

A WORD ABOUT JOHN DUNS SCOTUS

So, in the case of divine justice, we can consider the following situation: God could act by virtue of either perspective. God can either respond according to the object (what it deserves) or according to the divine nature (what God owes the divine nature, so to speak). Clearly, God's integrity far exceeds any demands the external object might make on divine action. God's deepest justice, then, is justice to divine integrity. God must always be God, regardless of the circumstance... since God's nature is love and generosity, this means quite simply that God's justice is mercy, forgiveness, and generosity.

Excerpted from Mary Beth Ingham's
Scotus for Dunces, 121.

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2. The University of Chicago Manual of Style, 14th ed., is to be consulted on general questions of style.
3. Titles of books and periodicals should be italicized or, in typed manuscripts, underlined. Titles of articles should be enclosed in quotation marks and not underlined or italicized.
4. References 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*.

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FOREWORD

Sincere apologies to our readers for the lateness of this issue. We had an unfortunate, although eventually not catastrophic, computer crash on April 3rd which interrupted our production in order to recover the lost or damaged files. But God is good and the technology gurus can work miracles, so we are back up and running now.

This issue has some first-time contributors and some returning authors fast becoming, if not already, favorites with our readers. Of those seasoned contributors we gain Seamus Mulholland's insights into brotherhood/sisterhood in today's world. Robert Williams shares insights about Franciscan interreligious dialogue, Michael Cusato explores Franciscan Trinitarianism, David Flood invites us to non-Franciscan reading which has much to say to Franciscans, Robert Karris brings Hildegard of Bingen's preaching to life for us and Kevin Tortorelli reflects on Francis and his friends. Billy Isenor, new to our pages, is studying the ascetic life and Mark Elvins sees Eastern influences in Francis's spirituality. A veritable potpourri!

St. Bonaventure University was privileged to host the celebration of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Festival of the Third Order Regular Rule this past weekend. It was an experience of much joy, celebration and renewed dedication to the challenges of being a Third Order penitent in today's world. There is a commemorative book in preparation which contains the history, both documents and personal narratives, of the development of the TOR rule. It's a must for every convent library and many will want a personal copy. Orders are being taken now.

While for the most part spring is here in western New York, we still flirt with snow-producing temperatures a couple of days after a record high for the season. It's a meteorological reminder to be open to our Creator's plans for us. As the beauty of this world constantly attests: God's design is infinitely better for us than human wisdom can direct.

Doris R. Mitchell, OSA

BROTHER/SISTERHOOD AS THE CONTEXT FOR GOSPEL LIVING FOR CHURCH, WORLD AND FRANCISCANS

SEAMUS MULHOLLAND, O.F.M.

When Franciscans come together to reflect on their lives, they come together as religious and as Franciscans. *Perfectae Caritatis* makes it clear that religious life is not something that is tagged on to the life of the Church [PC 1]. Rather, it is an integral part of the Church's life of communion with its members and with the world. Those of us who are Franciscans are first and foremost human beings. Our first experience of community living, therefore, is in the context of the community of the human person; the world-wide fraternity or sorority wherein our fundamental context for unity is not religion, race, creed, or culture, but the one indivisible thing we all share in common – our humanity. Thus, while we Franciscans will say that Franciscan life is a way of being in the Church and world, the primary way of being in the world is as a human person. This is the universal idea in relation to our Franciscan brotherhood, sisterhood; we abstract the individual from that universal idea by saying that I am a human person, living and being in the world-wide community of my brothers and sisters.

I choose to share my humanity in a particular life-expression which I call Christianity, and give that Christian life-expression an even more focused expression by freely choosing to express my Christian – and by extension – human life-expression, as a Franciscan. Therefore, while I may have had no say in the fact of my being in the world – that was between my parents – I do have a say in *how* I am in that world. If I am a Franciscan by free choice, then my being a Francis-

can is not an accidental characteristic of my life-expression – it is *the* determination of my life-expression. And as my human life-expression is intimately and inexorably bound up with the processes and dynamics of the human condition, the particular expression of my human life, my Franciscanism, is also intrinsically and inexorably bound up not just with other human beings who are Franciscans, but with the whole human community. So, therefore, it is true both conceptually and experientially, that as I am a member of the human community and so in my unique individuated expression of that humanity representative of humanity, so too as an individual Franciscan: I am individually representative of the entirety of Franciscan history, spirituality, theology, etc. As the whole human project is played out in my human life, so, too, is the whole Franciscan project played out in my Franciscan life.

Franciscan living, like human living, is never a *what* but always a *who*. In other words, it is never abstract but always concrete and real in the individual Franciscan. It is *me* who is human and who is Franciscan. The nature of my human life is lived in the context of others; the nature of my Franciscan life is lived in the context of others. I am not just a Franciscan *in se ipse* (in itself), I am a Franciscan for a purpose, as much as I am human for a purpose. The purpose for which I am a Franciscan is not so that I can live the Franciscan life, but so that others can live the Franciscan life. Franciscan living is enabled in and through me for others, as it is enabled and lived in others for me. I shall return to this in a moment when speaking of the paradox problem in Franciscan brotherhood/sisterhood. This brings us to an understanding of a contemporary approach to Franciscan living that is both central and crucial for understanding that we are not simply religious, but we are Franciscan religious. We seek to live out the Evangelical Counsels, characteristic of all religious, in a particular way in Church, world, society and our own Order/Congregation [PC 5]. And the centrality of that particular way lies in what I said above: I am a Franciscan for others and through me others are able to live out

their gospel calling and witness. In this sense my Franciscan life is a sacrament.

It is just to call Franciscan life a *sacrament* insofar as a sacrament is a sign of the holy, a sign of God's loving presence, a sign of God's love active and operative in the world, and a sign of God's grace and giftedness. This is true because Franciscan gospel living is itself a divine gift. Francis understood this when, in the Testament, he said:

And after the Lord gave me some brothers, no one showed me what I had to do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel. [Test 14]

What is interesting in this quote from the Testament is that Francis understands that the gospel life that he is now living is a revelation from God. It is divinely communicated to him. He does nothing to merit this and thus he is in receipt of God's gifted grace. However, what is also important for the concept of Franciscan brotherhood/sisterhood is that God is showing Francis something definite, something concrete. God is not just revealing to Francis some abstract, idealistic notion, God is showing Francis that the *how* he is to live is the *what*: he is to live out his life in the concrete historical situation that he finds himself in. So, Franciscan life is divinely revealed and divinely constituted since it is God him/her/itself who shows Francis what God wants him not just to *do*, but also to *be*.

This revelation to Francis comes at a time when there is no direction in his life: there is no one to advise him, show him, direct him, or guide him. The revelation to live the gospel life, therefore, is not simply *epiphanic*, it is also *theophanic* – it is a showing forth of the presence of God since God is to be found in the living of the gospel life. Franciscan life, therefore, has as its determining characteristic, its *haecceitas*, to use a Scotus idea, the *living of the gospel life*. Further, this revelation is given to Francis alone. It is a unique, divinely inspired insight into the gospel life that Francis sees as being given to him: God showed *me*; God led *me* are frequent self-

references in Francis's writings. Others come to join Francis; he does not go out and seek them. And they seek him out because they are inspired by what they see and not just by what they hear. Consequently, it is the *living* of the gospel life that gives expression to the Franciscan way of being in the world, not talking about it, writing about it or even reflecting about it. It is the *living* which makes the gospel life real and concrete in the now.

But this revelation, while it is given uniquely and personally to Francis, is not given in a solitary mystical moment. It is, rather, given in a very pragmatic and earthbound situation: a situation of confusion, insecurity, uncertainty which Francis seems to be referring to when he says *no one showed me what I had to do*. This implies that Francis, while he may have known that he had to do *something*, is not actually sure what that something is. This is part and parcel of his own growth and development in faith, vocation, commitment, and human living. But the *something* which he has to do is not a *thing*, it is a *life*. It is revealed to Francis that he has to live a life. This is something real and concrete, not something vaguely religious or mystical. Francis is to *live* the gospel life in the reality of the historical moment in which he finds himself. But as I said, while it is personal and unique, the gospel-life revelation comes in a very specific context. It is only after Francis has some brothers given to him by God, that the real call to live the gospel is given him. The gift of the brothers/sisters, the sacrament of fraternity/sorority, in other words, is a preparation for gospel living.

That gift of fraternity sets the condition for the gift of the revelation for gospel living. The context for living the gospel life for Francis, therefore, is itself divinely mandated: the brotherhood/sisterhood. In this context for us today, our brotherhood/sisterhood becomes the privileged locus for the experience of the presence of God and, consequently, I am a gift to the brothers/sisters, and they are gifts to me. It is only within the context of this graced God-giving, that gospel living becomes possible for me. I am not only a Franciscan *for* others, I am a Franciscan *with* others and *to* others, given to the brotherhood/sisterhood in order that the others may

not just understand but have revealed to them that their personal call by God is *to live the gospel*. Thus, we cannot be Franciscans on our own.

It is not simply that we join a congregation, or the Order. If we are Franciscans then we have been led to it. Along with Francis we can say [paraphrasing] *when I did not know what to do God showed me that I should live the gospel life – with, to, for and as these others*. So, Franciscan brotherhood/sisterhood is not a nice idea or image – it is the very beat of our Franciscan life's heart. It is the pulse of our being in the world as Franciscans. And brotherhood/sisterhood is *not about our life with God*. Community is our life *with God* – brotherhood/sisterhood is our life with *each other*. But one flows from the other and into the other. Our brotherhood/sisterhood informs our gospel living. Our gospel living informs our common life with God. The two, though separable, are, in a sense, symbiotic. God needs nothing from me to be God; my living of the gospel life adds nothing to God. If God has given me this life as a *graced gift*, then it cannot be because there is some benefit for him/her since God is perfect in all the pure perfections. This life, therefore, must be given for my benefit. But there is a problem here.

I have said that it is only after the brothers are given to Francis that the revelation to live the gospel life is given to Francis. The brotherhood, therefore, is important not just for the revelation but also for the concrete reality of how that revelation is lived out. If the brotherhood/sisterhood is the privileged place for the experience of the presence of God then that is the only place I can experience it: in the brotherhood/sisterhood. Therefore, the brotherhood/sisterhood *ministers* to my need for the divine presence since the brotherhood/sisterhood is a *sacrament*, and all sacraments are grace giving and life giving. The brotherhood/sisterhood is a means of the communication of grace, of the divine presence, and of the very life of the Trinity itself. Since God can only give totally of him/herself this is what is communicated in the *locus of the experience of the presence of God*, that is the brotherhood/sisterhood.

But the problem has not been forgotten. The above is simply contextualising the problem! I am a Franciscan. I profess the Rule of St. Francis. I say publicly before the whole Church and God in profession that I will live the gospel life to the end of my days in Chastity, Obedience and Poverty. But Francis does not use *poverty* in describing the *how* of gospel living. In other words the Rule says: *the Rule and Life of the Lesser Brothers [Franciscan] is this: to observe the holy gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, without anything of one's own, and in chastity.* [RB 1] The living of the gospel is the *what*, the Evangelical Counsels are the *how* and I who profess this rule am the *who*.

Now we come to the paradox problem. My gospel living as a Franciscan in the brotherhood/sisterhood is a serious problem. It is a serious problem because of the personal genitive pronouns: *my* gospel life, *I* live the gospel, *my* Franciscan life, *I am* a Franciscan, *I* live the life of brotherhood/sisterhood. It is a problem because these pronouns directly contradict my profession. In other words, I have said that I will live *sine proprio*, without appropriating anything to myself. So, if I say *I* am living the gospel life, or *my* Franciscan life etc., then I am appropriating them to myself. Once I appropriate them I own them. Once I own them I am not living *sine proprio*. Thus, if I make a claim to be living the life of brotherhood/sisterhood, then I am not living *sine proprio* – see the problem? However, I do live the life of brotherhood/sisterhood when I freely give it away, when I do not possess it and I do this through being a Franciscan in the brotherhood/sisterhood *for*, *with*, *to* and *as* the others since I enable them to live their life of brotherhood/sisterhood because they can only be a brother [sister] with and to and for and as me. So, when I do live *sine proprio* what I am living I have given away but the very moment I am living it it becomes mine and therefore it is not a *sine proprio* life.

It is the wonderful paradox of Franciscan living: that the moment we say we are something, that it belongs to us, is the very moment when it should not belong to us and so we must give it away. Fraternity/sorority, therefore, is not given to me as an individual, it is given to the others in and through

and with my own unique, personal, sacramental presence as a brother/sister. I only become brother/sister when I give it away, when I freely dispose of it in the *sine proprio* sense – so, even my *own* gospel living is not given to me for me but for the others, as theirs is not given for them but for me. This is why the brotherhood/sisterhood is such a privileged place: the presence of God is always something that is in the now, and it can only be in the now if the brotherhood/sisterhood is in the now. We are called *to live* the gospel: this is the present tense of the verb and the present tense can only be lived in the present. In other words, the life of Franciscan brotherhood/sisterhood is for this present reality and is only present when it is being lived. And it is only being lived when it is being given away and thus Franciscan brotherhood/sisterhood is for the Church, the world and humanity – it is not for Franciscans which, again, is the great paradox. Since the presence of God can only be experienced in the now, and the brotherhood/sisterhood is the privileged locus for that, the present moment is our own theophanic experience.

The presence of the divine in our lives in the context of the brotherhood/sisterhood only happens in the present, since God is the Now. As there is no past, or future in God, only the present, there is, then, no past, or future in the brotherhood/sisterhood – there is only the present. We can only live the gospel in the present. What we did yesterday is gone; we do not know tomorrow. We only know today and it is only in today that we can experience the divine in the brotherhood/sisterhood and we can only do that through the others. This is our great sacramental sign to the world. Hence it is that Franciscan brotherhood/sisterhood is always new, always fresh despite the ordinary humdrum existence of our lives and so we accede to Francis's reflection and command:

I have done what is mine, may Christ teach you yours (LMj XIV:3).

Let us begin, brothers, to serve the Lord God for up until now we have done little or nothing (1C 103).

So it is that we may have been in our Order or congregation for 50 years, but since we live the gospel in the present, which is where God is, in reality we are only Franciscans for one day – that is every day we awake and freely choose this life of gospel brotherhood/sisterhood, so that when we wake we say:

Today, I am going to be a Franciscan brother/sister.

Thus it is that the Franciscan brotherhood/sisterhood, the life of gospel fraternity/sorority, becomes actualized only in the present moment. Only at the very instant it is being lived, and at the instant it is being lived, we must give it away since the very essence of Franciscan brotherhood/sisterhood is that it is a gift. All our gifts are given to be used for others, our giving away of our lives becomes the expression of God's gracious giftedness to us. In this gracious giftedness the gift of fraternity – brotherhood/sisterhood – becomes not just a way of being in the world as Franciscans, but for Franciscans, it becomes a way of being in the world as human.

There is precedent and paradigm for this: the Word – Jesus – himself the Sacrament of the Father, was in the world as human. And as the Incarnate Word was among men and women, he freely and selflessly shared the totality of himself. His *food* – life – was *to do the will of the Father*, to make the Father's name known. He preached, talked, walked, healed so that all may know that God is Abba and that he was the only beloved Son sent by Abba.

His was a life of kenotic brotherhood/sisterhood and when men and women looked at him, and heard his voice, though they did not know it, they saw the face of the Absolute Divine Other in every line, mark, and contour of his dusty, weather-beaten young face. And his life was itself a life of *sine proprio*. When friends had gone, and vociferous welcoming crowds, once fed with bread and fish, had long since changed their minds and replaced *Hosanna* with *Crucify*. When dreams lay in the dust beneath his bloodied, broken feet and the joy and enthusiasm of beginnings on the roads of Galilee, Samaria, Tyre and Sidon, Bethany, the Mount of Olives, the

mount of the Beatitudes and every place where he barefoot walked, were long since forgotten, there is one moment that remains.

It is the moment at the very end when – bleeding, battered, broken, bruised, lost, alone and no more than a sad, desperate, lonely, isolated, filthy, blood laden, tragic figure – all he possesses that is uniquely his is his last dying breath. And not even this does he appropriate to himself but freely gives it to the God who is silent. With the words “Abba, into your hands I commend my spirit,” he breathed his last. The cross, therefore, is not some tragic folly but the culmination of our salvific moment which is begun when God says *Let there be light!* It is our life because through this death we come to new life. It is our salvation because through this death we are freed from sin. And through this death the divine life is our full possession because that death is not the end but leads to the glory of the Resurrection. On the cross, Jesus gives us everything by giving everything he is and has away for us. The cross, therefore, is the *sine proprio* point of Love's no return.

This is the exemplar for Franciscan brotherhood/sisterhood: to possess by giving freely away, to give freely away what is possessed; to do so in the present moment; to do so in, for, with and as a brother/sister. Perhaps our final reflection should not be on the nature or quality of life of brotherhood/sisterhood but rather the simple and humble request of the one who died beside him: “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And, more in hope than faith, we pray we will hear those death shattering words: “I promise you, today you shall be with me in paradise” – which is the longing of all our brotherhood/sisterhood.



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI AND HIS FRIENDS

KEVIN M. TORTORELLI, O.F.M.

Francis's friends are rather like our own. They are a medley of the upright, the beleaguered, the noble, the comic and the odd. Not all his friends were even human as Brother Wolf reminds us. Talk of friends is a concrete exercise in the form of stories. But in addition to this concrete setting the tradition of friendship is honored since antiquity as an aspect of moral philosophy. Cicero in the *De Amicitia* exemplifies this tradition. Here friendship is a sacred bond whose nature has fascinated people from earliest times and is hailed as the expression of the most complete harmony in taste, interest and feeling between two people. Friendship is noble since it can exist only between and among good people. And "good" here is concrete and easily recognizable – the "good" characterizes people of honor, decency and generosity. Friendship trumps other forms of relationship in that they can continue to exist in the absence of affection but friendship cannot. I may be estranged from my brother but we are still brothers. There are no friends who are estranged. Now and again the moral tradition has sought to define friendship. For example – friendship is a complete accord on all subjects human and divine joined with mutual good will and affection. This accord between persons delights in the capacity to say to a friend what otherwise I say only to myself. And this touches on the blessings or the fruit of friendship. Foremost among these blessings is the fact that in the face of a friend one sees a second self. Where my friend is, there I am. If he is rich, I am not poor. If I am weak, my friend's strength is mine.

Kevin M. Tortorelli

Virtue underlies all the variations of friendship – understood as a kind of confidence and wisdom. It also indicates that friendship cannot survive consenting to do what is wrong. To do something wrong "for friendship's sake" is simply discreditable. Friendship demands that we should ask of friends and do for friends only what is good. Yet for the sake of friendship one overlooks what is trifling and unimportant. Friendship also has loyalty as its foundation, its stability and permanence. These views of friendship in Cicero contributed toward a tradition of thinking and speaking to which the medieval culture of Francis was heir.

Francis's first friend is nameless, sick and ostracized. He is a leper, a man living in a deformed body. Sequestered, lepers announced their presence by ringing a clapper and crying "unclean." In the gospels when Christ touched him the leper was healed but Christ became unclean. Similarly, atop his mount, our dandy from Assisi had it in mind to touch the leper, kiss him and press a coin into his misshapen hand. The leper may have thought he'd met a lunatic and turned to flee. But some said in Francis's lunatic embrace that the leper disappeared and that it was in fact the poor, rejected Christ whom Francis had met. We do know that as a result of this encounter Francis resolved to leave the world. He could now be found nursing lepers at Rivo Torto. Clearly befriending can cause division. So and so is not really your class. You can do better than that one. Surely Francis's family can be heard in these disapproving remarks. Francis befriended a body – ugly, misshapen, misbegotten and there is no difference between the leper's body and the stigmatic crucified body of Francis. The Seraph descends to him bearing the deformed and leprous body of the crucified whose love ravishes Francis's body – "See my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself" (Lk 24:39), words by which the Risen Christ revealed himself to the Eleven. The body is the place of expression and intersection, the concrete place of all encounter. In all circumstances and everywhere the human body is a sacrament. Not only fit and beautiful bodies but especially those wracked by pain, old age, disease, disfigurement. Behold, Christ is a leper.

Another of Francis's friends is not even human. In fact he is a ferocious wolf. In the nineteenth century the skeleton of a large male wolf was discovered buried deep under the high altar of Gubbio cathedral. The dating of the remains is consistent with the life of Brother Wolf of Gubbio. The wolf wrought havoc to the townspeople who were shut up by night in their walled town. They were terrified to venture out where they were at the mercy of the prowling predator red in tooth and claw. Efforts to kill the wolf only made it more fierce and destructive. The townspeople asked Francis for advice and protection. The wolf caught sight of Francis coming toward him and with teeth bared the wolf made for him. Francis made the sign of the cross over the advancing wolf and in Christ's name bade him harm no one ever again. The wolf acquiesced and became as a lamb. Then Francis remonstrated with the wolf for its past ferocity and welcomed him to a covenant of peace with the town of Gubbio. The town agreed to feed the wolf every day and the wolf agreed to do no harm to any form of life. Francis with his hand and the wolf with his paw "shook" on it. Francis made himself a bondsman to the deal. Befriending is not limited to human life but to all life upon the earth. Brother Wolf shares this kinship with Francis together with the swallows and the larks of the air and Brother Falcon who on La Verna woke Francis for matins with the beating of his wings. Brother Wolf reminds us to go beyond "subduing" the earth and finding a way to care for it. Our assault upon the earth (*Gaia* to the ancient Greeks), the burning of fossil fuels, ozone depletion, carcinogens and acid rain, the extinction of whole species are all conditions that can be reversed if we befriend the earth after the manner of Brother Wolf.

Rufino was one of the early followers of Francis. He was a nobleman of the town of Assisi. Francis describes him as courteous, gallant, gentle, the pedigree of a good upbringing. But he was shy to speak and preach. Francis sent him to the main square of the town to preach and, because Rufino objected, he was ordered to appear in public in his underwear! He was roundly mocked by the townspeople. See how he de-means his family name and lineage! Meanwhile, in my view,

Francis became aware that his command to Rufino arose from envy at the young man's noble status. We can be envious of our friends and harm what we in fact cherish. Often we can twist the strong emotions of friendship by manipulation and envy. We can engage in passive aggressive manifestations of anger and distort what we otherwise hold in trust. Francis engaged in some such reflection. In the end he entered the main square in Assisi-wearing only his underwear, carrying his habit and Rufino's. Friendship blossoms when it is rooted in noble thought, noble emotion and noble gesture. It can overcome the darkness that stalks all human relationships. Friendship has the resourcefulness to forgive and to heal. At the end of the day Rufino's friendship brought Francis beyond secret envy to what was best and noblest in him. Friendship invites to conversion.

Among friends there is one who is recognized as a confidant. He is privileged to know one's heart, one's soul. For Francis that friend was Brother Leo. Typically Francis would say to him, "Brother Leo, write this down. ..." I confess when I was a novice I thought of this relationship as a medieval version of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson. One of their famous conversations took place during a cold winter's walk. The subject was perfect joy. Francis took the view that perfect joy does not lie in holiness or integrity or edification. Nor indeed in working miracles of healing. Nor indeed in learning, knowledge, prophecy or preaching. Shivering by now, Brother Leo is aghast, "then what is perfect joy?" Francis answers that perfect joy lies in being rejected with Christ and for Christ. Friends share across much of their lives. A good friend shares our setbacks and reversals. Perfect joy shares a friend's sadness but that sharing heads toward the companion's own joy. One senses that is a lesson Leo never forgot. Above all however Leo is the companion to Francis atop La Verna from about mid August to mid September 1224. On the feast of the Holy Cross Francis received the Stigmata. It was Leo who cared for Francis, bathing his wounds, washing his clothes, protecting Francis's modesty from the curious and well intentioned.

In the spirit of the "perfect joy" conversation, much of what we know about Francis we learn from Leo and their conversations enjoyed over the years. Their friendship was intimate, a sharing of their fundamental humanity at the level of personal risk and chaos. A profound measure of their friendship lies in the letter Francis wrote Leo in his own hand. In it Francis advises Leo "in whatever way you think you will please our lord God and follow in his footsteps and in poverty, *take that way*.... And if you find it necessary for peace of soul or your own consolation and you want to come to me, Leo, then come." In this piece of advice there is no effort to manipulate one's friend, no attempt to deprive him of his own self or his own experience or to make him after one's own image. In this letter Francis sets Leo free – *take that way*, as good conscience directs you. Intimacy thrives on such freedom and encouragement. In my view, only one other of Francis's friends, like Leo, shares this quality of intimacy. To her we now turn.

Clare injects erotic tension into our account – a noble and titled Lady, young, eligible. At 18 she joins Francis at Our Lady of the Angels where she is received and her hair shorn. In going from her home at the high point of the town of Assisi to the friars below the town in the valley she went from a form of life well known and long established to a form of life completely ill formed and a bit bizarre. Dramatically she left a life of privilege to become a servant. In time this fact will effect a change in the social order of feudal Europe. Clare was the "first flower" in Francis's garden yet her feelings for him were deep and womanly. At some point Francis composed a song with words and melody for Clare and her sisters. It is no longer extant and one must regret the loss. I think of that song as lyrical, a ballad enchanting the feet to dance, an exuberance before God, a friendship of joy. It would have brought sparkling smiles and easy laughter, the speech of friends. On one occasion Clare and Francis ate together in the company of the friars. The meal became a communion in that the townspeople reported that the whole place and the woodlands round about appeared on fire. But when they arrived they sensed that it was the spiritual fire of their com-

munion with each other in the Lord. In a related incident the Pope came to visit Clare and asked her to bless the bread the sisters had baked for the occasion. Clare demurred but finally blessed the bread. At her blessing the loaves of bread became inscribed with the sign of the cross. Clare and her sisters maintained this practice of blessing especially the sick with the sign of the cross for health and well being.

So it is that their friendship embraced a man and a woman and symbolized itself in eating and in sharing bread. With this friendship the Franciscan movement became feminine. This is a welcome and important point. Already the Franciscan lexicon spoke of *Lady Poverty*, *Sister Earth*, *Sister Water* and *Sister Death*. And now there is the *Lady Clare*. In contrast to St. Francis she is described as noble by grace, virginal in body, chaste in mind, youthful of age but mature in spirit. She was eager in her desire for divine love, bright and brilliant – here perhaps adverting to her name "Clare" or "Chiara" in Italian, meaning bright. God's praise of her makes up her bridal pearls. With her things "flourish" and a fragrant "odor" wafts around her. Her sisters (the Poor Clares) cultivate silence, patience and humility. To my reading these medieval descriptions are more distinctively feminine than masculine in their emphasis on the dignified, the graceful, the elegant, the spousal, the delicately beautiful. These qualities now become integral to a full and coherent description of the Franciscan person. Friendship unites a man and a woman who share with each other what is otherwise distinctive and beyond each one's reach. That is why spouses in marriage are often also best friends. This Franciscan friendship with the Lady Clare tends to balance out tendencies to patriarchy and subordination, to master/servant relationships in the Franciscan attitude. It replaces them with the image of eating and especially of bread that to the medieval mind represents sharing, suffering and fruitfulness. It places suffering and its fruitfulness foursquare in the male Franciscan's consciousness. Without these qualities attributed to Clare, the Franciscan is incomplete both in possession and appreciation. Quite simply one cannot understand Francis apart from Clare.

In contemporary literature on the spiritual life the theme of befriending has received a belated welcome. In applying it to Francis we achieve some modest results. Befriending risks costly disapproval as it chooses the leper but it sets value on right decision and the courage that underlies it. When one befriends all of life one sets aside arrogance or privilege regarding who or what is worthy of life. Friends admire something in each other and the bond of friendship makes that value available in one friend as something held in trust for the other. So friendship is indispensable to sustained conversion. Friendship brings forth the extraordinary gift of self-knowledge that the other holds for me. In him or her I know myself in limpid clarity. I do not fear what I shall see. Perhaps some such meditation on the variety and complexity of one's friendships can bring into focus our relationship with Christ who says to us, "... I have called you friends" (Jn 15:15).

There are five focus questions:

1. Do I befriend everything about a person – e.g., his handicap, her status, his marginalized living?
2. In my lifestyle do I befriend all life forms – from pets to environment to global concerns about all life? Do I reverence the earth as mother of life?
3. Does my befriending have the capacity to forgive a friend's pettiness, manipulation, envy?
4. Do I have friendships where I listen a lot, sharing difficulties as well as delights? What is unique about my conversations with friends?
5. How do I compare my same sex friendships and opposite sex friendships? How are they similar and how different?

FRANCISCAN READING

DAVID FLOOD, O.F.M.

In 1221, as a cover letter to the latest edition of the Early Rule, Francis of Assisi told his brothers to study their *vita* thoroughly. By *vita* he meant the purposes and practices that they had developed since the day in 1209 they set out together. At about the same time, as movement spokesman, he concluded the Message of Recall and Encouragement, the *Commonitorium*, by encouraging people to read it closely and share the text with others. He wanted them to take it to heart; he wanted them to study it well. Francis and his brothers had a policy on study. They summed it up in Admonition VII. Such study was good that supported their basic purpose of "giving God back all good things."¹ The phrase from Chapter Seventeen of the Early Rule expressed their movement goal.

From these passages in the early Franciscan writings we can conclude that Francis and his companions saw clearly that they had to devote time to study and discussion. We can understand why. Unless the early brothers and sisters kept talking up and developing further their sense of life and service and praise of God, they would be taken into some other talk and celebration going on in their day. Study and talk belong to life. We live in one linguistic world or another. So *The Cord* stands in the line of those efforts on which Francis, in the cover letter, called down God's blessing.

If we agree that Admonition VII characterizes the reading Franciscans have to do, then, I submit, we can find books

¹ ER XVII 17.

marked for study from outside the usual lists of Franciscan books. I propose two such books in this essay, books that deserve discussion among Franciscans. I hope they raise as well an important question about our reading. I dare suggest the question at the end of the essay.

I first read about Bill McKibben's *Deep Economy. The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future* when it was praised in *The New York Review of Books*. That was in June 2007. Eventually, as I had long intended, I got around to reading it. Here is a brief summary of McKibben's book. The author lays out clearly why we need better economic growth and not more economic growth; we need a system of supplying ourselves the goods of life that responds to the challenges of our day as well as speaks to our needs as human beings. We are challenged to save our planet from its ruin through an economy of growth. We have already gone too far, as McKibben proposes in his conclusion, with excellent references. In place of a global economic practice geared to increased production and its suicidal consequences, we need an economic system that fits us as people and not only covers our material needs. The author tells us how to develop such economies, in pleasing prose with supportive data. So much for the book. It's easy to find out more about it and the paperback edition does not cost much. I focus on two details that I picked up as I trolled its pages with my Franciscan mind.

McKibben has a fascinating three pages on money (162-164). The pages fit into his development on local economies and they make surprising sense. I say surprising sense because we tend to take official money as true value and not as paper that depends on some social agreement to use it in exchange. McKibben says that a "complementary currency" can help a local economy considerably. As a currency made and used by a local population, it can favor support for local produce and service and, in the process, reduce costs.² (Google "complementary currency" and see what Wikipedia

² Locals make it honest and consequently true, whereas they have no hand in fashioning the dominant currency.

says about it.) Francis and his brothers used an analogue to such a currency when they refused pay for their labor. They brought a new economic practice around money into play.

We recall that there were two currencies in use in Assisi when the brothers set out. There was the Luccan currency (the one for daily market transactions, little money) and the Pavian currency (for the heavy transactions, good money). Assisi had no currency of its own. The market coin tended to undergo debasement; it easily slipped out of control. When the canons of San Rufino and the bishop of Assisi agreed to arbitration in August 1216, they agreed to pay a fine for non-compliance to the arbitration's terms and pay it in good money. The agreement meant they were really serious. Their good money, kept carefully in coffers, gained in value. Although it did not change its metal weight, which defined its commercial value, it won esteem by association with the wealthy and their dealings. People had to make do with the market currency, whereas the rich saw to it that their silver was secure. Together, Assisi's currencies served as watchdog over the communal economy. A currency always takes sides, which is why De Gaulle hated the dollar.

Francis and his brothers understood money well, given their observer status and the lessons of the two currencies. In that knowledge, they took, as return for their labor, what they needed. By refusing coin, they finessed the services rendered the city's rulers by the two currencies. The value added of their labor enhanced the common effort and in this way manifested their solidarity with the working population. As for themselves, their practice kept them close to the daily struggles of the common people. Too bad they didn't stay there. Francis was for it. In his several pages on a local currency alongside the reigning monetary system, McKibben describes the dynamics resulting from the complementary currency. His description raises the question of similar effects from the early brothers' way with the age's currencies.

Deep Economy does two things. It criticizes the present economy as expanding and efficient. The expansion and the efficiency accumulate much more than its very restricted beneficiaries need, besides wreaking havoc on the environment.

McKibben shows simply and clearly that further growth cannot be the answer to our economic problems. *Deep Economy* also offers a sensible answer to our plight. It proposes we see to "a patient rebalancing of the scales," and McKibben spells out the great possibilities and promise of an "economics of neighborliness." He makes it sound both fun and wise, for he explains how it draws out and speaks to people's need for one another. Basically, the stories and proposals extend the Fair Trade of struggling populations into U.S. contexts. It ends up with good questions and first answers for a prudent and progressive change in the global economy: from an economy of planetary ruin to an economy for all people.

I pick up on the expression "economics of neighborliness," for I propose that we can locate the early brothers smack in the middle of a similar phenomenon. We know the initial ruling on brothers working at their trades (Early Rule VII). At a later moment, to the determination on labor Francis and his brothers added details on their relations to fellow workers. The workers to whom the brothers related belonged to guilds. We get a good idea of what went on in guilds from S. Epstein's book *Wage Labor and Guilds in Medieval Europe*.³ He explains (e.g., 157-58; and see "Charity" in the index, 302) how they helped one another, and the urban poor as well. The early Franciscans mixed into what we can call a medieval "economics of neighborliness." As spokesperson of the movement, Francis addressed The Message of Recall and Encouragement (*Commonitorium*) to the guild brothers and sisters (as they called one another) to whom through their work they were so close.⁴ One section has to do with life in the guild (units 22-36). There Francis encourages his readers to see to one another's needs as well as to the needs of the poor (30-31). His encouragement we can take as one concretization of the movement's encompassing principle to give God back all good things. That, in sum, is what McKibben means by an "economics of neighborliness." It is not inop-

³ S. Epstein, *Wage Labor and Guilds in Medieval Europe* (University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

⁴ I explain and invite such a reading of the text in *Work for Justice* forthcoming from Franciscan Institute Publications.

portune here to mention that, seeing as this is what Francis is doing in the text, we can drop the conceit that we know its early form.

McKibben's book has been widely reviewed and duly praised. One reviewer underlined "his real-world approach to solutions." Another called it an "oddly optimistic book." The latter remark recalls the surprised response of people in middle Italy to the uplifting dynamics of the early Franciscan movement. We find that optimism in the Message (48ff.), even though Francis does not hesitate to use a harsh and humbling word for each day's labor (40).

Years ago I read Ursula Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, first published in 1974. I thought then that the novel brought Franciscan traits into play. That is, some of the suppositions and a lot of the action in the novel brought the early Franciscan story to mind. I just read it again and it does read Franciscan.⁵ It's a sci-fi story. The practically uninhabitable planet Anarres is inhabited by a population that caused so much trouble in the luscious environment of the planet Urras that the people won the freedom to travel to Anarres and turn it into Utopia.⁶ The Anarresti are slowly getting there. Very slowly. One Anarresti, Shevek, thinks that Anarres is succumbing to bureaucracy and that Urras, as well as other planets (Terra, Hain), can benefit from the Anarresti experience. The novel tells how he succeeds in jump-starting a new phase in the journey to Utopia. The novel does have its utopian lessons, that's the nature of the beast; but the novel's story carries them well, it fits them into the action. We end up with a parable about Franciscan history. (Just don't tell the author, who's an atheist, or agnostic.)

In one way, the novel tells Shevek's story; and when Shevek is two, he is in a nursery, sitting in the sun that shines through a window. A fat baby sits down next to him, shifting him out of the warm sun into the shade. Shevek does

⁵ I use the word adverbially.

⁶ The novel is subtitled *An Ambiguous Utopia*. The very word utopia invites an abundance of ambiguity. And the title of the novel plays off of Dostoevsky's *The Possessed*. All of this, I rapidly conclude, dispenses me, in this brief essay, from saying more about utopia and possession.

not hesitate to push him out of the sunlight and reclaim his sun: "Mine!" The matron tries to restrain Shevek. He'll have none of it. There follows the lesson every baby on Anarres has to learn. The matron explains to him: Nothing is yours. Things are there for you to use and to share. "If you will not share it, you cannot use it." Shevek eventually learns the rationale of the training and embraces the lesson. He does so to such a degree that he finds it difficult, later, at twenty, when he gets better than average living quarters, given his intellectual gifts.

Writ large over time, the nursery lesson meant a decentralization that kept people unattached to thing and place and busy in the flow of life. Le Guin preempts McKibben when she has her theoretician explain life on Anarres: "...the natural limit to the size of a community lay in its dependence on its own immediate region for essential food and power..." The communities had to see that goods as well as ideas circulated among the populated centers. No one was left out or aside. Eventually we arrive at the consequences. Shevek explains in a paragraph central to the story: "You cannot have anything." Claim and hold things, and you jump out of time, for time is reality. The human condition is a temporal one.

I see a similar relation to things and a similar commitment to service in early Franciscan history. If we go through the Early Rule, we readily understand two basics of Franciscan life. One, Francis and his brothers called nothing theirs. Two, they understood their labors and their life as service to the common good. When Francis later interpreted their experience to others, he told the newly rich that they made a serious mistake if they thought they could possess anything.⁷ He laid it out clearly and simply to the civil authorities in central Italy.⁸ (And in the rest of the world: Francis was never one to stint on the applicability of good advice.) People in central Italy looked at the hard and simple life of the early brothers and wondered at their enjoyment of life.⁹ Shevek speaks in similar fashion about the people on Anarres. They are poor,

⁷ 2LtF 71 and 83.

⁸ LtR 4.

⁹ 1C 36-38.

they have nothing, and in their eyes there radiates the splendor of the human spirit.¹⁰

In his major disquisition on the poor life, Peter of John Olivi offers a philosophical argument for the Franciscan way with temporalities. He explains that when we appropriate something and hold onto it as "Mine!", we establish a relationship to things material that make them part of who we are. This conditions our relations to others. It so fixes us in things that we are no longer free in our relations to others and to God. Properties function as impediments to community. If we relate to them functionally, then they serve the common good, and that service leads to material equity among people. Peter of John called that *usus pauper*: standing with Jesus rather than with the wealthy. This is what takes place among the people of Anarres, and when Shevek explains it to the Urrasti, he says they are possessed by their possessions; they are in jail, each alone and solitary. On the other hand, possessing nothing, the Anarrestis are free.

Into her story of life on Anarres Le Guin has woven the weaknesses that come with being human. Not everyone handles the adventure of freedom well. Not everyone invites the understanding and affection of others. Not everyone brings energy and enthusiasm to the menial tasks that help sustain and invigorate communities. Not everyone believes in *usus pauper*. Le Guin narrates especially well the way life on Anarres slips into the rut of bureaucratic control and its limited vision. Although these parts of the story lack their correspondence in Franciscan history, such inventions help move the story along.

The Dispossessed has a structural clarity not available to the early Franciscans. It comes from the clear distance between life on Urras and life on Anarres. When the people clambered into the spaceships and blasted off from Urras to live on the desolate moon of Anarres, they left the world for good. They only had to glance up in the night sky to see what they had left and confirm their sense of where they were. The brothers left Assisi; they extricated themselves from its

¹⁰ Le Guin, *The Dispossessed* (New York: Harper, 2003), 228.

social bonds and abandoned their possessions. When Francis processed clerics into the brotherhood, he sent them to spend time in service to the lepers. He wanted to put them where they could glance back and see clearly the world they had left behind. Looked on with disdain at first, the brothers soon won the esteem of many, and society, to its own advantage and as required by its myth, began laying ties on them to drag them back in. And in they went. Perusal of Le Guin's novel can serve as a time among lepers. It can give us perspective on the globalized world ruining our planet. It can modulate our sad smile as we listen to the G8 people, with their usual hypocrisy, bemoan the poor of the world. (A meeting is underway in Washington as I write.)

McKibben's *Deep Economy* and Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* make good Franciscan reading, for they invite us to reflect on neighborliness (McKibben) and networking (Le Guin) as analogues to the early Franciscan concern for others. And the two books have today's action in mind, where the Franciscans belong. Early Rule VII 1-2 and XIV immerse the brothers in neighborliness. That's where the promising action can and does occur. That's where Franciscans belong, as does anyone who wants to get the race on track. On the other hand, the Saint-Founder-Prophet books abound in documents without their stories. They are heavy with information, for the documents have served as the playground of scholars intrigued by the popular image of Francis of Assisi. The game has been, or, alas, still is, answer The Franciscan Question.¹¹ The three volumes can make one learned in Franciscan lore. They distract us, however, from "laughing about our weaknesses as we shoulder the burdens of neighborliness alongside our Brother." So concludes Admonition V.

¹¹ The Franciscan Question, born of the biblical question at the end of the nineteenth century, aspires to determine which of the narratives about Francis we are to believe. An historian, qua historian, of course, believes no one.

FRANCIS AND THE SULTAN

ROBERT WILLIAMS, O.F.M. CAP.

The Second Vatican Council addressed the issue of missionary work and evangelization in our multicultural world in the declaration *Nostra aetate*. This document opened the possibility of new forms of dialogue with and respect for believers of other religions. While the message may have seemed new for the Catholic Church in the 1960's, we can see the same truth lived out in the prophetic lives of holy men and women throughout history. One man who offers a genuinely prophetic example of the type of dialogue called for by *Nostra aetate* is St. Francis of Assisi. His mission to the Sultan Malek al-Kamil during the fifth crusade was a fearless attempt at evangelizing non-Christians in the midst of dangerous times. His humble and brave encounter with the Sultan offered the opportunity for great numbers of devoted Catholics to live and work in the heart of the Muslim world for almost eight hundred years.

In this paper we will look at how the Second Vatican Council calls the Catholic faithful to interact with non-Christian religions. We will then look at the ideals of evangelization among non-Christians as expressed by Patriarch Maximos Saygh, Pope Paul VI, and Pope John Paul II. This will lead us to consider the mission of St. Francis to the Sultan Malek al-Kamil. In this brief study we will see that Francis embodied the teaching of the Council over seven hundred years before it was called into being.

In the opening statements of *Nostra aetate* the members of the Council assert that:

All men form but one community. This is so because all stem from the one stock which God created to people the entire earth, and also because all share a common destiny, namely God.¹

Here the Church asserts that all humans are creatures of God and are all called to share in the rewards that are promised to us by our faith. The Council goes further to explain that even certain other religions and their followers are to be respected, and that it is possible to see truth, however brightly or dimly it may shine, within their faiths. The Council states:

The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. She has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from her own teaching, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men.²

This is not to say that the Church wishes to abdicate her responsibility of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. To avoid any confusion the document continues by asserting that the Church, "proclaims and is duty bound to proclaim without fail, Christ who is the way, the truth and the life," because it is, "in him, in whom God reconciled all things to himself, men find the fullness of their religious life."³

Thus, the Church recognizes the innate unity of all humanity. She also recognizes the fact that many cultures have developed various religions in response to the innate religious sense that is part of being human. Further, she is able to recognize the glimmer of truth within some of the world religions. In particular Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Ju-

¹ Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 738.

² Flannery, 739.

³ Flannery, 739.

daism are named. For our purposes we will concentrate on what the document has to say about Islam.

The document begins by declaring the similarities that exist between Christianity and Islam stating:

The Church has also a high regard for the Muslims. They worship God, who is one, living and subsistent, merciful and almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has also spoken to men. They strive to submit themselves without reserve to the hidden decrees of God, just as Abraham submitted himself to God's plan, to whose faith Muslims eagerly link their own.... Further, they await the day of judgment and the reward of God following the resurrection of the dead. For this reason they highly esteem an upright life and worship God, especially by way of prayer, alms-deeds and fasting.⁴

It then continues in pointing out some important differences:

Although not acknowledging him as God, they venerate Jesus as a prophet, his virgin Mother they also honor, and even at times devoutly invoke.⁵

Finally it concludes the section on Islam by recognizing the difficult past shared between Christianity and the Muslim world:

Over the centuries many quarrels and dissensions have arisen between Christians and Muslims. The sacred Council now pleads with all to forget the past, and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding ...⁶

⁴ Flannery, 739-40.

⁵ Flannery, 740.

⁶ Flannery, 740.

In these brief sections we recognize that the Catholic Church does hold a certain respect for Islam while still maintaining the truth of Catholic Christian teaching. This sentiment is echoed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church which states that Muslims,

profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day.⁷

The Catechism goes on to explain that this does not mean that the Church denies her responsibility of preaching Jesus to Muslims or followers of any other religion. It states:

To reunite all his children, scattered and led astray by sin, the Father willed to call the whole of humanity together into his Son's Church. The Church is the place where humanity must rediscover its unity and salvation.⁸

The question of how we are to both respect other religions and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ simultaneously presents itself at this point. To answer this we may turn to one of the fathers of the Second Vatican Council, the Arab Byzantine Patriarch Maximos Saygh. He warned that:

the sacred law of Allah does not recognize apostasy from Islam and prescribes death for converts to other religions.⁹

This presents a definite difficulty for any missionary in that active proselytizing may put new converts at great risk. To this end Saygh cautions for patience and perseverance. He writes:

⁷ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), 841.

⁸ *Catechism*, 845.

⁹ Thomas E. Bird, *The Men Who Make the Council: Patriarch Maximos IV Saygh* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964), 33.

What Christ expects of us is not so much to convert souls as to put at their disposal the means of knowing the truth.¹⁰

The patriarch goes on to explain the means of providing this knowledge stating that:

The mission of Christians in Arab countries is to offer the Islamic world a Christian witness, freed from any extraneous element and from all human interests.¹¹

This line of thought was echoed in the document *The Muslim Dialogue of the Last Ten Years*, a document published by Pro Mundi Vita, "an international information and research center under Catholic auspices."¹² The document states that in order to engage in meaningful dialogue in the Muslim world, Catholics must develop three important virtues, "knowing how to keep silent, how to listen, how to be moderate."¹³

We must be careful in reading this, not to think that prudent silence, generous listening, and a moderate demeanor should in any way call for diminishing or ignoring the Gospel. While Paul VI, in a visit to Uganda, did express his "profound respect for the faith which they (Muslims) profess," and he further expressed his hope that, "what we possess in common may serve to unite Christians and Muslims in an ever closer way, in an authentic brotherhood;"¹⁴ he also produced the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*. In this document, Paul VI wrote about the relationship between the Church and other religions in more cautionary terms. He wrote:

¹⁰ Maximos IV Saygh, *The Eastern Churches and Catholic Unity* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963), 29.

¹¹ Saygh, *The Eastern Churches*, 32.

¹² John Reynard, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue: A Review of Six Post-Vatican II, Church-Related Documents," in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 23 (Winter 1986): 70.

¹³ Reynard, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue," 77.

¹⁴ J. Hoeberichts, *Francis and Islam* (Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 1997), 145.

We wish to point out, above all today, that neither respect and esteem for these religions nor the complexity of the questions raised is an invitation to the church to withhold from these non-Christians the proclamation of Jesus Christ. On the contrary, the church holds that these multitudes have the right to know the riches of the mystery of Christ ... (because) the religion of Jesus, which the church proclaims through evangelization, objectively places the human person in relation with the plan of God, with his living presence and with his action.... In other words, our religion effectively establishes an authentic and living relationship with God which the other religions do not succeed in doing even though they have, as it were, their arms stretched out towards heaven.¹⁵

With this, there can be no question that while respecting, listening to, and being moderate with other religions, faithful Catholics must also share the gospel with non-Christians. In so doing, Catholics share the greatest gift we have to offer.

John Paul II added his own significant thoughts to this matter in the encyclical *Redemptoris missio*. This document clearly affirms the teaching that:

If we go back to the beginnings of the Church, we find a clear affirmation that Christ is the one Savior of all, the only one able to reveal God and lead to God.¹⁶

This statement is strengthened by the assertion that:

In the process of discovering and appreciating the manifold gifts – especially the spiritual treasures – that God has bestowed on every people, we cannot separate those gifts from Jesus Christ, who is at the center of God's plan of salvation.¹⁷

¹⁵ Hoeberichts, *Francis and Islam*, 146.

¹⁶ J. Michael Miller, ed., *The Encyclicals of John Paul II* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1996), 497.

¹⁷ Miller, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 499.

Thus, John Paul II certainly accepts the teaching of the Council, while asserting that the same teaching does not take away from the unique gift of Jesus Christ and the absolute need of the Church to proclaim that gift.

To be sure that his message is not dulled, the document continues:

In the light of the economy of salvation, the Church sees no conflict between proclaiming Christ and engaging in interreligious dialogue. Instead, she feels the need to link the two in the context of her mission *ad gentes*.¹⁸

For the Church to remain silent about the gospel, even in the context of interreligious dialogue, would be for the Church to hide her greatest gift from non-Christians. John Paul II explained that:

All forms of missionary activity are marked by an awareness that one is furthering human freedom by proclaiming Jesus Christ. The Church must be faithful to Christ, whose Body she is, and whose mission she continues.¹⁹

Thus, if we as Christians are to seek the greatest good for all people, then we must desire their fullest freedom and Christ is the one path to perfect freedom.

In an effort to assert the importance of opening a path to the freedom of Jesus Christ to all non-believers, John Paul II explained that:

Dialogue should be conducted and implemented with the conviction that *the Church is the ordinary means of salvation* and that *she alone* possesses the fullness of the means of salvation.²⁰

¹⁸ Miller, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 541.

¹⁹ Miller, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 527.

²⁰ Miller, *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, 541.

This strong statement clearly denies the possibility of any softening of the Catholic Christian message by missionaries or anyone involved in interreligious dialogue. The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples took up this same line of thought five months after *Redemptoris missio* and jointly published the document *Dialogue and Proclamation*. This document firmly states that dialogue:

remains oriented towards proclamation in so far as the dynamic process of the Church's evangelizing mission reaches in it its climax and its fullness.²¹

Therefore, there can be no question about the intent of *Nostra aetate*. Indeed the Council fathers wisely opened the possibility of greater dialogue with other religions. Patriarch Maximos IV Saygh offered insight into the manner in which the Christian message could be shared with the Muslim world. Paul VI and John Paul II then followed with clear statements supporting dialogue with other religions while cautioning that the Christian message, and the mission of sharing the same gospel, cannot be diminished in any way. Rather, dialogue should, and must lead to a genuine proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

FRANCIS AND THE SULTAN

This leads us to consider the manner in which St. Francis of Assisi presented the gospel to the Sultan Malek al-Kamil. In many sources we find that Francis had a desire to preach the gospel to the Muslims both to share the good news and in hopes of gaining the grace of martyrdom.²² In his *First Life of St. Francis*, Thomas of Celano wrote:

²¹ Hoeberichts, *Francis and Islam*, 158.

²² To give an exhaustive list of the sources is beyond the scope of this paper. We will look at what some of the sources have to say about the matter.

In the sixth year of his (Francis's) conversion, burning with the desire for holy martyrdom, he wished to take a ship to the region of Syria to preach the Christian faith and repentance to the Saracens and other unbelievers.²³

Francis's plans were to yield no fruit due to a shipwreck. Bonaventure then tells us in *The Major Legend of Saint Francis* that:

because the fruit of martyrdom had attracted his heart to such an extent, he desired a precious death for the sake of Christ more intensely than all the merits of the virtues. So he took the road to Morocco to preach the Gospel of Christ to the Miramamolins and his people, hoping to attain in this way the palm of martyrdom he so strongly desired.²⁴

Once again his plans came to no fruition as Francis became too sick to continue with the journey and had to return home.

Finally, Bonaventure tells us:

In the thirteenth year of his conversion, he (Francis) journeyed to the region of Syria, constantly exposing himself to many dangers in order to reach the presence of the Sultan of Babylon.²⁵

Bonaventure goes on to place the trip into its historical context, "at that time there was a fierce war between the

²³ Regis J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and William Short, eds., *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vols. 1-3 (New York: New City Press, 1999-2001); this citation taken from vol. 1, 229. All further references to the sources will take the form *FAED* followed by volume number and page.

²⁴ *FAED* 2, 601.

²⁵ *FAED* 2, 602.

Christians and the Saracens." The fierce war of which Bonaventure speaks was the Fifth Crusade.

The reason for the crusades is a much-debated issue among historians even today. Pope Urban II called the First Crusade in 1095 at a meeting in the French town of Clermont. In his sermon calling for the crusade Urban explained:

From the confines of Jerusalem and from the city of Constantinople a grievous report has gone forth and has repeatedly been brought to our ears; namely, that a race from the kingdom of the Persians, an accursed race, a race wholly alienated from God, 'a generation that set not their heart aright and whose spirit was not steadfast with God,' violently invaded the lands of those Christians and has depopulated them by pillage and fire. They have led away a part of the captives into their own country, and a part they have killed by cruel tortures. They have either destroyed the churches of God or appropriated them for the rites of their own religion. They destroy the altars, after having defiled them with their uncleanness.... The kingdom of the Greeks is now dismembered by them and has been deprived of territory so vast in extent that it could be traversed in two months' time.²⁶

Here we see that he was asking the faithful European Christians to take up arms to help free Jerusalem and to aid the "Greek" kingdom so that Christianity could be safe in the Holy Land. It is obvious from this part of the sermon that the enemy was imagined to be strong and dangerous to the Christian world. After four crusades the danger had not been lifted, and much of the Holy Land was still under the control of Islamic rulers.

In an attempt to regain the Holy Land for Christianity Innocent III called the fifth crusade in the encyclical *Quia*

maior.²⁷ Wanting this crusade to enjoy a success not known from the fourth crusade Innocent added all of the strength he could muster to support the cause. Unlike previous crusades that were run by civil rulers Innocent "decided that he, himself, would direct the Fifth Crusade, putting all the energies of the papacy and Christendom behind the effort."²⁸ Among other incentives, all who joined in the crusade were guaranteed eternal salvation through the full forgiveness of their sins. Sins could also be forgiven for those who helped to fund the effort. Further, Innocent reminded the faithful of their duty to help protect their fellow Christians who were suffering at the hands of the Muslims.²⁹ It was this call that Francis answered, not as a knight, but as a missionary. In this we see that Francis did not go to the eastern Mediterranean to act as a crusader, rather he went with the crusaders looking to share the image of universal fraternity with all he met.

When Francis arrived on the scene with his brothers, the crusader armies did not know what to make of him. Jacques de Vitry was a cardinal who traveled along with the crusaders. He had been one of the chief preachers on behalf of the fifth crusade.³⁰ In his account of the arrival of Francis de Vitry wrote:

The head of these brothers, who also founded the Order, came into our camp. He was so inflamed with zeal for the faith that he did not fear to cross the lines to the army of our enemy. For several days he preached the Word of God to the Saracens and made a little progress. The Sultan, the ruler of Egypt, privately asked him to pray to the Lord for him, so that he might be

²⁷ Kathleen A. Warren, *Daring to Cross the Threshold: Francis of Assisi Encounters Sultan Malek al-Kamil* (Rochester, MN: Sisters of St. Francis, 2003), 22.

²⁸ Warren, *Daring to Cross the Threshold*, 22.

²⁹ Warren, *Daring to Cross the Threshold*, 23.

³⁰ Hoeberichts, *Francis and Islam*, 32.

²⁶ Urban II, Speech at Clermont 1095, Robert the Monk Version in *Medieval Source Book*, (<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/urban2a.html>), 3/16/07.

inspired by God to adhere to that religion which most pleased God.³¹

We also find an eyewitness account in the *Chronicle of Ernoul*. The writer is reported to have been the shield bearer of one of the great feudal lords who was fighting in the crusade. He wrote:

Now I am going to tell you about two clerics who were among the host at Damietta. They went before the Cardinal (de Vitry), saying that they wished to go preach to the Sultan, but that they did not want to do this without his leave.³²

Thus, Francis proved himself to be both a courageous man and a friar who was totally obedient to the authority of the church.

Before he was able to speak with the Sultan, Francis had to cross the battle lines. This in itself could have cost him his life. In his *Historia Occidentalis* de Vitry tells us that Francis was quickly captured by the Saracens and,

when the Saracens captured him on the road, he said: 'I am a Christian. Take me to your master.' They dragged him before the Sultan.³³

Celano explained that

Although he was ill-treated by many with a hostile spirit and a harsh attitude, he was received very graciously by the Sultan. The Sultan honored him as much as he could, offering him many gifts, trying to turn his mind to worldly riches.³⁴

³¹ FAED 1, 581.

³² FAED 1, 605.

³³ FAED 1, 584.

³⁴ FAED 1, 231.

Francis, being a good mendicant, turned down the offerings of gifts and requested the honor of preaching about Jesus Christ. The Sultan perceived in Francis a man of great courage and faith, and because of this he invited him to speak.³⁵

St. Francis never left a written account of what happened when he spoke with the Sultan, so we must rely on the traditions that grew up around his experience. In *The Deeds of Blessed Francis and His Companions*, a later writer explains that Francis taught the Sultan under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.³⁶ It seems that during his preaching some of the Sultan's co-religionists grew angry with the gospel message that Francis was sharing. To convince all present the humble saint proposed a test. Bonaventure tells us that Francis said to the Sultan:

If you wish to be converted to Christ along with your people, I will most gladly stay with you for love of him. But if you hesitate to abandon the law of Mohammed for the faith of Christ, then command that an enormous fire be lit and I will walk into the fire along with your priests so that you will recognize which faith deserves to be held as the holier and more certain.³⁷

Then the Sultan, knowing his own clerics, explained to Francis that no one else would be willing to walk into the fire with him. Francis was still willing to walk into the fire alone to prove the truth of Christ, but the Sultan asked him not to do so. Duly silenced, the Muslim religious leaders allowed Francis to speak with the Sultan.³⁸ We are told that:

From that moment the Sultan gladly listened to him, and asked that he come to him frequently. Moreover, the Sultan liberally allowed Saint Francis and his companions to preach freely anywhere they wished.

³⁵ FAED 3, 603.

³⁶ FAED 3, 490.

³⁷ FAED 3, 603.

³⁸ FAED 3, 603.

He then gave them a particular sign: seeing it, no one would harm them.³⁹

The same legend goes on to report that after Francis left Syria some of his brothers stayed on to preach among the Muslims.⁴⁰ For almost eight hundred years the brothers have continued to live and preach in the Muslim world. Finally this account says that on his deathbed the Sultan converted. The chronicler wrote, "From these brothers the Sultan received instruction in the faith and holy baptism."⁴¹

According to these accounts, Francis did influence the Sultan. The simple fact that the friars were allowed to remain in the lands ruled by the Sultan up to today attest to the fact that St. Francis and his brothers must have left a favorable impression with the Muslim leader. Indeed his positive influence is a sign that Francis did prefigure the instruction found in *Nostra aetate* over seven hundred years before its publication. First, he sought the obedience of the church before engaging in his mission, and then he approached the Sultan with respect and in Christian humility. Kathleen Warren points out that:

What Francis discovered in going to the Saracens, in humility and submission, was that these people were not ravenous wolves, but rather people with whom peace could be lived.⁴²

Francis's approach was not to attack Islam rather it was to preach the fullness of truth found in Christianity, and especially the salvation that is the gift of Jesus Christ. His gentle demeanor and genuine adherence to Christian values, lived out in his vows, won the saint the opportunity to pro-

³⁹ FAED 3, 490.

⁴⁰ FAED 3, 491.

⁴¹ FAED 3, 492. There are no sources outside a few of the legends that report this conversion and baptism. Some of the sources state that the Sultan would like to have converted but that he feared the response of his co-religionists.

⁴² Warren, *Daring to Cross the Threshold*, 72.

vide an open door to Christ. The decision to enter was then left to those who heard him preach.⁴³

We also find, in looking at several of his writings, that Francis's experience with the Sultan influenced the faithful mendicant. The Muslim respect for the name of God is echoed in Francis's *Letters to the Clergy* and in his *Letter to the Custodes* in which Francis calls the superiors of his order and all members of the clergy, in and out of the order, to hold great reverence for the Body and Blood of Jesus and for "His most holy names and written words."⁴⁴ Further, "They are also to preach the praise of God to all nations, all people throughout the world at every hour and whenever bells are rung."⁴⁵ This hearkens to the preaching that accompanies the call of the *muezzin*.⁴⁶ This is echoed again in *The Letter to the Rulers* where, "Francis speaks of a herald who would call the people to prayer."⁴⁷

In reading the *Regula non bullata* we find a reflection of Francis's respect for the Sultan in the manner in which he instructs his brothers to live among the Saracens and other non-believers.⁴⁸ We also see in this document an image of how to live a Christian life among non-believers that was very much reflected in *Nostra aetate* and in the words of Maximos Saygh, Paul VI, and John Paul II. Chapter XVI states:

⁴³ Here we may question whether the hagiographers were correct in stating that Francis sought martyrdom. Such a *topos* may have been used as a hagiographic tool for presenting traditional holiness in the face of "non-believers." We may assume that had a Christian monk from the camp of a crusading army truly sought martyrdom, he would have been able to find it. His intention, then, must have been somewhat different.

⁴⁴ Warren, *Daring to Cross the Threshold*, 81.

⁴⁵ Warren, *Daring to Cross the Threshold*, 81-82.

⁴⁶ The *muezzin* calls the Muslim faithful to prayer five times a day. Mohammed decided to use the human voice for this purpose rather than following the Christian tradition of using bells or the Jewish tradition of blowing the shofar.

⁴⁷ Warren, *Daring to Cross the Threshold*, 83.

⁴⁸ *Regula non bullata* (ca. 1221) was the first Rule for the Order of Friars Minor. It received oral approval from Innocent III, but due to its lack of canonical substance it had to be revised in the form of the *Regula bullata* (ca. 1223) by which the Friars Minor live today.

As for the brothers who go, they can live spiritually among the Saracens and nonbelievers in two ways. One way is not to engage in arguments or disputes but to be subject to *every human creature for God's sake* (1 Pet 2:13) and to acknowledge that they are Christians. The other way is to announce the Word of God, when they see that it pleases the Lord, in order that [unbelievers] may believe in almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Creator of all, the Son, the Redeemer and Savior, and be baptized and become Christians because *no one can enter the kingdom of God without being reborn of water and the Holy Spirit*. (Jn 3:5).

They can say to them and the others these and other things which please God, because the Lord says in the Gospel: *Whoever acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father* (Mt 10:32).⁴⁹

The chapter continues, but this is sufficient to see how Francis accepts that sometimes it is better to give a silent witness to spread the faith, while always professing a Christian identity. In this way he demonstrates the message of Maximus Saygh. We also see that he finds it often necessary to verbally preach Jesus Christ and baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity. In this he prefigures the admonitions of Paul VI and John Paul II.

To see in what way Francis images the thought of *Nostra aetate* we must look at the overriding themes of humility and respect. Kyle Haden explains that:

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.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ FAED 1, 74.

⁵⁰ Kyle E. Haden, "Suffering From a Franciscan Perspective," *The Cord* 57, no. 1(2007): 38.

While recognizing that God's movement and presence may have been in the Sultan, Francis also shared the gospel message with anyone who would listen, including the Sultan. He did not accept that some glimmer of the divine presence was enough, rather he found in that glimmer an invitation to shine the true light of Christ into an open heart.⁵¹

Nowhere in the Gospels can one find Jesus saying that spreading the good news will be easy. Nonetheless, he did instruct his disciples:

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you (Mt 28:19-20).⁵²

In fulfilling this mission, the Church is faced with the reality of other religions with a wide variety of beliefs. In an effort to face this reality she also recognizes that there are many different ways to share the gospel message. We have seen that, according to the Council, sometimes the best way to share the good news of our Catholic faith is through dialogue with other religions that must then lead to proclaiming the gospel.

Almost eight hundred years ago St. Francis of Assisi embodied this reality. In meeting with the Sultan Malek al-Kamil, Francis did not attack with weapons as many of his fellow Christians did. He did not insult the Muslim leader or his religion. The gentle saint humbly accepted abuse and then respectfully and boldly proclaimed the message of Jesus. That he was effective is witnessed to by the presence of Franciscans who live in relative peace in the Muslim world to

⁵¹ For a further look at the relationship between Francis and the Sultan, and Francis's desire for the salvation of the Sultan, refer to Michael Cusato, "Of Snakes and Angels: The Mystical Experience Behind the Stigmatization Narrative," in *The Stigmata of Francis of Assisi* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2006), 29-74.

⁵² *New American Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1987), Mt. 28:19-20.

this day. We have also seen that Francis was open to recognizing the working of the Holy Spirit in others. He was open to being affected by the respect for the name of God and the very public call to prayer that are common among the Muslim faithful. In St. Francis of Assisi we find a model of what it means to put the truth of Jesus Christ at the disposal of souls who have not yet received the light of Christ. His courageous and humble mission to the Sultan stands as a true witness to the full missionary call of the Church today.



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FRANCISCAN TRINITARIANISM: A CHARISM LIVED IN AND FOR THE WORLD¹

MICHAEL F. CUSATO, O.F.M.

It is a disconcerting but well established fact that “the friar” – that medieval ancestor of the nineteenth-century founders of this University – was often held in fairly low esteem during the Later Middle Ages, if not by the people in general, then certainly by a number of literary and ecclesiastical elites, most especially – but not exclusively – in a land called England. Indeed, what came to be known as the genre of antifraternal literature, while it had its literary and polemical origins in the Mendicant-Secular controversies at the University of Paris in the mid-thirteenth century during the famous debates between William of St. Amour and Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, had by the next century burgeoned into a veritable cottage industry of tracts, satires and unflattering screeds against “the friars” penned by such distinguished English authors as John Wyclif, William Langland (author of *Piers Plowman*), John Gower and, most notably, Geoffrey Chaucer in his *Canterbury Tales*.² How distastefully memorable is the infamous caricature of the friar in the Summoner’s Tale, where a certain Friar John is depicted as grasping, always angling for profit and advantage, overly-sated with food and drink and yet ever insatiable in the pursuit of his heart’s – or his stomach’s – desires. By the end of the tale, he

¹ Given as a presentation in honor of Dr. Ivor Roberts, President, Trinity College, Oxford at St. Bonaventure University, April 2, 2008.

² The classic work on this literature is: Penn R. Szittya, *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).

receives – according to Chaucer at least – his just desserts.³ (Those familiar with the tale will understand why I omit the unsavory details of his reward. Suffice it to say that the handful of alms he received was not exactly what he was expecting). Other authors, more charitably perhaps, lampooned the friars as well-intentioned if somewhat simple-minded clods and dullards: affable bumpkins with little of substance to offer the faithful except a cheerful laugh, jovial camaraderie and the promise of prayers on the morrow. This is, of course, the famous Friar Tuck of Robin Hood lore. Thus: a distinctly unserious lot, these Franciscans, the Friar Johns and Tucks of this world: a definite contrast to their more sagacious and learned contemporaries – the Dominicans – to say nothing of their sixteenth-century rivals in ministry – the Jesuits.

These are, of course, only caricatures. But every caricature has within it a certain kernel of truth. And, it is true that by the late-fourteenth century, religious observance among the Franciscans (and many *other* orders as well) had fallen to rather embarrassingly low levels. And yet, this is not the whole story. Beyond these infamous caricatures, there is another story to tell: one not as well-known as these literary depictions but so much more important for its impact upon history and culture. For there was within this often-maligned and pilloried Franciscan Order, at the very same time, not only a fervent nucleus of men who continued to strive for authenticity of life and fidelity to the ideals of their founder;⁴ but there was also a group of extraordinary thinkers and writers who, particularly within university environments, en-

³ On the Summoner's Tale, in addition to the above-mentioned work of Szittyá (231-46), see: Arnold Williams, "Chaucer and the Friars," *Speculum* 28 (1953): 499-513; John V. Fleming, "The Antifraternalism of the Summoner's Tale," in *Journal of English and German Philology* 65 (1966): 688-700; and G. Geltner, "Faux Semblants: Antifraternalism Reconsidered in Jean de Meun and Chaucer," in *Studies in Philology* 101 (2004): 357-80.

⁴ Cf. David Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century After Saint Francis* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001); and, for the Observant Reform Movement of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Duncan Nimmo, *Reform and Division in the Franciscan Order (1226-1538)* (Rome: Capuchin Historical Institute, 1987).

gaged in astonishingly profound levels of discourse among themselves and with their university colleagues. These were men who produced some of the most trenchant theological, philosophical and moral treatises of their day, addressing the most urgent questions of human life with their unique ability to integrate the deeply human and the indelibly divine within the human in a narrative prose that in some cases bordered on the lyrically poetic. This legacy of the Franciscan movement is what we call today the Franciscan intellectual tradition and it boasts within it luminaries not only the likes of such friars as the great transplanted Italian in Paris, Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, but also and especially a stunning gallery of Englishmen like Alexander of Hales, Adam Marsh, Thomas of York, Roger Bacon, Richard Rufus, John Pecham, John Duns Scotus, Adam Wodeham, Walter Chatton and William of Ockham.⁵ And most of this literary achievement was accomplished by the year 1349, the year of Ockham's death. This is the achievement of what has been called the Franciscan School. And this particular school of thought, when combined with its vernacular predecessor (the writings and charism of Francis and Clare of Assisi),⁶ constitutes the medieval foundations for a vital contemporary vision of life: a lost or obscured humanistic perspective important for our own times.

For the Franciscan intellectual tradition stands as a kind of alternate or alternative theological and philosophical manner of perceiving the human person, the world around us and God's relationship to both. I say alternate manner since it is a decidedly different read on reality from the one proposed, for example, in the thomist and neo-thomist ap-

⁵ Some of these figures have been well-served during the last century by definitive monographs on their work. For a general overview of the Franciscan intellectual tradition as it was developed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, see: *A History of Franciscan Theology*, ed. Kenan B. Osborne (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2007 [1994]).

⁶ Cf. Dominic Monti, "Francis as Vernacular Theologian: A Link to the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition?" in *The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition*, Washington Theological Union Symposium Papers 2001 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2002), 21-42.

proaches which have so predominated the Catholic Church since the Council of Trent in the late sixteenth century and which are still all-too-prevalent and operative today.⁷

What might this tradition convey to the modern onlooker as a source of hope in our beleaguered time? The Franciscan tradition takes as its starting point, its unassailable given, the absolute sacrality – the sacredness – of the human person: namely, that every creature created by God – and most pre-eminently the human person – has been endowed with an inviolable sacred character which is the ground of the unique and unimpeachable dignity of each and every one of us.⁸ This seminal insight is not unique in itself. Rather, it is how this insight came to be and how it *then* came to be integrated within a whole system of theological reflection that is the hallmark of the Franciscan intellectual tradition. Let's explore that a little this evening.

Where does this unique orientation come from? The founding insight of this tradition – as some of my colleagues here know well – is rooted in the famous encounter of its founder, Francis of Assisi, with a group of lepers outside the city of Assisi one day in the Spring of 1205. That pivotal encounter – in which Francis came face-to-face, literally, with suffering human beings, the poor and voiceless of this world – shattered the construct of values and assumptions that he had been brought up with in Assisi in which the value of a person's life was predicated on wealth or power or class or gender – or any combination thereof – rather than on the simple fact of having been created and fashioned by the lov-

⁷ For an overview of the distinctive traits of the Franciscan intellectual tradition, see: Kenan B. Osborne, *The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition: Tracing its Origins and Identifying its Central Components*, The Franciscan Heritage Series 1 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2003), and also the introductory comments to the volume by the General Editor of the series, Joseph P. Chinnici, v-xiii.

⁸ For a reflection on this fundamental insight of Francis, see, for example, Michael F. Cusato, "Hermitage or Marketplace: The Search for an Authentic Franciscan Locus in the World," in *True Followers of Justice: Identity, Insertion and Itinerancy among the Early Franciscans*, Spirit and Life 10 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2001), 1-30, esp. 10-13.

ing hand of God.⁹ That, in itself, by that one simple fact, becomes the ground of a distinctive Franciscan anthropology;¹⁰ it also becomes the foundation for a distinctive Franciscan Christology.¹¹ And this fact of our sacred fashioning also becomes the basis for a distinctive Franciscan metaphysics for, as Bonaventure would say it: we have all come from God and during the course of our lives, like a circle bending back upon itself, we are all being drawn back into God; pulled towards God, as it were, by a love that desires to be in full union with us. But that journey finds its proper goal, direction and meaning only if it passes through the cross of Christ; or, as we might say today more broadly, only as it travels the same path of values as exemplified – personified – in the life of Jesus of Nazareth.¹²

In other words, as a result of this encounter among the lepers of Assisi, Francis came to discover that all men and women, because of this common and shared primordial identity, are inextricably connected, related to each other, as *fratres et sorores*, brothers and sisters, one to another, born of one and the same God.

This is Francis's insight into the sacred and universal fraternity of all creatures. This is the vision which he and his first group of friars shared in Assisi and put down in writing in the year 1209 in the text known as the Early Rule of the Friars Minor. Francis's more famous Cantic of the Creatures written at the very end of his life is but the logical if breathtaking extension of that same foundational vision now reaching out and mystically embracing the whole cosmos.

⁹ In addition to the aforementioned article (note 8), see also: Michael F. Cusato, "The Renunciation of Power as a Foundational Theme in Early Franciscan History," in *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.

¹⁰ Dawn M. Nothwehr, *The Franciscan View of the Person: Some Central Elements*, The Franciscan Heritage Series 3 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2005).

¹¹ Michael Blastic, O.F.M. is currently preparing a volume on Franciscan Christology for the Franciscan Heritage Series.

¹² See the classic study on this imagery in: Zachary Hayes, *The Hidden Center: Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St. Bonaventure* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2000 [1981]).

As such, the human person and all those around him or her constitute a sacred fraternity. And fraternity implies both relationality and responsibility. We are, in other words, inescapably, in relationship with one another. And everything that endangers or threatens, ruptures or destroys the bonds that bind us inextricably together by our very nature, is what Francis (and the Franciscan tradition after him) call "sin."¹³ As a result: we, each one of us, all of us, by virtue of our creaturehood, have the God-given mandate to protect, foster and promote the welfare of this human fraternity of creatures, in whatever way we can, in whatever state of life we find ourselves. Another way of saying this is the following: Franciscan values always tend toward *praxis*: the Franciscan approach always privileges values-in-action and actions-on-behalf-of-others. Therefore, those who follow in the Franciscan way have something to say, for example, about ecology and the care of the earth; about matters of war, peace and diplomacy; about a just economics, a fair wage, dignified working conditions; about care of the sick, the elderly, the disadvantaged, the undesirables: the *minores* of our societies. When we are faithful to that tradition, to put it in contemporary jargon, we not only talk the talk but we walk the walk. It is a *praxis* of healed, healing and right relationships.

Now, even though the historical experience of the Poverello and his encounter among the lepers were rarely commented on directly by the great Franciscan writers of the next centuries in quite this way, nevertheless I am convinced that there must have been something within the Franciscan ethos itself – caught, carried on and conveyed in the very lives of the friars themselves – that was somehow intuited and grasped by our finest thinkers and which then served as the foundation for their theological and philosophical reflections. For these very same themes did come to be integrated into the more abstract intellectual edifices erected by the Franciscan Schoolmen of the High and Late Middle Ages. Indeed, one of the great emphases of the Franciscan tradi-

¹³ M. Cusato, "Hermitage or Marketplace," 11, 14-15; and M. F. Cusato, "To Do Penance / *Facere penitentiam*," *The Cord* 57 (2007): 3-24.

tion – as distinct, say, from the Dominican tradition – is the absolute importance of the will in human life: the seat of human judgment where love freely given to us by God becomes the primary motivator of our freely-chosen actions – our acts of love – in the world. We not only know the good but desire and strive to do it in concrete actions. And the lack or impairment of the will results in human sin and the scarring of creaturely relationships.¹⁴

Perhaps the most exalted vision of this insight comes in the form of what is probably the most erudite form of theological and philosophical commentary: reflections on the mystery of the Holy Trinity. The Franciscans were not strangers to such rarefied reflections. Indeed, the contribution of St. Bonaventure on this matter stands as one of the most profound and mature reflections on the Trinity ever written.¹⁵ And yet, at root this mystery of the Trinity is nothing less than the mystery of relationship: the lavish and unconditional love of the Father for the Son; the return and exceeding of that love by the Son to the Father; and the fruit of their mutual and selfless loving which is the love poured outward of the Spirit. Love, in other words, always begets a third: a new creation of some sort that is distinct from and yet intimately related to the loving relationship of the two.

In less metaphysical terms, the fruit of this love on one level – the most basic level – is creation of community: the creation of right fraternal relationships around us. On another more intentional and faith-engendered level, it is the decision to form *ecclesia*: to create Church. And on an even

¹⁴ The role of the will features most prominently, of course, in the philosophical system of John Duns Scotus. On this thematic, see: Mary Beth Ingham, *Scotus for Dunces: An Introduction to the Subtle Doctor* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2003), 83-99 and, more extensively, M.B. Ingham, *The Harmony of Goodness: Mutuality and Moral Living according to John Duns Scotus* (Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 1996).

¹⁵ *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Holy Trinity*, ed. and trans. Zachary Hayes, Works of Saint Bonaventure 3 (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1979). See Maria Calisi's forthcoming volume in the Franciscan Heritage Series on Bonaventure's understanding of the Trinity.

wider level yet, it is the building of the Kingdom of God that is nothing more and nothing less than the recreation of harmonious relationships between all people who are, again, brothers and sisters of each other by virtue of our common creaturehood. This is lived Trinitarianism; this is Franciscan Trinitarianism – not abstract or abstruse concepts but love-in-praxis, fraternity-in-deed.

This is part of the insight and ethos that characterized the founders of this university. It is the tradition that is studied and taught at our Franciscan Institute of graduate studies. And it is the inspiration for reaching out in mutual respect to our colleagues overseas, most notably and most recently, at Trinity College Oxford.¹⁶ If the essence of human life is the creation of mutually respectful fraternal relationships, then this new relationship between St. Bonaventure University and Trinity College is but another Franciscan expression of Trinitarian love seeking the creation of a third: the good of our students and ultimately the creation of a love-infused, Spirit-charged world.

Hence, while acknowledging that there have indeed been – then and even now – various expressions of Friar Tuck and Friar John throughout Franciscan history, there is perhaps another figure in English literature that is even more evocative of the Franciscan tradition at its best and truest moments. Created by the greatest of all English writers, William Shakespeare, in his famous tale of Romeo and Juliet, that figure is Friar Lawrence. For all his foibles and frailties as a human being, Friar Lawrence was trying to bring together two warring families – the Montagues and Capulets – by bringing together two representatives of those families who happened to be deeply in love with each other. Though he might ultimately have failed in his good-faith efforts to bring union and harmony out of disunion and division, the tragedy is a poignant one which has never ceased to touch

¹⁶ Now in its twentieth year of operation, the international program of studies run by St. Bonaventure University at Oxford University will, beginning in the summer of 2008, be centered at Trinity College.

human hearts throughout the ages.¹⁷ For he attempted that most essential of all human tasks: to draw elements of the human family together in common relationship, discourse and industry for a better world. This is the essence of the Franciscan and Christian traditions: one which St. Bonaventure University hopes to be able to foster with Trinity College, Oxford.



Image of St. Bonaventure from the north wall of the Garret Theater in Devereux Hall on the campus of St. Bonaventure University. The Garret Theater was the original chapel of the university.

¹⁷ The reference is, of course, to William Shakespeare's timeless classic play, "Romeo and Juliet."

FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY: THE ASCETIC LIFE

BILLY ISENER, O.F.M.

"Blessed are you also, son," he said, "you have wisely given me a drink of healing medicine for my disquiet!" And he began to say jokingly to his body: "Cheer up Brother Body, and *forgive me*; for I will now gladly do as you please, and gladly hurry to relieve your complaints!"¹

INTRODUCTION

In 2006, I was received into the Order of Friars Minor as a novice. During this past year in formation, *The Medellin Documents*² roused much discussion. These documents, of the Extraordinary General Chapter of the Order of Friars Minor, called for a reassessment of "our Franciscan life in the light of the Gospel, the spirit of St. Francis, and the needs of the present day."³ The questions raised concern the wide variety of interpretations of the asceticism of St. Francis's spirituality.

¹ Regis J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, William J. Short, eds., *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, Vols. 1-3, (New York: New City Press, 1999-2001). This citation is taken from vol. 1, 383. Further citations of these sources will be noted as *FAED* followed by the volume number and page.

² *The Medellin Documents* were written in response to the Second Vatican Council's call for religious renewal.

³ Extraordinary General Chapter of the Order of Friars Minor, *The Medellin Documents*, 9.

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Some friars struggle to live extremely austere lives characterized by practices of extreme mortification, fasting and prayer. Others try to reconcile contemporary spirituality with traditional practices of the Franciscan movement. This sometimes results in losing some aspects of traditional Franciscan spirituality.⁴ Others believe there is no need to retain traditional practices because they are out of date. These variations in viewpoint have created division in the Franciscan fraternity at some point in Franciscan history – an example is the recent founding of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, a split from the Capuchin Franciscans.⁵

This paper will explore the theology of living a Franciscan spirituality through asceticism. The word *asceticism*, in this context, refers to "ascetical practices ... methods and programs designed to restrain the influence of sin and maximize union with God."⁶

We will first look at St. Francis's asceticism and attempt to identify the theology behind his spirituality. Then we will look at the systematic theology presented in the works of St. Bonaventure who articulated the tradition of Franciscan spirituality and asceticism. After examining Franciscan spiritual theology in relation to asceticism, we will conclude with some considerations of what asceticism means for Franciscans today based on this tradition.

⁴ Michael Downey, *Understanding Christian Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press: 1997), 25. For a shift from religious life as it was lived in the early 13th century, cf. David Flood, Thaddée Matura, *The Birth of a Movement: A Study of the First Rule of St. Francis* (Chicago, IL: Franciscan Herald Press, 1975), 3-21.

⁵ Lead by Benedict Groeschel, the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal base their lives on a more austere asceticism and Groeschel argues: "common life, frugality, identifiable uniform dress of a religious nature (a habit), and a common apostolic work shared by all members of the community are things one must look for. Otherwise, there is no hope of a community's revival." Groeschel, "First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life," June/July, 2007, Issue 174, 15; available from: <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rlh&AN=25132659&site=ehost-live>; accessed November 9, 2007.

⁶ Joseph Komonchak, Mary A. Collins, Dermot A. Lane, eds., *The New Dictionary of Theology* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1987), 65.

1. ST. FRANCIS'S ASCETICISM

The austere and rigorous asceticism St. Francis practiced is well documented. St. Bonaventure gives many examples of Francis's extreme asceticism. Some of his practices included extreme mortification of the body; he would abstain from food to the point of starvation, expose his body to incurable diseases (leprosy), flagellate his body, and deny his body proper medical treatment.⁷ He even desired a martyr's death:

burning with desire for holy martyrdom, he wished to take a ship to the region of Syria to preach the Christian faith and repentance to the Saracens and other unbelievers⁸ (1C XX:55).

The Earlier and Later Rules of St. Francis reflect the brothers' asceticism. Both Rules give explicit instruction to the brothers concerning such matters as preaching, prayer, education, eating, begging, conduct and even transportation.⁹ When one reads these documents, it is hard not to notice the asceticism these brothers lived. In regard to the latter content, St. Francis's asceticism does pose challenges for modern theology. How could it not?

Does not St. Francis's extreme ascetical life imply a negative anthropology? St. Francis instructs his brothers:

And let us hate our body with its vices and sins, for by living carnally it wants to take from us the love of our Lord Jesus Christ and eternal life and cast itself with everyone into hell.¹⁰

⁷ Ewert Cousins, trans., *Bonaventure: The Soul's Journey Into God, The Tree of Life, The Life of St. Francis* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 222.

⁸ FAED 1, 229.

⁹ Cf. ER, FAED 1, 63-81; LR, FAED 1, 99-106; RH, FAED 1, 61-62; LtAnt, FAED 1, 107.

¹⁰ *Et odio habeamus corpus nostrum cum suis vitiis et peccatis, quia carnaliter vivendo vult nobis auferre amorem Domini nostri Iesu Christi et vitam aeternam et se ipsum cum omnibus perdere infernum;* translation by David Flood in "So What is a Franciscan?", 35. I use D. Flood's translation

St. Francis treated his own body miserably; he even asked members of his community to abuse him verbally.¹¹ Humanity does not even register more than a line in his *Canticle of the Creatures*. He proclaims creation's goodness and only mentions humanity once and it is in the context of unworthiness.¹² His life could not have portrayed a more negative anthropology. Yet, how could he see the goodness in creatures and not see it in humanity, since both are parts of God's creation? This is the paradox of St. Francis's spirituality and it needs to be reconciled before his theology can be understood.

The first problem occurs in the English translation of the Earlier Rule from its original Latin form. The Latin expression used in this verse does not translate easily into English. St. Francis uses metaphoric language to communicate Scripture passages. For example, to "hate our body with its vices and sins" is metaphoric language for living in the "flesh" found in Rom 8:4.¹³ He uses this metaphoric language to contrast two ways life can be lived: first, a life with God (life in the "Spirit") and the other according to humanity's ways (life in the "flesh").¹⁴ If understood literally, the text creates a controversy over St. Francis's view on humanity. If understood in the metaphorical sense, however, the interpretation of his negative anthropology is consequently altered.¹⁵

Second, St. Francis did not expect his brothers to practice the same extreme asceticism as he did – here we see the positive anthropology of St. Francis. St. Bonaventure records that St. Francis did encourage friars to live an austere life

of the text because of his observations that the FAED translation does not completely respect the intent of the content.

¹¹ Cf. 1C XIX: 53 in FAED 1, 228.

¹² Cf. CtC in FAED 1, 113-14.

¹³ Flood, "So What is a Franciscan?", 43. Biblical quotations are taken from *The Holy Bible*, New Revised Standard Version (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1989), 157. Subsequent scriptural quotations will be indicated by NRSV followed by the page.

¹⁴ "... so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Rom 8:4). NRSV, 157; Flood, "So What is a Franciscan?", 35-43.

¹⁵ Flood, "So What is a Franciscan?", 47.

but to do so with caution.¹⁶ In fact, he sternly warns about extreme asceticism that was not discerned with a certain level of theological understanding and self-knowledge.¹⁷ He commands St. Clare of Assisi to eat food when she takes her asceticism to a new level – she starves herself to the point of an unhealthy severity.¹⁸ In addition, as presented in the epigraph (the inspirational quote in this paper), St. Francis apologizes for the abuse that he administers to his body.¹⁹ He acknowledges, through the help of a brother, that his body has helped his soul achieve the peak of his spiritual journey back to God.²⁰ This, then, is the question: why did he practice an extreme asceticism, if, in fact, he did not condone the same asceticism for his brothers and St. Clare of Assisi? The answer is clarified in St. Francis's theology.

2. ST. FRANCIS THE THEOLOGIAN

A couple of points require theological attention. First, St. Francis's spirituality and theology are integrated – the division of the two disciplines happens later in history.²¹ Second, St. Francis did not have a systematized theology that was documented. His theology was based on his experience and was at best intuitive and "charismatic."²² In addition, Murray

¹⁶ There is a distinction between St. Bonaventure's account in *The Life of St. Francis*, which is a more positive account of asceticism than what is presented in the ER: XXII: 5-7. *FAED* 1, 79; Cousins, *Bonaventure*, 223. The reason why St. Bonaventure wrote a more positive account of St. Francis's asceticism could have been in reaction to the Franciscan zealots' extremism – many of whom followed the teachings of Joachim of Fiore – and "were committed to strict poverty, purity, simplicity and ascetic piety." Ilia Delio, *Simply Bonaventure* (New York: New City Press, 2001), 23.

¹⁷ Cousins, *Bonaventure*, 223.

¹⁸ Regis Armstrong, *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents* (Mahwah-New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 131.

¹⁹ 2C CLX in *FAED* 2, 383.

²⁰ *FAED* 2, 383.

²¹ Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Convergences: To the Source of Christian Mystery* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983), 33-35.

²² "The place assigned by the Triune-God to Jesus Christ in His work and consequently in the destiny of men, as Francis has conceived it perhaps by a pleasing intuition and one that is surely charismatic ..." Val-

Bodo argues, in "the *Testament* Francis records quite simply how Francis and the earthly brothers did in fact respond to God,"²³ unlike St. Bonaventure who systematically constructs a theology inspired by St. Francis's spirituality. St. Francis, however, is arguably a theologian whose message is seen in his experience and his writings.²⁴ Thomas of Celano speaks of an encounter with St. Francis and a Dominican, who was a "spiritual man and a Doctor of Sacred Theology."²⁵ The latter stated that St. Francis's "theology...is a soaring eagle..."²⁶ Thaddée Matura speaks of St. Francis's theology in this way:

While being known as one of the greatest figures of Christian sanctity, Francis is never considered a mystic, or a theologian. But, if these two words are understood in their original sense, as used in the patristic era (a mystic is one who discovers and spiritually experiences the mystery of God and his work; a theologian is one who contemplates and studies - beginning with God's word – the depths of visible and invisible reality), Francis is both. What appears in his writings, allows us to say that he proposes an authentic draft of a theology at the heart of which are the Trinity-God and humanity loved by him.²⁷

entin Breton, *Franciscan Spirituality: Synthesis, Antithesis* (Chicago, IL: Franciscan Herald Press, 1957), 12.

²³ Murray Bodo, *The Way of St. Francis: The Challenge of Franciscan Spirituality for Everyone* (New York: Image Books, 1985), 2; Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 41-42.

²⁴ Thaddée Matura, translation by Don MacDonald of a conference given in Avignon, France, July 2007, 3-4.

²⁵ 2C: 110 in *FAED* 2, 315.

²⁶ *FAED* 2, 315.

²⁷ "The place held in Francis' writings by the Word of God, as manifested by the large number of quotations from the Old and New Testaments, shows the generally theological dimension of Francis' writings. We can find, indeed, around 450 explicit quotations, 156 from the Old and 280 from the New Testament." Thaddée Matura, translation by Don MacDonald of a conference given in Avignon, France, July 2007, 4, 7.

That being said, two types of theology will be studied: that of St. Francis and that of St. Bonaventure – the latter inspired by the life of St. Francis. Both are archetypes for the Franciscan tradition regarding asceticism. If both these great spiritual leaders are archetypes for Franciscan spirituality, who should be studied first? It is clear that there is a difference between the spirituality of St. Francis and the spirituality of St. Bonaventure; it follows, then, that there are two ascetical practices: the ascetical life of St. Francis and the ascetical life of St. Bonaventure.²⁸ Therefore, to understand St. Bonaventure's theology, who is inspired by the spirituality of St. Francis, it is necessary to understand the theology of St. Francis first.

3. ST. FRANCIS'S THEOLOGY

First, although St. Francis's theology is commonly referred to as Christocentric, it is more correct to say that his theology is rooted in the relationship and love of the Trinity.²⁹ The majority of his works are inspired by the relationship of persons within the Trinity. He invokes the Most Holy Trinity repeatedly with primacy given to God the Father – in fact, he mentions God the Father over eighty times.³⁰ The conclusion is that Christ always expresses the love of the Father and leads to him as the source of creation.³¹

For St. Francis, the life of Jesus, the Son of God, is the complete expression of God the Father's divine plan for creation – the fullness of revelation fulfilled in the Word made Flesh. Jesus impacts Francis's spirituality in two major historical events: first, in the Incarnation where God chooses to be born in poverty, taking on the human condition, in order to save humanity; second, through the poverty of giving himself on the Cross, the mystery of God's love, the pas-

²⁸ Thaddée Matura, *Francis of Assisi: Writer and Spiritual Master* (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press: 2000), 3-6.

²⁹ Matura, *Francis of Assisi*, 12.

³⁰ Matura, *Francis of Assisi*, 29.

³¹ Matura, *Francis of Assisi*, 29.

sion, death, and resurrection of Christ.³² St. Francis knows that God freely gives his only Son even to death in order to restore humanity and creation to himself – Jesus raises the dignity of the human person and expresses the ultimate inexhaustible love of the Father for his creatures through his resurrection.³³

Next, St. Francis speaks of the importance of the Spirit who is the spiration of this self-diffusive love of the Father and the Son. The Spirit reveals the mystery of the Father and Son relationship through what St. Francis calls "operations."³⁴ Since the Spirit sees God the Father, the Spirit represents in some way the visibility of the invisible God, which the Spirit communicates to the people who choose to receive God's grace.³⁵ The Spirit illuminates and brings alive the intensity of this love expressed in the relationship of the Son and the Father which overflows to humanity; therefore, the Spirit expresses the vast love the Father and Son have for humanity.³⁶ Thus, it is the love perfected in relationship between the persons of the Trinity that influences St. Francis's spirituality.

The asceticism in the relationship of the persons in the Trinity is what motivates St. Francis's ascetical life. The asceticism (I use contemporary theology to explain this concept) that is based on the Trinity is fully expressed in the person of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Both, in total freedom, completely surrender, through the asceticism of obedience (for St. Francis, I dare say, poverty is included), especially seen in Jesus' life, to the Father, which "dictates the form of every Christian state of life"³⁷ – that is, a perfect love that is freely and exhaustively given. For the Christian, life relies on God's absoluteness. God's absoluteness "is so free that it

³² Matura, *Francis of Assisi*, 31.

³³ Matura, *Francis of Assisi*, 32.

³⁴ Matura, *Francis of Assisi*, 36.

³⁵ Matura, *Francis of Assisi*, 37-39.

³⁶ Matura, *Francis of Assisi*, 37.

³⁷ Dave Norman, *The Christian State of Life of The Fulfillment of the Commandment to Love through the State of the Cross in Theology of Hans Urs Von Balthasar*, Ph.D. Diss., University of Fribourg, 1995, 30, 31, 44.

does not count the cost in giving itself away."³⁸ This is something St. Francis understood and practiced through poverty and obedience; we see this in his actions as he tries to give back God's love – in full form including his body – that he has received.

Asceticism, then, provides a way in which St. Francis can express the relationship he develops with God by opposing the weakness of the flesh.³⁹ To see the flesh as weak is not, for St. Francis, a negative anthropology.⁴⁰ The weakness of the flesh is the human desire to appropriate the human self, in vainglory, over and against God.⁴¹ Therefore, for St. Francis, the human person's response should be to give back this love to God in every way possible.⁴² For him, the major way the brothers were to give back God's love was through communal living structured and guided by a disciplined rule based on the vow of living the Gospel life through the evangelical virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience. These evangelical virtues, based on love, help to foster other practices such as charity, communal living externally (in the world), and prayer.⁴³ St. Francis's more rigorous ascetical practices were for discipline – to keep his whole being concentrated on God. His love for God motivated him to imitate the person of Christ in every way – including Christ's wounded nature.⁴⁴ St. Fran-

³⁸ Norman, *The Christian State of Life*, 31.

³⁹ Adm V-X in *FAED* 1, 131-32; ER XXIII: 8 in *FAED* 1, 84; LtOrd: Prayer in *FAED* 1, 120-21; 2LtF: 63-84 in *FAED* 1, 50-51.

⁴⁰ "These values, which constitute the human being and for which one must ceaselessly be thankful, are elementary and concrete, one could even say, down to earth realities. It is the fact that our body is made according to the image of the Son which gives value to body and alters the image of asceticism, the scorn of the body, which often attributed to Francis: our soul – made into God's likeness and drawn to Him – is our life." Matura, *Francis of Assisi*, 45.

⁴¹ Matura, *Francis of Assisi*, 49; Adm XII: 1: "A servant of God can be known to have the Spirit of the Lord in this way: if, when the Lord performs some good through him, his flesh does not therefore exalt itself..." in *FAED* 1, 133; 1Frg: 47-49: "Let all brothers, therefore, beware of all pride and vainglory." *FAED* 1, 90.

⁴² Matura, *Francis of Assisi*, 50; Adm III, IV in *FAED* 1, 130; PrOF: 5 in *FAED* 1, 158-59.

⁴³ Matura, *Francis of Assisi*, 29, 51-65.

⁴⁴ Matura, *Francis of Assisi*, 67; VL 215-240 in *FAED* 1, 436.

cis wanted to experience, in every way possible, God's love and to enter more deeply into relationship with the Triune God.⁴⁵ Based on the experiential theology of St. Francis, the basis for a systematized theology is set in place – as articulated in the works of St. Bonaventure.

4. ST. BONAVENTURE'S THEOLOGY:

A HERMENEUTIC APPROACH TO ST. FRANCIS'S ASCETICISM

To comprehend any of St. Bonaventure's work in theology, there are four motivations behind his work that should be understood. First, it is influenced by the life of St. Francis.⁴⁶ It is St. Francis's experience and writings that illuminate St. Bonaventure's approach to theology – the relationships between the persons of the Trinity. Second, St. Bonaventure's works on the *Life of St. Francis* specifically try to reconcile a split that was happening between certain factions within the Order during his time – these factions fought over the way in which ascetic disciplines were applied.⁴⁷ Third, St. Bonaventure's works are extremely scripture orientated.⁴⁸ Fourth, the Dionysian and Augustinian traditions and the works of Alexander of Hales influenced St. Bonaventure's theology – his theology is allegorical and positive.⁴⁹

The ultimate source of St. Bonaventure's theology is the relationship between the persons in the Trinity.⁵⁰ Therefore, as Delio argues:

⁴⁵ LJS III: 17-18 in *FAED* 1, 380.

⁴⁶ Zachary Hayes, *Bonaventure: Mystical Writings* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999), 21.

⁴⁷ "During the years of his generalate he had to deal with a variety of problems in the growing Order. In his policies he [Bonaventure] favored a moderate position, attempting to be faithful to the ideals of Francis while developing the Order along institutional lines." Cousins, *Bonaventure*, 6-8.

⁴⁸ Bonaventure, *The Breviloquium*, Introduction, Translation and Notes by Dominic V. Monti, WSB IX (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2005), 40-48.

⁴⁹ Hayes, *Bonaventure*, 24; Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 29.

⁵⁰ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 39.

[St. Bonaventure's] theology is rooted in a divine ground that is at once unity and diversity, a community of persons who are mutually intimate, having distinct personality and yet so ultimately compatible that they breathe forth life with the same breath.⁵¹

God does not belong to "God alone," because no member of the Trinity appropriates himself over the other – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit become an expression, a self communication of a personal love that is given back to one another in a completely equal, unified and objectified way.⁵² The love between the members of the Trinity is perfect in every way; therefore, any person of the Trinity cannot appropriate love – this love is completely and freely given to each person of the Trinity, which is so abundant that God shares it with humanity; this is the principle that characterizes Franciscan poverty, spirituality and asceticism.

God the Father, the source of all, is given primacy in the mystery of the Trinity because the Father is the first principle.⁵³ Therefore, God the Father cannot be hidden from creation for it is through creation and as heard in God's Word that God the Father is revealed. What is revealed is God the Father's perfection in goodness and love – since creation is good and goodness is rooted in love.⁵⁴

God the Father who is fully perfected, invisible and reigns in eternal glory, comes face to face with humanity through Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh – who through the Incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection, fully expresses and manifests God's desire for relationship with creation. For St. Bonaventure, Jesus, the Word made flesh, "expresses the mystery of the Father precisely as goodness and love, as the fecund source of all that can be."⁵⁵ This creative, dynamic love, which any disciple of Christ is to express, is fully realized and expressed in the "activity of the Holy Spirit," who

⁵¹ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 39.

⁵² Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 42-43.

⁵³ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 44.

⁵⁴ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 44.

⁵⁵ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 47.

mirrors and freely gives God's love as a gift – if God is not free to give love, God is not perfect.⁵⁶ The gift of the Spirit helps humanity to be united with the love of the Father and the Son.

Since God has made an outreach to creation, one can deduce God that is "relational, ecstatic, fecund, alive as passionate love."⁵⁷ This outreach to creation reveals that God's life within creation is alive and active and that creation has a certain identity and role to play when it recognizes and accepts the gift of life given by the love of the Trinity.⁵⁸ Through the dynamic relationship of the Trinity as understood by St. Francis one can observe how St. Bonaventure's theology was trinitarian. For St. Francis, the relationship of the Triune God exemplifies the relationship and unity creation is to have – the communion of creation with God the creator. Therefore, through contemplation, as exemplified by St. Francis's life, humanity can come to know God as the source of all because God, like an artist, uses creation to express God's self and love (exemplarism).⁵⁹

Creation reflects the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Trinity.⁶⁰ St. Bonaventure articulates this exemplarism by stating that there are three levels of coming to know God through God's expression in creation. The first is called a trace (vestige); the second is through an image (the human person) and the third is the similitude (likeness) in which those whom grace has transformed "bear a likeness of God."⁶¹ In this theophany there is a created order that is a mirror of God's glory. St. Bonaventure describes it this way: "... God is not only the principle and effective exemplar of all things

⁵⁶ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 48.

⁵⁷ Catherine LaCugna, "Introduction" in *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 1, as quoted in Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 39.

⁵⁸ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 39.

⁵⁹ "Bonaventure agrees with Celano that what is distinctive about St. Francis's vision of creation is his feeling of belonging to one and the same family with all other creatures." Hayes, *Bonaventure*, 61; Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 60.

⁶⁰ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 61; CtC in *FAED* 1, 113-14.

⁶¹ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 61.

in creation, but also their restorative principle in redemption and their perfecting principle in remuneration. Therefore, theology does not simply deal with God the Creator; but also with the process of creation and creatures themselves.⁶² For St. Bonaventure, the role of creation and humanity is to accept the restoration of God, through his Son, Jesus:

Since restoration is a work of the First Principle, flowing out from it with generosity and leading back to it through conformity, it is therefore fitting that this be accomplished through grace and conformity to God, for grace flows from God generously and transforms human beings into God's own likeness. Thus, because the restorative principle repairs humanity through grace, and because anything exists more fully and perfectly in its source than elsewhere, it necessarily follows that in our restorative principle, Christ the Lord, there was the fullness of every grace.⁶³

The human person, being an image of God, is situated at the center of creation which is perfected in Christ; therefore, humanity is responsible for the harmony in God's creation – since everything is interconnected in and through God as source.⁶⁴ This theology, concerned with the relationship of the Trinity with creation, affects the asceticism practiced in the Franciscan way of life. For in Franciscan thought, humanity is to give back or reflect the goodness and love of God, and for St. Francis this involves stewarding creation – taking care of God's handiwork. This is to be done with all one's spirit and body – for the human body, for St. Bonaventure, reflects the perfected harmony of God's love, as reconciled in the person of Christ. St. Francis certainly believed that this reconciliation had happened in and through Christ.⁶⁵

The spirit and body are the most expressive reflection of harmony in God's creation – St. Bonaventure claims that

⁶² Bonaventure, *The Breviloquium*, 28.

⁶³ Bonaventure, *The Breviloquium*, 147.

⁶⁴ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 61-74.

⁶⁵ LtOrd 51-52 in *FAED* 1, 51-52.

they are ordained for each other.⁶⁶ Yet, to reflect God's glory there has to be discipline. Franciscan thinking does not consider the human body as evil – as shown earlier, the English translation from the Latin uses metaphorical expression. Rather, it considers the appropriation of self as the great sin. The definition of appropriating the self means putting one's own personal being equal to or higher than God. It also promotes a selfish attitude where a person only strives for personal gain. The Trinity is the opposite of the latter because each member of the Trinity is equal in every way. The appropriation of self, therefore, is not the expression of God's love within the Trinity – it is idolatry.⁶⁷ This is why St. Francis, out of passion and love, gives his body over to God through severe asceticism. He not only wants to imitate the crucified Lord but also tries to give back the love he receives from God by returning his whole being to God.

CONCLUSION

Franciscan spirituality, in light of the theology of St. Francis and the theology of St. Bonaventure, is naturally ascetic – ascetic because a candidate who professes vows professes a certain discipline in which to live in God's kingdom. Franciscan asceticism in spirituality goes beyond just some disciplined spiritual exercises – there is a deeper meaning behind it. That meaning is to live in dynamic relationship through a communal



⁶⁶ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 70.

⁶⁷ Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 75; Adm I:1-3 in *FAED* 1, 129.

asceticism, which should reflect the love of God given within the Trinity and to creation.

Franciscan spirituality is ascetical but is uniquely motivated and reflected in relationship – for this is the quality of the relationship that is revealed in the persons in the Trinity. Documents such as the Early Rule, the theology of St. Bonaventure, and other great Franciscan works are rooted in asceticism – ascetic practices that are not just repetitive and mundane exercises but express the love that has been received from God. This is the love that gives so abundantly that one cannot help but want to give that same love back to God. Such love is ever reciprocating. Franciscan ascetical spirituality aims to prepare and help a person come more deeply into relationship with God through giving back our whole being to God. Therefore, asceticism and Franciscan spirituality can be seen as positively connected: a way of lived discipleship, oriented towards reflecting the Glory of God.

EASTERN CHRISTIAN INFLUENCES ON THE SPIRITUALITY OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

MARK TURNHAM ELVINS, O.F.M. CAP.

The spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi is invariably written about from a Western perspective, which in itself is not exceptional. It is possible, however, that he may have come into contact with an Eastern tradition that influenced the development of his spirituality.

Francis is much esteemed in the East, as evidenced by a sixteenth century Eastern book of devotions in his honour.¹ If one were to ask the question why should this most Western of saints be so esteemed by the Christian East, the answer is to be found by a closer examination of his spirituality and manner of life. This is not simply an enquiry into some narrow field of ascetical theology, but an opportunity to explore the riches of the Eastern spiritual tradition that may have inspired one of the most popular saints of the West.

The late Pope John Paul II often quoted the Dominican theologian Yves Congar who indicated that Christians today must breathe with two lungs – namely, with the spirituality of the Christian East, as well as that of the Christian West. The spirituality of the Christian East, as a consequence of the Great Schism of 1054, has developed a character that distinguishes it from traditional Western spirituality. The re-discovery, in recent years by the West, of the Eastern Christian tradition has enormously enriched Christian spirituality in general.

¹ "The Bulletin of International Capuchin Information," Vol. 127, ed. F. Berti (Christmas, 1995): 155.

Francis of Assisi, in some measure, straddles the gap between East and West. Indeed, G.K. Chesterton hints at a duality in Francis² that becomes evident upon closer inspection. On the one hand Francis represents the high culture of the West with the secular traditions of chivalry, knighthood and courtly love, which he was too pains to sacralize. On the other hand, he displays all the characteristics of a wandering holy man, typifying the *saloi*, or *yurodivye*, the holy fool of the Christian East. What is more, the supernatural phenomena – the stigmata – largely associated with the West – and Taboritic light – associated with the East – are both found in St. Francis.

BYZANTIUM IN UMBRIA

The influence of the religious culture of Byzantium on an area largely dominated by Rome needs some explanation. The different cultural influences that developed within the Eastern and Western halves of the old Roman Empire were largely dictated by political circumstances that were necessarily reflected later in Christendom. During the reign of Pope Leo III (d. 816 AD), Greece, the Western Balkans, Sicily and Southern Italy were transferred from Roman jurisdiction to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, thus creating, in some measure, the demarcation of the schism of 1054 AD. Subsequent campaigns saw the loss of territory, including Sicily in 878 AD, but by the tenth century “virtually the whole of south Italy was restored to Byzantine authority.”³

In this southern Italian Byzantine dominion, around the year 905 AD, St. Nilus of Rossano was born in Calabria within what was, at that time, the Patriarchate of Constantinople. It was he who introduced Greek monasticism to Italy. His first attempts to set up a community were frustrated by the Saracen invasions and so, by the middle of the tenth cen-

² K.L. Morris, “Mirror of Perfection: G.K. Chesterton’s Interpretation,” *Greyfriars Review* 11, No. 1 (1997): 74.

³ J.J. Norwich, *Byzantium The Apogee* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 93.

tury, he sought a more secure environment at Rossano and founded the monastery of San Adriano, which later moved to Vellelucce. He then went on to found an Abbey at Grottaferrata, just south of Rome, which survives to this day. These Byzantine foundations in Southern Italy came under the direct influence of the Studion Monastery of Constantinople,⁴ thus indicating that there may have been *salons de culture* of the Eastern Christian tradition permeating parts of Latin Italy.

It is pertinent to ask if these influences found their way into the native Umbria of St. Francis. Documentary evidence from the archives of the Sacro Convento indicate that, like the rest of Italy, Assisi came under Byzantine rule after the fall of Rome in 476 AD. The Ostrogoths later re-conquered these territories, but the Eastern Emperor Justinian sent an army under Belisarius to regain these possessions and Assisi was occupied and ruled in the name of the Emperor by Sisifrido who became Duke of Assisi.⁵ During this brief early encounter Assisi imbibed an Eastern Christian culture and, in the tenth century, one Pandolfo Testadiferro, the Duke of Spoleto, waged war on the Eastern imperial armies in the south with the support of Assisi. The Eastern Christians were defeated between Ascoli and Bonvino and Duke Pandolfo banished them to the upper slopes of Assisi.⁶

Thus over two hundred years before Francis, on the hills above Assisi towards Valtopina, there lived a people of another race and culture, their dress, language and religious customs, albeit Christian, quite distinct. Many of them had come from around Apulia in the heel of Italy and named a local river after their mother province of Puglia. They also dedicated chapels to their old Byzantine patron saints, such as Poitus, Blaise and Stephen.⁷ Francis may have known this Byzantine settlement in the hills through his travels on the

⁴ M. Petta, “Monastery of Grottaferrata,” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 6 (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967), 813.

⁵ A. Fortini, *Francis of Assisi*, trans. H. Moak (New York, Crossroad, 1981), 164.

⁶ Fortini, *Francis of Assisi*, 164.

⁷ Fortini, *Francis of Assisi*, 164.

road between Assisi and Nocera. Moreover his father's cloth mills bordered on the fortress of Rocca Païda, built by these exiles on the opposite side of Mount Subasio.⁸ No doubt the adventurous young Bernadone communed with these people, imbibing their ways and customs.

Another possible source of influence on the spirituality of Francis is the monks at the monastery of San Pietro. Francis was familiar with the Benedictine foundation as his journeys to Perugia brought him in close proximity to it. The monks had reclaimed the flat land below Assisi where Francis established the first permanent home for his community, the *Portziuncula*.⁹ Ironically the stones of this old abbey were used, in the sixteenth century, to refurbish the new Franciscan Basilica of *Santa Maria degli Angeli*, erected over the *Portziuncula*.¹⁰

THE STRIPPING OF SELF AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE

In the stages of Francis's spiritual development one can discern influences reflective of an Eastern as well as a Western viewpoint. His starting point seemingly was the natural world, as it was for St. Anthony of Egypt who, in the fourth century, could look upon the vision of nature and "read in it the words of God." Discernment of the love that God poured out so freely in creation may have prompted in Francis recognition of his own lack of love, the first stirrings of his vocation, in the tradition of the desert fathers, expressed in abject sorrow for his sin. St. John of Damascus (c.750 AD) held that Almighty God created everything that exists out of "the abundance of his love and goodness," and Gregory Nazianzen (c. 4th century) saw creation as a revelation of the Creator. Such influences of the Eastern fathers¹¹ on Francis

⁸ Fortini, *Francis of Assisi*, 11.

⁹ Fortini, *Francis of Assisi*, 13.

¹⁰ Fortini, *Francis of Assisi*, 17.

¹¹ *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. F.L. Cross & E.A. Livingstone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 875.

are by no means conclusive, but when it comes to sorrow for sin Francis seems to mirror the desert solitaries exactly.

For instance, Diodochus of Photike placed a strong emphasis on what he called inward grief – in the Greek *penthos*. The closest equivalent meaning of the word *penthos* in scripture is found in Matthew 5:4: "Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted." Francis did indeed mourn for his sins in the hermit's cave at Carceri, in the exact manner of the cave-dwellers of the African desert.

The traditional prayer of the penitent in the Christian East remains the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me – a sinner." Francis adopted the shorter scriptural version as found in Luke 18:13: "God be merciful to me a sinner," the prayer of the repentant publican.

Evagrius of Photus describes a program of spiritual development which begins with stripping away the old man to put on Christ, as we read in Colossians 3:9. Francis, at the beginning of his conversion, while still employed by his father, a wealthy merchant, stole some bales of cloth to raise money to pay for the repair of poor churches. His father demanded justice, but Francis as a religious aspirant placed himself under the protection of the local bishop. Thus his father was forced to appeal to the bishop instead of the civil court. We are all familiar with the scene in which Francis returned everything, even the clothes on his back, to his father.

G.K. Chesterton has written that Francis's life has the "character of an allegory"¹² with a double meaning. On the one hand he returned all his possessions to his father, but on the other he also stripped off the old man. This, for Evagrius, marked the beginning of the active life, or *praktike*.¹³

The second stage of Evagrius's program of spiritual development he called *physike*, or seeing God in all created nature. Francis, after his conversion, came to see the world with new eyes so that he saw God in every created thing.

¹² Morris, "Mirror of Perfection ...," 67.

¹³ K. Ware, "Ways of Prayer and Contemplation" in *Christian Spirituality, Origins to the Twelfth Century*, ed. B. McGinn, J.M. Meyendorff and J.L. Leclercq (London, 1989), 397.

The third stage Evagrius called *theoria* in which the aspirant is granted a vision of God. Thomas of Celano recounts that Francis received such a vision on more than one occasion.

In the Christian East the "stripping of self" was invariably followed by spiritual warfare. In St. Paul's letters he compares the Christian life to an athletic contest or to soldiers facing combat in putting on "the armour of God" (cf. Ephesians 6:11). Evagrius, in his program devised especially for semi-eremitic monks, wrote extensively on this in Greek. Cassian translated it into Latin and so the idea came to the West. Francis practised a severe form of *ascesis* in his own spiritual battle as recorded in the *Legend of the Three Companions* where we read that Francis inflicted his flesh with such fasting that, whether healthy or sick, the excessively austere man hardly ever or never wanted to indulge his body.¹⁴

Continuous prayer is the path along which one progresses from the active (*praktike*) to the contemplative state (*theoria*) in Evagrius's program of spiritual growth. Francis is known to have used his own scriptural version of the Jesus Prayer (cf. Luke 18:13). One of Evagrius's classic manuals was the *Antirrheticus*. In it the use of scriptural texts to repel hostile thoughts is advocated, like a kind of spiritual arsenal. Such quotes were equivalent to what the desert fathers called "arrow prayers" which were considered the best at piercing heaven. They could also be used as a kind of mantra and Francis was often found repeating similar spiritual formulae such as *Deus meus et Omnia* (my God and my All).

The Byzantine school of prayer, often called *hesuchia* (or inner stillness), produced followers known as "hesychasts," a title applied to Maximus the Confessor (580-662) and Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022).¹⁵ This description was

¹⁴ "The Legend of Three Companions" in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents* 2, Regis J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, William J. Short, eds. (New York: New City Press, 2000). Further citations will take the form of *FAED* followed by the volume and page number.

¹⁵ K. Ware, "The Hesychasts: Gregory of Sinai, Gregory Palamas, Nicholas Cabasilas," in *The Study of Spirituality*, eds. C. Jones, G. Wainwright and E. Yarnold (London: SPCK, 1986), 245.

particularly applied to those who used the Jesus Prayer, the prayer of the mind in the heart. Symeon the New Theologian explained that this inner stillness was preserved by expelling distracting thoughts from the intellect to be destroyed "by the invocation of Jesus Christ."

The inner stillness was achieved by taming one's demons, which Evagrius identified as eight particular passions, called *logismoi*. He listed these as gluttony, fornication, melancholy, accidie, avarice, anger, pride and vainglory. The assaults came in the form of distracting thoughts that opposed purity of heart and undermined inner stillness. Thus Evagrius taught the cleansing of the temple of the heart using the Greek word *apatheia* for the spiritual goal of passionlessness. Francis's biographer tells how Francis repelled these distracting thoughts, recounting stories of how he endured the most severe fasts, rolled naked in the snow, and rigorously avoided temptations to obtain possessions or position in society.¹⁶ Francis castigated melancholy as a "Babylonian sickness"¹⁷ and he warned the brothers to beware of the snares of *accidie*, otherwise known as sloth or spiritual torpor, by resorting immediately to prayer. The devils who insinuated these distracting thoughts or passions "cannot harm a servant of Christ when they see him filled with holy cheerfulness."¹⁸

SPIRITUAL SIGHT AND TRANSFIGURATION

What Evagrius called *apatheia*, a state of inner stillness, and what Cassian called inner quiet or *puritas cordis*, (purity of heart) is achieved when one avoids being enslaved by one's passions. Francis, after his conversion, seems always to have possessed this interior calm. The achievement of *apatheia*, purity of heart, enables one to see in a new way,

¹⁶ Thomas of Celano, "Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul" in *FAED* 2, 239-393.

¹⁷ *FAED* 2, 330.

¹⁸ N. Arseniev, *Mysticism and the Eastern Church*, (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979), 65.

for as Our Lord said "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" (Matt 5:8). Maximus the Confessor (580-662 AD) of the late patristic period taught that when the intellect "abides in God alone ... it is granted direct vision of what pertains to God."¹⁹ Thus the aspirant enters the threshold of what Evagrius called *theoria* or the vision of divine light in the contemplation of God himself.

Francis, with purified sight, became so uplifted by the presence of God that he saw creation in a new way as we find in St. Paul: "if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation everything has become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). Symeon the New Theologian claimed that by penance and purification God can be seen in creation. He understood that the gift of the vision of God, lost by Adam at the Fall, could be restored by prayer and penance. Maximus the Confessor also taught the doctrine of "seeing again" in which an object is seen for what it is and then again in a sacramental way. Francis looked upon creation with a sacramental vision, as we read in I Celano: "... [Francis] never stopped glorifying, praising and blessing the Creator and Ruler of all things in all the elements and creatures."²⁰

Evagrius also taught two phases to his second stage of spiritual development (*physike*), the first was to contemplate the natural world with bodily sight which was intended to lead to the non-material world and the "angelic realm of spiritual reality."²¹ Symeon the New Theologian taught that penance and purification gained the aspirant "a new power of perception in the glorified man."²² This seems to imply an anticipated redemption resulting in the restoration of original innocence.

Adam, before the Fall, possessed particular gifts, including dominion over animals as well as a vision of God. Francis sought a return to Eden by way of the Cross and, like St.

Paul, sought to make up the suffering of Christ in his own body (cf. Col 1:24), acting as a co-operator in the great work of redemption. Uniquely he received, by way of divine approbation, not only the accolade of the stigmata but also the gift of Taboritic light. These are the fruits of a purified heart of which Paul the Hermit (c.340 AD) said whoever attains such purity of heart finds "all things subject to him like Adam in paradise before the fall."²³ In this way Francis is compared to the Fathers of the Syrian Desert to whom even the wild animals were obedient. He is also seen in the tradition of other Eastern mystics such as Sergius of Radonesch, Stephen of Perm, and Seraphim the Venerable.

St. Bonaventure confirms that Francis "... had reached such purity that his flesh was in remarkable harmony with his spirit and his spirit with God. As a result God ordained that creation which serves it Maker should be subject in an extraordinary way to his will and command."²⁴ Adam and Eve, in their state of innocence as recorded in the "Apocalypse of Moses," were clothed in light,²⁵ a reflection of their vision of God.

The Western understanding of the Transfiguration is that Christ revealed his glory on Mount Tabor, to his disciples Peter, James and John, to give support to their faith in the testing times ahead: his trial and crucifixion. In the Eastern tradition Christ radiated glory from the start, but the vision of humanity dulled by sin saw only a man, thus the Transfiguration was a brief restoration of original sight for the disciples in seeing Christ as he truly was. Hence icons of the Transfiguration invariably show shafts of light emanating from Christ and penetrating the eyes of the sleeping disciples.²⁶

¹⁹ Arseniev, "Mysticism and the Eastern Church," 88.

²⁰ Bonaventure, *The Major Legend of Saint Francis*, Ch. V:9; *FAED* 2, 567.

²¹ S. Brock, "Clothing Metaphors as a means of Theological Expression in Syriac Tradition," in *Typus, Symbolie, Allegoric* (Eichstatt: International Colloquium, 1981 [Regensburg 1982]), 16.

²² K. Ware, "The Transfiguration of the Body," in *Sacred Image*, A.M. Allchin, ed. (London: Fellowship of SS. Alban and Sergius, 1967), 27.

¹⁹ "Philokalia," 3, trans. and ed. G.E. Palmer, P. Sherrard & K. Ware (London: Faber & Faber,), 143.

²⁰ I Cel XXIX: 80; *FAED* 1, 250-51.

²¹ K. Ware, "Ways of Prayer and Contemplation" in *Christian Spirituality, Origins to the Twelfth Century*, 398.

²² Arseniev, "Mysticism & the Eastern Church," 71.

John Climacus (c.579-c.649) actually describes the consequences of viewing this divine and uncreated light for those who have had the vision of God restored. The recipient of this light "displays the splendour of his soul outwardly in his body as a mirror. So Moses who saw God was glorified," and all who are granted this vision enter into the mystery of the Transfiguration. As Metropolitan Kallistos Ware has written, they are "taken up into the uncreated splendour" and "shine outwardly with the divine radiance they contemplate."²⁷

This vision of the Deity within divine and uncreated light "belongs to the age to come" as Vladimir Lossky writes, and can be understood as a kind of anticipated redemption. This is the final goal in Evagrius's program, *theoria* or the vision of God, that is, to share the divine life in transfiguration. Bonaventure writes of Francis that "the joy of the Holy Spirit came over him and he was assured of the complete forgiveness of all his sins. Then he was caught up above himself and totally engulfed in a wonderful light, and, with his inmost soul opened wide, he clearly saw..."²⁸

In fact Francis is known to have radiated divine light for there are at least four witnessed accounts, once with St. Clare as recorded in the Fioretti, twice on Mount LaVerna as again recorded in the Fioretti²⁹ and finally at death, chronicled by Thomas of Celano.³⁰

From these accounts it can be concluded that Francis's spiritual journey demonstrates elements similar to those described by the great Eastern mystics. Although identified by his stigmata, it must also be acknowledged that his progress fulfills the Evagrian spiritual journey to *theoria*. Moreover he could be said to have reached the fullness of sanctity that the Eastern Christians call deification or *theosis*, a soul caught up in the life of God.

Perhaps what identified Francis most completely with the Eastern spiritual tradition, however, is his record of holy fol-

²⁷ Ware, "The Hesychasts: Gregory of Sinai, Gregory Palamas, Nicholas Cabasilas," in *The Study of Spirituality*, 253.

²⁸ Bonaventure, *LMj* 3:6; *FAED* 2, 545.

²⁹ *Fioretti* XV and IX, *FAED* 3, 466, 452-58.

³⁰ *FAED* 1, 280.

ly. Again, as with all aspects of Eastern Christian spirituality, this has its basis in scripture, for Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians (3:18) writes: "If you think you are wise in this age, you should become fools so that you may become wise." Thus St. Paul is rightly called the "Doctor of Folly" after dealing with the arrogant factions among the Corinthian Christians, for he showed the absurdity of their pride by demonstrating the power of God through weakness and absurdity. Thus he could say: "We are fools for the sake of Christ" (1 Cor 4:10). Worldly pride therefore has its antidote in the folly of God, which is wiser than the wisdom of men. In this way, to become truly wise requires a renunciation of worldly wisdom and a contradiction of all the *mores* of human status. Thus folly for Christ became a formative influence on a number of early Christians giving rise to the tradition of "holy fools."

In the Christian East they were known as *saloi*, seekers of wisdom who became fools in order to become wise (cf. 1 Cor 3:18). This Christian phenomenon, after the Great Schism, tended to flourish mostly in the East and later in Russia as *yurodive*. However, as has been related, Eastern Christian monasticism preserved some footholds in Western Europe, notably at Calabria in Southern Italy.

When Francis was addressing the Pentecost Chapter of 1222, as quoted in the *Speculum perfectionis* he said:

... I do not want you to mention to me any Rule, whether of Saint Augustine, or of Saint Bernard, or of Saint Benedict, or any other way or form of life except the one that the Lord in His mercy has shown and given to me. And the Lord told me what He wanted: He wanted me to be a new fool in this world. God did not wish to lead us by any way other than this knowledge, ...³¹

He therefore saw holy folly as part of his divine instruction manifested in his stripping himself before the bishop and his father and later preaching half naked before a church con-

³¹ "A Mirror of the Perfection," 68; *FAED* 3, 314.

gregation, when he was mocked as a mad man. His response to the mockery was to immediately refer to the nakedness and humiliation of Christ and subsequently the people repented.

Not long after setting up the hermitage at Monte Luco, Francis made a trip to the Holy Land and on his way he stopped off at Crete and Cyprus. His stay on Crete has been commemorated in the church of Panayia Kera where he preached on the penitence and the passion of Christ.³² A thirteenth century fresco of St. Francis survives in this church to this day. The Eastern Christians on Crete may well have heard of Francis before his arrival but his stay for several days must have convinced the islanders that here was someone worthy of veneration, one who certainly mirrored all the characteristics of the holy fools of Eastern Christendom.³³



³² Fortini, *Francis of Assisi*, 396.

³³ Fortini, *Francis of Assisi*, 396.

HILDEGARD OF BINGEN'S EXPOSITIO 12.2 ON THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON¹

ROBERT J. KARRIS, O.F.M.

INTRODUCTION²

Most of us are more familiar with the music and discography of Hildegard of Bingen than with the amazing fact that she was a medieval preacher. This sermon follows the medieval procedure of citing a portion of the biblical text and then offering a brief interpretation and repeating the process to the end of the biblical text. It is at once traditional and innovative. I have tried to show its traditional character by means of references in footnotes to St. Bonaventure's exegesis of this famous parable,³ for Bonaventure preserves many traditional elements in his interpretation.⁴ I give advance notice of one of these traditional components here. Virtually

¹ I have translated the text edited by Beverly Mayne Kienzle and Carolyn Muessig. See Beverly Mayne Kienzle, "Hildegard of Bingen's Gospel Homilies and Her Exegesis of The Parable of the Prodigal Son" in Rainer Berndt (ed.), *Im Angesicht Gottes suche der Mensch sich selbst* Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179), *Erudiri Sapientia* 2 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001), 299-324, esp. 322-24. I have added paragraph numbers for ease of reference. See also Jean-Baptiste Pitra (ed.), *Analecta Opera Sanctae Hildegardis*, *Analecta Sacra* 8 (Monte Cassino, 1882), 280-82. Reprinted Franborough: Gregg Press, 1966.

² This article is meant to be read in conjunction with my previous article on Hildegard of Bingen's first sermon on Luke 15:11-32, which appeared in *The Cord*, 58.1 (2008): 22-29.

³ See *St. Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of Luke. Chapters 9-16*. With an Introduction, Translation and Notes by Robert J. Karris, WSB VIII/2 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2003), 1422-68. Hildegard of Bingen died in 1179 while Bonaventure died in 1274.

⁴ I refer those who would like to engage in a more thorough examination of these traditional elements to: Stephen L. Wailes, *Medieval Allego-*

every paragraph raises the issue of human works and God's justice or grace. See, for example, paragraph 6: "But he (prodigal son) didn't mention the hired men, for he had no hope of any reward for the work he had done and was depending solely on God's grace."

The innovative aspects of Hildegard of Bingen's exposition are noticeable straightaway, for she interprets the elder son as the angels. Also quickly detected is the program of salvation history by which she allegorically interprets the parable. Most unique is her interpretation of Luke 15:25-32 which details the elder son's reaction to the mercy his father has shown to his wayward son. The key to Hildegard's interpretation of these verses is that they are not so much about a puzzled angel, but are a paean of praise to the redemptive power of the blood of God's Son. Finally, while tradition saw in the killing of the fattened calf "Christ slain for our sakes, who is offered to us in the Sacrament of the altar as most delectable food" as one aspect of the parable,⁵ Hildegard makes Christ's gift of food a central image in her sermon. In paragraph 7 she described the Son of God as the one "who brought the food of life to believers." In that same paragraph the prodigal son had been lost, "because he did not have the food of life." In paragraph 12 she repeats this point for emphasis: "**He had been lost**, since he did not appear healthy before the eyes of God because he lacked the food of life...."⁶

In brief, in her sermon for the Gospel read on the Saturday of the Second Week of Lent Hildegard of Bingen challenges her sisters and us to examine our waywardness and to

ries of Jesus' Parables, UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies 23 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 236-45. In brief, the traditional elements stem from Augustine, Jerome, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Great, and the Glossa Ordinaria. For those interested in interpretations of Luke 15:11-32 that postdate Bonaventure I refer to my articles: "Diego de Estella on Luke 15:11-32," *Franciscan Studies* 61 (2003): 97-234; "St. Bernardine of Siena and the Gospel of Divine Mercy (Luke 15:11-32)," *Franciscan Studies* 62 (2004): 31-66; "Francis of Meyronnes' Sermon 57 on the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)," *Franciscan Studies* 63 (2005): 131-58.

⁵ *Chapters* 9-16, 1452.

⁶ See "Gospel Homilies," 311-18 for Kienzle's insights on Hildegard's second exposition of Luke 15:11-32.

feast abundantly at the table of God's mercy in Jesus Christ, God's Son, a mercy that the angels never needed and never did enjoy.⁷

1. **A certain man**, namely, God,⁸ **had two sons**, namely, angels and a human being.⁹ **And the younger of them**, namely, the human, **said to his father** God: **Father, give me the share**, namely, the possibility, **of the property**, namely, of the perfection in works **that falls to me** from nature, so that I might perfect it.¹⁰ **And he divided his means between them**, so that they could work.¹¹

2. **And not many days later**, since the human being was a short time in paradise, **having gathered up everything** his desires, **the younger son took a journey**, that is, having been expelled from paradise,¹² **into a country faraway**, namely, into the world, **and there squandered his fortune**, that is, his works by living voluptuously.

3. **And after he had spent all**, namely, after he had defiled all his works, **there came a grievous famine**, since he did not have an abundance, **over that country**, namely, in the world, where it did not worship the true God, **and he**

⁷ By means of bold type I single out the scripture text on which Hildegard is commenting.

⁸ See *Chapters* 9-16, 1423: "By this *man*, as has often been said, we understand the benign and loving Lord."

⁹ An illustrative parallel for portions of Hildegard of Bingen's exposition occurs in St. Bonaventure's interpretation of the parable in Luke 15:8-10 of the woman who lost one of her ten drachmas. The lost drachma is the human creature and the nine other drachmas are the nine choirs of angels. See *Chapters* 9-16, 1413-21.

¹⁰ See *Chapters* 9-16, 1425: "... *having gathered up all his possessions*, through the rule of free will which *he* has over all his natural powers...."

¹¹ Hildegard of Bingen has initiated her interpretation of the parable. See *Chapters* 9-16, 1423 for the range of traditional interpretations: "But by *two sons* we understand the universality of the human race, not only with regard to Gentiles and Jews, as the Glossa explains it, but also in a more general sense to encompass the innocent and the repentant, as must be understood from the application of the parable itself." Bonaventure goes on to interpret the parable from the angle of the sacrament of penance.

¹² See Gen 3:23-24.

himself began to suffer want through idols. **And he went** by wandering roads **and joined one of the citizens**, that is, the devil¹³ **of that country**, the world, **and he sent him** by suggestion **to his farm**, namely, into his law, **to feed swine**, namely, so that he might nurture his desires with confusion and turpitude. And he desired to fill his belly, that is, the possession of his entire spirit, **with the pods**, namely, the sins **that the swine were eating**, namely, the desires for sins, **and no one offered him**, because God did not join himself with evil and the devil could not inject into them any abundance of some good.

4. **But when he came to himself**, and thus recalled by whom he had been created, when God gave circumcision to Abraham,¹⁴ he said: **How many hired men in my father's house**, who worship God for the sake of supernal reward, just as the just did who lived before circumcision such as Noah,¹⁵ Enoch,¹⁶ Abel,¹⁷ and others like them, have bread in abundance, that is justice.¹⁸ **But I am perishing here with hunger**, since I have no satiety of life. **I will get up**, from worshipping idols, and **I will go** by means of circumcision **to my father, and I will say to him**, worshipping him: **Father, I have sinned against heaven**, because I worshipped the sun, the moon, and the stars **and before you** when I deserted you. **I am no longer worthy to be called your son**, such as those who know and worship you. **Make me as one of your hired men**, namely, similar to those who are meriting eternal life.

¹³ See *Chapters 9-16*, 1431: "Now the citizen in the country of dissimilitude and sin is the person who has set up a permanent home in sin. Among these citizens the first and primary citizen is the devil himself."

¹⁴ See Gen 17:10-12.

¹⁵ See Gen 6:8.

¹⁶ See Gen 5:22-24.

¹⁷ See Gen 4:4. On Abraham, Abel, Enoch, and Noah, see Hebr 11:4-10.

¹⁸ See *Chapters 9-16*, 1436: "And these are the ones who serve for the sake of an eternal reward, and such abound frequently on the bread of faith, hope, and charity."

5. **And he arose** from worshipping demons **and came** to Mount Sinai, **to his father**, through Moses, taking up the law.¹⁹ **But while he was yet a long way off**, in the law, because the law was unable to lead human beings back to life,²⁰ **his father saw him**, when he sent the prophets who spoke of the incarnation of the Son of God,²¹ **and was moved with compassion**, when the angel Gabriel announced Christ to Mary the virgin.²² **And ran** in the very salutation to Mary²³ **and fell upon his neck** when the heavenly Father sent his word to Jacob and it fell upon Israel, **the neck** of strength in Judea²⁴ when the Holy Spirit came upon Mary in his conception,²⁵ **and he kissed him** with a kiss, as in The Song of Songs, of his mouth in the birth of his son.²⁶

6. **And the son said to him**, namely, the human being: **Father, I have sinned against heaven**, in the creature of the stars above, in the worship of idols, **and before you**, by denying you. **I am not worthy**, because I am a transgressor, **to be called your son**. But he didn't mention the hired men, for he had no hope of any reward for the work he had done and was depending solely on God's grace.²⁷

¹⁹ See esp. Ex 20:1-5 about the first commandment.

²⁰ See Gal 3:21: "...For if a law had been given that could give life, justice would truly be from the Law."

²¹ See, e.g., Isa 11:1-10.

²² See Luke 1:26-27.

²³ See Luke 1:28: "And when the angel had come to her, he said: Hail, full of grace, the Lord with you..."

²⁴ See Gen 32:28: "Your name will not be called Jacob, but Israel, for if you have been strong against God, how much more will you prevail against human beings?"

²⁵ See Luke 1:35.

²⁶ See Cant 1:1. See also Bonaventure's interpretation of Luke 15:20 in *Chapters 9-16*, 1444-45: "The spouse of The Song of Songs 1:1 is in search of this kiss of peace and of love: 'Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth, for they are better,' etc. ... The origin of this kiss is found in the Word Incarnate, in whom there exists a union of the highest love and the connection of two natures, through which God kisses us, and we kiss God..."

²⁷ See *Chapters 9-16*, 1447: "And therefore, he does not seek here the love extended to a hired man, as he declared earlier, when he still lacked infused grace. But now, by being fully converted to his father, he gives evidence of being sincerely repentant and asks for divine grace. And this is

7. **But the father said to his servants**, the apostles when they were called by Christ:²⁸ **Quickly**, don't delay, **bring the best robe**, namely, the garment that Adam lost in paradise,²⁹ and **put it on him** the new man,³⁰ **and give a ring**, namely faith,³¹ **for his finger**, so that he might complete faith with works,³² **and sandals for his feet**, namely, the mortification of the flesh in the preparation for spreading the gospel.³³ **And bring out the fattened calf**, when the Son of God, who brought the food of life to believers,³⁴ was led to Caiphas and to Pilate,³⁵ **and kill it**, when he was crucified, **and let us eat**, when he was chewed up in his passion, **and let us make merry**, in his resurrection.³⁶ **For this my son**, namely, the human being **was dead**, namely, he had lost the innocence that he had had in the heavenly realm, and **has come to life again** in knowledge of God. **He had been lost**, because he did not have the food of life, **and has been found** in the

what the Glossa says: 'He wants, he says, to become through grace what he declared he was unworthy to be through merit....'

²⁸ See, e.g., Mark 1:16-20.

²⁹ There is no reference to a physical garment in Gen 3. See *Chapters 9-16*, 1448: "Therefore, Bede comments: 'The best robe is the garment of innocence, in which the first man was created.'"

³⁰ See Eph 4:24: "And put on the new man, who has been created according to God in justice and holiness of truth."

³¹ See *Chapters 9-16*, 1449: "Therefore, a ring is a sign of faith and fidelity, by which the soul is espoused so that its works may please Christ."

³² See James 2:22: "Do you not see that faith worked along with his (Abraham's) works, and by the works the faith was made perfect?" See *Chapters 9-16*, 1449-50: "Now the ring is on the finger, when faith shines forth in action. For, as James 2:26 says: 'Faith without works is dead.'"

³³ See Acts 13:2 relative to the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas: "And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said: Set apart for me Saul and Barnabas unto the work to which I have called them." See *Chapters 9-16*, 1451: "Thus, Bede comments: 'Sandals on the feet, that is protected by the example of those who were predecessors in the office of preaching, so that his work may be adorned with good living and prepare him for the journey to the eternal realm.'"

³⁴ See, e.g., John 6:51: "I am the living bread that has come down from heaven."

³⁵ See, e.g., John 18-19. I cite no specific passage from the fourfold Gospel tradition for Christ's crucifixion, passion, and resurrection.

³⁶ See *Chapters 9-16*, 1452: "This *fatted calf* is Christ slain for our sakes, who is offered to us in the Sacrament of the altar as most delectable food."

groaning of repentance. **And they began to make merry**, when the apostles were strengthened since the Holy Spirit came upon them in tongues of fire.³⁷

8. **Now his elder son**, that is, the angels who were created before human beings, **was in the field**, namely, in heavenly worship.³⁸ **And as he came** on a supernal mission, **as he drew near to the house**, namely, when he descended to human beings with greater love than he had earlier shown, **he heard music**, namely, the sound of good praise that the apostles were performing miracles and great signs among the people,³⁹ **and dancing**, that is, the fullness of justice.⁴⁰ **And he called one of the servants**, namely, the unity of the prophets, **and asked**, namely, seeking the mystical things of the prophets,⁴¹ **what this meant**, the wonders that he was seeing.

9. **And he said to him** through the prophetic oracles: **Your brother**, namely, human beings, **has come** to repentance, **and your father**, God, **has killed the fattened calf**, namely, he has handed over his son for his sake,⁴² **since he received him back safe**, snatched from diabolical power.

10. **But he was indignant**, that is, he was amazed and stupefied how these things could take place, **and he would not enter**, since they did not need the passion of Christ nor the joy that took place over one sinner who repented.⁴³

11. **So his father came out**, in a display of his will to be merciful, **and began to entreat him**, when he sent angels

³⁷ See Acts 2:1-4.

³⁸ See e.g., Rev 5:11.

³⁹ See Acts 2:43: "And fear came upon every soul. Many wonders also and signs were done by means of the apostles in Jerusalem, and great fear came upon all."

⁴⁰ See Matt 3:15: "But Jesus answered and said to him (John): Let it be so now, for so it becomes us to fulfill all justice."

⁴¹ See 1 Peter 1:10-12.

⁴² See, e.g., Rom 8:32.

⁴³ See Luke 15:7, 10.

for the salvation of the people through the admonition of the Holy Spirit in the rebuilding of the church, since angels are sent for the necessities of men and women.⁴⁴ **But he answered**, namely, ruminating on God's question, **and said to his father: Behold, these many years**, that is, the entire time since I was created, **I have been serving you**, I have bound myself to your service, **and you have never given me a kid**, namely, you have not given me any part of the grace of repentance through which you have redeemed the sins of my brother, **so that with my friends**, namely, with the signs and miracles and powers of this kind **I might make merry**, that is, I might have new joy in new music. **But when this your son**, who is your creature, **who devoured**, that is, consumed **his means with prostitutes**, namely, by performing his works with gluttonous sins, **comes**, that is, he returns to you in repentance, **you have killed the fattened calf for him**, when you showed him the pouring out of the blood of your Son⁴⁵ who brought abundance of life to believers.⁴⁶

12. **But he** God **said to him** in admonition: **Son, you are always with me** in purity and holiness,⁴⁷ continually looking at my face,⁴⁸ but man, while he is in his mortal body, cannot see my face,⁴⁹ **and all that is mine**, namely, those miracles that I performed for your brother, *are yours*, since you will always be a messenger between human beings and me. But we had to make merry, since human beings were redeemed with the blood of my Son⁵⁰ and were strengthened through

⁴⁴ See Acts 12:7-12 which narrates how an angel enables Peter to escape from prison and rejoin the church. See *Chapters 9-16*, 1420 where one of the seven reasons why the angels rejoice in a sinner's repentance is: "Fifth, because through repentance *the Church is repaired*."

⁴⁵ Cf. Luke 22:20.

⁴⁶ Cf. John 10:10.

⁴⁷ Cf. Luke 1:75.

⁴⁸ See Matt 18:10: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I tell you: their angels in heaven always look at the face of my Father in heaven."

⁴⁹ See, e.g., John 1:18: "No one has at any time seen God..."

⁵⁰ See Rev 5:9: "Worthy are you to take the scroll and open its seals, for you were slain and have redeemed us for God with your blood..."

the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit,⁵¹ **and rejoice**, in the resurrection of human beings who had been lost, **since your brother**, human beings **was dead** to things heavenly and in good knowledge, **and has come back to life** in acknowledging God and in the root of justice.⁵² **He had been lost**, since he did not appear healthy before the eyes of God because he lacked the food of life,⁵³ **and has been found** in Christ through the groaning of repentance, having been redeemed by his blood.⁵⁴

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⁵¹ Cf. Rom 5:5.

⁵² See Book IV of Origen's *Commentary on Romans* in PG 14:965B: "So the root of justice does not stem from works, but from the root of justice the fruit of works blossoms."

⁵³ Cf. John 6:35, 48.

⁵⁴ See Rev 5:9.

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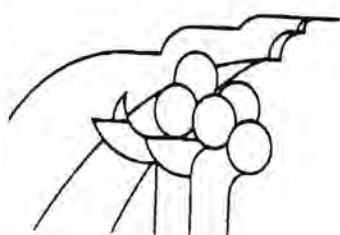
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Edited by Elise Saggau, O.S.F.

The scholarly authors of these essays probe important facets of preaching and its history in the Franciscan tradition. The reader will enjoy the insights of such well-known scholars as Colt Anderson, Joseph Chinnici, Dominic Monti, and Darleen Pryds.

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\$14.00

Mirroring One Another
Reflecting the Divine:

The Franciscan-Muslim
Journey into God

Franciscan Forum Eight
June 19-22, 2008
Colorado Springs, CO

Presenters:

Jan Hoeberichts	Robert Lentz, O.F.M.
Irfan Omar	Michael Calabria, O.F.M.
Yahya Hendi	Paul Lachance, O.F.M.
Fatima Betul Cavdar	Adam Bunnell, O.F.M. Conv.
Michael Blastic, O.F.M.	

Registration Fee is \$300.00. This includes meals, breaks and speaker fees. Full payment is due April 25, 2008. Cancellation Fee is \$50.00 before May 5, 2008. No refunds will be given after May 5.

For information on accommodations consult our website:
<http://franciscaninstitute.sbu.edu>

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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: May 3 to June 12 & November 1 to December 11.

Fee: \$1800 – \$2500 (depending on choice of hermitage).

Annual Journey With Retreat.... T.O.R. RULE & LIFE: GROWING EVER NEW:

with Mary Elizabeth Imler OSF. It is time to celebrate the 25th anniversary by living our Third Order Rule and Life. This retreat will be a sacred time to once again "fall in love" with our life whether you are newly professed or you have lived it 50 or 75 years. 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.

Time: June 11 at 7:00 PM to June 17 at 10:00 AM with brunch.

Fee: \$430 overnight; \$270 commuter

WRESTLING WITH RESTLESSNESS:

with Fr. Don Blaeser OFM. There is in each of us a certain restlessness, a longing, a loneliness, which affect our lives, including our spiritual lives, in many ways. During this retreat we will look at the many shapes this takes, the difficulties that we find ourselves coping with, and the blessings that are to be found there, leading us into closer union with our loving God. As St. Au-

gustine wrote, "You have made us for Yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You."

Time: July 16 - 22.

Fee: \$375 for overnight

\$225 for commuter.

Private Directed Retreat:

A team for Franciscan Retreat Directors will provide spiritual direction, prayer and ritual, centering around companioning individuals in transformational processes. The backdrop and emphasis will be in an atmosphere of silence, contemplation and prayer.

Time: July 23 from 7:00 PM to July 29 10:30 AM with brunch

Fee: \$420

For more information contact: Mary Ann Hamilton at the
Portiuncula Center for Prayer

9263 West St. Francis Road, Frankfort, IL 60423

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May 23-25, 2008

WTU Franciscan Symposium

**"Moral Action in a Complex World:
Franciscan Perspectives"**

See ad pg. 191.

July 27-August 1, 2008

5-Day Silent Retreat with Fr. Dan Riley, O.F.M.

San Damiano Retreat Center

See ad pg. 198.

June 19-22, 2008

Franciscan Forum Eight

The Franciscan Muslim Journey into God

Colorado Spring, CO

See ad pg. 200.

June 11-17, 2008

Annual Journey with Retreat:

TOR Rule and Life: Growing Ever New

Mary Elizabeth Imler, O.S.F.

July 16-22, 2008

Wrestling with Restlessness

Fr. Don Blaeser, O.F.M.

July 23-29, 2008

Private Directed Retreat

Portiuncula Center for Prayer

9263 West St. Francis Road, Frankfort, IL 60423

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See ad pg. 202.

Abbreviations

Writings of Saint Francis

Adm	The Admonitions
BIL	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
OP	The Office of the Passion
PrCr	The Prayer before the Crucifix
ER	The Earlier Rule (<i>Regula non bullata</i>)
LR	The Later Rule (<i>Regula bullata</i>)
RH	A Rule for Hermitages
SalBVM	A Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
SalV	A Salutation of Virtues
Test	The Testament
TPJ	True and Perfect Joy

Writings of Saint Clare

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

Franciscan Sources

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