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

Periodical Postage Paid
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A Word from Bonaventure

No person is in any way worthy to attain this supreme good, which totally exceeds the limits of human nature, unless elevated above self through the condescending action of God.... If then, the rational spirit is to become worthy of eternal happiness, it must partake of this God-conforming influence. This influence that renders the soul dei-form comes from God, conforms us to God, and leads to God as our end. It therefore restores the image of our mind to likeness with the blessed Trinity – not only in terms of its order of origin, but also in terms of its rectitude of choice and of its rest in enjoying [God]. And since a soul possessing these qualities is led back immediately to God and directly conformed to God, this grace is therefore given immediately by God acting as the source of this inflowing.

Brev V, 1:3

THE CORD

VOLUME 59, NO. 3 • JULY/SEPTEMBER 2009

FRANCIS, GO AND REPAIR MY CHURCH...

• A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW •

The Cord
A Franciscan Spiritual Review

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Distribution Manager: Noel Riggs

The Cord (ISSN 0010-8685 USPS 563-640) is published quarterly by the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 (716-375-2160).

Subscription Rates: $28.00 a year domestic; $32.00 a year international; $7.00 plus shipping per copy. Periodical postage paid at St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 and at additional mailing office.

Send address changes to *The Cord*, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 USA.

Notice to Contributors: Address all manuscripts to Editor, *The Cord*, The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778. (Email: dmitchel@sbu.edu)

1. Mss should be submitted in Microsoft Word in electronic format (CD, flash [thumb or travel] drive or as an email attachment.) Please include name, mailing address and brief bio information.
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3. Titles of books and periodicals should be italicized. Titles of articles should be enclosed in quotation marks. Please do not use single quotes except when it is a quote within a quote.
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 ms and should be taken from *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents* or *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents*.

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Cover design: Mark Sullivan

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Foreword

I hear the echo of previous years: how fast this summer is passing! We are nearing the conclusion of the summer session. The Poor Clares brought their life and prayer to campus and have departed for their monasteries, refreshed and renewed in their vocation. The library is the scene of intense study for finals. We have concluded the expanded celebration of the Feast of St. Bonaventure with the awarding of the Franciscan Institute Medal to Professor Emeritus Girard Etzkorn in recognition of his lifetime of service to Franciscan Studies, especially in the preparation of the critical editions of the works of Ockham and Scotus. And finally, another issue of *The Cord* is ready to go to the printer.

In its pages we have some old and some new friends. Michael Blastic shares his thoughts on the anniversary of the First Order Rule. Matthew Farrington explores medieval feminine spirituality. Thomas Herbst refreshes our appreciation for the cross and Jean François Godet-Calogeras sheds some light on the *Sacrum Commercium*. Our newest contributors, Patrick Foley, William Schmitt and Fred Arsenault, help us understand our place in creation, how to deal with ADD/ADHD and the Franciscan roots of the Society of the Atonement. In addition, we have book reviews written by Paula Scraba and Dan Horan and opportunities for deepening our experience of the Franciscan charism. May perusing its pages be a blessing to you, our readers, as it is for those of us here who prepare it for print.

As the summer days continue to dwindle, there are some items almost "in the can," to mix a film metaphor with our print processes. The sixth volume in the Franciscan Heritage Series is in its final edit. David Flood's book, *The Daily Labor of the Early Franciscans*, is in the cover-design stage. Spirit and Life 13: *Mirroring One Another, Reflecting the Divine: The Franciscan-Muslim Journey into God* should be back from the printer any day. In the meantime the files for this year's WTU Symposium are in, the 2009 *Franciscan Studies* is in process, and the fifteenth in the Bonaventure Texts-in-Translation series: *In Defense of the Mendicants* is waiting in the wings. Keep your eyes on the Publications web-site (franciscanpublications.sbu.edu) for more information about upcoming publications.

May God give us peace!

Daria R. Mitchell, O.S.F.

Our Franciscan Evangelical Way of Life and Ministry in the Twenty-First Century[1]

Michael W. Blastic, O.F.M.

Anniversaries turn our attention to the past, to the beginning of our story, and most often they are celebrated with some kind of re-commitment ceremony, which will also be the way we conclude our time together today. My presentation this morning will take us back to the beginning of our Franciscan story. While we are celebrating the 800th anniversary of the founding of the Franciscan Order in the spring of 1209, it is important to remember that this marked just the beginning of a life project that grew and developed through the centuries into our day. Textually, this anniversary celebrates the Lesser Brothers' *propositum vitae* and its approval in 1209 by Innocent III. But that *propositum vitae* which served as the initial plan was only the starting point, reflecting as it grew the lived experience of Francis and his brothers as it developed as a written text into the *Regula non bullata* of 1221, and finally, into the *Regula bullata*, confirmed by Honorius III in 1223. And while these texts reflect primarily the life and experience of the brothers, they also provide the inspiration that moved Clare and her sisters to join the fraternity in 1212, and it was this experience which also attracted the women and men living in their own homes (*in domibus propriis*), the penitents, to become part of the fraternity, all of whom gave shape to the Franciscan Movement in their own particular manner. So, while I will focus on the beginning of

[1] Originally presented to a gathering of Holy Name Province friars on April 25, 2009 in New York City.

the story of the movement, this will serve not as the whole story of who we are today, but only a part, albeit foundational. The reality of the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which we live and move and have our being, together with our own particular local stories of founding and mission, it can serve as a criterion of authenticity as we continue to follow the footprints of Jesus with Francis and his brothers and sisters in the twenty-first century.

My presentation has three parts. The first part will describe the event that we celebrate with the approval of Innocent III in 1209. The second part will develop the self-understanding of the early brothers and sisters as disciples of Jesus with five characteristics. Finally the third part will offer some concluding reflections on how we stand at this moment in history.

Francis, the First Brothers, and their Life-Project

Our story begins with Francis of Assisi, of course, whose story is very familiar. Here I will focus on only a few dimensions of his life in order to help us situate the origins of the fraternity.

He was the son of a merchant in the commune of Assisi, which was an early version of a capitalist social economic arrangement. The pacts of 1203 and 1210 announced to the world that Assisi was a community of the rich and powerful, and that only the rich and powerful would be able to find a place within its walls. Francis was socialized with this ethos and this understanding of the meaning of life, even though he himself was dissatisfied with his social rank of merchant, trying to advance himself into the nobility by becoming a knight. He fought for Assisi against the nobles in the Battle of Collestrada in 1202, experiencing the violence and brutality of war, and very likely even took the life of some of those men who fought against Assisi. Assisi lost the war though, and Francis was captured and imprisoned. During his imprisonment with his peers from Assisi, Francis probably saw many

of them succumb to starvation, infections and sickness, and even to death. Once ransomed by his father, he suffered the trauma of his participation in the war and went into a serious and deep crisis, struggling to make human sense of his experience. In the midst of his personal darkness, Francis was somehow led out of himself and was turned toward the lepers, whose sickness, isolation and personal pain he probably associated with his own experience in prison, and therefore he was able in some way to experience the pain of their situation and show compassion to them. Francis described this experience in his own words:

> This is how the Lord led me, Brother Francis, to begin living penance. When I was in sin, it seemed too bitter for me to see lepers. And the Lord himself led me among them and I did mercy with them. And when I left them, what has seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body. And afterwards I delayed a bit and left the world (*Testament* 1-3).

What Francis identifies as "doing mercy with" the lepers was treating them with care as his fellow human beings, paying attention to them, washing them and giving them food and drink. His choice to be with the lepers, to relate with them now as his brothers and sisters, marked for him the turning point of his life, as with them he came to know Jesus as his suffering brother. He then left Assisi to stay on the margins of that world by remaining with these poor outcasts. How he related to them as brothers and sisters, how he cared for them and provided for them with a heart full of mercy, all of this is what Francis meant by the life of penance. And it was this choice to be on the margins and to care for the lepers and other poor that caused his father and most of Assisi to hold him in contempt and to persecute him.

While he was living with and caring for the lepers on the margins of Assisi, Francis would gradually come to some understanding of what God's plan for him was, and in prayer before the cross in the destroyed church of San Damiano he received more definite indications. As the *Legend of the three*

Companions tells it, while he was at prayer before the image of the Crucified he heard a voice speak to him: Francis, don't you see that my house is being destroyed? Go, then, and rebuild it for me" (L3C 13)." While he first understood the voice he heard to tell him to rebuild the little broken down church, with time, he would come to understand that God's house referred to the concrete lives of men and women, such as the lepers whom he was serving. The house is the space of family relationships, the space in which human beings were intended to grow and flourish as part of God's plan. What was happening in both the church and society at that time was destroying what God intended for human flourishing. And this revelation was foundational to Francis, since both Francis and Clare would come to understand relationship with God in terms of the domestic relationships of mother, brother, sister, and spouse (2LtF 48-53; SalBVM; AntBVM). With this new insight Francis continued to live at the margins, to serve lepers, and in this way to rebuild God's house.

After about two years alone, Francis was joined by Bernard of Quintavalle and Peter, and with them he sought counsel from the scriptures of how they should live. Again, Francis tells us in his own words:

> 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 form of the Holy Gospel. And I had this written down simply and in a few words and the Lord Pope confirmed it for me (Testament 14-5).

Here we have Francis's description of the origin of the Franciscan movement. The author of the *Anonymous of Perugia* explains that the three brothers went to a church of Assisi to consult the gospel. With the help of a priest, they found the following passages (AP 10-11):

AP 11	ER
If you wish to be perfect, go, sell, everything you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven (Matt 19:21). Whoever wishes to come after me... (Matt 16:24).	If you wish to be perfect, go, sell everything you have and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven (ER I:2). If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me (ER I:3).
Take nothing for the journey (Lk 10:4)	When the brothers go through the world, let them take *nothing* for the journey, *neither knapsack, nor purse, nor bread, or money, nor walking stick* (Matt 9:3). *Whatever house they enter*, let them first say: *Peace to this house* (Luke 10:5. They may eat and drink *what is places before them* for as long as they stay *in that house* (Luke 10:7) (ER XIV:1-3).

From this you can see that the first two gospel texts the brothers found are the first two gospel texts listed in chapter one of the *Early Rule*. These are texts which in the Gospels are addressed to all followers of Jesus as an invitation to discipleship, and reflect the basic demand of leaving everything behind in order to follow Jesus. The *Early Rule* adds other scripture texts to these two recorded in chapter one, in order to further describe the footprints of Jesus which describe the life of the brothers (ER II:4-5 – Luke 14:26; Matt 19:29// Mark 10:29// Luke 18:30).

The third gospel text the brothers found when they opened the gospel can be found in chapter fourteen of the *Early Rule*, which describes the mission of the brother "as they go through the world" (ER XIV:1).[2] What is interesting about this third text is that it is comprised of citations taken from the sending of the disciples in chapter ten of Luke's gospel. This is significant in itself. It is important to remember that Luke includes two sending stories in his narrative: the sending of the apostles in chapter nine, and the sending of the disciples in chapter ten. The difference in detail between the two accounts is significant. The apostles are sent with "power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases" and "to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal" (Luke 9:1-2). On the other hand, the disciples are sent in pairs ahead of Jesus "like lambs in the midst of wolves" (Luke 10:3), to every town he intended to go to "cure the sick who are there and to say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you'" (Luke 10:9). While the description of the conditions of the journey is taken mainly from the sending of the apostles in chapter ten (many points of which have parallels in the sending of the disciples), the disciples are sent with neither power nor authority, and they alone are given the mission to announce peace, and by virtue of their relationship to the people they encounter and open their homes to them, they are to point out the nearness of the kingdom of God in their lives. The apostles, on the other hand, are to proclaim the presence of the kingdom. Thus, what we find in the *Early Rule* chapter fourteen is a very precise collage of scripture texts, carefully constructed to spell out the mission of the brothers, which is described as the mission of disciples. Francis and the two brothers realized that they were not called after the manner of the apostles, but like the disciples they were called to meet and engage people where they encountered them, to be agents of peace there, and to point out the nearness of God's kingdom without any exercise of power or authority.

[2] Carlo Paolazzi, "La *forma vitae* presentata da Francesco a Papa Innocenzo III," in *Francesco a Roma dal signor Papa*, ed. Alvaro Cacciotti and Maria Melli (Milan: Edizioni Biblioteca Francescana, 2008), 129-34.

This scripture collage describes very well the way the brothers lived their mission. Thus, the early self-understanding of Francis and the brothers was that they were living like the disciples, and accomplishing a mission like that of the disciples, as distinct from the mission of the apostles.

In addition, the author of the *Anonymous of Perugia* records that, "When they heard this, they were filled with great joy and exclaimed: 'This is what we want, this is what we were seeking.' And Blessed Francis said: 'This will be our rule'" (AP 11).[3] This suggests that Francis and Bernard and Peter already had this sense of their life together and their common mission, and that the words of the gospel simply confirmed what was inchoately present in their hearts.

When their number reached eight, Francis sent them out two by two to different parts of the world, reflecting again the description of Jesus' sending of the disciples before him in Luke. Celano recounts that after only a short period of time the brothers came back together again, probably because they encountered problems outside Assisi such as no official or recognizable ecclesial identity. Celano then described what happened upon their return: "They reported the good things which the merciful Lord was doing for them, and if they had been negligent, ungrateful, they humbly asked and carefully accepted correction and punishment from the holy father ... (1 C 30)," describing with these words a chapter which would become the regular practice of the brothers.

In a short time their number reached twelve, and they set off to have their proposal approved by the pope. As Francis wrote in his *Testament*, he wrote their proposal down simply and in a few words. Scholars have been attempting to identify what that brief text contained, but without any consensus. Recently, Carlo Paolazzi has demonstrated that the brothers' proposal which they took to Rome certainly contained the three gospel texts identified above, together with a statement of their obedience to the Pope, without which they would not

[3] Note how this parallels Celano's description of how Francis alone heard the gospel in the church of St. Nicholas, 1C 22.

have even gotten an audience.[4] Beyond this, Paolazzi suggests, it is impossible to know what was in the *propositum vitae*. What actually took place when they arrived in Rome? According to Celano, after some testing of their orthodoxy and some negotiation,

> [Innocent] blessed Saint Francis and his brothers and said to them: 'Go with the Lord, brothers, and as the Lord will see fit to inspire you, preach penance to all. When the almighty Lord increases you in numbers and grace, come back to me with joy, and I will grant you more things than these and, with greater confidence, I will entrust you with greater things" (1 C 33).

In effect, according to Celano, Innocent did not approve a text of the *propositum vitae*. Rather, Innocent was very tentative as his words indicate, and he blessed them, gave them permission to preach penance, and told them to continue the experiment. If and when they grew they were to come back to talk about it. So basically, what we are celebrating today is the very important fact that the Pope told Francis and his brothers to continue their experiment with his blessing! And, it is interesting that Celano reports that as they returned to the Spoleto valley, they still had not decided whether they were going to live as solitaries or among the people, which would seem to be an essential element to any proposal of life. The point here is to remember that the rule of the brothers and sisters follows the life of the brothers and sisters. The text that we call the Rule emerged from the lived experience of the brothers itself and serves as a description of the life lived!

A Discipleship of Brothers and Sisters

The words of Francis's *Testament* cited above articulate the temporal priority of brotherhood to Rule: "After the Lord gave me brothers ... the Lord revealed to me that I should

[4] Carlo Paolazzi, "La *forma vitae*," 134-39.

live according to the form of the holy Gospel" (*Testament* 14). These words of Francis underline the "givenness" of brothers and sisters – we do not choose our blood brothers and sisters as they are a given within a family. The subject of the Franciscan Rule is therefore these brothers and sisters given by God but not chosen as the *Early Rule* states simply: "The rule and life of these brothers is this ..." (ER I:1). This indicates that from the beginning, even before they came to be known as "lesser," the movement understood itself as a discipleship of brothers.[5]

By at least 1212, when Clare joined the brothers at the Portiuncola, the brotherhood had expanded and had become a discipleship of brothers and sisters, a reality which Clare struggled to preserve for her sisters until her death. The testimony of Jacques de Vitry is evidence of this reality when in 1216, visiting Umbria, he encountered the "lesser brothers and the lesser sisters."[6] As their fraternal life developed with time the brothers would come to articulate more clearly the implications of their fraternal life in what can be taken by us today as criteria of authenticity, of which I will identity five.

[5] This perhaps explains a curious feature about the early Franciscan writings – the almost complete absence of any reflection on friendship, which was a significant feature of monastic self-reflection in the twelfth century. In fact, in the writings of Francis it is usually treated in a negative context (the story of the dying rich man in 1 and 2LtF, whose friends are greedy and visit only on the possibility they can get some of his wealth upon his death). In the LR IV, Francis speaks of "spiritual friends" who can help the ministers satisfy the material needs of the brothers, which suggests that "ordinary" friends cannot fulfill that role for the brothers. Perhaps Francis's pre-conversion experience has colored his experience of friendship, which, according to the hagiographers, was characterized by the many "friends" who followed Francis because he paid for their entertainment (L3C 2,7). Also, Francis speaks in ER XXII:3, in a countercultural manner, of our friends as "All those who unjustly inflict upon us distress and anguish, shame and injury, sorrow and punishment, martyrdom and death," in the context of his impending travel to Egypt.

[6] "Letter I (1216)," *FA:ED* 1, 579.

Conditions for belonging

The first gospel text discovered by the brothers, as explained above, was that text which required the disappropriation of everything one had in favor of the poor (Matt 19:21 and Luke 18:22). This text seems to determine everything that follows in the rule concerning the life of the brothers (ER I-XIII). One must thus relinquish everything in favor of the poor in order "to accept this life" (ER II:1). Once this is accomplished, and when the period of probation is ended, one "may be received into obedience" (ER II:9), and like all the brothers and sisters, one should "wear poor clothes" (*vestimentis vilibus*) (ER II:14), that is, the same clothes that are worn by "people considered of little value and looked down upon, among the poor and the powerless, the sick and the lepers, and the beggars by the wayside" (ER IX:2). For these brothers received into obedience then, obedience becomes the space in which they live; it is this space which functions for them as the monastery functions for monks. Thus, with profession, one enters into the network of relationships that create the brotherhood, binding brother to brother, and in this way obedience becomes the space of fraternal life, which is further defined by their clothing which identifies their location as that of the poor and marginalized (*quando conversantur inter viles et despectas personas* ER IX:2).

Mutual obedience and service.

The *Early Rule* describes this dimension of life with these words: "Through the charity of the Spirit let them serve and obey one another voluntarily (Gal 5:13). This is the true and holy obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ" (ER V:14-15). "Let them express the love the have for one another by their deeds...." (ER XI:6). Fraternal obedience is an expression of charity, which must characterize both the actions of the minister and the subject. In fact, when a brother has a difficulty with living the life, the brother in difficulty should be able to speak and deal with the minister familiarly, "as masters with their servants, for so it must be that the ministers are the

servants of all the brothers" (LR X:5). The practice of authority and obedience among the brothers is placed in a context of mutuality – the minister stands with the brother to help discern God's will. This is different from the monastic model of obedience where the Abbot takes the place of Christ, and standing between God and the monk, mediates God's will for the monk. The Franciscan fraternity is a discipleship of equals.

The established link between charity and obedience is significant for Francis. In the longer redaction of the Letter to the Faithful, we are presented with a Christological foundation for the life of the fraternity in verses four through thirteen. After reflecting on the incarnation of Christ and the institution of the Body and Blood of the Lord on Holy Thursday, Francis passes to the passion, which he describes entirely in terms of Jesus' agony in the garden. He presents the agony as a real struggle for Jesus, to the point that he sweats blood (Luke 22:42-44) as he struggles to accept his father's will. Jesus does accept the will of the father which Francis describes this way:

> His Father's will was such that his blessed and glorious Son, whom he gave to us and who was born for us, should offer himself on the altar of the cross: not for himself through whom all things were made, but for our sins, leaving us an example that we might follow his footprints (2LtF 11-13).

As Francis indicates, the Father's will was not that Jesus suffer and die, but rather than Jesus continue to be "for us," that is, that Jesus continue to be the embodiment of the Father's reconciling and life giving love. The cross is not something Jesus does to make his father happy or to appease his anger, but the cross is what the Father in Jesus does for us – embodies the same love manifested in the incarnation, the same love that is made available to us daily in the body and blood of the Lord. In this context of the passion, obedience and charity are sacrificial by nature because they are ways of "being for others," and they reflect God's sacrificial love for

humanity. This, as the text indicates, is the "footprint" that Jesus left us as an example.

The fraternity was not and is not a brotherhood and sisterhood of the perfect. Sin was a reality of life that in every case was to occasion the response of mercy – *misercordia*, a merciful heart on the part of both the ministers and all the brothers. Both rules include prescriptions on how to deal with brothers who have sinned, and in each case the brothers are reminded that "They must be careful not to become angry or disturbed at the sin of another, for anger and disturbance impede charity in themselves and others" (LR VII:3).

Another dimension of the fraternal life of obedience is the practice of regular chapters, that is, conventions – the coming together of the brothers for the purpose of reflecting on their lived praxis of life in the light of their stated intentions or Rule. In the light of this reflection on life, they re-formulated their proposal where needed, and were then sent again to "go about the world" (ER XIV:1).

The brothers and sisters practiced an ethic of sufficiency.

By virtue of their conversion to fraternal life, the brothers relinquished everything, and identified themselves with the poor in terms of social location in both dress and residence. Poverty however, was never taken as an end in itself but was seen as the condition for authentic brotherhood and sisterhood. The story of the first brothers who arrived in Florence (*Anonymous of Perugia* 20-21) suggests this understanding of their experience of voluntary poverty. When the brothers refused the alms of the generous Guy, they explained their refusal in this way: "While it is true that we are poor, our poverty is not as burdensome for us as it is for the other poor, for we have become poor by the grace of God and in fulfillment of his counsel" (AP 21). The companions of Francis too, record a frequent saying of Francis: "I have never been a thief, that is, in regard to alms, which are the inheritance of the poor. I always took less than I needed, so that the other poor people would not be cheated of their share. To act otherwise would be theft" (AC 15).

This self-consciousness of the brothers concerning their poverty as distinct from the non-voluntary poor explains the fact that the brothers supported themselves through manual labor which provided them with their daily necessities. All the brothers who had a trade were expected to continue in that trade, for which they could keep the tools that were necessary (ER VII:9). For their work, the brothers could "receive whatever is necessary, excepting money. And when it is necessary, they may seek alms like other brothers" (ER VII:7-8). These verses contain a description of the economic practice of the early brothers. They supported themselves by work, hiring themselves out as day-laborers. In payment they refused to accept money, but received the necessities of life, food, drink, clothing, etc., for themselves, the brothers who were sick or unable to work, and for the lepers and other poor. If they did not receive a sufficiency for the day, only then could they beg for their necessities and only for that day as other brothers (who perhaps could not work for some reason). The brothers also refused to accept money "because we should not think of coin or money having any greater usefulness than stones" (ER VIII:3).[7] What the brothers were practicing was thus an ethic of sufficiency: if everyone took only what was necessary for the day, there would be enough to go around for everyone, which is explained by this prayer of the brothers: "Let us refer every good to the Lord, God Almighty and Most High, and acknowledge that every good is his, and thank him, from whom every good comes" (ER XVII:17). The Franciscan ethic of sufficiency is the way the brothers' and sisters' return "every good" to God through work and sharing. This ethic of sufficiency contrasted visibly with the Commune of Assisi's ethic of excess which in effect was responsible for the marginalization of the sick and the poor from sharing in the good things God gives to everyone.

[7] There were two kinds of money in circulation in the communes at that point: "strong" money which had an objective value in terms of international trade, and "weak" money which was franked locally, and used primarily to pay workers or make donations to the poor. This "weak" money was frequently devalued, and hence served primarily as a way for the rich to defraud the poor.

Poverty becomes thus the means to acknowledge God as the source and owner of all good things and is never a question of how much or how little one can have, but is rather a matter of ensuring the distribution of what God intends to be at the disposition of everyone's need. But at the same time, this practice of poverty facilitates brotherhood and sisterhood: "Let each one confidently make known his need to another that the other might discover what is needed and minister to him. Let each one care and love for his brother as a mother loves and cares for her son in which God has given the grace" (ER IX:10-11). To make a need known to another implies opening one's heart, becoming vulnerable, but as sisters or brothers this should be done confidently, that is, with the conviction that my brother or sister will hear and respond. Transparent reciprocity is the result of "having nothing of one's own" or of living *sine proprio*:

> Let all the brothers strive to follow the humility and poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ and let them remember that we should have nothing else in the whole world except as the apostle says "having food and clothing we are content with these (1 Tim 6:8)" (ER IX:1).

The point for the brothers and sisters is that poverty is not to be idealized as an end in itself, nor as an ideology of destitution; quite the contrary, the destitute condition of the lepers and the other poor occasioned the assistance and care of the brothers, who attempted to help the poor escape from their social exclusion and their resulting destitution. Poverty means living with a sufficiency, and is an alternative to the commune's economy of excess. For the brothers and sisters, the norm is always and everywhere "necessity." Poverty though does describe a precarious existence, and it cannot be lived alone – one needs others to be able to live only for the day, and hence the absolute need for brotherhood and sisterhood which makes living with a sufficiency possible, but only to the extent that one is able to express one's needs and admit one's dependence on others.

The Fraternal Life of discipleship as mission

The third scripture text which Francis, Bernard and Peter discovered was from the sending of the disciples, as mentioned above. This text, which is embodied in the fourteenth chapter of the *Early Rule* assumes that the brothers are itinerant, and that as they go about the world, they meet people where they find them, engage with them in honest conversation in the homes that are opened to them, eating and drinking what is set before them, promoting peace, and in and through this encounter, pointing to the nearness of the kingdom of God. As David Flood has described this life of mission, the brothers are to "sit down to table and get into people's lives."[8]

This mission is expressed in another way in the Letter to the Entire Order:

> For this reason he has sent you into the whole world: that you may bear witness to his voice in word and deed and bring everyone to know that there is no one who is all powerful except him. Persevere in discipline and holy obedience and, with a good and firm purpose, fulfill what you have promised him. The Lord God offers himself to us as his children (LtOrd 9-11).

No doubt, the language here reflects Francis's experience of Islam in the Middle East, where God was venerated as the All-Powerful and Most High Lord. But the point for Francis here is that the brothers are to witness to God in word and deed, through the way they live what they have promised to live. Then, as the text continues, it connects this mission to reverence of the Body and Blood of the Lord:

> I implore all of you brothers to show all possible reverence and honor to the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in whom that which is in

[8] David Flood, "Assisi's Rules and People's Needs: The Initial Determination of the Franciscan Mission," *Franziskanische Studien* 66 (1984): 93.

> heaven and on earth has been brought to peace and reconciled to almighty God (LtOrd12b-13).

The Body and Blood of the Lord thus accomplishes God's purpose of reconciliation and peace between God and the world. In this sense, the mission of the brothers is "eucharistic," that is, the mission is to effect reconciliation and peace. The accent on the Eucharist in connection with mission here reflects the brothers' method of going about the world, and sitting down at table with people in order to share food and life. Thus, the mission of the brothers, their way of being with others, is eucharistic – it takes the ordinary, everyday experiences of life, like a table and bread and wine, and makes these the occasion for experiencing the nearness of God's kingdom.

The description of the life and mission of the early brothers to this point has not placed preaching at the center of their self-consciousness. Even though the accounts of the approval of the *propositum vitae* in 1209 by Innocent include the explicit papal permission to preach penance, the reality of preaching is not mentioned until one arrives at the chapter on mission to the non-believers (ER XVI) and then again in chapter seventeen where it approaches preaching as a problem:

> Let none of the brothers preach contrary to the rite and practice of the church or without the permission of his minister. Let the minister be careful of granting it without discernment to anyone. Let all the brothers, however, preach by their deeds. No minister or preacher may make a ministry of the brothers or the office of preaching his own ... (ER XVII:1-4).

Thus, while by 1221, the office of preaching developed as a specific office of some of the brothers, an office which demanded a commission by the minister, all the brothers were still being reminded to preach by their deeds. It seems then that in the early brotherhood the brothers preached penance by means of their engagement and exchange with people in their homes, sharing life with them as agents of peace. Work

too would have been an occasion to preach by one's deeds. In addition to this though, some brothers were commissioned as preachers of penance in an official capacity. This office of preaching penance, open to both cleric and lay brothers, was still practiced and received an endorsement in the *Later Rule* IX.

Preaching by deeds was described as the first way to go on mission to the non-believers: "One way is not to engage in arguments or disputes but to be subject to every human creature for God's sake and to acknowledge that they are Christians" (ER XVI:7). Only when it pleases the Lord should a brother "[A]nnounce the Word of God ... in order that unbelievers may believe ..." (ER XVI:7). In a technical sense, preaching then is not the primary ministry of the brothers even when on mission to non-believers, but one among other ministries in which the brothers are engaged, and the primary mode of preaching remains preaching with one's life as witness to one's Christian-Franciscan identity, which reflects their primary mission of "being towards others and with others" as both the location and occasion for experiencing and naming grace.

The Franciscan life of discipleship is being-lesser brothers and sisters

In his Testament, after describing the life of the early brothers Francis states generally that "[W]e were simple and subject and to all" (Test 19). In the longer redaction of the *Letter to the Faithful*, Francis wrote, "We must never desire to be above others, but, instead, we must be servants and subjects 'to every human creature for God's sake' (1 Peter 2:13)" (2LtF 47). The same terms are used to describe the brothers' position in the places where they work (ER:VII:2), their position in the church (LR XII:3), their position among the non-believers (ER XVI:6), and finally their position in the created order (SalVir 13-14). Thus, being subject describes the life of the brothers in terms of Gospel inspiration, their life of

poverty, their social and ecclesial position, their work, their relationship to power and authority in the world and church, and in the context of the mission beyond the Christian world. Those to whom the brothers are to be subject include all people in the world and church, as well as the created order of nature. In short, Franciscan disciples are to be simple and subject to everyone and everything!

It is interesting to note that the scriptural context for this is to be found in 1 Peter 2:13-25, where it appears as a part of a baptismal mystagogy which explains the Christian ethos to the baptized in the context of their life as citizens of the Roman Empire. It open with the admonition "Be subject to every creature because of the Lord (1 Peter 2:13)," and then goes on to specify situations such as the relation to the emperor or governor, and even to their household master, and encourages them to patiently endure even when suffering unjustly. The text goes on to suggest the motive for this: "For to this you have been called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps" (1 Peter 2:21). In this scripture passage one finds two of the metaphors Francis uses to connect the experience of Franciscan discipleship with the life of Christ, who in his incarnation, the institution of the eucharist, and the passion left "us an example that we might follow his footprints" (2LtF 13). The experience of being subject finds its deepest meaning then in the context of Jesus' own example. But Francis does not interpret this in terms of ascetical behavior, that is, in terms of fasting, mortification, or penances, but rather understands the implications of being subject in terms of the way humans relate to one another within the brotherhood and sisterhood, in the church and in the world. The quality of Franciscan life is thus described in terms of being subject.

Being subject or lesser implies a pattern of behavior that is a lifestyle, and even more than a pattern of behavior, it describes a way of being human – simple, without exercising any power over others, even over the created world. There is only one All-Powerful, and that is the Father of Jesus Christ. This way of being human is the counter-example to the greed and violence of the commune of Assisi, and describes the real

condition of the lepers, the poor and the marginalized. Being subject does not imply a passive acceptance of injustice and evil, but the choice to act humbly, patiently, and peacefully in every situation.

Being subject as the brothers understood this also implied that they were committed to the processes of inculturation.[9] That is, they did not impose their way of doing things or their practice of life on different people in different social and cultural contexts – being subject to their Muslim neighbors in Egypt is a clear example of this practice. Even the way they would preach to the non-believers, when it pleased God, was to be done in such a way that it reflected a Muslim understanding of God as they were to preach: "[Almighty] God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Creator of all, the Son the Redeemer and Savior ..." (ER XVI:7), titles of God shared by Muslims. Since being subject is integral to the nature of Franciscan discipleship, this attitude toward inculturation must be the constant context for life in brotherhood and sisterhood, for all ministry and service, and for every encounter with every other man and woman met, wherever they are met and whenever they are met.

Concluding Thoughts on Franciscan Discipleship and the Evangelical Life

What I have described so far is largely the experience of the early brothers and sisters with an end point of 1221, because that is the date of the *Early Rule*. But the brotherhood had already begun to change by the time Francis returned from the Holy Land in late summer of 1220: brothers were aging; new brothers brought with them different experiences of life; educated and clerical brothers brought with them a different understanding of life in the church, etc. Upon hearing of problems in the order, Francis returned to Italy first

[9] I am grateful to Bill McConville, O.F.M., for pointing out to me that this text from 1 Peter has been interpreted in recent exegesis as referring to the process of inculturation.

stopping in Viterbo where he requested a Cardinal Protector for the Order from Pope Honorius. This granted, he returned to Assisi, where he resigned as the minister of the brothers, choosing to continue be the example for the brothers while renouncing all juridical power as a lesser brother. While he had no doubt begun to suggest a more juridical approach to life to the ministers in Francis's absence, now with Francis's invitation Cardinal Hugolino participated in the revision of the Rule so that it could serve as a clearer expression of a legal document and disciplinary law necessary for a religious order. What emerged from the discussions of Francis, the brothers and Hugolino was the *Regula bullata* approved by Honorius III in 1223. This Later Rule juxtaposes both inspirational exhortations from the *Earlier Rule* with clear legal guidelines reflecting the curial demands for the text. In short, it is a very different kind of text than the *Early Rule*.

But, Francis points to this Rule of 1223 as the Rule that he and the brothers have promised to observe. He wrote in his *Testament*,

> And let the general minister and all the other ministers and custodians be bound through obedience not to add or to take away from these words. And let them always have this writing with them together with the Rule. And in all the chapters which they hold, when they read the Rule, let them also read these words. And I strictly command all my clerical and lay brothers, through obedience, not to place any gloss upon the Rule or upon these words saying: 'They should be understood in this way.' But as the Lord has given me to speak and write the Rule and these words simply and purely, may you understand them simply and without gloss and observe them with a holy activity until the end (Test 35-39).

While these words of Francis were and are sometimes understood to be a command to live the rule literally, they rather serve to underline the role of the brothers in the interpretation of their life. A medieval gloss was an authorita-

tive interpretation of a text, and was primarily used in the interpretation of canon law and the bible. A gloss was placed next to a text in order to suggest its authoritative interpretation of the text. Here Francis commands that nothing should serve as an authoritative meaning of the rule, probably directing this statement to both the ministers as well as to the papal curia. What Francis seems to be saying here then, is that the brothers themselves are responsible for interpreting their rule as a fraternity – the brothers and no one else can tell them the meaning of their life. But, beginning with *Quo elongati*, the popes began giving authoritative interpretations of the rule, and sadly this was done at the request of the brothers themselves. Francis was not opposed to change and development, as the Testament itself demonstrates (Test 24), but he was opposed to anyone but the friars themselves taking responsibility for their life of discipleship.

Joe Chinnici has suggested, beginning in 1987, that the biggest obstacle we Franciscan brothers and sisters had to overcome was allowing the church to impose a definition on us that did not fit the reality of our life. He commented:

> On a practical level, we often float around in the soup of religious eclecticism. In some instances, the dominant themes continue to be taken not from a grappling with our own experience and tradition, as mixed as it might be, but from religious publications and national religious organizations to which we belong, both of which generally argue from the perspective of very fine but different tradition of apostolic religious life.[10]

As he himself has argued earlier, I would add, that we also allow the church to define us from a juridical perspective.[11]

Joe continued with a description of the evangelical life:

[10] Joseph Chinnici, "The Prophetic Heart: The Evangelical Form of Religious Life in the Contemporary United States," *The Cord* 44 (1994): 297.

[11] Cf. Joseph Chinnici, "Evangelic and Apostolic Tensions," in *Our Franciscan Charism in the Word Today*, Super Conference VI, St. Bonaventure, NY, July 1987, ed. Alcuin Coyle (New Jersey: Fame, 1987), 96-121.

> The evangelical religious life means witness – witness as a Roman Catholic to the good Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It means taking seriously and publicly naming the fact that God, who encompasses all things, is the personal heart of the evangelical life and the goal of our desires. It means talking about this search for God, a community of Three in One, whose Word became flesh in the womb of a woman, and giving it a social language which communicates to people WHO OUR GOD IS AND WHO WE ARE. It means making visible in the midst of struggle a poetics of love.[12]

Our early brothers and sisters attempted to do just this in their church and world, in their time and place, grappling with their experience and language. This, in effect, is what Innocent III approved in 1209 – he told our twelve first brothers to continue their experiment of living the good life of the gospel, and to check in again when they had more experience. And that is what they did. They left Rome (they did not get stuck there!) and lived as the brothers and sister disciples of Jesus, relinquishing everything as the condition for belonging, living lives of mutual service and obedience, practicing an ethic of sufficiency, understanding their very mode of life as their mission of being simple and subject to everyone and everything. These five characteristics of the life of our early brothers and sisters remain points of reference for our fidelity to their and our charism, but they must be lived in our time and our world and church. In this sense, our life is evangelical because it can never be explained or lived or realized once and for all, just like the gospel of Jesus Christ. As we celebrate eight hundred years of the Franciscan experiment, I can hear Francis saying to us today as he said to his brothers when he was near death, "I have done what was mine to do, may Christ teach you what is yours to do!"

May God give us Peace!

[12] Joseph Chinnici, "The Prophetic Heart," 297-98.

Bodies of Christ: Gender, the Eucharist and the Development of a Vernacular Theology Among Medieval Women

Matthew Farrington, O.F.M.

Early in the thirteenth century, James of Vitry, an Augustinian priest and teacher at the University of Paris, wrote a biography describing the Eucharistic piety of the mystic Mary of Oignies. In it, he describes Mary's devotion to the Eucharist in dramatically physical terms. Mary spoke of the body of Christ as fattening her, purifying her. She reported experiencing a desire to cling to Christ in his human form and she so keenly felt this need that for her to live without the Eucharist was tantamount to death. Others would later describe this attachment to Christ in physical form in similar ways, sometimes in highly descriptive and emotionally charged visionary experiences. A number of women writing on spiritual matters in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries wrote about the Eucharist.[1] The reception or adoration of the Eucharist was closely tied with women's mystical experiences, particularly as they pertained to union with God. Offering an alternative to clerical power, the mystical experiences of these visionaries were central to the development of a vernacular theology.

Theology may be defined as the field and analysis of religious truth and the particular course of that study which may be dependent on a particular faith. Though the experiences of mystics are singular by nature, vernacular theology may

[1] Carolyn Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1991).

best be described as an attempt to express religious experience in a medium accessible to a wide array of believers. This theology finds meaning among ordinary people. What I propose to explore here is one facet of the religiosity of medieval women. In particular I will focus on how medieval women developed an intricate and dynamic vernacular theology of the Eucharist. In order to appreciate this vernacular theology in all of its dimensions, I will take four broad steps. First I will examine how women in the Middle Ages viewed sin in relation to their own bodies. Second, I will examine what they saw as their primary mode of redemption: the body of Christ. This leads, third, to the question of how these women communicated their religious experiences. Clearly, it is through the reception of the Eucharist that women sought redemption and in this they held common sway with all medieval Christians. But for the women themselves, the question of where Eucharistic visions would lead them and how they would define those visions is my concern here. Finally, I will attempt to continue a discussion begun over twenty years ago by the historian Caroline Bynum with regard to the relationship between the Eucharistic visions of medieval women and their own bodies. This relationship between the physical body and the nature of redemption contributed to the emergence of a vernacular theology. It was in the body of Christ that the spiritual imperatives of women's devotional practices could sometimes exceed those offered by the Church.

Medieval theologians had a decidedly different view of gender and the human body than do their modern counterparts. Those same theologians followed a long line of patristic thinkers on the subject of women, in general, and sin in relation to the body in particular that shaped not only Church doctrine but also public policy and life in the domestic sphere. Long held beliefs about the nature of the fall of humankind and the incarnation that redeemed it served to legitimate the harsh view (and often harsh treatment) of women in medieval society. While it seems apparent that medieval women may have been held in what appears to be a state of perpetual infancy, it is also true that some of those women were elevated beyond their cultural experience. Devotional practices, par-

ticularly in devotion to the body of Christ in the Eucharist, were often the impetus to that elevation.

Apart from some powerful abbesses of the period, medieval women in general lacked the spiritual authority or temporal influence necessary for full participation in the formal expressions of sacramental life. Viewed objectively, the relationship between sin and the body impacted the development of theology beginning in the late twelfth century.[2] By equating women with flesh and therefore with sin, the patristic writers, and medieval theologians who followed suit, inflicted not only exclusion but, in some ways, retribution on women for the fall of humankind. Women were associated with the lower, fleshly stratum of humanity and in theology, philosophy and law, were generally subject to the rule of fathers, husbands or clerical authorities.[3]

How did women react to this treatment? It has been assumed that whatever the source of misogyny in medieval society and religious culture, women internalized it. Such assumptions see women as castigating themselves, driven by a "need" to escape their sexuality, itself blamed for the fall. This argument has led to the further assumption that chastity was the central religious issue in the lives of medieval women, particularly those in religious communities. These causal constructs may lead to the analysis that women's lives were significantly shaped by misogynistic and destructive self-images. However, careful attention to what medieval women wrote, how they worshipped and their own thoughts about their gender make it clear that women, by and large, did not seem debilitated by negative symbolism.[4] Women writers of the period generally ignored their gender or, conversely, embraced it as a source of union with Christ. If anything women looked upon the notion of female "fleshliness" with an emphasis on their redemption by a Christ

[2] Ilia Delio, *Simply Bonaventure: An Introduction to His Life, Thought and Writings* (Hyde Park: New City Press, 2001).

[3] Dyan Elliot, "The Physiology of Rapture and Female Spirituality," in *Medieval Theology and the Natural Body*, ed. Peter Biller and A.J. Minnis (York: York Medieval Press, 1997).

[4] Bynum, *Fragmentation*, Chapter IV.

who was in fact fleshly, physical *because* he was human. Redemption was viewed then as the natural outcome of a life seeking union with Christ. Devotion to the Eucharist and the imperative of some women to unite the body of Christ with their own bodies, was more physical pronouncement of their state of being than it was formal theological discourse, thus making it accessible and understandable to others – perhaps especially to other women. This road to redemption for Christians lay, at least in part, in the reception of the Eucharist, a sacrament (and the incarnational language used to describe it) that has formed the basis of Christian theology for centuries.

By the beginning of the thirteenth century women's Eucharistic piety had made inroads into the collective conscience of medieval society from the Low Countries to southern Italy. Some evidence of the soaring popularity of women's piety and spirituality in this period can be found in the records of canonization, in which women seemed to have played a pivotal role. Of the witnesses called to the numerous beatification processes of the thirteenth century, more than half were women. In addition, the proportion of women canonized rose dramatically. By the middle of the fifteenth century about twenty-eight per cent of those saints canonized were women. From 1198 to 1431 ten women were canonized. Five were Franciscan, all were mystics and, like Francis of Assisi himself, their experience was lay, not clerical. All mediated the direct experience of God themselves or as part of a larger community of women.[5] Women were also operating in quasi-religious states of being. They began living their lives in poverty and chastity without withdrawing from the world or becoming part of complex religious institutions. While women were held to be weaker, more emotionally distracted and supposedly more prone to negative psychological excesses, they were at the forefront of these new religious movements – Beguines in the north, tertiaries in the south.[6]

[5] Bynum, *Fragmentation*, Chapter IV.
[6] Bynum, *Fragmentation*, Chapter IV.

It is difficult to determine what the response of women to either popularity or ridicule may have been. Relatively few accounts of the lives of medieval women are left to us. But for a period of time in the middle ages a great deal of writing and record keeping regarding the religious experiences of women took place. This is especially true of the mystics and their devotion to the Eucharist. From the late twelfth to the beginning of the fourteenth century women developed a spirituality that may, at least in part, have been born out of the need to express themselves religiously as individuals apart from male interpreters.

Women also found ways to actively define sanctity on their own terms and this led to innovative methods of spiritual fulfillment. Women were kept from the full realization of bringing forth Christ in the Eucharistic celebration, a duty left to the male clergy. Also, extreme asceticism among male religious, particularly in the new mendicant orders, the Franciscans in particular, was a form of religious piety that was often denied to women on the basis of perceived physical weaknesses. It was thought that the weaker state of women's bodies left them more susceptible to egotistical, maniacal or even diabolical manifestations of religious interpretation. This presented a significant barrier to the outward, visible and often rigorous practice of religious asceticism. Subsequently women embraced Eucharistic piety and devotion as a charismatic alternative. Women could embrace Eucharistic ecstasy to bypass the power of the male clergy and sometimes point out ecclesiastical error. In short, the ecstatic visionary experiences, which I will discuss below, lent the lay status of women profound spiritual significance and authority. Some women retreated into their bodies during these ecstatic moments, not to abandon their physical state but to achieve important and sometimes breathtaking visionary experiences.

To refer to these episodes in the lives of medieval women as hallucinations or to dismiss them outright as the result of physical or mental defect or even as puerile fantasy is to categorize them as unimportant in the overall history of the period. More modern claims that women were deprived of notions of self-worth or that they simply denied their gender in

order to claim some sort of spiritual achievement do not hold sway. In fact a vernacular theology of the body was developing that would empower women with a sense of the sacred and an authority to describe religious experience without the benefit of official interpretation from male clergy. In addition, reacting to dismissal or perceived self-abnegation by imposing twenty-first century sociological terms on the experiences described by the women themselves clearly misses the point as well.[7] What we can do is extrapolate, from the records available to us, a sense of what women experienced during periods of ecstatic vision and in their devotional life. It is how these periods were defined and communicated that we see a specific vernacular theology emerge.

The views of St. Bonaventure on the subject of women are useful here. Briefly, Bonaventure's explanation of original sin, the culpability of women and the redemption inherent in the Incarnation leads to the assertion that before the fall, humans "saw the truth of all reality in the embrace of God's love."[8] Humans fell, no longer living in the presence of the creator but somehow *outside of* the creator. The interiority of life before the fall, a life lived within God, may have sparked the drive of medieval women to retreat inward in order to experience God fully. To medieval theologians the acceptance of knowledge on the part of Eve was the key to losing the constant presence of God. It was in union with God in religious ecstasy that women sought to achieve that presence again.

In the Middle Ages it was the nature of creation, and its logical conduit to humanity's redemption, the Incarnation of Christ, in which women would find their greatest conduit to personal theological development. It would also prove to be the very discourse that allowed them to ponder and expound on theological questions. The story of creation and incarnation itself, evidenced in physical form in the celebration of the Eucharist, would lead medieval women mystics into visionary experiences of God, visions that were tied almost exclusively to the Eucharistic miracle. Since, for medieval women,

[7] Bynum, *Fragmentation*, Chapter IV.
[8] Ilio, *Bonaventure*, 74.

the humanity of Christ was the key to salvation, the union of their own physical and spiritual natures with that of the bodily Christ was necessary not only for their own redemption but as part of a broader religious experience. This was achieved, most often, in the reception of communion and in ecstatic visionary experiences regarding the Eucharist. These visions seemed to serve women well as a means of spiritual fulfillment and gave them a certain spiritual authority. There were, however, notes of discord from men. William of Auvergne argued that "this reversion to bodily things is in fact the opposite to mystical rapture" and Jean Gerson "would similarly urge that such abstractions are not really raptures but a 'dragging downwards or drowning of the spirit.'"[9]

Whatever commentators may have thought, the theology of incarnation and redemption is important in understanding the Eucharistic experiences of medieval women. The incarnation, literally the taking on of a body by God, was thought to be a fitting act for the salvation of mankind because of the fall and because of God's love for creation. Medieval women, particularly mystics though not necessarily members of established religious communities, understood the body to be salvific and consequently embraced dramatic actions that led them to closer union with God incarnate. That union would manifest itself in extraordinary and sometimes disturbing ways.

As with Mary of Oignies, the Franciscan tertiary Margaret of Cortona had a craving for the Eucharist that caused alarm among some of her contemporaries. In one vision Margaret spoke to Christ himself who gave her the privilege of daily communion, an uncommon practice at the time. In the 1270s the Cistercian nun Lukardis of Oberweimer cured one of her sisters, Agnes, who was denied the Eucharist because of failing eyesight. In this case, Christ encouraged Agnes to seek out Lukardis and kiss her, letting their breath mingle. The nun was cured and allowed to once again receive com-

[9] Dyan, *Physiology*, 148.

munion.[10] Devotion to the body of Christ had become, by the thirteenth century, a central theme in women's religiosity.

The humanity of Christ, a core element of Eucharistic miracle stories of the period, was associated especially with women. Indeed, men were less likely than women to have visions and if they did were less likely to make them the focus of their spiritual experience. Virtually all women mystics and visionaries, those in religious orders and not, were, according to Caroline Bynum, "inspired, compelled, comforted and troubled by the Eucharist to an extent found in only a few male writers of the period."[11] Mysticism had become "the only place in the history of the west in which woman speaks and acts so publicly."[12] Christ's very humanity, his physical nature, was the manifestation of redemption according to Bonaventure and other medieval theologians. The body and blood of Christ, therefore, could be held as particularly important in the devotional lives of women, given that women were so often denied access to the devotional, liturgical and certainly sacramental avenues open to men.

In addition, the experience of Christ's humanity was often described in terms of Christ being eaten, Christ as food. As women were chiefly responsible for preparation and distribution of food in their families and communities, it makes sense that this description of Christ as food and devotion to the Eucharist held so much fascination for medieval women. Devotion to the Eucharistic meal and subsequently the presence and ingestion of Christ's flesh, was a logical conduit for women's relationship with God. This extended not only to women who received Christ in the Eucharist but to those who could not. For instance, Juliana Falconieri incorporated Christ into her flesh while she lay dying. When she could not receive the host by mouth, it was placed on her breast and disappeared.[13]

[10] Bynum, *Fragmentation*, Chapter IV.

[11] Bynum, *Fragmentation*, 131.

[12] Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 191.

[13] Bynum, *Fragmentation*, Chapter V.

Women in the Middle Ages saw the humanity of Christ in many forms, notably as baby, bridegroom and the tortured body on the cross. It was the suffering of Christ in particular to which women related their Eucharistic experiences. In fact, according to Bynum's research, virtually all religious women experienced Christ in this manner. Also according to Bynum, the *imitatio* of the suffering of Christ that women sought in their own lives was achieved through extreme asceticism and eroticism. For instance, Mary of Oignies cut off parts of her flesh in one powerful vision of the crucifixion. In the *Book of Divine Consolation* Angela of Foligno discusses the salvific role of the suffering Christ and the centrality of the Eucharist in the redemptive process. Carrying this to an extreme, when she was denied the Eucharist by her confessor, she "drank the scabs from the wounds of lepers, reporting that they were as sweet as communion."[14] It is clear that to ingest the body and blood of Christ and to relate that act to the suffering and death of his body was, to these women, to come into mystical union with God. Medieval women would see this as the locus of their own redemption.

Devotion to the Eucharist was also at the heart of women's response to their social experience, particularly in combating dualistic heresy. Recent historiography has supported the notion that thirteenth century Eucharistic devotion was spiritually and theologically encouraged to thwart Cathar dualism. Counter to the Cathar view that the physical world is central to the existence of evil, devotion to the physicality of Christ in the Eucharist was seen as an important tool in negating the Cathar imperative. For instance, the cardinal who supported Juliana of Cornillon in the propagation of the Feast of Corpus Christi did so specifically so that the feast could be used as a weapon against dualism.[15] In this it is clear that the vernacular theology developed through women's experiences had become a weapon of scholastic theology in the hands of the Church.

[14] *The Book of Divine Consolation of the Blessed Angela of Foligno*, trans. Mary G. Steegmann (New York: Cooper Square, 1986).

[15] Bynum, *Fragmentation*, 143.

As women's visionary experiences surrounding the Eucharist were often held up against dualism, we must understand them also against the backdrop of *positive* religious views of the body. The emergence of the mendicants as the Church's public weapon against the Cathars is important. The extreme asceticism of the mendicants and their rejection of material gain while embracing the view of creation as good, flew in the face of the Cathar notion that anything physical was the result of evil and therefore must be shed. For instance, the extreme asceticism of Francis of Assisi, the founding principles of the Franciscan movement for which he was responsible, and the subsequent theological development that followed and would flourish, lends credibility to the notion that Cathar dualism could be thwarted by conversely embracing and mortifying the flesh.

It is apparent that medieval religious women saw themselves less in terms of gender than in terms of matter. It is significant to note that medieval theology, philosophy and biology all saw woman as representing the physical, lustful and material natures of humanity and that man simply represented the spiritual and logical. It follows then that women would find that very physicality redeemed by a human *fleshly* God. Revelations in mystical visions would lend a certain authority to the women who experienced, interpreted and discussed them.

Mysticism is linked to power in that mystical revelations provide an avenue to interpreting the will of God. Access to God's will challenges every other form of spiritual authority. In the Middle Ages the approved spiritual life for women was the monastic enclosure, a life that in fact fostered the rise of mysticism. The opportunity to read and write, nearly at will, the environment of prayer and contemplation and the monastic goal of union with God all gave women greater access to religious experiences. As I have noted however not all medieval mystics were enclosed or even part of religious institutions. Some were lay women whose direct experience of God transcended their state in life. For some women private vows of chastity and poverty *required* isolation. Still others,

like Angela of Foligno, waited until their families died before committing themselves to Christ.

Women outnumbered men in medieval Europe and so it was not always necessary for women to fulfill one of the two avenues open to them: marriage. For those unmarried women who chose not to enter monastic communities, such as Margaret of Cortona and Angela of Foligno, the tertiary or Beguine life provided a profound personal environment that actively fostered contemplative visionary experiences.

Finally, women visionaries seem to have drawn the conclusion that it was their very physicality, the part of their nature blamed for the fall from grace itself, which provided the opportunity to come into a fuller union with God. They achieved significant control of their bodies and their religious lives simply by embracing, in a physical sense, the very principle Bonaventure and other theologians indicated to be the key to redemption-the incarnation, the humanity of Christ. As we have seen, the development of a vernacular, or popular theology sprang from the exclusion of women from common avenues of religious expression. Women were able to transcend their social experience and promote unique, inspirational and even troubling experiences of God that few, if any, men could achieve. The larger Church would eventually use at least some of these experiences to further its own scholastic and doctrinal agendas.

800 Years of Embracing Earth as *Partner*: The Relevance of the Franciscan Tradition for a World in Ecological Crises

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As I eased into seat 37G on a recent transatlantic flight from Rome to Washington, D.C., my head and heart were full of many amazing experiences associated with the 8th centenary celebration of the conversion of St. Francis. From gathering with so many friars from different corners of the world, to drinking in for the first time the amazing sites of Assisi, to hearing the compelling keynote talks given during the first day of the Chapter of Mats imbued with fiery ideas of evangelizing in the itinerant style of Francis and becoming "new wineskins for new wine"; I am only beginning to process the magnitude of it all! So, when the person next to me in seat 37H asked what I had done of interest during my time in Italy, I hardly knew where to begin! After explaining to him that I was a Franciscan Friar and that I had attended an International Chapter celebration in Assisi on the occasion of the 8th centenary of Francis's conversion, he told me that his name was Martin and that he was a Deputy Director at The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Italy meeting with environmental ministers from the Group of Eight (G8). He said that they were meeting to lay the groundwork for the next major climate pact (which will replace the Kyoto Protocol in 2010). I could hardly believe my luck! Not only is the environment a major concern and interest of mine, but I also had someone sitting next to me with whom I could share my enthusiasm about the relevance of St. Francis's approach to creation for a world in ecological crises. I also realized that I had an opportunity to do a bit of evangelizing and to share

my own efforts to form new wineskins out of the Franciscan heritage and legacy of caring for creation.

On The Notion of Stewardship: Three "S's"

As we began to discuss our concerns about the environment and the need for Christians to respond to the ecological crises as one of the greatest challenges ever faced by the human community, we noted how many of the current approaches to dealing with the environment involve the notion of stewardship. The problem with the idea of stewardship is that for those who aren't familiar with a more holistic and scriptural understanding of the term it often connotes at best conservation and at worst simply using natural resources in the most efficient manner possible. This may be due, in part, to the fact that stewardship is also a term that has been used in the secular and political arenas (i.e., the notion of land stewardship) in a way which has adversely impacted the capacity for the concept to be used adequately to respond to the complex crises of climate change. However, this doesn't imply that we should "throw the baby out with the bathwater." The notion of stewardship has such deep roots in scripture and the Catholic social teaching heritage that it can and must be appealed to as *one* genuine response to what the signs of the times concerning the environment are demanding of us. The current approach to environmental or ecological theology notes the liabilities of the concept of stewardship and mentions or alludes to at least three critical aspects that should be borne in mind and given equal emphasis (we will refer to them as the "three S's" of stewardship).[1]

First, creation must be regarded as subject. By subject is not meant the personal, philosophical, or psychological sense of being endowed with consciousness, rationality, and the unassailable and intrinsic rights of the human person. What subjectivity implies in relation to creation is the *theo-*

[1] For a critical analysis of the concept of stewardship, cf. Willis Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace: Environmental Ethics and Christian Theology* (Oxford: University Press, 2008), 80-82.

logical sense that it has been endowed with a certain subjectivity by virtue of the fact that God in the pact made with Noah explicitly enters into a covenantal relationship with all of creation (Gen 8:21-22). In a very real way, this makes creation a covenantal *partner* of God. Further, what can be referred to as partner can also be referred to as subject. This idea finds clear correspondence in St. Francis's notion that all creatures, no matter how small or lowly, are to be regarded as brother and sister. Additionally, John Duns Scotus's idea of *haecceitas*, or "thisness," can also support the subjectivity of creation by asserting that prior to valuing creation and creatures for their utility, humans must learn to value each creature for the value that it has in, of, and for itself. Second, the utility of creation implies that it can be regarded cautiously as servant. In the book of Genesis God gifts humanity and other creatures with the vegetation they need to be nourished (Gen 1:30). Clearly, creation serves the needs of humanity and other creatures as well. However, by *servant* is not meant servile or slave. The dignity that creation has in serving the needs of other creatures should always be associated with the dignity of Christ who likewise came to serve and not be served (Mark 10:45).

The third "S" of stewardship is that creation should be approached as sacrament. According to John Haught, a professor of Theology at Georgetown and a leading author in the areas of science and faith and ecotheology, a sacrament is "any object, person, or event through which religious consciousness is awakened to the presence of sacred mystery."[2] When we steward creation as sacrament, this implies that we regard and cultivate it in such a manner that the capacity for creation to awaken our religious consciousness to the presence of God is enhanced. Practically speaking, this requires initiatives such as the greening of cities in which habitat is set aside for nature to roam relatively free and give fuller expression to it's manifold and collective *haecceitas*. In other words, if creation is to stir the deep and abiding awareness of

[2] John Haught, *The Promise of Nature* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 76.

God's presence and beauty dancing before us as a dynamic symphony, caring for it requires, ironically enough, that we *let it be*. Commentators on the *Canticle of the Creatures* have noted that in each strophe of Francis's praising God for the goodness of creation, the prepositions *by*, *for*, and *through* can all be used to convey what he is praising the Creator for in each creature. By indicates that creatures themselves offer praise to God each in their own way. For pertains to the intrinsic and instrumental value of each creature in themselves and in relation to other creatures. Through refers to the capacity for each creature to mediate the truth, goodness, and beauty of God – in other words, the capacity of creation to be a sacrament. St. Bonaventure was also well aware of the capacity of creation to stir religious consciousness when he referred to it as a revelatory book, word, and mirror which reflects to some degree the divine likeness and majesty. In our contemporary day, Michael and Kenneth Himes, O.F.M., have co-authored an important and very informative article that highlights the sacramental character of creation and that also establishes a solid basis for approaching creation not only as stewards but as partners.[3]

The Scriptural Path from Stewardship to Partnership: Three "P's"

What was very refreshing in my conversation with Martin was not only his passion for the environment and his determination in working on a global scale for a "carbon neutral" future, but also that he acknowledged the fact that mere

[3] Michael Himes and Kenneth Himes, "The Sacrament of Creation: Toward an Environmental Theology," *Commonweal* (January 26 1990), 42-49. One of the main points proposed by the authors of this article is that there is a strong basis in the Genesis creation account for humans approaching nature or creation as a partner. For an appreciation of the Franciscan view of creation as sacrament, cf. also, Ilia Delio, *A Franciscan View of Creation: Learning to Live in a Sacramental World*, The Franciscan Heritage Series Vol. 2 (CFIT/ESC-OFM), (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2003).

stewardship is not a robust enough concept to move us toward such a future. He agreed that what is urgently needed is a dramatic move from mere stewardship to partnership. As we continued our discussion on how to move toward a carbon neutral future, we noted that a lowest common denominator approach to stewardship (one that doesn't take into account the three "S's") is fundamentally non-relational and objectifying. In other words, if we relate to creation only as steward, then we can easily find ourselves on the slippery slope of simply regarding it as a brute object. Even a balanced and scripturally sound understanding and application of stewardship implies some form of power over or control on the part of the human person toward creation that we must be cautious of. Needless to say, such an orientation alone will not move us into sharing the vision of Francis that all creatures are brother and sister in God, Christ, and through the Holy Spirit.

Another major liability of the concept of stewardship is that it can lend itself to trying to fix the problems we are experiencing with the environment rather than allowing these problems to speak of how creation may be trying to *fix us*. Once again, this isn't to say that non-human creation is endowed with some kind of quasi-consciousness and that it has motives or intentions, in the human sense, which direct its activities. Creation's ability to fix us is rooted in the ecological notion that all life is deeply interconnected and therefore reciprocal (i.e., just as we care for creation, creation cares for us; this echoes the idea in Francis's Canticle that creation governs us). What this implies is that if humans are living in an unbalanced and unhealthy way and using the created world as despots, the response of non-human creation will necessarily be to offer signs of this imbalance (i.e., depleted ozone layer, climate change, rapid and unnatural rate of species extinction, etc....) as well as indications of how the systems of life can be healed (i.e., alternative energy, conservation, global solidarity and elimination of poverty, etc.). In this way creation can offer us pathways to healing and wholeness – if we learn to listen to what creation is trying to tell us.

Given the above mentioned insights of Francis, Bonaventure, and Scotus regarding the capacity for creation to communicate to us in itself and as sacrament, it should really be no surprise to contemporary Franciscans that God is speaking to us at all times by, for, and through creation. The key is to take creation more seriously as subject of God's covenantal love and therefore as a genuine partner on the one journey to God. How can we do this in a manner consistent with our Franciscan tradition and in a way that cannot be reduced by skeptics as mere sentimentalizing or romanticizing? To begin with, just as Francis had recourse to scripture when beginning his life of conversion 800 years ago, we look to scripture to ground the Franciscan intuition that all creatures are sister and brother and therefore *partner* to us in Christ through the Holy Spirit. There are at least three ways in which creation can be described as a partner of humans in scripture (we will refer to them as the "three P's of partnership"): creation is a partner of **p**raise, a partner on **p**ilgrimage, and a partner of the **p**romise.

Psalm 148 is an exhortation on the part of the psalmist for all creation to lift up its voice in praise of God. This psalm likely provided a foundation and inspiration for Francis's own Canticle and implies that the human awareness of creation's capacity to give praise to God in it's own unique way has ancient roots. As a matter of fact, the psalms make generous use of images from nature as metaphors of God's abiding presence in the world. Psalm 148 makes it relatively easy to see how non-human creation can partner with human creation in the sense of praising God. What isn't so apparent and obvious, however, is precisely how creation can be acknowledged as a partner on pilgrimage and a partner of the promise. The metaphor of pilgrimage has often been applied to Christians and the Church to describe the kind of journey that is constitutive of Christian discipleship. The term conjures up the idea of making an arduous trek through unfamiliar, alien, or even hostile territory on the way to our heavenly homeland. The primary problem with this metaphor, however, is that it has acquired some very heavy baggage partially as a result of Christianity's tendency throughout

the ages to pit the material world against the spiritual world. As a result of the material realm being undervalued, the idea of pilgrimage imparts the sense of an escape from the physical world. Romans 8:19-21 paints a very different picture of the dignity of creation from the traditional assumption mentioned above:

> For creation awaits with eager longing the revelation of the children of God; for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it, in hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God.

These verses make it quite clear that any notion, no matter how implicit, of creation being jettisoned on our way to God has nothing to do with God's plan of salvation; quite to the contrary, creation is on a pilgrimage every bit as much as we are and partners with us in helping us to arrive together at our heavenly homeland.

Finally, scripture indicates that creation is also a partner of the promise. Much of being willing, able, and ready to accept creation's partnering with us in realizing and receiving the promise of God has to do with what we believe God promises. It would be true and safe enough to say that God's promises were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Unfortunately this still doesn't answer the question of what – *exactly* – this promise is all about. To grasp the length, depth, and breadth of what God promises we must retrace the entire history of God's covenantal relationship with Israel and mine it to extract what God is up to in this history. Very briefly, from Noah to Abraham to Moses to Jesus Christ, God's covenant has been oriented toward the promise of bringing *shalom* to God's people and God's entire creation. The scriptural concept that perhaps amplifies this promise is the phrase a "new heavens and new earth" and connotes total well-being, happiness, and the fullness of peace for every creature. The phrase can be found in Isaiah (65:17), the Second Letter of Peter (3:13), and the Book of Revelation (21:1). To be sure,

God's promise is fulfilled in Christ, but not so much in terms of redemption from sin as the *inauguration of a new creation* (2 Cor 5:17).

To believe that God's promise is merely to deliver us from sin doesn't capture the full breadth, magnitude, and majesty of what God has been up to throughout history and especially in the life of Jesus Christ. John Duns Scotus knew this well when he crafted his doctrine of the Primacy of Christ. This doctrine holds that the breadth, magnitude, and majesty of the Christ event was so great and unprecedented that it could not simply have been an afterthought of God based on original sin. In other words, God didn't look down upon creation at some point in the primeval beginning and say, "boy, they sure have made a mess of things down there, I better send my Son at some point to bail them out!" Rather, according to Scotus, in planning to send his Son into Creation God would have said something more akin to, "Look at how wondrous, though precarious, all things are turning out as a result of coming into being through my beloved Word! In the fullness of time I will make this Word into Flesh that the world may know how much I love it." How important is it that we have a proper starting point for understanding God's promise to creation and how, precisely, it is fulfilled in Christ! Jesus Christ was first in God's intention to create because he was the word *through* which all was created and the Son *for* which all things are destined. Very simply, creation is a partner of the promise of God to sum up all things in Christ (Eph 1:10) and to fashion a new creation in the form of a "new heavens and new earth" where God will be all in all (1 Cor 15:28).

The Franciscan Path from Stewardship to Partnership

In the course of our conversation about the need to include spirituality and faith values in devising a practical approach to addressing the ecological crises (which is what Martin was doing with the other G8 environmental ministers), he told me

that he is Unitarian. While not knowing a great deal about this Christian denomination, my understanding is that it is very inclusive and open to a wide range of interpretations concerning the doctrinal and practical aspects of the Christian message. While the value of such a faith orientation is that it certainly lends itself to tolerance and acceptance for the sake of unity and communion, it is vulnerable to the extreme of regarding different positions on doctrine and praxis as equally valid (also known as "relativism"). However, when it comes to forming an ecologically sensitive spirituality not all perspectives regarding God's presence in the world and what "awaits" us in eternity are created equal. Some positions, like those that focus on God's transcendence to the detriment of his immanence, and that pit the spiritual against the material, can be ecologically ruinous. As a consequence, it is perhaps more important than ever that Christians be very deliberate in how we imagine God's interaction with creation and what God is "up to" in Christ. For us Franciscans, we have a tremendous spiritual, and intellectual legacy that has inspired the imagination of Christian and non-Christian alike for over 800 years. All that is required of us is to reappropriate certain elements of this tradition in an effort to address the urgent need to formulate an ecologically oriented Christian Spirituality.

While there are many sources that could be referred to in the past 800 years of the Franciscan tradition which could help us in forming an ecologically sound Christian Spirituality, the following are some major contributions that can lay the foundation and framework for such a spirituality. Regarding Francis's witness, the *Canticle of the Creatures* continues to provide the standard par excellence for how we are to regard creation and all creatures. Especially promising is contemporary research by scholars which shows the complexity of the *Canticle* (i.e., the aforementioned idea of being able to represent Francis's regard for creation by using the prepositions *by*, *for*, and *through* interchangeably with each strophe). Additionally, certain key concepts of chivalry that animated Francis's pre- and post-conversion outlook, *cortesia* and *pietas*, are also rich in their ecological implica-

tions.[4] These notions focus basically on courtesy, deference, and respect for the other. St. Bonaventure's entire theology has been regarded as an attempt at articulating more precisely Francis's spiritual vision. Therefore, many concepts can be derived from his philosophy and theology to form an ecologically sensitive spirituality. The following ideas are key starting points: *Contuition* (Francis's ability to see Christ in all things), *Centrality of Christ* (Christ at the center of reality), *Emanation* (God's intimate, triune, and "Christic" way of initial and ongoing creation), *Exemplarism* (all things being created according to the "example" or "exemplar" of the Trinity and, more specifically, Christ), and *Consummation* (creation's "return" to God in Christ through the Holy Spirit).[5] John Duns Scotus's notions of the *Primacy of Christ* and *haecceitas* have received attention by those both within and outside Franciscan circles who are seeking to form an ecologically minded Christian spirituality.[6]

There are, no doubt, many other concepts that can be derived from our tradition and authors who may not be as notable as Bonaventure and Scotus but who are nevertheless worthy of mention. In a previous edition of *The Cord*, Daniel P. Horan lifts up the contribution of Robert Grosseteste, an early, more obscure scholar who helped lay the foundation of the Franciscan intellectual tradition at Oxford.[7] In addition to his insights into the dignity of creation, one of the areas that Grosseteste was a pioneer in is the fruitful dialogue

[4] Roger Sorrell, *St. Francis of Assisi and Nature: Tradition and Innovation in Western Christian Attitudes toward the Environment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 69-75; Ilia Delio, Keith Douglass Warner, and Pamela Wood, *Care for Creation: A Franciscan Spirituality of the Earth* (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2008), 85.

[5] For an introduction to Bonaventure's thought which explores these concepts in greater detail, cf. Ilia Delio, *Simply Bonaventure: An Introduction to His Life, Thought, and Writings* (New York: New City Press, 2001).

[6] For an introduction to John Duns Scotus's writings, cf. Mary Beth Ingham, *Scotus for Dunces: An Introduction to the Subtle Doctor* (Saint Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2001).

[7] Daniel P. Horan, "Light and Love: Robert Grosseteste and John Duns Scotus on the How and Why of Creation," *The Cord* Vol. 57.3 (July/September 2007): 243-57.

between faith and science (as understood in the thirteenth century). Given the fact that an ecologically astute Christian spirituality implies a basic appreciation of what the contemporary sciences are telling us about nature, we would do well to follow Grosseteste's lead and enter into a more deliberate conversation with the natural sciences.

As our conversation began to wind down, it was clear that the spirit of the "poor man from Assisi" had made an impact on Martin. He was refreshed not only by our conversation about how the spirit of Francis is alive and well after 800 years but also by the fact that many within the Christian tradition are starting to re-examine our faith due to the signs of the times concerning global warming. As Franciscans we should be the vanguard for forming an ecologically oriented Christian spirituality.[8] To begin forming such a spirituality, we need only rediscover and integrate into our personal and corporate lives the intuition of Francis that, by virtue of the filial bond we share with all creatures in God, Christ, and Holy Spirit, we are called by God to regard creation as sister, brother, and therefore, as a genuine *partner* on the one journey to God.

> For creation awaits with eager longing
> the revelation of the children of God;
> for creation was made subject to futility,
> not of its own accord
> but because of the one who subjected it,
> in hope that creation itself would be set free
> from slavery to corruption
> and share in the glorious freedom
> of the children of God.
>
> Romans 8:19-21

[8] The aforementioned *Care for Creation: A Franciscan Spirituality of the Earth* is an excellent starting point for beginning to fashion an ecologically astute Christian spirituality.

Franciscan Christology in the Development of the Iconography of the Passion

Thomas Herbst, O.F.M.

Devotion to the humanity of Christ, particularly in regard to his Passion, became an overriding theological concern in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Throughout the Middle Ages the mirror served as a popular metaphorical device and it is an apt one for this article. The twelfth and thirteenth century artists who created the panel crucifixes and the Franciscans who left written testimony mirror a common Christology and both reflect the devotion to the humanity of Christ which characterized their time.

One of the outstanding characteristics of Franciscan spirituality is its optimism. In the Christology of the medieval Franciscans the Crucified Savior was a sign of purest hope and the message he imparted contained all that was best in human nature. The panel crucifixes sought to give visual expression to that image. To envision the Crucifixion of the Lord of Life is to enter into a paradox which lies at the heart of the Christian faith. In exploring that paradox the Franciscans and the artists of central Italy were able to face the suffering in their world without despair or denial and find, hidden within, a source of hope and profound joy.

Consideration of the influence of Franciscan Christology on the iconography of the thirteenth century panel crucifixes is, at first, problematic. Written testimony of the artists who painted the crucifixes is rare and it is not reasonable to assume that all the artists were familiar with the writings which articulated Franciscan spirituality, yet virtually all modern art historians give the Franciscan movement credit

for influencing the artists' conception of the crucifixes. It is important to recognize that the trends that mandated a devotion to, and artistic representation of, the humanity of Christ were far larger and pre-dated the influence of the Franciscan movement, yet the evidence points to the Franciscans as the most important contributors to the production and content of the thirteenth century panel crucifixes. Direct evidence is found in material terms simply by the number of the crucifixes found in Franciscan churches and convents. Further evidence, powerful yet circumstantial, is found in the influence of the Franciscans in the spiritual life of the thirteenth century. As a mendicant order, the Franciscans spoke to the popular imagination in an intimacy born of kinship. The friars articulated the spirituality of the thirteenth century, duly recorded in the arts, precisely because they drank, originally, from the same wells of popular religiosity.

Christ's Passion emerges, in the writings of Francis, as a testament to divine humility. The Suffering Servant theme is linked to Christ's obedience and the pervasive theme of poverty is derived from Christ and applied to members of the Order. Poverty, as a tangible sign of divine humility, is far from being intrinsic to Christ's condition. On the contrary, he is rich beyond measure and his poverty is an expression of compassionate giving bordering on the profligate. An understanding of the Franciscan tendency to invert worldly values is essential here. Poverty is not seen primarily as an ascetic exercise; rather it is participation, to the highest degree, in the courtly values of compassion, service, and generosity. The absolute poverty of Christ marks him as a king and the cross becomes his royal throne. Poverty accompanies Jesus, like a companion, throughout his life. He chooses it at birth and at death. It is in the peculiar conception of poverty, as a sign of favor and mark of nobility, that the transition from the *Christus Triumphans* of the twelfth century crucifixes to the Suffering Servant, or *Christus Patiens*, of the thirteenth century crucifixes is understood to be thematically linked to a Franciscan understanding. Prefigurations are seen on the twelfth century crucifixes in a refusal to portray Christ as a king according to worldly perceptions. He is represented in

a loincloth and his posture, which is not entirely erect as in earlier representations of the Passion, bears witness to the divine humility. It was in the thirteenth century, however, that the ambiguities, still inherent in the triumphant attitude of the living Christ of the twelfth century crucifixes, finally disappear. Though the humanity of Christ was emphasized in the crucifixes of the thirteenth century, his divinity was not neglected. Rather, the divine nature of Christ was manifested through the paradoxical human experience of poverty to the extremes of suffering and death.

Images of the Patristic Period

In contrast to this thirteenth century development, Patristic theologians began with a theology of the divine. It was their peculiar task to represent the *Logos* enfleshed. An iconography beginning at that point was necessarily preoccupied with problems pertaining to the difficulty of representing a transcendent, other-worldly reality somehow manifested in the common place of a particular human life. The Franciscans, as part of the spiritual tradition originating in the twelfth century, were still concerned to represent the two natures of Christ, but they began with his humanity and their emphasis pointed toward the tangible reality of Christ in this world. They apprehended the divine through aspects of Christ's humanity and chose poverty, with its attendant virtues, as a consistent theme of Christ's humanity, and the Passion as its ultimate expression.

Images of Jesus, from the foundation of Christian iconography, were concerned to represent the dual, but unified, nature of the God-man. It has often been the case that the divine nature of Christ, who was interpreted eschatologically as the King of Glory, was represented by such attributes of royalty as robes, the obeisance of men and angels, and a reliance on hieratic abstraction. The close association of the royal and the divine, forged by the union of Church and State, became a dominant theme in the iconography of both East

and West for nearly a thousand years. It has been the genius of certain periods of history to correct this assumption. Kings, as well as peasants, are human beings. Conversely, a Gospel oriented Incarnational theology points to the fullness of divinity residing in the particular person of the Poor Man of Nazareth. The panel crucifixes, particularly under the Franciscan influence of the thirteenth century, remained true to the ancient formula which demanded a rendering of the divine as well as the human nature of Jesus. The innovation occurred by separating the image of the divine from that of the earthly king.

The San Damiano Crucifix is an advanced example of the Umbrian style and indicative of the synthesized artistic and theological sensibilities of the transitional age in which it was created in the mid-twelfth century. At first glance this crucifix conforms in almost every detail to the classical iconographic patterns of the Crucifixion. Christ is represented alive and, therefore, in a triumphant attitude. His divinity is emphasized by the hand of God in a half circle at the top of the crucifix in a motif common to the Carolingian period. Angels testify to Christ's glory in the upper periphery, while Stephaton and Longinus are represented in radically reduced hieratic perspective in the lower periphery of the crucifix. In these respects, the San Damiano Crucifix seems far removed from the humanizing spirituality of Francis of Assisi who fell in love with the Poor Man of Nazareth. Its iconography is almost purely triumphant; its emphasis clearly on the divine, but on closer inspection it is possible to find the humanizing influences that were transforming the art and spirituality of the age. The linear design of Christ's body is a crude facsimile of the iconic conventions of Byzantium, but the raised halo introduces an element of Romanesque plasticity rooted in the nascent Western interest in naturalism. The head of Christ, thus emphasized, does not conform to the disinterested Cosmic Lord with staring eyes and fixed expression found in so many early crucifixes. Rather, it is transformed with tenderness in the expressive, almond shaped eyes and a half smile on the lips of the Savior. Christ's head is slightly tilted, emphasizing his humanity with a human gesture. In

a similar way, though expressed in the iconographic form of *Christus Triumphans*, he is clearly not a king; instead he wears the loincloth of a poor man. The arms of Christ on the San Damiano crucifix do not rigidly conform to the lateral beam of the cross in the way of the earliest representations of the Crucifixion. In this way, the conception of the Cosmic, otherworldly Christ is mitigated and we find him here in the posture of the *orants* similar to early representations of Christians in the catacombs. What begins to emerge is a portrait of compassion within a human context that the word, in its literal sense of "suffering with another," demands. What becomes obvious is that the primary message contained in this crucifix is that of Christ as Sacrificial Victim. What finally emerges in the crucifix at San Damiano is a kind of superimposition of iconographic styles. It almost seems that the anonymous late-twelfth century artist was constrained by conservative influences to represent Christ in the tried and true traditions of Byzantium, pervasive in Umbria, and the Romanesque which was quite mature at that time. Beneath these iconographic conventions it is possible to discern radical currents, awakened in the Romanesque and rushing toward greater expression in the dawning Gothic, which would facilitate the humanization of Christ in art.

The Thirteenth Century Synthesis

The flowering of Gothic art in Western Europe coincided with the painting of the thirteenth century panel crucifixes in an inevitable way. The Gothic style of painting and sculpture formed a visual medium for the representation of Christ in a way compatible with Franciscan Christology. This is easily understood if one remembers that art and spirituality remained inextricably intertwined throughout the Middle Ages. Just as the Christology of the Franciscans is but an articulation of a much larger spirituality animating the Western Church, Gothic art provided another means of communicating the same spiritual impulses.

In many ways Gothic art built on the foundation of the Romanesque in much the same way that the Franciscans built their Christology on the foundations of twelfth century theological currents articulated by writers like Hugh and Richard of St. Victor and Bernard of Clairvaux. Gothic art continued the medieval preoccupation with the tension generated by the relation of spirit to matter and, for a while, achieved a harmonious balance. It is naturalistic as well as idealistic. Like Romanesque art before it, the Gothic emphasis was increasingly placed on the range of human emotion as a newly acceptable means of conveying spiritual truth. The impulse toward an affective, or devotional, spirituality also increased during the period and found a ready receptacle for expression in the emerging Gothic style. Figures are often elongated and the whole orientation of Gothic art, from architecture to painting, is characterized by a tendency toward verticalism. This becomes apparent in the panel crucifixes of the thirteenth century as the body of Christ is elongated and curves in an agonized ascent. It is also indicative of the shift of Christological emphasis pioneered by the Franciscans, one which began with the humanity of Christ and, in a kind of spiraling ascent, was then able to apprehend the divine. In summary, Gothic art, through its synthetic combination of the spiritual and the material, was able to represent the human figure charged with emotional variety and in aspects of relationship. There is a relationship forged between the human and external world which, since the twelfth century, was increasingly perceived as the theater of salvation history and, therefore, sanctified.

The first of the great thirteenth century artists involved in the painting of crucifixes was Giunta Pisano. Pisano deserves credit for the complete transformation of the concept of the painted crucifix, establishing a tradition that remained a model throughout the thirteenth century. In his earliest surviving work in the Potiuncola at Assisi this is clearly seen. It is in Pisano's treatment of the figure of Christ that the most radical innovations occur. The erect and open-eyed figure of the Romanesque *Christus Triumphans* gives way to a Christ, seemingly dead, with his head slumped over on his

shoulder in an expression of infinite sorrow, but also tender composure, on his face. The arms remain in the supplicating *orans* posture of the Romanesque crucifixes, but the body continues the rhythm in a gentle curve to the left. The overall effect of the crucifix imparts a kind of sympathetic pathos, or compassion, which strikes a delicate balance between the natural revulsion one might feel at a truly realistic representation of the Crucifixion and the total denial of pain seen in earlier crucifixes hampered by the conservative motif of the *Christus Triumphans*. It was an art form peculiarly receptive to the Franciscan emphasis on the pathos of Christ as the touchstone of devotion to his humanity and, if one should care to translate the message of compassion which radiates from the crucifix, a means of apprehending the divine through the highly affective, or emotional, elements which characterized Franciscan spirituality and, indeed, the spirituality of the age.

Coppo di Marcovaldo, the first Florentine painter to be identified by name, was known to be living in the parish of San Lorenzo in Florence in February of 1260. Marcovaldo strove to upset the delicate balance of emotion achieved by Giunta Pisano in his synthesis of Byzantine formalism with the new plasticity of the Gothic. Ferdinando Bologna describes Marcovaldos success in his depiction of Christ on the San Gemignano Crucifix:

> ... spiky and bristly. It is a drama taking place within an automaton with a creaking, rusting heart; the deep shadows plunge beneath his leathery eye-lids; the tendon beneath the armpit squeals like a train wheel on a curved track. We have here, in short, a feeling for the horrific and its effect in transporting the mind, even if these effects go beyond what one would expect in this Christ from the depths of hell, defeated by death, yet irreconcilable with it.[1]

[1] Roberto Longhi quoted by Ferdinando Bologna, *Early Italian Painting: Romanesque and Early Medieval Art*, ed., Roberto Longhi, (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1963), 75.

It would be impossible to grasp the meaning, or to comprehend the efficacy, of such a ghastly image outside of the context of the naturalistic idealism of Gothic art animated and articulated by Franciscan Christology. The inverted exaltation characteristic of Franciscan spirituality is applied here to Christ as the ultimate Poverello. His poverty is translated in starkly emotional terms which do not, however, include despair. He is not reconciled to death. Rather, according to the Gothic formula of spiritual transcendence manifested in the natural world, Christ's very agony, expressed in pathetically human terms, is the medium of his transcendence, and an intimation of the divine.

A Mirror hung on a Cross

We have seen the close association of the central Italian panel crucifixes, most of which were painted for the many churches of the young mendicant orders, and the development of Franciscan Christology. The Franciscans were not simply one group among many in the medieval Church with a particular message fated to pass into obscurity. Rather, they articulated a spirituality, much larger than themselves, which originated in a deep longing among the Christians of the time for a radical response to the Gospel. It was a response fraught with urgency as the Gospel took on a character of existential relevance and immediacy. Twelfth century writers like Bernard of Clairvaux and the Victorines met Jesus in the course of their prayers and meditations in a way that dissolved the barriers of time. Their unfeigned love was given to a Master who was known, and knew them, in an intimate and contemporary way. Francis of Assisi was also an intimate friend of Jesus and, in the union made possible by that friendship, mirrored Christ to his contemporaries of the thirteenth century. The panel crucifixes give graphic testimony to this fact by representing Christ, in the aspects of poverty and suffering communicated by his Passion, as a medieval penitent. It was a theme echoed by the Franciscans.

The image of the mirror, pervasive throughout late antiquity and the Middle Ages as a metaphorical device, is aptly applied to the panel crucifixes in their relation to the Christology of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The panel crucifixes mirror the affectivity and naturalism of those centuries by representing Christ in terms of human realism; not only physically, but emotionally and, as such, faced the harsh realities of human suffering through the Franciscan paradox of evangelical poverty; uniting them to the sufferings of Christ and transforming them into a medium of spiritual transcendence in full recognition of Christ's divinity. The genius of the panel crucifixes was demonstrated by the reclamation of the Suffering Servant image as eschatological in its own right. The inverted wisdom of Franciscan poverty in its exaltation of humility and lowliness made it possible for Christ to remain the divine king of Kings without crown or robe, but with a cross for his throne.

The Cord, 59.3 (2009)

Francis and the Short-Attention-Span World

William Schmitt, S.F.O.

In searching a directory of patron saints one doesn't see anyone designated to help those who suffer from one of today's most widespread and troubling conditions. The condition is called attention deficit disorder (ADD), and recent scholarship might incline one to nominate Saint Francis of Assisi as its patron saint *par excellence*.

Any student of ADD quickly realizes that its symptoms are everywhere around us. "American society tends to create ADD-like symptoms in us all. We live in an ADD-ogenic culture."[1]

Authors Edward M. Hallowell, M.D. and John J. Ratey, M.D. offer plenty of evidence for this statement: our fast-paced lives, our tendency to surf TV channels with the remote control, our demand that people "cut to the chase" or sum up their arguments with a soundbite, our obsession with the present moment, our disinterest in the past or the future, plus the high levels of restlessness, distraction, anxiety, impulsiveness, and incivility among people.

In some way we all suffer from short attention spans to one degree or another, and with only a bit of hyperbole, that inattentiveness infests our culture like a cancer. In the wake of 9/11 and the New Orleans hurricane disaster, America looks more and more like a place that does not plan for the future, take appropriate precautions or really address lin-

[1] Edward M. Hallowell, M.D. and John J. Ratey, M.D., *Driven to Distraction: Recognizing and Coping with Attention Deficit Disorder from Childhood Through Adulthood* (New York: Touchstone, 1995).

gering problems—like poverty, social injustice on local and global scales, and dysfunctional relationships with the environment.

As a society, we need to take people and things more seriously. We need to become re-sensitized to the details of problems, to the dignity of people, to the artificiality of so much that distracts us from everyday reality. Paradoxically, as the 9/11 Commission report pointed out, our country has also suffered from "a failure of imagination" and an inability to see "the big picture" underlying problems, that is, the many ways in which our lives, our policies, and our behaviors are connected and need to be wisely integrated.

Francis, I think, would write the same paradoxical prescription for what ails our society. This man whose out-of-the-box thinking included a bold peacemaking initiative during the Crusades and whose mind- and heart-expanding attitude toward life helped to launch the Renaissance would urge us to exercise our imaginations even as we grasp every joyful detail of the tangible world.

Our short-attention culture clearly has much to learn from Francis. When we move to the individual level, where clinical diagnoses of ADD are being made so commonly among Americans, the saint's call to conversion and healing for our weak human bodies gains special poignancy.

Look at some of the specific clinical symptoms of ADD. *Driven to Distraction* lists roughly twenty "diagnostic criteria" for ADD in adults. They include: a sense of underachievement, of not meeting one's goals; difficulty getting organized; having many projects going simultaneously; trouble with follow-through; a tendency to speak or act spontaneously and impulsively, without considering the timeliness; easy distractability; trouble focusing attention; a tendency to tune out or drift away in the middle of a page or a conversation; and restlessness and nervous energy.

We see these traits in the way people drive, in the way people spend money or manage their finances, in the way we treat others and ourselves.

Of course, the life and teachings of St. Francis stand foursquare against these traits, as he points to the Gospel

and calls for deep penitence that turns our hearts away from ourselves and toward God. He is the saint of the "big picture" and the "whole context." He calls us to a true joy that sees God's blessings even in our suffering, as well as a rich sense of thankfulness that flows from humbly acknowledging our lack of control, and our total dependence on God.

With ADD as a lens through which so many of us view life, as a cross that we carry to one degree or another, through which the Lord is calling us to deeper conversion and intimacy with Him, there is new hope from the experiences and teachings of St. Francis.

There is another book, about the close cousin of ADD called Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.[2] This book embraces the mental and spiritual judo-flip which can be identified with Francis's perspective on life. The Franciscan judo-flip finds joy amid sorrow and turns human weakness into God-given strength. It sows light amid darkness, love amid hatred, hope amid despair.

The Gift of ADHD brings a Franciscan judo-flip insight—implicitly, not explicitly—to the attention-deficit diagnosis. The author suggests that ADD is simply a different mode of paying attention, not necessarily a disorder. Indeed, it can yield certain good fruits. Those who exhibit ADD symptoms may be unusually creative and exuberant, may have an "ecological consciousness" that attunes them to the natural world and an "interpersonal intuition" that leads to deep insights about people and situations. The author tells us individuals with ADD may be "emotionally sensitive and expressive." They are "living in a world that has the volume turned up much higher than for others."

This description could be applied to Francis and his brothers and sisters. Because his message contains the perfect responses to the negative side of ADD, he has pinpointed the positive side of this alternative mode of attentiveness. Indeed, he has personified it.

[2] Lara Honos-Webb, *The Gift of ADHD: How to Transform Your Child's Problems Into Strengths* (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 2005).

In no way is this article meant to engage in any modern academic exercise of "psychological history" that might try to analyze Francis as an ADD sufferer who "overcame" his illness. Rather, he sensed and sought to overcome a growing disability in the world around him. Francis seems to have lived a life that "had the volume turned up." The Lord brought this saint into an increasingly complicated society that was starting to exhibit the modern marketplace's tendency toward distraction and doublethink, its obsession with time and prosperous productivity. The Church was "falling into ruins" because it was losing its focus on the Gospel.

Francis was a child of this age who, at about the midpoint of his life, became aware of an alternative response to the world—a response that was at once true to his unique personality and true to the grace of God in his life. He saw that this unusual response, this alternative way of paying attention, was a perfect fit with the world because it helped to fill in the fault-lines that were forming.

As a member of the Secular Franciscan Order, I am aware of the order's challenges in the middle of a world where the same fault-lines exist and have grown deeper. We have been indoctrinated with the secular culture's attention deficit disorder. We have only our personal strengths and proclivities, plus our willingness to call down God's judo-flip power to convert and transform our weakness and sinfulness, with which to play our role as healers and fault-line fixers. We have been called to "turn up the volume" in our own lives so that we keenly sense the ambient dissonance and earnestly strive to sow harmony into it.

Using the ADD lens to see Francis more clearly, we may find ways to walk with him as we strive to make a positive difference. Here are a few starting points for a dialogue with Francis.

1. Francis grew up as a rich merchant's child in a society that offered many new enticements and exhilarations, including products from around the world, the romantic tales of knighthood told by troubadours, and the perceived glories of going to war. His exuberance gave him a reputation as the

king of party-goers. Both before and after he developed an intimate relationship with the Lord, one can picture Francis as an impulsive and emotionally expressive person.

In his first pursuit of the financial wherewithal to rebuild the Church of San Damiano, Francis stole merchandise from his father. When he was called to task by his father in the presence of the local bishop, he stripped off his clothes and separated himself from his family. When he confronted a leper who previously had represented revulsion to him, he kissed the leper, and he soon pledged himself to Lady Poverty. If his early life emulated the commercial slogan, "Just Do It," the energy and spontaneity with which he came to serve the Lord in the most unusual ways evoked the new slogan of "Just Do It for God." As G.K. Chesterton puts it in his *Francis of Assisi*, Francis "flung himself into fasting and vigil exactly as he had flung himself furiously into battle." Elsewhere, he says of Francis, "He devoured fasting as a man devours food. He plunged after poverty as men have dug madly for gold."[3]

2. One reason why nobody seems to be paying attention to what's important today is because so much of what's important is presented or experienced only in the abstract. The rich live apart from the poor, so they don't experience the miseries of poverty. Political issues are marketed as soundbites and hardly ever lead to real debate, much less real action. Religion is often presented as a mere call to good behavior or simply an invitation to be saved through a mere declaration of belief, rather than as a lifelong journey into intimacy with Christ and a willingness to share His cross.

Francis would have none of this abstraction. When the Lord called him to "rebuild my church," Francis went off and physically rebuilt churches. He wasn't inclined to be a "nature lover" in the generic sense; he loved creation by loving every creature. He went further and sought relationship, or at least kinship, with every creature, using names like Brother Sun, Sister Birds, and Brother Wolf. He wanted to bring the

[3] G.K. Chesterton, *Francis of Assisi*, (Garden City, NY: Image, 1987).

wonder of the incarnation alive for himself and others, so he transformed the cave at Greccio into a living Nativity scene. He was able to truly adore the Eucharist because there was nothing abstract or "symbolic" about it; this was sublime, tangible reality, a great gift of God's unfathomable humility.

The writing of the Rule for his order is the ultimate shunning of abstraction. Francis instinctively knew that the Gospel—and the everyday mandate for going from Gospel to life and life to the Gospel—was all that really needed to be said. The Franciscan is called to elevate love from mere concept into concrete action and authentic relationship. For the SFO, the "commissions"—focused on the environment, the family, peace and justice, and the workaday world—offer specific pathways where this elevation can occur.

3. The ecologically conscious mind is curious about the "big picture" within which little things are occurring and is receptive to cues and messages of meaning that may arise anywhere within the ecological setting. Our society tends to grab onto the little aspects of the big picture that people can control, or that people can understand rationally, or that people can tell internally consistent stories about. ADD is to be celebrated, in a sense, if it leads people to be quickly bored by the "same old assumptions."

A healthy alternative to modern "attentiveness" prods people to humbly welcome surprises, super-natural connections, and information contrary to the conventional wisdom. This "ecological" wisdom, taken literally, would make us better stewards of the environment. More generally, it would make us more awe-filled, joyful, and thankful observers of God's surprising interaction in the world. Chesterton says of Francis, "The whole point of his point of view was that it looked out freshly upon a fresh world that might have been made that morning."[4]

What a great gift Franciscans can be to other people if we really listen to them and seek to respond to them as wonder-

[4] Chesterton, *Francis of Assisi*.

ful mysteries, imposing no emotional baggage or presuppositions upon them. For the ADD "sufferer," one's mind might drift away from the exact words another person is saying, but the mind might stay attuned—perhaps exceptionally well attuned—to the meaning behind the words, or the circumstances behind the words. This alternative "attentiveness" is the realm of imagination and intuition—not the kind of intuition that Malcolm Gladwell's best-selling *Blink* calls "the power of thinking without thinking," but an intuition that is conscious and conscientious at the level of love for God's creatures and love for God's truth. Animals were drawn to Francis because he loved them as they were, in a broadly understood context, and he carried no baggage of fear or manipulation or falsehood.

Much more could be said about Francis from the perspective of attentiveness, and it seems to offer valuable insights for those who would follow him in an attention-starved world. Perhaps it's a paradoxical truth in this world of meaningless noise and aimless action that we need to "turn the volume up" so that we see and hear what we've been missing. Our proposed patron saint for an ADD-ogenic world can continue to help us fully experience the grace-filled joys to which we have numbed ourselves, and hear in the zephyr our God who demands a receptive-yet-restless soul.

Neglected Pages in Franciscan History

Jean François Godet-Calogeras

There is an early Franciscan document that has been published and studied by a few scholars, but that is still little known and certainly very little used. Although relatively short, it has generated some discomfort among Franciscans and has always been relegated to the last pages of any collection of the Franciscan sources, usually after the *Fioretti*, the "Little Flowers" of Saint Francis, classified as beautiful and poetic stories of no or little historical value. But the *Sacrum Commercium sancti Francisci cum domina Paupertate* — it is its Latin title — is an early Franciscan source, and beyond its poetical style is of great historical importance. In English the text is available in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, Volume I, New York: New City Press, 1999, 529-54, where it is published under the title "The Sacred Exchange between Saint Francis and Lady Poverty."

The title

The title has caused problems from the beginning. As it was very often the case in the Middle Ages, the author does not seem to have bothered giving our document a title, nor signing nor dating it. So, the various manuscripts have various titles. When they published their critical edition in 1929, the editors of Quaracchi decided on a title that was in concordance with the main tradition, a decision with which Stefano Brufani agreed in his more recent critical edition (As-

sisi: Edizioni Porziuncola, 1990). Parts of that title come from the text itself: *commercium*, *Franciscus* and *Domina Paupertas*. But other parts are not from the text: *sacrum*, *sanctus*. Those words and the omission of some others that should have been part of the title reflect some later interpretation or misunderstanding.

Francis appears alone in paragraph 4 of the text, but from paragraph 12 on he is always associated with his companions. Moreover, Francis is called *beatus*, blessed, and not *sanctus*, saint. Our document presents the group of Francis and his companions, and does not focus on Saint Francis in his aura.

Lady Poverty is the central character of the story. She is the woman that Christ has chosen. So, she is Jesus' lady, and not Francis's lady. Francis and his band want to reach her, because they know she will lead them to Christ, God, and infinite happiness.

The word *commercium* is taken from paragraph 13 of the text. There, however, it is not called *sacrum*, sacred, but *salutare*, which means "that saves, gives health." The Latin word *commercium* is difficult to translate in modern languages. It means basically the activity of exchanging (*cum*, together) something (*merx*, merchandise). Modern English uses words like business, or trade. But the English language also has a word taken from the French and originating in our Latin word: commerce. As its Latin ancestor, commerce does not only mean buying and selling merchandise, but also social exchange, including sexual relationship. Although difficult to translate, the word *commercium* has too much content to be dropped without losing a key to understanding the document. (And in the English translation it has, indeed, been abandoned.) What it is all about is not something between Saint Francis and *his* Lady Poverty. This document — that we will refer to as *SC*, for *Sacrum Commercium* as well as *Salutary Commerce* — is about the relationship between Poverty, chosen by Christ and personified as a lady, and Francis and his band. A relationship in which there is an exchange that, in turn, saves.

The story

The argument of *SC* is simple: according to Christ's teaching whoever wants to partake in the reign of God (and its wealth, and its happiness) goes the way of poverty; poverty is the key to reaching the reign of God.

Here comes Francis. From the day he becomes a disciple of Christ, he wants to find poverty. He asks people if they have seen her that his soul loves. Of course, people don't understand what or whom he is talking about. Francis goes to those who have power and education. Rebuffed by them, Francis leaves the city. (*SC* does not name Assisi, suggesting that what the story implies is not limited to a particular city.) Wandering the country, Francis meets two old men. Again he asks them if they know where lives Lady Poverty whom he is longing for with love. The old men tell Francis that they have seen Poverty many times. She lives on a high mountain, where God has established her. If he wants to climb the mountain and get to Poverty, he should get rid of any encumbrance, and he should also take with him faithful companions: one does not ascend a mountain alone.

Francis gathers his band and together they start climbing. From the top Poverty sees them and is amazed how fast they are. Soon they arrive, and Poverty welcomes them. In their response the brothers ask Poverty to receive them in peace and to keep them safe. Remembering the whole history of salvation, and how Christ loved her and chose her, they ask Poverty to always free them from dangers.

Full of joy Poverty receives them, calling them her brothers and dearest friends. Then she tells them her story – sorry, her story –, how the human being, her companion from the origins, fell from innocence into greed and appropriation, until Jesus and his disciples came. She tells them about her major rival, Avarice, who lives only for making profit and accumulating possessions. Avarice is very smart: to attract more people, she can present herself in disguise as Discernment or Precaution. And she gets much help from Apathy. Seduced and deceived, many who had followed Poverty aban-

doned her and, having grown lazy and fat, even persecuted her. Poverty had tried to rescue them, but they would not listen to her. So, Poverty recommends that the brothers be careful and humble.

Francis, with his brothers, tells Poverty they totally agree with what she said, and that they definitely want to serve her. Poverty can contain herself no more. She runs, hugs them and kisses them. Then, together, they descend the mountain to the place where the brothers dwell.

There the brothers invite Poverty to eat with them. But she asks them to show her their oratory, cloister, refectory, everything. They answer that she must be tired from the journey, as they are, and it would be better to eat and take some rest first. Poverty is pleased. They all share a very simple meal. Then the brothers take Poverty to a place where she can get some rest. After a brief and peaceful sleep, Poverty wakes up and asks the brothers to see their cloister. The brothers take her to the top of a hill and, showing her the whole world, as far as they can see, they tell Poverty: "Lady, this is our cloister."

Before returning to her mountain, Poverty admonishes the brothers and leaves them with words of encouragement.

Who wrote *SC* and when?

As previously commented, medieval authors usually did not sign their work. Neither did the author of *SC*. Some manuscripts attribute *SC* to John of Parma who was minister general of the Franciscan Order from 1247 to 1257 and died in 1289 at age 81. One manuscript – but only in a marginal note – attributes *SC* to Saint Anthony of Padua who died in 1231 at age 36. An Italian translation of *SC* from the early sixteenth century attributes it to Crescentius of Iesi who was minister general from 1244 to 1247. A modern scholar thinks *SC* was written by John Parenti, minister general after Francis's death from 1227 to 1232. Another, more recently, proposed Caesar of Speyer, who was one of Francis's com-

panions. No hypothesis is totally convincing. From the text itself, and this is probably more important, we can deduce a few things about the personality of the author and the time of composition.

First of all, the author of *SC* knew the Bible well. Medieval writers liked to compose their texts using Biblical words; not only would they quote passages as authorities to reinforce their assertions, but also throughout their texts they would use bits and pieces of sentences that would echo in the reader's mind (this is called reminiscence). The author of *SC* did that a lot. Such an ability suggests that the author had received very good scholarly education. Moreover, in using the Scripture so much in his writing, the author of *SC* wanted to put the Franciscan movement in a Biblical perspective, i.e. part and continuation of the history of the people of God.

The author of *SC* also knew well what happened in the early years of the Franciscan movement. His fictitious tale is quite parallel to the historical events as we know them from other documents, and many sentences of *SC* are reminiscent of Francis's (and later Clare's) writings, particularly when it deals with the Franciscan way of life.

Whoever wrote *SC* must have been strongly implicated in the living experience of the early Franciscan movement and in the internal struggles following Francis's death. The original manuscript of *SC* has not been preserved, but the oldest copy, preserved in Assisi, is from the middle of the thirteenth century. That and the fact that *SC* does not present Francis as a canonized saint tend to prove that *SC* was composed in the second quarter of the thirteenth century, probably soon after Francis's death (1226) and before his canonization (1228). At that time the conflict between the first Franciscan generation, those who had left the unjust commune of Assisi and its siblings; and the newcomers from the transalpine intellectual and clerical milieus who had ties with the urban society, was growing fast. The author of *SC* belongs to the first.

The style

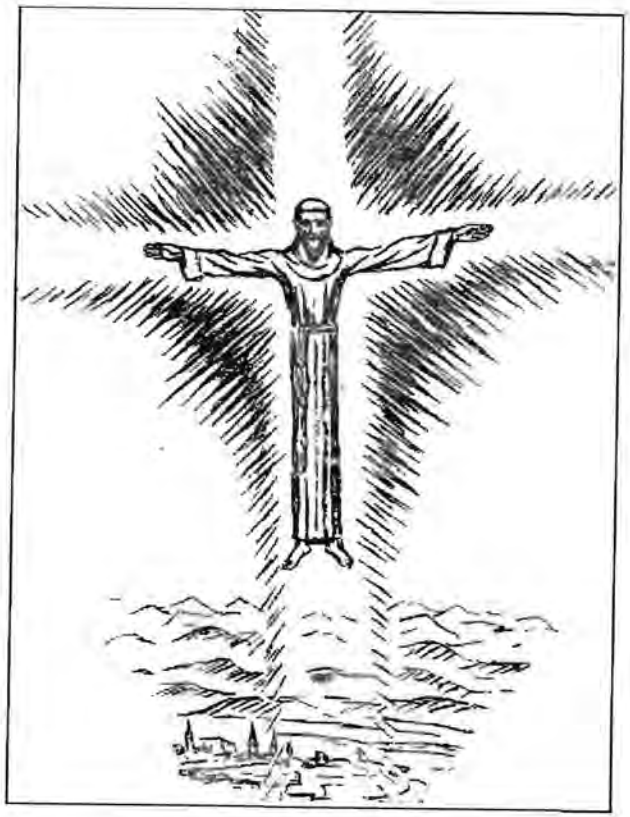
The author of *SC* chose to write in a poetic way. We can wonder why. Some would assert that *SC* has been written in a poetic style because it is a spiritual document. Maybe. It all depends on what is meant by spiritual. The word spiritual has often been used to refer to a world without time and space, to another world separated from the material world. I must disagree with such use. Spiritual belongs to spirit, indeed, but the spiritual does not have to be separated from the material, for spirit is what gives matter life. With that in mind, I would consider *SC* a spiritual document. Even better, I would consider it as an inspired and inspiring document.

This brings us back to the poetic aspect. So often poetry is considered as imaginary, unreal and unrealistic. It is well known that poets are dreamers.... However, this is not acknowledging what poetry or poesy really is. Poesy comes from *poesis*, a word that the Latin language had borrowed from the Greek. In ancient Greek *poiesis* is the action of *poiein*, of creating. So, poesy actually means to create, to make a different reality.

As a matter of fact, poetry has been and is still used as an alternative expression, a different way of expressing oneself in order to be heard or at least not to be repressed. It is particularly the case with minorities. In the Middle Ages, for instance, poetry allowed women to express themselves in a patriarchal society without competing or conflicting with men. In our times, poetry has allowed dissidents to express themselves in confrontation with an oppressive political situation: Pablo Neruda in Chile, Yevgeny Yevtushenko in the USSR are famous examples.

Rather than being outside the realm of reality, poetry can be most subversive of reality. And this is probably what *SC* is. Whoever wrote *SC* in the years following the death of Francis was involved in the difficult internal conflict of the Franciscan movement. He was in disagreement with those who wanted a clerical religious order involved in church hierarchy and in the unjust society of the communes. He chose a poetic way to subvert the dominant paradigm.

(For an extensive study of *SC*, see David Flood, *Poverty's Condition. A Reading of the Sacrum Commercium*, Haversack, 1990.)



The Cord, 59.3 (2009)

Assisi on the Hudson: The Franciscan Roots of the Society of the Atonement

Fred Arsenault, S.F.O.

Within the past several years, the Franciscan Friars and Sisters of the Atonement have celebrated three significant centenary events: the community's Franciscan origin; their corporate entrance into the Church of Rome; and the establishing of what has become the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Headquartered in the Catskill region of New York on a mountain called Graymoor, near Garrison, about thirty miles north of New York City, and within view of the Hudson River across from West Point, the friars have been leaders in the ecumenical movement, innovative in their care for those who suffer from chemical addictions, and active in missionary, parish and retreat ministries. Today, the friars and sisters are active in the United States, England, Canada, Japan and elsewhere. They care for the Church of St. Orofino in Rome and conduct an international novitiate program in Assisi.

Though each of the celebrations is worthy of historical study, this article will focus on the Franciscan roots of Graymoor; how and why Father Paul Wattson and Sister Lurana White chose the Franciscan tradition for their community. The Franciscan Friars of the Atonement claim their membership in the Franciscan family as a "foundational charism," reflecting the tradition of St. Francis of Assisi and their founder, Father Paul. While still Episcopalians, Father Paul and Sister Lurana possessed a deep love for St. Francis of Assisi and the Roman Catholic understanding of evangelical poverty. With the founding of Graymoor, Assisi had seemingly come to the Hudson; and thus the story of Graymoor

is Franciscan in tradition, and uniquely American in its pioneering spirit. Now into their second century, the Society of the Atonement continues to adapt and renew itself in this new age of the Church.

Almost entirely, I have made use of the three biographical accounts of Father Paul and Sister Lurana. In 1953, Father David Gannon[1] wrote the first book-length general treatment of Father Paul; in 1975, Frs. Charles Angell and Charles LaFontaine[2] wrote *Prophet of Reunion, the Life of Father Paul of Graymoor;* their emphasis is Father Paul's contribution to the ecumenical movement. The single biography of Mother Lurana was written by Sister Mary Celine,[3] an Atonement Sister, who was close to Mother Lurana and served as Postulant Mistress for a decade.

Drawn to the Poverello

Vowed religious communities within the Episcopal Church were rare at the beginning of the twentieth century. Those which did exist, lacked a sense of canonical authority and corporate poverty, and were, therefore, fundamentally different from religious life in the Roman Catholic Church. Brought up in an Anglican high church tradition, Father Lewis T. Wattson desired a greater austerity and stability than Episcopalian religious orders normally possessed; and Lurana White desired a community life formed on the traditional evangelical counsels, especially corporate poverty. Over time, each became isolated from the Episcopal practice of religious life and found themselves attracted to the Franciscan Order and the Roman Catholic Church.

[1] David Gannon, S.A., *Father Paul of Graymoor* (New York: Macmillan, 1959).

[2] Charles Angell, S.A., and Charles LaFontaine, *Prophet of Reunion, the Life of Father Paul of Graymoor,* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975).

[3] Sister Mary Celine, S.A., *A Woman of Unity* (Garrison, NY: Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement, 1956).

Influenced by boyhood conversations with his father, an Episcopalian priest with an interest in things Roman Catholic, Lewis T. Wattson sensed a call to found, within the Episcopal Church, a preaching Order like the Paulists. Apparently, a friend of his father had converted and became a Paulist priest. However, the extent of young Wattson's knowledge of Catholic religious orders remains unclear.

Lurana White came from socially comfortably circumstances in Warwick, New York, about ten miles or so northwest of Manhattan, along the New Jersey border. From early on, she reported an attraction for spiritual things, with a desire to serve the poor. At twenty-three, she heard an Episcopalian priest insist that young people live and practice their religious convictions openly and courageously. "I knew that God was speaking to my soul more clearly than ever before ... and I became conscious of two things: first, that my life was to be different from that of my girl friends, for I knew that I should not marry; and secondly, that I wish to do and suffer something worthwhile for God and for others."[4] Thus began a spiritual journey which would take her to England and back to the United States, but with significant pilgrimages to Rome and Assisi.

Since she was educated by the Sisters of the Holy Child, an Episcopalian community belonging to the Diocese of Albany, Lurana entered their community in 1894. She was content to work among the poor and to do hospital work during formation; yet it was a biography of St. Francis of Assisi and his love for Lady Poverty which resonated deeply within her soul. She began to long "for something more which the Sisterhood of the Holy Child could not satisfy. Her great desire was to be part of a community which professed *corporate*, as well as *individual* poverty. The Sisterhood of the Holy Child professed neither."[5]

To seek direction, she wrote to Father Lewis T. Wattson, awell-respected popular and successful pastor, who was then superior of a men's Episcopalian community in Omaha,

[4] Mary Celine, *A Woman of Unity*, 11.
[5] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 42.

Nebraska, called the Associate Mission. She inquired if he was aware of any women's Episcopal community which practiced corporate poverty. He confessed his lack of information about this issue, but concluded:

> Worldliness is indeed the most serious hindrance now standing in the way of the Church's onward and upward progress in America, and a religious order either of men or women that would take Our Lord's precepts literally, as did St. Francis, and refuse to possess any property at all might serve as salt to preserve the lump.[6]

Sister Lurana and Father Wattson continued to correspond over the next two years in which he disclosed his dream of a men's religious order, for which he had already given a name, the Society of the Atonement. "We breathe the same atmosphere of faith,"[7] Father Wattson once told her and brought up the possibility of co-founding a women's congregation within the Atonement family. No doubt Lurana was intrigued. The only question was her preparation to establish a new religious community and guide the formation for the spiritual daughters the Lord might provide. It was clear she required a formal novitiate and she looked to the Sisters of Bethany in Lloyd Square, London for assistance in this matter.

In June 1897, accompanied by her aunt, she sailed for England for a year's novitiate. "When the ship docked in Liverpool, Sister Lurana parted from her aunt and in the company of a charming lady she met on board went to Oxford where she spent a memorable week. From her Franciscan lore she brought forth delightful memories of Blessed Agnellus of Pisa and his chosen band of Friars who had been sent to England by Saint Francis himself."[8] Arriving in London, she presented herself to the kind Sisters with the under-

[6] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 42.
[7] Mary Celine, *A Woman of Unity*, 24.
[8] Mary Celine, *A Woman of Unity*, 18.

standing that she could not adopt their habit nor expect to be professed after the novitiate. Those conditions suited Lurana; she was determined to be one of a band of Franciscan Sisters in America, "doing only mission or parish work and vowed to Corporate Poverty."[9]

She wrote Father Wattson of the "increasing influence St. Francis was exercising over her." For his part, he responded that, while a pastor in Kingston, New York, he studied the life of St. Francis "with intense interest and he became my ideal of a monk and mission preacher. I was especially impressed with the way he sought of God a constitution for his Friars Minor. After weeks and even months of prayer, on the Sixth Sunday after Trinity, four tears ago I celebrated Mass with special intention and after the Mass knelt before the altar with the Holy Scriptures in my hands and opened them three times in the Name of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity."[10] Sister Lurana responded: "I was not at all surprised that St. Francis should be your own ideal of a monk and missioner, but nevertheless, it is very sweet to hear it. Tonight after keeping the Festival of my Father Francis, I feel more certain than ever before that I am under his protection in some unknown way ..."[11]

On March 4, 1898, Sister Lurana was clothed in a brown Franciscan habit. Sister Mary Celine asked: "Was ever a child of Saint Francis received so strangely? Yet, surely, he smiled fondly from Heaven on this young nun, longing for the light of Holy Faith and the ideals he loved so well."[12] The time and place of her religious profession, however, would have to be resolved in the United States. In late spring before returning home to America, she set off with her sister to visit Assisi and Rome.

Although Rome "impressed her with its timeless character and its uplifting spirit of Catholicity, it was Assisi that

[9] Mary Celine, *A Woman of Unity*, 20.
[10] Mary Celine, *A Woman of Unity*, 25.
[11] Mary Celine, *A Woman of Unity*, 29.
[12] Mary Celine, *A Woman of Unity*, 35.

delighted her most."[13] She first went to San Damiano and the attached monastery in which St. Clare and her nuns once lived; and then they prayed at the Church of Saint Clare. "There she remembered the Lady Clare who, after hearing Francis preach on God's love for the children of men, gave up the world to become like Francis.... Leaving Assisi, she felt convinced that the ideal of poverty was what she had been seeking, and that now the quest was finished."[14] The Franciscan dye was cast and, for the rest of her life, she kept "Lady Poverty" as her best friend and spiritual guide.

Sister Mary Celine detailed the visit to Assisi:

> Most fittingly the Portiuncula was her last and greatest memory of Assisi. Here she met an English-speaking Friar, Father Bernardine, O.F.M. He gave her three blessed Portiuncula crosses, one of which Sister Lurana wore on her rosary the remainder of her life. Later on, when designing the habit for her Community, she gave the Portiuncula cross a permanent place on the Franciscan Crown. While kneeling at the tomb of St. Francis, Mother Lurana handed the Friar Sacristan a crucifix which she had purchased in one of the religious shops in Rome, asking him to lower it down until it touched the tomb of the Seraphic Patriarch.... Before leaving Assisi, the young Anglican nun requested the prayers of the Friars. Upon receiving assurance of prayerful intercessions, Sister Lurana remarked with a smile, 'But would you promise so willingly if you knew that I am what you would probably consider a heretic?' Whereupon Father Bernardine (evidently he could not reconcile heresy with such a garb), eyeing with puzzled glance her Franciscan habit and white cord, replied, 'We shall pray all the more willingly.'[15]

[13] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 43.
[14] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 44.
[15] Mary Celine, *A Woman of Unity*, 39.

Sister Lurana, now at home in New York, waited for further guidance from Father Wattson; her faith was seriously tested because two potential companions ventured to Omaha to work with the Associate Mission. Sister Lurana wrote to Father Wattson:

> As you suggest, I will wait here until after Michaelmas and spend September, the month sacred to the Holy Cross, in camp. Did you know that the Franciscan motto to this day is, 'God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ?' In Italy I used sometimes to see in paintings Saint Paul and Saint Francis grouped together. How much alike they were ... truly one and the self same spirit.[16]

For his part, Father Wattson was now seriously considering the claims of Roman Catholic Church.

> He saw what he had feared to see all his life. The claims of Rome *were true* and communion with the See of Peter was the only way by which men could share in its divinely given Unity.[17]

Twelve years, however, including the founding of the Society of the Atonement, would elapse before he and his little community entered the fold of Peter.

On September 29, 1898, Father Wattson resigned as Superior of the Associate Mission. Father Gannon, wrote:

> Shortly after midnight he celebrated a private Communion Service in the oratory of the mission house. He always remembered his thanksgiving after that particular Communion Service. It was long and devout, because he felt the spirit of the Little Man of God very close to him. Sister Lurana's deep love of St. Francis and of poverty was beginning to take hold of

[16] Mary Celine, *A Woman of Unity*, 45.
[17] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 47.

> him. Up to this time he was more the imitator of St. Paul than of St. Francis. He had imbibed the Pauline spirit rather than the Franciscan; and he thought of the Society of the Atonement as an order of great preachers, crusading as St. Paul did for the conversion of the world. Even though he was familiar with the life of St. Francis and was enamoured with the ideal of poverty, it was not until long after the correspondence with Sister Lurana started that his romance with 'Lady Poverty' really began.... Kneeling in prayer, he thought of the simple man who, though having nothing, yet possessed all things. He asked God for the Grace to be more like the seraphic Poverello, who had first inspired Sister Lurana with her deep love for absolute poverty. With God alone as his witness, he vowed to imitate as closely as possible the ideal of poverty which St. Francis had practiced. He resolved never again to touch money, but to place his entire trust in God, Who feeds the birds of the air and beautifully clothes the lilies of the field.[18]

Father Wattson returned east to visit his former parish in Kingston, New York, but he no longer sought to be the typical Episcopalian clergyman, married and living within a comfortable parish situation.

> His Society, under the guidance of Divine Providence, would be called into being for the main purpose of drawing others, notably Anglicans, into the Fold of Peter. Meanwhile, the call to follow Saint Francis became more luminous day by day. Was it not the example of the Poverello which had inspired him five years ago to open the Bible that he might know God's Will? Was it not the same gentle Saint of Assisi who was leading Sister Lurana so mightily and sweetly along the path of seraphic poverty?"[19]

[18] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 49-50.
[19] Mary Celine, *A Woman of Unity*, 47-48.

Had parishioners and friends known the truth, that he had fallen in love with Lady Poverty, he feared they "would say of him what the people of Assisi, seven hundred years before, had said of Francis Bernardone, "Father Wattson is a fool, or else completely insane."[20]

Father Wattson lost no time in visiting Sister Lurana. She wrote in her diary:

> Our Father Founded arrived in Warwick toward evening on the evening of October 3rd, the Eve of St. Francis' Day. On that memorable day we met for the first time. The future Father Founder told the story of his call and his hopes, and I told him of my search for St. Francis and corporate poverty. Then there came to us both the dawning realization of the oneness of God's call.[21]

They planned the Society of the Atonement and began a three-day retreat, which ended with a spiritual covenant between these two special souls. Sister Lurana wrote again:

> Then came October 7th and the end of the three days' retreat which we had kept together. Father blessed, and laid on the little improvised altar in the oratory, two crucifixes; one he gave to me and the other he kept for himself. The latter had been brought by me from Assisi, and I had seen it in the *Basilica* lowered down by the Franciscan Father, our guide, until it touched the tomb of St. Francis. It was well understood by the Father Founder, and by me, that these same crucifixes represented our entire oblation of ourselves into the hands of God for the purpose of founding the Society of the Atonement.[22]

[20] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 52.
[21] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 52-53.
[22] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 53.

From Assisi to Graymoor

During the retreat, Sister Lurana told Father Wattson of a tract of land, about thirty miles north of New York City, with a chapel called St. John's in the Wilderness which three pious ladies with a great devotion to St. Francis had restored.

> The story of how St. Francis had restored the Church of San Damiano inspired them to restore St. John's. Almost every country church in America is painted white, but St. John's received a coat of brown paint in honor of the Poverello. As the ladies worked to restore the church, they often said how nice it would be to have some group of nuns following the Rule of St. Francis take care of the church permanently.[23]

Father Wattson himself visited Graymoor

> to see the possibilities of the place.... He found it an undulating valley nestling among the towering hills, but with few inhabitants, and decidedly solitary; yet, withal, an excellent place wherein chosen souls might prepare themselves, by prayer and the practice of the evangelical counsels, for either contemplation or active mission work, as God might dispose.[24]

Sister Mary Celine, likely from conversations with Mother Lurana, wrote of Father Wattson's first trip to Graymoor:

> Trees were clothed in their autumn apparel of green, gold and scarlet, and as he entered Graymoor Valley on that gorgeous October day Father Wattson's heart was captivated completely by the beauty of the spot God had chosen as the future home for the members of he Society of the Atonement. He was delighted and

[23] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 61.
[24] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 61.

at once wrote Sister Lurana, communicating to her his happiness at the discovery.[25]

At last, there might be a home for their society and it came seemingly out of the Providence of God. He was still full of plans for the society. What would Sister Lurana think of a white habit for him to emphasize his witness to the celibate priesthood? Absolutely not, she replied, because future members must "conform themselves to the Order even in the way of dress and custom."[26]

It now appeared that Providence would provide a home for the Society of the Atonement worthy of the Franciscan ideal of holy poverty. Wisely, however, Father Wattson knew he lacked experience in the practice of religious life and in the guidance of the Society of the Atonement. Thus, he sought formation from the Episcopal Order of the Holy Cross in Westminister, Maryland. There he began a novitiate.

In the meantime, Sister Lurana, now called Mother Lurana, settled into the harsh life of Graymoor in December 1898.

> The first winter at Graymoor was a hard and difficult one. The cold blasts of wind which blew down from the hills penetrated the crevices of the old building so that it seemed colder inside than out."[27]

They lived in an old farm cottage called "Dimond House" and the first thing she did was to light a fire. For supper, Mother Lurana and her companions shared a loaf of bread given them by a poor woman.

> That night, as Mother Lurana knelt in the cold chapel, she poured out her heart in thanks to God. She saw no ugliness in the poverty, which surrounded her. It

[25] Mary Celine, *A Woman of Unity*, 52.
[26] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 75.
[27] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 65.

> was what she had wanted all her life, and it was a companion she would always treasure.[28]

By spring 1899 a new convent building was begun beside the church and it would be dedicated to "her beloved Poverello – St. Francis of Assisi." Father Wattson was not able to attend, but wrote a letter that today is still treasured among their spiritual children. He wrote in part:

> The undertaking of two defenseless women to build a house in this sparsely settled region of the Highlands, without money enough on hand to finish to finish the building they have begun, much less to furnish and provision it when completed, must seem to be, from the viewpoint of the worldly wise, sheer madness. What can come of such folly save starvation, or else a return of these foolish women to their senses! But these two heroic souls (or, if you will, 'fools for Christ's sake') wearing the brown habit of St. Francis, and wedded like him to Holy Poverty, know well that He, in Whom they have put their trust, will never let them be confounded. They are sure His promise cannot fail: 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and food, raiment and shelter and all else that is needful will be freely added unto you.'[29]

By summer, despite the continued poverty and hardship, "Mother Lurana with a genuine Franciscan spirit in a truly Franciscan atmosphere was charmed with the beauty of the Graymoor Valley."[30] As events unfolded, by the fall, the little community lost their chaplain and another could not be found; Father Wattson cut short his novitiate to minister to the spiritual needs of the small community. Enroute to Graymoor, he visited a Franciscan monastery in Washington, DC and received a warm and hospitable welcome from

[28] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 64.
[29] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 68.
[30] Mary Celine, *A Woman of Unity*, 75.

the acting Superior, Father Matthew Fox, who was kind and sympathetic. "When Father Wattson knelt in the grotto of the Stigmata and asked Father Matthew to bless him and his work, the Friar Minor gave him the blessing of St. Francis with his whole heart."[31]

Father Wattson arrived at the Garrison train station late in the day of October 3, 1899, exactly a year from first meeting Mother Lurana. He first looked for a suitable cave in which to live, but finding none, he settled into an old paint shop north of Graymoor, calling it the "Palace of Lady Poverty." Unheated and with a leaky roof, Father Wattson was often forced to pray and write in overcoat and top boots and holding an umbrella. The chilled wind was somewhat abated by the paper and rags stuffed in the wall crevices. "But he never complained of its poverty. Like Mother Lurana, it was what he wanted – the foundation of the Society of the Atonement – and his soul was at peace."[32]

Strangely, the question of the habit for the Society of the Atonement remained a question Father Wattson's mind. From Elmira, where he was preaching a twelve-day retreat, he wrote to Mother Lurana:

> May God make His Will perfectly clear in regard to the habit – nothing would distress and grieve me so much as to take any such grave step without the certain approval and direction of Our Divine Lord. My mind is by no means clear as to the Will of God in this matter, and I will not move forward unless the Pillar of Fire goes before. When the time for advance arrived heretofore, God invariably pointed the way in a manner that left no room for hesitation and doubt. I look to Him for the same direction now; and if He withholds it I will simply refuse to budge until the direction comes.[33]

[31] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 78.
[32] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 86.
[33] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 86.

On January 25, 1900, the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, Father Wattson officiated at his own investiture of the habit of the Society of the Atonement. The previous evening, he placed the habit on the altar and remained in prayer almost throughout the night. After a few days he wrote:

> It was with much fear and a sinking heart that I at last put on the habit about which I had so long dreamed. During that time of preparatory prayer and meditation, a vision of what it meant to follow the Crucified was given to me. It was a foreshadowing of Gethsemane and my poor heart and soul shrinks from the ordeal that lies before me. But I am very happy about it, nevertheless. Each day I am growing to love my habit more and more.[34]

Sister Mary Celine presents a more dramatic account:

> The anticipated joy of a candidate for the religious habit has become proverb. It may seem strange to learn, therefore, that Father Wattson experienced no such joy. Instead, a vague fear and apprehension took possession of him. Yet he did not flinch. Bearing in mind how the knights of old received their armor, he kept watch alone till midnight in the Chapel of Our Lady of the Angels. Then 'while the night was in the midst of her course,' he assumed the brown Franciscan habit, receiving it, as if from the invisible hand of God. He had himself chosen that day, January 25, 1900, feast of the great Apostle and Missionary, St. Paul. 'I do not remember,' he said, 'anything in my experience that was more truly a cross than putting on that habit, and I shall never forget the real crucifixion it was to walk in it for the first time, not long after, along the streets of New York. For having assumed it, there was no authority in the Episcopal Church to give me a dispensa-

[34] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 87.

tion to take it off and put on secular attire when I went abroad into the world.'[35]

Father Wattson made his religious profession on July 27, 1900. His Franciscan vocation had come to fruition as he made his vows under a canvas tent, near what he called the Corpus Christi Cross, at Graymoor's summit. Mother Lurana left a report of the ceremony:

> The Friar who is making the triple vows of Poverty, Obedience and Chastity is the Reverend Lewis T. Wattson, who from this hour ceases to be Father Wattson and becomes Father Paul James of the Atonement; for this new name in religion takes the place of the old to emphasize the irrevocable nature of the step just taken, just as in marriage the bride loses her maiden name to bear the one that comes as a dowry from her husband.[36]

Three months later, on the 4th of October, on a rain-chilled day, Mother Lurana likewise publically professed vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

> The little company gathered together was too happy to be conscious of the conditions outside these four holy walls. 'No one, surely,' wrote Sister Mary Anna in *Rose Leaves*, 'can tell of Mother's unspeakable joy and deepest thankfulness; and for the rest, we know that what the Bride says to the Bridegroom is, in the words of the Seraph of Assisi – 'the secret of the King.' ... With a deeper consciousness of its meaning, doubtless, all listened attentively to the collect for St. Francis Day, 'O God, Who by the worthy deeds of Blessed Francis, has enriched Thy Church with a new offspring, grant

[35] Mary Celine, *A Woman of Unity*, 83.
[36] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 89.

> that after his example, despising earthly things we may ever be made partakers of Thy heavenly gifts.'[37]

Thus, the Society of the Atonement was solidly Franciscan, but its day as an Episcopal religious order were about to run its course. Shortly after Mother Lurana's profession, Father Paul dedicated the Society to the mission of reunion, especially the Anglican Communion's return to the Catholic Church. Over the next nine years, it became more clear that the Society of the Atonement itself belonged within the fold of St. Peter; that its Franciscan charism is continued with a confirmation of the Society's name and institute, and that it be received into the Third Order Regular of St. Francis, with Graymoor's property to be maintained by the Society of the Atonement.

To the good fortune of the friars and sisters, two notable friars, Fathers Edward Blecke and Paschal Robinson arrived at Graymoor to facilitate this Franciscan transition:

> Oh, how happy I felt when the former asked me to see the chapel. By the light of a candle we entered. I led the way. He was so kind and I feel that he has already taken us into the family, the great Franciscan Order which I have loved so much and for so long.[38]

Father Robinson continued as Graymoor's chaplain until the ordination of Father Paul and received the Society officially into the Third Order of St. Francis Regular.

On October 30, 1909, the friars, sisters and lay associates, seventeen in all, were received into the Roman Catholic Church. The *New York Times* carried a full-page story:

> The action of this handful of men, widely known for their lives of self-sacrifice and devotion to their cause, has come as a thunderbolt upon Protestant denominations.... And while the storm of criticism and indigna-

[37] Mary Celine, *A Woman of Unity*, 91.
[38] Mary Celine, *A Woman of Unity*, 142-43.

> tion and even ridicule which is certain to be aroused by so unprecedented a departure breaks, hundreds of men and women in the valley beneath the Mount of the Atonement will cry a blessing upon their heads.[39]

Now in the Fold of Peter, two issues remained: religious profession for the friars and sisters, and the ordination of Father Paul's ordination as a Roman Catholic priest, which took place June 16, 1910. Besides Mother Lurana and Sister Amelia from Graymoor, Father Robinson was there along with Father Solanus Casey from Yonkers, who had prayed for the sisters during their property dispute with former Episcopalian friends. Father Solanus also preached at Father Paul's first Solemn High Mass the next day at Our Lady of the Angels Chapel the next day.

In 1910, some disgruntled Episcopalians charged that the sisters' land and buildings should revert back to their ownership, because the Society of the Atonement was now Catholic. It was a very nasty affair, lasting several years, and Mother Lurana felt uncomfortable with the legal wrangling. In an amazing illustration of Franciscan spiritual clarity she told the sisters:

> As members of the Society of the Atonement, we are victims. Surely the holocaust must begin to be consumed. And we are Franciscans. Our Seraphic Father told his children they were *not to resist* but rather joyfully suffer the spoiling of their goods.[40]

Because of her spiritual clarity, she defied worldly wisdom and the natural tendency to fight an unjust charge; instead, she followed the example of St. Francis and refused to betray Franciscan principles for expediency or comfort.

On November 7, 1911, in the Chapel of Our Lady of the Angels, Father Blecke received the perpetual vows of Mother Lurana and two other sisters. Then, on January 24, 1912,

[39] Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor*, 164.
[40] Mary Celine, *A Woman of Unity*, 212.

he received the vows of Father Paul and Brother Anthony, the first-born son of Graymoor. All were now solidly within the Fold of Peter and the Franciscan family. Graymoor was completely home.

The attraction to the Poverello, and the Church he loved and served, had fueled this American Franciscan adventure of faith. Dated November 3, 1909, just after their reception into the Catholic Church, Archbishop Folconio, the Apostolic Delegate penned these words to the friars and sisters:

> The great Saint Francis whom you have chosen as your model will give you strength and courage, and I recommend you and your Community to read often the life of this great Saint, that your hearts may be filled with the love.[41]

Besides the historical value of the story, the Franciscan roots of the Society of the Atonement have produced a rich legacy, from which all who follow the Poverello can draw. As with St .Francis, the foundational principle of their religious life was evangelical poverty which they embraced without reservation or mitigation, as much as they could in twentieth century America, the penance and austerity found in the life of Francis of Assisi. They became, in effect, the children of God and the spouses and mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ, as Francis had advised, in the *Letter to the Faithful*, his followers to become.

In moments of great anxiety and darkness, when it seemed the Society of the Atonement would never come to be, or at times when forces worked to destroy it, the co-founders possessed an amazing faith, reminiscent of Abraham, who obeyed to the point of willingness to sacrifice his beloved son. More often than not, Father Paul and Mother Lurana faced questions and obstacles, yet they had taken within themselves the spirit of Mary, who patiently consented and pondered the working of God within her life. Like St. Paul, they

[41] Mary Celine, *A Woman of Unity*, 148.

never wavered to endure every adversity and consider it as nothing, for the sake of the Gospel. Most of all, however, they followed their beloved St. Francis in his love of poverty, his austerity of life and his passion for peace within themselves and the entire world.

Father Paul and Mother Lurana were realistic enough to know the parallels between their story and that of Francis and Clare. Nonetheless, this awareness does not detract from its inspiration and charm, for Graymoor became a remarkable example of Franciscan renewal; it beckoned, in the harshness of its poverty and the depth of its fidelity, the spirit of the first Franciscan generation. The co-founders demonstrated that the Franciscan way was alive and well in twentieth century America; they possessed that profound Franciscan zeal for souls, which compelled them to work and pray "that all may be one."

Lord, make us one:
one in our words,
that a single reverent prayer
might rise before you;
one in our yearning and pursuit of justice;
one in love, serving you by serving
the least of our sisters and brothers;
one in longing for your face.
Lord, make us one in you.

Book Review

Things hidden: Scripture as spirituality by Richard Rohr, O.F.M. (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2008), 238 pages, $19.95.

Richard Rohr's ability to entice the reader's interest is evident in his latest publication, *Things hidden: Scripture as spirituality,* based on a series of his lectures. It is a fascinating and concise description of what he calls, "connecting the dots," the dots being the various levels of understanding of Scripture as it affects everyday life as well as spiritual growth. The Israelites' history "tells all" as a people sharing their story. If written today, it would be a movie sequel to *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly,* a television series similar to *Dallas,* or a daytime soap opera like *Days of Our Lives.* Rohr leaves no leaf unturned as he draws the connections to family relations, power and rivalries.

Throughout the text Richard Rohr explores and strengthens the relationship between Sacred Scripture and one's inner spiritual journey with God. Rohr's weaving of the Judeo-Christian story of a constantly changing relationship with God is a message and a challenge to transformation, not only, or primarily, information. We see that as he explores the concept of sacrifice. In Hebrew Scripture we see the Israelites with a "God fearing" relationship. Sacrifice was used to please God, to make atonement for having offended God, or to barter with God for favors. This understanding is still held today by many people

The thought that Christ came out of love and expressed his relationship to a "God of love" was difficult for the people at his time to comprehend and seems to be a continued

difficult realization for people today. Many times the phrase Christ used, "be not afraid," was purposely intended to stress that they should "fear no more" but respond in "love" to one another, to love one's neighbor as oneself and to love God above all. Just the use of the word gospel to mean "Good News" was an awakening message. Understanding Jesus as Forgiver and accepting the mystery of the cross were and still are difficult for people. Throughout the text Rohr continues to connect the dots to Francis's relationship with Christ and God, highlighting Francis's message of love, *Pax et Bonum*, and the Franciscan philosopher Scotus's writings of *God's perfect and utterly free initiative of love.*

A consideration that Richard Rohr incorporates throughout the text, whether when discussing Hebrew Scripture, Christianity, or our personal spiritual growth and development concerns the role of the ego. Our relationship with God is at times a "power struggle" with our ego for control, to "let go" and be open to the Will of God. Rohr reminds us that the ego does not know how to receive things freely or without logic. God's desire for "free partners" is understood through the economy of grace.

Grace has been freely given as part of the tradition of *banquet* and *food*. Across history these graced moments of table fellowship from manna to bread and fish have provided harmony with our inner journey and our communion with God and others. Rohr also reflects on our ability to remain in the present, a very difficult concept for "human beings" to accept. We are constantly trying to control our future and dwell on the past. We are challenged: Can we just be "human" with one another and God instead of trying to be God? At the same time can we be content with "being" rather than doing or trying to do our own "human sacrifice" with God to barter for favors? Can we accept being, as Francis reminds us, "what a person is before God, that he is and no more?"

Richard Rohr's masterpiece, *Things hidden: Scripture as spirituality*, truly is a dot-to-dot connection of our prayer life, relationship with God and our inner experiences as a series of "reflections to again unite what should never have been separated: Sacred Scripture and Christian spirituality." This

text is scholarly, yet written in a very user friendly manner that enables everyone to read and be enriched. Rohr's book would also serve well as an introductory course in Scripture studies or courses on the Catholic-Franciscan Heritage.

Paula J. Scraba, Ph.D.
St. Bonaventure University

Also by Richard Rohr
and available from St. Anthony Messenger Press

PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS WITH RICHARD ROHR
Daily Reflections for Advent
Richard Rohr

"Advent is not about a sentimental waiting for the Baby Jesus," Richard Rohr asserts. Advent is a time to focus our expectations and anticipation on "the adult Christ, the Cosmic Christ," who challenges us to empty ourselves, to lose ourselves, to surrender.

Drawing on selections from his best-selling inspirational lecture on CD, Preparing for Christmas With Richard Rohr, this booklet provides daily reflections and prayers for the Advent season, along with each day's Scripture readings and questions for reflection. A wonderful resource for personal prayer, this attractive, 80-page, pocket-sized booklet is a perfect companion for your Advent preparation.

GRAVITY AND GRACE
Insights Into Christian Ministry
Richard Rohr, O.F.M.

Christian life is the best preparation for Christian ministry, proclaims Franciscan priest Richard Rohr. All we can give, he says, is who we are. "Jesus didn't tell us to be good, he told us to follow him." Authority to minister comes with the ability to see the divine image in all created things. Ministers, Rohr says, are the gloves that God wears to touch us. He invites us to touch others on the edge of our society, according to our unique life and gifts.

Book Review

A Mended and Broken Heart: The Life and Love of Francis of Assisi, by Wendy Murray (New York: Basic Books, 2008), xxv + 251 pp., $25.95 hardcover.

Wendy Murray, a former senior writer for *Christianity Today* and author of several books including *The Beliefnet Guide to Evangelical Christianity* (Doubleday, 2005) and *On Broken Legs: A Shattered Life, a Search for God, a Miracle that Met Me in a Cave in Assisi* (NavPress, 2004), adds her contribution to the ever-growing bibliography of popular books about Francis of Assisi. As with each new volume to this expanding collection of literature, this book presents both a variation on a theme, namely an interesting biographical account of the world's most popular Saint, and its own unique mark. The thematic variation is played well by Murray. Her writing style is engaging and her thought well articulated. The unique mark of Murray's biography, however, requires a more nuanced critique.

The subtitle of the book, "The Life and *Love* of Francis of Assisi," should catch the attention of any Franciscan scholar, practitioner or enthusiast. The exploration of the relationship between Francis and Clare of Assisi with undertones positing romantic interest is not new. One thinks of Adrian House's popular biography of Francis, *Francis of Assisi: A Revolutionary Life*, for example. Concerning the relationship between the two Saints from Assisi, House writes, "It is a love story in which Clare's devotion to Francis is strongly reminiscent of the seventeen-year-old Hëloïse's to the great theologian and teacher Peter Abelard, a century earlier."[1] However, unlike other biographers who often make this suggestion in passing, Murray makes this theme a centerpiece of her book. She introduces her project with the bold assertion, "... the case will be made that the electric charge that ultimately propelled Francis's conversion was his love for Clare" (xvi). She later writes, "It is my close examination of this [historical and cultural] context and these sources that has enabled me to cobble together a picture of Clare's rightful place in Francis' life" (xxii).

A Mended and Broken Heart is divided into fifteen chapters, opening with chapters titled "Assisi's Son," "Partying and War," and "Dreams and Prayers." Murray seeks to highlight both Francis's context (cultural and social) and his "pre-conversion" lifestyle. It is here that Murray begins to suggest the presence of Clare in the life of Francis at times and places that can only be supported by poetic license and conjecture. Take for example this comment found in chapter three, "the warriors [including Francis] gathered near the cathedral of San Rufino. Clare's family home overlooked the piazza, so she would have witnessed the grand event and recognized the well-known Francis Bernadone as numbered among the mounted" (33). This is representative of frequent and subtle implications Murray posits throughout the text, leading readers to infer an especially intimate, if not overtly romantic, relationship between Francis and Clare even before Clare's reception into the nascent Order.[2]

Beyond the romantic undertones latent in the text, Murray does a superb job of painting a colorful picture that highlights the medieval environment of Francis's day, replete with images of knights and the emergent sense of chivalry that was known to captivate the young Francis.

[1] Adrian House, *Francis of Assisi: A Revolutionary Life* (New York: Paulist Press, 2003), 129.

[2] For a fuller treatment of the so-called "clandestine" (Murray's term) meetings between Francis and Clare see, Lezlie Knox, *Creating Clare of Assisi: Female Franciscan Identities in Later Medieval Italy* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 21. Knox, unlike Murray, recounts each Saint bringing another party with them in order to maintain propriety.

Chapter four introduces the theme of Clare's relationship to Francis with force. Murray acknowledges the widely held position that after professing their respective religious vows, both Saints remained true to their commitments. However, Murray is more interested with the pre-profession period, offering such questions as, "Could [Francis's] dreams of a wife and family have had anything to do with Clare?" (53). Chapter five is more concerned with Francis's paternal renunciation than with his relationship to Clare, while chapter six covers the earliest days of the nascent movement. Murray skillfully describes those first brothers who join Francis.

Chapter seven is Murray's presentation of the formation of the primitive rule and the initial approval of Pope Innocent III for Francis's *forma vita*. Here, as in other instances throughout the book, Murray seems to overlook (or is unfamiliar with) the nuances of medieval ecclesiastical organization. Her description of the hierarchy is often simplistic and can be misleading. A case in point is her illustration of the medieval church as organized in concentric circles with the pope at the center, the poor at the exterior and everyone else between. This image is used again when she claims that Francis "in effect turned the concentric circles inside out" (83). Such a reading implies Francis pushed the papacy and Roman hierarchy to the margins, when in fact his Rule has always been clear about the relationship in obedience all of the brothers are to have to the "Lord Pope" (RnB 1:3, RB 1:2). Additionally, all of the brothers are to be Catholic (RnB 2:12, RB 2:2).

In chapter eight Murray focuses more directly on Clare, with particular attention to the debate over her age. Murray contends that Clare was older than many believe her to have been, stating that, "This could put Clare's age closer to Francis by at least a few years, which also carries the implication that their relationship would not, of necessity, have to have been defined in father-daughter terms" (95). Of course, the amount of effort Murray puts into the discussion of Clare's age would seem disproportionate to the rest of the material, if Murray was not trying to build a case. Chapter nine compares Francis, Clare and the early brothers to "Knights of

the Round Table" and the lady of castle. In chapter ten Murray tells the famous story of Francis's encounter with Sultan Malik-al-Kamil with gusto.

Chapter eleven presents the period of transition marked by Francis's return from Egypt, including the transition of power from Francis to his first successor (Peter Catanii). Chapters twelve and thirteen recall the last years and days of Francis. Chapters fourteen and fifteen chronicle the Franciscan movement after the death of the Saint. The penultimate chapter also reflects on the life of Clare after Francis's death, while in the last chapter Murray reflects on how Francis's legacy "transcends categories," allowing the Poverello to touch the lives of all people, earning him the title "anyone's saint" (184).

Murray supplements the body of the text with two appendices and a glossary. The first appendix is a small collection of maps that illustrate the geographic layout in the time of Francis. The second appendix is a selection of what Murray calls "source material." How the material was chosen for this appendix is not immediately understood, for it contains a seemingly random collection of items including *The Canticle of the Creatures*, the *Bull of Canonization*, "modern statistics of the three primary orders of Friars Minor," and a list of the popes and minister generals through the fourteenth century. While these data might be interesting, they also appear superfluous. The glossary, while well intentioned, leaves much to be desired. For example the first entry, "Abbot/Abbess," erroneously states "a friar or sister who is in charge of a particular monastery" (237). Friar-leaders are, of course, ministers (of the guardian, custos, provincial or general variety), but never abbots or priors.

Overall this is not a poorly written or uninteresting book. Murray is a skilled writer who imaginatively illustrates the background scenery of Francis's life that often goes unpainted. However, the creative elaboration spills over into territory that might not be fair game to tamper with. While the most basic and general information in this text is correct, there are serious mistakes and, at times, complete fabrications that challenge the credibility of Murray's project in *A Mended and*

Broken Heart. Although she has consulted a number of texts, I question the priority given to some of her favored sources (e.g., Chesterton's biography of Francis). Murray's familiarity with Franciscan primary sources is adequate, but it is clear that her knowledge of contemporary Franciscan scholarship is limited and her use of respectable secondary sources is minimal. With a more critical reading of the source material and a broader appreciation for Franciscan scholarship, this book could have been more solid. As it stands, it is a pleasant read that requires an attentive reader aware of the need for a hermeneutic of suspicion. That said this book is not the worst of its kind. Murray has done a better job than many who are "outside" both the Franciscan and Catholic tradition. However, this text will undoubtedly remain on the periphery of Franciscan scholarship and literature.

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Recent Release
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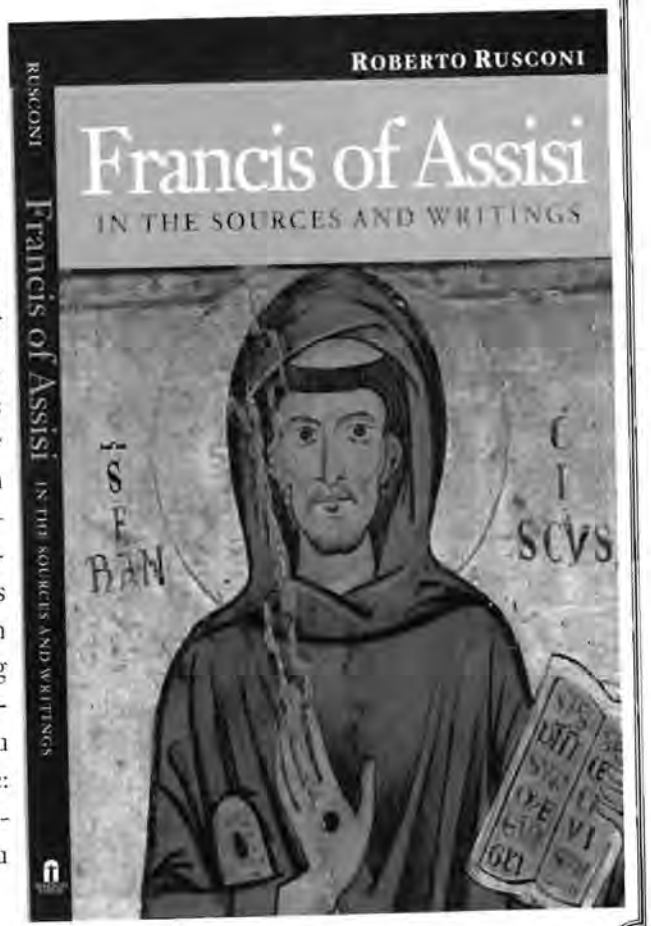
Just in to our warehouse, *Francis of Assisi in the Sources and Writings* is a translation of a work by Roberto Rusconi. This brief biographical sketch of Francis of Assisi retells a story both familiar and new but then goes a step farther by providing selections from thirteenth and fourteenth century manuscripts which give the reader a priceless glimpse into what scholars call the *sitz im leben* of early passages from which traditional interpretations of the Franciscan charism have developed.



The fruit of several years of translation and compilation, this work will be of interest to those who are first encountering the phenomenon of Francis of Assisi, as well as those looking for a new insight into an established relationship. Available for $20 plus shipping from our shopping cart: franciscanmart.sbu.edu or our website: franciscan publications.sbu.edu

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ABBREVIATIONS

Writings of Saint Francis

Adm	The Admonitions
BlL	A Blessing for Br. Leo
CtC	The Canticle of the Creatures
CtExh	The Canticle of Exhortation
1Frg	Fragments of Worchester Manuscript
2Frg	Fragments of Thomas of Celano
3Frg	Fragments from Hugh of Digne
LtAnt	A Letter to Br. Anthony of Padua
1LtCl	The First Letter to the Clergy (Early Edition)
2LtCl	The 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 Br. Leo
LtMin	A Letter to a Minister
LtOrd	A Letter to the Entire Order
LtR	A Letter to Rulers of the Peoples
ExhP	Exhortation to the Praise of God
PrOF	A Prayer Inspired by the Our Father
PrsG	The Praises of God
OfP	The Office of the Passion
PrCr	The Prayer before the Crucifix
ER	The Earlier Rule (Regula non bullata)
LR	The Later Rule (Regula bullata)
RH	A Rule for Hermitages
SalBVM	A Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
SalV	A Salutation of Virtues
Test	The Testament
TPJ	True and Perfect Joy

Writings of Saint Clare

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

Franciscan Sources

1C	The Life of St. 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 Choir
Off	The Divine Office of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer
LJS	The Life of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer
VL	The Versified Life of St. Francis by Henri d'Avranches
1-3JT	The Praises by Jacapone da Todi
DCom	The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri
TL	The 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 Perguia
L3C	The Legend of the Three Companions
AC	The Assisi Compilation
1-4Srm	The Sermons of Bonaventure
LMj	The Major Legend by Bonaventure
LMn	The Minor Legend by Bonaventure
BPr	The Book of Praises by Bernard of Besse
ABF	The Deeds of St. Francis and His Companions
LFl	The Little Flowers of St. Francis
KnSF	The Knowing of St. Francis
ChrTE	The Chronicle of Thomas of Eccleston
ChrJG	The Chronicle of Jordan of Giano