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• A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW •

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FOREWORD

As I write this we are celebrating one of the first sunny days of the New Year in western New York. It makes one much more conscious that we are on the waxing side of daylight hours, beginning a journey to new birth. In this year of 2010 may we be renewed in our desire to use each additional minute of light to spread the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ!

With this new volume of *The Cord* I am pleased to report an addition. Each issue generally contains articles, poetry and book reviews. With this new subscription year, however, you will also find reflection pieces. Generally of shorter length than the articles, these submissions may challenge us to new ways of thinking, inspire us to meet more generously the daily crosses of our Franciscan *vita*, remind us of things forgotten, highlight the needs of others, or provoke discussion within the family. When an author provides contact information, our readers are encouraged to enter into dialogue with them, if desired. As is accepted writing style, these reflections are not, for the most part, first-person narratives, although many find their themes in personal experiences. And, as is true for all submissions to *The Cord*, reader reflections are edited for style, grammar, spelling and punctuation when necessary.

This issue is blessed with several new contributors: Axel Marc Takács, Jeanne d'Arc, Vicki Masterpaul, Ann Power and Roderic Petrie. Old favorites like Seamus Mulholland, Dan Horan, Mark Elvins, Girard Etzkorn, Bob Karris, Paula Scraba, Tom Barton, Ruth Agnes Evans, Dennis O'Brien and Chet Corey have also blessed our New Year with input.

While it's difficult to predict print production to the day and hour, you may actually receive this issue around the same time you receive your subscription invoice. Subscriptions to *The Cord* run from January through December. The first issue of 2010 will be sent to all 2009 subscribers. The second issue, however, is sent only to those who send in their renewals. Watch the mail to avoid missing any of this year's issues.

Daria R. Mitchell, O.S.F.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF ENGLISH FRANCISCANS TO THE FRANCISCAN INTELLECTUAL TRADITION

SEAMUS MULHOLLAND, O.F.M.

The English Province of the Franciscan Movement, like many others, can lay claim to having been founded during the lifetime of St. Francis and to have maintained its fidelity to the tradition of the movement from that time, throughout persecution, martyrdom, and attempted dissolution. The tradition is not simply intellectual, but also spiritual and pastoral. English Franciscan saints and martyrs such as John Wall and John Forest attest to the pastoral fidelity of early English friars (to say nothing of later and contemporary ones!). At the same time, the English Province of the Franciscan Movement can, with all humility, boast of a great intellectual tradition and of freely making available to the whole Order what we may best describe as “the development of Franciscan Theology/Philosophy.” The richness of its thought, spirituality (as in, for example, the English Franciscan Mystics), insight and intellectual genius culminated in the work of John Duns Scotus, whose work has been embraced, quite rightly, by the whole Franciscan Movement.

The finest moment of English Franciscan thought is firmly situated within the development of that intellectual movement generically called Scholasticism. It is not the purpose of this article to offer an essay on what is essentially an academic subject in a journal whose purpose is to share the insights of contemporary Franciscan spirituality. Nevertheless, there is a tendency to see the Scholastics purely within the context of their intellectual achievements and contribution and to ignore or at least not mention the

fact that they were also spiritual masters. This is not the case when speaking of Bonaventure, who while undoubtedly one of the great scholastics, is a greater master of the spiritual life itself infused with the profundity of the Franciscan spiritual insights. This paper does not attempt to redress that seeming imbalance but rather attempts to celebrate and share with the rest of those involved in the contemporary Franciscan Movement, the gift of those great thinkers and spiritual masters who hailed from the English Province. Why should we turn our heads to an *intellectual* past when there is so much that demands our pastoral and spiritual attention in the present? We turn our attention to the past, to understand the process of Franciscan thought in the present with an eye to its contribution to the future.

Theology is not an isolated science or simply an intellectual pursuit. In the history of Franciscan thought theology has always been coupled with a pastoral pragmatism such that all Franciscan work, mission, evangelization and spirituality is derived from its insight into scripture and tradition in the context of Franciscan life. As it was during the scholastic era, so, too, it is today. The Franciscan thinkers were not merely intellectuals, they were *Franciscans* and this shaped and colored their thought. So, while it is not strictly accurate to speak of a *Franciscan school of theology*, we can, nonetheless, speak with great confidence of the significant contribution made by Franciscan thinkers.

Franciscan history attests to the thorny issue of the place and role of studies within the development at the proto-Franciscan tradition. It lay at the heart of the dissatisfaction of the Spirituals dismayed by so many *literati* joining the proto-movement, who, they felt, had betrayed the finest ideals of St. Francis. Yet, it is well known that Francis was not an anti-intellectual. The letter to Antony – *my brother and bishop* – evinces this. Francis was concerned that the “spirit of holy prayer and devotion” not be extinguished and knew further that the ministry of preaching involved study of Holy Scripture and theology. Wherever we stand today, what is abundantly clear is that Francis’s fear was never realized. The *spirit of holy prayer and devotion* was

far from extinguished. Indeed, it was kindled and fanned to a conflagration of preaching, teaching and evangelizing through a sound grounding of theology.

While one can sympathize with Bonaventure's unease at the introduction of Aristotle into the Universities, one can also comprehend the view that understanding human reasoning was essential for true learning and that it was not unreasonable or irrational to be a person of faith and to proclaim such faith as reasonable and rational. In this respect the two great thinkers at Paris, our brother Bonaventure and our brother Thomas Aquinas, showed that such an approach was not averse to the mainstream of philosophical thought, and sought to demonstrate that philosophy rather than being the *servant* of theology was, in fact, its sister. This was most certainly the view held by Eric Doyle† of the English province. While undoubtedly one of the finest minds in the Franciscan movement during the 70s and early 80s, Doyle was also in every respect a simple man of faith and devotion. The intellectual tradition of the English Franciscan Province situates itself in this mode of thought also.

It is true that Franciscans were at the heart of towns of the medieval period in two respects: in the universities and on the outskirts of the town where the poor, voiceless and dispossessed were found. The same is true today: Franciscans are to be found as university professors, lecturers, researchers, scholars, teachers, thinkers and as witnesses to the dynamic of Franciscan brotherhood and sisterhood among the same poor and dispossessed.

The Franciscans arrived in England at the town of Dover in 1224 and by 1229 they had already established a house in the university town of Oxford and in 1225 a house in Cambridge. This association with these two famous University towns continued up until the last few decades. While it is true that the Franciscan school of Oxford gave more prominence to natural science and logic than to speculative philosophy, it also reached its zenith with the arrival of Scotus. Roger Bacon was essentially a product of Paris where he taught longer than any other master. Robert Grosseteste, while not a Franciscan, can be numbered among English Franciscan

intellectuals because of his intimate involvement with the friars whom he taught theology and who himself held to a concept of the *Primacy of Christ*. Grossesteste's influence and impact on the Franciscan tradition cannot be underestimated. He was the foremost thinker of his generation and although he understood Aristotle, he was more neoplatonic and Augustinian in temperament (as indeed Franciscan thought is today).

But when one speaks of *Franciscan Intellectual Tradition*, one automatically thinks of the great universities of Oxford and Paris. The Franciscans arrived at Paris in 1219. The reputation of the Franciscans at Paris soon grew with their pursuit of speculative philosophy and theology. In 1225 four doctors of the University took the Franciscan habit and by 1229 the Franciscan School of Theology was organized.

History attests that the shining light of Franciscan Paris was Bonaventure who manifested a great knowledge of the philosophers and Aristotle was given a privileged place in the Arts Faculty when Bonaventure studied at Paris. Though holding Aristotle in great respect and making use of his works, Bonaventure cannot be called an Aristotelian. Bonaventure showed little acceptance of Aristotle's rationalism, or at least the way it was disseminated at the university of Paris. In later years, faced with the Averroist controversy, Bonaventure stood firmly against Aristotelianism and any attempt to philosophize against the safeguards of faith.

The mention of Bonaventure serves to introduce the first of those English Franciscans whose work, life and genius have illuminated the history of the Order: Alexander of Hales 1185-1245. Alexander was born in Hales Owen, Shropshire in 1185 and studied in Paris around 1200 and sometime before 1210 he gained his MA. After joining the Faculty of Theology at Paris he became Regent Master c.1220. Sometime after 1222, Alexander introduced a novelty at the university which would change the face of Medieval thought definitively – he used the famous *Sentences* of Peter Lombard as the basis for his theology lectures. Alexander's *Glossa*, which were only authenticated in 1945, was a result of this work. At the apex of his academic and intellectual career he joined

the Franciscans, in the words of Roger Bacon (not generally known for giving compliments!) “Edifying the whole world and giving new status to the Order.”

While not strictly a member of the English Province, he was nevertheless an Englishman and a theologian of considerable repute before joining the Order. The Franciscans at Paris were to benefit immensely when he was put in charge of the Franciscan school in the Paris friary. He continued his teaching, especially through his *Disputed Questions* and had some part to play in the great theological compilation which bears his name, the *Summa Alexandri* (which, incidentally, Roger Bacon in his own inimitable fashion said “Weighed heavier than a horse.” At the same time, Alexander participated in the affairs of the early Franciscan Movement, attending the chapter that deposed Elias in 1239. He was co-author of the *Exposition of the Rule of St. Francis* (the famous Commentary of the Four Masters) and was active in the affairs of the Church both in the university and at the First Council of Lyons in 1244-45. His sudden death resulted from an epidemic raging through Paris in 1245 and his epitaph at the friary lauded him as “The glory of learned men, the honour and pride of philosophers.”

The literary problems of both authorship and content of the *Summa* do not belong here but the teachings of Alexander are to be found in the authenticated *Glossa* and *Disputed Questions* which is written in two parts: those written before he became a friar, and those written afterwards. The *summa* ascribed to him does not necessarily contain his opinions. The unfortunate aspect of the *Glossa* and the *Disputations* is that they are student *reportata* (though some copies do seem to have had official approval) but both seem to justify the opinion of Bernard of Bessa who said that Alexander was “the greatest master in theology and philosophy.”

Alexander is both a theologian and a philosopher who masterfully engages in a wide spectrum of questions. He is a traditionalist whose teachers are Augustine, John Damascene and Pseudo-Dionysius. Alexander is way beyond his contemporaries in the depth of his thought and in the questions he introduced into theology. So Alexander of Hales

can justifiably be heralded as the innovative conceiver of a renaissance in medieval thought, particularly as the head of the Franciscan school at Paris where he initiated an approach that came to characterize such luminaries of Franciscan intellectualism as Odo Rigaldus, Bonaventure and Matthew Aquasparta.

In turning to John Pecham (also spelled 'Pecam') we are meeting one of the formidable minds of the English Franciscan movement and the English Medieval Church. John Pecham was born in 1225, the year after the Franciscans came to England, at Pecham, near Brighton, Sussex. He was educated at the monastery at Lewes then studied at Oxford and Paris and sometime during the 1250s he joined the Franciscans at Oxford. In 1269 he became Master of Theology at Paris and returned to Oxford in 1272. He was elected Provincial of the English Province in 1275 for two years when in 1277 he lectured at the Papal Court. In 1279 he was elected Archbishop of Canterbury and held this office till his death. His body lies in Canterbury Cathedral.

John Pecham was a pupil of Bonaventure and his primary intellectual interest was concentrated on stemming the growing allegiance to Aristotelianism through a return to the thought of Augustine. Pecham was no doubt inspired to do so by the Lenten Sermons of Bonaventure who in the 1260s had warned Franciscans about the heterodox nature of aspects of Aristotelianism prevalent in Paris. But John did not disapprove of philosophy, rather he was cautious in his approach to it even though he systematically used Aristotelian terminology. His main intellectual approach was the selective use of non-Christian philosophers which he attempted to harmonize with Augustine. John Pecham's career can be said to have mainly consisted of ensuring that the teachings of Augustine survived through modernizing them. He endured considerable distress while Archbishop of Canterbury since his firm defense of Augustine incurred the wrath of the equally firm defenders of Thomas Aquinas. Later many of the issues which John Pecham merely touched upon were developed at great length by his followers. While he may have made a significant contribution on Medieval Thought,

a final judgment on this great English Franciscan thinker must wait until more of his works are critically published.

It would take a separate series of articles to come to terms with one of the absolute greats of Medieval thought and not just of the English Franciscan intellectual tradition but also that of Europe. Roger Bacon (c.1214-1292) was born in an unknown place but most certainly in England and died at Oxford. It is not known with any certainty whether he studied under Robert Grosseteste (Robert taught the Franciscans there between 1229-1235) but Roger certainly had a high regard for him. He arrived in Paris sometime before the death of Alexander of Hales, since Bacon himself says that he had seen Alexander and William of Avergne. He was Regent Master in 1237 and was the first to lecture on the forbidden books of Aristotle when the ban on teaching them was lifted. Here he composed many of his works. These works, primarily in the area of natural science, show the mind of a genius not only far ahead of his contemporaries but also, while not truly philosophical, nevertheless, able to grasp with a singular ability the newly arrived literature of Aristotle and his Arabian exponents. He prided himself on being a pure Aristotelian, although he would never acknowledge the strong influence of neoplatonism.

Sometime during the latter half of 1247 he must have joined the Franciscans at Oxford who had recently been left the extensive library of Robert Grosseteste. Roger was conscious of his own genius and the importance of his work, yet resented the fact that his poor brother and the poor Franciscans could not finance his research and was annoyed at the preference seemingly being given to more orthodox pursuits like theology. The net result of this was that a brilliant mind and soaring intellect resorted to biting sarcasm and spite which he used to vilify some of the best thinkers of his age. That such a mind could have been so easily taken in by the fundamentalist interpreters of Joachim of Fiore is still incredible and it immediately had the outcome that his views were regarded with some suspicion. He was sent to Paris and forbidden to publish his works outside the order. His *Compendium of Philosophy* was intended as

a new and creative exploration of contemporary philosophy, unfortunately it quickly became the vehicle for venting his spleen against the intellectual evils of his age, the target of these diatribes being the Franciscans and the Dominicans. But more ominously for Roger it also showed a revival of his Joachimite leanings. *The Chronicle of the Twenty-four Generals*, written in 1370, said that Jerome of Ascoli (later Pope Nicholas IV) imprisoned Roger for “suspected novelties” in spite of the fact that his astrological and scientific views were similar to those of thinkers such as Albert the Great.

Given what we know of Roger’s what-you-see-is-what-you-get attitude and the fact that he did not suffer fools gladly, [or at all] it is more likely that his criticisms of the morality of the secular masters resulted in his incarceration – the only way to keep him quiet and not put any more pressure on the already fragile relations between the seculars and the Friars. The genius of Bacon is without doubt, yet in many respects he was a contradiction. He belonged to a period of new, daring creative thought, yet in his understanding of theology he belonged to an era which had waned. His involvement with Joachimism and his conviction that he was the only one who had the answers to the questions, as well as an eclectic interest in astrology, natural science and alchemy, left him unable to comprehend the new intellectual movement on which he could have made an even greater impact. He certainly attended some theology lectures, but he was ignorant and uninterested in what the new theology was doing. This, coupled with his sarcasm and caustic dismissal of so much that was brilliant in the Franciscan movement of the period, exposes a mind which, while it soars to undoubted heights on rare occasion, demonstrates more of a crank than a genius.

Three English Franciscan Thinkers can be spoken of together at this point: Roger Marston, Richard Middleton and William Ware. The biographical details of Roger Marston’s life are sketchy. But it is known that he was born in Marston, Oxford in 1250. He was educated at the Faculty of Arts about 1276, taught at Oxford and Cambridge from 1276-1285 and

was Provincial of the English Province between 1292-1296. He died in 1303.

Roger Marston was a pupil of John Pecham and like Pecham sought to restore the primacy of Augustine in Christian theology and philosophy. In this work he showed a remarkable grasp of the writings of Augustine as well as a very good grasp of literary and textual criticism. Marston was attacked as an anachronistic archconservative because he argued that he was a traditionalist who had reasonably assessed the evidence and come to conclusions which synthesized the thinking of the saints: Augustine and the philosophers. There is no question that Roger Marston knew his subject matter and interpreted the Greek and Arabic intellectuals with superb subtlety and did not hesitate to highlight either ambiguities or fundamental differences.

His greatest claim to fame was his defense of the Augustinian-Bonaventurian theory of Divine Illumination which, for him, was necessary for certitude. Roger attempted to reconcile the Augustinian theory of knowledge with Aristotle's equating Divine Illumination with the Aristotelian separate agent of intellect. At the same time Roger could not allow what, for him, was an unacceptable gap in the psychology of the human person – the dispossession of the person's agent intellect. He proposed a double agent: human and divine. In so doing he provided one of the best attempts at a solution of the debate (still continuing) between the idealists and the empiricists.

Richard of Middleton was a Franciscan philosopher, theologian and canon lawyer. The date of his birth is not known. It is certain that in 1283 he was appointed as one of the judges of the works of Peter Olivi. Three of his sermons preached in Paris in 1281 and 1283 have survived and he was Master of Theology there between 1284-1285. His last writings can be dated to c.1295 when he completed his commentary on Book IV of Lombard's *Sentences*. He was a thinker in Bonaventurian/Pecham mode but he maintained a free-thinking mind, held no prejudices and differed from most of his fellow Franciscans in that he was sympathetic to some Thomist principles. Richard was one of the first

Franciscans to reject the theory of divine illumination of the intellect. In common with other Franciscan thinkers of the time, Richard stressed that the Will was a more noble faculty than the Intellect.

William of Ware was born in Hertfordshire between 1255-1260 and is honored as the Doctor *Fundatus*. He joined the Franciscans at an early age and studied at Oxford where he commented on the *Sentences* (1292-1294). He was an inceptor at Oxford but it is not known if he was ever at Paris, though some believe that he was Regent Master there. Only his *Commentary on the Sentences* has survived and it undoubtedly influenced both Scotus (whom some regard as a pupil of William) and William of Ockham.

William of Ware is important in the history of the development of the Franciscan Intellectual tradition in so far as he can be regarded as an initiator of a new Franciscan approach. Bonaventure had dominated for over 100 years and there was a sense that unless the Bonaventurian methodology died off, a new Franciscan theology was not possible. We do not know enough of the work of William of Ware to make any firm judgments, but it is thought that he played a very important role in preparing the new Franciscan scholastic approach which would culminate in Duns Scotus. His proofs for the existence of God derive from Augustine, but like Richard of Middleton, he rejected the Augustinian-Bonaventurian divine illumination of the Intellect.

He had a highly developed theory of the Primacy of the Will and, for him, theology is not, in the strict sense, a science, since its principles, the articles of faith, are not evident. Theology is neither speculative nor practical, it is contemplative and the primary object of theology is God under the aspect of the Good, whom humanity cannot know comprehensively, but only under the notion of the Infinite. The unity of God is demonstrable by faith alone, a theory which would influence William of Ockham and many others. The Christology of William lays the foundation stone for the doctrine of the Absolute Primacy of Christ, and he was the first to introduce and positively defend the Immaculate Conception in the universities. At first sight it may seem that given William

of Ware's stress on the Primacy of the Will, his Christology and his defense of the Immaculate Conception, it would be easy to agree with the idea that he taught Duns Scotus. But this cannot be proved since these alone do not necessarily give compelling evidence that he was the teacher of Scotus (a tradition which does not go back later than the end of the fourteenth century). But what can be said with certainty is that with William of Ware, the older Bonaventurian positions are radically questioned and challenged. In this sense Duns Scotus would appear in the Franciscan Intellectual tradition with no scandal. Indeed, I would go so far as to suggest that his arrival was expected.

John Duns Scotus 1265(66?)-1308 was born in Duns in Berwickshire sometime between 1265-66 and at fifteen years of age he had completed his early education at the school run by the Franciscans at Dumfries, where his uncle, Elias Duns, was guardian. In 1281 he made profession in the Franciscans and in 1291 was ordained priest in Northampton and continued his studies at Oxford. Scotus does not need me to extol his greatness. Indeed, it is not necessary to do so. The fact that Scotus is well known in the Franciscan Movement as the great champion of the Immaculate Conception, the one who developed the Doctrine of the Absolute Primacy to unequaled heights, his recent beatification is testament to the greatness of John Duns Scotus. If anything needs to be said of Scotus then it is simply this – let we who are Franciscans not refer to Scotus as the Subtle Doctor, but rather as the Doctor Amoris – the Doctor of Love for it is this which is at the beginning, middle and end of all his thought, life, writings.

William of Ockham would require a separate reflection but his keen and insightful mind coupled with his undoubted genius and intellectual talent bequeathed to the Franciscan Intellectual tradition a sharper methodology in its approach to the many questions posed by the scholastic movement. Ockham's Razor, as it is commonly known, was important for establishing the criteria of intellectual pursuit, though his anti-Scotist trend and pure rationalism have led him to be viewed as something of a *bete noir* who initiated

many of the questions which preoccupied the Reformers. Nevertheless, Ockham ranks as one of the most clever and perceptively focussed thinkers of the scholastic era. With Ockham the contribution of medieval English Franciscans to the intellectual tradition draws to a close.

In recent times the primary scholars of English Franciscanism have been Eric Doyle† and Ignatius Kelly: Eric in the field of *Ecclesiastical History and Franciscan Studies* and Ignatius in *Theology*. In Franciscan Spirituality, especially a renewed emphasis on Franciscan Goodness and Scotus and the Primacy, Austin McCormack has done a lot of conscientization through lecturing and retreat work. Philippe Yates, current Principal of the Franciscan International Study Centre, has made extraordinary contributions in the field of early *Franciscan Legislation*, and Ninian Arbuckle has contributed much to new forms of *Franciscan Spirituality*. The English Franciscans can be proud of their contribution to the development not just of medieval thought, but to the Church and theology/philosophy as a whole. So in a sense, as T.S. Eliot said, our point of origin is our point of arrival. The English Franciscans continue to make their contribution to the development of thought, especially in the field of study of the Franciscan Tradition through the Franciscan International Study Centre, Canterbury.

The world is ever changing, growing, developing. Like the Middle Ages we are in a period of historical change and the ever increasing technological advances, especially in the field of information technology, necessitate that Franciscans keep in touch with and, at times, keep ahead of current thinking. This is necessary so that we can be true to our charism: the annunciation of the gospel of peace and reconciliation in a spirit of open fraternity and service. In the pursuit of theology, philosophy and spirituality, research continues and is ever dynamic and English Franciscans strive to be true to the inheritance bequeathed to them by Alexander of Hales, John Pecham, Roger Marston, Adam Marsh, Richard of Middleton, William of Ware, William of Ockham and the greatest of them all – John Duns Scotus.

***IL POVERELLO AND LOS POBRES:
READING THE SACRED EXCHANGE
IN LIGHT OF SOUTH AMERICAN POVERTY***

DANIEL P. HORAN, O.F.M.

*Es algo singular la pobreza: todo el mundo la desprecia
pore so de que no se la encuentra en medio de los que
viven entre delicias.*¹ (ScEx 10)

INTRODUCTION

There are few things as greatly discussed and debated within the Franciscan tradition as the vow of poverty. The ambiguity of poverty's applied praxis has led to a number of internal and external disputes within the tradition. These disputes have resulted in the occasional splintering of the Franciscan family to form new branches and the ongoing unease of what the founders' (Francis and Clare of Assisi) intentions were concerning poverty and its proper application today.

¹ *Sacrum Commmercium*, in *San Francisco De Asis: Escritos, Biografías, Documentos de la época*, ed. Jose Antonio Guerra, 6th ed. (Madrid: Biblioteca De Autores Cristianos, 1995), 937. In the spirit of solidarity with those whom I introduce as *Los Pobres* below, I have chosen to open this article with a quote from the *Sacred Exchange* in Spanish. The English translation is, "Poverty is the only thing that everyone condemns so that it cannot be discovered in the land of those living comfortably," found in Regis J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and William Short, eds., *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 1 (New York: New City Press, 1999), 532. Further citations of this source will be noted as *FA:ED* followed by volume and page number.

Such issues surrounding the proper living of the vow of poverty are not new phenomena, rather they stem from the very founding of the early Franciscan movement. Soon after the death of Francis, in the shadow of the construction of the great basilica in honor of the Saint by General Minister Elias of Cortona and Pope Gregory IX, some friars objected to the lifestyle and projects undertaken by the Order as being outside the vision of Gospel poverty intended by Francis and the early brothers.² Poverty was a contested issue when it came to the way of life for the Poor Clare sisters as Clare struggled to obtain, and eventually received in 1228, the approval of her request to maintain the privilege of poverty.³ Poverty as a characteristic of evangelical life as modeled by Christ became the source of several major debates in Paris among the secular, Franciscan and Dominican masters in the mid-thirteenth century. Poverty was a central issue of dispute during the so-called “Spiritualists” controversies of fourteenth century.⁴ Debates, arguments, interpretations and reinterpretations of the vow of poverty continue to this day.

While the questions surrounding the orthopraxis of the vow of poverty most directly affect those who profess to live a consecrated religious life, it tangentially affects every person who strives to follow the Gospel in the footprints of Francis and Clare. Those Christians who are inspired by the spirituality and charism of the Franciscan movement are also impacted by the call to live simply in the world and follow the example of Christ. Francis explains in his *Later Admonition and Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance*,

² See “Introduction,” *The Sacred Exchange between Saint Francis and Lady Poverty*, in FA:ED 1, 524-25.

³ See *Los Escritos de Francisco Y Clara e Asis: Textos Y Apuntes De Lectura*, ed. Julio Herranz, Javier Garrido, and Jose Guerra (Madrid: Editorial Franciscana Arantzazu, 2001), 435-39.

⁴ For an introduction to the subject see Peter Colosi, “Heresy of the Franciscan Spirituals,” *The Cord* 48 (January/February, 1998): 7-17; David Burr, *Olivetti and Franciscan Poverty: The Origins of the Usus Pauper Controversy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989); and David Burr, *Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century After Saint Francis* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).

“Though he [Christ] was rich, he wished, together with the most Blessed Virgin, his mother, to choose poverty in the world beyond all else” (2LtF 5).⁵ Francis called all who were inspired by his way of life to embrace Lady Poverty and turn away from the distractions of the material world.

There is much we can learn about our Franciscan way of life and the orthopraxis of evangelical poverty by both consciously examining our written tradition and considering the global reality of some people’s lived experiences. In this article, we will look at *The Sacred Exchange Between Saint Francis and Lady Poverty* and the current environment of poverty in the nation of Bolivia. Why these two foci? The *Sacred Exchange* presents us with an early allegorical vision of Franciscan poverty dating to the early- to mid-thirteenth century.⁶ It allows us to return to our roots and study the sources, hagiographical and narrative, that help form the foundation of the life we strive to live today. The *Sacred Exchange* is less often studied than the more famous early documents,⁷ which allows this text to be reflected upon with a certain freedom not necessarily found with the other sources.

If the *Sacred Exchange* serves as the window into our tradition, then the contemporary situation in Bolivia serves as the mirror reflecting the lived experience of people struggling with social injustices and poverty. This contemporary milieu of injustice and poverty will be used to inform the reading of the Franciscan ideal of evangelical poverty in a broken

⁵ *FA:ED* 1, 46.

⁶ There are a number of possible dates and authors posited by a selection of scholars. While there is no scholarly consensus suggesting a particular date and author, it is widely believed that it was written sometime between 1227 and 1239, meanwhile the author remains anonymous. Regardless of its date of composition and the identity of its composer, the text remains a powerful narrative window into the early “self-understanding of those who, with Francis, strove to ascend the mountain of Lady Poverty” (*FA:ED* 1, 527). For more on the dating and author ascription see *FA:ED* 1, 523-27 and *Escritos* 931-33.

⁷ Here I am referring to *The Life of Saint Francis* by Thomas of Celano, *The Legenda Major* by Saint Bonaventure, *The Legend of the Three Companions*, The so-called *Anonymous of Perugia*, and, of course, the writings of Francis himself.

and challenging world. The editors of *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents* provide a contextual note in their introduction to the *Sacred Exchange* as they remind us that the text emerges “from a period of history in which poverty and the poor were seen differently.”⁸ The purpose of reflecting on the text as it is informed by the poverty of South America is to help make relevant the *Sacred Exchange* for our period in history and to better understand how the world looks at poverty and treats the poor today.

¿ QUIÉNES SON LOS POBRES? ⁹

The poor of Bolivia – *Los Pobres* – make up about 70% of the total population.¹⁰ They are the poorest people of the poorest nation in South America. Holding such notorious honors as the *Guinness Book of Records*’ recognition for 188 coups d’état between 1825 and 1982,¹¹ the political, social and cultural history of Bolivia is scarred with violence, unrest, colonialization and instability. Today, while the political landscape bears some faint resemblance to its checkered

⁸ *FA:ED* 1, 527.

⁹ “Who are the poor?”

¹⁰ For information on the history of Bolivian poverty see The World Bank, *Bolivia – Country Assistance Evaluation*, Report No. 33493 (1 September 2005); The World Bank, *Bolivia Poverty Diagnostic 2000*, Report No. 20530-BO (28 June 2002); Omar Arias and Magdalena Bendini, “Bolivia Poverty Assessment: Establishing the Basis for Pro-Poor Growth,” *En Breve* 89 (May 2006): 1-4; Jon Hellin and Sophie Higman, *Feeding the Market: South American Farmers, Trade and Globalization* (Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2003); George Ann Potter, *Deeper than Debt: Economic Globalisation and the Poor* (Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2001); “The Slow Road to Reform,” *Economist* 357, no. 8199 (2 December 2000): 23-26; “Go South, Young Child,” *Economist* 351, no. 8119 (15 May 1999): 38-39; and “Riches for Poverty,” *Economist* 349, no. 8090 (17 October 1998): 40-41. The United Nations publications department is also a great source of current information of poverty and social inequality in Bolivia, especially through their UNICEF office.

¹¹ James Read, *The Rough Guide To Bolivia*, 2nd ed. (New York: Penguin Publishing, 2008), 7.

past,¹² Bolivia has enjoyed a stable system of governance since 1982.¹³ However, its economy remains weak and its people remain in poverty.

The history of poverty in Bolivia is complex, with several factors that combine to create an environment of social and economic injustice. Omar Arias and Magdalena Bendini, in their World Bank report, suggest three major reasons for the persistent high levels of poverty in Bolivia. These factors are the limited short-term benefits of the only recent period of economic growth in Bolivia, the low productivity of business and industry and, perhaps most importantly, few opportunities for the nation to increase its human capital.¹⁴ Interestingly, the first two factors appear to stem, in part, from the third factor. To better understand the climate of poverty in Bolivia, we need to look at each of these factors and consider their role in the injustices present today.

First there are the minimal and temporary benefits of a slight rise in the economic status of the country in the mid-1990s. During that time there was an increase in the exportation of certain natural resources. However, Bolivia's history of a weak general infrastructure and unskilled workforce has, in part, prevented the brief economic boom to carry over into long-term benefits.¹⁵ The ongoing problems associated with an insufficient infrastructure and limited education for the general population stem from the country's history of colonialization, abuse and neglect. That period was followed by civil, political and military unrest for nearly two centuries. Without serious outside assistance, any hope of turning minor economic or political successes into long-term benefits are minimal.

¹² At the time of this writing, Bolivia is engaged in fierce internal debates about its leadership and the approval of autonomy for the Department of Santa Cruz. Additionally, within the last decade there have been several major strikes and politically motivated protests that have warranted United States State Department warnings about travel to the region.

¹³ Read, *The Rough Guide to Bolivia*, 7.

¹⁴ Arias and Bendini, "Bolivia Poverty Assessment," 2.

¹⁵ Arias and Bendini, "Bolivia Poverty Assessment," 2.

Second, there is the problem of low productivity for the businesses that manage to succeed in the nation. The basic problem here has to do with the casual business practices in a nation that has seen little change in employee-employer relations for decades. In addition to the natural challenges of being a land-locked country, Bolivia's business laws and practices actually discourage growth and innovation within its markets.¹⁶ According to The World Bank this phenomenon has severely discouraged outside industries and businesses from investing in Bolivian companies. In other words, because the economic system in Bolivia remains antiquated and inefficient, other more wealthy nations have chosen to ignore the country and neglect assisting the struggling people with material and educational resources to improve their condition.

Finally, there is the lack of human capital. Perhaps the most significant barrier to economic growth and social stability, the lack of education in Bolivia continues to play a major role in the country's struggles. Without stable incomes and a social structure that can support broad general education, children – even though programs have been established to encourage basic education for all – often drop out of school at a young age to work.¹⁷ There is a vicious cycle that is created when people do not receive the necessary education to advance in the local and world markets because they have to work to survive and are forced into this mode of survival because of the neglect and disinterest of the rest of the world.

The aim of sharing information about the general struggles of the people in Bolivia is to provide a context within which we can locate ourselves in the world. Bolivia serves as a good example because of the terrible degree of poverty experienced by such a concentration of people. As we read

¹⁶ Arias and Bendini, "Bolivia Poverty Assessment," 2. There remains some debate about the justice of adjusting previous laws (dating back to the 1940s) that aim to protect employees, while placing significant burdens on employers. Neighboring countries seem to have struck a happy medium – in some cases – of providing laws that protect employees while encouraging business growth and investment (3).

¹⁷ Arias and Bendini, "Bolivia Poverty Assessment," 2.

the *Sacred Exchange* or consider the way the Gospel is lived out in our contemporary setting, it is important to remember that our reality is not the reality shared by all.

TOWARD CONVERSION

If today there is one message that continues to come across in the text of the *Sacred Exchange*, it is a call to conversion. Despite its contested and ambiguous historical background, this allegorical reflection remains a powerful provoker of self-examination. As we read the text, we are invited to journey up the mountain with Francis and his early brothers as they ardently strive to reach the summit and embrace Lady Poverty. Together with the early Franciscans we sit at the feet of poverty and wisdom personified to hear of the joys and challenges of the life we aspire to lead.

The *Sacred Exchange* begins with Francis who is seeking the way to heaven. His quest leads him, with his companions, to a mountain where Lady Poverty rests. The remainder of the text consists of the conversation that ensues between the Saint and Lady Poverty. The Lady explains to Francis the entire history of Salvation while highlighting the manner in which humanity (from Adam to the contemporary Christian) has accepted or rejected evangelical poverty. Ultimately Lady Poverty praises Francis and his followers for their sincere desire to follow Christ in perfect poverty and exhorts them to persevere in their way of life.

The *Sacred Exchange* is not an easy text to read. The narrative's criticism of worldly preoccupations is explicit and the force of its delivery is without mitigation. The challenge of considering the text has partly to do with the general desire of all who are comfortable in life to remain in such a state. Conversion is difficult because it requires the willing effort to change behaviors, attitudes and adopted paradigms. If we, like most of the United States population, find ourselves in a state of comfort (or even luxury), the temptation is strong not

to grapple with the tension of evangelical poverty in a land of plenty. So, more often than not, evangelical poverty remains a subject of conversation that is politely passed over, like religion and politics, to safely engage in discussions of weather and other trivia. The author of the *Sacred Exchange* was well aware of this phenomenon. In the beginning of the narration, we read:

[A]t that time there was no voice and no sense among Adam's children of being willing to converse with or to speak to anyone about poverty. They hated it with a vengeance, as they do even today, and could not speak peacefully to anyone asking about it (ScEx 5).¹⁸

If eight hundred years ago people did not want to critically address their own lifestyle and preferred manner of living, then why should we be concerned today?

The simple answer is that we, as Christians, are called to transcend the material world of insignificant concerns and consciously live a life that reflects our full dignity as daughters and sons of God. This dignity was shown to us in the life of Jesus Christ. As Leonardo Boff reminds us, Christ did not come preaching comfort and peace in order to justify and maintain the *status quo*.¹⁹ Instead, Christ spoke a word of "tough love" and issued a challenge for us to "Take up our cross and follow him" (Mark 8:34), becoming poor in spirit (Matt 5:3) and serving him in our sisters and brothers in need (Matt 25:31-46). It is in this manner Francis modeled his way of life and it is in this manner that we are to live as Christians.

Poverty can come across as glorified or romanticized by those who aspire to "recreate" the early Franciscan movement or exactly replicate the life of Francis. For example, the section of the *Sacred Exchange* titled "The Dignity of Poverty" along with the following section, "The Response of Lady Pov-

¹⁸ FA:ED 1, 530.

¹⁹ Leonardo Boff, *Jesucristo el Liberador: Ensayo de cristología crítica para nuestro tiempo*, 7th edition (Santander, Spain: Sal Terrae, 1985), 85.

erty,” could be taken as an argument for the complete abandonment of earthy possessions and suggest total divestment. Here we read of three scriptural examples given by the early brothers to Lady Poverty to express their desire to embrace the personified poverty. They include the humility of the Incarnation and the earthly life of Jesus, the teaching of Jesus in the Beatitudes with the selection of simple disciples,²⁰ and the manner of Jesus’ death by way of mockery and crucifixion (ScEx 19-22).²¹

At first glance the issue appears to be about material poverty, which is partly correct. However, a closer reading suggests that the exchange is not exclusively a lesson in material divestment, but rather it is a dialogue fundamentally concerned with the root of worldly preoccupation that is one’s investment in earthly wisdom over the Wisdom of God. Whereas general human wisdom suggests that God would enter the world in glorious triumph that might put the greatest earthly rulers to shame, God chose the simple, humble and lowly entrance as an infant in a manger. Whereas general human wisdom would suggest that God would select the smartest and most skilled orators to serve as the first messengers and followers of Christ, God chose fishermen and publicans who were simple and despised. Whereas general human wisdom would suggest that God would leave the world with a spectacular display of strength and power, the Word-Made-Flesh was nailed to the Cross and executed as a criminal. This allegory calls us to consider the meaning of evangelical life from outside the human construct and from within the paradigmatic Christian ideals set before us in Scripture and Tradition. It is only after we move to accept God’s Wisdom over earthly wisdom that we can begin to free ourselves of worldly preoccupations.

²⁰ “Blessed are the poor in spirit because there is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 5:3) in *FA:ED* 1, 535.

²¹ *FA:ED* 1, 535-36.

TOWARD JUSTICE AND LIBERATION

Lady Poverty presents us with two images of “poverty.” The first is the image of Adam before the fall. This form of poverty, life in the utopian garden without possession or concern, is presented as an ideal image of human existence in this world. Recalling her experience in paradise with Adam, Lady Poverty tells, “The Most High created him [Adam] just, good and wise and placed [him] in the most delightful and beautiful place. I was so happy playing before him all the while because, possessing nothing, he belonged entirely to God” (ScEx 25).²² Unencumbered by earthly possessions or worldly concerns, Adam found that by living without anything of his own, he could belong to God completely without holding back anything. This type of poverty is the divesting of one’s possessions to be possessed unreservedly by God. Such is the goal of evangelical poverty.

However Lady Poverty shares another vision of poverty, this time not of a goal or way of life, but a story of victimization and abuse. We read, “He was truly naked because, as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, he fell among thieves who robbed him first and foremost of his good nature, causing him to lose his likeness to the Creator” (ScEx 28).²³ While this description can be, and has been, read from the perspective of one who has selfishly chosen to disobey his Creator, the inclusion of the allusion to the first part of the “Good Samaritan” parable (Luke 10:30) suggests another interpretation. This other tale is one of violence and dehumanization.

First we have the thieves who deliberately and maliciously deprive “Adam” of all things. Then, as we know from the continuation of the parable, we have those who ignore and neglect the fallen person. Finally, we have the victim who, because of the abuse and crime, is naked and loses his dignity as a human being created in the image and likeness of

²² *FA:ED* 1, 537.

²³ *FA:ED* 1, 538.

God. This story is the beginning of our reading of the text in light of South American poverty.

Like the victim in the parable of the “Good Samaritan,” and Adam in Lady Poverty’s tale, the women and men of the southern hemisphere have been abused, neglected and robbed of their human dignity. At times they no longer bear resemblance to the Most High Creator because it has been taken from them. Going back through the centuries of European colonialization and North American military and political interventions, we have before us a record of the atrocities committed by the thieves in Lady Poverty’s story. Perhaps the thieving was not always deliberate but, at times, the result of sinful omission – like those who walked on, unmoved by concern for the victim at the side of the road.²⁴

Lady Poverty presents the Apostles as models of those who responded in true Christian charity to their fellow human beings. We read, “They burned with charity and gave themselves to the needs of all, overflowing everywhere with a feeling of piety and with a thorough vigilance, careful that no one would say of them: ‘They spoke but did not do’” (ScEx 32).²⁵ How often do we claim the title of Christian for ourselves but do little or nothing about the suffering of our sisters and brothers? Is our *modus operandi* a process of self-protection and self-advancement or do we look out for the interests of all? The *Sacred Exchange* acts as a lens through

²⁴ For more on the theological implications of South American oppression and poverty see Gustavo Gutiérrez, *La Fuerza Historica De Los Pobres: Selección de Trabajos* (Lima: Centro De Estudios Y Publicaciones, 1979), 129-82. Gutiérrez shares some interesting insights on the role of global capitalism and its contradictory and oppressive nature for *Los Pobres* (144-52). This, of course, was written more than sixteen years before the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was implemented and other more recent international trade agreements were initiated. It would appear that these reflections are even more relevant today. Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention the seminal work of Gutiérrez as a resource for further inquiry: *Teología de la liberación: Perspectivas* (Lima: Centro de Estudios Y Publicaciones, 1971); in English, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, rev. ed., tran. Matthew O’Connell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988).

²⁵ *FA:ED* 1, 540.

which we can view ourselves as contemporary disciples of Christ and consider how we fare when contrasted with the first Apostles.

One aspect of our lives that both the *Sacred Exchange* and the present situation of poverty in Bolivia and the rest of South America challenges us on is the influence of greed in our lives. The love of money, possessions and power are strong factors in most cultures of the developed world. A look at the lives of *Los Pobres* in Bolivia reminds us of our unnecessary dependence on money, property and power. Why do we need another shirt, another car or another vacation? Why do we work so hard to acquire the resources to fuel such desires? Why do some people have so much of everything and still want more while others live on less than two dollars a day?

Lady Poverty warns Francis, the early brothers and us of the seductive and destructive nature of greed. While at first one turns away from a radical commitment to poverty to “continue in works of piety, to have time for good, fruitful deeds, to provide for the needy, and to give something to the poor” (ScEx 39),²⁶ eventually that person becomes too comfortable. Lady Poverty tells us that what was once an exception for charity later becomes “discretion” and “fore-sight.” Greed assumes the names associated with prudent planning. New excuses and rationalizations begin to be concocted for the sake of politeness and security. Where once we trusted in the Lord, now we only trust in ourselves. Lady Poverty describes it in this way:

At first everything will seem very sweet for you to bear, but after a little while, once you have accepted security, you will tolerate negligence of the blessings you have received. At that hour you will think you want to return to that state and to rediscover the first consolation, but negligence once allowed is not easily uprooted. Your heart will then turn to other things, but

²⁶ *FA:ED* 1, 543.

reason will call you back to the first. Thus turned in spirit to laziness and sloth, you will offer thoughtless words of excuse. 'We cannot be as strong as we were in the beginning,' you say, 'times are now different.' And so you do not know what is said: When a man has ended, he is only just beginning (Sir 18:6). There will always be an inner voice, however, which will say: 'Tomorrow, tomorrow we will return to that first husband for it was better then than now' (ScEx 55).²⁷

From this state only further degrees of selfishness are attained. The result of such self-centeredness is the slow disintegration of the Christian community of charity and mutuality. Where once it was possible for the community of believers to live as with one heart and mind, no one claiming any of her possessions as her own, having everything in common (Acts 4:32), now there remains little hope. This is our global milieu: the haves and the have-nots.

As Christ came to bring justice and liberation to the marginalized and forgotten,²⁸ as the Apostles were commissioned two-by-two to do the same (Mark 6:7, Matt 9:35, Luke 10:1), and as Francis went among the lepers and served the untouchables (1C 17),²⁹ so, too, we are tasked with a likewise sizable mission. In what ways we are able, in what manner is most fitting our particular vocation in life, we must work toward justice and peace following in the footprints of Francis who followed in those of Christ. Sometimes one of the most subversive actions is remembering the forgotten and working toward a future where all of our sisters and brothers have, not only the hope of a place at the eternal banquet, but a seat at the table of this world, too.³⁰

²⁷ *FA:ED* 1, 550.

²⁸ Boff, *Jesucristo el Liberador*, 84-93.

²⁹ *FA:ED* 1, 195.

³⁰ The historical, theological and pastoral significance of the "Preferential Option for the Poor," is explored in Jorge Pixley and Clodovis Boff, *Option Por Los Pobres*, 2nd ed. (Madrid: Ediciones Paulinas, 1986), especially 125-280. Also see Gustavo Gutiérrez, "Option for the poor," in *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology*, ed. Jon Sobrino and Ig-

**READING THE SACRED EXCHANGE,
LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

Through the window of the *Sacred Exchange* we look into our tradition and through the mirror of *Los Pobres* we see the injustices of our world reflected back to us. The *Sacred Exchange* provides us with a number of ways to reconsider our investment in wisdom and our efforts to help bring justice and liberation to our world. The poor and neglected of our time remind us of our need to reassess the ways in which we prioritize our own lives and how we do (or do not) work toward the liberation and justice of all our sisters and brothers. In this way the *Sacred Exchange* read in light of the plight of poverty among us reveals a disconnect found in our lives that is need of reconciliation.

While the *Sacred Exchange* carries with it a history tainted by polemics and remains an allegorical narrative of the ideal expression of poverty for the early Franciscans, it provides a paradigmatic structure with which we can consider our own efforts to follow Christ in the manner of the *Poverello*. The authentic living of a Christian life is realized in the community of believers. It is important to recall that we do not live in the manner of the Gospel alone. Both conversion and working toward justice are formidable tasks that mandate a community's effort. The author of the *Sacred Exchange* knew that, which is why we, like Francis, are advised to, "Take faithful companions so that during the mountain's ascent you will have their advice and be strengthened by their help" (ScEx 11).³¹ Only with the help of our sisters and brothers can we follow in the footprints of Christ, in the spirit of Francis.

nacio Ellacuria (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996): 22-37. For uniquely Franciscan perspectives see David Flood, "Gospel Poverty and the Poor," in *Option for the Poor: Challenge to the Rich*, *Concillium* 187, ed. Virgil Elizondo and Leonardo Boff (June 1986): 63-69; and Leonardo Boff, *Francis of Assisi: A Model for Human Liberation*, tran. John Diercksmeier (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006).

³¹ *FA:ED* 1, 532.

As for *Los Pobres*, part of our ongoing conversion should inspire us to return to the mirror of our world to gaze upon the reflection of the injustice and captivity brought about by poverty. Perhaps the evangelical call toward justice and liberation was expressed best in the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (*Gaudium et Spes*), where we are told, “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the [women and] men of this age, *especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted*, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.”³² As powerful as these introductory words are, they mean nothing if we do not take action to make them a way of living and not just beautiful prose. We are reminded again that the preferential option for the poor is to be our *modus operandi*. That same section of *Gaudium et Spes* articulates the singular goal of all Christians. It remains to carry forward the work of Christ with the help of the Holy Spirit.³³

Lady Poverty, at the end of the *Sacred Exchange*, warns the early brothers that the task to live the Gospel life, to embrace true and perfect poverty, is no easy venture. She warns that the wisdom of the world:

[I]s exceedingly proud and its pride and arrogance are more than its strength. It will show great anger toward you, will turn the arms of its universal cunning on you, and attempt to pour out the venom of its wrath. It will be like the one who, in warring against the rest, has conquered and cast them down and is now sad to see you looking down on it (ScEx 67).³⁴

However, there is hope. As we hear in *Gaudium et Spes*, Lady Poverty promises the early Franciscans the gift of the Holy Spirit who will aid the followers of Christ in their mission. She instructs them, “Humbly receive the grace offered you. Always use it worthily for the praise and glory and hon-

³² *Gaudium et Spes*, 1. Emphasis added.

³³ *Gaudium et Spes*, 3.

³⁴ *FA:ED* 1, 554.

or of him who died for you, Jesus Christ, our Lord” (ScEx 69).³⁵

Today we are called to follow Christ in a similar fashion. Lady Poverty continues her conversation with Francis through his contemporary sisters and brothers. Inspired by the spirit and life of Francis and Clare, we are invited to embrace Lady Poverty and work toward the justice and liberation of those who are poor and afflicted.



³⁵ *FA:ED* 1, 554.

**MARY: PROTOTYPICAL MYSTIC
THE MARIAN LAUDS OF JACOPONE DA TODI**

AXEL MARC TAKÁCS

INTRODUCTION

Within the corpus of the 93 Lauds of Jacopone da Todi (c.1236-1306), the Franciscan poet-mystic of Umbria spends much time on charity, poverty, the Church, the soul's passionate love for Jesus Christ and, above all, his experience of mysticism as union with the Divine. He was among the first to write in a "vulgar" Italian (specifically Medieval Umbrian) rather than the Latin of the educated. As a result the masses had easy access to his poems which were, in fact, very popular because their "wording and [sounds] as such originally conveyed only homeliness."¹ Within these Lauds are three² gems concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary; actually, it is within the greater context of his Lauds that these poems need to be read. In so doing, one can envision Mary as the prototypical mystic according to the path of Franciscan spirituality, and we as Christians can grow spiritually in light of this Marian spirituality of a Franciscan orientation.

¹ Serge and Elizabeth Hughes, *Jacopone da Todi: The Lauds* (Ramsey, NY: Paulist Press, 1982).

² Before twentieth century scholarship, many included the *Stabat mater dolorosa* within Jacopone's *oeuvre*. However this is not the case. See Hughes, as well as George T. Peck, *The Fool of God: Jacopone da Todi* (University, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1980). Thus, three Lauds directly concerning the Virgin Mary remain.

The Sinner and the Blessed Virgin Mary is a conversation between a sinner and Mary. The poem begins with the sinner coming to the Virgin in a state of frenetic despair:

O gracious Queen, heal, I beg of you, my wounded heart.
Despairing, I come to you, confiding in you alone.
Without your help I am ashes.
My wound is past telling, my Lady, it festers.
Hasten, help me. This suffering unravels me;
The pain swells to a height, wails.³

The poem continues with a response from the Virgin who comforts the sinner immediately “Son, I hear your cry, / And gladly will I come to your side,”⁴ but then offers some rather heavy suggestions, most of which conform to Jacopone’s rigorous Franciscan spirituality.⁵ In the end, however, “God will cancel the debt and in your strength / You will ward off the blows of the Enemy.”⁶

The laud entitled *The Blessed Virgin Mary* is the most theological of the three lauds concerning the Virgin. In it we find the language of the Immaculate Conception, wording that posits an undamaged womb at the nativity, and a theology of the heavenly ascent of the Virgin in contradistinction to the worldly descent of her Son. This latter subject is of interest to us, and will be addressed below.

The third laud, *The Lament of the Virgin*, is by far the most consuming of his Marian lauds. The laud sets an impassioned conversation between a messenger, the Virgin, and her Son, moments before and during the crucifixion, bringing to life the suffering and threnody of any mother mourning the death of her son. For our purposes, this laud brings to light, in combination with the laud entitled *The Blessed Virgin Mary*, a Mariology that places Mary as the quintes-

³ Hughes, *Jacopone da Todi*, 69.

⁴ Hughes, *Jacopone da Todi*, 69.

⁵ Jacopone stresses spiritual and physical poverty, controlled appetite, and eliminated vanities.

⁶ Hughes, *Jacopone da Todi*, 69.

sential mystic who climbs the ladder to the Divine and experiences ecstasy in union with the Word (annunciation and nativity), only to plunge to the abyss of the “dark night of the soul” (Mary at the crucifixion) that so many mystics have experienced. Whether or not this was the intention of Jacopone is a moot point, but we must recall that as a mystic, his intentions occasionally transcend implied deliberateness and enter into the realm of theosophical interpretation. In other words, the premeditations of a mystical author are multivalent and need to be read as such.

The Lauds

We will focus on the two lauds that directly address our thesis (*The Blessed Virgin Mary* and *The Lament of the Virgin*). These two lauds, in combination with his overall representation of the mystical life, present Mary as the paradigmatic mystic. For Jacopone, a Franciscan was to empty himself both physically and spiritually in order to be a true follower of poverty. He went further and followed in the path of St. Francis, himself a mystic, and described the effects of such emptying in Laud 91:

The doors open wide, and entering within
The soul becomes one with God,
Possesses what He possesses ...
Because it has renounced all
That is not divine,
I now hold in its grasp
The unimaginable Good
In all its abundance[.]⁷

Laud 66 then describes the dark night of the soul:

I seek out Your nativity, Lord,
Seek out Your suffering;
There is no joy in the quest,

⁷ Hughes, *Jacopone da Todi*, 62.

For love has gone cold ...
Contemplating my own grief I weep,
The dry tears of a heart in ruins.
That precious, inaccessible sweetness—
Where has it gone?⁸

A protracted list of other lauds could be given that exemplify Jacopone's mystical theology of poverty and the dark night. However, the purpose of these citations is simply to have a reference point in order that we may address his Marian hymns in relation to his overall theology and spirituality.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is a nativity poem that delves deep into the person of Mary. In addition to expounding upon her Immaculate Conception and her rather (amazingly) painless labor that left her womb undamaged, Jacopone elevates the status of Mary:

You carry God within you, God and man,
And the weight does not crush you ...

O salamander-heart, living in flame,
How is it that love did not consume you utterly?
Fortitude sustained you, and steadies the burning heart.
Yet the humility of the child dwarfed yours:
With your acceptance you ascended in glory;
He, instead, abased Himself, descended to wretched
state.⁹

It appears that Mary embodies what St. Irenaeus of Lyon, and countless other writers after him, wrote about humanity's deification: God became man so that man might become God. Theologian after theologian have written about the extreme humility of Mary, and Jacopone takes this concept to show that Mary then "ascended in glory." For Jacopone—as the true Franciscan that he was—humility and poverty were

⁸ Hughes, *Jacopone da Todi*, 37.

⁹ Hughes, *Jacopone da Todi*, 71.

the *sine qua non* for the proper spiritual life oriented toward Christ, not to mention the mystical life. As Laud 91 (cited above) illustrates, only after renouncing all can the true mystic's soul enjoy ecstatic union with the Divine. Mary, as an exemplar of humility, did precisely that: she humbly did God's will and was given union with the Word in her bearing of the Son of God.

Above, we cited Laud 66 as an example of the dark night of the soul, and Jacopone's *The Lament of the Virgin*, using Mary as the mystic, shares this same theme to an extreme degree. For in this laud, Divine Love,

... permits the possibility of union between the tragic existence of humanity and the supernatural dimension; God and Man [unite] in the sharing of suffering.¹⁰

One cannot but come to tears in reading this laud, for it places on the lips of Jesus and His mother a dialogue of agony. The laud begins with the messenger informing Mary of her Son's arrest, beating, and soon-to-come death:

Lady, Queen of Heaven, they have taken your son;
Hurry, come and see—they're beating Him,
Whipping Him brutally; they will kill him;¹¹

Mary replies in shock:

How can this be? My son, who has done no wrong,
My hope—how could they have taken Him?

The dialogue between the messenger and the Virgin continues, the former relaying what has happened, and the latter receiving the news in a state of stupefaction:

¹⁰ S.E. Ennio Cardinal Antonelli, *Jacopone da Todi: Il sentiero dell'anima* (Todi, Italy: Tau Editrice, 2008), 4.

¹¹ This laud is taken from Hughes, *Jacopone da Todi*, 278-80.

Axel Takács

My son, my son, my son, my loving lily,
Who can console me in my anguish?
Son whose gentle eyes once smiled on me,
Why do you not answer me?
Why hide from the mother who nursed You?

Finally, Mary arrives at Calvary and her Son, upon seeing
His mother, wails

Mother,¹² why have you come?
Your agony and tears crush Me;
To see you suffer so will be My death. (emphasis mine)

We reproduce the section in full:

(Mary)
My anguish is without cause;
O my Son, Father and Spouse, (emphasis mine)
Who was it wounded and stripped you?

(Jesus)
Mother, weep no more; stay and help
Those dear to Me, the friends I leave behind.

(Mary)
Son, do not ask this of me; *let me die with You.*
Let me breathe my last here at Your side.
A common grave for son and mother,
Since ours is a common agony. (emphasis mine)

Jesus then gives Mary to John as his Mother, and then
breathes his last. Mary ends with a poignant elegy:

My Son, You have breathed Your last;
Son of a mother frightened and dazed,

¹² Jacopone conveys an intimate affection whenever Jesus addresses the Blessed Virgin, for he does not put “Madre” (lit., mother) on the lips of Christ, but rather the more familiar “mamma.”

Son of a Mother destroyed by grief,
Tortured, tormented Son!
Son without peer, fair and rosy-cheeked,
To whom shall I turn now that You have left me?
Why did the world so despise You?
Gentle and sweet Son, Son of a sorrowful mother,
How cruelly You have been treated!
John, my new son, your brother is dead:
The sword they prophesied has pierced my heart.
*They have killed both mother and son,
One cruel death for both,
Embracing each other and their common cross!*
(emphasis mine)

The theological and mystical implications of this laud are multifarious and noteworthy. To begin, Jesus' mother has such an influence on him that he appears to not suffer until her arrival, and in fact it is *her* suffering that will be *his* death. The pain of a mother losing a child bleeds through this laud, and the reader can almost undergo the suffering alongside the Blessed Virgin (a very real "com-passion"). Her emotional torment affects both the reader and Jesus, for Mary cannot imagine life without her Son and expresses herself appropriately ("Let me die with You!"). In fact, she spiritually and emotionally suffers alongside the physical passion of her Son, to the point that she exclaims, "They have killed both mother and son ... embracing ... a common cross."

While this may be the traditional, albeit emotionally amplified, version of a *Mater Dolorosa*, an additional conclusion can be drawn. When this dirge, along with the preposterous (though only on a superficial level) statement of Mary's, "O my Son, Father, and Spouse," are read within the context of Jacopone's other lauds, we can see Mary as the quintessential mystic of Franciscan spirituality. She is the Christian who has emptied herself in humility in order to make room for the Divine, which brings both sublime ecstasy (cf. *The Blessed Virgin Mary* Laud, above) and wretched suffering (much akin to the dark night of the soul). Union with the Christ means suffering alongside him as well. This is pre-

cisely what Mary is doing in this Laud, and she does so in a hyperbolic fashion: she is the only human who experienced *real* union with the Word (in carrying the Word made flesh within her) and *real* separation (in witnessing the Word that was once within her die an agonizing death). Mary is thus the archetypal Christian mystic.

Lest we be left with a theology that affects but a handful in this world, for ordinary mystics are few and far between, these Marian lauds also enter into the lives of all Christians, for we are all extraordinary mystics in our own way. Antonelli, in his selective translations, sums up the importance of the Marian lauds succinctly:

The Virgin Mary constitutes, as it is for the other mystics, a constant point of reference within the journey of the soul of Brother Jacopone and takes such an important place within it that, almost all of the stages of [Jacopone's] life versified in the Lauds carry [her] print. Mary, therefore, constitutes a model for the journey for all Christians.¹³

For Jacopone, the model Christian must empty himself in spiritual and material poverty and be ready to receive the Word in times of both joy (Mary's glory as the Mother of God) and despair (Mary's dark night of the soul at the foot of the cross). Thus, Jacopone is offering his readers an *imitatio Mariae* for the major mystic, as well as for the minor mystic within all Christians. As Christians, we must be aware that following Christ entails an emptying of the self in order that the Word made Flesh may penetrate and fill us, but this is followed at times with suffering as we imitate Christ's "compassion." In other words, we find both sublime bliss and a "suffering-with" in Christ. That said, it would be refreshing to retrieve the theme of "Mary as quintessential mystic," beginning with the Lauds of the Franciscan, Jacopone da Todi.

¹³ Antonelli, *Il sentiero dell'anima*, 21.

A STROLL THROUGH THE TESTAMENT OF SAINT CLARE

JEANNE D'ARC, O.S.C.

PART ONE: SAINT FRANCIS

Schematically, Francis could appear as an excessive man, more or less absolute in his choices, passing from one excess to another. In fact, he is a youth who passes from juvenile, happy go-lucky and irresponsible immaturity toward progressive maturity, as do all youth. Endowed with a generous and enthusiastic temperament, an upright and wholehearted character, he gives himself totally, wherever he discovers his values. It is why the Lord can help him to form his true values and Francis will manifest his docility. The Anonymous of Perugia (6b) reports the dream of Spoleto: "Who can do more for you, the lord or the servant?" "The Lord" he answered. "Then why are you abandoning the lord for the servant, and the patron for the client?" To which Francis responded: "Lord, what do you want me to do?" "Go back to your own land to do what the Lord will tell you."

Christ will gently teach him to clarify his desires. An upright man, but not yet formed in the spirit of the gospel, Francis will allow himself to be trained. Intelligent and honest, he will submit to the multiple calls and indications of God. Moreover, little by little, he will become capable of *reflecting* on the events of his life and of *reacting* to some situations, which invite him to a necessary conversion (to kiss the leper, for example). And by this conversion he will change the course of his entire life.

Jeanne d'Arc

Let us say that his “excesses” have become for him, preparation stones for surpassing self. This is what is pleasing to Christ. Thus, through the incessant refining of his perception, the progressive recentralization of his spirit, the attachment of his heart to the Person of Christ and reversal in his judgment (cf. Rom 12:1-2), Francis outlines the complete course of his human and spiritual journey: intelligence, will, affectivity. This journey becomes visible for us from the moment we understand his growth in love through innumerable difficulties of every kind until it reaches fruition in the stigmata.

One can follow this beautiful human and spiritual adventure in reading what Clare has written in her Testament where we are conscious of both the admiration and the tenderness she has toward her spiritual Father. In her heart, too, was kindled the desire to know Christ intimately.

Vs. 9-10 In fact, almost immediately after his conversion, when the holy man did not as yet have brothers or companions, while building the church of San Damiano, where he was totally visited by divine consolation and impelled to abandon the world.	<i>Francis is alone</i> <i>Conversion</i> <i>Poverty</i>
Vs. 11, 13, 14 completely through great joy and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, the holy man made a prophecy ...“Come and help me ... because there will as yet be ladies here who will glorify our heavenly Father ... by their ... holy manner of life.”	<i>Joy, leads to Liberty</i> <i>Creates space for</i>

Vs.15, 16, 17 ... the abundant kindness of God to us. Because of His mercy and love, He saw fit to speak these words about our vocation and election through His saint. And our most blessed Father prophesied not only for us, but also for those who would come to this holy vocation ...	<i>The conception</i>
	First fruit of this conception: Clare, Then the Sisters, Then Brothers

PART TWO: SAINT CLARE

Clare follows a different human and spiritual route than Francis. Well after the death of Francis, when she writes her *Testament*, she has already slowly relived the memory of her own spiritual journey and the extraordinary journey of her precursor and spiritual friend. She has tasted the fruits of transformation and of new life in herself and in her Sisters. From the beginning of her conversion, she allowed herself to be lead by Francis “to offer herself as a living holy and agreeable sacrifice to God.” Thus she became aware that there was a “spiritual cult that she was to offer to God” (cf. Rom 12:1-2).

Resisting the pressures of the world with all her strength and her entire will and refusing to model herself upon false values, she welcomed the education of Francis, her spiritual master, who helped her to renew her judgment and to allow herself to be transformed to the point of knowing how to discern what was the will of God for her, what pleased

Him, what was perfect (cf. Rom 12). This capacity to discern explains why Clare could not have an identical life to that of Francis. She is free and Christ enlightens her according to what he desires from her and of her Order. Francis has not made a carbon copy of himself, but they knew how to listen, learn and understand (cf. Col 1:6) together the project of God for each of the two communities. Francis guided Clare and accompanied her on the road of spiritual growth in order to develop together the apostolic fecundity of which the Church had need. If our two Orders are born from the same charism, each has a unique, if complementary, mission. The *Testament* of Clare, moreover, does not offer parallels between her life and that of Francis. Although the spirit is the same, her manner of living this very intense desire for interior identification with Christ is realized by other means than those of Francis.

By character, Clare is less impulsive and less excessive than Francis is; she is certainly more mature and spiritually more profound than he was at the same age. However, is it not precisely thanks to Francis, that the charism awakened in her the audacity to give form to what was most living in her? Above all, her contact with Francis revealed to the young Clare how to respond to Christ with the best of herself through a total, profound and joyful giving of self. What Francis brought to her corresponded and responded exactly to the fire burning in her! The characteristic of spiritual friendship is truly to give birth and to develop the profound personality of a being.

Many men and women saints have abundantly described and transmitted to posterity their spiritual and mystical experiences. Regarding this, Clare, is very discreet, as was Francis also. (It is a common trait of their poverty). No research has uncovered accounts of their unique spiritual experiences. What one knows of them is found in some counsels that she writes to Agnes of Prague. Even the *Testament* says nothing about it and the *Rule* does not reveal much more, at least in the first approach.

Poverty

By entering with respect and love we will try to penetrate this boundless reserve to uncover the appealing spiritual personality of Saint Clare.

Clare, as did Francis, was greatly attracted to a life of poverty. But what is it that makes this poverty so appealing in her eyes? What has she perceived in the moment when choosing to embrace it?

A prayerful reading of the *Testament* enables us to guess a little of it. First, we see her love for Christ. She wants to live with him in a little place and without possessing anything. Poverty is perceived, then, as an apostolic force. Clare desired this restrained place, which creates an accumulation of energy to go far and wide. Do not forget that she wanted to go and live the Gospel in the Orient in order to be a martyr there. The strict cloister of Saint Damian did not frustrate her apostolic desires. On the contrary: she channeled these apostolic desires into a profound personal intimacy with the Word made flesh in that place of her spiritual growth and the mainspring of development of our Order. It is within this narrowness, seen as a positive and apostolic force that Clare becomes more and more sensible to the call of Christ to surpass herself by allowing him to be her Center. "Clare placed the Word in her heart and her heart in God" (cf. General Constitutions 4.2). There, Clare can allow herself to be fashioned in the following of the Virgin Mary and through her, into a little dwelling offered to "The One Who Saves." Her specific poverty, far from being sordid and sad, is a space of liberty, conquered by her dynamic love of Christ who embraces the project of God. This is her unlimited apostolic goal, the cause of the blessed flowering of her being.

In the Process of Canonization, the Sisters of her monastery have revealed, with insistence, the radiant joy, the happiness and the sweetness of Clare, always smiling, that is to say, her human and spiritual maturity that she found in the Form of Life of Saint Francis. Effectively responding to her apostolic desire she transformed the geographic itinerancy

of Francis and the Brothers into interior spiritual itinerancy for her and her sisters, where Christ continued his universal redemptive work in space and time from this “working room.” Such is clearly the typical dynamism of Francis, relayed through the interiority of Clare. This is our heritage.

From the beginning, our two Orders are complementary in the accomplishment of a unique service to the Church, within which Clare and her Sisters participate in a profound sense: (cf. Eph 3:18) “You will receive the strength to understand with all the saints, what is the width, the length, the height and the depths, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge.”

A woman of breadth endowed with profound intelligence, Clare naturally loves the grand apostolic horizons of the Church and wants to inscribe her life and ours in the circle of the universal Mission of the Church. To Agnes she writes: “I consider you a helper of God Himself,” nothing less!

Thus, Clare, spouse of the Savior, is always aware of her vocation, that is, participation in the work of Christ. This is why she begins her *Testament* by these words:

Among the other gifts that we have received and do daily receive from our Benefactor, the Father of mercies (2 Cor 1.3), and for which we must express the deepest thanks to the glorious Father of Christ, there is our vocation (Testament 2-3).

What is the origin of this poverty which so attracts her? It is surprising not to find any “treatise” on the spirituality of poverty so essential to Clare. Neither is there any intellectual description of her own experience or her spirituality. On the surface her writings seem limited to practical observances. So how are we to find the spirituality which upholds her extreme poverty?

The Source, is it more profound?

If at first glance her writings seem too materially oriented, let us look more closely to find the source. Jesus effaces himself to reveal the Father, Clare effaces herself to reveal Francis, both efface themselves to reveal the Christ.

The Son of God has been made for us the Way (cf. John 14:6), which our blessed father Francis ... has shown and taught us (Testament 5).

In other words, Clare points to Francis, and both point to Christ. Christ points to the Father: a communication full of humility and of dependence that leads to Life. This is a beautiful antithesis of Genesis 3:11-14 where man, interrogated by his Creator, "points to" the woman responsible for the disobedience, the woman "points to" Satan: a communication full of pride and accusation that leads to death. Here the Son is, on the contrary, *the Way, the Truth and the Life*. Such is the contemplation of Clare and her imitation of the Son of God: communication that leads us in our turn to "the Father of mercies, and for which we must express our deepest thank, there is our vocation." (Testament 2, 3.)

Clare inscribes herself in the line of the Spirit who reveals (John 16:13-15): this is transmission of Revelation. When Clare effaces herself before the mystery, it is her manner to reveal it because it is the manner of Christ. It is in the same mystery that each sister will freely find her way to live Franciscan spiritual poverty.

The poverty for Christ is first to do the work of the Father, then to reveal the Father and finally, to commit everything into the hands of the Father: "The Son, Himself will submit to the One who has submitted all to Him, so that God can be all in all" (1Cor 15:28).

Is this not the nucleus of poverty for Clare? Imitation of the poverty of Jesus who neither says nor does anything that he has not heard or seen from the Father (John 5.19, 30, 43; John 8, 28). He had nothing of his own in the moment of his

return to the Father except the Spirit whom he bequeathed to us, and in so doing, Jesus revealed the Father. This is our direct heritage of poverty, the sap that irrigates the Franciscan body for eight hundred years in the Church. It is the charism of our Order, of which our own is to witness to the complete poverty of the Son of God and to live it ourselves. It is the secret and the mystery of Franciscan joy!

This is not all, if this lived poverty is of the order of transmission, as we have just seen, it is also of the order of conception (that is to say, a new birth), as Mary kept all these things in her heart where slowly, secretly she is already conceiving the Church. The same with Clare, in the silence of a total discretion with herself, conceived her Order in humility and poverty, a fertile soil welcoming the Order just as the womb of Mary had welcomed the Word made flesh.

We know how much Clare venerated the Virgin Mary. It is not astonishing then, that her contemplation led her to imitate this interior attitude in the most profound and fruitful way.

Numerous traces of this transmission appear when one scrutinizes the *Testament*. Some verses easily reveal the spirit of profound humility of Clare, modeled on the Son of God, who always effaces Himself to reveal the Father.¹

Thus, Clare lived prophetic religious life: leaning on Christ, the definitive Covenant. She knew this Covenant never ceases to reveal its promises. Our Mother shows us that we are associates by vocation in this construction and in fidelity to the mission that Christ continues in and through his Church. Clare manifests the future by pointing to the Covenant so as to go before us in the work of Christ.

¹ See, for example, the Testament of Clare 37, 39-41, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 56-60.

**SAINT FRANCIS AND CHIVALRY
FROM MILITARY CODE TO SPIRITUAL ROMANCE**

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

Chivalry is one of those words that, for some, conjures up a lost world shrouded in legend and romance. For others, it represents an old-fashioned and rather quaint kind of deference towards women. And yet, for others, it signifies a relic of condescension from a medieval class-ridden society. It is, in fact, none of these. In a strange and unexpected way it often lingers on in the most unlikely of situations. Once during a student debate in Dublin the motion was put forward that "this house considers this academic institution discriminates against women." Upon leaving, a gentleman held the door for the young lady who proposed the motion. Although aware that if she were an ardent feminist the response to his courtesy might have been a resounding slap he received a gracious "Thank you." However, chivalry is much more than old-fashioned courtesy towards women.

There is a distinctly heroic side to chivalry. Take, for example, the sinking of the troopship H.M.S. Birkenhead in 1852. As the ship went down there were only enough lifeboats to accommodate the women and children on board. All of them were saved, even as the men stood resolutely at their posts as the ship disappeared beneath the waves. The *Times*, dated April 9, 1852, call this an act of "matchless chivalry." At the outbreak of the First World War, Lloyd George called the young airmen "the knighthood of this war, without fear and without reproach; they recall the legendary days of chivalry." Such notions of the glories of war were inevitably shattered after a few months in the trenches when even the members

of the Royal Flying Corps rendered the verdict that in the reality of conflict "Chivalry counted for nothing."¹ Moreover, Churchill voiced the final judgment after World War II that in modern warfare "there is little place for chivalry."

In thirteenth century Italy, Francis of Assisi had a similar experience after the Battle of Collestrada. He had fallen in love with the idea of chivalry but the carnage of the battlefield disillusioned his knightly ambitions. The term chivalry, in the Middle Ages, was never used in a precise way, but its most common application was to describe deeds of valor in the field of combat. It could also refer to the knightly class in general, or to a particular aspect of a military code of behavior. Even the so-called code of chivalry remained somewhat obscure, being a collection of ideals which were accepted more by individual choice than by any general obligation. This left the idea subject to a certain amount of manipulation, but at the same time opened the way for Francis to use the term with a new and revolutionary significance.

Francis was born at about the time when the code of chivalry was formulated. It was about this time that the "dubbing" of knights came to be sponsored by the Church. Europe had been convulsed with petty feuding of the knightly and noble classes for over six hundred years, presenting a scandalous example to all of Christendom. One nobleman, to spite his neighbor, would torch his crops, thus destroying the livelihood of most of the local peasantry. To mitigate the violence of the times the Church sought to curb all the conditions which encouraged it. One of the earliest attempts to restrain this violence occurred at the Council of Valence in 855 which condemned trial by combat. At the councils of Charroux (989 AD) and Narbonne (990 AD) aggressive attitudes were again restrained by the "Truce of God."² In 1027 the Council of Elne limited acts of military violence to those of an altruistic nature, such as defence of the weak (viz. orphans and widows). The Second Lateran Council of 1139 condemned the

¹ Letter from Derek Robinson printed in the *Times* June 1, 1987.

² A suspension of private warfare and protection of all noncombatants decreed by the Church on certain days and seasons.

practice of jousting. These Christian admonitions formed the basis of an ethical code which became enshrined in the idea of chivalry.

The Church's concern over the scandal of the warring nobility received a new direction in 1095 when Urban II proclaimed a crusade to rescue the Holy Land from Islamic rule. This gave opportunity for the knightly classes to redirect their military aggression towards a more worthy cause, namely wresting the Holy Places from Saracen control and thus restoring the free and safe escort of Christian pilgrims to Palestine. It was this plea for a renunciation of aristocratic banditry and for such violent inclinations to be channelled towards a more spiritual end that gave rise to a new ideal of knighthood. Thus, by the late twelfth century every aspiring knight was expected to perform an all-night vigil, to be shriven and take a ritual bath for purification. The sword would be blessed, and before receiving knighthood, the candidate would receive Holy Communion. While the Church could not compel such ritual, it was strongly encouraged as part of the moral formation of the knightly classes. The blessing of the sword had a quasi-sacramental character with an exhortation that it be only used to defend the weak. In this way the Church hoped to exercise some control over the idea of knighthood.

One of the earliest treatises on this Church-sponsored knighthood was Bonzino of Sutri's *Liber de Vita Christiana* of the late eleventh century. This work stressed the chivalric duty of keeping faith with the superior lord, of abstaining from pillage and defending the poor and the weak.³ Furthermore, the knight was expected to be a champion of Catholic orthodoxy and loyal to the successor of Peter. Urban II's proclamation of the crusade also added the duty to defend Christians against the infidel.⁴ These exhortations came to be considered the Code of Chivalry.

³ J.F. O'Callaghan, "Chivalry," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. III (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 1907), 618.

⁴ O'Callaghan, "Chivalry," 618.

In the early twelfth century, Bernard of Clairvaux drew up his *Liber de laude novae militiae* which was an attempt to strengthen the Church's control of knighthood by combining the ideals of chivalry with those of monasticism. Although this was a propaganda exercise for the newly founded Order of Knights Templar, Bernard made a sharp contrast between secular knighthood and his Templars. The implication, however, was that true chivalry could only be embraced within the context of a Christian vocation.

The so-called Code of Chivalry was, therefore, the means whereby the Church sought to civilize the brutality of feudal society and to inculcate a moral responsibility among the knightly classes. The chivalry that first attracted the young Francis Bernardone was the idealized version of the French troubadours whose ballads were a heady mixture of romance and courage, but also the contradictory notions of courtly love. Francis first heard these songs on his trips with his father to the cloth fairs of Provence and Champagne, where the Occitan culture reigned, expressed in a language that Dante named the *lingue d'oco* or, as it is better known today, *langued'oc*. Within this region, according to Fouque in his *Girart de Roussillon*, the ideal of the knight was presented as one who is eloquent, well bred, generous and skilled in courtly pastimes.⁵ The young Francis must have imbibed this spirit as part of the culture of chivalry for his generosity was prodigious and he considered all sadness the work of the devil. However, the a priori Christian element in the Code of Chivalry was the protection of the weak as summed up in Exodus 22:22 and Deuteronomy 27:19, which specifies the orphan, the widow and the wayfarer as being in need of protection. In Francis's youthful exuberance this was an unsullied though increasingly neglected ideal. To some extent the medieval world lived under a romantic illusion and all the great chroniclers, such as Froissart, Monstrelet, d'Escouchy, Chastellain, LaMarch, and Molinet, sought to glorify knight-

⁵ Jack Lindsay, *The Troubadours and their World of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (London: F. Muller, 1976), 119.

hood despite the horrendous slaughter that often accompanied knightly enterprise.⁶

Francis was, to some extent, an exponent and a victim of his own culture in which the real and the ideal lived in contradiction. The concept of society as an evolving, complex, historical phenomenon was beyond the grasp of contemporary historiographers; the interplay of greed, ambition and the thirst for power all became muted in the soft glow of the colors of chivalry. War was disguised as a noble game for the edification of a privileged class in which chivalry at best acted as an anodyne to the horrors of conflict but at worst became a profligate and deluded romanticism. In Francis's gilded youth such troubadour ballads as the "Song of Roland" and those of the fabled knights of the Round Table entered Italy through the wandering minstrelsy of France⁷ and with his father's wealth to support his ambition, he dreamed of knighthood.

The early years of Francis were marked by the strong military presence of Duke Conrad of Urslingen who held the fief of Assisi in the name of the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry IV, who upon succeeding his father Barbarossa in 1188 began to foment the old rivalry of the imperial and papal parties. Duke Conrad of Urslingen was commanded by Innocent III to hand over Assisi. Noting that the imperial grip had weakened by a succession of calamities, the Duke fled La Rocca, his Assisi stronghold, to do homage to the Pope at Narni. This was the signal for the local citizens to assault the offending fortress and raze it to the ground. A new communal form of government was set up and Assisi became an independent city-state owing papal allegiance. The neighboring city of Perugia, which had given refuge to the ousted imperial overlords, declared war on Assisi in 1201. Francis seized his opportunity and enlisted in the commune army, but the Battle of Collestrada proved a turning point. The brutal reality of

⁶ This is ably described in Barbara Tuchman's superb book *A Distant Mirror*.

⁷ Peter Dronke, *The Medieval Lyric* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: D.S. Brewer, 1996), 44.

warfare struck him with a searing ferocity amidst the blood-soaked corpses. His knightly ambition dissipated as he faced captivity in a fetid Perugian prison.

Despite his chastening experience Francis found consolation among his fellow aristocratic captives and embers of his dream re-kindled. Moreover, he heard of Gautier de Brienne, the Captain General of the papal army, who had never known defeat and was considered the last of the Paladins.⁸ Francis's father, as the richest merchant in Assisi, soon obtained his release but Francis succumbed to a kind of lethargy in which his mind seemed to lurch between the desire for glory and the despondency of shattered illusions. He soon pined to join the standard of Brienne as an antidote to the boredom he found in his father's cloth trade.

At this time Francis met one of his old prison companions on his way to join Brienne, and encouraged by his father's purchase of a glittering suit of armor, he set out for Apulia to defend the papal suzerainty against the emperor. Francis planned to ride in the vanguard of Count Gentile of Manupello, by whom he hoped to be knighted on the field. On the first lap of his journey, he encountered a knight too impoverished to be properly equipped. The workings of grace already beginning to transform his worldly ambitions, Francis immediately doffed his armor and presented it to the poor knight. That night he dreamt of a fine castle whose exterior walls were decked with shields and inside with trophies of the victor's spoils. Furthermore, within the walls was a ravishingly beautiful maiden, and when Francis asked, in his dream, for whom these splendors awaited, he was told they were for him⁹ and his knights. Upon waking he rode resolutely to Apulia reaching Spoleto by nightfall where he lodged at an inn and had another dream. This time he received instructions to return home.

⁸ Arnaldo Fortini, *Francis of Assisi*, tran. Helen Moak (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 1981), 163.

⁹ Thomas of Celano, *The Life of Saint Francis*, in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, ed. Regis Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, William Short, Vol. 1: *The Saint* (New York: New City Press, 1999), 185-86.

Although there were impressive examples of knighthood, some of the first crusaders marked their progress "by orgies and excesses, murders and debauchery, which were a disgrace not merely to their religion but to humanity itself."¹⁰ Francis was initially quite blind to these shortcomings for he had been conditioned by the romantic propaganda of the troubadours. He had embraced a dream, but slowly the cold light of reality began to reveal to him the contradictions of his aspirations. The experience at Collestrada must have sown doubts in his heart which eventually prompted a change. For it could be asked if this gentle Umbrian youth was suited to the life of the sword or had he been deceived by romantic aspirations.

Christian society upheld the status of knighthood but largely excluded vagrants and poor wayfarers from being members of the universal Church.¹¹ Francis had begun to view his privileged life in the light of the Gospel and to consider knighthood with some measure of distaste as it began to seem vain and worldly. A knight was expected to dress extravagantly, to be lavish in his hospitality, when not fighting to be a man of leisure and also to represent the power of the ruling classes. But Francis had so identified with chivalry that he found it difficult to discard the ideal so he re-invented it to suit his changed perceptions.

Italian society in the thirteenth century was largely supported by an underclass of serfs and was riven by class struggle between the *majores* and the *minores*. Knighthood and status were synonymous with the *majores* and, as such, conflicted with his idea of Gospel living. Francis turned his back on worldly knighthood. In his search to be without status he assumed the garb of a hermit, only to find that a hermit had a distinct status in medieval society. The one person

¹⁰ F.J.C. Hearnshaw, "Chivalry and Its Place in History," in *Chivalry: A Series of Studies to Illustrate Its Historical Significance and Civilizing Influence*, ed. Edgar Prestage (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1928), 10.

¹¹ R. Boase, *The Troubadour Revival* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 23.

in medieval society who was a complete outcast, without any status whatsoever, was the leper.

The leper was what Francis dreaded above all others. He would ride the long way round to avoid passing the Leper Hospital of San Lazaro at Arce, on the outskirts of Assisi. On the occasions he was forced to pass it he would shield his eyes from the piteous sight. One day he absent-mindedly rode past the hospital and came face to face with a leper. Unaccountably Francis dismounted and embraced the leper,¹² completely contradicting his fastidious nature. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio wrote in his *Legenda Maior*¹³ that Francis saw the face of Christ in the suffering, bleeding features of the leper.

This life-changing experience became the inspiration for Francis's vocation, for he acknowledged Christ to be the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and only ruler of princes, but also as one who came into this world despised and without status. Henceforth, he rolled back the boundaries of chivalry by greeting affectionately all the most despised members of society. In the code of chivalry, based on the defence of the weak, lepers had not a mention, but Francis inverted chivalric custom by putting the last first as in Matthew 25:40: "in as much as you did it to the least of my brethren you did it to me."

In Francis's interpretation of chivalry, Thomas of Celano describes how he resolved to exchange the carnal weapons of knighthood for spiritual ones.¹⁴ Worldly knighthood was marked by extravagance of dress; Francis chose the garb of a leper. Worldly knighthood was indicated by wealth and largesse; Francis chose poverty and mendicancy. Worldly knighthood – when not bearing arms – was identified by leisure; Francis sought to labor with his hands. Worldly knighthood indicated power; Francis sought to be subject to all. Worldly knighthood was marked by a title – *Dominus* or *Mes-*

¹² Fortini, *Francis of Assisi*, 20.

¹³ Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, *Legenda Maior*, 1:5, FA:ED 2, 533.

¹⁴ Thomas of Celano, *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*, Chapter Six, in FA:ED 2, 248.

sire – Francis chose to be called a Lesser Brother. Finally, worldly knighthood sought military prowess; Francis became a peacemaker.

What Francis achieved was perhaps the redemption of chivalry, divested of its military qualities to become Gospel-based. This, in its turn, became a tool for renewing the Church in which the religious life that Francis pioneered became a kind of Gospel chivalry. Apart from defending widows, orphans and poor pilgrims, according to Leon Gautier writing in 1968, the code of chivalry stressed the obligation to give hospitality to the poor, the powerless and those who could not repay.¹⁵ In this lies the catalyst of chivalry's redemption and the Gospel link, and the serving of the least of Christ's brethren. On this principle Francis saw the agency for transforming chivalry to conform to the Gospel, and the corporal works of mercy: giving bread to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothes to the naked and shelter to the homeless became the basis of a new code.

No doubt as Francis progressed in his discernment he came to distinguish dream from reality. Many newly dubbed knights soon forgot their code and oppressed the weak instead of defending them.¹⁶ There was one glorious exception to the general failure of Christian knighthood and that was the example of the brethren of the Hospital of St. John in Jerusalem. They had established a hospital or house of hospitality for poor and sick pilgrims and wayfarers in Jerusalem. They called themselves the servants of the sick and the poor, calling them their true lords. Moreover, their maxim was to uphold "the honor of God, courtesy to all, and the service to Christ in the sick and the poor." Such sentiments would not have been wasted on Francis, in particular, the inverted hierarchy of precedent in becoming vassals of the poor. Thus, even before Francis's lifetime the chivalric protection of the weak had found a special expression in the vocation of the

¹⁵ Leon Gautier, *Chivalry*, tran. Henry Frith (London: George Routledge and Sons, Limited, 1968), 25 and 265.

¹⁶ Richard Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry* (New York and Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1995), 371.

Hospitallers, but the spiritual refinement of treating the sick and the poor as liege lords would have found a particular resonance in the young Umbrian. Moreover, in the hands of Francis, chivalry became radically changed – like a palimpsest re-written on old parchment – for redeemed of military ambition and worldly status it became imprinted on the life of the Gospel. It could be said that in chivalry Francis had chosen the "better part" which he was to transpose to his new Order, becoming a characteristic of its ministry and spirituality.

Johann Kluber wrote that the knight "must be joyous, because this is the life of warriors; happiness in the field and joy in the castle."¹⁷ For true gallantry required a lightheartedness and sadness betrayed cowardice. True suffering, wholly embraced, gave rise to the happy warrior. For Francis, sadness was one of the wiles of the devil for he would say "the Devil rejoices most when he can snatch away spiritual joy from a servant of God."¹⁸ He would illustrate his conversation with images of the paragons of chivalry describing how they did not spare themselves from toil or danger, which he would compare to members of his Order who joined him on the hard road of the Gospel. He would say: "These friars are my Knights of the Round Table, who remain in deserts and lonely places in order to devote themselves more completely to prayer and meditation."¹⁹ He would say that of all his disciples Brother Giles was the most knightly in his conversation and enthusiasm. He would say in comparison that, like a good knight when wounded would continue on the battlefield, so a good friar would continue to persevere indomitably despite fatigue.

Brother Giles actually compared the code of chivalry with the rule of the Franciscan Order. He wrote:

¹⁷ Johann Kluber, *Das Ritterwesen des Mittelalters nach seiner politischen und militärischen Verfassung*, 1789.

¹⁸ 2 MP 95, *FA:ED* 3, 342.

¹⁹ 2 MP 72, *FA:ED* 3, 320.

A truly obedient religious is like a well-armed knight riding on a good horse who passes safely among enemies and no one can harm him. But a religious who grumbles at obeying is like an unarmed knight riding a bad horse who, when passing among the enemy, falls and is immediately captured, chained, wounded, imprisoned and sometimes put to death.²⁰

In the library of the great friary of Sacro Convento in Assisi there are chronicles compiled less than a century after Francis's death, in which a link is shown between the tales of chivalry and the life of Francis. There is even a pious legend based on the *Chanson de Geste* as told by Brother Elemosina in which the deeds of the friars are compared to those of valorous knights. This all testifies to the fact that Francis's love affair with chivalry resulted in a new and re-invented version shorn of its worldly cupidity and aristocratic pretentiousness.

Official biographers of Francis – Thomas of Celano and Bonaventure of Bagnoregio – displayed certain censures towards what they considered the unduly secular nature of chivalry.²¹ Celano, for instance, considered Brother Pacifico, formerly a famed troubadour, to be a "secular person," not knowing God,²² whereas the *Legend of Perugia* calls him "a chivalric doctor of songs," called by Francis to teach his friars to praise God. This use of the secular went against pious opinion, the Church often viewing such sentiments as profane and preferring the more austere and gravely philosophical opinion. In this Francis's biographers failed to appreciate his genius of turning the secular to the sacred.

For Francis, chivalry became not a military code but a code for the Gospel life in which fealty was given not to any earthly ruler but to the King of Kings. His chivalric ideals

²⁰ Fortini, *Francis of Assisi*, 494.

²¹ Roger D. Sorrell, *St. Francis of Assisi and Nature, Tradition and Innovation in Western Christian Attitudes towards the Environment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 69.

²² 2 Cel 106, *FA:ED* 2, 317.

also became part of a unique way of acknowledging God's bounty in creation. In adapting secular chivalric ideals to a religious purpose he indicated a spiritual genius in which he related all creation to a divinely ordered hierarchy. In the *Fioretti*²³ he describes chivalry (*curialitas*) as the sister of charity which extinguishes hatred and keeps love alive. He notes that *curialiter* is one of the qualities of God, who gives his sun and rain and everything in creation to the just and the unjust alike. Francis likens this open-handed generosity of God to chivalric largesse as found recorded in the *Legend of Perugia*.²⁴ His concept of the brotherhood and sisterhood of all creation was dependent on God's bounty, like the lilies of the field that neither toil nor spin but in their dependent state are arrayed more splendidly than Solomon in all his glory. This, in Francis's vision, is a divinely established *noblesse oblige* which provides for the needs of all creation which in turn glorifies the Creator.

Francis, the spiritual innovator, takes the responsibilities of privilege of the knightly class towards the weak and dependent and ascribes them to God. Moreover, he personifies chivalry as *frater curialitas*²⁵ which, as in the person of good knight Piers Plowman (an allegorical poem c. 1400 AD) can be seen as the figure of Christ²⁶ whose incomparable largesse on the cross won the salvation of the world. Chivalry re-interpreted as heavenly largesse was, for Francis, the basis of a divine human relationship which within the compass of nature provided a dependence which turned all creation back to God. In this chivalry became a symbolic language with which to describe his response to God's reckless generosity in the great drama of redemption.

²³ *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis*, 37, FA:ED 3, 628.

²⁴ *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis*, 37, FA:ED 3, 628.

²⁵ *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis*, 37, FA:ED 3, 628.

²⁶ William Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, tran. Henry Wells, (London: Sheed & Ward, 1935), 239-40.

CELIBACY AND MISOGYNY: INEXORABLY CONNECTED?

GIRARD ETZKORN

From the earliest times in the history of Roman Catholicism there has been an admiration, respect for and a practice of chastity or virginity, taken as abstaining from sexual acts. This evolved into institutions such as the Benedictine monks and later the Franciscan and Dominican friars and a host of religious orders both male and female where initiation into these religious institutions involved taking the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Such life-styles were considered as a more perfect way of imitating the life of Jesus and his mother Mary who have generally been considered as leading celibate lives.

The vows of poverty and chastity are regarded as negative virtues, namely an abdication of private property and a refraining from sexual relations and as such are considered negative perfections such as a hole in the handle of a scissors. Chastity and poverty are liberating in the sense that they free individuals from monetary concerns and the obligations of conjugal commitments plus the sometimes onerous responsibilities of caring for and educating children. Being so liberated, it enables the individuals taking the vows to serve the impoverished, those in need of education and spiritual nourishment, and this in a virtually endless variety of ways. The lives of Francis of Assisi and Mother Teresa are beautiful examples of such service.

The purpose of this article is to show that the praise of chastity has frequently been accompanied by the demeaning of women with the implication that as persons they are not

equal to men and hence inferior. Even the great theologian, Thomas Aquinas, was not immune from this mind-set. "In women," he says [*Summa theol.* II-II q. 149 a. 4] "there is not a sufficient robustness of intelligence for resisting concupiscence." Or again: "Woman was weaker than man, hence she could more easily be seduced." [*Summa theol.* II-II q. 165 a. 2]. "In the state of innocence woman was more imperfect both in body and in soul than man." [*Summa theol.* I q. 92 a. 1] Of course, one might say that Aquinas was not acquainted with the intellectual prowess of women since they were not allowed to matriculate in medieval universities. This mind-set of regarding women as inferior, however, is not peculiar to Christianity and may said to have been inherited from pre-Christian writers. Aristotle, for example, in his book on *Politics*, book I chap. 5, states: "The male is by nature superior and the female inferior, and the one rules, and the other is ruled."¹

To illustrate this tendency to demean women, we have selected sections from a dialogue entitled "In praise of chastity" held in Rome in 1471.² The author of the dialogue was the Franciscan Friar Bernardine of Florence. The principal figure in this dialogue was Francis de la Rovere, elected General Minister of the Franciscans in 1464, named a cardinal by Pope Paul II on Sept. 18, 1467 and elected Pope on Aug. 12, 1471 taking the name of Sixtus IV.³ The other interlocutors in the dialogue were Georgius Vespucius, Christophorus Calitianus and Christophorus Marsupinus. It was the purpose of the interlocutors to pose themes, questions, suggestions and objections with a view of soliciting the views of Francis de la Rovere. That this was ever a viva-voce dialogue is improbable.

¹ *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. R. McKeon (New York: Random House, 1970), 1132.

² G. Gál, "Bernardini de Florentia Dialogus de Laudibus Castitatis atque Virginitatis," in *Franciscan Studies* 23 (1963), 140-78.

³ The same Francis de la Rovere was participant in another dialog entitled *De arcanis Dei* [A Symposium on God's Foreknowledge of Future Contingents] under the aegis of Cardinal Bessarion. G.B. Salviati, *De arcanis Dei*, ed. G. Etzkorn in *Miscellanea Franciscana* (Roma, 1997): 220.

This is an appropriate selection as revelatory of a prevailing mind-set in fifteenth century Catholicism, but it is also pertinent in that authorities are cited that go back to the early centuries of the Roman tradition. There are many issues touched upon as “preludes” to the virtues of chastity, such as free will, fallen nature, Christ’s invitation to a more perfect life:

If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven ... And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times more, and will inherit eternal life [Matt 19, 21, 29].

However, in all of this, women are portrayed as being obstacles to the “liberating virtues” of chastity.

“Many things are deemed necessary for the use of women and matrons:” says Francis de la Rovere, “precious clothing, gold, gems, maidservants, various household utensils, gilded wall-coverings, golden sedans. Then there are babbling questions all night long.” Quoting from St. Jerome who is actually citing Theophrastus,⁴ Francis then continues: “She goes to the mirror to put on her make-up in an affront to her maker, striving to be more beautiful than she was made. The children are whining, a noisy family, children needed to be kissed and a host of other worries.” Further on in the same passage:

What is more willful? What more fickle? What more prone to all sorts of pleasure? What more inconstant? What more cunning? What more troublesome and perilous to man? She always thinks about how she may go forth more beautiful, not with a view of pleasing her husband, but to please others.

⁴ Art. Cit., 161; all translations are mine.

Further on, Francis continues:

What was the cause of the ruination of the world? Woman. What the cause of the flood? Woman. What the cause of the conflict between Abraham and the Egyptians? Woman. What the cause of the plunder of Athens by the Lacedemonians? Woman. What the cause of the fall of Troy? Woman.

Francis goes on to cite Secundus the philosopher, defining(!) the nature of woman:

The bewilderment of man, insatiable beast, constant worry, ceaseless quarreling, daily 'loss,' an obstacle to solitude, shipwreck of the continent man, a vessel of adultery, pernicious warfare, the worst of animals, the heaviest of weights, an insatiable asp and the enslavement of man.

This is the heritage to which Francis refers and to which he obviously consents.

The interlocutor George Vespuccius then challenges Francis's assessment of womankind, provoking the following response:

It does not follow, that wives must be done away with. For if no one takes a wife, there would be no children, nor would we now be speaking together, the whole human race would not only be weakened, but totally extinguished.... They should be accorded the highest honors who live a chaste life, who imbue their children with good morals and precepts, who take care of the household and promote a peaceful life. Hence women and females are partly to be vituperated and partly to be given the highest praise and glory.

Nevertheless in this same passage Francis continues:

Of them the great Origen said: 'Behold woman, captain [*caput*] of sin, weapons of the devil, expulsion from paradise, mother of crime, the corruption of the laws of ages.' And Jerome: 'Gate of the devil, path of iniquity, the scorpion's sting; women are a noxious genus.'

It is noteworthy that nowhere in this dialogue is there an evaluation of men. Do men have a plethora of unwholesome qualities and disorders such as have been attributed to women? Do men perhaps have a penchant for using physical and psychological power indiscriminately and immorally? Food for thought!

In this article we have obviously excerpted, particularly the passages which are demeaning of womankind. There are likewise passages which extol virginity and give high praise to the Virgin Mary as might be expected in a dialogue "In praise of chastity." We are left to wonder, however, if the praise of chastity requires the general denigration of womankind. We likewise must wonder if such a mind-set is compatible with the teachings of the Christian scriptures and the words and behavior of Jesus. I think of Jesus' response to the men who would stone the adulterous woman. I assume that there was no such punishment for adulterous males in Jesus' time or that extra-marital sex could even be considered adultery in the case of males. Was it not the women who did not desert him on Golgotha when all but one of the male apostles abandoned him? The women friends of Jesus are often portrayed as serving the Master and it was that same Master who told his Apostles that as leaders they should be servants, viz. leadership as service is the rule of the Gospels. The apostle Paul was supportive and appreciative of the women who helped him in his apostolate.

It was, of course, in the culture of Jesus' time – much as it still is today in many countries of the globe – inconceivable that women would be accorded positions of secular or religious leadership, but does this allow us to conclude that women as persons are inferior to men and hence unfit for positions of leadership?

The inauguration of mandatory celibacy for the secular clergy in the Latin rite of Roman Catholicism came much later in history. Pope Benedict VIII (1012-1024) required celibacy in order to prevent priests from willing church property to their offspring. Under Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085) the practice became more widespread, albeit not universal. It was likewise, once mandated, of mixed success, such that John Pecham, lecturing in Paris in 1270, noted that clerical concubinage was more the rule than the exception. In contemporary times, we have witnessed the horrible results of pedophile predators who had taken the vow of celibacy and yet abused adolescents who had been taught to respect the clergy. That this was at times condoned by ecclesiastical authorities is morally reprehensible. Of course, even today, mandatory celibacy for clergy of the Roman rite is not universally practiced since married priest converts from Anglicanism are functioning in the active ministry while priests from the Roman rite who have married are excluded from the same ministry. In the secular world this would be regarded as a double-standard and hence discriminatory.

Some theologians of ecclesiology have regarded celibacy as a charism, a special gift not given to everyone. Chastity is not listed among the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. If celibacy is a charism and a special gift, exemplarily practiced by many priests of the Roman rite, should it indeed be made mandatory? Whatever the ultimate outcome, the “praise of chastity” is not well-served by the denigration and demeaning of women, nor can women, viewed as inferior persons, find support in the Christian scriptures.

**STILL YOUR BROTHER ... YOUR SISTER
A REFLECTION ON DEMENTIA**

VICKI MASTERPAUL, O.S.F.

Several months ago a friend sent me the book *Still Alice*. A New York Times best-seller, it is a compelling debut novel by the author, Lisa Genova, who is a neuroscientist. Reviewers have given high marks to this work describing it as pure genius, insightful, tragic, inspirational and heartbreakingly real. Besides the author's expertise in her own field, she is a gifted story teller, leaving me riveted from page one onwards.

Genova was inspired to write the book after journeying through Alzheimer's disease with her over eighty-year-old grandmother. Thus, although a novel, all aspects of the story were, for me, true to life.

The book's main character, Alice Howland, a Harvard University professor of cognitive psychology, is diagnosed, at age fifty, with early onset Alzheimer's disease. Her husband, also a professor at Harvard, and her three adult children are well educated and successful in their life choices. As Alice's husband and children accompany her through a two year struggle, it becomes sadly apparent that the disease is relentless and leaves its mark on every station of life.

I daresay that we all know at least one person, either in religious community, or among relatives and friends who is suffering from dementia. Their condition could be due to several possible causes: a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease, the result of a stroke or series of mini strokes, or perhaps from severe vitamin B12 deficiency, among other possibilities. Whatever the precipitating cause, living through the

progressive stages of dementia with loved ones is an overwhelming and heart-rending challenge.

As I read Lisa Genova's thought-provoking and masterfully written work, I found myself identifying and empathizing with the daily unpredictability facing Alice, her family and her colleagues. Interestingly, the more I read, the more I seemed to experience a haunting preoccupation with one word in the book's title: *still*. This word seemed to express to me the core message of living gracefully with dementia and its ever-saddening manifestations.

Despite the progressive deterioration that is the undeniable earmark of dementia, it is absolutely necessary for us, as men and women professing to be brothers/sisters to one another, to realize that our brother/sister who is living with dementia still possesses an inner light – what Sister Mary Ann Weldon calls *the spark of the divine*. Unfortunately, we believe often that anyone whose cognitive ability has deteriorated must also have a diminished spirit. While we may never truly know what one with dementia is feeling or experiencing, I am convinced that there is still what I choose to consider an inner beauty of soul.

Anne Henderschott, in her book *The Reluctant Caregivers*, speaks of the need for us to engage in “soul talk.” Despite our way of life, we are not often comfortable with this type of dialogue. Henderschott points out that in her experience of caring for her mother-in-law, Katherine, it was evident that her essence or soul remained. This recognition enabled Katherine's family to experience her as their beloved mother, mother-in-law and grandmother, and most importantly as a child of God. In other words, she was still Katherine, even when she was not able to remember anything of herself.

I also believe that we must approach our brothers/sisters who are living with dementia with the inner conviction that deep within, they are still the men/women they always were. If we do this, our actions and attitudes will reflect acceptance, compassion and loving support. By understanding that dementia is an illness rather than an embarrassing and purposeful set of behaviors, we are less likely to misinterpret our brothers' or sisters' actions, to criticize them and pos-

sibly even to alienate them. Although those living with this illness are not in possession of all their mental faculties, they may well be able to sense our acceptance ... or rejection.

In his book entitled *Denial of the Soul*, M. Scott Peck reminds us that for those with faith, there is knowledge that the soul of the individual remains, even with dementia. David Keck, in *Forgetting Whose We Are* calls Alzheimer's the "theological disease" because although the disease may ravage the body, he maintains that it does not affect the soul. Scripture scholar, Donald Senior writes a commentary on Keck's book in which he focuses in on a very poignant and noteworthy point – i.e. that although the person with dementia forgets who he/she is, God always remembers who we are (Isaiah 49:14-16).

In concluding this reflection, let this be our prayer:

Compassionate God, the longer I journey with my brother/sister whose visible behavior is progressively diminishing because of dementia, the more I seek the grace to find that inner spark and remember that he is still my brother ... my sister! Amen.

A FRANCISCAN VOCATION: WHO IS CALLED?

RODERIC PETRIE, O.F.M.

And I worked with my hands, and I still desire to work;
and I earnestly desire all brothers to give themselves
to honest work (Test).

Soon after St. Francis and his earliest companions received from Pope Innocent III a positive, if wary, approval of their way of living the Gospel, there began an amazing avalanche of vocations to the new Order. It was by trial and error, by the help of other existing Orders, and by the intervention of the Holy See, that this new Order of Friars was able to bring some discipline to the chaos of admission and formation which caught everyone unprepared.

Pope Innocent presented Francis and his companions with a blessing and with a difficulty when he gave them the minor order of tonsure (L3C XII). He thereby eased the acceptance of these new friars as recognized and accepted members of the Church structure, but at the same time he folded the Order into the accustomed practice of religious orders at the time as having members who were either clerics or laymen. The cleric members of monasteries had the responsibility of the liturgy, while the main portion of manual labor fell to the laymen, the Brothers. Monasteries of women had a similar composition of Choir nuns and "lay" Sisters.

Francis, the innovator, who wished his Order to be known as the Order of Lesser Brothers (Friars Minor), who wished all his followers to be brothers, none to have priority over

another, had to deal with the system that existed and yet somehow fit into it. Brothers should elect one of their own to be their Superior for a period of time, and his title would be Minister, or Servant. He did not specify that the Minister be a cleric or a lay person.

Those who came to join the Friars were attracted, not by a particular ministry such as teaching or pastoral care of souls, but by the example of Brothers living the Gospel in poverty. To support themselves as a community, the Friars worked and received food; or the wage was paid to a third party who then supplied the friars' needs. The friars themselves were not to receive money (LR: IV and V).

The *Earlier Rule* of 1221 (ER: VII) states that those "who know how to work do so and exercise the trade they have learned ... and it is lawful for them to have the tools and instruments suitable for their trades." It was common practice, then, for Friars to work outside the friary and to have some trade.

In time, of course, because of the growing number of foundations, those who had "the gift of working" were needed at home. Over time the realm of manual work, which St. Francis prized so much (Test) fell more and more to the lay Friars who were usually uneducated. To the cleric Friars fell the duties of the liturgy and whatever ministry might be carried on: teaching, preaching, pastoral work. Often enough the two groups of Friars, cleric and lay, lived quite separately from the other. The lay Friars attended the Divine Office in choir, but did not recite the psalms; they prayed a series of Our Fathers. The two had a separate formation which had different goals and priorities. There were separate rooms for recreation. At meals the two sat separately: the cleric Friars near the head table, and the lay Friars sat farther away. Each group came to see themselves as having its own purpose: the cleric Friars to carry out the liturgy and any sacramental ministry; the lay Friars to supply the physical needs of the Friars and to free up the clerics for their ministry. The purpose of living the Gospel together became, over the centuries, less and less the allure and driving force of their vocations.

So it is no wonder that for hundreds of years recruitment of new members and the formation of them has been directed toward one or the other group of Friars. One joined the Franciscans, yes, but either to engage in some ministry, usually as a priest, or to work within the community of Friars. It has been this way until quite recently. Only now, in the last fifty years or so, have we seen a blending of the two Friar groups with a change in roles and in formation.

But even with these changes there remains still the underlying assumption that a friar, cleric or lay, if involved in a ministry, is duly educated and trained. However, if a candidate is poorly educated and has either no ability or desire to study, in the unlikely possibility that he be accepted, he would work within the Friar community. We have lost to a great extent the response to the basic call of living the Gospel together as brothers. It is ministry that is the engine that runs our life. Even though in my own Province we unfailingly designate fraternal life as a priority, we are forced to make choices of candidates, of formation goals, of personnel assignments because of the needs of ministry.

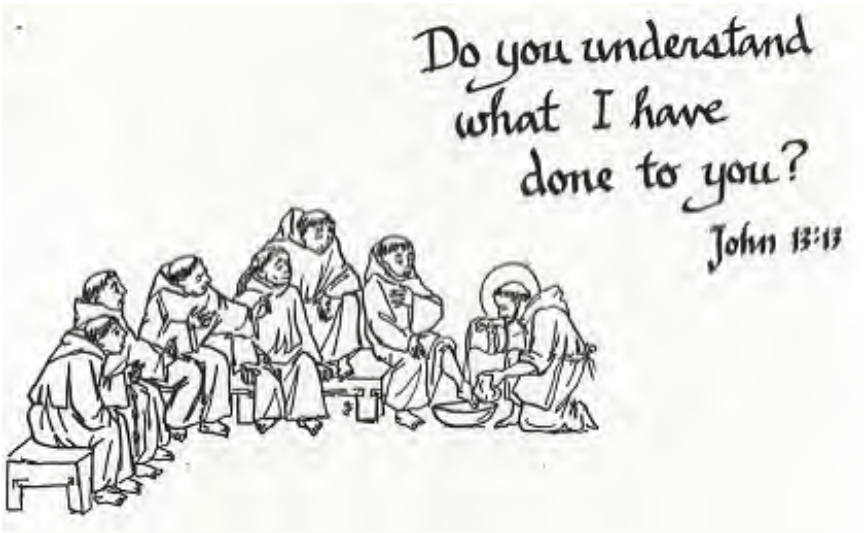
Let us suppose for a moment that we are presented with a suitable candidate who works on construction, or for the Sanitation Department, or drives a bus eight hours a day, five days a week. Would we, could we, allow him to continue in his job? Could we offer him an appropriate formation? Could we offer a fraternal community life? In short, could he live the Gospel with us? At present, "no" to all the above.

Should we even consider the possibilities? Given our present culture there are probably very few to whom the possibility of becoming a Franciscan Friar and working construction would offer any attraction. Granted that many religious Sisters today find themselves working as secretaries or some other job because their communities no longer staff a school or hospital and yet they must send in a salary to the Motherhouse. Unfortunately they live alone or in a mixed community and offer little attraction.

Even though the one who might long to live the Franciscan life of the Gospel with brothers (or sisters) and hold an outside job might be more hypothetical than real. Even

though the one to whom this concept might appeal might be a recent immigrant who would bring the added difficulty of another language. Even though we are unprepared to deal with such a person. Is it worth considering?

I think the answer is yes. Even though the interested aspirants might be few, at least initially. Even though mind sets, and admission directives, and formation goals, and our own community life would have to be reexamined and changed. I think that today's Church in today's world calls us to reexamine Francis's statement that "the life of the Friars Minor is this: to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ ..." That is essentially what we can offer to others, and that is sufficient.



ST. BONAVENTURE'S TEACHING ABOUT THE PRIEST

ROBERT J. KARRIS, O.F.M.

Pope Benedict XVI has declared "The Year of the Priest." What does St. Bonaventure say about priests? In his *Defense of the Mendicants*, chap. 12, n. 3-7* Bonaventure describes the priest with seven and then three biblical metaphors.

The first biblical metaphor is BUILDER. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:10: "As a wise builder, I laid the foundation." As the builder is related to the building, so is the priest related to the people by establishing and promoting the truth of the faith.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:6: "I have planted." The FARMER renews the virtues which must be irrigated by the teaching of the Scriptures. "Now if the people are a garden and a paradise planted and vibrant with many virtues, the person who instructs the people in moral teaching is rightly called a farmer."

Jesus talks about the SHEPHERD in John 10:2-4: "The one who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.... And when he has let out his own sheep, he goes before them." This is what the priest does when he goes before the people with an example of holiness.

Hebrews 5:1 describes the priest's role as INTERCESSOR as he pleads before God for men and women.

*In early 2010 Franciscan Institute Publications will publish Fr. Bob's annotated translation of St. Bonaventure's *Defense of the Mendicants*.

As a PHYSICIAN, the priest cures injuries inflicted by enemies. In the Parable of the Good Samaritan the Samaritan bound up the injured man's wounds. The Samaritan represents Christ himself, the physician, and those who take his place in the expurgation of sins.

As a WATCHMAN the priest warns his people against imminent danger, according to what Ezekiel 3:17 says: "Son of Man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel."

The priest is like a military LEADER who bears the standard to repulse actual assaults in the manner of noble Maccabeus "who put on a breastplate as a giant and girt his warlike armor about him in battles ... and protected the camp with his sword." (1 Maccabees 3:3).

After giving these seven metaphors, Bonaventure returns to Paul for three images of loving priestly ministry. When Paul speaks of his converts, he says in one instance that he had begotten them in Christ, in another that he has given birth to them, and in yet another that he has fed with milk the little ones in Christ. "Since it is not irksome at all, but desirable, sweet, and pleasing for a father, mother or nurse to sustain a poor little son, to nurture a weak child, and to give milk to a crying babe, it must also be a great consolation for all holy and compassionate priests every time they procure salvation for their people."

*We adore you, Lord Jesus Christ,
in all your churches throughout the whole world
and we bless you because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world (Test, 5).*

WE

ASTOUNDINGLY, AND AMAZINGLY,
FRANCIS, NEAR HIS DEATH,
BODILY DEATH,
ILL,
CONFUSED
SAD
FAITHFUL AND FRATERNAL,
TAKING US, HIS SISTERS AND BROTHERS,
INCLUDING LARKS AND LEPERS,
SUNFLOWERS AND SISTER WATER,
TO THE MOST HIGH GOD,
WE,
NOT ME,
MY, I NOR MOI
BUT WE TO GOD.
SO INCARNATIONAL, SO HERE AND NOW,
ALL OF US,
AT EVERY TIME AND IN EVERY SEASON AND PLACE,
TO GOD.
AND WE THANK YOU.

ADORE

ADORE?

HOW CAN I ADORE GOD?

I UNSTAND ADORATION OF

A BABY,

A BELOVED,

A PARENT,

A FRIEND,

AND EVEN A PLACE.

BUT, THE MOST HIGH GOD?

WHAT DOES ADORE MEAN?

HOW DO WE ADORE GOD?

IN EVERY SEASON,

IN EVERY PLACE, FOR ALL TIME, A TRUE MYSTERY.

You

You, you?

NOT ME, NOT EVEN WE, BUT YOU.

FRANCIS TOLD US OF YOU IN HIS PRAISES

YOU ARE GOOD,

YOU ARE JUSTICE,

YOU ARE MODERATION,

YOU ARE ALL OUR RICHES

TO SUFFICIENCY,

YOU ARE ENOUGH FOR US.

AND WE THANK YOU FOR YOURSELF.

LORD JESUS CHRIST

*LORD, NOTHING HIGHER THAN,
THE SUMMIT AND FULLEST EXPRESSION OF GOD.
HOLY, AWSOME, SUBLIME,
FOUNTAIN FULLNESS, WHOLLY OTHER, TOTALLY IMMA-
NENT.
LORD,
NOT PRESIDENT, PRIME MINISTER OR CHIEF,
NOT PARTY BOSS NOR MANAGER.*

*BUT JESUS,
SAID BY THE ANGEL GABRIEL:
HIS NAME SHALL BE JESUS.
AND THE SCRIPTURES
AT THIS NAME, EVERY HEAD SHALL BOW AND EVERY
KNEE BEND IN HEAVEN,
ON EARTH, AND UNDER THE EARTH.
THE ALPHA AND OMEGA.
THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.
OUR DAILY BREAD, FOR US AND FOR OUR SALVATION.*

CHRIST, THE ANOINTED OF GOD.

Thomas W. Barton, O.S.F.

WHEN FRANCIS PRAYED

Hawks and owls and sparrows
would come to perch
on the outstretched, crossbeam
arms of Francis,
palms of his imprinted hands
up and open to embrace
the bread of sun, wine of rain.

They were veined in colors
of maple leaves in late autumn;
but they did not fall,
even after the last of the birds –
the owl who sought
the up-burrowing mole – flew,
all wings and talons.

Not until Francis had prayed
for pursuer and pursued,
for prey of night, naked of day,
would hands follow arms
and fall to his imprinted side –
Christ's imprimatur
to the body's book of prayer.

Chet Corey

**ALEXANDER OF HALES RISKS HERESY
(AND JOINS THE POOR)**

*Weary, misty, trance entwined
All light ellipse from empty center
All that hits my eye refracted
I contemplate all things subjective!*

*Toss my shoes and frock in Paris,
I've moved my heart and now my chair
Here I stand as stark as logic
Irrefutable, my voice is clear ...*

*Canticle, Canticle,
Song of light!
All is unity, good and true!
Every aspect of sense connected
Love is, in all things, reflected!*

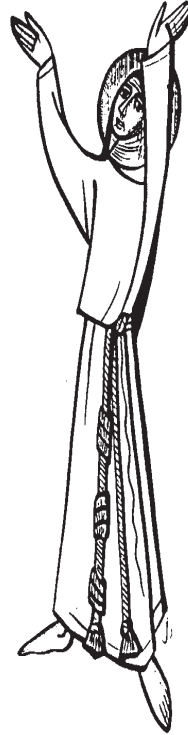
*The center empty and self-diffused
Love, not sin, gave us a Savior!
He did not come just to atone,
He would have come for love alone!*

Dennis O'Brien
St. Bonaventure University

CLARE

*My brother sheared my hair,
The wind swept up my gold,
Possessed its gleam,
And I leapt free,
Rejoiced that no man any more,
Would look at me.
I shivered then, far-flung,
From all I would have been.*

*I wanted to watch him,
I needed to know well,
What kind of God,
What man,
Had come so far for me.
I pleaded to be clothed
With his blessed poverty.
I looked for no defence
Since he had none,
Suspended on his cross.
I longed to own his loss,
Mirror his loveliness,
Possess his throne.*



Ruth Agnes Evans, O.S.C.

THE HUNGER

What of the hunger that becomes a fastness,
the plenty that sustains need?

Elizabeth knew the hunger,
the wrenching ache, the thirst that must be placated;
that never was.

Amid palatial feasts: beef pies, pheasants, rich pastries,
and dark red wines poured from silver flagons,
she remembered
the poor, the multiplying hungry, who asked
a pommel of hearth bread, a cloak of
Lindsey-woolsey against the icy German
winters, a thin, silver halfbracteate.

Given to penances, generous in alms,
retiring, she was radiant in holiness,
her life consumed by the small details of
a charity so large, centuries
could not dim its reputation.
Hers was a logic outlandish,
challenging the notions of the feudal world;
still challenging ours.

There were whispers, opposition to her marriage.
Ludwig, the Landgrave of Thuringia, took
Elizabeth as his bride, his beloved.
To her he opened the bounteous coffers and granaries
of his kingdom.
For the young Elizabeth, the insatiable became a blessing,
became a beatitude of fulfillment.
Her feast was spread for others
in the Field of Lilies below the castle.

Altered by the grace of giving, her gaze unraveled
the horizon until there was no distance
between the present, the eternal;

all was leveled in equality of spirit.
Nothing alarmed the excess of her generosity.
Nine hundred a day came to the gate, their frail helplessness
of body, spirit, and bone, a bruised subtext unfolding
reproach that spoke in eloquence to the listening heart
below the text of human thriving.

Her crusader-husband dead, Elizabeth,
driven from her castle, spent the first night in a stable.
Under the reluctant stars, in the insistence of
the night-owled evening, she understood
unless the leaving remained absolute,
she could not find courage
for the penultimate journey of her soul.

In the penitential robes of Francis,
she dissolved the final ties until
all that was left was the ravenous desire that
sought the Other.

Short years later,
in the November midnight of her dying,
remembering once more the stable,
the Christ Child at Bethlehem, the new star
overhead in the heavens as witness,
she bid those around her
Silence; repeated it softly again.
Emptied of all but the Divine,
in that ineffable moment, Elizabeth
found the banquet, the spring that satiated,
rested replete in the Lord, Jesus.

*The wedding feast of the Lamb has begun,
And his bride is prepared to welcome him.**

Ann Power

* Revelation 19:6-7 (translation from: *Office of Readings*)

BOOK REVIEW

Visions and Revisions: Celebrating 800 years of the Franciscan Way of Life by Murray Bodo, O.F.M. (Phoenix, AZ: Tau Publishing, 2009), 89 pages, \$8.95.

Murray Bodo again gifts us with a treasure of poetry, this time with a reflection of the life and times of the Franciscan presence since its inception. In poetic cadence, *Visions and Revisions* captures the joys and sorrows, the moments of elation and those of disappointment within the Franciscan family over 800 years. At the same time, it is also the story of the experience of one man, Murray Bodo.

The painting on the book's cover by Paolo Grimaldi, a beautiful collage of Assisi and the Umbrian valley, sets the tone and context. We are greeted at the beginning of the book with a quote from T.S. Eliot, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*:

And time for a hundred indecisions,
And a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

With this quote, Bodo invites us to enter into a collage of poetry that is “news from the soul of the poet to the soul of the listener or reader.” Murray has divided these songs of the soul into four areas. In the first set of poems, he weaves striking and complex patterns of the lives, struggles, visions, and realities of Francis and Clare. He reminds us that Francis was the first Franciscan poet and that *The Canticle of Creatures*, expressing his relationship with creation, was the first Italian poem written in the Umbrian dialect. (He also

lets us know, at the beginning of Section I, that poetic images do not flow effortlessly into the poet's head and onto the paper or computer!)

Murray Bodo explores the inner soul's journey in Section II with poems such as *Grace*, *Soul-making*, *Silence*, *Pilgrim's Hymn*, *Praying*, *Dark Angel*, and *Island Chapel*. The poems, *Grace*, *After Wind and Rain*, and *Paradox* in Section II, and *Bells* in Section IV, have a touch of Robert Lax's style of writing poetry. Murray Bodo spent some time at St. Bonaventure University, NY, researching Robert Lax's work and conversing with Lax's family members to better understand the man and the story behind his writing. Bodo brings some of his research on Lax into the picture for us through these poems.

In Section III, the poems arise from the life and memories of the poet/author. In *Memoir*, transient and ever-morphing clouds describe his effort to remember the past as it was; *Ramage* tells of memories evoked by photographs on top a crowded desk; *Cousins* captures one memorable experience of a three year-old and a younger cousin. In *Mining Camp Photo, 1920s*, the son traces the harsh lives of his mother and uncles in New Mexico in the faces and poses caught in a keepsake photo.

Section IV is a collage of Murray Bodo's personal journey and travels as a Franciscan called to mission throughout the world. He begins with *water, wind, waves* and his journey across the ocean, probably on his way to Assisi. In *Fog and Clearing*, he muses, as he observes heavy fog near the Grand Bands of Newfoundland, that words can cloud rather than clarify reality. In *On the Train Outside of Lewes*, he reassembles characters and emotion in Graham Greene's murder thriller, which takes place in Brighton, where now his train is headed. In *Wives of Bath*, he plays out scenarios in the public gardens of Bath, suggesting that surface appearances may not tell the tale. Then, in *Aldeburgh Beach*, while possibly enjoying a re-creational pause on the Suffolk coast, he applies an image of wind riling quiescent sea to distant, conflict-torn countries as well as father and child nearby. One of the closing poems in this last section, *Pilgrimage*, speaks to us of a common experience: the loss, then transformation of what

could be called first-love, that initial wonder and appreciation of an experience, a person, a place. Bodo's final poem, *Revision*, reflects on his three decades of life and work during Assisi summers. His words embrace the people of Assisi, first of all the late Don Aldo Brunacci, for the hospitality experienced by him and so many pilgrims.

As he explains in the Afterward, the author wants to communicate — in the clearest, deepest, simplest, and shortest way he knows how. For him, that is through poetry. In *Visions and Revisions*, Murray Bodo offers us brilliant and beautifully nuanced insights into Francis and Clare, founders of the Franciscan movement, and into himself.

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

BOOK REVIEW

The Saint and the Sultan: The Crusades, Islam, and Francis of Assisi's Mission of Peace, by Paul Moses (New York: Doubleday, 2009), ix + 302 pp., \$26.00 hardcover.

There is perhaps no more relevant story from the life of St. Francis of Assisi for today than that of his encounter with Sultan Malik al-Kamil in 1219. At a time when the Muslim and Christian worlds were pitted against one another as a result of the crusades, Francis of Assisi traveled on a mission of peace amid violence to speak with the Muslim leader of the time. Today the world is again witnessing disagreement, struggle and violence between predominantly Christian and Muslim populations in a climate marked by distrust and crusades of a new sort: radical Muslim extremists on one end and radical “anti-terror” extremists on the other. Both sides see violence as a legitimate means to a perspectively righteous end. It is for this reason that Paul Moses’s new book, *The Saint and the Sultan* could not have arrived in a more timely fashion.

Moses, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist-turned-professor, revisits an often overlooked saga in the already richly narrative life of Francis. So often relegated to a place as a proto-ecological activist or generic “lover of all,” Francis does not usually garner attention for his less romantic endeavors. What would culminate as a crusade-era peace mission is unlikely celebrated in the manner befitting the annual October 4th blessing of animals at Churches around the globe.

Moses does a fine job contextualizing the worldview and life experience of this young thirteenth-century saint. Instead of beginning his book with the encounter with the Sultan as

such, Moses invites the reader to first imagine what Francis's own young adult life might have looked like. A life enveloped in inter-city war and periodically confined to the makeshift cave prisons of nearby Perugia. Moses's point is well delivered: to understand how Francis might appreciate the message of peace he would witness to the Muslims, one must first consider the would-be saint's own encounters with violence. In an effort to illustrate the possible effects these early life experiences might have had on Francis, Moses consults modern-day experts on war, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and veterans of recent international conflicts. Moses skillfully weaves these perspectives and insights into his narrative in such a way as not to appear overtly anachronistic or misplaced.

The author's writing style is accessible, yet intellectual. While not an explicitly academic text, this volume reflects sound research and scholarship. This is further supported by the endnotes and rather extensive bibliography. Having closely examined the bibliography, it is fair to say that Moses went above and beyond what other authors – especially those outside of Franciscan studies *per se* – might have endeavored to investigate. All of the major pertinent texts have been listed alongside more obscure primary and secondary sources that lend a great deal of scholarly capital to this project. Such a book necessarily requires so-called “filler material” or creative license to supplement the sparing resources on an encounter dating almost eight centuries back. On these occasions, often the most risky aspect of authorship for those writers who engage historical figures of ages past, Moses comes across as respectful and minimalist in his elaborations.

The book is organized into three major sections and subdivided into nineteen chapters, an epilogue, a “cast of characters” with brief biographies, a timeline and several illustrations and maps. The length of the text is concise and the flow is generally smooth. The first six chapters, while creatively presented, will likely be repetitive for those already familiar with the life of Francis. Chapters seven through sixteen offer a new presentation of the crusade, the experience of

encounter between Francis and the Sultan and the events that followed in the years afterward. The remaining chapters provide the reader with a journey into what will likely be new information for many. Moses goes to great length to elucidate the multiple reasons for the apparent suppression of or collective amnesia relating to the story of Francis and the Sultan. Additionally, Moses offers something of a tangential survey of the remaining years of Francis's life after his return from Damietta, the ecclesiastical politics that rocked the Order for decades and the motivation for and process of writing several biographies (i.e., hagiographies) of the saint after his death in 1226.

In the last chapter, nineteen, Moses offers an interesting series of correlative reflections on Francis and some contemporary figures. These figures include Charles de Foucauld, Louis Massignon, Pope John Paul II, and several contemporary Franciscans. The parallels drawn are interesting and Moses's reflections on modern Christian-Muslim relations are a nice way to retrieve the experience of Francis for the present day. Moses's epilogue is perhaps the most fascinating of all the chapters. It is here that he reflects, rather subjectively, on how he sees the story of Francis and the Sultan during the Fifth Crusade as an allegory of peace amid violence worthy of recollection today. This is most expressly seen in the recent experiences of war in Iraq. Moses's reflection on the encounter at Damietta is summarized well when he wrote: "The story of the sultan and the friar, like any good story, resonates with various levels of meaning rather than with a single precise moral. It doesn't so much prescribe a course of conduct as suggest hope that the right path still can be found" (237).

There are a few reservations that should be expressed about this book, although they are indeed minor. At times the details seem to distract from the overall narrative. Beyond the historical context and particular information directly relating to the encounter between Francis and the Sultan, there can be a density weighed down by detail not germane to the agenda of the text. This is perhaps most clearly seen in the seeming digression surrounding the Spiritualist move-

ment alongside the deposing of former Minister General John of Parma discussed in chapter 18. Also worth mentioning is the occasional and incorrect reference to Franciscans as “monks” (for example see page 3). Franciscans, including Francis, were and are mendicants, not monks.

Overall this is a wonderfully written, well researched and timely book. It will surely serve to bring the message of peace that is exhibited in the encounter between Francis and the Sultan to a world desperately in need of recalling such possibilities. For those already familiar with the historical and hagiographical sources relating to this Franciscan narrative, Moses’s text will provide a welcomed refresher and compact resource. For those who have yet to learn of this incredible story of interreligious dialogue, Moses’s book will creatively and skillfully introduce the event. This is a book that belongs in the personal libraries of all Franciscans and all who strive to encounter the other in a loving, Christian and respectful manner.

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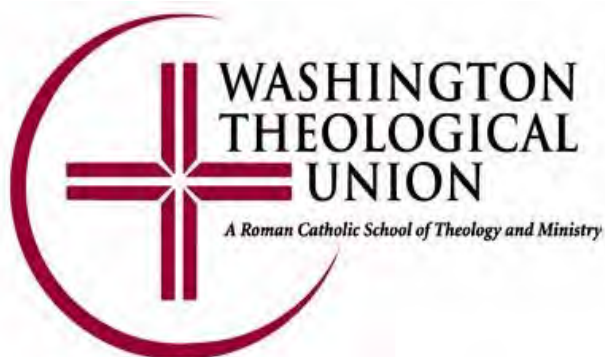
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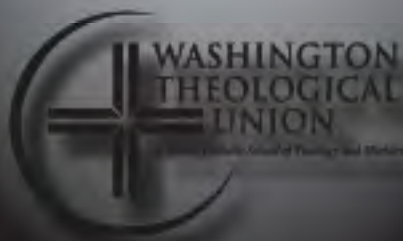
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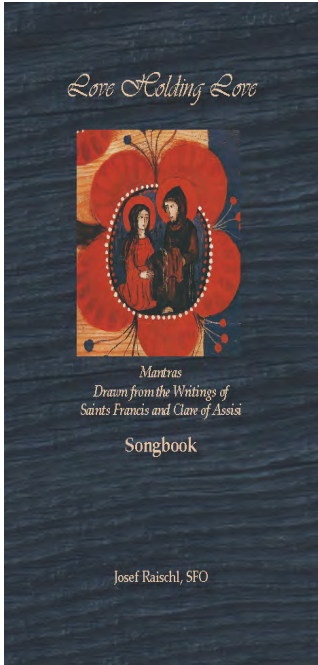
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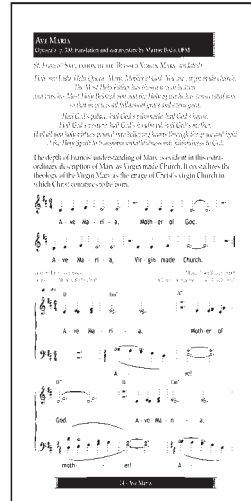
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**THE FRANCISCANS:
A FAMILY HISTORY**

FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY

**CLARE OF ASSISI:
HER LIFE AND WRITINGS**

**FRANCISCAN PRAYER
FRANCISCAN SERVANT
LEADERSHIP**

**ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI,
AN INTRODUCTION**

**THE RULE OF THE SECULAR
FRANCISCAN ORDER**

To learn more about how you can enhance your Franciscan knowledge, contact us at:

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(ICFL can be found by clicking on *Centers*
or *Continuing Education's Non-Credit Programs.*)



SCHOOL OF FRANCISCAN STUDIES
ST. BONAVENTURE UNIVERSITY

SUMMER 2010: JUNE 28 -- JULY 30

Course Information	Instructor	Times
Weeks 1-5: June 28 - July 30		
Franciscan Movement I [3 credits; Core]	Dominic Monti, OFM	MWF 8:30-11:15
519: Early Documents: The Companions and Disciples Tradition [3 credits; Track; pre-req 518]	Jacques Dalarun, Ph.D.	MWF 1:00-3:45
546: Foundations of Franciscan Theology [3 credits; Core]	Joshua Benson, Ph.D.	MWF 1:00-3:45
560: Introduction to Franciscan and Medieval Studies [3 credits; Core]	Margaret Klotz, OSF	T-Th 8:30-11:15; W 6:45-9:30 p.m.
597: Comprehensive Exam [Core]	TBA	TBA
505: Integration Seminar [Core]	TBA	TBA
Weeks 2, 3, 4: July 5-July 23		
509 Franciscan Movement II [3 credits; Track]	Jack Clark Robinson, OFM	M-F 8:00 - 11:15
525: Writings of Francis and Clare [3 credits; Track]	Wayne Hellmann, OFM Conv.	M-F 1:00-3:45
539: Formation in the Franciscan Tradition [3 credits; Elective]	F. Edward Coughlin, OFM	M-F 1:00-3:45
557: The Franciscan Mystical Tradition [3 credits; Track]	Fr. Frank Lane, Ph.D.	M-F 1:00-3:45
559: Spirituality of Bonaventure [3 credits; Track]	Thomas McKenna, Ph.D.	M-F 8:30-11:15
566: Studies in Franciscan Paintings II: 1517 - through the 20th Century [3 credits; Elective]	David Haack, OFM	M-F 8:30-11:45
One-Week Courses: June 28 - July 2		
564-01: Gospel Living in the 21st Century [1 credit; Elective]	Ilia Delio, OSF	M-F 8:30-11:15
564-02: Franciscan and Inter-Faith Dialogue [1 credit; Elective]	Steve McMichael, OFM Conv.	M-F 1:00-3:45
General Orientation Courses: June 28 - July 9		
520: Francis: Life and Charism [2 credits]	Mary Meany, Ph.D.	M-F 8:30-11:15



Franciscan Life Center Retreat

"On Earth as in Heaven: Participating in a World Good Enough for God"

Sunday (7 p.m.), July 18 – Saturday (12 Noon), July 24, 2010

Director: Gabriele Uhlein, OSF., Ph.D.

Grounded in the mystical roots of our Franciscan spirituality that takes the "whole" into account Sister Gabriele Uhlein will offer practical ways of cultivating a contemporary Christology that is both hope-filled and theologically sound. Using compelling images and music inspired by the Earth Charter, retreatants will explore what it means to belong, to heal and to contemplate, so as to become lovers of a soul-filled world and one another.

Inspired by the spirit of Saints Francis and Clare, this retreat is an opportunity to look at how God is still with us and present in all the day-to-day events of our lives. Our time together will be a contemplative opportunity to celebrate the incarnate sacredness of all our relationships—with our God, our earth community, our human community, our religious community—in a world good enough for God.

Presenter Sister Gabriele Uhlein is a Franciscan sister, theologian and artist. She has dedicated over 25 years to recovering and celebrating the spiritual legacy of the Christian mystics, especially of Saints Francis and Clare. Her current ministry includes transformative facilitation of community chapters and consultation for organizational development and spiritual deepening.

Cost: \$400 (includes meals and lodging).

Pre-register by June 1, 2010, with a \$50 non-refundable deposit.



FRANCISCAN
SISTERS
OF LITTLE FALLS
MINNESOTA

For more information or to register, contact:

Franciscan Life Center

116 8th Avenue SE, Little Falls, MN 56345

320-632-0668 • franciscanlife@fslf.org • www.fslf.org

THE NINTH NATIONAL FRANCISCAN FORUM

DYING, AS A FRANCISCAN:

Approaching our *Transitus* to Eternal Life Accompanying Others on the Way to Theirs



The two poignant scenes depicted in the famous Giotto frescoes show us the dying Francis of Assisi being cared for and mourned by brothers and sisters gathered around him during the final days of his life. These beloved friends of the saint journeyed with him, preparing him for that great *transitus* which would take him from this life through death into eternal life.

Many of us within the Franciscan Family of the 21st century – friars, sisters, seculars and all those associated in any way with the Poverello of Assisi – find ourselves surrounded by those within our own communities and families who are in need of similar accompaniment and companionship as they walk the road toward the fullness of life. And each one of us, one day, will walk the same path ourselves.



Is there a particularly *Franciscan* manner of approaching our own passage to the Lord and of helping others to do the same? Are there particular elements within the Franciscan tradition – stories, symbols, rituals, and so forth – on which we can all draw to help us and others whom we accompany in this ultimate pilgrimage of the human journey? There are indeed!

On **June 17-20, 2010**, the Ninth National Franciscan Forum will explore both aspects of this journey through a series of talks and discussions led by a group of distinguished presenters, among whom will be:

Tom Nairn, O.F.M.; Mary Petrosky, F.M.M.; and Dan Sulmasy, O.F.M.

The Forum will be held on the scenic campus of Regis University in Denver, Colorado. Start making plans to be present for this signal event!

And watch for more detailed information on topics, presenters, registration and travel arrangements at

<http://Franciscaninstitute.sbu.edu> (tab: **Franciscan Forums**).



DVD and Study Guide ... in time for Lent

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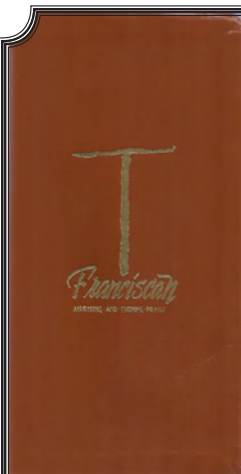
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The Franciscan Federation
Third Order Regular of the Sisters of Brothers of the United States

presents

Franciscan Morning and Evening Praise

This book is offered as a source for prayer and worship focused around the four Franciscan Third Order Regular values of penance or ongoing conversion, poverty, contemplation and minority. Each week of the four week Psalter is dedicated to one of these basic values.

While not an official liturgical office, *Franciscan Morning and Evening Praise*, follows the format of the Church's official prayer. The format of prayer uses two psalms and includes two readings, one Scriptural and one from Franciscan sources. The rubrics are essentially the same as found in the Church's breviary.

Franciscan Morning and Evening Praise is a one volume publication which includes:

- Proper of Seasons (Advent and the Christmas Season)
(Lent, Holy Week and the Easter Season)
- Four Week Psalter
- Proper of Saints
- Commons (Apostles, Blessed Virgin Mary, Founder/Foundress, Holy Men and Women, Married Couples, Common for the Dead, for the Dying, Common for Peace, in Thanksgiving, as well as Commons for the First Order, Second Order, and the Third Order)
- Hymns (Indexed Numerically, Alphabetically and Thematically)
- Ordo (from 2008 to 2030)
- The Rule and Life of the Brothers of Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis

Cost for members of the Franciscan Federation is \$60.00 + shipping and handling

Cost for non-members is \$65.00 + shipping and handling

To order a copy, go to the Franciscan Federation web site, www.franfed.org for a printable order form, call the office or email franfed@aol.com specifying the number for books and shipping information.

The Franciscan Federation does not accept credit cards. An invoice will be enclosed with your order for payment to: Franciscan Federation, P. O. Box 29080, Washington DC 20017



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FRANCISCAN RETREAT
With
BR. JOHN PETRIKOVIC
July 9-16, 2010

“GOSPEL MINORITY: Taking Francis’ Low Road”

The Admonitions have been called the “Beatitudes of Gospel Minority” by Kajetan Esser. “Minority” is a key to unlock the richness of the originality of Francis of Assisi, and the Admonitions---insights offered to his followers at their chapters and gatherings---are an indispensable source to tap into Francis’ wisdom and insights about the human person and the working of grace.

This retreat will provide a context for and exploration of the Admonitions so that they can become a guide and a handbook for our daily lives. At times seemingly harsh, at other times seemingly benign, the Admonitions can help bring Francis’ true spirit to life for a contemporary religious who seeks to follow in the footprints of Jesus.

In a polarized world where dialogue and the art of listening have taken a back seat to “talking points” and “spin”, the Admonitions can lead us back to becoming the peacemakers we are called to be as well as people who know and experience the peace that is found only in Jesus. **Fee: \$475** includes materials, accommodations, and meals.

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CHIARA CENTER

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EVANGELICAL LIFE RETREAT

March 7–March 13, 2010

Andre Cirino, OFM & Anne Bremmer, OSF

Fee: \$600

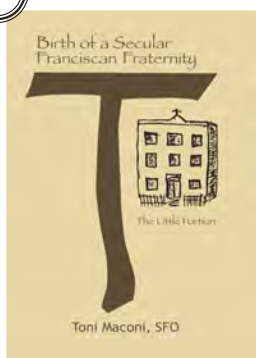
This newly developed retreat focuses on the five movements of living the evangelical life. Limited to 30 participants.

Payment and completion of registration form holds place.

Contact: Sr. Renita Brummer, OSF, Chiara Program Director

4875 LaVerna Rd. Springfield, IL 62707 (217-523-0901) chiaracenter.org

A new center located on the 300 spacious grounds of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis



ISBN 978-1-935257-05-9

Service to the poor in the south Bronx brought people together who found that, through their time and efforts, they began to mean more to each other than just a group of volunteers. Twenty-five years ago a Secular Franciscan Fraternity was formed that is still vibrant and active today. Toni Maconi describes the group's activities and the formation of the Little Portion Secular Franciscan Fraternity in her book, *Birth of A Secular Franciscan Fraternity*. This book can serve as an inspiration to and a model for any current or aspiring fraternity.

Birth of a Secular Franciscan Fraternity
Toni Maconi, SFO

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75 pgs paperback edition, Order online at

Tau-publishing.com



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JULY 25 - 30, 2010

FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY RETREAT

Br. Bill Short, OFM

OCTOBER 1 - 3, 2010

FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY RETREAT

Fr. Kenan Osborne, OFM

JANUARY 21 - 23, 2011

FRANCISCAN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

in

Spiritual Direction and Directed Retreats

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

Focusing on the lives of Francis and Clare and the insights of Bonaventure we open the universal spiritual dynamic, identify it in our own lives and apply it to the ministry of Spiritual Direction and Directed Retreats.

For further information contact:

David Connolly, OFM Cap.

Mt. Alverno Retreat Centre

20704 Heart Lake Rd.,

Caledon, Ont. **L7K 2A2**, Canada

Email: david_cap@hotmail.com

SUMMER 2010 HIGHLIGHTS

SPECIAL ONE-WEEK COURSES

564-01: Gospel Living in the 21st Century

June 28 - July 2

Taught by: Ilia Delio, O.S.F.

M-F8:30-11:15

Franciscan evangelical life centers on the good news of Jesus Christ, making Christ alive through mutual relationship, respect for the human person and care for creation. But what does it mean to live the good news of Jesus Christ *in the twenty-first century*, a period marked by violence, environmental problems and religious pluralism? Is it possible to live the Gospel today in a meaningful way? Drawing together the writings of Francis and Clare with insights from the science of evolution and quantum physics, we will look at how we can redirect the focus of Christian life in a world of change, a world grounded in the essential goodness of God.



564-02: Franciscans and Inter-Faith Dialogue

June 28 - July 2

Taught by: Steve McMichael, O.F.M. Conv.

M-F1:00-3:45

This course will focus on the Franciscan encounter with Jews, Muslims, Hindus, etc., in an historical perspective. It will cover such themes as Francis of Assisi and Muslims; the Franciscan mission to the World Religions in the Primitive Rule and in history; Vatican II and the modern principles of interreligious dialogue; and the Franciscan contribution to the world of dialogue and mission.



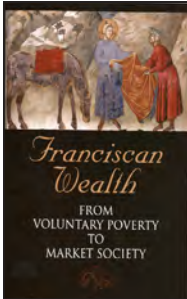
FORMATION ROUNDTABLE

The Franciscan Formation Round Table is an extra-curricular series of conferences, guided readings and group reflection on foundations for life and prayer as a Franciscan person. It is designed for women and men in initial formation in the Franciscan Order. The Round Table will convene for five evening sessions during the last three weeks of the summer program. Registration is separate from course registration.

Moderator: Sr. Judith Terrameo, O.S.F.

Cost: \$175 per person.

Now Available from Franciscan Institute Publications

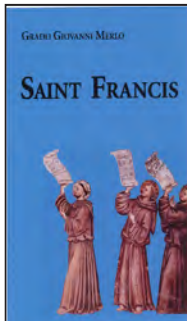


Franciscan Wealth: From Voluntary Poverty to Market Society, written by Giacomo Todeschini and translated by Donatella Melucci

Originally published in Italian in 2004, Todeschini's studies highlight the relationship between the development of the Franciscan movement and medieval economic thinking and practice. While not the "first economists," the early Franciscans approached the marketplace out of their rigorous Christian religiosity and showed clearly the necessary connection between morality and business.

978-1-57659-153-6

\$30.00

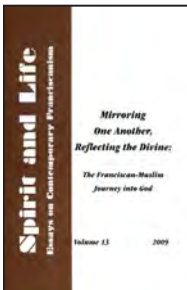


In the Name of Saint Francis: A History of the Friars Minor and Franciscanism until the Early Sixteenth Century by Grado Giovanni Merlo and translated by Rafael Bonnanno, O.F.M., edited by Robert J. Karris, O.F.M. and Jean François Godet-Calogeras.

A most fascinating and intriguing aspect of this history is the constant, life-giving examination the friars made of their past, so rich with creativity and intellectual effort, but also so full of human suffering and unrelenting conflict. Merlo rightly refrains from asking who among the friars can more legitimately claim fidelity to the teaching of Francis. Instead he shows what is really important in their journeys..

1-978-1-57659-155-0

\$60.00



Mirroring One Another, Reflecting the Divine: The Franciscan-Muslim Journey into God

Presentations from the Eighth Franciscan Forum (2008), held in Colorado Springs, with contributions from Jan Hoeberichts, Michael Calabria, O.F.M., F. Betul Cavdar, Paul Lachance, O.F.M., and Robert Lentz, O.F.M. This is a companion volume to *Daring to Embrace the Other: Franciscans and Muslims in Dialogue*.

1-978-1-57659-157-4

\$18.00

WEBSITE: FRANCISCANPUBLICATIONS.SBU.EDU

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The Franciscan International Study Centre is a unique place for study, a sabbatical and formation. It has established itself as the most popular and international destination in the English speaking world for Franciscan Studies and theology taught from within the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition.

What we offer:

Franciscan Certificate Courses:

for students wishing to deepen their understanding of St Francis, St Clare and Franciscan history, theology, spirituality and formation.

BA Theology:

full or part-time study alongside Franciscan students preparing for solemn profession and ordination. This course provides a broad introduction to biblical studies, canon law, liturgy and theology required for ministry in the Catholic Church.

MA Theology:

in-depth investigation of several subjects in contemporary theology and biblical studies.

MA Theology (Franciscan Studies):

in-depth studies of aspects of Franciscan history, theology and spirituality, including topics of interest in contemporary spirituality.

"Masters" in Formation and Leadership:

the course provides a well rounded preparation for any friar or sister training for a role in formation or leadership within the Franciscan family.

Research Degrees:

FISC lecturers supervise students for research degrees in the areas of biblical studies, canon law, Franciscan studies and theology.

Sabbatical Programme:

for both religious and lay people seeking space to spend time in reflection, rest and gentle study.

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a programme covering two terms from mid-January to the end of June.

Franciscan Spiritual Direction:

a ten week intensive spiritual direction programme held during the summer months.

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a four week programme set to different Franciscan themes for immersion into the charism, wisdom, and spirituality of the Franciscan way of life.

Franciscan Formators / Leaders Programme:

a four week intensive programme for Franciscan leaders and formators.

Distance Learning:

our programme currently offers the Award in Franciscan spirituality and discipleship.

For more information, please visit our web site www.franciscans.ac.uk
or contact Pauline Marks on Tel. ++44 1227 769349 or email:

info@franciscans.ac.uk

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The collaboration between the **Franciscan International Study Centre** (the Study Centre) and the **Pontifical University Antonianum** (the Pontifical University) is the result of the desire of the Franciscan family to ensure that formators and leaders are prepared to the highest standards for their roles.

- The Study Centre was approached by the Pontifical University to teach a joint **two year English-language programme** leading to a **Roman "Masters" in Formation and Leadership accredited by the Pontifical University.**

This course comprises:

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which provides a grounding in Franciscan history, spirituality and theology, an introduction to formation and leadership skills required

with the option of pursuing the Spiritual Direction Programme over the summer.

- A second academic year in Rome at the Pontifical University intensifies training in the skills of accompaniment and leadership.

For more information, please visit our web site www.franciscans.ac.uk
or contact Pauline Marks on Tel. ++44 1227 769349 or email:
info@franciscans.ac.uk

Franciscan International Study Centre Giles Lane, Canterbury Kent CT2 7NA

ON THE FRANCISCAN CIRCUIT

The 17th Annual Central New York
Franciscan Experience featuring Mary Beth Ingham, C.S.J.
Reading the Gospels through a Franciscan Lens

March 20, 2010 8:30am - 4:00pm

The Franciscan Center 2500 Grant Blvd.

Syracuse, NY 13208

See ad p. 93.

Evangelical Life Retreat

André Cirino and Anne Bremmer

March 7-13, 2010

Contact Sr. Renita Brummer, O.S.F., Chiara Program Director
(217-523-0901) or chiaracenter.org

See ad p. 106

The Franciscan Symposium

May 28-30, 2010

Greed, Lust, and Power: Franciscan Strategies for Building a More Just World

Washington Theological Union, Washington, DC

See ad p. 92.

THE NINTH NATIONAL FRANCISCAN FORUM DYING, AS A FRANCISCAN:

***Approaching our Transitus to Eternal Life
Accompanying Others on the Way to Theirs***

Sponsored by The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University
At Regis University in Denver, Colorado June 17-20, 2010

See ad p. 101.