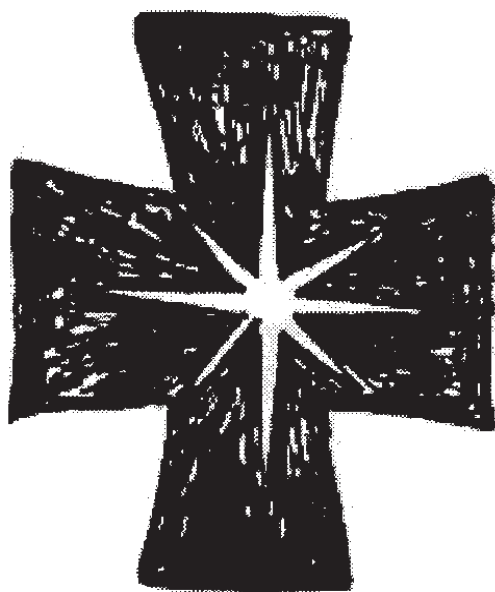


THE CORD

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• A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW •

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FOREWORD

The changing scenery of Autumn is bittersweet. As we watch the brilliant colors mute and the landscape become more bare, nature is reminding us that it is what is beneath the surface that is most alive. As we take in garden furniture, store hoses, clean out flower beds and deal with the “Fall Back” of the clock, let us enjoy the intimacy of the inside season in our hearts and communities.

This issue of *The Cord* is a potpourri of insights, thoughts and new ideas from our authors. We have some familiar names: Robert Karris, Pat McCloskey, Kevin Tortorelli, Andrea Barone and Clare Julian Carbone. But alongside them are some new contributors: Russel Murray, Mary Esther Stewart, Janet Sullivan and Ann Marie Emon. There’s bound to be something to arouse our interest and challenge our comfort zone.

Just as the season is in transition, so are we here at Franciscan Institute Publications. In September we welcomed our new Director of Publications, James L. Knapp. In all of the discussions and reorganizations that are and will be occurring here at FIP our goal is to be more responsive to you, our readers, and to become a sustainable ministry for the Franciscan Family. While you’ll notice new phone/fax numbers in our flyers and print materials, don’t worry if you inadvertently call the old numbers which are still in service. We’ll love hearing from you and be happy to connect you so that your orders and/or requests can be taken care of efficiently. And if you’re near St. Bonaventure, don’t hesitate to visit. You’re always welcome!

Other signs of the time are the plethora of political yard signs, ubiquitous TV ads, and constant drone of media commentators. Election Day will be past when you receive this issue, but it’s still a timely reminder to pray for those who are elected to office, to pray for the grace of wisdom and civil discourse in policy discussions, and to give thanks for the end of the campaigns. Can I get an “Amen” to that?

Daria R. Mitchell, O.S.F.

PEACE IN THE CHURCH: TOWARDS A FRANCISCAN RESPONSE

RUSSEL MURRAY, O.F.M.

Peace in the Church: it is a timely topic,¹ largely due to its absence in so many corners of the Church. A sampling of the current headlines confirms this: the trauma experienced by people across the country when their parishes are merged or closed; the anger aroused in the faithful by the scandalous response of many bishops and religious superiors to reports of child sexual abuse by their clergy; the conflicts that erupt on the campuses of Catholic colleges every year whenever the question of who will address its graduates is raised. How many of us have already braced ourselves for the next headline? How many of us have begun to speculate about what the next headline will be?

Peace in the Church is certainly a timely topic. But then, it has always been a timely topic. As our Scriptures witness and our faith teaches, peace is not a zero-sum game. It is the graced process of realizing that Kingdom which Jesus proclaimed to be already in our midst: the reconciliation of all people as sisters and brothers through the saving love of

¹ This article was originally presented as a talk during an Evening of Re-Creation at Mt. Irenaeus Franciscan Mountain Retreat in West Clarks-ville, NY, July 2010. It has been modified for this publication. Please note, as well, that when using the term “Church,” I am referring to the Roman Catholic Church. I make this reference without any prejudice toward the ecclesial self-understandings of other Christian communities. As it did for several pastors of the United Methodist Church attending the Evening of Re-Creation, I hope that this clarification enables Christians from other churches to engage my reflections more easily than they may have otherwise been able to do.

God. The headline issues of our time are our own, of course, as are the pains that accompany them. Yet, the efforts we are making to address these issues and their attendant pains are part of something greater than this present moment. They are part of the work of the Spirit among us, bringing about the peace of God's reign in and for our world – the Church included.

What work is the Spirit doing among us Franciscans? What response is the Spirit calling us to offer a Church that again longs for the peace of God's Kingdom? In our time together I shall take three steps toward the formulation of a Franciscan response. At the outset, please note that although I will be reflecting from within our Franciscan Tradition, nothing I shall offer is exclusive to it. After all, being Franciscan is only one way of living the Gospel, which, of course, is the vocation of all who follow in the footsteps of the Prince of Peace. I shall conclude with some observations on stacking stones. I shall begin, though, with a brief reading of the signs of our times.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

In her book *Root Shock* Mindy Thompson Fullilove describes the effect that the federal Housing Act of 1949 had upon the urban African-American community. The act led to the destruction of African-American neighborhoods across the United States, as is well known, but what was really destroyed – and little acknowledged, she argues – was more than brick and mortar. It was the living fabric of meaning and identity that united the people who once called those neighborhoods *home*. The effect of this destruction was *root shock*.

Root shock is the traumatic stress reaction to the destruction of all or part of one's emotional ecosystem.... Root shock undermines trust, increases anxiety about letting loved ones out of one's sight, destabilizes relationships, destroys social, emotional, and financial

resources, and increases the risk for every kind of stress-related disease, from depression to heart attack. Root shock leaves people chronically cranky, barking distinctive croaky complaints that their world was abruptly taken away. Home is where you feel safe in the dark.²

In his book *What is the Point of Being a Christian?* Timothy Radcliff, O.P., past General Master of the Order of Preachers, uses *root shock* as the key to understanding the effect that the Second Vatican Council's embrace of Modernity had upon the Catholic Church – upon the Catholic *Community*.³ In the wake of this embrace, most Catholics experienced either the partial or complete collapse of their emotional ecosystems. They experienced the unraveling of the living fabric of meaning and identity that had united them as Catholics, regardless of the particular neighborhood they had once called *home*, e.g., a parish or religious community. What is more, this shock has repeated itself time and again, and there is little sign of it abating. This has left Catholics feeling “chronically cranky, barking distinctive croaky complaints that their world was abruptly taken away.” As Radcliff describes it, the effect of root shock upon the Catholic Community has been so deep and so sustained that post-conciliar Catholics live in a state of exile,⁴ a diaspora of uncertainty in which they wander in the dark, searching for a home where they might feel safe once again.

Does this *feel* familiar to you? Let us consider the effect of root shock upon the Catholic Community more concretely. In the absence of a broadly shared, felt sense of belonging within the Catholic Community, the past forty-five years have seen the formation of intentional communities of belonging wherein like-minded Catholics might feel at home. To name

² Mindy Thompson Fullilove, *Root Shock: How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America and What We Can Do About It* (New York: One World/Ballentine, 2004), 11.

³ Timothy Radcliffe, *What is the Point of Being a Christian?* (New York: Burns & Oats, 2005), 164-78.

⁴ Radcliffe, *What is the Point of Being a Christian?*, 171.

three of the more prominent groups, there are the Kingdom Catholics who are committed to proclaiming the Social Gospel and its call to justice, which they do in the Church as well in the secular public square in order to further the *reforms* initiated by the Council – reforms threatened by reactionary forces within “The Vatican.” There are the Communion Catholics who, for the sake of recovering “Catholic identity,” work to reform the *renewal* that the Council had called for, but which was perverted in the decades that followed it. Finally there are the Spirituality Catholics whose primary concern is their own personal religiosity, irrespective of any obligation of “organized religion” that runs contrary to their consciences.⁵ If they appeal to the Council at all it is usually to the Council’s spirit, however defined. Perhaps you would use different labels for these groups, or would describe them in different terms. Regardless of the labels one assigns them, these and many other communities are part of a growing phenomenon in the Catholic Community. Their members look upon one another through the lenses of *us* and *them*, and speak about one another in a way that makes it clear: “That’s not *my* Church!”

Have you ever heard that phrase before? Have you ever uttered it before? If so, you are not alone. It conveys a sentiment – delineates an *identity* – that each intentional community voices in its own language, even through the organs of its own media. For some Catholics, *NCR* stands for *National Catholic Reporter*, while for others it means *National Catholic Register* – and little chance of confusing their editorial pages. Yet as different as their languages are, there is one expression they all share: “If there’s ever going to be peace in the Church, then *they* need to think a bit more, feel a bit more, act a bit more like *us*.” Consider some of the competing prescriptions they proffer as cures for the Church’s headline-ills: should clerical celibacy be optional or more strictly enforced as part of a greater commitment to “official” sexual ethics; is

⁵ NB: The terms “Kingdom Catholic” and “Communion Catholic” come from Radcliffe (see *ibid.*, 161ff.); the term “Spirituality Catholic” is my own.

lay-leadership the way toward a more mature post-conciliar Church, one more relevant to the needs of the “average” Catholic, or is a more explicit assertion of episcopal authority needed to renew Catholic identity; or perhaps we should accept the death of organized religion and embrace the birth of spirituality? Might there be a wisdom in each of these prescriptions from which the others could benefit? Perhaps, if their advocates’ opinions were not so hard, their suspicions not so deep, and the degree of polarization between them not so profound as to blind them to the intrinsic and necessary value of anything that does not resemble “*my Church*.”

Kingdom Catholics, Communion Catholics, Spirituality Catholics: each of these communities recognizes the need for peace within the wider Catholic Community, and each of them is sincerely committed to responding to that need. Unfortunately, the vision of peace that guides their respective efforts often appears as little more than a larger P-I-E-C-E of the ecclesial pie. What about P-E-A-C-E in the Church? What about the peace of the Kingdom Jesus proclaimed, i.e., the peace born of our reconciliation to one another as sons and daughters of God? As Radcliff states, this is possible only if we Kingdom Catholics, Communion Catholics, and Spirituality Catholics are willing to “understand the exile that the other feels. We shall rebuild the Church as our common home only if we have the imagination to understand the other’s sense of exile and work to build a community in which they may feel that they too belong”⁶ – to build a neighborhood in which they too may feel safe in the dark.

TOWARDS A FRANCISCAN RESPONSE

Peace in the Church: it is certainly a timely topic. What is the Spirit calling us Franciscans to do for the sake of such peace? By way of moving towards a Franciscan response to this question, I offer the following three steps, which I draw

⁶ Radcliffe, 171.

from the life of St. Francis of Assisi: (1) “The Lord gave me brothers”; (2) “Let us begin again”; and (3) “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.” Let us take each of them in turn.

1. “*The Lord gave me brothers...*”

“The Lord gave me brothers ...” (*Test*, 14). These words from St. Francis’s *Testament* express the heart of his vocational identity. By the time the Lord had given him the gift of brothers, Francis had already disavowed his inheritance. He had begun to care for lepers and to repair wayside churches. In a word, he had, as he put it, already “left the world” (*Test*, 3). Yet for all this, it was not until the Lord had given him brothers that Francis became *Brother* Francis and with his brothers, discerned as a revelation from God that *their* vocation was to live the Holy Gospel (*Test*, 14).

This may sound quite beautiful, and more than a bit romantic – so long as we remain talking about Francis and his brothers. Yet, this vocation to brother/sisterhood becomes quite challenging when we allow ourselves to realize that their vocational identity as *fratres minores*, i.e., lesser brothers, was but one expression of our common identity as Christians: brothers and sisters in the Lord. St. Paul described this identity well in his letter to the contentious, divided Church in Galatia: “Through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free-person, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:26-28).

Beautiful, yes, and more than a bit romantic, to be sure, but spoken into our Church today this description of our vocation to brother/sisterhood confronts us – indeed, challenges us – with the question: Do we really believe this? Do we really believe that we are all one in Christ Jesus? Do I believe that I cannot be a Christian all by myself, that *we* cannot be Christians all by ourselves so long as there remains a *them* against whom we think we must define *us*? Do we

believe that we are sisters and brothers with *all* those who have been baptized into Christ, and that we can rightly hear the voice of Christ only when we come together and listen to His voice with one another?

In the face of such questions I recall a story from the *Fioretti*, in which St. Francis admonished the guardian of a hermitage for having turned away a group of highwaymen from the friary door. They had come begging for something to eat. The guardian, Brother Angelo, gave them a scolding for their sins. Francis's response was to send Angelo to beg the highwaymen's forgiveness for his own cruelty and to offer them, in Francis's name, a daily portion of food from the friars' table. All Francis asked in return was that, their needs now met, they stop terrorizing travelers. The men were so moved by Angelo's humility and Francis's charity that they repented of their sins. What is more, some of them returned to the hermitage with Angelo, where they were received into the Order by Francis himself.⁷

St. Francis was no more blind to the sins people commit than he was blind to the reality of his own sinfulness, nor was he blind to the emotional reaction that others' sins stirred within his heart.⁸ Yet what Francis chose to see in others – to respond to in the men and women he encountered, especially those whom others had condemned and dismissed – were his sisters and brothers in Christ.⁹ This was what drew people to Francis. This was what changed

⁷ Fior, 26. Other versions of the same story (AC, 115 and 2MP, 66; *FA:ED* 2, 221-22 and *FA:ED* 3, 310-11) have Francis sending an unnamed group of friars into the forest on the same penitential mission. In only one of these versions (2MP, 66; *FA:ED* 3, 310-11) is the entrance of some of the bandits into the Order mentioned, although no mention is made of their having been received by St. Francis. Regardless of the version, the meaning of the accounts is the same: while some people related to others on the basis of the others' sins, Francis related to every person on the basis of God's saving love for them, and this, in turn, had a transformative effect on their lives.

⁸ See Adm, XI and 1C, 54; *FA:ED* 1, 133 and 228-29.

⁹ See LMin, 9-12, in *FA:ED* 1, 97-98, the presumption here being that Francis would not advise the unnamed Minister to do something that he would not himself do – or had already done – with another brother.

people's lives, and made Francis a leaven for peace in the Church:¹⁰ Francis walked among the people of his day as a Christian among Christians. As his lesser sisters and brothers, the Spirit is calling us to do the same – not a people set apart, but as a leaven for what God calls his Church to be: the sacrament of his reconciling love in and for the world.¹¹ What would it mean for us to take this step? It would mean that we are a people always ready to begin again.

2. “Let us begin again ...”

To all outward appearances, by the end of his life St. Francis was an unqualified success. He was the founder of the fastest growing religious movement in the Church. He was the author of a new religious rule – even after the Fourth Lateran Council had forbidden the composition of new rules. He was a friend of popes, revered by practically everyone as a wonderworker and living saint. And it was at this point in his life that Francis turned to his brothers and said: “Let us begin again, brothers, to serve the Lord, for up to now we have made little or no progress.”¹² It was a radical, almost unbelievable thing for him to say, doubly so given the age into which he had been born.

Francis was born into what some historians refer to as the Age of the Cloister.¹³ During this time period, which lasted from the dawn of the Middle Ages to roughly 1200, change was considered a bad thing; stability was good, it was the ideal, for it was the state of life that mirrored the divine ordering of creation. This belief was exemplified by the cloisters from which the age derives its name: the monastery cloisters in which the monk or nun could live a disciplined, predict-

¹⁰ See 1C, 36-37 and LMj III, 2 in *FA:ED* 1, 214-17 and 2, 543; also 2C, 146; *FA:ED* 2, 341.

¹¹ See *Lumen gentium*, §1.

¹² 1C, 103, in *FA:ED* 1, 272-73.

¹³ See Christopher Brooke, *The Age of the Cloister: The Story of Monastic Life in the Middle Ages* (Mahwah, NJ: HiddenSpring, an imprint of Paulist Press, 2003).

able, well ordered Christian life. For the faithful Christian of this age, the cloister symbolized the way life was supposed to be. Francis, however, looked upon Christian life with markedly different eyes.¹⁴

For Francis, the Gospel revealed that Christian life was anything but stable. It was a life marked by the following of the One who had nowhere to lay his head (Luke 9:58), the One whom the Father had sent into the world to proclaim the Kingdom of God, and who in turn sent his disciples to do the same: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21). This was the Christian life: the life of the Gospel itself, which the faithful Christian embraced by walking in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. The early days of Jesus' mission evidenced this well. After Jesus' early success in Capernaum, his first disciples began looking to set down roots, to establish a home for themselves. What was Jesus' response? "To other towns I must proclaim the Kingdom of God, because for this purpose I was sent" (Luke 4:43). Jesus' mission – Jesus' life – was that of one *sent*. If that was the life of Christ, so too would it be Francis's life, as well as the life to which all those who had clothed themselves with Christ were called by the Lord to embrace as their own.

Today, it is an understatement to say that life is unpredictable. In one way or another, all of us have had our emotional ecosystems shocked, including the ecosystem of our Christian lives. My parish has been closed or merged with another. My job has taken me across the country to a church I do not recognize as "*my* Church." I have arrived at college a stranger to the faith community at the campus ministry center. My stable world has been turned upside down by the inevitable tide of change. It is a moment of choice. Do I fight the change, stay at home, and mourn the loss of my spiritual house? Do I search for an emotionally comfortable home in

¹⁴ NB, I do not wish to imply here that Francis was unique in his view of Christian life. That would fly in the face of history. Rather, I mean only that Francis's vision of the Gospel life did not correspond to the prevailing paradigm of his age, i.e., the stable lifestyle and spiritual sensibilities of Benedictine monasticism.

a cloister of the like-minded? Do I keep away from the college chapel and begin creating my own personal spirituality? Or like St. Francis, do I embrace Christian life as someone always ready to begin again to follow the Lord?

For Francis, home was to be found precisely in relationship with the brothers and sisters whom the Lord had given him, and to whom the Lord had given him. In the conventional sense of the word, this is certainly not a *safe* life. Yet, for Francis, it was the life of the Gospel, and it is to this truly and fully Christian life, in the footsteps of Christ himself, that we Franciscans invite other men and women to follow with us.

3. “*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace ...*”

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, pardon.

Where there is doubt, faith.

Where there is despair, hope.

Where there is darkness, light.

Where there is sadness, joy.

We know these words as part of *The Prayer of St. Francis* – in spite of the fact that St. Francis did not write them. Even the historical origin of the prayer is itself disputed.¹⁵ Nevertheless, we can say three things about this prayer with some certainty.

First, it does not praise God for what God did to Francis. Rather, inspired by Francis’s life, it asks the Lord to do something to the one who offers it – to us. Like Francis, Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Make me a true disciple, a living image of your Son, the Prince of Peace. Open my eyes to see every person as my sister and brother, as

¹⁵ See Albert Haase, *Reflections on the Peace Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi* (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2004), 2-4, for a brief outline of the historical roots and development of this prayer.

someone deserving of your gifts and as someone deserving of my love. And enable me, Lord, to receive them as your gift to me, and offer myself as your gift to them.

Second, in this prayer peace is not a zero-sum game. It is the living reality of God-won reconciliation that we sow in faith, trusting that the Lord who began this good work in us will bring it to fruition when the fullness of his Kingdom dawns (Phil 1:6). In this sense, peace is not a project that we accomplish; it is not a vision that we impose upon those who think, who feel, who act differently from ourselves. That is the peace that the world gives: P-I-E-C-E. P-E-A-C-E is a gift of faith. Peace is a work of love that God's Holy Spirit enkindles and accomplishes in each of us, God's children, as we stumble along our pilgrim way, constantly in need of learning anew what it means to follow in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Third, while the desire to be instruments of peace may arise from the gift of faith that God has implanted in our hearts, the only one who can respond to it, lend flesh and blood to it, is a faithful Christian, i.e., you and I. To be an instrument of God's peace is certainly a beautiful thing, maybe even a bit of a romantic thing. The reality of such a life, however, is difficult, indeed. This is something that we Franciscans know well. As Francis and his first brothers have taught us, the first step in becoming an instrument of God's peace is the step *down*. It is the step of becoming *lesser*: lesser sisters and brothers to all whom we meet, lesser sisters and brothers of all those with whom we share life – particularly life as God's Church – as a gift from the Lord. How easy is this? It is about as easy as stacking stones.

ON STACKING STONES

It was in a time of radical social and ecclesial change that St. Francis heard God's voice. It was a time when, one might say, Church and State were locked in a struggle for supremacy, when civilizations West and East were engaged in a war that appeared without end, when the established social or-

der was beginning to crumble, and when groups of clergy, religious, and laity alike were clamoring for the reform of the Church – and could not agree on the form it should take. It was the dawn of an age that established institutions and spiritual traditions were ill equipped to serve. It was an age suffering from root shock, and it was in the midst of this age that God called out to Francis: “Rebuild my house, which as you can see, is falling into ruin” (2C, 10).¹⁶ Although Francis’s initial response was to begin rebuilding the crumbling edifice of the chapel in which he had been praying, it was not long before he began to realize that the “house” he was called to rebuild was not a building, but a people – God’s People, God’s Church – and that his material was not blunt stone, but the suppleness of the human heart.

In our own age, we can say that although much has changed since the time of Francis, much has remained the same. Ours is a world, a society, indeed a Church that is undergoing radical changes, experiencing one root shock after another. We yearn for peace, especially within our Church, which the fathers of Vatican II declared to be a sign of the communion of life and love God wills all people to have in him – a sacrament of the peace of God’s Kingdom.¹⁷ From the Franciscan perspective, our vocation as Christians is precisely that to which God called St. Francis eight hundred years ago: “Rebuild my house, which as you can see is falling into ruin.” How do we do this? One stone at a time, one person at a time, one sister and brother at a time as Christ would have us do. We do it as lesser sisters and brothers whom the Lord gives to be living instruments – true sacraments – of the peace he longs to give our world, the Church included. What will our response be?

¹⁶ *FA:ED* 2, 249.

¹⁷ *Lumen gentium*, 1.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI AND STUDIES: UNTYING THE GORDIAN KNOT¹

PATRICK McCLOSKEY, O.F.M.

I must begin by acknowledging that my title has taken liberties regarding the term *Gordian knot*. In a region of ancient Turkey, it secured a king's chariot to a stake. Whoever could untie the knot would rule that territory. Some ancient writers describe Alexander the Great as cutting it because no one could untie it. Because the issue of St. Francis of Assisi and studies is similarly complex, this fact has usually caused people over the centuries to cut the knot on one side (this is an insoluble problem) or on the other side (this is obviously a non-problem).

The writer Plutarch, however, cites Aristobolus, who says that Alexander succeeded in untying the Gordian knot.² In Shakespeare's play *Henry V*, the Archbishop of Canterbury describes King Henry V as being able to unloose a Gordian knot "as familiar as his garter."³ I think that Francis himself can help us untie this knot concerning his attitude toward studies.

I will develop my presentation under four headings:

1. The distinction between knowledge and wisdom,
2. Francis of Assisi's appreciation of that distinction,

¹ This text is adapted from a lecture given at St. Bonaventure University, during the Summer Session of the School of Franciscan Studies, July 2010.

² Plutarch, *The Life of Alexander the Great*, trans. John Dryden (New York: Random House, 2004), 18.

³ William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, Act 1, Scene 1, in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (New York: Avenel Books, 1980), 490.

3. The acceptance of this distinction in early Franciscan writings, and finally,

4. A short reference to Father Ignatius Charles Brady, O.F.M. as a Franciscan scholar who was eminently knowledgeable and wise.

1. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

The late Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen once observed that there are two kinds of knowledge: the kind that we possess and the kind that possesses us.⁴ In fact, doesn't this distinction point out the crucial difference between knowledge and wisdom? Although wisdom always builds on knowledge, knowledge does not guarantee that a person will become wise.

Our educational system charts a person's proficiency regarding various types of knowledge. Whether on the high school, college or graduate level, transcripts indicate courses we have taken, grades received and credits earned. In a certain sense, we can possess the knowledge needed to work out an equation in algebra, to conjugate a verb in Spanish or in another language, to understand why certain chemicals react as they do or to locate Tajikistan on a map. Knowledge, however, can be *appropriated* or hijacked for a person's selfish interests. Knowledge can also lead someone to wisdom

⁴ Despite the generous help offered by Monica Yehle of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, I have not succeeded in finding this exact quote. This distinction, however, is reflected in two Sheen quotes below. "Knowledge is as necessary as light. In fact it is like light: it is in itself devoid of color, taste and odor and it should be kept pure and without admixture. If it comes to us through the medium of prejudice, hate, or uncontrolled passion, it is discolored and adulterated." *The Quotable Fulton J. Sheen*, ed. Frederick Gushurst (Anderson, SC: Droke House, 1967), 134. "The regeneration of society requires that a distinction be made between science and wisdom. Science is concerned with means and techniques; wisdom is concerned with goals, destinies and purposes. A mechanical civilization is built on science; a cultural, on goals or destinies." *The Quotable Fulton J. Sheen*, 258.

– before which *humility* is the only proper response. By definition, humility involves expropriation.

Knowledge gives us new freedom, new possibilities, but it is a two-edged sword. Timothy McVeigh knew how to combine ammonia and fertilizer to create the bomb that killed 168 people at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995. That knowledge, however, clearly did not lead McVeigh to wisdom. He possessed some knowledge but refused to be possessed by other knowledge.

Sadly, we can possess knowledge in an arrogant way. Unfortunately, we are also tempted to reduce the concept of truth to a simple question of knowledge.

Who can forget Jack Nicholson's portrayal of Colonel Nathan Jessep in *A Few Good Men*? In one crucial scene, Lieutenant Daniel Kafee (played by Tom Cruise) shouts, "I want the truth!" Jessep shouts back, "You can't handle the truth!" Kafee, however, succeeds in establishing the facts concerning the murder of Marine Private William Santiago.

Knowledge is not a cannon that can blow a rowboat out of the water. Nor is knowledge like a laser so tightly focused that it can remove a cataract or ultrasound waves that can break up a kidney stone.

Instead, like a lighted candle, genuine knowledge shines in all directions. Sometimes we concentrate light in a single direction, but its natural tendency is to diffuse itself equally in every direction – as is always true of the good, the true and the beautiful also.⁵

Schools teach their students various truths but will eventually fail students who are either uninterested or unable

⁵ Ancient philosophers spoke of reality as one, true and good. Medieval philosophers began to speak of the transcendentals as the good, the true and the beautiful—perhaps because they saw all creation as coming from a single God and, therefore, unified at its deepest level. Medieval thinkers often used light as a symbol of the good. "The good diffuses itself," they wrote. See the description of transcendentals in Mary Beth Ingham, C.S.J., *Rejoicing in the Works of the Lord: Beauty in the Franciscan Tradition*, Franciscan Heritage Series, Vol. 6 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2009), 5.

to integrate various truths into an overarching truth, into wisdom.

Fulton Sheen's description about two kinds of knowledge suggests that all white-collar crime is really a misappropriation or selfish use of knowledge.

Insider stock trading utilizes knowledge restricted to a few people in order to buy stocks likely to increase in value when some report becomes public. Insider knowledge can also enable someone to sell stock sure to lose value once a previously unannounced fact becomes public.

Conflict of interest policies protect everyone from a selfish use of insider knowledge. Embezzlement is carried out by people who know a system well enough to "scam" it.

In the academic world, plagiarism is driven by the thought that someone else's work is so much better than my own that stealing their work will lead to a higher grade – and eventually to a better job. Plagiarists manipulate knowledge for a selfish purpose. Universities such as St. Bonaventure University rightly expect faculty and students to be people of integrity regarding their intellectual debts.

According to one estimate, twenty-five percent of today's résumés list degrees that a person has not earned while another thirty-five percent contain "embellished" entries.⁶

Knowledge can be used very selectively and ruthlessly. The more it is used honestly and therefore humbly, the more that person is moving in the direction of wisdom.

Learning and teaching are great uses of human ingenuity and freedom. I treasure the facts that I learned here at the Franciscan Institute and elsewhere, as well as the wisdom of many teachers whom I have had. I am grateful that I taught at Roger Bacon High School in Cincinnati for sixteen years full-time and another three years part-time. My present editing work at *St. Anthony Messenger* has teaching and learning elements.

⁶ Dan Chaney of Employers Resource Association in Cincinnati, Ohio, conversation with author, August 11, 2010. A lower estimate was cited in the original talk.

Although we can manipulate knowledge, humility is the only proper response to wisdom, to knowledge understood in the context of God's creation and its accompanying web of interconnections.

You students at St. Bonaventure University want your teachers to be knowledgeable. I'll bet, however, that no one in this room has been profoundly influenced by a teacher who was merely knowledgeable. As to those of you who are teachers, don't you seek to be more than walking databases of information?

The teachers who light fires within us, who help us make connections that we had not previously appreciated, who open us up to wider worlds--these priceless teachers are always wise as well as knowledgeable.

2. FRANCIS OF ASSISI'S APPRECIATION OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM.

St. Bonaventure wrote:

In beautiful things [Francis] saw Beauty itself and through the footprints impressed in things he followed his Beloved everywhere, out of them all making for himself a ladder through which he could climb up to lay hold of him who is utterly desirable.⁷

This is a well-known passage, but because the good, the true and beautiful are transcendentals, that is, they are always found together as different lenses on the same reality, we could substitute the words *good* or *true* in that passage and the meaning would remain the same.

Let's try it:

⁷ Bonaventure, *Legenda Major*, IX in *Bonaventure*, trans. and introduction by Ewert Cousins, Classics of Western Spirituality (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1978), 263.

In truthful things [Francis] saw Truth itself and through the footprints impressed in things he followed his Beloved everywhere, out of them all making for himself a ladder through which he could climb up to lay hold of him who is utterly desirable.

Francis of Assisi did not have an extensive formal education. Indeed, in his “Letter to the Entire Order,” he refers to himself as *ignorans et idiota*, ignorant and unlettered.⁸ Even so, we have many more writings from Francis than from his more learned contemporary, St. Dominic. Francis directed the friars to copy his writings and called on Brother Caesar of Speyer for help with Scripture references in the Rule of 1221.

Because Francis viewed God’s creation holistically, he intuitively understood the connections among the good, the true and the beautiful. Each will lead us to God if we follow it humbly.

For Francis, the primary sin was appropriation, claiming for oneself what belongs to God alone. Thus, the most basic virtue is expropriation, emptying oneself to be filled with God’s grace, following wherever it may lead.

Eventually that forced Francis to empty himself of his plans and instead open himself to God’s wisdom.

Francis knew well St. Paul’s exhortation to the Philippians to have indeed the mind of Christ,

Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross (Phil 2:6-8).

⁸ Francis of Assisi, *Epistola Toti Ordini Missa* in *Opuscula Sancti Patris Francisci Assisiensis*, ed. Kajetan Esser, O.F.M. (Grottaferrata: Collegii St. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1978), 146-47. In his *Testament*, 29, Francis refers to himself as *simplex* (Esser, *Opuscula*, 313).

In his “Prayer Before the Crucifix,” Francis asks for “sense and knowledge that I may carry out your holy and true command.”⁹ Concerning people who do not do penance, Francis wrote, “They do not possess spiritual wisdom because they do not have the Son of God, the true wisdom of the Father.”¹⁰

In the *Earlier Rule*, Francis wrote,

Let the brothers who know how to work do so and exercise that trade they have learned, provided it is not contrary to the good of their souls and can be performed honestly. And it is lawful for them to have the tools and instruments suitable for their trades.¹¹

Later in that Rule, he wrote,

Let nothing else please us and cause us delight except our Creator, Redeemer and Savior, who is the fullness of good, all good, every good, the true and supreme good.¹²

If Anthony of Padua had been a shoemaker when he joined the friars, he clearly could have continued to exercise that trade. Because Anthony obviously knew Scripture well and could teach the other friars about it, Francis recognized that this was legitimate work for Anthony as long as it did not extinguish what the *Later Rule* calls “the Spirit of holy prayer and devotion to which all temporal things must contribute.”¹³ Francis also wrote that the friars must “desire above all else to have the Spirit of the Lord and its holy activity.”¹⁴

⁹ “Prayer Before the Crucifix,” in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, ed. Regis Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, William Short, Vol. 1 (New York: New City Press, 1999), 40. Hereafter the volumes in this series will be cited as *FA:ED* 1, 2 or 3, followed by page number.

¹⁰ Earlier Exhortation, 8, *FA:ED* 1, 43.

¹¹ *Earlier Rule*, VII, 3 and 9 in *FA:ED* 1, 69.

¹² *Earlier Rule*, XXIII: 9 in *FA:ED* 1, 85.

¹³ *Later Rule*, V:2 in *FA:ED* 1, 102.

¹⁴ *Later Rule*, X, 8 in *FA:ED* 1, 105.

In fact, Francis wrote to Anthony,

I am pleased that you teach sacred theology to the brothers providing that, as is contained in the Rule, you ‘do not extinguish the Spirit of prayer and devotion’ during study of this kind.¹⁵

Under a teacher such as Anthony, there was little danger of that happening.

In Admonition V, Francis asks,

In what then, can you boast? Even if you were so skillful and wise that you possessed all knowledge, knew how to interpret every kind of language and to scrutinize heavenly things with skill: one could not boast of these things.¹⁶

In Admonition VII, Francis writes,

The apostle says: The letter kills but the spirit gives life. Those people are put to death by the letter who only wish to know the words alone, that they might be esteemed wiser than others and be able to acquire great riches to give to their relatives and friends.¹⁷

That pretty well describes the manipulation of knowledge for selfish gain.

A key saying occurs in Francis’s Admonition XIX, “For what a person is before God, that he is and no more.”¹⁸ When we know who we are before God, we are not in danger of appropriating anything as truly ours, including knowledge.

¹⁵ Letter to Anthony, 2 in *FA:ED* 1, 107.

¹⁶ Admonition V, 4-5 in *FA:ED* 1, 131.

¹⁷ Admonition VII, 1-2 in *FA:ED* 1, 132.

¹⁸ Admonition XIX, 2 in *FA:ED* 1, 135.

Francis opens his Salutation of the Virtues by exclaiming, "Hail Queen Wisdom! May the Lord protect You, with Your Sister, holy, pure Simplicity!"¹⁹

3. ACCEPTANCE IN EARLY FRANCISCAN WRITINGS OF THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM.

A curious incident in the life of St. Francis illustrates the error of restricting knowledge to formal academic study. Thomas of Celano tells us that Francis was once distracted at prayer because he could not stop thinking about a cup that he had fashioned earlier. Francis could pray effectively only when he had destroyed that cup. His ability to make that cup become such a pleasing memory that it threatened to overshadow God's larger plan.²⁰

The earliest biographers of Francis quoted the Old Testament's wisdom literature extensively. Celano's first biography applies Proverbs 16:16 to Francis: "For he desired to possess wisdom which is better than gold, and to acquire understanding, which is more precious than silver."²¹

After Francis had twelve friars, he and the brothers felt great gladness and unique joy whenever one of the faithful, led by the Spirit of God, came and accepted the habit of holy religion, whoever the person might be: rich or poor, noble or insignificant, wise or simple, cleric or illiterate, a layman of the Christian people. This was a great wonder to those of the world and an example of humility, challenging them to the way of a more reformed life and to penance for sins.²²

¹⁹ Salutation of the Virtues, 1 in *FA:ED* 1, 164.

²⁰ Thomas of Celano, *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*, Book 2, Ch. lxiii in *FA:ED* 2, 311.

²¹ Thomas of Celano, *The Life of Saint Francis*, Book 1, Ch. 4:9 in *FA:ED* 1, 190.

²² 1C, Ch. 12, *FA:ED* 1, 209.

Thomas of Celano may have been describing his own entrance into the Order when he wrote,

Shortly afterwards when Francis returned to the Church of Saint Mary of the Portiuncula, some literate men and nobles gladly joined him. He received such men with honor and dignity.²³

Celano later wrote,

Overflowing with burning charity, [Francis] set out on the way of full perfection, reached out for the peak of perfect holiness and saw the goal of all perfection. That is why every order, sex and age finds in him a clear pattern of the teaching of salvation and an outstanding example of holy deeds.²⁴

In the *Dictate on True and Perfect Joy*, Francis does not criticize masters of theology for entering the Order.²⁵ Francis simply says that news of this is not perfect joy.

In fact, we know that Haymo of Faversham and three other university masters in Paris entered the Order on Good Friday of 1224.²⁶ Perhaps Anthony of Padua's arrival in France that year was an influence.

Alexander of Hales brought his university "chair" with him when he joined the friars in 1236. If Francis was completely opposed to studies, these very intelligent men – and St. Bonaventure after them – somehow missed that!

²³ 1C, Ch. 20:57, *FA:ED* 1, 231.

²⁴ 1C, Book 2, Ch. 1, 90, 260.

²⁵ This appears in *FA:ED* 1, 166-67 but comes from the *Little Flowers of St. Francis*, Ch. 8, *FA:ED* 3, 579-81. See *Assisi Compilation*, 109 (*FA:ED* 2, 217) and *Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*, 106 (*FA:ED* 2, 341) for the perfect joy story set in the context of a general chapter [hypothetical?] where the friars say that Francis is no longer the leader that the brotherhood requires.

²⁶ Thomas of Eccleston, *The Coming of the Friars Minor in England in XIIIth Century Chronicles*, trans. Placid Hermann, O.F.M. (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1961), 120.

In reality, Francis was more worried about friars who after entering the Order saw learning as a way to advance themselves.²⁷ Perhaps Francis felt confident that learned men who joined the Order already recognized knowledge as a preparation for wisdom and not as a guarantee of wisdom itself. Learning tempered by humility has always been a powerful witness to God's wisdom.

Three passages from the *Assisi Compilation* deserve to be quoted here.

[Francis] taught that in books the testimony of the Lord, not value, should be sought, edification rather than elegance. He wanted few books kept, and these should be available to the brothers who needed them (AC 25).²⁸

Francis once said that the general minister

should not be a book collector or too intent on reading, so he does not take away from his duties what he spends on his studies (AC 43).²⁹

Finally, it grieved the blessed Father when brothers sought learning while neglecting virtue, especially if they did not remain in that calling in which they were first called. Francis said:

Those brothers of mine who are led by curiosity for knowledge will find themselves empty-handed on the day of reckoning. I would prefer that they grow strong in virtue, so that when the times of tribulation arrive, they may have the Lord with them in their distress. For a tribulation is approaching when books, useful for nothing, shall be thrown into cupboards and closets!

²⁷ *Assisi Compilation*, 103 in *FA:ED* 2, 207.

²⁸ *FA:ED* 2, 136.

²⁹ *FA:ED* 2, 145.

[Francis] did not say these things out of dislike for the study of Scriptures, but to draw all of them back from excessive concern for learning, because he preferred that they be good through charity rather than be dilettantes through curiosity (AC 47).³⁰

Indeed, Francis wrote in his *Testament*,

We must honor all theologians and those who minister the divine words and respect them as those who minister to us spirit and life (*Test*, 13).³¹

In one of his sermons on the feast of St. Francis, St. Bonaventure said, “Meekness is necessary to the pursuit of truth both in those learning and those who teach.”³² Later in the same sermon he quoted St. Augustine: “The more we rid ourselves of the canker of pride, so much the more are we filled with love.”³³ We could safely add that although knowledge could end in pride, wisdom must end in love.

In the *Legenda Major*, Bonaventure recalls that, according to Francis, a preacher must be wept over, as over someone without real piety, who in preaching seeks not the salvation of souls, but his own praise, or who destroys with the depravity of his life what he builds up with the truth of teaching.³⁴

In a later sermon on St. Francis, Bonaventure quotes St. Gregory the Great who said: “The person who acquires other virtues but not humility, is like someone carrying dust against the wind; he becomes all the more blinded by what he is seen to be carrying.”³⁵ We can rightly ask: Isn’t this also true of knowledge?

³⁰ *FA:ED* 2, 147.

³¹ *FA:ED* 1, 125.

³² Bonaventure, “Evening Sermon on St. Francis,” (October 4, 1255), in *FA:ED* 2, 517.

³³ Bonaventure, “Evening Sermon,” *FA:ED* 2, 520.

³⁴ Bonaventure, *Legenda major*, Ch. 8:2 in *FA:ED* 2, 587.

³⁵ Bonaventure, “Sermon on St. Francis” (October 4, 1266), in *FA:ED* 2, 732.

In another sermon on St. Francis, Bonaventure says, "I admire the humility of Francis more than all his other virtues."³⁶

According to Thomas of Eccleston's account of the first Franciscans in England, John of Parma, Bonaventure's predecessor as general minister, said that the Order of Friars Minor was built on two walls, upon holiness of life and of learning.³⁷

Robert of Grosseteste, who taught Scripture at the friars' *studium* in Oxford between 1230 and 1235 told Peter of Tewkesbury:

unless the brothers fostered studies and gave themselves to the study of the divine law, it would most certainly happen to us as it happened to other religious, whom we see, sad to say, walking in the darkness of ignorance.³⁸

Study could be an important part of their service to the Church, especially because the Church increased its requirements for a license to preach.³⁹

According to Philippe Yates, O.F.M., it was no accident that when the friars arrived in England in 1224, they soon established houses in Canterbury, London and Oxford. Respectively, these were the country's religious, political and intellectual capitals.⁴⁰

³⁶ Bonaventure, "Morning Sermon on St. Francis" (1267), *FA:ED* 2, 749.

³⁷ Eccleston, *XIIIth Century Chronicles*, Ch. 13, 161.

³⁸ Eccleston, *XIIIth Century Chronicles*, Ch. 15, 179.

³⁹ My mentor and confrere Larry Landini, O.F.M., who also taught at the Franciscan Institute, explained this development in *The Causes of the Clericalization of the Order of Friars Minor, 1209-1260 in the Light of Early Franciscan Sources* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1968). This was his 1967 doctoral thesis at the Gregorian University in Rome.

⁴⁰ Philippe Yates, O.F.M., "The Coming of the Friars to England – Development of the Tradition of Learning," in *A Pilgrimage Through the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition*, ed. Andre Cirino, O.F.M. and Josef Raischl, S.F.O. (Canterbury, UK: Franciscan International Study Centre, 2008), 27.

Although the *Chronicle of the 24 Generals* tells us that Giles of Assisi lamented, “Paris, Paris, why are you destroying the Order of St. Francis,”⁴¹ it was not learning that threatened the Order but rather learning divorced from divine wisdom.

In a sense, the lament of Giles updates Tertullian’s famous question, “What does Athens have in common with Jerusalem? The Academy with the Church?”⁴² Ironically, refusing to acquire knowledge could become as much a possession as acquiring knowledge – but that is a talk for another occasion!

Faith and reason proceed from the same God and ultimately, therefore, cannot be in conflict. In his 1998 encyclical *Faith and Reason*, Pope John Paul II recalled that ancient monks called the Blessed Virgin Mary “the table at which faith sits in thought.”⁴³

In the Prologue of *The Soul’s Journey Into God*, St. Bonaventure writes:

Do not think that reading is sufficient without unction, speculation without devotion, investigation without admiration, circumspection without exultation, industry without piety, knowledge without charity, intelligence without humility, study without divine

⁴¹ The quotation “Ah, Paris, Paris! You will be the ruin of the Order of St. Francis” appears in the *Chronicle of the 24 Generals* in *Analecta Franciscana*, III, (Quaracchi, 1897), 263. The accusation that Paris was destroying Assisi comes from Jacapone da Todi, *Poesi spirituali*, ed. B. Brugnoli (Florence, 1914), 57. These are cited in Lazaro Iriarte de Aspurz, O.F.M. Cap., *Franciscan History: The Three Orders of St. Francis of Assisi* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982), 150. Sometimes this viewpoint has been linked to 1 Corinthians 8:1, “Knowledge puffs up but charity builds.” Unfortunately, ignorance can also “puff up.”

⁴² Tertullian, *De Prescriptione Haereticorum*, VII, 9; SC 46, 98. This is cited in *Fides et Ratio*, n. 41.

⁴³ *Fides et Ratio*, n. 108.

grace, the mirror without the inspiration of divine wisdom.⁴⁴

At the end of the *Itinerarium*, St. Bonaventure writes:

Thus, leaving all things and freed from all things, in a total and absolute ecstasy of a pure mind, transcending your self and all things, you shall rise up to the super-essential radiance of the divine darkness.

6. Now if you ask how all these things are to come about, ask grace, not doctrine; desire, not intellect; the groaning of prayer and not studious reading; the Spouse, not the master; God, not a human being; darkness, not clarity; not light, but the fire that inflames totally and carries one into God through spiritual fervor and with the most burning affections. It is God alone who is this fire, and God's *furnace is in Jerusalem* [Isaiah 31:9]. And it is Christ who starts the fire with the white flame of his most intense passion. Only that person who says: *My soul chooses hanging and my bones death* [Job 7:15] can truly embrace this fire. Only one who loves this death can see God, for it is absolutely true that *no one can see me and live* [Exodus 33:20]. Let us die, then, and enter into this darkness. Let us silence all our cares, desires, and imaginings. Let us pass over with the crucified Christ *from this world to the Father* [John 13:1] so that when the Father has been shown to us, we may say with Philip: *It is enough for us* [John 14:8].⁴⁵

Pope Benedict XVI focused on St. Bonaventure during three Wednesday general talks March 3, 10 and 17, 2010. The third one had an *L'Osservatore* headline, "Love sees fur-

⁴⁴ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, Prologue, 4, trans. Zachary Hayes, introduction and commentary by Philotheus Boehner, WSB II (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2002), 39.

⁴⁵ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium*, Ch. Seven, 5-6, 139.

ther than wisdom.” The pope’s general audience talk for July 7, 2010 was on Blessed John Duns Scotus.⁴⁶

4. FATHER IGNATIUS CHARLES BRADY, O.F.M. AS A MODEL FRANCISCAN SCHOLAR

I will admit a bias here, but Father Ignatius Brady of St. John the Baptist O.F.M. Province may have been the most distinguished Franciscan scholar who taught regularly at the Franciscan Institute in the twentieth century – in the 1950s and again in the 1970s. For many years he was also president of the Theological Section of the Order’s research institute at Quaracchi and later at Grottaferratta, working especially on the critical edition of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard.⁴⁷

Ignatius was very knowledgeable but also very humble – as several people here can testify from personal experience. He was loath to overstate any discovery. Many, many Franciscans turned to him when they hit a snag in writing their doctoral dissertations. They were never misled by his advice.

I got to know Ignatius a bit when I was a student in philosophy and in theology. In 1975 I came here to take his course on the writings of Saints Francis and Clare. I stayed and eventually earned an M.A. in the Institute’s research track.

One day after he had returned to the U.S., he told me about an event in Rome where someone remarked in his pres-

⁴⁶ These catecheses appeared in the English edition of *L’Osservatore Romano* on March 10, March 17 and March 24, 2010 respectively. On July 7, 2010, the pope devoted his general audience catechesis to Blessed John Duns Scotus. That text appears in the English edition of *L’OR* on July 14, 2010. To some extent, that talk partially offsets the negative and inaccurate reference to Scotus made during his University of Regensburg address on September 12, 2006. See Girard J. Etzkorn’s “Reflections on Pope Benedict XVI’s Talk at Regensburg,” in *The Cord*, 56.6 (2006): 292-94.

⁴⁷ His obituary notice appears in *Acta Ordinis Fratrum Minorum*, September-December 1990, 271.

ence, “Ah yes, Ignatius Brady – the Franciscan who should have been a Jesuit.” Iggy thoroughly rejected that description. His life might indeed have been easier in some respects if he had become a Jesuit – he came from a parish run by Jesuits and first studied at the archdiocesan seminary in Detroit – but Ignatius was a Franciscan down to his toenails. And everyone who knew him well recognized that.

If Ignatius were present for tonight’s talk, at this point he might take a slow puff on his pipe and then point out where I may have overstated some evidence and failed to cite stronger evidence than I have presented. He would be the first to laugh at any suggestion that there was ever a golden age of Franciscan studies.

But Ignatius would do all this gently and with a smile. It is always a privilege to be corrected by a scholar as wise as Ignatius.

I am confident that he would agree with me that zeal can never substitute for knowledge – not in the thirteenth century and certainly not in the twenty-first!

Next year will mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of Ignatius Charles Brady, Friar Minor. Wouldn’t this be an excellent occasion to publish the long-discussed Brady reader, an anthology of his best popular writing on Franciscan themes? That would reinforce the *Festschrift* that the Institute published in 1976 on the occasion of his 65th birthday.⁴⁸

Father Eric Doyle, O.F.M., (1938-1984), who taught for several years in St. Bonaventure University’s summer Sacred Theology program, was another outstanding scholar who combined incredible knowledge with a deep wisdom and humility.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ *Studies in Honor of Fr. Ignatius Charles Brady, Friar Minor* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1976).

⁴⁹ *My Heart’s Desire: Collected Writings of Eric Doyle, Franciscan, Theologian*, ed. Andre Cirino and Josef Raischl (Canterbury, UK: Franciscan International Study Centre, 2005). This 619-page volume includes two CDs of presentations by Eric.

CONCLUSION

Francis said in Admonition XIX, “For what a person is before God, that he is and no more.” The Franciscan school of theology insists on seeing the salvation won by Jesus within the larger context of creation.

Before Original Sin, knowledge and wisdom were linked. Satan chose to separate them (remember his “I will not serve” in John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*?). Satan later convinced Adam and Eve to follow that same path.

Perhaps all of this has something to do with Pope Paul VI’s statement in *Evangelii nuntiandi* that people today seek not merely teachers but rather *witnesses* who are also teachers.⁵⁰

I began this talk by admitting that I have taken liberties with the term *Gordian knot*. I conclude by thanking you for your patience with my attempt to show that although Francis appreciated the possible misuse of knowledge through appropriation, Francis also appreciated knowledge’s ability to lead people to wisdom and therefore to God.

⁵⁰ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 41 in *Vatican II: More PostConciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1982), 728.

PETER OF JOHN OLIVI ON LUKE 2:7

ROBERT J. KARRIS, O.F.M.

INTRODUCTION

Peter of John Olivi (d. 1298) was a student of St. Bonaventure and became a learned scholar in his own right. Early in 2010 the critical editions by Fortunato Iozzelli of Peter of John Olivi's commentaries on the Gospel of Luke (513 pages) and on the Gospel of Mark (20 pages) were published in a single volume as Volume V in the series *Collectio Oliviana*. The translation of Olivi's commentary on Luke 2:7 provided here gives a very brief sample of his interpretive style. Readers will notice how indebted Olivi is to tradition, especially St. Jerome, and how he underscores the poverty of Mary and Jesus.

PETER OF JOHN OLIVI ON LUKE 2:7¹

1) 2:7 "And she brought forth her firstborn son." "First-born" deals with what preceded, that is, there was no son born before this one. It has nothing to do with what followed subsequently, as if after this birth she gave birth to another child. Now this mode of speaking often occurs in the Penta-

¹ This is a translation from *Petri Iohannis Olivi, Lectura super Lucam et Lectura super Marcum*, ed. Fortunato Iozzelli, *Collectio Oliviana V* (Grottaferrata (Rome): Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 2010), 247-48.

teuch, as I have shown in my Commentary on Matthew. “And she wrapped him in swaddling clothes.” In his book *Against Helvidius* Jerome comments:

No midwife assisted at his birth. No tender anxiety of women intervened. With her own hands she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, herself being both midwife and mother.... This statement refutes the ravings of the apocryphal accounts, for Mary herself wrapped the baby in swaddling clothes.²

So far Jerome’s remarks. The text does not specify with what type of swaddling clothes she wrapped him. Bede, however, states that they were “cheap.”³ And to a certain nun it had been revealed by Christ, as he chided her for her abundance of clothing, that he had been wrapped with the veil of the Virgin. He said to her: “How great a shame it is for you and other religious that you want so many clothes when I in my birth would have had nothing to cover me unless my mother, who was suffering with me in great sorrow, had not wrapped me with the veil from her head.”⁴ And one would certainly and firmly believe that if she had anything smoother, she would have wrapped the delicate little body of her son in it. The text states that “she wrapped” to indicate the way of binding and banding a new born infant.

² See *De perpetua virginitate adversus Helvidium*, ch. 10 in PL 23:192A and NPNF 2, Volume 6: 339.

³ See his commentary on Luke 2:7 in *Bedae Venerabilis Opera, In Lucae Evangelium expositio, In Marci Evangelium expositio*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL cxx (Turnhout: Brepols, 1960), 49.

⁴ The critical edition, 247 note, indicates that no reference for these verses has been found. There is a parallel to the Virgin’s use of her veil as swaddling clothes in Meditation VII of John of Caulibus’ *Meditations on the Life of Christ*. See *Iohannis de Cavlibus Meditationes Vite Christi olim St. Bonaventuro attributae*, ed. M. Stallings-Taney, CCCM cliii (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 31: After the Virgin had washed her son, “she wrapped him in the veil from her head and laid him in the manger.”

2) “And she laid him in a manger.” In the Letter which is called “the Epitaphius for Holy Paula”⁵ Jerome calls this manger a cave, that is, a grotto. He says that Paula

came to Bethlehem and entered into the cave of the Savior. Afterwards she saw the sacred inn and stable where ‘the ox knew its owner and the ass its master’s manger.’⁶ In my hearing she swore that she saw with the eyes of faith the infant, wrapped in swaddling clothes and crying in the manger. She also saw the magi adoring God, the star shining overhead, the Virgin Mother, the attentive foster father, the shepherds coming by night to see the word that had come to pass.⁷

Furthermore in the Letter that Jerome wrote to Marcella on behalf of Paula and Eustochium it says this about the holy places:

Let us pass now to the cottage-inn that sheltered Christ and Mary. With what words and with what language can we set before you the cave of the Savior and that manger in which he cried as an infant?... Behold, in this poor crevice of the earth the creator of the heavens was born. Here he was wrapped in swaddling clothes. Here he was seen by the shepherds. Here he was pointed out by a star. Here he was adored by the magi. I think that this place is more sacred than the Tarpeian rock⁸ which has shown how frequently it has been struck by lightning from heaven.⁹

⁵ “Epitaphius” refers to a funeral oration. This letter is also known as Letter 108 to Eustochium.

⁶ See Isa 1:3.

⁷ See Letter 108 n. 10 in NPNF 2, Volume 6: 199.

⁸ This is a reference to the Capitoline hill where a great temple to Jupiter stood and where executions took place.

⁹ See Letter 46, ch. 11 in NPNF 2, Volume 6: 199. The citation is not verbatim.

3) To show the poverty and the dire straits that forced her to lay her son in a manger, the text adds: "Because there was no place for them in the inn." That is, in that peasant hut that was open on all sides. To it travelers and others turned aside from everywhere in the pursuit of quiet or human concourse. Because of the huge numbers of people coming to register the place was so full of the utterly poor that the Virgin had no place there to lay her son except in the manger of the grotto that was under that peasant hut or inn. Now that grotto was called a manger because it served as a trough for the animals of the poor. Thus it is believed that the ox and the ass of some poor were being pastured there. Because of this some refer to Isaiah 1:3: "the ox knew its owner and the ass its master's manger." But it is not very likely that Joseph would have brought his ox and ass there. Otherwise he and the Virgin would have been exceedingly wicked and inhuman because they would not have sold them or whatever else they had and used the money so that they might provide Christ with more suitable housing and buy or get someone to make the swaddling clothes and other necessary items. So from this what has been said earlier about the Virgin's veil is quite likely.¹⁰

4) On the level of mystery it is fitting that he was born in Bethlehem, that is, in the house of bread, as the true bread of life that has descended from heaven to feed us.¹¹ And since

¹⁰ Compare *St. Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, introduction, notes and trans. Robert J. Karris, WSB VIII:1 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2001), 146: "... *And she wrapped him in swaddling clothes*, that is, not in one single garment, but in many, so that he could be called a pauper in tatters and would exemplify what the Apostle says in 1 Timothy 6:8: 'Having some food and something in which we are clothed, let us be content with these.'"

¹¹ See Homily 8 n. 1 in *Gregorius Magnus Homiliae in Evangelia*, ed. Raymond Étaix, CCSL cxli (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 54. See also *Gregory the Great Forty Gospel Homilies*, trans. David Hurst, CSS 123 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1990), 51: "Bethlehem is translated 'house of bread', and it is he who said: *I am the living bread who came down from heaven*. The place in which the Lord was born was called the 'house of bread', because it was truly going to come to pass that he would appear there in a material body who would nourish the hearts of his chosen ones by an interior food." See also John 6:41. See further WSB VIII:1, 146: "In a

we have the natures of animals and beasts, it was in a manger, which is the table for animals, that he wanted to be offered to us not as hay or as barley, but as wheat.¹²



manger Christ is laid, so that what John 6:41 says might be demonstrated: 'I am the living bread that has come from heaven...'

¹² Wheat bread was the most expensive bread and far preferable to coarse barley bread. See Bede's commentary in CCSL cxx, 49: "... the one who is the bread of angels is laid in a manger, so that we like sacred animals might feed on the wheat of his flesh ..."

PETER OF JOHN OLIVI ON LUKE 23:39-43

ROBERT J. KARRIS, O.F.M.

INTRODUCTION

In his commentary on Luke 2:7 Olivi showed how his exegesis could be dependent upon tradition. In his exegesis of the passage on the Good Thief, however, we see that Olivi can provide exegesis that is insightful and not dependent upon tradition. Jesus crucified is the redeemer who leads into Paradise. The Good Thief, crucified with Christ, is a model of faith, hope, and love and is a preacher of the Good News about Jesus Christ. In his own way Olivi has shown why the passage about the Good Thief is “The Gospel within the Gospel,” as Jacques Dupont, the renowned Lukan scholar, called it decades ago.

PETER OF JOHN OLIVI ON THE LUKE 23:39-43: THE GOOD THIEF¹

The Divine Glorification and the Most Devout Death of Christ

1) Luke 23:34b-43. “Now as they divided his garments.” At this time frequent blasphemy occurs against him who has now been crucified. Together with this are his divine glorifi-

¹ See *Lectura super Lucam et Lectura super Marcum*, 638-42.

cation and his most devout and virtuous death. It treats of how he was blasphemed in deed and word. This blasphemy occurred relative to his garments, which were divided, and relative to his body which they offered vinegar to drink. Three types of people blasphemed him in speech. First were the Jews and their leaders. Second were the Roman soldiers. Third was one of the thieves crucified with him. However, the latter's blasphemy was countered by the proclamation given by the holy thief and thus follows upon the first glorification, namely, that of Christ's title of triumph.² He was glorified by God, first, through the ministry of Pilate, who had written in a solemn manner and in three languages the title of triumph and proclamation, namely, "This is the King of the Jews."

2) Second, he was glorified through the miraculous zeal and proclamation of the thief who had been converted to him. For with the greatest zeal he contended for him against the other thief by showing first that in his blasphemy he was acting against God and fear of the divine. He said: "Do you not even fear God?" He exaggerates to intimidate, since the penalty of their sentence and mutual suffering had to strike divine fear in him and lead him to suffer with Christ. So the text continues: "You are under the same sentence," that is, the punishment of suffering. He secondly separates and distinguishes the reason for their condemnation from the reason for Christ's condemnation, and therefore shows that a different measure is involved, for they were being justly and fittingly punished for their crimes, but Christ, although he was completely innocent, was being punished for no crime and therefore was being punished unjustly. Thus the text continues: "And we are indeed justly" being punished for the evil we have done, that is, we are condemned and receiving fitting punishments, but this person has done no evil.

3) How did this thief know this? Three answers can be given. First, he knew it by Christ's public reputation for holi-

² See Luke 23:38: "And there was also an inscription written over him in Greek and Latin and Hebrew: This is the King of the Jews."

ness and miracles which was very widespread throughout the entire land. Christ's reputation was so strong that his rivals were ashamed by it and were unable to contradict it. Second, Christ's words and signs and deeds openly placed before him Christ's wondrous innocence and meekness and humility and compassion and constancy and magnanimity and gratitude towards God. Third, a sudden influx of a singular grace immediately changed his soul, leading him to remorse and to the insight and confession that Jesus was truly Christ and God, and the true King of the Jews and of all the elect. And so after he had rebuked his fellow thief and confessed that the two of them were guilty and were being justly punished, he addresses his words to Jesus as to his true God and King: "Lord, remember me, when you come into your kingdom."

4) Notice what great faith and hope and love have suddenly been given him. He has a faith by which he sees someone in the act of dying and rejected and blasphemed by all and indubitably believes in him and says that he is his Lord who will soon come into his kingdom. By his faith he sees that his passion and death are only a certain brief and straightway journey to his kingdom. Likewise, his faith could not tolerate the error and rebuke against Christ of the other thief. Through his hope he hopes that he might obtain not only forgiveness from Christ, but also his friendship and eternal remembrance and the glory of his kingdom, for unless he hoped for this he would not pray for this from Christ in such a trusting and loving a way. Also just as it is to be believed that he spoke his first words against his fellow thief with a scowling and angry face, it is much more to be believed that he would have spoken these words to Christ with copious tears and with the most deep contrition of heart, as one who in the agony of death and as one, whose eyes had been opened and illumined by faith, recognized with recent awareness that Christ the redeemer, who was dying for him, was at his very side. Through love he seeks nothing other than remembrance by and friendship with Christ. He seeks no

other glory and salvation, but only that which pertains to the eternal kingdom of Christ.

5) Now so that you might more clearly see how sublime the conversion and justification of this thief were and ought to be, carefully consider the three singular privileges he had which no human person possessed. The first is that he was the only one chosen to be crucified alongside Christ and to die with him. If you rejoin that this is not a privilege because the other, the wicked thief, was similarly alongside Christ, note that he was not there so that he might be chosen and that the power and passion of Christ might be incorporated into his mind. Rather just as Judas, a traitor from being an apostle of Christ and after consuming the body of Christ and also another special morsel, happened to become worse, so too this thief fell into the most horrendous blasphemy from his very nearness to Christ. For it was most wicked that Christ be mocked and blasphemed by someone crucified with him. On the part of the holy thief note that it is a characteristic of God, which reason also dictates, that the first exemplars of the chosen ones and their works might have some exemplary privilege. Again reason dictates that the bodily presence and companionship of the human Christ might promote something singular to his individual companions, just as we believe that consuming his body in the sacrament of the altar is of singular merit and prayer on the part of the one worthily consuming it. So if this thief was lifted up as the first palpable exemplar of conversion and salvation by the power of Christ's passion, and also if, from the moment of his conversion he was the only one accompanying and associated with Christ in his holy co-crucifixion, do you wonder whether the blood of Christ and the opening of his compassionate side singularly penetrated the soul of one who was at that time his unique and only companion?

6) His second privilege was that at that hour he was the only person elected to be a witness and a preacher of Christ. Holy Brother Giles, the third person in our Order after Father Francis, used to say and I heard this saying: no testi-

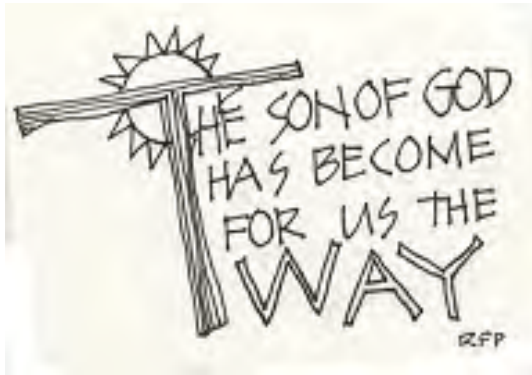
mony would be more acceptable to a king than when he had been abandoned and rejected by all his soldiers, relatives, and friends and had been thoroughly beaten up and vilified by everybody else, that he would be constantly recognized and proclaimed and heralded by one person with all his strength.³ But this, he used to say, was what happened in the witness given by that herald, the blessed thief, to Christ crucified.

7) The third privilege is the singular promise of a reward given to him by Christ. And it is to be believed that just as from the singular throne of his grace or from that noble winepress and storeroom of his passion and blood flowed forth something of singular effect for him. And certainly Christ's very way of speaking attests to this, for there is not a superfluous word spoken. First is an oath, namely, "amen." Second is a word that expresses familiarity and is from the person himself and at the same time is issued authoritatively, namely, "I say," as if he were saying: I, who am such and such, am saying this with my own mouth. Third is designating him and speaking to him in the second person, indicating clearly how they stand one to another, namely, "to you." Fourth is an adverb of the present time, which is hastening relentlessly towards its completion which is expressively stated, namely, "today." The fifth is the promise of a personal and singular relationship, namely, "with me." Sixth is the true and divine or godlike promise of eternal being, namely, "you will be." John in 1 John 3:2 glorifies this existence in these words: "Beloved, ... it has not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that, when he appears, we shall be like to him, for we shall see him just as he is." Seventh is the word that signified and is promissory of the highest and most delightful place of glory, namely, "paradise." This can only be taken here to stand for the very essence of God in as far as

³ I have been unable to find this citation in *Dicta Beati Aegidii Assisiensis sec. codices MSS, Emendate et denuo edita PP. Collegii S. Bonaventurae*, Bibliotheca Franciscana Ascetica Medii Aevi III (Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi): Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1905).

that essence is most delightful and like a garden of delights, which is the interpretation of paradise.⁴ Now since on that day Christ was not in heaven in soul or body and since immediately after his death he descended into hell, and at the time of his resurrection triumphantly departed from there, it does not appear that he was in an earthly paradise on the day of his death. Therefore, paradise is to be taken here to mean the beatific essence of God. And since Christ was already there, Christ did not say: We will be there, but you will be there with me.

8) Thus, do you not see how in the seven words of this promise, seven things are profoundly expressed? Do you see how beginning with an oath that expresses the authority and majesty of the person of Christ, the text concludes with the beatific essence and glory of God? It is also to be believed that just as this promise was unique that was manifestly expressed by Christ in a certain special way to the heart of the thief and was an extraordinary comfort and delight, so too the expression and form of Christ's love towards him were extraordinary.



⁴ See Book XIV, iii n. 2 of *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, trans. Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, Oliver Berghof with the collaboration of Muriel Hall (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006, 285: "Paradise is located in the east. Its name, translated from Greek into Latin, means 'garden.' In Hebrew in turn it is called Eden, which in our language means 'delights.' The combination of both names gives us the expression 'garden of delights,' for every kind of fruit-tree and non-fruit bearing tree is found in this place, including the tree of life."

If Saint Francis were here ...

He would tell us that Jesus said what he meant
and meant what he said;
that the Gospel was intended to be lived,
not just to be read, ignored and forgotten.

He would tell us that to follow the poor Christ
is to share with those who are in need.
He would tell us that we are to simplify our lives
so that those less fortunate can have basic necessities.
He would remind us that this is God's justice.

He would tell us that he liked Christmas best of
all
because that is the day when God bent low to
walk in our skin
and to show us how much he really wants us for
himself,
to share his love and his happiness.
He would tell us to **really celebrate** Christmas!

He would tell us that war is not holy, that it is not good
for anyone,
and that war does not bring peace.
He would tell us about his meeting with the Muslim Sul-
tan of Egypt,

how they both desired to have peace in spite of the Crusades,
and how they became friends.

He would tell us about lepers. He would tell us
that those who
we think are the lowest members of society are
also God's children
and that we must accept them as we would accept Christ.
And he would tell us that this is not easy!!

He would tell us that all creatures are our brothers and sisters
because we have the same Father.
He would tell us to respect and care for the water, the air, the wild creatures,
the land, the sea and each other.

And he would tell us to sing, ***sing a lot,***
because we are children of a Great King!

Mary Esther Stewart, S.F.O.
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IMPLICATIONS OF THE PHRASE *SINE PROPRIO*

JANET SULLIVAN, O.S.F.

It is the purpose of this reflection to identify and seek the meaning and contemporary implications of Francis's use of the term *sine proprio*.¹ In *Francis of Assisi Early Documents* there is a footnote for Admonition XI in which *sine proprio* appears. The footnote reads as follows:

The phrase *sine proprio* [without anything of his own] is the same as that found in the formula of the three vows, cf. ER I:1; LR I:1. It was used as a technical form to describe the vow of poverty. Yet Francis extends its meaning, as this text suggests, and implies that poverty is much more than a material concern. As the doctrine of a life 'without anything of one's own' unfolds in The Admonitions, poverty touches on poverty in relationship to (a) one's brothers, (b) one's inner self, and (c) God.²

Given this, *sine proprio* would seem to be a referent for numerous passages in Francis's writings – even though Francis's choice of words differs in them. Therefore, some of those passages will be included in this reflection.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, passages from the writings of Francis and the English translations are taken from *Francis and Clare of Assisi Early Documents*.

² *FA:ED* 1, 133.

The phrase *sine proprio*, found three times in Francis's writings, means without having anything of one's own and is sometimes translated as without property or poverty. The term appears in the *Earlier Rule* (*Regula non bullata*), the *Later Rule* (*Regula Bullata*),³ and Admonition XI. Related to rules for vowed religious, the interpretation is mainly governed by Canon Law which restricts the use of and relationship to temporal goods; restrictions may differ from one religious order/congregation to another. Those who profess a vow of poverty commit themselves, at the very least, to requirements of the law. Vowed religious and others who are truly committed and intent on a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ strive to embrace the spirit of poverty which invites them to a practice that more closely resembles what Francis had in mind. The use of *sine proprio* in Admonition XI,⁴ is related to inner disposition, attitude and the nonmaterial such as ministry, time, and quiet. When nonmaterial qualities are threatened, how one responds says much about how one perceives them in relationship to oneself. One more easily lets go of what is not considered to be one's own in the first place. Given Admonition XI, there are numerous passages that seem to have *sine proprio* as a referent. Examples follow:

Fragments Found in a Manuscript in the Worcester Cathedral

No minister or preacher may make a ministry of the brothers or the office of preaching his own, (*appropriet sibi ministerium vel officium praedicationis*) but, when

³ The Rule (LR I:1) reads as follows: The Rule and Life of the Lesser Brothers is this: to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, without anything of one's own, and in chastity. [FA:ED 1, 100] (*Regula et vita Minorum Fratrum haec est, scilicet Domini nostri Jesu Christi sanctum Evangelium observare vivendo in obedientia, sine proprio et in castitate.*)

⁴ Admonition XI 3 reads as follows: That servant of God who does not become angry or disturbed at anyone lives correctly without anything of his own. [FA:ED 1, 133] (*Ille servus Dei, qui non irascitur neque conturbat se pro aliquo recte vivit sine proprio.*)

he is told, let him set it aside without objection (1Frg 42).⁵

In this fragment we find a form of the latin verb *approprio/appropriare* which means “to make one’s own or appropriate.” *Appropriare sibi* could be translated “to appropriate to oneself.” *Appropriare* has the same root as the word *proprio* as found in *sine proprio*. *Non appropriare* (not to appropriate) would seem to be synonymous with *sine proprio*. The connection is striking and may well convey Francis’s wider understanding of what to have nothing of one’s own really means.

The Earlier Rule (The Rule Without a Papal Seal)

No minister or preacher may make a ministry of the brothers or the office of preaching his own, but, when he is told, let him set it aside without objection (ER XVII 4).⁶

This passage in the *Earlier Rule* reflects how not having anything of one’s own relates to the brothers’ relationships to each other and to God/God’s work. Office, position, ministry are not personal possessions.

Admonition II

For that person eats of the tree of the knowledge of good who makes his will his own (*qui sibi suam voluntatem appropriat*) and, in this way, exalts himself over the good things the Lord says and does in him (Adm II 3).⁷

Drawing on what was written above regarding the verb *approprio/appropriare*, this admonition puts hearers on the

⁵ *FA:ED* 1, 89.

⁶ *FA:ED* 1, 75.

⁷ *FA:ED* 1, 129.

alert concerning the one who appropriates to himself his own will: *qui sibi suam voluntatem appropriat*. That person who makes his will his own follows in the steps of Adam, wanting to dominate what God has invested in him, that is, what belongs to God. Here also is a connection to obedience/disobedience, disobedience being a willfulness that denies that all we are and have belongs to God.

Admonition XIX

Woe to that religious who has been placed in a high position by others and [who] does not want to come down by his own will (Adm XIX 3).⁸

Here is a warning about a willfulness that both manifests a personal claim on one's own will (*suam voluntatem*) and is used to maintain possession of what is not one's own: position. Both Admonition II and XIX have a connection with obedience. See Admonition III below.

Admonition III

That person who offers himself totally to obedience in the hands of his prelate leaves all that he possesses and loses his body (Adm III 3).⁹

This admonition is inserted here, not so much for the words that Francis used as for the spirit that it proclaims. To relinquish all that one possesses (*relinquit omnia, quae possidet*) in obedience! Is this not, in a startling way, to embrace the spirit of *sine proprio*?

⁸ *FA:ED* 1, 135.

⁹ *FA:ED* 1, 130.

WHAT SHAPED FRANCIS'S VISION?

What shaped the vision of Francis as it is manifested in *sine proprio* and its referents? To consider his inner disposition before God as that disposition emerges through his words provides the beginning of an answer. Francis, steeped in humility and truth, reveals the soil that grounds his conviction: we have nothing of our own.

In the Canticle of Creatures Francis humbly and gratefully acknowledges before God that all belongs to Him:

Most High, all-powerful, good Lord,
Yours are the praises, the glory, and the honor, and
all blessing,
To You alone, Most High, do they belong, and no human
is worthy to mention Your name (CtC 1-2).¹⁰

In addition to attributing the praises, the glory, the honor, and all blessing to God alone, Francis, later in the Canticle, attributes ownership of the creatures to God when he speaks of God's creating and forming them.

In Admonition VIII, Francis writes:

Therefore, whoever envies his brother the good that the Lord says or does in him incurs a sin of blasphemy because he envies the Most High Himself Who says and does every good thing (*qui dicit et facit omne bonum*) (Adm VIII 3).¹¹

To envy is to want for one's own what belongs to another, in this case the good that God says or does.

This admonition shocks us into a new reality which is not to be taken lightly.

¹⁰ *FA:ED* 1, 113.

¹¹ *FA:ED* 1, 132.

Near the beginning of the Office of the Passion, in Compline for Holy Thursday, there is a short prayer:

Let us bless the Lord God living and true
Let us always render him
praise, glory, honor, blessing and every good.
Amen. Amen.
So be it. So be it.¹²

In this prayer, Francis would render to God, praise, glory, honor, blessing and every good. In addition to the litany that is above in the Canticle are the words “every good.” Also, while the verb *refero/referre* is perhaps best translated as “render” in this passage, it has other meanings that imply giving back, bringing back, and restoring. There is a passage in the *Earlier Rule* which clearly demonstrates Francis’s desire to give back to God what is his: everything.

Let us return all good (*omnia bona reddamus*) to the
Most High, Supreme Lord God
Let us learn that all good is his,
And for everything, let us render thanks to him from
whom every good comes¹³ (ER XVII 17).

Remembering that Christ returns to the Father all that the Father gives to him, it becomes clear that Francis is propelled into doing the same. One cannot help but be amazed! In a different context, the remarkable significance of this verse is illustrated by David Flood when he claims that *omnia bona reddere* is “the culminating statement of the Franciscan movement, a consequence of the brothers’ economics and more immediately of Chapter XIV, their model of social action.”¹⁴ Concerning this same verse, Flood says,

¹² *FA:ED* 1, 141.

¹³ Translation by the author.

¹⁴ David Flood, “The Early Franciscan Model of Social Action,” *Haver-sack* 6.2 (December 1982): 5.

There they [the brothers] declare that they will do their best to see to it that the good things of life do render the service for which the good things have come about. They have come about for our welfare and as our service to others, and first of all to those in need.¹⁵

The brothers' way of life proclaims that the proper use of and sharing of goods with others is the way to return to God all the good that is his.

These passages help us to understand why the spirit of *sine proprio* was so important to Francis and why it is right that it be very important to those who profess to follow in his steps: everything that is good belongs to God alone. Consequently, its purpose must be honored and fulfilled; in this way its return to God is accomplished.

The implications of such a stance are far-reaching and inclusive. Were individuals to adopt such a stance, the world would be a very different place. What can any one do about it? A Franciscan can start with him/herself. That's where Francis started and his attitude was contagious, spreading all over the world. The results would include the following:

- All would live simply without excess of anything; surplus would be given for the poor.
- Talent and time would be at the service of the Gospel and God's people.
- God would be praised as the author of all good works.
- Tools for ministry would be shared with others according to their need; nothing would be held for one's exclusive use: money, equipment, cars, computers, books, etc.
- There would be no greed.
- Material and moral support for others' good works would be evident.

¹⁵ David Flood, "Francis of Assisi: Crime Buster," *The Cord*, 60.2 (April/June 2010): 211.

- There would be rejoicing at the good done by others and at their success.
- All would relinquish positions gracefully.
- Obedience would be a priority.
- Peoples' rights to the goods of the earth, given by God to meet the needs for human development would be protected.
- There would be genuine care for the earth.
- Life would be treasured as God's special gift.
- The human body which belongs to God would receive proper care.
- There would be time given to God alone.

When extended to nations, there is no doubt that where there is genuine concern and practical programs for responding to people's needs and respecting people's way of life, the threat of war would be significantly diminished. Church documents are quite relevant here; they present a vision that many recognize as the means of promoting peace in the world. Church documents show the world the way to actualize Francis's vision of creation.

It is important to remember that the early Franciscans were not perfect. Francis did not write what he wrote out-of-the-blue. Admonitions and other challenges were probably written to address behaviors that Francis was observing. The brothers needed to be reminded about the meaning of *having nothing of one's own*. And today? Reminders are meant to encourage; reflections are meant to inspire, to initiate a new start and generate new hope. Just as the Franciscans of the thirteenth century made a difference, so too can those who live today.

FRANCISCAN JUSTICE AND PEACE: IS IT FOR ANIMALS TOO?

ANDREA F. BARONE, S.F.O.

“... Franciscans have been notably, if ironically, lacking in their stated concern for animals.”

Rev. Andrew Linzey¹

In the 1989 groundbreaking work, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, the internationally known Anglican theologian and author, the Rev. Andrew Linzey, noted that despite the animal ethics, welfare, and rights fields growing significantly in scope and import, Franciscan voices were oddly silent about contemporary ethical issues surrounding animals. Linzey is not alone in making this observation; even “secular” animal rights and welfare proponents have questioned the absence of Franciscan voices.

What would prompt Linzey and others to say that Franciscan silence about animals is “ironic”? I would like to reflect upon that question in this article.

Francis of Assisi is well-known to Catholics and non-Catholics alike for his loving and joyful approach to all of God’s creation. He believed that because all creatures share the same Creator, we form a “spiritual family” of brothers

¹ Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1987). Quotation taken from <http://www.godandanimals.com/PAGES/edits/linzey/church3.html>. Linzey has the distinction of holding the world’s first fellowship in Theology and Animal Welfare at Oxford University. He is also the Director of the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics. For more information on Linzey see page 4.

and sisters, bound by deep, fraternal ties. Given his universal appeal, it is not surprising that he has been acclaimed universally as the official patron of ecologists and the environment.

In addition to his love and respect for the natural world, Francis had a profound and tender relationship with animals. It has even been said that he was "... surely the first 'Christian animal welfarist.'"² Some of the early Franciscan sources relate accounts of him freeing animals from human constraints and encouraging them to be true to their God-given nature, while others recount him freeing hares and lambs from captivity, and preventing them from being taken to slaughter. Roger Sorrell says that one of the important threads running through those particular encounters is that "... Francis sets an example of special regard for creatures by refusing to kill them needlessly ..." ³ Time and again he extends his hand in peace and non-violence to all of God's creatures. Thomas of Celano tells us that when Francis greeted the birds in Bevagna, it was with his usual greeting: "May the Lord give you peace."⁴ He also leaves us touching examples of familial affection; we are told that Francis treated animals like a mother, father or brother.

Today, Catholics and non-Catholics alike protect their animal companions with St. Francis medals, and to the delight of the mainstream media, bring them to our churches to be blessed in his name. During a recent conversation with several university students, one commented that "*Everyone* knows that Franciscans love nature and animals!" Another admitted that she thought all Franciscans were vegetarians! As naïve or humorous as those comments may seem, they illustrate a common perception: Francis, and Franciscans, are seen as having the kind of compassion that "transcends species."

² <http://www.cva.uk.homecall.co.uk/pdf/WTCPSNov05.PDF>

³ Roger D. Sorrell, *St. Francis of Assisi and Nature: Tradition and Innovation in Western Christian Attitudes Toward the Environment* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 78.

⁴ IC, XXI, FA:ED 2, 234.

In addition to their love for Creation, Franciscans are well known for their work with the poor and disenfranchised, primarily within a “Justice and Peace” framework. Originally created as the Justice and Peace Commission, the General Definitorium of the Order of Friars Minor expanded the commission to include “Integrity of Creation” (JPIC) in 1991, thereby acknowledging the dire state of our planet. All branches of the Franciscan family now have JPIC offices or ministers, address JPIC concerns in their formation programs, and maintain websites and statements about the work they carry out in this arena. Although JPIC is not unique to Franciscans, or Catholics for that matter, it serves as an important framework for the Franciscan family in particular, by addressing injustice from a specifically Franciscan theological, spiritual and historical perspective. Commendably, the Commission also encourages action, and offers opportunities and initiatives for Franciscans who want to work for peace and justice on a grassroots level.

Although Franciscans continue to make significant strides on behalf of “non-human” creation, some members of the Franciscan family are not yet represented equally within our Justice and Peace initiatives. Many Franciscans have told me they believe animals are implied within the Creation discussion; while they may be implied, the general consensus is that in the JPIC context, “Creation” is synonymous with nature, Environmental Justice, or Eco-Justice and so animals, when mentioned at all, are included only in occasional references to endangered species or in spiritual discussions such as Franciscan fraternity.

Despite a long history of working for justice in the marketplace, Franciscans have not yet begun to advocate for animals there – where their value is solely a monetary one, determined by a system that sees them only as things and commodities. In *Franciscan Wealth: From Voluntary Poverty to Marketplace Society*, Giacomo Todeschini notes that as Francis began to make choices about poverty,

Some fundamental ideas strongly emerged: the refusal of contact with money ... the search for contact with

living beings usually considered outside of the sphere of human society: animals, lepers, wanderers, criminals, mendicants, the poor and farmers.⁵

He adds:

The wolf domesticated in Gubbio, the birds that one could teach the Gospel to in Bevagna ... the lepers encountered on the streets and nursed without fear ... the rural people in their simplicity and poverty ... money could not represent their value ... birds would fly to announce the Gospel, while fish, hares and pheasants would be rediscovered to be in possession of a natural value not identical to that of goods for consumption ... Francis was a champion of those who had little value in the eyes of society.⁶

Today farm animals, in particular, have become nothing short of ends to human means. In the September 1976 issue of "Hog Farm Management," John Byrnes advised workers: "Forget the pig is an animal. Treat him just like a machine in a factory."⁷ Unfortunately, the cattle, poultry, and pig industries have done just that, effectively creating highly industrialized factory farms where "... animals can be subjected to every kind of exploitation, indignity and suffering in the sacred cause of commercial profit."⁸ While owners of small farms may still treat their animals

... with personal care and consideration for their well-being, and dispatch them with humble and scrupulous recognition that their life should be taken in times of necessity, such conditions are abnormal today...⁹

⁵ Giacomo Todeschini, *Franciscan Wealth: From Voluntary Poverty to Marketplace Society*, trans. Donatella Melucci (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2009), 55.

⁶ Todeschini, *Franciscan Wealth*, 58-60.

⁷ <http://www.veganoutreach.org/whyvegan/animals.html>

⁸ Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, 157.

⁹ Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, 143.

Given Francis's compassion for the least of God's creatures, and his sensitivity to the injustices he found in the marketplace, it seems to me that Franciscans, above all, would have strong feelings or opinions about the cruel and exploitive practices that animals are subjected to there.

The omission of animals from JPIC statements and initiatives is also perplexing given the long history of Franciscan concern for the poor. Animal agriculture has an acknowledged impact on the environment, as well as serious ramifications for the poor:

Over 70 percent of U.S. grain and 80 percent of corn is fed to farm animals rather than people. Conscience dictates that the grain should stay where it is grown, from South America to Africa. And it should be fed to the local malnourished poor, not to the chickens destined for our KFC buckets. The environmental think-tank, the World Watch Institute, sums it up: 'Continued growth in meat output is dependent on feeding grain to animals, creating competition for grain between affluent meat eaters and the world's poor.'¹⁰

The JPIC Commission is not the only arena where Franciscans have failed to acknowledge or advocate for animals. An examination of international Franciscan publications, websites, and formation materials reveals that, despite the increasing time and advocacy devoted to "Sister Mother Earth," with few exceptions, animals are nowhere to be found. These publications and sites encourage us to recycle, conserve energy, and feel the pain of the earth, yet the pain of millions of animals is rarely mentioned. Franciscans espouse peace and justice, and advocate for the poor and the natural world – where then, does that leave the billions of animals with which we share the planet? Are they any less entitled to peace and justice than the environment? Ironi-

¹⁰ <http://ncronline.org/blogs/road-peace/only-diet-peacemaker-vegetarian-diet>.

cally, have Franciscans, who are known for their love of all Creation, defined a Creation without Creatures?

Although one can cite specific examples of the exploitation of humans and nature in websites and publications, there is no acknowledgement of the widespread violence and exploitation that animals face in a multitude of venues, nor any statement about where Franciscans stand on any of the contemporary ethical issues that have captured the attention of groups and individuals concerned about their welfare.

Those who are not familiar with the wide range of topics in the fields of animal rights and ethics may only be exposed to the high profile topics covered by the mass media: wildlife conservation, the welfare of our companion animals (including the importance of spaying and neutering and the proliferation of puppy mills), and product testing. And while these issues are certainly of concern to animal advocates, they represent only a small piece of a much larger picture – one of a disturbing violence and brutality that an enormous number of animals face each day in a number of venues. Franciscans who are interested in looking into the current trends in philosophical and ethical discussions involving animals will find a plethora of challenging topics: the question of sentience and suffering; genetic engineering; cruelty in the factory farming, clothing and entertainment industries; medical and product testing; hunting; meat eating vs. vegetarianism or veganism; and the complicated “rights” discussion that admittedly poses some difficult philosophical questions.

Because the subject of animal rights and ethics has engendered international and frequently heated debate, and because we are known for our compassion for all creatures, Franciscan silence on these topics is both noticeable and ironic. It highlights the disparity between the way Franciscans are perceived by those outside the tradition, and reality: we simply do not advocate for animals. Early in his career, environmentalist Keith Warner, O.F.M., questioned the silence of Franciscan voices on behalf of the environment by asking, “Why do other groups seem to be more excited about Francis

as the patron saint of ecology than the Franciscans?"¹¹ We might ask ourselves the same question about animals.

My search for Franciscan voices for animals yielded one exceptional British theologian and writer: Eric Doyle, O.F.M. Doyle spoke out boldly against animal exploitation and suffering, but unfortunately, he is no longer with us. My colleague, the Rev. Andrew Linzey, recalls the admiration he felt hearing him speak passionately about animals in his lectures.¹² He was in many ways ahead of his time – he even advocated for a universal declaration of animal rights. I was surprised to open his 1980 publication, *St. Francis and the Song of Brotherhood and Sisterhood* to find the following:

Dedicated to the United Nations Organization in gratitude for all it has done for the world and to UNESCO with the hope that it will accept the Universal Declaration of Animal Rights.¹³

In "St. Francis-Patron of the Environment," he challenges us to acknowledge animal suffering by illustrating specific ways in which animals are abused ... something rather rare for Franciscans:

We maltreat God's creatures with unspeakable cruelty.... In vivisection laboratories animals are subjected to unimaginable horrors to find out what cigarette smoking can do to us or to get a better brand of nail varnish. To produce patè that will titillate our palates, geese are strapped down to boards and an electric force feeder is used to stuff them with grain. A nice refinement of cruelty that is.... St. Francis considered

¹¹ Keith D. Warner, O.F.M., "Taking Nature Seriously: Nature Mysticism, Environmental Advocacy and the Franciscan Tradition," in *Franciscans and Creation: What is Our Responsibility?* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2003), 59.

¹² Andrew Linzey, personal email, April 30, 2009.

¹³ Eric Doyle, O.F.M., *St. Francis and the Song of Brotherhood and Sisterhood* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1997), dedication page.

all creatures his brothers and sisters. He wrote *The Song of Brother Sun* precisely because people in his time were misusing creatures for selfish ends and he saw this as a great offence to the Creator.... My word, how much more guilty we are of the same offence.... If all creatures are our brothers and sisters how can we maltreat any of them?¹⁴

There are other strong contemporary, non-Franciscan voices speaking out for an ethical treatment of animals. One is the well-known Jesuit peace activist, Fr. John Dear, who served as the executive director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the largest and oldest interfaith peace organization in the U.S. Fr. Dear tells us that in addition to advocating for the poor, the disenfranchised and the environment, a growing number of peacemakers are beginning to realize something else:

Nonviolence invites us, also, to reevaluate the way we treat animals in our society ... we are also invited to break down the species barrier, extending our belief in Christian compassion to the animal kingdom ...¹⁵

In his pamphlet on “Christianity and Vegetarianism” (which appeared in abbreviated form in the National Catholic Reporter), he advocates for a vegetarian diet, saying that if peace making is predicated on the sanctity of all life, then the only true diet for a peacemaker is a vegetarian one.¹⁶

The Rev. Andrew Linzey is an Anglican minister and professor of theology at Oxford University in England, and the first scholar to hold a fellowship in theology and animal welfare. He has written a multitude of books on the ethical

¹⁴ Eric Doyle, O.F.M., *My Heart's Quest: Collected Writings of Eric Doyle, Friar Minor, Theologian* (Canterbury, UK: Franciscan International Study Centre, 2005), 62.

¹⁵ Fr. John Dear, S.J., *Christianity and Vegetarianism: Pursuing the Nonviolence of Jesus* (Norfolk, VA: PETA publication), 1.

¹⁶ <http://ncronline.org/blogs/road-peace/only-diet-peacemaker-vegetarian-diet>

treatment of animals from a theological perspective, including *Animal Theology*; *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*; and *Why Animal Suffering Matters*. He is the founder and director of The Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics, and is esteemed internationally by both secular and Christian animal rights advocates for his pioneering work on animals. He was named the official chaplain of the animal welfare movement in recognition of his outstanding work in the field of theology and animals, and was awarded the Peaceable Kingdom Medal in 1990 for his work in the field. I point to Linzey and Dear as two individuals “outside” the Franciscan tradition who are making their voices heard on behalf of their fellow creatures.

Although many academics and those familiar with the Franciscan intellectual tradition frequently bemoan “the birdbath” as an overly sentimental depiction of Francis, they offer no serious alternatives to it. Granted, delving into current animal rights and ethics issues can present great philosophical and emotional challenges; in fact, the saying amongst animal activists is that “Animal rights is not for the faint of heart.” A visit to any one of the many existing internet sites posting graphic undercover footage of animal abuse reveals how horrific their treatment is – it shows intelligent, sentient creatures who experience physical, psychological, and emotional suffering much as humans do. Animals used in the food industry, for example, are:

... separated from their families at birth and mutilated without painkillers. Chickens have their beaks chopped off with a hot blade. Cows and pigs are castrated. Cows have their horns cut off. Pigs have their teeth pulled out with pliers and their tails chopped off.

They all suffer the mental and physical anguish of living in tiny spaces with no relief, no opportunity to act on any of their natural desires and needs, and no hope for escape. They are transported without food or water to a hellish death ... those who can no longer walk are dragged from the trucks, breaking bones in

the process. They are killed by being hung upside down and bled to death from a slit throat, often skinned and hacked to bits while still conscious ...¹⁷

It is difficult to acknowledge this kind of suffering, but in order to advocate for animals we must look beyond the boundaries of pet ownership and wildlife conservation, and acknowledge that brutality and violence is the norm for a staggering number of animals who supply us with food, clothing, health products, medicines, and entertainment. The reality is that they lead lives far removed from the romanticized image of the birdbath.

While few would argue against the need to protect endangered species and spay and neuter our pets, it behooves us to become knowledgeable about the more controversial issues involving animals, and ask ourselves how we feel about the important ethical questions they pose. Then, we must determine how far we are willing to go to make a difference in the lives of our fellow creatures.

Because JPIC provides an important international framework for Franciscan peace and justice activism, and supplies educational and formation guidelines to the Franciscan family, any omission from this framework is a significant one. It seems logical that those who seek justice and peace for animals look to JPIC for guidance and support; I did. But if no acknowledgement of animal suffering and exploitation exists, then no practical, organized initiatives exist for those who might be interested in working on their behalf.

I am not alone in believing that Franciscans, who are blessed with an 800 year old heritage of peacemaking and compassion, should be at the *forefront* of any movement working to obtain justice and peace for animals. That is why we must ask ourselves the original question posed by Rev. Linzey, and others: why are Franciscans lacking in a stated concern for animals? I believe there are several reasons for

¹⁷ Fr. John Dear, S.J., *Christianity and Vegetarianism: Pursuing the Nonviolence of Jesus* (Norfolk, VA: PETA publication), 9.

our silence, and I will offer some possible explanations for this in a subsequent article.

Franciscans are in a position to offer the world a strong Christian, specifically Franciscan, argument for the ethical treatment of animals, and we who profess the spiritual fraternity of all creatures must take a bold step in that direction. I encourage all branches of the Franciscan family to begin formulating statements and initiatives on behalf of animals, and adding them to their Peace and Justice agendas.

To continue our selective advocacy and espouse compassion and justice for humankind and the earth but exclude animals from our care and initiatives would be unjust. I believe that only when we begin to dialogue about animals in truly significant ways, will we be able to “think beyond the birdbath” that we so often ridicule, and truly call ourselves brothers and sisters of all Creation.

ASSISI PILGRIMAGE – A PRAYER JOURNAL
MAY 21-MAY 31, 2010

KEVIN TORTORELLI, O.F.M.

At the end of May, 2010, eleven friars of Holy Name Province undertook a pilgrimage to Assisi and Franciscan Italy. The author kept this Prayer Journal to help him recall his memories and reflections over time.

Friday, May 21, 2010

St. John Lateran is on the Celian hill – one of the seven hills of ancient Rome. In the Church each Apostle is sculpted to heroic scale while outside a fresco depicts little Francis holding up the badly tilting church. A number of young people sit focused in the Sacrament chapel lost in the vastness of the church, even oblivious to so many milling about. The east façade where daily the Risen One in glory greets the crimson-cresseted dawn, Orion of the Light, Aurora Kyrie! Inside again apse and crypt call to each other, height and depth of sacred space, this mother, head and cornerstone of all the churches of the world, simple and majestic, invoking the New Jerusalem on its twelve courses of stone.

Evening and we are off to Trastevere to the church of San Francesco della Ripa with its memories, perhaps conceits, of Francis and the Lady Jacoba. It is a place that honors their friendship that bound together nobles and lepers and hard sleep on a stone pillow. Nightfall and vespers in the Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere, home of the lay community of Sant'Egidio, youthful, singing evening prayer, peaceful. I hear the easy laughter of friends meeting to pray togeth-

er. The basilica piazza, wet with a light drizzle, draws many young people. Inside, near the entrance, the basilica hosts the image of the Holy Face reflected, as I thought, in all those young faces in the piazza. The Holy Face looks intently at the viewer with an expression of friendship and of care, listening, knowing the heart. The ancient basilica beams its hospitality and welcome and respects the tentative, young steps that have brought many here from great distances, some surely along tragic paths. Sant'Egidio encourages the visitor to rest and pray, to attend to one's heart. Sant'Egidio put me in mind of Secular Franciscans in this lay witness of reconciliation, honoring justice, sharing the peace that is its fruit.

Saturday, May 22, 2010
Vigil of Pentecost

Night falls under the threat of thunder and rain, a breeze coming up fresh but damp. We saw Rome from the vantage point of our two feet, visiting places in the company of many hundreds, the weather hot but dry. St. Isidore's welcomes us. For me it is a return to a favorite place, home of the Irish friars for many generations and their house of theological formation. It no longer serves in that capacity. This sad fact jostled with the happy memories of its nooks and crannies – the Spanish cloister with its stone cistern, the larger cloister with its orange trees and its paintings. One painting, in a section devoted to friars of the nobility, caught my eye – *Exsistens maior, mavult esse minor*. Born to nobility he prefers to be a Friar Minor – with its contrasting of maior and minor. St. Isidore's has known change and I hope this fact will serve it in good stead.

Actually we walked a good deal before arriving at St. Isidore's – even scaling the Spanish steps. The whole world seemed to be in Rome, pressed along the narrow paths leading from the Trevi Fountain to the Pantheon, on to the French Church and the Piazza Navona. At day's end the thunder has reshaped my focus – it is the Vigil of Pentecost with the Spirit like howling thunder, cascading towards us.

Sunday, May 23, 2010
Pentecost

Early this morning we set out for St. Peter's and Pentecost Mass with the Holy Father. We had red entry tickets but in the vast piazza I could see red entry tickets everywhere! At first we sat in the body of the basilica. Suddenly a priest in cassock and surplice asked us in Italian if we were priests. He needed help with distributing Holy Communion. We were quickly led to the Sacrament Chapel in the company of numerous priests and deacons who were likewise to assist with Communion. It felt like 'come up higher friend.' We sat cheek to jowl behind the high altar. The Holy Father looked tired and drawn but he delivered his homily with vigor and stamina. The Mass was formal with both men and women serving in liturgical roles praying in perhaps ten or more languages. Leaving the basilica one could see thousands of people standing in the hot sun awaiting the noon blessing. The unspoken bond with the Pope was a moving sight.

Pentecost evening rumbles with the sound of thunder. The day began and ends with it – heard throughout the house as a violent wind. *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, Creator and Lord of Life whom wind and thunder serve. And gentle Sister rain. Receive our prayerful breathing, exhaling what you have breathed in us. Receive as your own all whom we love. Gather us in the Lord Jesus. In him reassure us, teach us, remind us, comfort us, heal us, renew us ... prepare us for eternal life.

Monday, May 24, 2010

Greccio lies about midway along the road from Rome to Assisi, above the vale of Rieti and steep in its mountains. It is the place of the presepio and a new Bethlehem. The complex consists of a retreat house at one end and at the other the 'shrine' of Greccio with its cave of the nativity. All the works of art shared a remarkable focus on Francis in connection with the Lord's nativity. This focus embraced art worked in metal, the reliefs on the doors and in sculptures both inside

and out. The shrine itself is built of stone with wood ceilings giving onto a pleasant, intimate terrace which in turn embraces the Rieti valley falling away, its sprawling fields in rich cultivation – grass, olive trees and vineyards. Some horses were grazing in the distance though I counted only four sheep.

What drew Francis here? Remote mountains (snow covered in the distance), breathtaking vistas, solitude, silence ... these abound. He knew they held the promise of contemplation and peace. He knew how this manner of prayer had led him to Brother leper and his life and ministry among them. Nature soaring, almost inaccessible called to him. Nothing else seems to have held his interest. Indeed nothing else seems to have mattered. All along the Greccio ridge the view of the valley below is intoxicating. I actually saw a rain-storm gather and take shape, drop low and blow over us in a strong if brief rain. In all essentials those views and vistas are unchanged. Francis saw them pretty much as we do. But I know he saw something else. Something deeper and purer. Something the column of rain cloud I saw earlier suggests as it moved toward him. In this interplay of mountain and valley he saw the humility of the Word in our flesh and the humility of the faith of his Mother. There is about Francis nothing fussy. Everything is simple and sturdy and expressed concretely with deep measures of joy and vitality. Something more like singing or praying on the bedrock that is simply there, on which your two feet are planted.

By late afternoon we are in Assisi. For me it has been many years and in that time the environs and outskirts are much built up. The sun is still high and hot and the 1997 earthquake has clearly afforded opportunity to redesign and rebuild. I am still trying to get my bearings. People are here in great numbers. In all this variety there is a shared look, a shared search, a shared trust that you will find that treasure hidden in the field, there where your heart is. Again there is no fuss, only the sense of bedrock, the welcome of a peaceful town, the Galilee of Italy. It is the presence of Jesus in a little poor man who once lived here and still does. Searching has brought many people many miles, perhaps across many

years. Everyone mixes well. Assisi – why does the whole world come to you? You are like a cistern, deep, unfathomable, offering pure and fresh water. Without exception you receive all who thirst. Receive me.

Tuesday, May 25, 2010

This morning awoke clear and fresh and we walked the length of Assisi steeply down to San Damiano. I warmed to its welcoming well known stone façade with its distinctive round ‘window.’ Uniquely it invites to silence and this invitation is taken up by the many visitors. It is the place of encounter between Francis and the Crucified in whom we find all Revelation. Drawn into Christ crucified, Francis grows more and more conscious of conversion and mission – rebuild, reconcile, befriend ... and joy in these activities. I presided at the Mass. In the near distance groups of pilgrims sang spontaneously “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.”

Santa Chiara is different – approached through a large, open piazza – so open as to dwarf a fine fountain in its middle. On its long side the piazza frames the vast and distant valley below. The basilica is clean and large. In the bleaching sun its stones sparkle with light colors and textures. Inside and to the right hangs the original cross from San Damiano – an instant invitation to pray, to tarry. Once again a large number of young people are gathered at the foot of the cross. The young at prayer – a reassuring sight. Assisi mesmerizes youth, drawing them to itself as though Assisi itself were not an ancient town perched precariously on a flank of Monte Subasio. Its spirit is youthful. It’s in the air, in a lightness of gait and smile, in the hovering effect of the Basilica of Saint Francis. Assisi invites you to breathe deeply and doubtless after hiking some of its hills one readily complies!

Clare stamps her basilica. She lives there in her sisters, a feminine energy that is remarkably confident. It takes the form of welcome, a Bethany hospitality that gives Christ. Really, the Sisters have nothing else. I felt joy in Clare’s presence and very much at home. Others seemed affected in

much the same way, refreshed and at peace as we walked outside and entered the piazza. Clare's bright smile, sisterly and motherly, simply cheered us. In her basilica Clare holds in her womb the cross of the crucified, the promise of the Order, the love of Francis for the Lord, his words and command to rebuild his Church.

Wednesday, May 26, 2010

The Basilicas of San Francesco and the Portiuncula of St. Mary of the Angels relate to each other like body and spirit. They are both Francis, more so the latter. For the flesh avails not but the spirit gives life. So it was early this morning at the tomb deep within the bowels of the basilica that bears his name – death, ending, sarcophagus. There is the reverence due the dead and the palpable sense that Francis's remains lie here in death, in this basilica magnificent in its composition and setting. It is a church slightly sad with that special quality of a hidden sadness – rather like meeting a mother whose child died many years ago. It is a sadness often not lying on her face, though perhaps in her eyes and certainly in her heart. The church is pre-eminently dignified, evoking our respect before inevitable death. Will my death be like his? Surely that will depend on whether my living is like his?

The Portiuncula is the church of his spirit. Little Portion, the church of founding, beginnings, enthusiasm, conflict, prayer. Nowhere on earth is there such a sense of Franciscan place as here. Here very simply Francis belonged, this little portion of wattle, earth and timber dedicated to St. Mary of the Angels. This is his sense of place, of earth, of finitude, this gate of Heaven "though all the earth is mine says the Lord." In this place one could meet Francis and here he could welcome us as his guests. For the man of gentle courtesy must have a place to receive us, a place to root us, a place in which we are at home even when far from home. This is remarkably his realism contained in a place only a few times larger than his tomb.

Like a girdle the Umbrian valley lush in springtime unites the church of his body and the church of his spirit. It is a

valley richly cultivated, a space green with grass, orchards, vegetable gardens, plots of different sizes and shapes. I expect it looks much as he would have seen it – especially Assisi steep and watchful, a town he seems both to have loved and renounced. This was home yet the more Francis travelled the less he could come home again, the less things fit anymore. Apart from Egypt his travels were not far afield. He sought the poverty of solitude and the solitude of poverty. This search is framed by the fields that stretch between the church of his body and the church of his spirit. The whole tableaux called him back both to nourish his spirit and then to receive his body. So there is closure here – in that space between the church of his body and the church of his spirit, a space and a town that in the end he richly blessed.

Thursday, May 27, 2010

In the approach to LaVerna there is the feeling of leaving all behind. Ahead a cluster of massive boulders ... and that is it. Something happened up here. One is invited to sort it out. The whole effect is a strange combination of ferocity and intimacy. The boulders soar confidently, blocking the sun, assuring the pervasive dampness, overpowering with austere severity. The boulders do not so much welcome as tolerate us. Yet they are witness to a secret – this force of stone silence. These boulders witnessed the events of August-September, 1224. Two little men, whom they might have crushed, lived lightly among the boulders together with Brother Falcon who with beating wings woke them for Matins. It cannot have been easy. Perhaps the massive boulders were familiar with Gadarene madness and so took little notice of them. Perhaps only madmen could thrive here.

Yet intimacy is the jewel in the great crown of boulders. Francis is driven deep down into the clefts and gorges that strip the little poor man almost of breath, reducing him to a near pinpoint, visible today. I wondered in which direction he was looking when the fire descended? Hidden, like Moses, in a cleft or looking out across the tabletops of the mountains? And how long did it last? How long would it take Christ to

burn himself into the flesh of Francis? And why? What purpose did it mean to serve?

Here Christ shares with Francis his interior darkness, his fear and anxiety, the destruction of his sacred body, a sharing of cruel dying and agonizing death. The rocks whisper Christ's awful loneliness, his abandonment and betrayal. Francis stands where Peter would not. He stands with the beloved disciple and the Virgin Mother and the other women. He is like Magdalene only he does not so much cling as receive. Typically fire can forge a new unity, a deep and hidden cauldron, purifying, white hot intensity, the licking flame of joy. It is how Christ loves us. LaVerna is Christ and Calvary. This is the revelation in the fire among the boulders. That this fire of love still burns is the gift of Francis's body to us – "See my hands and feet, that it is I myself (Luke 24:39)!" Francis's body is racked, unusable, dependent ... how is it also an icon? Now so lacking in dignity? But on LaVerna the Lord and the little poor man are mirror images of each other – their bodies almost indistinguishable, made one in shared wounds, ghostly twins. Does Christ so exalt one to his cross that one comes to know nothing but Christ crucified? And in that light to account all else as loss?

Midday at LaVerna and the little procession forms up and follows the cross, essentially without words – walking, stumbling, behind him who goes before us. The young are there, gathered, with signs of faith – perhaps not quite secure in them but open and searching, attentive to Christ, alert. I see in their eyes not vacancy but hints – they see perhaps at a distance and wish to draw closer. Under watchful eyes school children frolic amid the gorges and ledges. All of us thrive in LaVerna's intimacy and beauty. So many, each alone and unique but sharing the windborne secret. Here the Risen Christ is exalted and enthroned, the Lord whose poverty mediates the end of old death and the birth of new life. For the Crucified lives and Francis lives in him.

The Church acknowledges the events of LaVerna distilled in the austere wisdom of boulder and rock, dark cave and deep gorge, the soul's utter littleness. Here nothing matters but the Lord. Francis's crucified body is a liturgy of praise,

glory and honor to the Lamb. Lord, how is it you love us so much?

Friday, May 28, 2010

I have just walked back to Assisi from the Carceri entering Assisi near the Cathedral of San Ruffino. I imagine Francis walked this same route between the Carceri and San Ruffino – from a dark and lofty contemplation of the Word to preaching that Word in the cathedral and its piazza. In his preaching Francis brings together the Carceri and the Cathedral. The Carceri experience was long term and both Francis and his first companions shared it. It molded them with the modest trace of a new religious Order. And so the Carceri laid the foundations of the Order in the interaction of those early friars and in the shared dimensions of their lives. Eventually of course this networking of the first friars embraced the Porziuncula, from the caves to the little chapel. Nevertheless the chief axis of the Carceri connects with San Ruffino and the preaching of the Word of God. Their early preaching seems to have been penitential but also an expression of the heart, moving it to conversion and change. The Carceri was a lengthy preparation for preaching. Its roots lie in the formidable landscape, so like LaVerna, with its stripping away, with the solitude and darkness of the cave. The Carceri lacks the explosive intensity of LaVerna. Perhaps because Francis's life there was less condensed, more spread out. But the Carceri served Francis's ministry of preaching repentance and the love of God.

San Damiano announces Francis's conversion, the Carceri sustains it, the Porziuncula extends it and LaVerna reveals its goal.

There is room for us all here. Surprisingly, the man of grottoes, caves, cliffs, solitude draws many to himself. While he was living life in this way, there grew in him a depth of peace, a gentle joy. How did this happen? It is true he was naturally courteous and honorable. Increasingly he grew humble and poor, welcoming, thoughtful, beyond all else at home with the leper, at home with Christ. Perhaps one is

inclined to pause here – have I dug deeply enough into Francis? Am I missing something in these days of pilgrimage here in his town and in the venues he cherished?

Does the leper tell the whole story? Can it be? Is this the secret Brother Sun daily takes down the long arc of the sky, the secret so many voices praise in song?

Saturday, May 29, 2010

In Rome and already I miss Assisi, its spirit and atmosphere, its open vistas and small town feel. I am just down the street again from the Lateran where Francis met Pope Innocent III. At that time it was a long trek from Assisi to this completely different world – the Eternal City, Rome of the Caesars and the Popes, and rural Umbria, little Assisi, perhaps half as small then as now. What could come out of this Nazareth? Sharing faith in the Church, Pope and Beggar meet, the most powerful man in Europe and a man simple and subject to all.

Sometime after this encounter Bonaventure was born at Bagnoregio, an austere, formidable hilltop town located in ancient volcanic origins and, in the seventeenth century, devastated by a great earthquake. Nowadays it is approached by a steel rampart that seems modeled on a piece of Roman siegecraft. The ramp is steep, like a ski lift, and the valley floor falls away dramatically. There seems nothing to be gained from making the climb. Yet people live there among a few shops and restaurants on a hilltop still largely in ruins yet tough, stubborn and confident. The church of San Donato where Bonaventure was baptized is being restored. When you finally catch your breath you may wonder how Bonaventure was affected by growing up here. What influence can we see on him? What promise of future study and learning? Bagnoregio could not be further removed from Paris and its University, scholars, concerns and status! I think the answer may lie in the views the town offers which cannot be very different today. As the highpoint, the town is the lofty center of all the eye can see. Perhaps this graphic view of geography and landscape undergirds his great theological affirmation of

human existence as the midpoint and summary of the world, the place of the Incarnate Word, himself the midpoint and center of all things.

Bagnoregio bears no comparison with Assisi as it is a rougher and sterner place. But the spirit of its two sons was more compatible than the setting of their towns. Writing about Francis, the man of God, Bonaventure did in theology what Giotto did in art – a work of elaboration, application, meaning and significance, appreciation, even homage. It seemed important for Bonaventure that he capture the man, an elusive task. But why do so many run after Francis? Why do I? What draws the young people's pilgrimage to the Porziuncula on its feast day, the feast of the Great Pardon? What drew the late Pope to invite the world's faiths to Assisi to encounter there the peace of God? I left these questions behind as I said goodbye this morning to Assisi.

I have been chasing Francis up and down these hills and cliffs. "Come and see" he yells over his shoulder. It can be like running in a circle – the towering heights, the caves and grottoes, intensity, solitude yet never far from the friars or at least not far from Leo. What finally comes into view is Francis's intimacy with Christ. One senses it is simply all-consuming. But what does it look like? How does it fill up his day – and night?

Sunday, May 30, 2010

A warm Roman day and a leisurely morning in which to enjoy it. We made our way to the Curia of the Order. For its considerable size it is a modest brick building. Within it is spacious and open to the light. The General Minister, Fr. José Carballo Rodriguez spoke to us at some length making some points about which he felt strongly. He noted that the last General Chapter decided on a moratorium for the Order during which we would reflect on three questions – Where are we as an Order? Where are we going? What does the Holy Spirit ask of us? Certain emphases continue to be important – Spirituality, Fraternity and Mission. His own commitments were clear as he took some questions – collaboration among

the friars of different backgrounds and Provinces, avoiding monastic tendencies in favor of mission among the people, understanding our charism, the Church as the People of God, humility by which we learn from the people. Clearly José was encouraging us to share a vision. He was not solving problems for us. In that sense he was keeping firmly to his role as General Minister. I appreciated how very valuable that role is, how well in fact it contributes toward our ability to arrive at solutions and to fix things at the local level. José draws on intense global experiences, conversations with numerous individuals, groups and conferences. The sheer scale may be more than one can take in but he draws on all this easily and he seems to have concentrated the matter into those few points as though to indicate how very basic they are.

No one claims to know the future. The sense all round seems to lie in authentic retrievals, inspiration, faithfulness, a renewed thirst for God, being a good neighbor – not least to each other as friars. And that poverty, with which all this began, leaves everything to the Lord – fruitfulness, numbers, plans, everything. Who are you, Lord? Who is my neighbor? Who am I? Peace to all who read these reflections. *Sia lodato Gesu' Cristo.*



THE HIDDEN CHRIST OF ISLAM A CHRISTIAN REFLECTION ON SURA 18

CLARE JULIAN CARBONE

THE IMPERATIVE AND THE CHALLENGE

Compelled by our times to form bridges with Islam, a Christian may feel led to read the Holy Qur'an. Such an endeavor will likely present significant challenges.

Of the challenges likely to arise for the Christian reader of the Qur'an is the discovery of a recurring theme present throughout several chapters, known as Suras. This theme, on the surface, appears to be a strong stance against the Christian dogma of the Incarnation, and over the centuries has become a source of contention between the two traditions.

One such example of this theme may be found in Sura 18, the main topic of this paper. In its opening verses, following the customary acknowledgement of Allah's supremacy and the promise of his blessing to true believers, a stern reprimand is given "to all those who assert that God has taken unto himself a son." Verses 4 and 5 of this Sura reads as follows:

- 4) Furthermore (this divine writ is meant) to warn all those who assert, "God has taken unto Himself a son."
- 5) No knowledge whatever have they of him, and neither had their forefathers: dreadful is this saying

that comes out of their mouths and nothing but falsehood do they utter!¹

Traditionally these verses, and similar others throughout the Qur'an, have been presumed to be addressing Christians, warning them against their worship of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. One may ask if and how such a discrepancy in these fundamental belief structures may ever be reconciled?

In correspondence related to this subject written well over fifty years ago, French Catholic professor of Islam, Abee C. Ledit² prophetically intuited that Islam, on deeper levels, "leads in the direction of Christ." He urged the task of "finding the key to understanding this in the Qur'an just as we did in the Bible." Is it truly possible for the Christian to find the Qur'an, 'leading in the direction of Christ'? Such is the hope of this paper.

AN OVERVIEW OF SURA 18

Comprising a total of 110 verses Sura 18 is known by its title, "The Cave" (Al-Kahf in Arabic) and is a complex series of allegories attesting to Allah's Mercy, Wisdom and Sovereignty. Its title, "the Cave," is derived from an ancient Syrian legend known also as "The Legend of the Seven Sleepers." Briefly stated, it is the story of seven young men who were divinely led to seek refuge in a cave near their homeland of Ephesus during the time of brutal religious persecution under the Emperor Decius. Because of their refusal to abandon their faith, these men, commonly thought to be Christians, are presented in Sura 18 as models of the "true believer." While in the cave, prayerfully awaiting God's deliverance, they each fell into a deep miraculous sleep lasting approximately 300 years.

¹ All quotes from the Qur'an are taken from Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an* (The Book Foundation, 2003).

² Guilio Basetti-Sani, *The Koran in the Light of Christ* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977), 35.

Following the Cave legend is an allegory concerning two men and their gardens. Each of the two men is given a garden to tend and a common source of water by which to cultivate it. One of the men, becoming very proud and arrogant, fails to acknowledge Allah (Arabic for God) as the Source of all that he has. The other man, more humble and grateful of heart, remembers to preface all his endeavors with the words, "Only if Allah wills it."

The reader is next introduced to a mysterious figure known as "al-Khidr," (pronounced al-Hizer) and literally translated, "the Green Man." He is held by many Muslims to be an angelic or prophetic messenger who has revealed himself through the centuries to various seekers of truth. Certain Muslim mystics have recorded their personal apparitions of al-Khidr and their initiation by him into the mysteries of God.³

Al-Khidr is sent to Moses who has called upon Allah for greater Wisdom. Moses then embarks on a journey with al-Khidr. But following Moses' third objection to the events by which he is tested, al-Khidr announces, "this is the parting of ways between me and thee." However, before his departure al-Khidr explains the merciful meanings underlying each event, "This is the real meaning of all those events that thou were unable to bear with patience."⁴

The Green Man then proceeds to engage in conversation with Dhu'l Qarnayn, translated as "The Two Horned One." Among other things, al-Khidr offers the "Two Horned One" instruction on choosing the right. The Sura comes to an end with Al-Khidr's discourse concerning the fate of the righteous and the unbelievers. His instruction to the "Two Horned One" concerns the humility with which the believer is to regard himself in relation to his Lord:

³ Ibn al Arabi, known as the Greatest Sufi Master, is one example of this. He claimed visitations from both Jesus and al-Khidr during his initiation into Sufism. See Claude Addas, *Quest of the Red Sulphur* (Cambridge, 1993), 38-44.

⁴ The three specific tests presented to Moses by al-Khidr can be found in verses 71-82.

Say, I am but a mortal like you, but it is revealed to me that your God is the one and only God. So whoever looks forward to meeting his Lord let him do good, righteous deeds, and let him not associate any partner in the worship of his Lord.

UNRELATED THEMES

When first encountered, Sura 18 seems to be a series of unrelated themes and baffling allegories. What is the connection between the strange encounters involving Moses and the two mysterious figures known as the Green Man and the Two Horned One? How, if at all, are any of the themes related? And what is a Christian to make of the implied reprimand regarding the Incarnation? As we begin to unravel these questions let us first seek to establish to whom this Sura, its ancient legend and mysterious figures were initially addressed.

Addressed to the Pagans

As previously observed, the initial verses of Sura 18 strongly rebuke the claim that “God has taken unto Himself a son,” warning that it is a “dreadful ... falsehood” to say such a thing of God. For centuries this and similar other warnings in the Qur’an were interpreted as stern admonitions addressed to the Christian population regarding their worship of Jesus and their belief that he is the Son of God. Surprisingly, however, scholars of the Qur’an have established that Sura 18 was primarily addressed to pagans and is among the Suras transmitted by the Prophet Muhammad during his years in Mecca, around 632 AD. These “Meccan” Suras are commonly believed to be Allah’s response to the pagan idolatry practiced by the people of that area. The understanding that Sura 18 was a direct admonition to the pagan population of Mecca is a crucial point in this study. Indeed some of these pagans were actually Jews also living in Mecca during this time. Having forsaken the monotheistic revelations of Yahweh given to them through Moses they eventually returned to

familiar idolatrous ways of worship.⁵ This may partially explain Moses' appearance later in the Sura.

The interpretation that Sura 18 was initially addressed to the pagan population of Mecca and not to Christians reframes the common assumption that its initial rebuke concerns Jesus. Pagans did not acknowledge the supremacy of the monotheistic God of Abraham, claimed and worshipped by Jews, Christians and Muslims alike. It now becomes appropriate to explore pagan forms of worship requiring such stern confrontation. Let us begin, from an historical framework, with the amazing Legend of the Cave.

THE MIRACULOUS SLEEP ACCORDING TO CHADRI

Believed to be of ancient Syrian origin, *The Legend of the Cave or The Seven Sleepers* became popularized in western literature by Gregory of Tours approximately 100 years before its appearance in the Holy Qur'an. A well-established legend, it was included in the Golden Legend compilation and recorded in Fox's *Book of Martyrs*.⁶ During the tenth and eleventh centuries an Anglo Norman poet named Chardri wrote his inspired version of the legend.⁷ He provided a detailed account of the context out of which the legend arose. He wrote descriptively of the brutal persecution of Christians occurring under the Emperor Decius (also spelled Docius) during the third century. The young men were nobles serving in the Emperor's court who refused to obey the Emperor's

⁵ Basetti-Sani, *The Koran in the Light of Christ*, 105.

⁶ In the year of our Lord 251, the emperor Decius having erected a pagan temple at Ephesus, he commanded all who were in the city to sacrifice to the idols. This order was nobly refused by several of his own soldiers, viz. Maximianus, Martianus, Joannes, Malchus, Dionysius, Seraion, and Constantinus. The emperor wishing to win these soldiers to renounce their faith by his entreaties and leniency gave them a considerable respite until he returned from an expedition. During the emperor's absence, they escaped, and hid themselves in a cavern, which the emperor being informed of at his return, the mouth of the cave was closed up, and they all perished with hunger. (Fox's *Book of Martyrs* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978]).

⁷ See transcript available on the Internet: Medieval Sourcebook: Chardri, *The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus*, trans. Tony Devaney Morinell.

decree to abandon their Christian faith. They sought refuge in a cave near Ephesus. Hearing of their blatant disobedience, the Emperor Decius ordered the cave entrance sealed with a large stone. Awaiting God's deliverance, the young men were overtaken by a miraculous deep sleep from which they awakened 300 years later. Finding the stone removed, one of the young men volunteered to discreetly enter the village and obtain some bread for himself and his hungry companions. Unaware that religious persecution against Christians had by now ceased, the young man was perplexed upon seeing crosses and other Christian symbols clearly displayed in the village. When he unwittingly paid for the bread with three hundred year old coinage he was held suspect and confronted with charges of thievery. The young man led the village people and the bishop to the cave of refuge. Eventually, the miraculous nature of their circumstance became evident and all began to praise God. As the legend goes, the seven young men peacefully died in the cave as the bishop and village people venerated them.

According to Chardri's account, the Emperor Decius was particularly devoted to the god Apollo and severely enforced the same allegiance on all his subjects. Christians who refused to abdicate their faith and embrace the worship of Apollo risked the punishment of extreme forms of physical torture, frequently leading to death.

JESUS OR APOLLO

One discovers in the study of mythology that Apollo is the son of the great god Zeus, and therefore may very well be the "son of god" referred to in the Qur'an. It is quite remarkable that the Qur'an conveys a legend of seven young men, commonly known to be devout Christians, commending them as models of the "true believer." Because of the prominence of their story in Sura 18, it is not unrealistic to assert that the "Sonship" of Jesus Christ (as would have been understood by these Christian young men) was therefore not the presumed problem being addressed in the opening verses. Rather, the more urgent concern appears to be the practice of paganism

and, in particular, the worship of the idol Apollo – one of the deities revered by the pagans.

Though Apollo and his father Zeus were thought of as among the finest of the pagan gods, they were each known to be quite limited in their scope of power and were at times even subject to the power of other gods. In addition, and more pertinent to this study, mythology reveals that both Zeus and Apollo each pursued intimate relationships with other deities, as well as with male and female human beings, and that from these unions both divine and finite beings were begotten.

Related to this theme, it is interesting to note an excerpt from the book, *The Murmuring Deep* by acclaimed Jewish Theologian Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg. In reference to the story of Noah, she writes, “God is of course classically described as the one who ‘neither sleeps nor slumbers,’ as he holds vigil over his people; as Sustainer and Feeder (zan u-mefarnes) and as one unpartnered and without the erotic life of the pagan gods.”⁸

The “sonship” and “partnership” associated with Allah to which the Qur’an offers rebuke appears to be of this very kind. Any attribution of such banal human activity to Allah, regarding him as one who is “partnered” in this way and who possesses such limited divinity consistent with Apollo and his father Zeus, serves to explain the outcry in Sura 18 (and similar other Suras) regarding the unacceptable belief that Allah “has taken unto himself a son.”⁹

By contrast, the Sonship of Jesus possesses no such implication for the Christian. Jesus instead is believed to be the human embodiment of God’s Love and Mercy, known in

⁸ Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, *The Murmuring Deep, Reflections on the Biblical Unconscious* (New York: Schocken-a division of Random House, 2009), 54.

⁹ In his book on Islam Hans Küng also describes the crudeness such an assertion is to the Muslim, “The word ‘begotten’ becomes reduced to a human activity seen as a blasphemous connotation when applied to Allah.” Hans Küng, *Islam Past, Present and Future* (Oxford, UK: OneWorld Pub, 2007), 485-503.

ancient Scripture as his Word or Logos (Gen 1:3), and as his Wisdom or Sophia:

God of our ancestors, Lord of Mercy, who by your Word have made all things and by your Wisdom fitted man to rule the creatures that have come from you ... With you is Wisdom, she who knows your works, she who was present when you made the world" (Wisdom 9:1-9).

The disciple John writes that this "Word" through whom all creation came into existence, entered our humanity in Jesus and "pitched his tent among us" (John 1:1-5, 14).

In succeeding to clarify the distinction between the lesser divinity of Apollo – understood by the pagan population of Mecca – and the Divinity of Jesus –understood by Christians, particularly by the seven young Christian Men in the legend of the Cave – we are free now to turn our attention to the mysterious "Green Man" and his compelling appearances to Moses and the "Two Horned One."

AL-KHIDR – THE GREEN MAN

When names like "The Green Man" and the "Two Horned One" are presented in the course of a narrative it is common to presume that the key to understanding the character's purpose is partly revealed in the name itself. What then can be made of the meaning or symbolism of a figure whose name is translated "The Green Man"?

Carl Jung, in his essay on the psychological interpretation of Sura 18 in which he expounds on the theme of death and resurrection, used the title, "the Verdant One" to translate the Arabic word, al-Khidr.¹⁰ His use of this particular title helps us to understand the role of this figure. "Green," we can safely presume, is to be thought of not merely as color

¹⁰ Carl Jung, *Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, Vol. 9 part 1, "The Four Archetypes," (Princeton: Bollingen Foundation/Princeton University Press, 1969). See Chapter 2: "Concerning Rebirth," 77.

but as Life-giving Essence. We will use this meaning for him as we continue with our study.

Many Muslim scholars have accepted the more verdant definition of green, associating al-Khidr with well known spiritual figures such as Jeremiah the prophet, St. George the Christian martyr, and Melchizedek, the King of Salem in the Book of Genesis.¹¹ Of particular interest, are the associations made between al-Khidr and Melchizedek,¹² and their parallel to Christ. Noteworthy for the purpose of our study, is Melchizedek's visit with the patriarch Abraham, recorded in the Book of Genesis 14:17-21. During their encounter Melchizedek presented gifts of bread and wine to Abraham. Noting the Christian symbolism in this visit, Smith's Bible Dictionary makes this entry:

Some have thought that the bread and wine were sacrificial, and that Melchizedek was a type of Christ. Others have strangely imagined that it was the appearance of Christ himself in the disguise of the priest.¹³

Given these associations to Melchizedek as a common reference to both al-Khidr and Christ, could the Green Man of the Holy Qur'an be seen as a disguised Christ figure?

THE GREEN WOOD AND TRUE VINE

We may find supporting references for this in Scripture itself. For instance, Fifteenth Century Franciscan Friar, Francesco de Asuna in his book, *The Third Alphabet*, draws our attention to the meeting of Jesus with the women of Jerusalem in the Gospel of St. Luke and observes that Christ refers to himself as the "green wood":

¹¹ See Irfan Omar, "Al Khidr in the Islamic Tradition," *The Muslim World* Vol. LXXXIII, No. 3-4 July-October, 1993: 279-94.

¹² Omar, "Al Khidr in the Islamic Tradition," 279-94.

¹³ William Smith, *Bible Dictionary*, Revised ed. (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1990), 97.

Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children. For the days will surely come when people will say, 'Happy are those who are barren, the wombs that have never borne, the breast that have never suckled!' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' For if men use the *green wood* like this, what will happen when it is dry? (Luke 23:28-32).

Another passage may be found in St. John's Gospel where Jesus clearly reveals significant aspects of his identity reminiscent once again of the "Green One":

I am the True Vine, you are branches. Whoever remains in me with me in him bears fruit in plenty (John 15:1).

The Muslim speculations as to al-Khidr's identity and the parallels with Christ are significant. Let us now consider his conversations with Moses and The Two Horned One.

AL-KHIDR AND MOSES

Moses holds special prominence within each of the Abrahamic traditions as the prophet who at one time spoke intimately with God, "face to face" (Deut 34:10). He is esteemed and revered as the chosen servant through whom God transmitted the ten commandments and Mosaic Law.

In Sura 18, the focus of our study, we encounter Moses traveling with an unidentified companion in search of deeper knowledge and wisdom. Intent on his search, Moses says to his young attendant, "I will not give up journeying until I reach the junction of the two seas though I may march on for ages." They indeed pass through this junction but continue on their journey inadvertently leaving behind a "special fish" placed there especially for them. They realized this oversight when Moses became fatigued and hungry, desiring a "morning meal." They set about retracing their footsteps

in search of the fish they had left behind. When they return to the junction of the two seas, understood by Muslims to be a metaphor for a source of Life, al-Khidr appears. Moses inquires of him, “May I follow you so that you may teach me something of the knowledge of guidance which you have been taught?” Aware of Moses’ limited capacity to hold paradox, al-Khidr expresses his reservation,

Behold, thou wilt never be able to have patience with me, for how canst thou be patient about something that thou canst not comprehend within the compass of thy experience?

Nevertheless, Al-Khidr attempts to initiate Moses into another dimension of reality, a reality perceived at the level of the heart and soul, beneath human sensate reality, and paradoxical to the rational human mind.¹⁴

In the Gospel accounts, Jesus is a master at perceiving this quality of Wisdom and Reality, but often finds himself at odds with the more rigidly based scholars of the Mosaic Law. They appear to have become bound by “the letter” losing connection with its Life-giving Spirit. Often considered to be refuting the Law of Moses, Jesus, like al-Khidr, attempts to initiate his hearers into another realm of reality,

I give to you a new commandment, love one another as I have loved you (John 13:34).

For the Christian, this dimension of God’s Love and Reality found its supreme expression in the Person of Jesus Christ. Understanding the Incarnation, and the events surrounding Jesus’ Passion, Death and Resurrection, have posed a great dilemma for the Muslim. Yet for the Christian they reveal a quality of God’s Love and Mercy never before perceived or fathomed.

¹⁴ See footnote 4.

Moses' journey with al-Khidr in search for Wisdom may speak to the Christian reader of Christ and his promise of transformation found in his new Law of Love. This appears to be al-Khidr's object lesson for Moses and perhaps, the Moses within each of us.

AL-KHIDR AND THE "TWO HORNED ONE"

What does the title, "Two Horned One" signify for us? To begin to address these questions and gain insight into the nature of the Two Horned One we must again refer to history – this time history involving the Hellenistic Age and Alexander the Great.

The story of Alexander is indeed a complex one. He lived approximately three hundred years before the birth of Christ. Historians suspect that it was Alexander who arranged the assassination of his own father Phillip II in an attempt to acquire his father's throne and powerful empire. This empire comprised most of what we now know as the Middle East and included the areas of Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, and Afghanistan etc. Understanding this makes Alexander's seemingly strange appearance in Sura 18 less mysterious.

The title, "Two Horned One," is a direct reference to the image imprinted on the ancient coins of his time, depicting Alexander's profile in which the horn of a ram was incorporated on either side of his forehead or warrior's helmet. The ram horns were specific references to the god Zeus with whose divinity Alexander wished to be associated. Indeed he was actually thought by some to be divine and in Egypt was even considered to be "a son of god," like Apollo.

History reveals that Alexander experienced periodic bouts of drunken rage in which he impulsively killed those who threatened or offended him in some way. Paradoxically, he is also known as a leader who was truly loved and revered by his military men. Alexander was also thought of as an altruistic visionary. In this regard he is highly admired for his attempt to bring about the union of two previously irreconcilable

cultures, that of Persia and Greece.¹⁵ Given these extreme qualities, we may understand that the title, “Two Horned One” depicts not only the two ram horns engraved on Alexander’s coins, but just as significantly the duality clearly manifest in his temperament.

Alexander the Great may therefore be considered as a person with an irreconcilable inner nature composing a potential for extreme forms of both good and evil. In light of his dualistic nature, it is understandable that his conversation with al-Khidr is a lesson in the art of “choosing the right.” Alexander, bound by his destructive tendencies, needs instruction on making clear choices for the good. He must relinquish the impulse to destroy whatever appears to threaten his sense of self, and embrace the common, finite humanity which he shares with all others. In contrast, St. Paul writes of Christ:

Being in the form of God he did not grasp equality with God, but became obedient, even to death, death on a cross (Phil 2:6).

And in contrast to Alexander’s failed attempt to reconcile his own inner nature, Paul writes:

But now in Christ Jesus, you that used to be so far apart have been brought near, by the blood of Christ. For he is the peace between us, and has made the two into one and broken down the barrier which used to keep them apart, actually destroying in his own person the hostility caused by the rules and decrees of the Law. This was to create one, single New Man in himself out of the two of them and by restoring peace through the cross to unite them both in a single Body and reconcile them with God. In his own person he killed the hostility. Later he came to bring the Good

¹⁵ For a wonderful concise presentation on the enigma of Alexander see Jeremy McNerney, *Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic Age*, Part 1 (The Teaching Company, 2000).

News of peace, peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near at hand. Through him, both of us have in the one spirit our way to come to the Father.... How rich are the depths of God – how deep his wisdom and knowledge – and how impossible to penetrate his motives or understand his method! Who could ever know the mind of the Lord? Who could ever give him anything or lend him anything? All that exists comes from him. All is by him and for him. To him be glory forever. Amen (Eph 2:13-19).

CONCLUSION

This article began as an attempt to re-interpret Sura 18 from a Christian perspective. It's hope was to re-examine passages commonly thought to refute the Christian belief in the Incarnation. In the process of reframing those interpretations this paper also examined the prospect of revealing a hidden Christ present heretofore unrecognized. Does the Qur'an lead in the direction of Christ in a way in which Professor of Islam, Abbee Ledit predicted it would if we possessed the right "key"? In response to this question we examined the appearances and teachings of the mysterious figure Al-Khidr comparing his presence and lessons with that of Christ.

Perhaps it is not possible to determine conclusively al-Khidr's identity, but it is hoped that this article will serve to open a door on this journey. May those who desire to be in solidarity with their Muslim neighbor be encouraged and not lose heart in their endeavor to study and understand the Qur'an from a Christian perspective. Above all may this article serve in assisting us to grow in our love and mercy towards one another, and in our humble surrender to the One, True Creator of us all.

FRANCISCAN JOY

ANN MARIE EMON, O.S.F.

St. Francis certainly tried to discover the small joys tucked in the corners of each day. I do that, too, because I live with a mental illness. Those small joys help me deal a little easier with depression. I am convinced that both good mental health and trust in our loving God can make our days a little brighter. I have learned some basic principles that weave good mental health together with spirituality. These principles are:

Take time for solitude: This summer I spent my annual retreat at the LaVerna hermitage. I was in a good space mentally because I was well rested so my mind was alert. Mental fatigue does not enrich true contemplation. I could quiet my mind and heart in order to hear God. The hermitage setting near the woods surrounded me with solitude until one evening around sunset a rustle of leaves drew my attention to a deer eating some tiger lilies near my window. My thoughts were raised in praise for Brother Deer. Francis understood how one could weave the uniqueness of all God's creation into a canticle of praise for he wrote "*Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures*" (CtC). That deer was definitely the discovery of a joy tucked in the corners of that day.

Live in the Moment: Sometimes we are so busy projecting what is going to happen in the future, or remembering the hurts from the past that we don't stop to thank God for all that is good in our lives. Our mission as Franciscans states that we are called like Francis of Assisi to live the Gospel in joyful servanthood among all people. Living in the

moment will help us be true Franciscans as we seek joy in the little events that daily come our way

Farmers have something to teach us about living in the moment. Planting the seeds of today makes tomorrow's crops possible. Like farmers who neglect their crops worrying only about the prices they can get for their produce, we have stopped caring about ourselves and instead care more about success. God – with just the right amount of rain, mixed in with a sprinkle of sunshine – nurtures the earth and it flourishes. We need only to follow God's example and learn how to nurture and care for ourselves.

Engage in positive “self-talk”: We can choose between negative thoughts that will bring us down or we can think encouraging ones that will lift our spirits. Spending time feeding our mind with positive messages and telling ourselves how we are made in the image and likeness of God is part of good mental health. Last summer as a Franciscan community we gathered together to explore how we could corporately engage in positive discussions on how we can serve God's people. Our discussions included: advocacy for children, care for the earth, exploring senior affordable multi-dwellings and our responsibility for our elderly Sisters. Renewed energy, a sense of pride and love for each other permeated those days. God has blessed us over and over again.

Sleep: The amount of sleep we need varies for each of us. Some people are well rested after five hours of sleep while others need at least eight. The proper amount of sleep is important, but the quality of our sleep is the key. We can prepare for a good night's sleep by quieting our minds; turning off the television; or spending time in centering prayer before we climb into bed. We will wake refreshed and ready to live the challenge of the Gospel for another day.

These principles are appropriate for everyone, not just those of us dealing with a mental illness. Franciscans know how different our lives would be if we took time for solitude, tried to live in the moment, engaged in positive “self-talk” and finally got a good night's sleep. I believe we can always learn something new. How many of these principles can you apply to your life? Try it – and you could find true joy.

BOOK REVIEW

ELIZABETH HAYES: *Pioneer Franciscan Journalist*, by Pauline J. Shaw. Gracewing, Leominster, 2009. ISBN 978-0-85244-209-8 (paperback) pp. xx + 320, £14.99.

We are presently witnessing a universal interest in the study of the cultural contribution women have made to the society in which they live. Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil Jr., in their introduction to the series of books entitled “The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe,” define “the Other Voice” as the contribution of women as opposed to men in the reshaping of European culture between 1300 and 1700. They hail this period as a time when women were capable of higher education, of holding positions of power and influence in the public realm, and of speaking and writing persuasively.

Pauline (Sister M. Francine) Shaw’s *Elizabeth Hayes: Pioneer Franciscan Journalist* might be described as a chronicle of “the other voice” since it tells the story of Elizabeth Hayes (1823-1894), a deeply religious woman who communicated the “good news” which she held so dear through the medium of journalism in an age when the article which was published in a periodical was as powerful then as web site is today.

The book leads us through the human fortunes of Elizabeth Hayes as she comes into contact with the Oxford Movement, joins the Wantage Anglican sisterhood, converts to Catholicism and becomes a part of the Franciscan movement.

At another level the book is a rich source of the history of Catholic Journalism at this time in England, France, North America and Italy. Franciscan periodicals and Elizabeth Hayes’ own *Annals* are examined in detail. Equally fascinating

The Cord, 60.4 (2010)

are the glimpses of Elizabeth’s experiences and relationships in religious life, both with her own sisters and some powerful Church people of the day.

The work is an amazing accumulation of facts and details showing extensive careful research. It is addressed as much to the general reader as to the scholar. The book allows us to listen to “the other voice” as it is raised not so much in protest but as the outstanding contribution of a woman who is challenging the world to share a vision that she holds so dear. In these pages the reader will discover a convincing motive for implementing the exhortation of Pope Benedict “to make use of the modern means of communication to promote the mission of the Church today.”

Patrick Colbourne, O.F.M.Cap.

ELIZABETH HAYES (1823–1894) is a woman whose personal life and achievements are of significance in both British and North American religious, social and literary history. Born on the Island of Guernsey, the youngest child of an Anglican schoolmaster-clergyman, she embraced the Oxford Movement, the Wantage Anglican sisterhood, Catholicism and the Franciscan movement when a neo-monastic revival found enthusiasts in both the Catholic Church and in Anglicanism.


Strongly committed to living a Franciscan way of life, as foundress, teacher, religious sister and journalist, Elizabeth’s desire for mission in foreign places fired her with a courageous determination. Concerned for the poor, she had a bold and broad vision, while her capacity to mingle comfortably with key religious and literary figures of the period in England, Paris, Rome and North America set her apart.

In the ‘age of journalism’, she ventured confidently into an arena where most women writers struggled for acknowledgement and even took on male pseudonyms in order to succeed. Many journals proved ephemeral, yet Elizabeth’s monthly periodical, published first in Minnesota, then in Georgia, and, finally, in Rome, was to endure. No minor player in Victorian Catholic journalism, she wrote, edited, published and distributed through her Sisters the first English Franciscan journal, initiated in 1874. She continued these roles for twenty-one years until her death, while her periodical itself continued for a century.

Elizabeth carved out a fresh Franciscan path that indicated how she grasped both the purpose of her life and the importance of good journalistic literature for society. *Annals’* subscribers were more than readers with needs; they collaborated in a seven-hundred-year-old Franciscan way of life with its rich history, traditions and missions, and in Franciscan spirituality through her confraternity. This was the cornerstone of the ultimate success of Elizabeth’s mission through journalism, a mission that responded exactly to the needs for Catholic evangelism following the great migrant influx (1825–50) in North America.

Pauline Joan Shaw MFIC Ph.D. has spent years in teaching, educational administration, pastoral school boards for Queensland Catholic Education and as consultant for Brisbane Catholic Education. Her research on Elizabeth Hayes adds a new dimension to the history of Christian development in the nineteenth century.

Elizabeth Hayes
Pioneer Franciscan Journalist



Pauline J. Shaw

GRACEWING

BOOK REVIEW

Colette of Corbie (1381-1447) Learning and Holiness by Elisabeth Lopez. Translated by Joanna Waller and edited by Elise Saggau, O.S.F. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2011. Hardcover, 640 pages; \$50.00.

In her book on the learning and holiness of Colette of Corbie, Elisabeth Lopez, presents the life of this saint as well as an historical overview of her reform movement among the Poor Clares and among the friars. Read through the eyes of her biographers, Pierre de Vaux and Sister Perrine, Lopez's rendition of Colette's vocation, personality and piety is fascinating to read.

Colette of Corbie is not a well-known figure among christian saints. However, she is an influential figure in the Franciscan world not only during her lifetime, the fourteenth/fifteenth centuries, as Elisabeth Lopez's book demonstrates, but there is a renewal of her vision with new Poor Clare foundations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This saint of Corbie, Colette, re-establishes for the Poor Clares the possibility to adopt Clare of Assisi's *Form of Life* as *Rule* rather than living according to the *Rule of Urban IV*.

A strong spiritual personality, this french woman, is very influential in the history of the Poor Clare movement. Born in Corbie, France in 1381, of aged parents and in the shadow of the Benedictine Monastery of Corbie, she makes a vow of virginity in her youth. Later, she enters and leaves several communities: Beguines of Corbie, Urbanist Poor Clares at Pont-Ste-Maxences, and the Benedictines where she was a lay-sister. On September 17, 1402, under the direction of friar Pinet (guardian of the Cordeliers of Hesdin) and under

the tutelege of the Benedictine Abbot of Corbie, Colette becomes a recluse in Corbie and adopts the Franciscan Third Order Rule in 1402.

Four years later following a strong interior vision, believing herself called to reform the Order of Saint Clare and with the counsel of Henry of Baume, a friar who assists her, she leaves her place of recluse much to the consternation of the Benedictine Abbot and goes to see the Pope. During an audience with Pope Benedict XIII he receives her profession as a Poor Clare and confirms her mission to establish a Monastery according to the *Rule of Saint Clare*. Her reform begins during the Western Schism and her mission is confirmed by Benedict XIII, who will later be named an anti-pope. The beginnings of the reform were extremely difficult during the next four years, even though in 1408, through a Papal Bull, Benedict XIII accords her the Urbanist Monastery at Besancon where only two aged sisters remain.

Saint Colette is heir to the original text of the *Form of Life of Clare of Assisi*. Her *Constitutions* and *Sentiments* present Clare's *Rule* of life and spirituality for living in a different period of history, that is, in the Fifteenth Century and not in the rich spiritual culture of Thirteenth Century. The *Sentiments* parallel each chapter of Clare's *Form of Life* without modifying the order of the text. However, the *Constitutions of Saint Colette*, which reorganize the sequence of the text of the *Rule*, express most clearly Colette's thought and strongly influence the Colettine branch of the Poor Clare tradition throughout the centuries.

Lopez's book gives an overview of all the writings attributed to Saint Colette: *Constitutions*, *Sentiments*, *Ordonnances*, *Avis*, *Petites Ordonnances*, *Intentions*, *Testament* and *Lettres* and notes that the authenticity of some of these remain questionable and perhaps are the work of later sisters.

The appendices are very helpful to have a rapid vision of this very complex historical moment. The charts and maps help to visualize the success of Saint Colette as she establishes this reform. Besancon remains the cradle of the reform in France, but it is Ghent, Belgium which gives birth to the new expansion of monasteries in England, Ireland, Ger-

many, United States and Brazil in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Names of most early figures in this Colettine Tradition are rarely cited by anyone today. Soeur Marie Chevalier is the first disciple of the reformatrice when Colette takes possession of the former Urbanist Monastery in Besancon. Two works, now lost, are attributed to her: *Le Trésor de l'âme* and a *Vie de Jésus-Christ* ("Treasure of the Soul" and a "Life of Jesus Christ"). When the parents of Blessed Bonne d'Armagnac, childless for ten years, asked Colette to pray for them, she recommended that they vow their first daughter to God. Other figures in the second generation of the movement are Louise of Savoy and Philippa of Gueldre, both widows who entered the Monastery after the death of their noble husbands, pious men devoted to Saint Francis.

The section on renewal of Italian Poor Clare life during the same historical period, recounts as well some of the struggle that is part of the Poor Clare history under the Observant friars. While Colette emphasises structural reform (see the table of sixteen foundations and two monasteries reformed), the internal renewal of Poor Clares in Italy produce writings of noble women of the Renaissance. Thus, we have mystical texts from the Poor Clares, such as Catherina Vigri, Battista Varono and Eustachio Calafatto, who were inflamed by their loving experience of the Passion of Christ.

Franciscans encountered in this book include: Pierre de Vaux, her biographer, Henry of Baume, who supports her reform, William of Casal, General Minister of the Order who approves the reform and John of Capistran, very influential in the Italian Observant movement but somewhat reluctant to meet Colette. The Colletins, a group of friars whom Colette establishes in the Franciscan tradition, are called to assist the Colettine communities and serve as confessors and spiritual directors in her new foundations.

This book also documents the early and later struggle for the canonization of Colette and looks at some of the possible reasons for its delay. Why did it take 360 years before the final approbation for the ceremony of canonization which took place on Trinity Sunday, May 24, 1807?

In his preface (original French édition) André Vauchez points out that Colette's sombre expression of Poor Clare life in the Fifteenth Century differs significantly from that of Clare of Assisi's spiritual approach and the fraternal life of the sisters of the Thirteenth Century. Colette's understanding of poverty and austerity, building monasteries only in small cities, her rich benefactors, her private oratory, herself establishing foundations rather than delegating other sisters, etc. reveal clear differences in the spiritual gifts of these two women. Colette's greatest gift to the Poor Clares is having convinced the Papal authorities to allow access to the restoration of Clare's vision by approval of her *Form of Life* for those who wish to follow the inspiration and charism of this Thirteenth Century lover of Gospel poverty and liberty.

Lopez's book is necessary reading for anyone who wants to understand the many faceted aspects of the history of the Poor Clares. This book is historically rooted by the author's historical studies, is well documented by her access to the Archives in various Monasteries, especially Poligny, France and by her own personal experience of life in a Colettine Poor Clare Monastery.

Pacelli Millane, O.S.C.
Clarisses de Valleyfield

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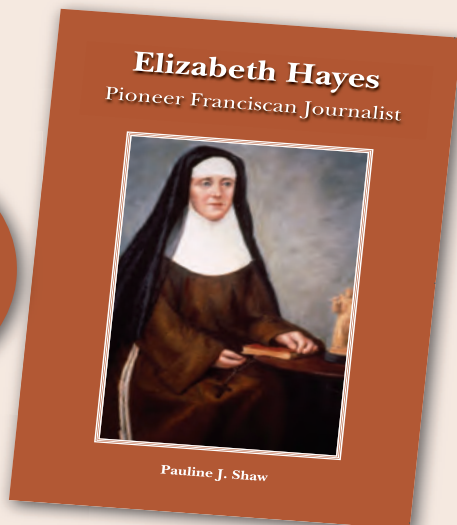
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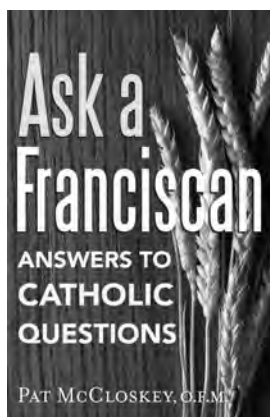
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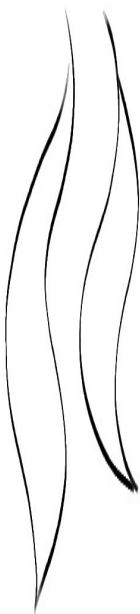
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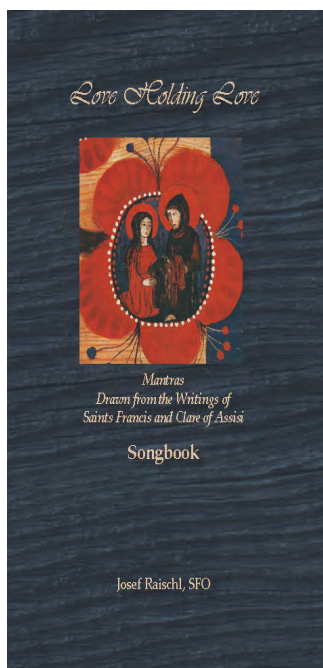
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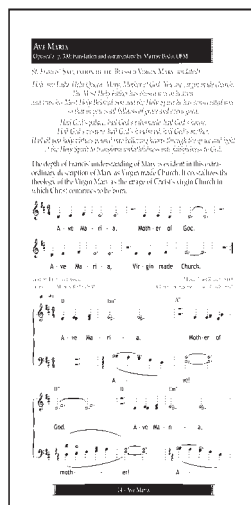
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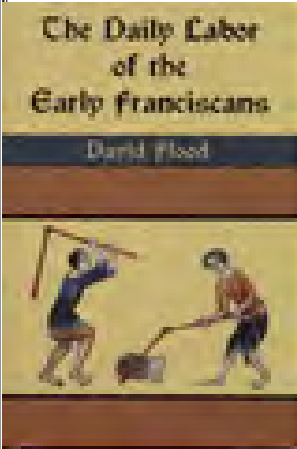
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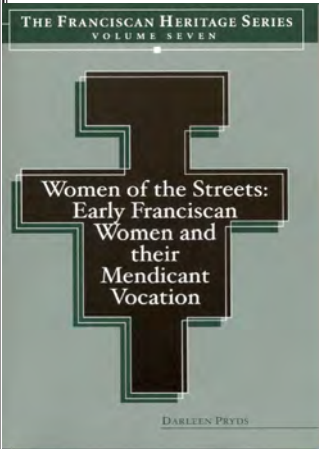
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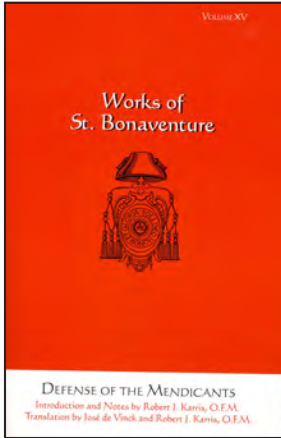
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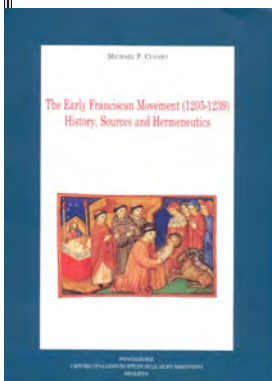
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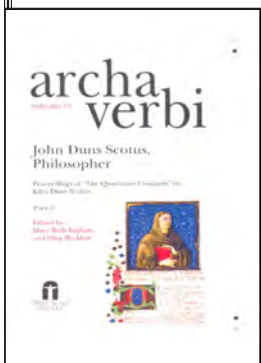
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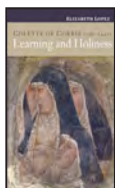
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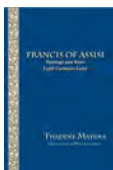
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16. Publication of Statement of Ownership for a Requester Publication is required and will be printed in the <u>October/December 2010</u> issue of this publication.					
17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner Daria R. Mitchell, O.S.F. Editor, The Cord				Date October 1, 2010	
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