

THE CORD

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• A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW •

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FOREWORD

Spring is slowly making its way to western New York, in fits and starts, followed by teases and subtle hints. A sunny day, even if somewhat nippy, can gladden the heart and give new purpose, and what better time of the liturgical calendar to find new purpose than Lent?

In the pages of this issue you'll find some familiar names and voices with their insights on various themes. We may not often take the time to recognize that the articles that appear in this journal come from the generosity of the writers and are, therefore, gifts to be cherished. But, as we read these pages and digest the thoughts and nuances put before us, let us offer thanks for the graces these writers share with us.

Our new Executive Director of Publications, Jim Knapp, with the help of Jill Smith and other campus departments, have been working on a new publications website. You can access it at www.franciscanpublications.com and find information about our titles, both newly released and vintage, special discounts and offers to entice you. When you have time in the coming weeks, please take a look at how Publications is working to meet the needs of our readers. And put the address on your list of favorites to keep track of as it grows.

At this time of year we are busy preparing for our annual trek to Kalamazoo for the 46th International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University, May 12-15, 2011. This is an annual trip which morphs into a homecoming of sorts since our Franciscan family medievalists in attendance seem to gravitate to our booth to peruse our wares and network with speakers and participants. It's always an enriching and heartwarming time with such a variety of themes and topics that one would be hard put not to find something of interest in the program.

As we near the end of our Lent and prepare to rehearse our resurrected life with the Lord, may we keep in heart and prayer all those who have gone before us to show us the way.

Daria R. Mitchell, O.S.F.

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FRANCISCAN PRIESTHOOD TODAY

SOLANUS M. BENFATTI, C.F.R.

Trying to articulate the identity of the Franciscan priest is not easy but perhaps can be made easier if certain foundational facts can be identified. I would like to try to do this in two broad areas: historical and theological. First, the Franciscan Order has its own historical peculiarities related to the question of priesthood, and knowledge of them is indispensable for beginning to discern what should now happen. Second, there are certain doctrinal elements already articulated at various magisterial and theological levels that must be kept in mind when discussing the nature of priesthood in general, its meaning for the other baptized, and its relationship to consecrated life. After making notes on these two areas, I will draw a few preliminary and provisory conclusions that I hope will be useful in future discussions.¹

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

The early Franciscan fraternity

Francis founded a novel kind of religious Order: unlike traditional monks, the friars were not bound to an abbey but to a fraternity of itinerant preachers. Plus, a monastery had need for only a few priests, while Francis's group was as open to priest members as it was to lay-brother ones.

¹ Special thanks go to Sr. Sara Butler, M.S.B.T., who kindly read a draft of this article and offered very helpful suggestions.

Francis's group was also different from the various new groups that had sprouted up in the decades before his birth. His was different from the ones that were inspired by the original Jerusalem community described in *Acts* as sharing all things in common and living together in a stable fashion, because now there was not only individual poverty but communal as well; plus, many of these groups were built on canonical life, which was strictly clerical. Francis's new group was also different from the new poverty-driven, itinerant groups that were in and out of good graces with the Church (sometimes for pastoral reasons, other times theological ones), because he had constant recourse and devotion to the Church's leadership from the earliest days of the fraternity.

This new group was not clerical in two senses. First, it was not clerical insofar as it was a mixed community of lay brothers and priests. It was a fraternity, in the medieval usage of the term, and neither brothers nor priests dominated the brotherhood in numbers or influence. Second, it was not clerical in the triumphalistic sense of that word. In an era when the priesthood carried a certain prestige and power, the priests of the Order absented themselves from these privileges, choosing to be one among a group of *minores*. Within the Order they were sometimes given positions of governance and sometimes not. Without the Order they wielded no authority, neither over a parish nor over a diocese.

The Clericalization of the Order

This changed quickly. For various historical reasons,² it was only a matter of decades before priests dominated the Order in numbers and influence. The priests became the gov-

² There was great demand for priests to preach doctrinal sermons and to hear confessions. Demand came from the people, whose spiritual lives were being awakened by the evangelical preaching of the friars. Demand came also from the Holy See, who now had a new, thriving, orthodox, and international group at its disposal. The landmark and still valid study on the clericalization of the Order is: Lawrence C. Landini, *The Causes of the Clericalization of the Order of Friars Minor: 1209-1260, In Light of the Early Franciscan Sources* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1968).

erning ministers and priestly ministry became the essential Franciscan apostolate. Outside the Order, friar priests were being nominated for bishoprics, even in very important Sees (Leo of Perego was asked in 1241 to preside over Milan). In 1273 the General Minister became a Cardinal (Bonaventure of Bagnoregio). In 1288, the succeeding Minister became the Pope. All this in six decades from the death of the founder.

Ebbs and flows of reform throughout history

In subsequent generations, practically every Franciscan reform group began by consciously or unconsciously tending towards a more lay expression of the charism. With the emphasis on poverty, minority, and personal prayer, priesthood becomes a kind of liability. A certain duty impinges on the priest to build up the sacramental life of the Church, which draws him out of the simple and hidden life of the hermitage.³

Still, despite beginning this way, the reform groups inevitably disintegrated or evolved. The Observants would not be remembered today if it were not for itinerant preachers Bernadine of Siena and John of Capistrano, who effectively changed the identity of the group. And the Capuchins of the Golden Age hardly resemble the eremitical ideals described in the first statutes of Albacina.

Discrimination, equality, and reverse discrimination

Leading up to and continuing through the Second Vatican Council, a new triumphalism and clericalism in the Church and in the Order became the object of scrutiny, a scrutiny which had rich yields in many cases. In the wider Church, the

³ In fact, reform groups often shied away from even non-sacramental apostolate, such as service of the poor, because this too distracts from the simple and poor life of the hermitage. See Michael F. Cusato, "Where are the Poor in the Writings of Angelo Clareno and the Spiritual Franciscans?," in *Angelo Clareno, francescano*, Atti del XXXIV Convegno Internazionale, Assisi, 5-7 ottobre 2006 (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 2007), 123-65.

participation of the faithful in the liturgy and the theological explication of the common priesthood of all the faithful are highlights. In the Order at large, discrimination against and denigration of the lay brother was systematically removed.

On the other hand, this systematic reorientation in the Order became in some sectors so effective that not a few Franciscan priests admitted to feeling ashamed of their priesthood, as if it were a betrayal of equality and/or the original intention of the founder. The late Fr. Larry Landini writes:

... some friar priests may have come to view themselves as tolerated exceptions, hybrids or hyphenated friars. Perhaps they have played down the special character and demands of their vocation lest it get in the way of the 'Franciscan-thing.' Tensions common to all vocations and religious vocations in particular may be blamed on the priestly dimension of a friar's life.⁴

Compatibility of Franciscan life and priesthood

But history shows that Franciscan life is not by its nature opposed to a priestly expression. The founder's not being a priest is what legitimized the thoroughly mixed character of the institute but is not something that therefore excludes priesthood.

In fact, many elements of Franciscan life seem eminently suited to having a "sacramentalized" expression, to borrow Landini's turn of phrase.⁵ His article is worth reading on this point. Here are a couple of examples of how he articulates it:

⁴ Lawrence Landini, O.F.M., "The Franciscan Priest in the Midst of Renewal," in *Studies Honoring Ignatius Charles Brady, Friar Minor*, ed. Romano Stephen Almagno, O.F.M., and Conrad L. Harkins, O.F.M. (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1976), 335.

⁵ Landini, "The Franciscan Priest," 337. If he is correct about this it becomes much easier to understand how the clericalization of the Order came about so easily.

The longing of the heart and mind of Francis was to follow the teaching and the very footsteps of Christ. A literalism led Francis to pattern his very external lifestyle of wander-preaching and poverty on the example of Christ and the Apostles. Such literalism might still suggest to friars today that they imitate Christ and the Apostles by sharing in the ministerial priesthood.

Fidelity to preaching after the example of Christ and the Apostles contributed largely to the ascendancy of priests within the Order in the thirteenth century. Today, baptized persons other than priests may preach or proclaim the word of God in so many different ways. Yet, a friar may still want to be a priest to preach the word of God at that level of intensity and commitment that only a ministerial priest can fulfill.⁶

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

In order to speak accurately about the identity of a priest religious, we have to be clear on the nature of the priesthood, its difference from the common priesthood of all the faithful, and the nature of consecrated life.

Relationship between the “priesthood of all the faithful” and “ministerial priesthood”

We can summarize Church teaching of recent decades in the following manner.⁷ The “two priesthoods” are different modes of participation in the one priesthood of Christ. The difference is not a difference of degree but of essence.⁸ The non-ordained, who are members of Christ’s body because of

⁶ L. Landini, “The Franciscan Priest,” 336.

⁷ This relationship has been treated in *Lumen Gentium* (10-11), summarized succinctly in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (esp., 1546-7), and considered further in the 1997 Vatican *Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of the Priest* (esp. under the heading “Theological Principles,” Section 1).

⁸ ... *licet essentia et non gradu tantum different* ... (LG 10).

baptism, “exercise their baptismal priesthood through their participation, each according to his [or her] own vocation, in Christ’s mission as priest, prophet, and king” (CCC 1546). On the other hand, those ordained to the ministerial priesthood receive the authority to act in the person of Christ the Head. This sacred power (*sacra potestas*) is given to them so that they can make Christ’s gifts of Word and sacrament available to the rest of the baptized (cf. LG 10). It does not in itself indicate anything about a greater degree of subjective holiness (cf. *Pastores dabo vobis* 17). Rather, it is a gift given for the service of the common priesthood of all the faithful.

Consecrated life

What about consecrated life, the vowed life of the evangelical counsels? *Vita consecrata* 30 speaks of it as a “new and special consecration,” “a special and fruitful deepening of the consecration received in Baptism.” While all the baptized are called to live out “the chastity appropriate to their state in life, obedience to God and to the Church, and a reasonable detachment from material possessions,” only some receive a special, further call to vowed celibacy, the renunciation of possessions, and obedience to a superior, and are given a “specific gift of the Holy Spirit” to respond to that call. This vowed life has an “objective superiority” in that it is a “more complete expression of the Church’s purpose, which is the sanctification of humanity” (VC 32). (The subjective appropriation of this objective superiority is, however, a separate question.)

All vocations together constitute a “harmonious constellation of gifts” (VC 32) that are, each in their own way, “at the service of one another, for the growth of the Body of Christ in history and for its mission in the world” (VC 31).

The priest religious

A curious thing about the call to the ministerial priesthood is that in certain theological expressions it is not a “state of life,” properly so-called, for it is in fact possible for a man to

be called to the priesthood from any of the states of life.⁹ So, how should the intersection of the vocation to the priesthood and the consecrated state be understood? In other words, if we have articulated the difference between ministerial and common priesthood of all the faithful, and we know the peculiar characteristics of the consecrated vocation, what does it mean for a man to be both a priest and a religious? This is the real question we are wrestling with.

It seems that *Vita consecrata* gives much-needed orientation as we try to work towards our answers:

30. As for *priests* who profess the evangelical counsels, experience itself shows that *the Sacrament of Holy Orders finds a particular fruitfulness in this consecration*, inasmuch as it requires and fosters a closer union with the Lord. The priest who professes the evangelical counsels is especially favored in that he reproduces in his life the fullness of the mystery of Christ, thanks also to the specific spirituality of his Institute and the apostolic dimension of its proper charism. In the priest, in fact, the vocation to the priesthood and the vocation to the consecrated life converge in a profound and dynamic unity. Also of immeasurable value is the contribution made to the Church's life by religious priests completely devoted to contemplation. Especially in the celebration of the Eucharist they carry out an act of the Church and for the Church, to which they join the offering of themselves, in communion with Christ who offers himself to the Father for the salvation of the whole world.

I see three important points in this passage. First, the priesthood is *particularly* fruitful when the priest has also already offered himself unreservedly through the evangelical counsels. The priest is conformed to Christ as Head of the

⁹ Both the man committed to celibacy by vow (consecrated religious) or promise (candidate for diocesan priesthood), as well as the married man (in the Eastern Catholic Churches), can be called to the ministerial priesthood.

Church by the sacrament which authorizes him to act in his person. But the religious priest is aided in appropriating this gift by another type of conformity, the one stemming from vowed imitation of the life of Christ who was chaste, obedient, and poor. And this makes his priesthood more fruitful, or so it seems from *Vita consecrata*.

A second point is that there is a “*profound and dynamic unity*” of the two vocations in the life of the priest. This is an idea worth exploring at length, meditating on the question, “What does it mean to have the two profoundly and dynamically united in me?” While we must preserve the possibility of making a logical and theological distinction of the two vocations in the one man, it might be advisable to do so cautiously and attentively. When we frame the discussion in terms of “you are a religious (or Franciscan) first and a priest second” we ought to define precisely what we mean by this so as not to imply separation instead of “profound and dynamic unity.”¹⁰

A final noteworthy point in this passage is that some priests are called even to a purely contemplative form of religious life, and this is “of immeasurable value.” Their offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice is fruitful for the whole Church, especially since they join to it their own self-offering of the vowed life. Can we not find in this consideration the foundation for answers to some of our own questions? If a religious priest of certain institutes may be called to a purely contemplative form of life, could there also be other institute charisms that legitimately limit priestly “activity” without betraying ministerial priesthood? Is it ever legitimate for a Franciscan priest to consider limiting his sacramental or preaching / teaching activity if it means greater fidelity to the charism? Are there aspects of the Franciscan charism that call for this? What about personal or communal prayer, fraternal life, or service of the poor?

¹⁰ Thanks to Fr. Augustine M. Conner, C.F.R., for first drawing my attention to this.

SUMMARY POINTS

Some summary points can be made and conclusions drawn in the following manner.

First, historically and theologically, the Franciscan vocation and the priesthood are not incompatible, but even suited to one another.

Second, since a Franciscan priest *is* a religious who has unconditionally and permanently vowed himself to the life of Christ within a particular institute that has its own peculiar charism, he must be careful to review regularly the heart of the Franciscan identity and be sure that he is imbued with its dynamic inner spirit and not be merely someone clothed in its external garb. His priesthood must not be divorced from this spirit but in fact be a sacramental expression of it.

Moreover, the theological *ratio* of the ministerial priesthood is to be ordered to the up-building of the common priesthood of all the faithful. Perhaps the Franciscan priest, then, should consider who those baptized people God has designed for him to serve might be. His priestly vocation is ordered to them. Are those perhaps first of all the other members of the Fraternity?

SUBJECTIVE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Landini anticipated *Vita consecrata* by a couple of decades by suggesting that theologically there is a “fundamental unity” in the priest friar’s Franciscan and priestly vocations. And he adds that not recognizing this could be a fatal mistake in the life of the Franciscan priest; it is demanded by “good psychology.”

In fact, there *is* something important about making a kind of separation, though it must be done with subtlety and care. I mean a couple of things by this. First, friars in early formation should concentrate on their formation in the charism and not be distracted by other concerns. If I have, in a sense, two vocations, how many can I work on at a time? Canon law requires it too: a man must be solid in his identity in the re-

ligious institute and be in final vows before receiving Orders. And it is more than a mere formation in the charism that is required: candidates for the priesthood simply must not arrive at their day of ordination without an adequately integrated affective life, and today this takes more time and care. Second, a logical separation during early formation may help to educate men on the possibility of the lay-brother vocation, which seems to be suffering its own misunderstandings today.

Still, in the end, while I as a priest friar can distinguish theologically between my priestly call and my religious call, I may be incapable of doing so existentially or psychologically. It could be that I have never felt anything but a call to be a “Franciscan-priest,” and to try to separate my Franciscan vocation from my priestly one might not be possible.¹¹ Landini says that for the ordained Franciscan, “good psychology” demands seeing the unity of the two vocations:

Otherwise I might find myself wondering in the most important moments of a day if I am now more a friar and less a priest or vice versa. I may even come to think that my priestly life is the source of my problems as a Franciscan. Too often our problems are rooted in ourselves.¹²

THE FRANCISCAN PRIEST TODAY: I AM THE PROBLEM

“Too often our problems are rooted in ourselves.” The tensions in the Franciscan priesthood today, suggests Landini, are not due to theoretical questions but to my practical failures.

Unfortunately religious and priests tend to dramatize their difficulties and/or seek their source in abstract or theoretical issues. A tug of war between a friar’s priestly vocation

¹¹ I would say that in the case of those already ordained this should normally be the case. In the case of the not-yet ordained this might be fallible and could be unduly cited when prematurely requesting studies or Orders.

¹² Landini, “The Franciscan Priest,” 338.

and Franciscan vocation might rather boil down to balance in his own personal life. All people, lay brothers and Little Sisters of the Poor know tensions between being and doing, life and work, community and apostolate, prayer and action. The priesthood is not to blame for these tensions.

Such tensions are best dealt with within the total framework of the Franciscan priestly vocation. If, a priori, a sharp distinction between the priestly vocation and the Franciscan life is drawn, a tug of war situation is created. Worst of all, we may miss ourselves as the real source of our problems.¹³

These words challenge us to examine our consciences and ask in what ways the tensions I am concerned about in the fraternity are the result of my own failures. Could it be that my own selfishness or lack of human development blinds me and causes me to find theoretical expressions that would back up my own plans, which may not in fact be God's?

Hans Urs von Balthasar saw all expressions of vocation to be boiled down to the same essential reality: the call to "unconditional, unrestricted readiness for everything for which God could use and wishes to use the person called by him, and anywhere that he could and might wish to send him."¹⁴ Could it be that the tensions in a religious community are due almost always if not exclusively to the failure on the part of the individuals to dispose themselves totally to God's desires? Balthasar insists quite firmly:

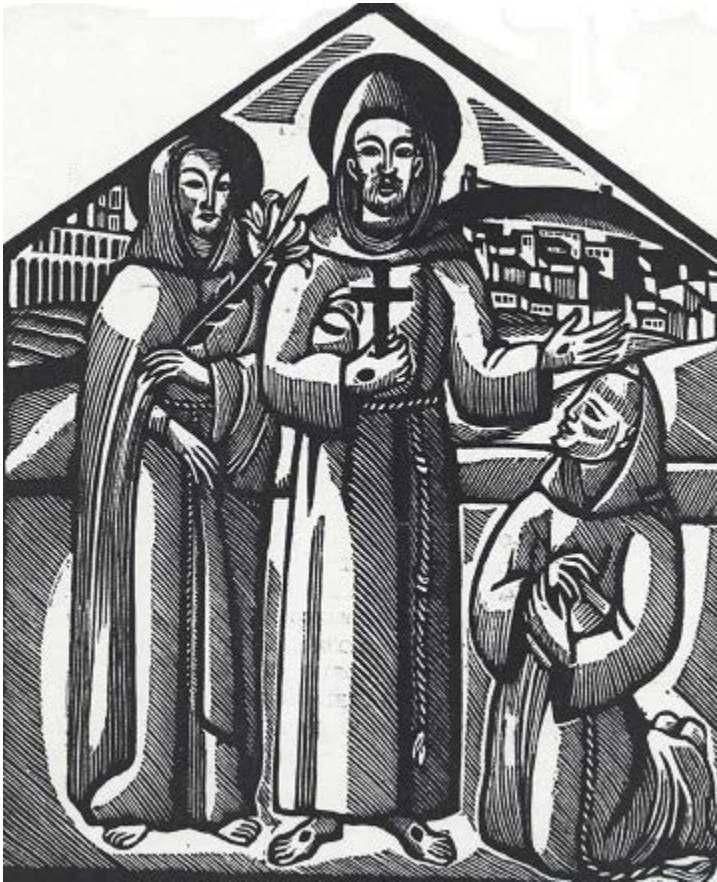
[T]oday, qualified, contingent assents cripple vocations everywhere like mildew. People either want to commit themselves only for a time (and thereby take away from God the possibility of being able to dispose over the whole man), or only for a certain kind of work they have in mind, that attracts them or seems timely (and thereby bind the hands of their ecclesial superiors, preventing them from disposing over those under them).... Everywhere that this takes place, one asks only initially and superficially what 'the Church'

¹³ Landini, "The Franciscan Priest," 338.

¹⁴ Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Vocation," trans. by Michelle K. Borrás, *Communio* 37 (2010): 111-28, at 115.

needs, or even what ‘our time’ needs, or even worse, what today’s priests or religious ‘needs’ in order to develop his personality harmoniously, and no longer, what God needs. Only one thing can be of use for God, with a view to his Kingdom: total surrender, which posits no conditions.¹⁵

It is worth thinking about.



¹⁵ Von Balthasar, “Vocation,” 117.

LAY CONTEMPLATIVES

SUGGESTIONS FROM SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA

BARNABAS HUGHES, O.F.M.

The world, the people, for whom Saint Anthony wrote no longer exist. His world was one of the same faith and moral code, no matter how many believed poorly or acted disgracefully. Regardless, he described the contemplative in terms suitable in the twenty-first century. He could do this because there has been no change in essence or in requisites for contemplation. Before developing this objective further, a clear description of contemplation brings understanding to all that follows. Contemplation is the personal experience of the Blessed Trinity that they bestow on well prepared persons.¹ Anthony described the contemplative in this way:

The contemplative is taken mentally to the third heaven [2 Cor 12:2] where he contemplates the glory of the Trinity in the depths of his spirit. He hears with the ears of his heart what cannot be expressed in so many words, what the mind cannot comprehend.²

There are people today fit for contemplation and many others desirous of making contemplation a part of their lives. The first part of this study fills out Anthony's description of the contemplative. The second part lays out his thinking

¹ Calling contemplation "Christian mysticism" Jerry Ryan expressed the same idea in his article, "Masked Mysticism Everyday Suffering, Everyday Sanctity," in *Commonweal* 138 (2010): 12-14.

² S I 36-37, *Sermoni*, 50, Sermons I 47. See note 3 for explanation of references.

about contemplation itself. (Expect some overlap of the first two parts.) The third and final part describes how one may become a contemplative, a state of being that may be developed by any sensible Christian. All the quotations are from sermon material written by Anthony.³ Hence to appreciate his thinking, some details of his life frame what follows.

THE CONTEMPLATIVE

Anyone who investigates the numerous passages on contemplation in the resource book soon reaches two conclusions. First, Saint Anthony thought that all religious and preachers should become contemplatives. Secondly, only living the vow of poverty or its equivalent prepared a person for contemplation.⁴ This second conclusion would seem to hobble the Blessed Trinity in loving those whom they would. Not at all. Rather from time to time Anthony described the contemplative as the “just person.” The just person is the one who lives according to the First Beatitude.

³ *S. Antonii Patavini Sermones Dominicales et Festivi ad fidem codicum recogniti*, ed. B. Costa, L. Frasson, J. Luisetto, and P. Marangon, 3 vols. (Padua: Edizioni Messaggero, 1979). References to this Latin edition are marked by the capital letter S followed by volume and page numbers. *I sermoni di Sant'Antonio di Padova*, G. Tollardo, trans. and ed., 4th edition (Padua: Edizioni Messaggero, 2005). References to this translation are identified by the word *Sermoni* followed by volume and page numbers. *Sermons for Sundays and Festivals*, trans. and ed. Paul Spilsbury, 4 vols. (Padua: Edizioni Messaggero, 2007-2010). References to this translation are identified by the word *Sermons* followed by volume and page numbers. Parenthetical statements within quotations are by Saint Anthony; phrases within brackets are mine. All translations from the sermon material are also mine. Hence it is important to note that any understandable translation is an interpretation of the author's thinking. Finally, my appreciation and thanks to Paul Spilsbury Ph.D., a Franciscan at heart, who provided me with a complete index of all words beginning *contemplat* in his translation.

⁴ Barnabus Hughes O.F.M., “Poverty and Contemplation: A Franciscan Marriage,” *The Cord* 59.4 (2009): 425-40, esp. 430-33.

Specifically, anyone poor in spirit is capable of becoming a contemplative.⁵

To appreciate the validity of this claim, let us begin with his concept of the Church.

The whole Mystical Body of Christ is the Church [see Col 1:24].... In this body some are the head, others the hands, others the feet, still others the whole body. The contemplatives are the head. The hands are those involved in the active life. The feet are the holy preachers. The body consists of all true Christians.⁶

Anthony clearly divided the Mystical Body of Christ into four distinct elements, each with its own function. He drew this picture as a working image of the Church, not a set of disjunctives. For instance, he expected both clergy and preachers to be contemplatives, and religious are not mentioned in the fourfold division. He would refine the image.

One refinement appears in his material for the feast of the Holy Innocents. He described the scene where the angel appeared to Joseph in a dream, telling him to take the Child and Mother and leave immediately for Egypt. Anthony worked over the word *Joseph*.

The word *Joseph* can be interpreted as *growing* [see Gen 49:22]. It represents the Christian inserted into the Church by faith in Christ. He must grow from good to better and carry the fruit of eternal life. His dream is peace of mind or sweet contemplation. [According to Aristotle] "Dreaming is the rest for animal strengths that renews his natural powers." When the body is quiet, the spirit grows.⁷ This quotation suggests that all Christians may become contemplatives.

⁵ J. Heerinckx, O.F.M., "S. Antonus Patavinus auctor mysticus," in *Antonianum* 7 (1932):183-96, elaborates on the issue in a lengthy academic study constructed with a multitude of quotations, most of which are referenced only to Locatelli's edition of the *Sermones*, the only one available to Heerinckx. He addresses the importance of "poor in spirit" briefly, on pp. 191-92.

⁶ S I 55, *Sermoni* 64, Sermons I 66.

⁷ S III 43-44, *Sermoni* 972-73, Sermons IV 48.

In his description of the fifth day of creation when God created the fish of the seas and the birds of the air,⁸ Anthony added further refinement to his concept of the contemplative by introducing the notion of active members of the Church and contrasting them with contemplative members.

The fifth virtue is the practice of the active and contemplative lives. The active person is like a fish finding its way through the seas, that is, he is in the world in order to help one's neighbors in their needs. The contemplative person is like a bird rising into the heavens on the wings of contemplation and according to the measure of its capacity contemplating "the king in all his splendor" [Isa 33:17]. "The human being," so said Job, "was born to work" in the active life, "and the birds to fly" in the contemplative life [Job 5:7].... The twin ways of life were prefigured when the owner of the house went out at the eleventh hour. Now the number eleven consists of the numbers one and ten. One is aligned with the contemplative life because it has the one God as the sole object of joy. Ten belongs to the active life because of the Ten Commandments whereby those in the active life fill their time in this earthly exile.⁹

To refine the terms active and contemplative, Anthony discussed the terms interior and exterior. For the feast of Saints Peter and Paul he commented on the text from Deuteronomy, "Rejoice, Zebulon, in your going out; and Issachar in your tents. They shall call people to the mountain" (33:18–19). Concentrating on the passage, "they shall call people to the mountain," he seemed to identify *they* with two distinct persons, the interior and the exterior. As the

⁸ All the sermon material begins with Septuagesima Sunday, now the third Sunday in Ordinary Time before Ash Wednesday. The Old Testament reading for this Sunday was from the Book of Genesis, "In the beginning God created ..." Saint Anthony wrote two sets of sermons for this passage. In the first he draws parallels between the seven days of creation and seven articles of faith. The second set attaches seven virtues of the soul to the seven days of creation. On the fifth day God created the fish of the seas and the birds of the air. The appropriate virtue follows.

⁹ S I 21, *Sermoni* 37 and 38, Sermons I 29–30. Elsewhere he switched images: the fish is the contemplative and a bird is the active one; see S III 108, *Sermoni* 1123, Sermons IV 118.

text shows, however, one and the same person may be both interior and exterior. (The Latin text uses the generic word *homowhere* I use *person*.)

“They will call the people to the mountain.” Every person is both interior and external, and each of the two has its own “people.” To the interior person belong people of thought and sentiment. To the external person belong people of limbs and senses.

The love of God calls “the people” of the interior person to the mountain, that is to the sublimity of holy contemplation, to assemble at the banquet of which Isaiah spoke, “Upon this mountain the Lord of the hosts will prepare for all his people a banquet of succulent meat and superb wine” [25:6]. When the mind is elevated in contemplation, then the people will assemble on the mountain because their thoughts have freed them from vain distractions and their sentiments have abandoned illicit desires. Then the Lord prepares for them a banquet of joy. The succulent meat is the light of interior wisdom that strengthens the conscience. “Voices exulting in joy are raised at the banquet” [Ps 41:3]. Like a well fed animal moving about in happy joy, so having savored the delights of contemplation the soul exults and would shout with joy. The banquet of special wine, that is joy, symbolizes the consolation brought to the spirit from shedding tears of happiness. The twofold joy pervading thoughts and sentiments abides in one’s knowledge and love.

Likewise, love of neighbor calls the “people” of the external person to the heights of fraternal love in order to put body and soul at the service of neighbors to provide them with necessities. In fact Haggai has it, “Ascend the mountain, carry the wood, build the house. This is pleasing to me and I am glorified, says the Lord” [1:8]. Who loves his neighbor climbs the mountain and carries the wood that supports him. He builds a house for him, who provides for his necessities.¹⁰

The concepts interior and exterior are clearly distinct characteristics of the same person.

¹⁰ S III 288, *Sermoni* 1221, Sermons IV 303.

The active life as the inferior part [of knowledge of eternal happiness] must serve the contemplative life, because the inferior part exists only on account of the superior part.... The contemplative life, which blossoms in humility of heart, by its prayers and tears controls the drive to work and the heat of temptation.¹¹

What then is it that a contemplative does? Anthony offers a first answer in his comment on an observation of Solomon.

“Having entered my home I will rest with her (Wisdom), because being in her company there is no bitterness nor bother in our living together, only happiness and joy” [Wis 8:16].

Spiritual persons leave aside mundane concerns and disturbing thoughts to enter into the home of their consciences, closing the door upon the five senses. They relax with Wisdom, leaving themselves empty for the divine contemplation, in which one savors the quiet of spiritual sweetness.¹²

Contemplating heavenly things frees the mind of worldly things so that the Lord may rest in the soul thus exalted by humility. Further, God’s Majesty fills the house of the five senses. When the Lord rests in the mind, all its members are in a quiet state.¹³

When all is said and done, Anthony characterized the contemplative thus:

The contemplative person is like the Ark of the Covenant. In the contemplative are the manna of sweetness, the tablets of the twos laws of love of God and of neighbor, and the rod of correction. He is called “the Ark of the covenant with the Lord.” He has in fact concluded a pact with the Lord forever to serve Him, who is enthroned upon the Cherubim, a name that means “fullness of knowledge.” He is seated thus on

¹¹ S I 300, *Sermoni* 280, Sermons I 327.

¹² S II 50,14, *Sermoni* 587, Sermons II 259.

¹³ S II 461, *Sermoni* 888, Sermons III 214.

the soul that is satiated with love. “The fullness of the law is love” [Rom 13:16].¹⁴

Mindful of Anthony’s thinking about the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, that each of us has been inserted into Christ by faith and baptism, and that contemplation is assigned or available to certain undefined members, I conclude that contemplation is also for suitable laity. How does this fit into Anthony’s thinking about contemplation?

CONTEMPLATION

The first thing to accept is that contemplation is an act of the Blessed Trinity, not something that the well prepared person does. As Saint Anthony expressed it:

Contemplation does not come from our own willful efforts but as a gift of God. He gives the sweetness of contemplation to whom he wishes, when he wishes, and how he wishes.¹⁵

Since it is all on God’s part, how could God do this?

The Blessed Trinity can flood the soul with the sweetness of its presence because they made us capable of their indwelling, as St. John tells us in Chapter 14 of his gospel. In other words, human nature as such is capable of being open to the Blessed Trinity whenever they wish to make their presence known. So what is it that we can be receptive of? In the words of Anthony, and I hazard to guess that he was writing from his own experience:

In so far as possible the contemplative person encounters “God in His splendor” [Isa 33:17].¹⁶ God

¹⁴ S I 424-25, *Sermoni* 416, Sermons II 41.

¹⁵ S II 232, *Sermoni* 700.8, Sermons II 407-08.

¹⁶ S I 21, *Sermoni* 37, Sermons I 29. Whether or not the contemplative has an immediate and direct vision of God is a disputed issue. Saint Anthony thought not; Saint Bonaventure would disagree. See Heerinckx, 64-67, for details.

is the object of contemplation.¹⁷ Meeting Christ ... [the person] is led outside oneself to contemplate the light of the highest wisdom with a joyful mind.¹⁸ Tears flowing from abundant devotion wash the eyes of the contemplative so that he can see through the dense vision of contemplation to his salvation.¹⁹ In contemplation a person is in heaven.²⁰ Now we contemplate him as under a veil, in a dim way like looking in a mirror" [see 1 Cor 13:6].²¹

When the mind of a person stands face to face with God and contemplates his beauty and tastes his sweetness, then he is truly in the garden of delights.²² The contemplative is like the chameleon that lives solely on air, that is, on the sweetness of contemplation.²³ The sweetness of contemplation, more precious than any riches and incomparable with any other desire, arises from the Creator's love.²⁴

Note how the final five words in his description make clear that Love, which is the Blessed Trinity, pours itself into the contemplative, thereby wrapping the person in contemplation.

Anthony seems to credit the Holy Spirit as the conductor of contemplation. Commenting on a line from the Canticum of Canticles, "Awake, O North Wind! Come, O South Wind! Blow upon my garden so that its fragrance may be spread about" (4:16), he writes:

¹⁷ S I 300, *Sermoni*, 280, Sermons I 327.

¹⁸ S III 287, *Sermoni* 1220, Sermons IV 301. While this statement is from Richard of Saint Victor, Anthony made it his own; see G. Zinn, trans., *Richard of Saint Victor The Twelve Patriarchs, The Mystical Ark (Benjamin Major)*, Book III of *The Trinity* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1979), 276.

¹⁹ S III 108, *Sermoni* 1123, Sermons IV 118.

²⁰ S II 162 (*homo caelum est contemplatione*), *Sermoni* 641 ("l'uomo diventa cielo con la contemplazione"), Sermons II 333 ("man is 'heaven' by contemplation").

²¹ S I 469, *Sermoni* 456, Sermons II 91.

²² S I 146, *Sermoni* 143,17, Sermons I 162.

²³ S II 392, *Sermoni* 834,14, Sermons III 137.

²⁴ S III 286, *Sermoni* 1219, Sermons IV 300.

“Come, O South Wind!” that is, “Come Holy Spirit! “Blow upon my garden (that is, my mind) so that its fragrance (that is, my tears) may flow!”²⁵

All the initiative comes from the Holy Spirit.

The [contemplative] rests on his beloved when he presumes nothing from his own strength, attributes nothing to his own merit, but owes all to the grace of his beloved.²⁶

In this quiet position is anything happening? Recall the opening quotation:

The contemplative is taken mentally to the third heaven [2 Cor 12:2] where in the depths of his spirit he contemplates the glory of the Trinity. He hears with the ears of his heart what cannot be expressed in so many words, what the mind cannot comprehend, the reward of a hundredfold.²⁷

The experience of contemplation is what it feels like when a person suddenly understands something completely, or when he sees the solution to a problem, or when it dawns upon him that another person loves him, or he loves another.

There is so much sweetness, light, and joy in Anthony’s description of contemplation, the awesome experience of encountering the Blessed Trinity who suffuses one’s whole being with themselves, that it seems counterproductive to wonder, even to inquire if he ever discussed, much less described any negative experiences. It seems that he did. In his sermon for the *Litanies* or *Rogation Days* he wrote at length of the so called night that harms the eyes, a disturbance or temptation that interferes with the eye of reason.²⁸

Thus begins a lengthy passage, eighty-seven lines in the Latin text that one wishes were shorter because of its unpleasantness, yet ends on the optimistic note that if you persist in besieging God in prayer, the Blessed Trinity

²⁵ S III 75, *Sermoni* 318-19, Sermons I 380.

²⁶ S III 187, *Sermoni* 221,9, Sermons IV 199.

²⁷ S I 36-37, *Sermoni*, 50,12, Sermons IV 47.

²⁸ S III 222, *Sermoni* 336, Sermons IV 234.

will pull you out of the sludge of darkness into the light of their Love. Between beginning and conclusion, however, the terrain is rough. A brief, close look at the unpleasant terrain is rewarding. Anthony made three points:

1. As often as one seeks solace in earthly things, so often is it denied.
2. The desire for relief in meditation of heavenly thoughts is frustrated.
3. One seems to be standing outside of God, asking for help and getting none.²⁹

Pulling it all together he wrote:

What a miserable, sorrowful situation! There is no joy in contemplation. There is no consolation in worldly activity – nothing but darkness in prayer and inattention in business. Should I give up? Cease praying? Absolutely not! If the door to heavenly grace is closed, whether due to my sins or perhaps because I am supposed to implore and beseech ... I must not give up hope of being heard. I must strengthen my desire to pray regardless of the difficulty in persevering in prayer.³⁰

Saint John of the Cross discussed this misadventure in his commentary on that most beautiful poem, *The Dark Night of the Soul*.³¹ The same condition attracted the attention of the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*.³² Spiritual writers, it would seem, had long been aware of the situation. Anthony's

²⁹ S III 223-24, *Sermoni* 337-38, Sermons IV 235.

³⁰ S III 224-25, *Sermoni* 338, Sermons IV 236. The question this section sought to answer arose naturally during the development of my investigation. Heerinckx, 179-83, provided the insight and citation whereby I fashioned what appears here. He thinks that what Saint Anthony wrote is considerably clearer than the writing of Saint John of the Cross.

³¹ Book II, Chapter 5 to 8. www.ccel.org/ccel/john_cross/dark_night.html

³² Chapter 68. www.ccel.org/ccel/anonymous2/cloud.html

final advice is common and effective, “pray regardless of the difficulty in persevering in prayer.”

Contemplation, however, is not an end all by itself. Rather it has two companions, perseverance and love of neighbor. Anthony made this point when he described the altar a person was approaching when he remembered that his brother or sister had something against him. The gospel says to get reconciled before offering at the altar (See Matt 5:23-24). Anthony told how to make this altar:

To construct this altar to the Lord, [use] these measurements: its length shall be in perseverance, its width in love of neighbor, and its height in contemplation of God.³³

In short, contemplation does not stand by itself. A person may not ignore love of neighbor for long. So how does one prep for this life?

BECOMING A CONTEMPLATIVE

The crucial question is, what kind of person has successfully prepared oneself for being a contemplative? While it is comparatively easy to describe the contemplative, it is entirely another thing to describe the one who has successfully prepared oneself for contemplation. This statement of Saint Anthony, I believe, answers the question.

The just person passes through the transitory love of this world with the cross of Jesus and thus reaches the promised land with two gifts: the fruits of the active and of the contemplative life.³⁴

This is clear. The successful one, the just person, enjoys the fruit of a life that is both active and contemplative. Fortunately, Anthony left us with several operational

³³ S I 526, *Sermoni* 505, Sermons II 152.

³⁴ S I 390, *Sermoni* 388, Sermons II 5.

descriptions of the just person, such as the just person is always full of compassion and sympathy for his neighbor.³⁵

It follows therefore that anyone so disposed is a candidate for contemplation.

So we turn to what Anthony required for a person to ready oneself for contemplation. First is his conviction that poverty is the primary requisite for contemplation.

Temporal things close the eyes of the heart to contemplation of things eternal.³⁶ [Things one possesses can] take a person away from interior contemplation and flood one's mind with external preoccupations.³⁷

Then, the lug nut that holds all together is the most difficult to manipulate.

If you wish to follow [Christ] and take the consequences of following him, then you must give up yourself.³⁸

Anthony returned to this crucial requirement on the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul, when he commented on a phrase from the Book of Deuteronomy.

And so Zabulon, that is the love of God, "is gladdened at its departure" [33:18]. These words describe the contemplative life. Whoever wishes to make progress in it, must depart as soon as possible not only from cares of the world but also from one's own cares, that is to depart from oneself.³⁹ To give up oneself affects one's entire way of being.

In the twenty-first century, one's entire way of being is complex. Social, cultural, political, intellectual, and religious components impregnate one's being. The nearly omnipresent electronic, computer-based equipment, so useful for gathering, sorting, and storing data, not to overlook the cellphone for instant communication anytime anywhere, tends to increase

³⁵ S II 87, *Sermoni* 619, Sermons II 302.

³⁶ S II 458, *Sermoni* 885, Sermons III 211.

³⁷ S I 424, *Sermoni* 415, Sermons II 41.

³⁸ S III 85, *Sermoni* 1147.4, Sermons IV 96.

³⁹ S III 287, *Sermoni* 1220, Sermons IV 301.

one's dependence upon and enjoyment of things material to the detriment of the spiritual.⁴⁰ Predispositions, prejudices, preferences, and patterns have influenced the conclusions by which one governs one's life. And then there is faith. With the help of grace each person has developed oneself to become the particular person that "I am." The way each is, we hope, reflects Jesus after whom we have developed ourselves. Yet to be poor in spirit "I" must be ready to yield any part of "my" complex being as the Holy Spirit suggests. Thus one is ready to depart from oneself. In God's own time the result of giving up oneself is certain.

Those who have abandoned all earthly things are raised up to the sweetness of contemplation alone.⁴¹

This is an operational definition of being poor in spirit, at which we now look closely.

The exemplar for Anthony was Jesus, who though divine took upon himself the condition of a slave, the model of the first Beatitude.

The poor in spirit is the swift runner who runs with the giant of twin natures [Jesus]. The one who has nothing to love has dropped a heavy weight and so can pursue his way. Hence, Wisdom speaks in the Book of Proverbs, "I will show you the way of wisdom. I will lead you through the avenue of just conduct (poverty). Your steps (disposition) will not slow you. No obstacle will be in your way" [Prov 4:11–12].⁴²

[T]he poor in spirit [are] those who have lifted themselves above earthly things so that they reflect a keener form of poverty, in order to contemplate the Son of God, a pilgrim on earth but glorious in his heavenly home.⁴³

⁴⁰ Any reader interested in pursuing the effects of these things on our youth for whom we are trying to develop a spiritual streak in their characters would do well to read Larry D. Rosen, *Rewired – Understanding the iGeneration and the Way They Learn* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

⁴¹ S II 134, *Sermoni* 1102, *Sermons* III 421.

⁴² S II 299, *Sermoni* 755, *Sermons* III 34.

⁴³ S II 485, *Sermoni* 907, *Sermons* III 244.

Most of his remarks about this Beatitude focus on those who are materially poor. He was trying to shore up their courage in the face of demeaning poverty. Those who are married accept one another in trust, not in ownership. They are not attached to any material thing, regardless of how much they use them. Whatever their possessions may be, they see them as tools to love others better. In this sense they are on a par with religious who have vowed and practice absolute poverty.

Persons poor in spirit are the perfect Christians, the ideal persons described by the First Beatitude. They do not hang onto, grasp, cling to, or seek things as though they were *alter egos* or would enhance their sense of identity. Whatsoever Anthony might have intended when he wrote this section, it can clearly be applied to any layperson who is truly poor in spirit.

Mindful that Saint Anthony wrote his resource manual for those preaching principally to the laity, I conclude that his description of the just person does fit the serious layperson. In a lengthy development that begins with an analogy with the balsam tree, he describes this just person.

The balsam tree typifies the life of the just person. It is and must be similar to a vine and kept like a vine. The vine is dug around, pruned, and kept in place with small stakes. Thus the just person digs around his life with the hoe of compunction, prunes it with the knife of confession, and supports it with pegs of satisfaction.... The peg is a figure of the faithful one because humility preserves the life of the just person in the holy church. [The tree] is two cubits high. The cubits refer to the two precepts of charity that raise the just one above the earth. The first cubit, the love of God, the Lord spoke of to Noah in the Book of Genesis. "Make a window and finish it to a cubit above" [Gen 6:16].

The mention of Noah signals the addition of another analogy that leads to the second cubit:

“The ark is so called because it keeps away theft and vice.”⁴⁴ ... The window is so called because it open outward like a devout mind through which the soul like a dove comes and goes. It goes out to contemplate God and returns to consider itself. The window in the ark is therefore the devotion of the just person that is consummated in the cubit of the love of God.... Then something similar may be said of the second cubit, love of neighbor. Moses had been commanded “to dig a border of one cubit about the altar” [Ez 43:13]. The border of one cubit around the altar is compassion in the mind of the just for one’s neighbor.⁴⁵

Anthony continued the parallelism between the balsam tree and the just man with many quotations from Sacred Scripture interspersed with a few comments. As the tree is evergreen so does the just man persevere in good works, something that the infusion of grace accomplishes. Taking example from the saints the just are open to compunction and quick to confess should they fall into mortal sin. Perseverance leads to the goal, God.

Balsam in the hand is a pure conscience at work. When the burning sun of divine love lights up and fires the mind of the just person to see himself as he is, then every act, every power fades away.... When the sun of grace is joined to the balsam of a pure conscience, confidence in one’s own ability vanishes.⁴⁶

The Blessed Trinity becomes all in all.

That laypersons can enjoy contemplation appears in an unexpected category: the penitent. Information and instruction about confession in all its components appears so frequently among the sermon material that one may suspect that it supplied the woof for the material. Anthony was writing these helps for preachers ten to fifteen years

⁴⁴ Isidore, *Etymologia*, XX, 92; *Patrologia Latina* 82:719.

⁴⁵ S II 304-05, *Sermoni* 759-60, Sermons III 38-39.

⁴⁶ S II 308, *Sermoni* 762-63, Sermons III 41-42.

after IV Lateran Council (1215), in which annual confession was made mandatory for all Roman Catholics. Confession well made brings spiritual justification to the true penitent, with these results:

The justice of the true penitent consists in the spirit of poverty, fraternal love, contrite tears, mortification of the body, sweetness of contemplation[!], despising worldly prosperity, the sweet embrace of adversity, and purpose to persevere to the end.⁴⁷

The inclusion of contemplation in the list suggests that in Anthony's thinking, contemplation is open to all: religious, cleric, laic.

An appropriate question then is what prepares a layperson to become poor in spirit? What does one do? In the sermon for the feast of the Ascension, Anthony offers this observation. The disciples were commanded to go out and convert the whole world. In fact, Anthony remarks, each person is a world unto oneself. Consequently the four points of the compass pertain.

The principal moments in the life of a person are these: the East of birth, the West of death, the South of prosperity, and the North of adversity. This is the world in which we must walk. "Go out into the whole world" and think about yourself as you were at the moment of your birth, as you will be at the moment of death, how you smile in prosperity, and how you conduct yourself when adversity batters you. Pay attention to your ups and downs. This fourfold meditation ought to gush forth a quadruple profit: distrust of self, disregard for mundane things, equanimity in good times, and patience to offset depression.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ S I 515-16, *Sermoni* 495.3, Sermons II 140. Also, "Rachel, a name that means sheep or one who sees God, represents the penitent, who in the simplicity of a sheep sees God in contemplation." S III 49, *Sermoni* 977, Sermons IV 54.

⁴⁸ S III 240, *Sermoni* 351, Sermons IV 255.

In a comment on “I come to my garden” (Cant 5:1) Anthony described the total effect upon the person who had realized the quadruple profit:

The garden is the soul of the just person that continues to bear fruit and is never without fruit. The Beloved comes to it when the Son of God infuses grace into it because it is clean both inwardly and outwardly. ‘I belong to my Beloved,’ says the soul of the just person, ‘and he to me,’ for ‘the Lord is part of my inheritance’ (Ps 15:5)... The just person keeps one’s life spotless amid worldly abundance ... He is like ‘the cypress soaring on high’ whose topmost is round. The top is the mind of the just person. It rises in the roundness of Divine Love and exults in the heights of contemplation.⁴⁹

Indeed, Anthony envisioned the just person to be well balanced, well practiced as poor in spirit.

Two additional comments can be applied to people today who possess more rather than less of the world’s good. The first springs from Job: “princes who had gold ... filled their houses with silver” (3:4). Anthony wrote:

The princes represent ‘the poor in spirit’ [Matt 5:4] who possess gold, that is golden poverty, and fill their houses (their consciences) with silver that has a beautiful sound praising God and confessing one’s sins.⁵⁰

Caring for the have-nots is obligatory upon the haves, for this is the meaning of “love your neighbor as yourself.” Only a person who cares for the poor can have a clean conscience.

⁴⁹ S II 86–89, *Sermoni* 619–20, Sermons II 302–04. These quotations are only excerpts from a larger passage, in which Anthony drew analogies from the characteristics of rays of the sun, the full moon, the rainbow, trees and plants. He described the just person as full of love for God and neighbor, distrustful of this world, sorrowful for sin, and internally joyful because of the grace in which he can rest.

⁵⁰ S III 44, *Sermoni* 973, Sermons IV 48–49.

The second comments lie here:

If you wish to understand the meaning of the gospel phrase 'Blessed are the poor in spirit' [Matt 5:4], you must first turn the eyes of your heart away from any mass of money that has been accumulated dishonestly and tear out completely the desire to accumulate more.⁵¹

Reading his many imprecations on those who accumulate wealth dishonestly, I wonder if Anthony thought that anyone built a fortune honestly.⁵² In modern times, some people strike it rich by a unique invention. Consider for instance the young adults who have done so well with the internet, something entirely unknown to spiritual writers even of the first half of the twentieth century. Other people inherit their wealth. For all of them the second part of his description applies: "to tear out completely the desire to accumulate more." The implication in the quotation is that a person who lives honestly can be poor in spirit and thus open to contemplation. Thus with some effort anyone in any stratum of society can seek contemplation along Anthony's way.

Confirmation of this conclusion follows from a remark Anthony made in his material for the Feast of the Ascension, where Our Lord told the disciples to preach to everyone:

Announce the good to all creatures who are adorned with virtue both inwardly and outwardly. Share the good news with everyone who in the secret of their hearts thinks about how wonderful will be the glory of the blessed spirits before the face of the Creator, of praising him without end, of living always with him

⁵¹ S II 483, *Sermoni* 905, Sermons III 241.

⁵² In a remark about David fighting the Philistines (1 Sam 17:40) Saint Anthony remarked, "The Philistines typify the rich in this world clothed in purple [Luke 16:19], drunk with the excesses of greed and carnality, who fall from grace into fault." S I 391, *Sermoni* 389, Sermons II 5-6. Thereafter he flays the rich at length; S I 392-413, *Sermoni* 389-407, Sermons II 6-30.

who is life, and of enjoying permanently inexpressible happiness.⁵³

The passage begins with a comment about what and to whom one preaches. Since all virtuous people are in the audience, the practice of some Beatitude would be the defining characteristic of being virtuous. It may be the motivating force (“Blessed are the poor in spirit ...”) or the driving action (“Blessed are the peacemakers ...”) whereby one demonstrates love of neighbor. Further on in the citation, Anthony seems also to be describing the afterlife. The bridge is contemplation. And from everything that he wrote, it is clear that all people are called to contemplation.⁵⁴

Further confirmation lies in Anthony’s remark about the just person. Mindful that justice requires each be given one’s due, his operational definition of the just person is this:

Everyone is obligated to practice justice in five ways: honor God, care for oneself, love one’s neighbors, condemn the world, and hate sin.... If you honor God, God will strengthen you. If you are as prudent as possible about how you live, then he will watch over your health. If you love your neighbors, he will save you and them. If you condemn the world, the Lord your inheritance will bless you. If you hate sin, he with whom you will spend eternal life will guide and sustain you along the way.⁵⁵

Saint Anthony’s thoughts about the just person ready for contemplation may well be summarized in his comment on a line from I Maccabees (4:57) that describes how the Temple was adorned.

The word *Temple* comes from the word *contemplation* or perhaps from the phrase “very adequate roof.” The Apostle says, “Holy is the Temple of God that you are” [1 Cor 3:17].

⁵³ S III 241, *Sermoni* 352, Sermons IV 251.

⁵⁴ For more on the universal call to contemplation, see Blasucci, *Teologia mistica*, 211-13.

⁵⁵ S I 518-19, *Sermoni* 498, Sermons II 143-44.

We are at once the Temple of God and holy, if we realize in ourselves three significant things: we contemplate, we are a roof, and we are very adequate. The way to contemplate God is to renounce all temporal things. Again the Apostle says, “We contemplate not the things we can see but those we cannot see” [2 Cor 4:18]. Physical mortification is the roof, as we read in Mathew: “Let whoever is on the roof not go down to take whatever is in the house.” The *Glossa* tells us: “Those who have overcome temptations of the flesh do not return to their old ways.” They do not indulge in carnal attractions. A person is very adequate by compassion for one’s neighbor. Being very adequate further implies that a person is more interested in contemplating God and the welfare of one’s neighbor than being interested in oneself. If we will be such a Temple, then indeed we will be Saints.⁵⁶

It’s that simple.

⁵⁶ S II 302, *Sermoni* 757-58, Sermons II 36-37.

HAYMO AND GREGORY IN CONSULTATION THE RULE AND THE GOSPEL

DAVID FLOOD, O.F.M.

After the general chapter of 1230, a small band of brothers left Assisi for Rome. Unable to solve difficulties with the Rule themselves, they turned to one who had been instrumental in its formulation. They had questions for Pope Gregory IX. Whereas some, and John Parenti first of all, saw no problem with the Rule, Haymo of Faversham certainly did.¹ Veterans understood the Rule as their *vita*. Learned newcomers saw the Rule as their collection of rules. The latter wanted to know to what they were held by professing the Rule. The former had a good sense of the direction required by Rule VI.

In 1223, Francis and a few colleagues had joined forces with several canonists to produce a text that satisfied, more or less, the expectations of the papal curia. Canonically the brothers needed a rule. A rule is an ordered body of commitments which members of a religious community swear to follow. To the negotiation of a rule the brothers brought their *vita*, which, with the approval of Pope Innocent III, they had followed and developed since 1209. The Rule of 1223 was a canonical structure that supported and presented the *vita*. The canonical elements of the text were formal, while its substance, and Chapter VI first of all, sanctioned the continuation of the *vita*. That is, Pope Honorius III glossed and confirmed what his predecessor Pope Innocent III had approved.

¹ That was the basic problem, one however which they did not address.

One question for Pope Gregory had to do with the gospel. At the beginning and at the end of the Rule, the brothers swore to observe the gospel. That was “the rule and the life” of those who committed themselves to live as friars minor. From the first day on, Francis and his companions developed a distinctive pattern of seeing to their needs and relating to others. They legitimated their decision to do so with passages from the gospel. To their mind the passages associated them with Jesus. This meant that the gospel belonged to the life of the brothers from the first day on. That is, they were following the gospel on the terms they set forth, then and later. Pope Innocent III agreed that it was a good thing to follow the gospel. In 1223 the brothers and the canonists put the commitment to “observe the gospel” in the new text.

The gospel (or all four gospels) gives us an interpretation of what Jesus said and did. It does so in the context of biblical history, that is, as a sequence emerging from the story of Abraham and his descendants. The gospel is the Christian narrative. The first Christians recalled Jesus’s story in different ways and with different emphases. Their witness got passed down and written up. At one moment, church officials decreed that that was enough and determined the canon. The story had a conclusion, which, at first, was imminent and, eventually, put on hold, more or less. Christians lived and live in that expectation. They do so consonant with the story’s meaning. That is, they bring their life into harmony with Jesus’ words and ways. In sum, they follow in his footsteps. They belong to the caravan that keeps an eye on history’s horizon and, with that hope, do not hesitate to encourage others to join them.

All Christians follow in Jesus’ footsteps, at degrees varying from one to ten, and many fraction the one. Francis of Assisi and his first companions wanted to do a ten. They were penitents. There were various ways of living as penitents, and the brothers laid down how they would go about

it. They “followed Jesus” as they saw fit. Their plan rapidly turned into a detailed piece of directional discourse.² As a life, it possessed continuity, growth, and character. One of its central details was clearance by the pope. That was a wise or clever move, according as one sizes up their story. There was nothing of Jesus’ story in their plan. It all arose in central Italy in the early thirteenth century and definitely not in Galilee and Judaea c. 35 A.D.

Francis and his companions could not live differently without running into conflict with people who had settled down into a satisfactory life. That is what gave individual Christians a number on the scale. In *Early Rule* IX 1-2 they went along, as gladly as they could, with the misunderstanding and criticism and, frankly, the injustice done them. They had set out to follow in Jesus’ footsteps and, they rightly pointed out, he had suffered in similar fashion. The brothers used the parallel to explain and embrace what was happening. It was a Christian society that knocked them about, all the same, and not a Jewish one.

In *Early Rule* XXII, once he has described handling dire opposition and one’s own weaknesses, Francis reflects on the parable of the sower. First he goes through the details of the parable, then he lays out its meaning for his brothers. He describes the way the world about them sought to wean them away from their journey. They committed themselves to the journey in 1209 (*Early Rule* I and XIV), the journey re-asserted in late 1223 (Rule VI). The brothers were to let those blinded by business bury their own. Francis tells them to remember the meanings and their consequences, the *verbum* and the *praecepta* (XXII 20), worked out in the years and the trials from 1209 to 1219 (probable date of Francis’s meditation). The ethical dimension of the gospel, the consequences that follow on Jesus’ words, deals with the circumstances in which those who hear Jesus and read Jesus find themselves. First comes understanding, then comes the directional discourse. So, too, for Francis. He recalls the parable, then he

² Expository prose recounts and explains, while narrative prose tells the story. Directional discourse sees to the journey. Going to Binghamton? Take a car, gas it, get on 86, and go east. Enough said.

declares what it means for the brothers in 1219. He helps them face the temptations of pride and material comfort, social forces which the *Hymn to Obedience* (aka *Salutatio virtutum*) declares will one day be confounded by humility and poverty.

The early brothers dealt with the difficulties that followed on their decision to work and take no pay. (They took no pay for they had disengaged themselves from the economics of their day.) In *Early Rule* VIII they spelled out the prohibition of handling money both in their interests (VIII 3-7) and in the interests of the needy whom they served (VIII 8-11). To introduce the ruling, they found two passages from Luke's Gospel which they adapted to their policy on money. They did not decide on the policy because they read those lines in the gospel, but because they could not maintain a clear line between themselves and the world and its business if they did handle money. If they had arrived at their non-monied ways as the consequence of the two lines from Luke, they would have laid a curious interpretation on the two passages. Nor would they have seen need to change the cited lines. It was the brothers' practice to clear and support their practical *vita* decisions with passages from Scripture. We have a few examples of *Early Rule* VIII's pattern with the Admonitions. I have proposed that *Early Rule* XVII originally began that way. The lines from Scripture were then bumped because of a further development of the opening determinations of the chapter. They were bumped because they no longer fit, rhetorically, and not because the brothers had decided against following the instruction of those words from Scripture.

Admonition V presents us with a basic idea that jelled early in the brothers' journey. It explains briefly that there is something fundamentally off kilter with the human race. Simply put, as they would see it in the early thirteenth century, people had abandoned their covenant with God. They had brought evil into history, one consequence of which was the death of Jesus on the cross. What to do? Nothing, save fall in step with Jesus and work with him to regain the lost balance. Out of all they knew the men draw the conclusion that they shall respond to the deplorable human condition

by joining Jesus' action. They pick up on the gospel narrative.³ Just what Jesus' action is in their day, they have to determine and do so: the *vita*. They are not following the gospel. Rather, they have grasped the meaning of Jesus and in that light draw consequences for their day.

In his *Recordandum*, Francis sums up the origins of the brothers' common journey by saying: "God gave me to understand that I was to live by the form of the holy gospel." I see no reason to derive from this line that we have here an adequate or precise description of how the journey of the brothers began. Francis is speaking close to twenty years later, relating his way of looking back on an intense period of time. Unfortunately, we have no account of how one or the other of his companions remembered the origin of the common accord. I cite the phrase for its reference to the gospel. The reference does not spell out, or refer to, the passages of the gospel that Francis and his companions molded into the *vita*. Rather, it declares that the *vita* has legitimacy through its accord with the passage of Jesus among us. Insofar as that is so, it deserved and acquired the approval of Pope Innocent III.

Haymo of Faversham had a problem with the Rule's stipulation that a friar minor bound himself to observe the holy gospel. We readily understand why. He entered the institution already having a formal pattern of life. He was a cleric. He was looking for an opportune place to settle his pattern. In 1230, discussing the issue of observing the gospel with Pope Gregory IX, he wanted his institutional obligation spelled out.⁴ The pope answered that he was not obliged to follow the gospel more than any Christian, just that he should be a few notches above the ordinary run on the one-to-ten scale.

Haymo had joined an organization and he wanted its rules spelled out clearly. Such was his cast of mind. Less than a

³ The men cite no gospel passage, although the editors of the Admonition insist they do, given the Christian phrasing of the Admonition's conclusion.

⁴ As well as the obligation of his subjects. Haymo was a superior almost from the beginning of his Franciscan life, which he ended as general minister.

decade after *Quo elongati*, Haymo was involved with supplying the order with a full set of constitutions, many formulated with an eye to those of the Dominicans. He agreed, I propose, with the sentiment of the Four Masters, who sent him their work on the Rule in May 1242. A friar should know to what the Rule bound him, and ignorance was no excuse. Haymo's concern focused on the individual's conscience, whereas the conclusion to Admonition V gloried in the common consciousness of brothers underway at Jesus' side. Haymo had himself in mind, whereas Jesus' side was a metaphor for the brothers' selfless service.

Pope Gregory's response to the Rule's reference to the gospel invites discussion. As a legal answer to a legal question, it really does not have much to do with the Rule. With a term in the Rule, yes, but not with the term's role in the Rule. Pope Nicholas III will attempt more in 1279, but even there it would have been better to abide by his predecessor's legal finesse of the problem. The only way to deal with the double reference to the gospel in the Rule is to bring it into relation with the *vita*. It sanctions, as it did in 1209, the plan of carrying the Jesus narrative forward in the early thirteenth century. It contributes to a critical reading of Rule VI and its repetition of the original intent of Francis and his brothers. They aimed at a ten, which, of course, is the proper desire of those journeying at Jesus' side.

We can easily determine where there was "a parting of the ways" in early Franciscan history. Haymo had pastoral action in mind. For that he needed an ordered base. He did not find it in the Rule. Nor was it there; the canonists had helped the brothers give their *vita* canonical support. The Rule was a legal document, and legal documents invite and need commentary, but it was not only nor primarily that. Haymo was addressing the Rule with a juridical mind. His colleagues, Paris masters of similar mind, would produce a text that answered Haymo's general concern more fully than did the concise rulings of Pope Gregory. The canonical contribution to the Rule was a mere *annotatio* to the *vita*.

Rather than further rulings, the *vita* needed a set of carrying ideas that would clear the way of obstacles. It need-

ed the *Hymn to Obedience* in the expository prose of the learned. Such a product would draw out and expatiate on the clear differences between the *vita* and the world, between the brotherhood and society. Francis made an effort in that sense in the *Commonitorium*. I think Brother John of Perugia had something like that in mind, but could not disengage himself from moral categories and explain in social terms the *viam et doctrinam* of the first brothers.⁵ The difference did not have to do with morality, but with social realities. One could live a holy life in Haymo's order, whereas one could do poor satisfaction to the pilgrim life of the *vita*. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio's *Apologia pauperum* sanctioned the emergent institution promoted by Haymo. Peter of John (Olivi) developed a theory of poverty that corresponded to the poverty celebrated by Francis in Rule VI.

The 1230 journey of the six friars to Rome with questions for Pope Gregory spoke to the accommodation of bright young men, eager for study, within Franciscan walls. Haymo's idea of the order gained support and soon, with Brother Elias's failing administration, Haymo and his friends prepared and brought off their *coup d'ordre*. The directional discourse of the prologue to the constitutions of 1260 put all brothers under the law and warned that any irritation caused the order by remnants of the *vita* was disobedience and would be dealt with accordingly.

⁵ García, *Summa*, 503, *De inceptione et fundamento*. Brother John warned his brothers of ignoring the narrative.

THE BULL “QUO ELONGATI” POPE GREGORY IX¹

JOHANNES SCHNEIDER, O.F.M.

Francis, in his *Testament*, had strongly ordered the Brothers, in obedience, “Not to put glosses on the rule or on these words [the *Testament*], saying: They are to be understood thus” (Test 38). This testamentary forbidding of interpretation in regard to the basic text of the Franciscan way of life ceremoniously decreed in a bull by Honorius III on November 29, 1223 had brought a large number of the Brothers into considerable embarrassment. So the General Chapter in 1230 “sent an official legation to Pope Gregory with General Minister Johannes Parenti and St. Anthony, Brother Gerhard Rossignol, the Penitentiary of the Lord Pope, Brother Haymo who later was General Minister, Brother Leo who was later Archbishop of Milan, Brother Gerard of Modena and Brother Petrus of Brescia. They were to ask for a clarification of the Rule.”² St. Bonaventure later recounted in a sermon, “at the time of these General Ministers there were many doubts among the Brothers in regard to what happened with the content of the Rule. The General however, held the Rule in his hands and confirmed, this is clear, one

¹ This article is introduced, translated and with a commentary given by Johannes Schneider, O.F.M., who thanks Prof. Michael Ernst, Salzburg, for an initial raw translation.

² Brother Thomas von Eccleston, “Bericht von der ankunst der Minderbrueder in England,” Chap. XIII in Lothar Hardick, *Nach Deutschland und England, Die Chroniken der Minderbrueder Jordan von Giano und Thomas von Eccleston* (Werl: 1957), 115-214, 179. English version *XIIIth Century Chronicles*, trans. Placid Herrmann (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1961).

can observe them, they are to be observed to the letter (*ad litteram*).³ However, Francis had never spoken of a literal observance, but of Brothers “who knew and recognized that they could not religiously observe the Rule” (LR 10, 4). Thus from the very beginning a tension was felt between the directives of the *Testament* (39), the understanding of the Rule without explanation (*sine glossa*), and the understanding of the Brothers who could not live it spiritually (*spiritualiter*).

Through the Bull *Quo elongati*⁴ Pope Gregory IX, by calling on his long familiarity (*familiaritas*) with Francis, whose view of the Rule he knew full well (*plenius*) because as Cardinal Protector he was helpfully present at the writing of the Rule, tried to resolve the tension between *sine glossa* and *spiritualiter* (or according to the *intentio* of Francis) as he determined the Testament to be legally nonbinding. The repeal of the interpretation imposed by the Founder was based on the legal principle that an “equal had no right to authority over an equal,” and defended a literally narrow observance of the Rule which is not only rigidly legal, but also should serve as “Rule and Life” above all the “Life of the Friars Minor” (LR 1,1). However, Francis’s prohibition of commentary (gloss) should also be given attention. For his simple, spiritual and practical text of the Rule, which in the course of the history of the Order led to many juridical, theological and ascetical clarifications – both papal and internal to the Order – also led Francis to a so-called ordinary gloss – at that time marginal and interlinear commentaries were customary – making correct and necessary clarifications by underlining, giving rigorous explanation of obscure meanings, or to counteract convenient excuses.⁵ But also when Pope Paul VI first abolished

³ Chronik der 24 Generalminister, in AF III, 213.

⁴ Text and Commentary by Herbert Grundmann, “Die Bulle *Quo elongati* Papst Gregors IX,” in AFH 54 (1961): 3-25; cf. Lothar Hardick, “Die Regelbeobachtung im Lichte der paepstlichen Regelerklaerungen,” in *Werkbuch zur Regel des heiligen Franziskus* (Werl: 1955), 74-88; David Flood, “The politics of *Quo elongati*,” in *Laurentianum* 29 (1988): 370-85; Vergilio Gamboso, *Testimonianze Minori su S. Antonio* (Padova: 2001), 45-47 and 74-87.

⁵ Kajetan Esser, *Die endgueltige Regel der Minderbrueder im Lichte der neuesten Forschung* (Werl: 1965); Josef Terschluesen, “Die Regel des Fran-

these papal clarifications,⁶ specifically the right, through the *sine glossa* in the last Will of the Saint, not to be enslaved by a literal obedience to the Rule, but rather to be allowed a simple, spiritual and more Catholic (*spiritualiter, simpliciter et melius catholice*) interpretation through the author's self-declared hermeneutical principles in view of the life, we must be thankful.

TEXT OF BULL QUO ELONGATI⁷

This English translation is based on the critical edition of the document by Herbert Grundmann, "Die Bulle 'Quo elongati' Papst Gregors IX," AFH 54 (1961): 1-25.

Gregory, Bishop and Servant of the servants of God, to our beloved sons, the general and provincial ministers, the custodians, and the other brothers of the Order of Minors: greetings and apostolic benediction.

1. The further you have flown away from the world, above yourselves, having taken wing like a dove into contemplative retreat (cf. Ps 55:7-8; 68:14), the more clearly you perceive the darts of sin; the more too can the eye of your heart (cf. Eph 1:18) scrutinize those things which you recognize to be obstacles on the road to salvation. Thus at times the Spirit discloses to your consciences⁸ what lies hidden to others. Still, because the darkness of human weakness beclouds the splendor of spiritual understanding, occasionally the anxiety

ziskanerordens im Lichte der geltenden paepstlichen Regelerklaerungen," in *Werkbuch zur Regel des heiligen Franziskus* (Werl: 1955), 93-126.

⁶ Cf. Communication from the Congregation for Religious on February 2, 1970 to the General Minister of the Order of Friars Minor, in *AOFM* 89 (1970), 25-26: "Die frueheren paepstlichen Erklaerungen zur Regel des hl. Franziskus gelten hinsichtlich ihrer Verbindlichkeit als abgeschafft, ausser jener Erklaerungen, die im geltenden allgemeinen Kirchenrecht und in den Konstitutionen selbst enthalten sind ..."

⁷ An English text of this bull can also be found in FA:ED 1, 570-75.

⁸ Lat. *Intelligentie spiritualis*; perhaps this is a play on the "spiritual (*spiritualiter*) observance of the Rule" (LR 10:4).

of doubt presents itself, and thus difficulties that are almost insurmountable begin to pile up.

2. And so, beloved sons, there recently arrived at our court a delegation whom you, provincial ministers, dispatched as you met in general chapter, and whom you, beloved son, as General Minister, personally accompanied. It has thus come to our attention that your Rule contains some doubtful and unclear passages as well as certain phrases which are difficult to comprehend (cf. 2 Peter 3:16). But the holy confessor of Christ, Francis of blessed memory, did not want to have his Rule interpreted by any of the brothers. So towards the end of his life he commanded – and this command is called his *Testament* – that the words of his Rule should not be glossed;⁹ that no one should say, and here we use his own words, “That they should be understood in this or that way.” Furthermore, he added that the brothers are in no way to seek any letter from the Apostolic See. He also included several other directives that are impossible to observe without considerable difficulty.

3. Since you are doubtful in regards to your obligation to observe this *Testament*, you have asked us to remove the uncertainty from your conscience and that of your brothers. For as a result of the longstanding friendship between the holy confessor and ourselves,¹⁰ we know his mind more fully. Furthermore, while we held a lesser rank, we stood by him both as he composed the aforesaid Rule and obtained its confirmation from the Apostolic See. And so you have petitioned us for a clarification of the doubtful and obscure points in the Rule, together with a response to the difficulties. We certainly believe that in the *Testament* the confessor of Christ demonstrated a single-hearted purpose and that you therefore aspire to conform to his just longings and holy desires.

⁹ Lat. *Non glossentur*; the expression *glossa* in Test 38 allows the assumption that Francis was at least familiar with the “*Glossa ordinaria*” from hearing; cf. *Biblia Sacra cum glossa interlineari, ordinaria, Nicolai Lyrani Postilla, eiusdem Moralitatibus, Burgensis Additionibus, et Thoringi Replicis*, Bd. II. (Venedig 1588; Basel 1498).

¹⁰ Because of his long-standing friendship with Francis, Gregory refers to it also in the canonization decree of St. Francis *Mira circa nos* (July 19, 1228), Nr. 7, in BF I, 42-44, 44.

Nevertheless, we are aware of the danger to your souls and of the difficulties you could incur because of this. And so, wishing to remove all anxiety from your hearts, we declare that you are not bound by the *Testament*. For without the consent of the brothers, and especially of the ministers, Francis could not make obligatory a matter that touches everyone. Nor could he in any way whatsoever bind his successor because an equal has no authority over his equal.¹¹

4. In addition, as we gather from your messengers, some of the brothers are entertaining doubts about whether they are bound by the counsels of the Gospels as well as by its precepts.¹² For your Rule has as its beginning: “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 their own, and in chastity.” And it concludes with these words: “[so that] we might observe the poverty and humility and the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ which we have firmly promised.”¹³ So the brothers want to know: are they bound to the other Gospel counsels besides those which are expressly contained in the Rule by way of precept or prohibition? This question is of special moment since they did not intend to oblige themselves in this way, furthermore, it is only with great difficulty, if at all, that they can observe all of the counsels literally.¹⁴

Our answer is brief, you are not bound by the Rule to observe the counsels of the gospel, other than those explicitly contained in the Rule to which you have committed yourselves. As for the rest of them, you are bound in the same

¹¹ Lat. *Imperium par in parem*. Gregory here uses a common ecclesiastical formula that a successor cannot be bound by law by an equal who is his predecessor; Grundmann, *Bulle* (as Anm. 4) 4 and Anm. 2.

¹² It is a question of whether each Brother, “who obliged themselves to this Rule, are obligated to follow all that is in the Gospel, all its directives and counsels exactly and literally as stated, or only that which is specified in the Rule as a command or prohibition” (Grundmann, *Bulle* [as Anm. 4], 5).

¹³ LR 1:1, and 12:4.

¹⁴ Lat. *Ad litteram*; in a letter to Konrad von Offida, P.I. Olivi in a literal explanation of the Rule, i.e., holds that the Gospel is impossible and defends *Quo elongati*, Livarius Oliger, *Petri Iohannis Olivi De renuntiatione Papae Coelestini V, Quaestio et epistola*, in AFH 11 (1918): 309-73, 371.

way as other Christians, although even more so by virtue of the goodness and integrity with which you offered to the Lord a total holocaust by your contempt of all that pertains to this world.

5. Likewise, in the same rule the brothers are forbidden to “in any way receive coins or money, either personally or through an intermediary.”¹⁵ Since they desire to observe this prohibition always, they seek a clarification. Dare they, without violating the Rule, present to God-fearing people some of the faithful through whom the former might relieve the needs of the brothers? Furthermore, dare they with a sound conscience have recourse to these same faithful for their necessities, even though they know these faithful have accepted coins or money – coins or money, to be sure, which on their own authority the brothers have no intention of causing to be held or demanding from them – in the name of the donor?

We are led to respond to this matter as follows. If the brothers want to buy something necessary or make payment for something already purchased, they may present to those persons who wish to give them a [monetary] alms either an agent of the person for whom the purchase is being made or someone else, unless perchance these donors prefer to make payment themselves or through agents of their own. The one presented by the brothers in this way is not their agent, even though he may have been designated by them; rather he is the agent of the person on whose authority he makes the payment, or of the one receiving it. Such an agent must promptly make payment, so that none of the donated money remains with him. If, however, this same agent is presented for other imminent necessities, he may deposit the alms committed to him, as though they were his own, with a spiritual friend¹⁶ or familiar acquaintance of the brothers, and through such a one, dispense the alms as he judges expedient according to the circumstances and time of the

¹⁵ LR 4:1; the expression “necessity” (*necessitas*) is common with Francis, especially in LR 2:15; 3:9-12; 4:2 (2x); 6:8.

¹⁶ The office of the “spiritual friend” (*amicus spiritualis*), who should concern himself with the material needs of the Brothers, can be found already in LR 4:2.

brothers' needs. The brothers may also have recourse to this agent for necessities of this kind, especially if he is negligent or simply unaware of such needs.

6. Furthermore, the Rule clearly states that "the brothers shall not appropriate anything as their own, neither a house nor a place nor anything at all."¹⁷ But as time goes on the brothers fear that the poverty of the Order will be compromised, especially since some people have been maintaining that movable property belongs to the brotherhood in common. And so in this matter also you have humbly requested us to give attention to these threats for the sake of your consciences and for the purity of the entire Order.

Therefore, we decree that property may be possessed neither individually nor in common. However, the brotherhood may have the use of equipment or books and such other movable property as is permitted,¹⁸ and that the individual brothers may use these things at the discretion of the general and provincial ministers. Dominion over places or houses is excepted; this is the right of those to whom you know they belong. Nor may the brothers sell or exchange or alienate movable goods outside the Order in any way, unless the Cardinal of the Roman Church who is the governor of the brotherhood authorizes the transaction or gives approval for it to the general or provincial ministers.

7. Another chapter of the same Rule says: "If any of the brothers, at the instigation of the enemy, sin mortally in regard to those sins about which it may have been decreed among the brothers to have recourse only to the provincial ministers, such brothers must have recourse to them as soon as possible, without delay."¹⁹ The brothers conscientiously question whether this means only public sins or both public and private sins.

We therefore reply that the chapter in question refers only to manifest public sins. We wish that the general minister appoint, or have appointed, from among the more mature

¹⁷ LR 6:1.

¹⁸ Here the helpful, later however also misused, difference between possession (*proprietas*) and use (*usus*) of goods will be added.

¹⁹ LR 7:1.

and discreet²⁰ priests, as many confessors as the ministers deem suitable for the provinces. Let these priests hear the confessions for private sins, unless the brothers choose instead to confess to their ministers or custodians who happen to be visiting their places.

8. Furthermore, the Rule forbids any of the brothers to preach to the people “unless he has been examined and approved by the general minister and received from him the office of preaching.” You wish to know whether, in order to assist the work of the brothers and for the sake of avoiding hazardous travel, the general minister may delegate to other discreet brothers the said examination, approval, and authorization for the office of preaching, and if so, whether he may delegate universally for examining brothers assigned to the provinces or delegate only for certain brothers in particular.

To this we respond as follows. The general minister may not delegate these matters to any brother in his absence. Let the brothers who are judged ready for examination be sent to him; or let them accompany their provincial ministers to the general chapter for this purpose. Now, if they do not require an examination, on the basis of having had training both at a school of theology and in the office of preaching, and if they are of mature age, and if they possess all those other qualities that are expected of such men, then they may preach to the people in the approved manner, unless the provincial minister decides otherwise.

9. Furthermore, the brothers are wondering whether the vicars of the provincial minister, whom these latter appoint to act in their stead when they are traveling to the general chapter, may receive postulants into the brotherhood or dismiss them once they have been received.

We declare that they may not. Even the ministers themselves may not do this unless they have been specially authorized. And just as the general minister has power to authorize them, so may he deny the authorization. According to the rule, the reception of brothers may not be delegated

²⁰ Lat. *Discretioribus*; of such is also the word in NbR 20:1-2.

to others²¹ besides the provincial ministers. Much less, then, do these ministers have the power to subdelegate. For this authority has been entrusted to them alone, not to others.

10. Then again, the Rule states that “upon the death of the general minister, the election of a successor should be made by the provincial ministers and custodians at the Pentecost chapter.”²² You are asking whether all of the custodians in the entire Order have to assemble at the general chapter. Or, in order to conduct business with greater tranquility, might it suffice that from each province a few attend who know the mind of the others?

This is our reply: let the custodians of each province designate one of themselves to send together with their provincial minister to represent them at the general chapter, advising him of their views. Once you yourselves shall have passed this statute, we consider it approved.

11. Finally, it is written in the Rule that “the brothers should not enter the monasteries of nuns, except those to whom special permission has been granted by the Apostolic See.”²³ Up to now the brothers have interpreted this passage as referring to the monasteries of the Poor Cloistered Nuns for whom the Apostolic See exercises a special concern. This interpretation is believed to have been handed down by the provincial ministers in general chapter through a statute at the time when the Rule was approved and blessed Francis was still alive. Nevertheless, you have asked for a clarification. Does this mean all monasteries without exception, since

²¹ LR 2:1.

²² LR 8:2; lat. *Decente*, can also mean “resigned.” In any case his election was considered for life.

²³ LR 11:2. The name “Poor Cloistered Nuns” (*Pauperae moniales inclusae*) comes from Gregory; Kajetan Esser, “Die Briefe Gregors IX an die hl. Klara von Assisi,” in *FrSt* 35 (1953): 174-95, 284; Martina Kreidler-Kos, Niklaus Kuster, Ancilla Roettger, “Den armen Christus arm umarmen.” “Das bewegte Leben der Klara von Assisi, Antworten der aktuellen Forschung und neue Fragen,” in *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* 66 (2003): 3-81, 63-72; Martin Kreidler-Kos, Ancilla Roettger, Niklaus Kuster, *Klara von Assisi Freundin der Stille – Schwester der Stadt* (Kevelaer, 2005), 107-18: The “attentive care and special responsibility” for the “Poor Ladies,” which Francis had promised for himself and his brothers, pertains only to the cloister of San Damiano; FormKl 2 = KlReg 6:4.

the Rule excepts none, or does it refer only to the monasteries of the aforesaid [Poor Cloistered] Nuns?

We respond the prohibition affects communities of nuns of every description. And by the term monastery we mean the cloister, the living quarters, and the inner shops. Those brothers to whom the superiors have granted permission by virtue of their maturity and suitability may go into the other areas to which lay people also have access in order to preach or beg alms, with the exception always of the monasteries of the aforesaid Cloistered Nuns. No one has any access to them without the express permission of the Apostolic See.

Given at Anagni, the twenty-eighth day of September, in the fourth year of our pontificate (1230).

FRANCIS WAS POLITICALLY CORRECT

KAREN ZIELINSKI, O.S.F.

We all know Francis so loved God in all creation that he is considered the saint of the Environment, the saint of Earth. Francis loved God and it showed in how he lived peace and non-violence, even to the extent that he traveled to the Far East to see the Sultan and talk of peace. His life and values are ageless and extremely relevant in today's world.

But Francis of Assisi was ahead of his thirteenth century world on another issue: accepting his brothers and sisters as they were. Flawed, but good people were more than their occupations, races, status or religious beliefs.

This insight came to me at a recent Franciscan Chapter of Mats.

The Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvania, Ohio, just held a community gathering called the Chapter of Mats. The gathering was inspired by one, dating back to the Middle Ages, at the time of St. Francis of Assisi, Italy, our founder.

The Franciscan brothers had been sent out to such far reaching places as Germany, England, and France in order to preach the Gospel. Once each year Francis would call the brothers back together to the Portiuncula (a tiny chapel considered the home of the Franciscans) for a religious gathering (called a Chapter). Since there were too many brothers to be accommodated in the tiny chapel, they slept outside on reed mats ... hence the name, Chapter of Mats.

Once every four years, the Sylvania Franciscans gather in this spirit. We come to re-connect and to share the stories of the marvels that God continues to work in our lives

and ministries. "Hope for the Journey" was the theme of the Chapter of Mats held June 23-25, 2010. Sisters, Associates and former members from the north and south, from the east and west and from Haiti, gathered in the spirit of Francis for the purpose of testifying to the Gospel and bearing witness to God's all-embracing love.

We gathered in the spirit of St. Francis. The Chapter was full of prayer and conversation, sharing times of joy and celebration, as well as times of disappointment and loss. Our keynote speaker, Rev. Robert Wilhelm spoke to us of Franciscan spirituality as a tapestry woven through our lives. The tapestry is woven with strands of conversion, contemplation, poverty and minority.

As he spoke of the four Franciscan values during the Chapter, I was struck by his words on minority. "We are called to stand in the midst of our messy world as some sign of hope for those around us."

The Franciscan charism of Minority should be the atmosphere in which we live our lives as servant leaders, servants of the servants of God, recognizing that work is the great equalizer and leveler. As Franciscans, we bring a certain joy to our work which marks us as followers of Francis and Clare. We must love the "leper" because s/he is my sister/brother who has leprosy (e.g. alcoholism, Alzheimer's, mental illness, AIDS, etc.) and needs to be treated with an exceeding love and respect.

Francis was ahead of his time, again. Francis really knew how to address people with disabilities of all kinds. Often, we do not know how to address a friend who has cancer, a cousin who lives with autism or people with emotional disorders. The bottom line is to use language which "puts people first." That is exactly what Francis did. He called his brother who had leprosy, or alcoholism "brother." Not, the "alcoholic" or the "leper." Francis respected the brother with a disability and made him feel welcome. Thoughtless language can make people feel excluded and can be a barrier to full participation

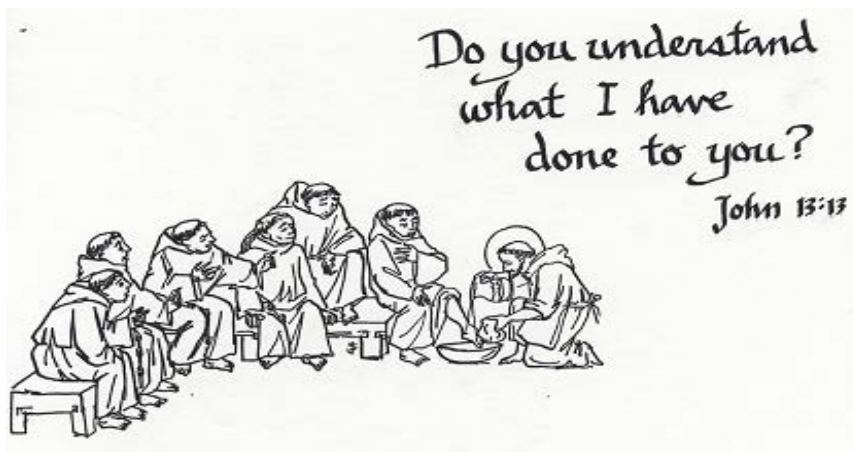
It is important to remember that we're talking about people first. The people matter, not their disabilities. We must

remember to refer to the person. For example, “a person who uses a wheelchair” or “a person who has arthritis” is preferred over “the wheelchair user” or “the arthritic.” The last two describe the disability as the person rather than one aspect of his/her life.

The Research and Training Center on Independent Living, a research-advocacy group from the University of Kansas, says that “words are important because they can shape the public image of people with disabilities.” The words and images we use can create a straightforward, positive view of people or an insensitive view that reinforces common myths and is a form of discrimination.

Francis would not discriminate. All are welcome in his world. Francis was a saint, a peacemaker and a lover of God and all creation.

But he was a brother first.



THE FRANCISCAN THIRD ORDER AND THE PENITENTIAL TRADITION

ELISE SAGGAU, O.S.F.

BIBLICAL GROUNDING: THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

The Judeo-Christian religious tradition rests on an anthropology that sees human beings as creatures in relationship with a Creator upon whom they are absolutely dependent. It understands human fulfillment as recognizing and accepting one's own reality as creature, but as creature-loved-beyond-measure, as creature gifted with freedom to respond in love to the One in Whom "we live, move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). The Hebrew Scriptures are an account of the journey of human beings to an ever greater recognition of who they are and who God is. It is the story of falling and rising, of dying and returning to life. The *historical* books recount the faithfulness of God to promises made to the patriarchs and the faithlessness of the people of God as they repeatedly forget who they are and who God is. The *prophetic* books constantly call the people back to their fundamental vocation: to be witnesses to who God is in relationship with humans. The books of *wisdom* reflect on the responsibility of humans to choose life, the morally good life, in the midst of the often incomprehensible vicissitudes of human experience.

The Hebrew Scriptures then are a primer of conversion. They recount, often in quite dramatic ways, the never-ending need for human beings to turn back, to change their ways, to surrender their own agenda in the face of God's demands, to leave behind their idols and return to the God who made

them, to allow their “hearts of stone” to be turned into “hearts of flesh” (Ez 36:26).

BIBLICAL GROUNDING: THE CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES

Into such a religious and cultural milieu Jesus of Nazareth was born. He was steeped in the history of his people, and the call of the prophets rang in his ears. His first recorded words according to Mark’s Gospel were: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news!” (Mark 1:15). Clearly, Jesus was a reformer, a new prophetic voice in the spiritual desert which was the Israel of that historic moment. He intended that people should change. He proclaimed that a time of personal and social transformation was at hand. The theme of conversion was fundamental to all his teaching and example.

Thus Jesus did not come to “destroy the Law and the Prophets” but to fulfill the work that God had begun among these “*anawim*” of Israel (Matt 5:17). The language of conversion continued throughout the Christian Scriptures and on into the life of the early Church.

Early Church and Conversion of Life

After Jesus’ death/resurrection, his followers needed to cope with a whole new way of being. The paradigm of Jesus’ death and resurrection held enormous power for them, a power released into their own lives by the experience of sacramental baptism/confirmation. This sacrament was a public manifestation of personal conversion of life. Persons who submitted to baptism and received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands were expected to live in a way very different from the way they had lived before and from the way others in the society lived. Thus conversion of life was both personal and social. It necessarily had the effect of a counter-cultural movement.

However, the social pressures of the culture often proved stronger than the personal conversion of the Christian. Those

who sinned seriously and publicly after baptism needed a way to turn back again to a life of faithfulness. Gradually the Church developed specific disciplines that it required for lapsed Christians who wished to be reconciled with the faith community. These disciplines were often quite severe and publicly humiliating. They often lasted for years, sometimes for a lifetime. Eventually, they constituted a “way of life” in themselves, as public penitents were set apart by distinct clothing, by personal austerity, and by social restrictions.

Those who wished to return to the community after serious transgression practiced this penitential “way of life” by prescription. There were others, however, who were not public sinners but who desired to separate themselves more definitively from the dangers of an affluent and indulgent society and to live their Christian lives more austere and intensely. They began to practice the penitential “way of life” voluntarily. Eventually this way of living became recognized, even canonically in the Church, as an “order,” having its own regulations, obligations, and privileges. It was open to both clergy and laity, to married and single, to women and men. It was practiced by persons who lived together in communities, by spouses who remained in their homes, by hermits who sought solitary situations, and by recluses living alone in their own homes or in small dwellings attached to churches. These recluses might or might not be part of a larger, loosely connected group.

The Penitential Way of Life in the Time of Francis

Francis of Assisi was born in 1182 into a society characterized by its Christian identity. Christendom was not just a religious designation, but a kind of generalism. It named a society that understood the Christian culture to be its fundamental underpinnings. Pope and Emperor struggled for political dominance within this context, but even the Emperor was forced to bow to the superior power of the spiritual domain. The Christian religion, then, whether properly understood or distorted by ignorance and superstition, was intrinsic to all aspects of life. Ideas of sin and salvation permeated

the everyday thinking of the populace no matter what their social class.

Over the centuries the Church and its people, as we have seen, struggled with the experience of sin and reconciliation with the Christian body. The penitential life, engaged in publicly, ritualized the return to grace of the public sinner. It also constituted a way of life for many persons who, while not having committed grievous public sin, nevertheless experienced in their lives a compelling desire to live more intensely and publicly a life in close imitation of Jesus Christ and his disciples.

This penitential life, then, whether prescribed by authority for public reconciliation or chosen freely by persons of a more intense spiritual bent, constituted a fairly clear “class” of persons within the Church. From the fifth century this “class” had been recognized in legal documents.¹ And around the middle of the twelfth century, Gratian in his *Decretum* describes the penitents as enjoying the privileges of the clergy. In defense of the penitents’ right to claim exemption from military service, Gratian asserts that juridically “the penitents lived under ecclesiastical authority.”² Gregory VII, the great reformer of the late eleventh century, describes in Homily XXXVI, 11, the motivations of the penitential culture: “a love of solitude and of poverty, of prayer and of detachment, which cause one to use things in a manner whereby he does not become a slave to them.”³ Undoubtedly, “the penitential life [was] one of the most characteristic aspects of medieval society.”⁴

¹ Gillis G. Meersseman, O.P., as quoted by Raffaele Pazzelli, T.O.R., “The Origins of the Franciscan Penitential Movement,” *The Assisi Congress on Formation* (Greensburg, PA: Chas. M. Henry Printing Co., 1979), 133.

² Gratian, as quoted by Pazzelli, “Origins,” 135.

³ As quoted by Andrea Erba, “An Historical-Anthropological Perspective of the Penitential Life in the Early Middle Ages,” *The Assisi Congress on Formation* (Greensburg, PA: Chas. M. Henry Printing Co., 1979), 103.

⁴ Erba, 101.

FRANCIS AS A PENITENT

This being the case, it is not surprising that Francis, after his own personal experience of conversion, should embrace a way of life that was enjoying a resurgence in society and that had a recognizable and even juridic character. It is clear from the legal action brought against him by his father that both Francis and his society recognized that he had entered formally upon a way of life regulated and protected by the Church.⁵ The judgment before the Bishop of Assisi was an ecclesial action because the defendant claimed and was granted ecclesiastical status. According to Lino Temperini: "The first thing to be said is that Saint Francis began his own conversion as a Penitent and this neither can nor should be ignored."⁶ And Cajetan Esser corroborates this:

It is clearly evident that for Francis "doing penance" in the spirit of the Gospel was the God-given beginning of his new life, that he expected his followers to have this as their basic attitude, and that he desired its preservation for all time. With this beginning of his God-centered life, Francis became an integral part of the penitential movement of his day and was, to a certain extent, its culmination. His real objective was man's total conversion to God in absolute, self-transcending obedience. In this sense, "doing penance" was for him the way to the Kingdom of God, which he then wanted to proclaim to all men.⁷

⁵ Cf. Bonaventure, *The Major Legend of St. Francis*, 2:4. (All references to the early biographical sources are from *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vols. 1-3, ed. Regis Armstrong, Wayne Hellmann, and William Short [New York: New City Press, 1999, 2000, 2001]), hereafter referred to as *FA:ED* followed by volume and page number..

⁶ Lino Temperini, TOR, "Penitential Spirituality in the Franciscan Sources," *The Assisi Congress on Formation* (Greensburg, PA: Chas. M. Henry Printing Co., 1979), 185.

⁷ Cajetan Esser, O.F.M., *Origins of the Franciscan Order* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1970), 206-07.

It seems that Francis's life took this definitive turn around 1207 or 1208. Dressed in hermit garb, Francis dedicated himself to restoring old churches and to a life of prayer, fasting and penitential practice. By 1209 or 1210 a small group of men had associated themselves with him. What had begun as an eremitical style of penitential life had in fact become a community of *conversi*. This process was not unusual. The twelfth century shows abundant evidence of the tendency for Penitents to gather, especially around charismatic figures. Unfortunately, many of these groups, through a too-great enthusiasm, made themselves suspect to Church authority, especially when their words as well as their lifestyles began to be critical of the clergy and hierarchy.

Francis, quite aware of the vulnerability of his small group and characteristically desirous of a clearly obedient position, decided to seek papal approval. Together the first brothers sought an audience with Innocent III, a young and energetic pope, who had taken a benign, if not positive, attitude towards contemporary penitential groups. Innocent saw in them possible vehicles for promoting his political and spiritual agenda for the Church, provided they could be controlled and kept free from the heresies that plagued the West at the time.

Consequently, around 1209, Francis and his little band were kindly received by Innocent and given oral approval to live their life of public penitence and to preach penance to others: "Go with the Lord, brothers, and preach penance to all people" (1Cel 33). We note that "the Pope did not grant them a general faculty to preach, it was limited to preaching penance."⁸ Therefore, the new brotherhood received the same kind of approval that was given to other similar penitential groups of the time—permission to live their lives as formal "Penitents" and even to preach penance to others under certain circumstances and restrictions. In exchange, the brothers promised obedience, respect and loyalty to the Pope.

It seems clear then that Francis and his first followers thought of themselves as belonging to an accepted way of life

⁸ Erba, 121.

in the Church called the “penitential life.” Even later, when the Order was well-established in its own right and the process of clericalization well-advanced, we find Brother Giles reflecting on the friars martyred in Morocco as an example of the penitential life: “If we had not the example of the fathers who have gone before us, perhaps we should not be in the state of penance in which we are.”⁹

The New Order and the Penitential Movement

A strong attraction on the part of the laity for a more intense and authentic religious life after the values of the Gospel was “in the air” throughout the twelfth century and into the thirteenth. This hunger was not well-nourished by the official Church and took, as we have seen above, a variety of forms, from individual lives of austerity to full-blown communitarian programs or “orders.” This movement had a chaotic quality to it and went off in many directions, sometimes heretical, most often disobedient and threatening to Church authority. The genius of Innocent III was to harness this spiritual energy for the welfare of the Church. The genius of Francis of Assisi was to recognize the spirit of his times and to set in motion a way of living the Gospels that could be done in an orthodox way by anyone in any walk of life.

For Francis himself this way of life required a radical “leaving the world” (Test 3). His own passion moved him to renounce entanglements with worldly affairs, material possessions and domestic responsibilities. His own personal attractiveness soon drew to him like-minded individuals with whom he formed a new kind of religious way of life, one that eventually became recognized and approved as an Order in its own right. In this Order, Francis was a member. To this Order, Francis was the founder, the original and central charismatic figure whose creative vision shaped and gave energy to the enterprise. The freshness, authenticity and orthodoxy of this new religious Order attracted great numbers of

⁹ *The Golden Sayings of the Blessed Brother Giles of Assisi*, trans. and ed. Paschal Robinson, O.F.M. (Philadelphia: The Dolphin Press, 1906), 74-75.

persons ripe for such a spiritual adventure. The Order grew rapidly. Friars alive with this new spiritual energy traveled the roadways of Europe preaching penance as they had been taught and authorized.

This energy expanded and connected with similar currents in the lives of genuine Christian people hungering for just such a message. However, not all could abandon their worldly responsibilities to pursue the same life-style as the friars. It was inevitable that laypersons should soon be asking for a formula by which to order their lives along the same lines as the friars. No doubt many of these people were already practicing to some extent the penitential life as this had been established in the Church. The spiritual charism of Francis and his brothers infused with new life the ancient penitential "order."

There is reason to believe that Francis took seriously the hunger he perceived among laypersons seeking an authentic Christian way of life. The *Anonymous of Perugia* (IX, 41) states that the people request explicitly

a way of life compatible to the marriage state (secular life style) since [they] "have wives who will not allow themselves to be dismissed." Because of this request, an Order is established which is called the Order of Penitents which has been confirmed by the Pope.¹⁰

In fact a number of sources attest that Francis responded to the desire of lay people by giving them some kind of rule of life.

[Francis], according to his plan, rule, and teaching proclaimed before all, the Church is being renewed in both sexes, and the threefold army of those to be saved is triumphing. To all he gave a norm of life, and

¹⁰ Jeanne Glisky, S.F.P., "An Investigation of the Origins and Development of Third Order Franciscan Communities of Women," unpublished thesis (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1976), 64. CF. *FA:ED* 1, 216-17.

he showed in truth the way of salvation in every walk of life (1Cel I, 37).

And the testimony of Julian of Speyer supports the already existing evidence supplied by Celano that Francis influenced (“*ordinat*”) the establishment of a third order for the clergy and laity in the world. Julian adds an additional dimension to the character of this order by saying, “[It] profitably brings together clerics and laity, virgins, unmarried, and married persons of both sexes” (LJS 4:23; *FA:ED* 1, 385).

In 1230, just four years after Francis’s death, we find in a bull of Gregory IX (*Cum dilecti filii*) the designation: “Brothers of the Third Order of St. Francis.” And eight years later the same Pope, writing to Agnes of Prague says that “Blessed Francis instituted three Orders which are described as the Order of Minor Brothers, that of Enclosed Sisters, and that of the College of Penitents.”¹¹

Bonaventure, himself, in the Order’s official life of Francis, “indicates that it was the preaching of Francis which influenced a great many people to accept a new form of penance according to the plan introduced by him which he called the Order of the Brothers of Penitence.”¹²

Contemporary with Bonaventure’s *Major Legend of St. Francis*, we find as well an outside source attesting to Francis’s role in establishing three orders. According to the *Legenda Monacensis S. Francisci* (1263-1282) written by a Benedictine from the Monastery of Oberaltacch:

*Tres autem Ordines instituit in Ecclesia; primum Fratrum Minorum nominavit ...; Secundus, qui dicitur pauperum Dominarum ...; Tertius dicitur Poenitentum, qui sexum capit utrumque*¹³

¹¹ As quoted by Glisky, 54.

¹² Glisky, 58-59.

¹³ As quoted by Glisky, 60. “He instituted three Orders in the Church; the first he named the Friars Minor ...; the second was called the Poor Ladies ...; the third was called Penitents, which had members of both sexes.” (Translation mine.)

While scholars continue to discuss the actual import of such words as “influenced,” “instituted,” “introduced” and “founded,” there does not seem to be much doubt that because of what Francis did there developed a new way for the laity to live an evangelical life, a way that gradually took the shape of a new order in the Church, a way that was thoroughly imbued with the spirit reflected in Francis and his first followers.

It is clear that in the expression: Saint Francis, founder of the order of Penitence, the words founder and order do not mean the same thing as in the expression: Saint Francis, founder of the order of the Minors. Certainly, Saint Francis and his first companions gave a thrust to the order, that is the penitential state, among the laity, but Saint Francis did not invent this state which existed before him and which he himself embraced before founding the order of the Minors.¹⁴

Pazzelli basically agrees with this view. He acknowledges that Francis benefited very much personally from the penitential movement and gifted the movement with his own “vision of God, of creatures and of life itself.” When others shared that vision with him and lived it out in the penitential state, then the movement itself became “Franciscan.”¹⁵

Francis and his early friars then were instrumental in revivifying and giving new impetus to an ordered way of living the Christian life which had existed for centuries and which already enjoyed a canonical status in the Church. What historians now call the “penitential movement of the thirteenth century” is likely the direct result of the “renewal” work of the friars, the time of it corresponding to the rapid increase in the number of itinerant preachers who identified with Francis’s new way of life. “It is a historical fact [that] around 1215

¹⁴ Gillis G. Meersseman, *Dossier de l'ordre de la pénitence au XIIIe siècle* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1961), 37. (Translation mine.)

¹⁵ Pazzelli, “Origins,” 131, see note 1.

in the urban centers of Italy we note a sudden increase in the number of penitents, even among married persons.”¹⁶

BEGINNINGS OF A RULE OF LIFE

It was probably just about 1215 that Francis composed a letter or exhortation addressed to “All the Faithful.” This document, discovered by Paul Sabatier in Volterra, Italy, around 1900, is now considered the “*Recensio prior*” (earlier version) of the later “Letter to All the Faithful” (or “Admonition and Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance”), which in turn is considered to be the forerunner or “preamble” to the Rule of the Third Order.¹⁷ Esser observes that

both documents ... show in their own uniqueness that Francis was deeply concerned about the Brothers and Sisters of Penance and followed their development with greater sympathy than some historians are still willing to admit.¹⁸

The two versions of the “Letter to All the Faithful” outline a penitential program of life and could very well be Francis’s way of responding to the laity’s supplication for a “form of life” for themselves. The earlier version is very simple, made up of two parts or chapters. The first part describes the blessedness of those who do penance. The second part describes the desolation of those who do not do penance. It is not so much prescriptive as descriptive and would seem to accord with Francis’s humble attitude towards those whom he ad-

¹⁶ Meersseman as quoted by Raffaele Pazzelli, T.O.R., *St. Francis and the Third Order, the Franciscan and pre-Franciscan Penitential Movement* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1989), 102.

¹⁷ P. Fredegand, O.M.C., “Le Tiers-Ordre de Saint François d’Assise,” part 1, *Etudes Franciscaines* 33 (1921): 368. Scholars continue to discuss the order of these two versions of the letter. Cf., *History of the Third Order Regular Rule: A Source Book*, ed. Margaret Carney, Jean François Godet-Calogeras, Suzanne Kush (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2008), 39-40, esp. n.3.

¹⁸ Esser, as quoted by Pazzelli, *St. Francis*, 106.

dressess. He is not asserting any kind of authority on his own part, but relies on the authority of the Scriptural sources he uses, for these he claims are “spirit and life” (1LtF 2:21).

The second version, written around 1220-1221, is much more developed and shows a strong influence of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215). In this longer letter, Francis teaches the incarnational and sacramental doctrine of the Council and emphasizes the importance of remaining orthodox Catholics. Clearly, the penitential life is an ideal way to live an authentic Christian life, but only in the context of the Church, its teachings and its sacramental practice. Even here, however, Francis is not authoritarian.

I, Brother Francis, your lesser servant, with a wish to kiss your feet, beg and implore you in the love that is God, to receive, to put into practice, and to observe, as you should, these words and the others of our Lord Jesus Christ with humility and love (2LtF 87; *FA:ED* 1, 51).

About the same time (1221), there appears a document that seems to be a juridical expression of the directives given by Francis in the “Letter to the Faithful.” This is known as the *Memoriale propositi* and is thought to be the fruit of the combined efforts of Francis and Cardinal Hugolino to give the rapidly growing penitential movement a juridic form. Bernard of Besse, in his *Liber de Laudibus*, says:

In composing the rules and form of life of these Brethren, the Lord Pope Gregory of holy memory, then placed in a lower rank of dignity, and bound by the closest ties of familiarity with the Blessed Francis, supplied what was wanting to the holy man in the science of composition.¹⁹

¹⁹ Bernard of Besse as quoted by Oswald Staniforth, O.S.F.C., *The Third Order of Saint Francis*, three lectures delivered at the Franciscan summer school, Oxford, August, 1928 (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd, 1929), 19.

If this is so, the rule of the Third Order seems to have followed the same general development pattern as the rule of the friars. Francis composed a simple form of life for the friars in 1209, weaving together significant Gospel passages. By 1221, enriched by the experience of living the life and incorporating the directives of Lateran IV, Francis developed the rule greatly. In 1223, this document from the heart of Francis became transformed into a juridical document, which, while preserving the basic content of the earlier rule, lost much of the original spirit in the interests of meeting canonical standards.

So it was with the rule for the penitents. Around 1215 Francis addressed “all the faithful” in a heartfelt and simple document that describes the blessedness of a life of penance and the woe of a life of impenitence. By 1221, with several years of experience and the directives of Lateran IV, Francis had written a much more developed letter to the faithful. Later that same year a rather dry juridical document gave the movement a new canonical status.

Moorman observes that

the content of the *Memoriale propositi* is very pedestrian and unheroic.... All that the Rule does is to set a standard of life, devout, simple, and disciplined. As such it seems a curious document to put before those who were inspired by the spirit of renunciation and adventure which was so vital to S. Francis and to those who followed him. Moreover ... neither Francis nor the First Order is mentioned anywhere, and the Rule might have applied to any association of God-fearing people who wanted to live simply.²⁰

Nevertheless, this rule had the necessary canonical credentials and would serve as the model from which would later be developed a clearly Third Order rule.²¹

²⁰ John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order from Its Origins to the Year 1517* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1988; St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2007), 43.

²¹ Staniforth, 22.

TOWARD A FRANCISCAN THIRD ORDER

Having launched then a newly revitalized penitential life among the laity, Francis and the friars continued to accompany their sisters and brothers in this new way. By the end of the thirteenth century the Franciscan Third Order was known throughout the Christian world, and by the end of the fourteenth century there were great numbers of Franciscan tertiaries. "It is very probable that practically every convent of Friars Minor located in a city or locality of any importance had the direction of a fraternity."²²

In 1289, the Franciscan Pope Nicolas IV, in the bull *Supra montem*, for the first time gave papal approval to a rule specifically designated for the "Brothers and Sisters of the Order of Penance" whose "founder" was St. Francis. By this time, while there were still many who lived the penitential life under other designations, the Franciscan way of living the life of penance was dominant.

Clearly Francis was a driving force in a movement that was to have a tremendous impact on the lives of great numbers of people down through the centuries. The time was ripe for him, for his gifts, for his vision, for his energy. Francis was a Friar Minor, a Lesser Brother, whose fraternity would grow great and serve the vast purposes of the universal Church. Francis was also a penitent, whose participation in the ancient penitential order of the Church would determine to a great extent his fundamental vision of the Christian life. Beyond his brotherhood he would extend that vision to the whole people of God, inviting them to the sweetness of the converted life, the life of the "children of the heavenly Father whose works they do" and the life of the "spouses, brothers, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1LtF 1:7; *FA:ED* 1, 41-42).

²² P. Fredegand, O.M.C., "Le Tiers-Ordre de Saint François d'Assise," part 2, *Etudes Franciscaines*, 34 (1922): 372. (Translation mine.)

CONTEMPORARY THIRD ORDER FRANCISCANS AND THE CHARISM OF PENANCE

In revising the Third Order Rules for our own times, prodigious work went into both the study of the historical roots of the Third Order and consultation about the contemporary experience of those who today profess this way of life. Scholars of the Third Order uncovered its roots in the Church's ancient order of penitents. The fruits of their work have revitalized the notion of "penance" as the fundamental charism of the Franciscan Third Order, both Secular and Regular, and have caused Third Order Franciscans to re-examine the very meaning of a penitential way of life in and for our own times.

In the second article of the 1982 Rule of the Third Order Regular we read:

... the brothers and sisters of this order are to persevere in true faith and penance. They wish to live this evangelical conversion of life in a spirit of prayer, of poverty and of humility. Therefore, let them abstain from all evil and persevere to the end in doing good because God the Son himself will come again in glory and will say to all who acknowledge, adore and serve him in sincere repentance: "Come blessed of my Father ..." ²³

The commentary that accompanies this text asserts that faithfulness to the gospels requires that we do penance *always*, that *metanoia* is central to the Order's spirituality and that penance, as a root value of the tradition, bears fruit in poverty, minority and contemplation. "This article," states the commentary, "is the charism statement of the Third Order Regular." ²⁴

²³ *The Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis* 2, with Commentary by Margaret Carney, O.S.F., and Thaddeus Horgan, S.A. (Franciscan Federation, 1982), 15.

²⁴ *Rule and Life* 15.

There seems little doubt, then, that the Franciscan Third Order, Regular and Secular, finds its historical roots in the ancient penitential movement or “order of penitents,” which in turn finds its roots in the biblical concept of *metanoia*. The more practical issue seems to be: how does a Christian lay-person or vowed religious understand the concept of “penance” today? As it is used in the Rule, it seems to point simply to that turning of life toward God that is the fundamental act of becoming, being and remaining a Christian—a follower of the gospel way of Jesus Christ.

Francis and Clare, as we know, speak of their conversion in terms of a profound awakening in their lives that compelled them to “leave the world.” This language, of course, was and is symbolic for a turning away from the values of a materialistic, selfish and violent society. In their lives it meant something very concrete and practical—a definitive separation from the dehumanizing values espoused by their society and an intense focus on God and the things of God. In practice it computed into radical forms of poverty and a life of contemplative prayer, personal asceticism and humble service of others.

CONVERSION OF LIFE

Examining the concept of “penance” as the fundamental charism of the Franciscan Third Order, one is immediately faced with a host of images that can be fairly off-putting. The asceticism of Francis, Clare and the early followers seems extreme and is intimidating to most twentieth-first-century first-world Christians. The disciplines of the ancient order of penitents requiring the wearing of distinctive clothing, prescribed fasting, continence, regulations about bearing arms, taking oaths, and participating in social and political activities seem archaic, perhaps even repugnant and oppressive. Is there a contemporary understanding of “penance” that gets at the same fundamental experience of conversion or *metanoia* that was intended by the medieval practice?

Clearly, some of the traditional practices were and are today authentic expressions of the gospel way of life, which calls us to turn away from the values of a materialistic and greedy society. Today's fascination with Eastern types of spirituality, for example, leads us to a new appreciation of fasting and living simply, perhaps even austere. New awareness about health and environmental problems directs us to use the things of the earth sparingly and deny ourselves many luxuries and conveniences, though they might be easily available. Violence in our society leads us to "dis-arm" ourselves by refusing to have weapons in our homes or to take on military roles.

To focus on external practices, however, may be to miss the point. Penance understood as conversion or *metanoia* aims at that profound "turning around" that changes us in the very core of our being. It is more than an experience of a changed attitude toward social values. Bernard Lonergan tells us that

Conversion ... is a radical transformation on which follows, on all levels of living, an interlocked series of changes and developments. What hitherto was unnoticed becomes vivid and present. What had been of no concern becomes a matter of high import. So great a change in one's apprehensions and one's values accompanies no less a change in oneself, in one's relations to other persons, and in one's relation to God.²⁵

This description of conversion accords well with the kind of experience to which Francis testifies. In his "Testament" he says:

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

²⁵ Bernard Lonergan, S.J., "Theology in Its New Context," in *Conversion, Perspectives on Personal and Social Transformation*, ed. Walter E. Conn (New York: Alba House, 1978), 13.

them. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body. And afterwards I delayed a little and left the world (Test 1-3; *FA:ED* 1, 124).

Clearly Francis's "turning" was the beginning of what Lonergan describes as the experience "on which follows, on all levels of living, an interlocked series of changes and developments." Such a notion of the life of "penance" points to it as a process, a process rooted in a dynamic relational life. In this sense one never "arrives" at some kind of finish line, but lives daily the life of "turning," renewing over and over the fundamental choice to be faithful. This was true for Francis and for the movement that he set in motion.

For the Christian person the experience of conversion is ideally celebrated in the sacrament of baptism. Experience proves, however, that after this graced moment there follow many other moments when the choice must be made again from ever-new vantage points. From time immemorial there have been Christian people in all walks of life who desired to live this way more intensely and more publicly and to receive the support of a community of like-minded persons.

The historical reality is that innumerable persons wanted to do this after the charismatic example of Francis of Assisi. Twenty-first-century Christians still feel the attraction of this peculiar charism and continue to "run after" this poor little man of Assisi (LF1 10). We who follow the Third Order search our own lives and experiences for ways to express in our times what Francis and his followers expressed so well in theirs. The Rule of Life assists us to recognize and to receive our rootedness in the Church's ancient order of penance, which after all is only a sincere and heartfelt effort to live the gospel life, to surrender ourselves completely to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, to share in his life, passion, death, and resurrection in such a way that our very lives announce and celebrate God's mercy in our own time and place.

GOD'S HOLY NAME

Sing aloud all you birds of the air
Proclaim your praise of God's Holy Name.

All you butterflies dance joyfully before the God who made you
That you may praise God's Holy Name.

Little creatures of the earth that crawl and fly
Lift up your heads and shout,
Praise God's Holy Name.

Trees that rustle at God's command
Shine with all your magnificent beauty,
Proclaim the wonders of God's Holy Name.

You babbling brooks that flow through the land
To rivers and seas and oceans,
Sing the Praise of God's Holy Name.

You flowers and plants of all colors and hues,
Sparkle before the God who made you,
Giving delight to God's Holy Name.

You two-legged creatures,
Bow before the wonders the earth brings forth
In Praise of God's Holy Name.

You two-legged creatures,
Stand before the God who made you
In awe and wonderment.

Shout to the highest heavens the Praise of God's Holy Name.
Shout to God:
Glory and honor and praise for God's Holy Mystery of Love.



Martha Herkness, O.S.F.
Sylvania, Ohio

THE GIFT OF SIGHT

Lift up your eyes to God in praise of His creation,
To see and sense the height, width,
And depth of God's glory of creation.

To see the many colors of blues and greens,
The different hues of color,
The yellow and orange of the sun,
The yellow of the sunflower and daisy,

The many brilliant colors of flowers and berries;
The reflection upon a pond
Giving pleasure from its smoothness and calmness of
water,

Speaking of the different hues and shades of green.

To see a butterfly dance from flower to flower.

To see a moth dance from harm's way to find safety.

To see the deep purple of a morning glory giving praise
to the rising sun.

To see the smile of delight on an older person's face as
we sit and talk.

All this and more, because You, my God
Have given the gift of sight.

Praise be to You for the gift of sight that enables us to
see the wonders of Your creation!

Sister Martha Herkness, O.S.F.
Sylvania, Ohio

BERNARDINO DE SAHAGÚN AND THE GLOBAL REACH OF THE FRANCISCAN INTELLECTUAL TRADITION

KEITH DOUGLASS WARNER, O.F.M.

The retrieval of our intellectual tradition has been among the most exciting initiatives in Franciscan life over the past decade. We can now draw inspiration from the examples of Francis and Clare, but also the philosophical and theological work of Bonaventure and Scotus. As we seek to engage the broader currents of our globalizing world, we have access to a much broader Franciscan vocabulary than in decades past.¹ This essay seeks to expand the topical and geographic extent of the Franciscan tradition by investigating the vocation of Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, a Franciscan Friar and missionary priest who was also a pioneering anthropologist in colonial New Spain (now Mexico).

The Franciscan intellectual tradition is broader than commonly realized; it includes theology and philosophy, but is not limited to these. We should not conceive of our retrieval project as echoing the ideas of Bonaventure and Scotus. Rather, our Franciscan intellectual tradition is an integral and dynamic approach to knowing God, nature and humanity in light of the Gospel and in the spirit of St. Francis.² With this richer understanding of our tradition, we can include the sciences, expand our scope beyond medieval Europe,

¹ William J. Short, O.F.M., "A Franciscan Language for the 21st Century," *Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities Journal* 1, no. 1 (2004).

² Kenan B. Osborne, O.F.M., *The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition: Tracing Its Origins and Identifying Its Central Components* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2003).

and deepen our reflection on what it means to undertake its retrieval.³

For example, Franciscans were active contributors to medieval science.⁴ Bartholomew the Englishman (c. 1203-1272) wrote a medieval encyclopedia to instruct friars preparing for ministry, and this became one of the most important sources of information about nature during the Middle Ages.⁵ Bartholomew's encyclopedia introduces basic information and concepts of the natural world which would help a student understand the metaphorical meanings of creation in Bonaventure's *The Soul's Journey into God*.⁶ Roger Bacon (c. 1220-1294) was an English friar with a passion for investigating the natural world, and he helped establish the conceptual foundation upon which the modern scientific method was built. He insisted science be studied in preparation for theology, and that to reform Christianity, education must be reformed to include study of the natural world.⁷ These friars undertook their study of nature as an expression of their religious vocations, their Franciscan values. Their work contributed to medieval European society's understanding of nature, philosophy and science.⁸

The Franciscan intellectual tradition took its first institutional forms at the Universities of Oxford and Paris, but this tradition was in no way limited to these places, any more than it is to monastery walls. Franciscan spirituality is dis-

³ Kenan B. Osborne, O.F.M., "The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition: What Is It? Why Is It Important?" *Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities Journal* 5, no. 1 (2008), Keith Douglass Warner, O.F.M., "The Incarnation Matters! Retrieving Franciscan Science for Ecological Literacy," *Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities Journal* 8 (2011).

⁴ Edward Grant, *The Foundations of Modern Science in the Middle Ages: Their Religious, Institutional, and Intellectual Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁵ Elizabeth Keen, *The Journey of a Book: Bartholomew the Englishman and the Properties of Things* (Canberra: ANU E-press, 2007).

⁶ Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure: The Soul's Journey into God, the Tree of Life, the Life of St. Francis* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978).

⁷ Brian Clegg, *The First Scientist: A Life of Roger Bacon* (New York: Carroll & Graff Publishers, 2003).

⁸ Warner, "The Incarnation Matters!"

tinguished by its itinerant character.⁹ This is reflected in the global spread of the Franciscan movement through its history. The Franciscan intellectual tradition has been no more geographically stable than have Franciscans. By investigating Bernardino and his intellectual vocation, we can enhance our understanding of our Franciscan intellectual tradition and what it means to retrieve it.

INTRODUCING BERNARDINO DE SAHAGÚN

Fray Bernardino was born in what is now Spain in 1499. He travelled to New Spain in 1529, and spent more than 50 years interviewing and documenting Aztec people about their beliefs, culture and natural history. His primary motivation was to evangelize Indigenous Mesoamerican peoples, yet his extraordinary work documenting Indigenous worldview and culture has earned him the title “the first anthropologist.”¹⁰ He is best known as the author of *La Historia general de las Cosas de Nueva Espana* (in English: the *General History of the Things of New Spain*, hereafter shortened to *Historia general*, commonly referred to as The Florentine Codex).¹¹ It consists of 2400 pages organized into twelve books with over 2000 illustrations. It documents the culture, religious cosmology (worldview) and ritual practices, society, economics, and natural history of the Aztec people. Bernardino’s work evinces three overarching goals:

1. To create a vocabulary of the Aztec language, Nahuatl, to train missionaries to evangelize the Indigenous Amerindians.

⁹ Keith Douglass Warner, O.F.M., “Pilgrims and Strangers: The Evangelical Spirituality of Itinerancy of the Early Franciscan Friars,” *Spirit and Life* 10 (2000), 63-170.

¹⁰ Miguel León-Portilla, *Bernardino De Sahagún: The First Anthropologist* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002).

¹¹ Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain (Translation of and Introduction to Historia General De Las Cosas De La Nueva España; 12 Volumes in 13 Books)*, trans. Charles E. Dibble and Arthur J. O Anderson (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1950-1982).

2. To describe and explain ancient Indigenous religion, beliefs, practices, deities. This was to help friars and others understand their “idolatrous” religion.
3. To record and document the great cultural inheritance of the Indigenous peoples of New Spain as it crumbled under the weight of colonial occupation.¹²

His work can be understood as a five decade long research project investigating a cluster of religious, cultural and nature themes. Perhaps most impressive was his pioneering methodology, for he created new forms of gathering information and validating its accuracy. One scholar described the *Historia general* as “one of the most remarkable accounts of a non-Western culture ever composed.”¹³

Bernardino as a Franciscan missionary and academic

As a teen, Bernardino attended the University of Salamanca (in what is now Spain), which exposed him to the currents of renaissance humanism. The University of Salamanca was then a center for Franciscan intellectual life, and Bernardino joined the Franciscan Friars there. Due to his academic and religious reputation, he was recruited to travel to New Spain as a missionary.¹⁴

Shortly after arriving in New Spain, Bernardino helped found the first European school of higher education in the Americas, the *Colegio Imperial de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco* in 1536, in what is now Mexico City.¹⁵ This became a vehicle for the Franciscans recruiting native men to the clergy, but also a center for Franciscans to study native languages to further

¹² Alfredo López Austin, “The Research Method of Fray Bernardino De Sahagún: The Questionnaires,” in *Sixteenth-Century Mexico: The Work of Sahagún*, ed. Munro S. Edmonson (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), 121.

¹³ H. B. Nicholson, “Fray Bernardino De Sahagún: A Spanish Missionary in New Spain, 1529-1590,” in *Representing Aztec Ritual: Performance, Text, and Image in the Work of Sahagún*, ed. Eloise Quiñones Keber (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2002).

¹⁴ León-Portilla, *Bernardino De Sahagún: The First Anthropologist*.

¹⁵ León-Portilla, *Bernardino De Sahagún: The First Anthropologist*.

their evangelization efforts. Bernardino taught Latin and other subjects during its initial years.¹⁶ Other friars taught grammar, history, religion, scripture, and philosophy. Native leaders were recruited to teach about native history and traditions, which would later stir controversy among conquistadores and colonial officials concerned with controlling Indigenous populations.

The school at Tlatelolco was important for the establishment of Catholic Christianity in New Spain, but it also became an important institution for cultural exchange. Two notable “products” of the school are the first New World herbal, and a map of what is now the Mexico City region.¹⁷ An herbal is a catalogue of plants and their uses, including descriptions and their medicinal applications. The plants are drawn, named and presented according to the Aztec system of organization.¹⁸ It describes where the plants grow and how they can be prepared into herbal medicines, and was likely used to teach Indigenous medicine.¹⁹ The *Mapa de Santa Cruz* shows the urban areas, networks of roads and canals, pictures of activities such as fishing and farming, and the broader landscape context. The herbal and the map display clear influence of Spanish and Aztec cultures; they convey by their structure and style the blending of these cultures.

In addition to teaching, Bernardino spent several extended periods evangelizing Aztecs outside urban areas. Bernardino was first and foremost a missionary, motivated to bring the peoples of the New World to the Catholic faith. His writings reflect this fundamental missionary interest. His intellectual curiosity drew him, and his linguistic gifts allowed him, to learn more about the worldview of the Aztecs. He conducted all his research in the Indigenous language of Nahuatl. In 1547, he collected and wrote down *huehuelatolli*, Aztec formal orations given by elders for moral instruction, education

¹⁶ Nicholson, “Fray Bernardino De Sahagún.”

¹⁷ Donald Robertson, *Mexican Manuscript Painting of the Early Colonial Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 155-63.

¹⁸ William Gates, *An Aztec Herbal: The Classic Codex of 1552* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1939/2000).

¹⁹ Robertson, *Mexican Manuscript Painting*, 159.

of youth, and cultural construction of meaning.²⁰ As a result of these initial investigations, he grew increasingly skeptical of the mass conversions of Aztecs to Christianity. He thought most of them were superficial. Perhaps more importantly, he concluded that most of his fellow Franciscan missionaries misunderstood the basic elements of traditional Aztec religion and cosmology. Bernardino became convinced that only by mastering native languages and worldviews could missionaries be effective.

Anthropological research

Bernardino's life changed dramatically in 1558 when the new provincial of New Spain, Fray Francisco de Toral, commissioned him to write in Nahuatl what he considered useful for the missionary project. This allowed him a more creative, sophisticated and rigorous approach to gathering, analyzing, and presenting his studies of Indigenous language and culture. Subsequently he conducted research for about twenty-five years.

He began his formal research by spending two years conducting interviews with ten to twelve elders of a village about fifty miles from present-day Mexico City. Bernardino questioned them regarding the religious rituals and calendar, family relations, economic and political customs, and natural history. Bernardino recruited and collaborated with graduates of the school at Tlatelolco. They actively participated in the research and documentation over decades. This early work has been named *Primeros Memoriales* ("first memories"), which he would use as the basis for subsequently creating the more ambitious *Historia general*.²¹

Bernardino systematically gathered knowledge from a range of diverse informants who were recognized as having knowledge of cultural tradition. He did so in the native language of Nahuatl, but then compared the answers from different sources of information. He sought out different kinds

²⁰ León-Portilla, *Bernardino De Sahagún*.

²¹ León-Portilla, *Bernardino De Sahagún*.

of informants, including women (which was unusual). Many passages of the texts in *Historia general* present descriptions of like items (e.g., gods, classes of people, animals) according to consistent patterns, and it appears that Bernardino deployed a series of questionnaires to structure his interviews.²² Other parts appear to be the transcription of spontaneous narration of religious beliefs, society or nature. Some sections of text report Bernardino's own narration of events or commentary.

Bernardino was among the first to develop a diverse set of strategies for gathering and validating knowledge of Indigenous New World cultures. In the context of significant uncertainty among Spaniards about Aztec culture, Bernardino created new ways to gather, document, and justify the human knowledge of others. Thus, his work can be considered a pioneering form of social science. Centuries later, the discipline of anthropology would later formalize these as ethnography (the scientific research strategy to document the beliefs, behavior, social roles and relationships, and worldview of another culture, but to explain these within the logic of that culture). Ethnography requires the practice of empathy with those very different from oneself, and the suspension of one's own cultural beliefs in order to understand and explain the worldview of those living in another culture. Even though Bernardino conducted his research before the advent of the modern scientific method, his research activities and his strategies for validating information shared by members of another culture disclose a brilliant epistemology, or philosophy of knowledge.

The *Historia general* is a complex document. It was assembled, edited, revised and appended over decades. Bernardino's goals of orientating fellow missionaries to Aztec culture, providing a rich Nahuatl vocabulary, and recording the Indigenous cultural heritage at times compete with each other within it. A general ordering of his twelve book presentation is as follows:

²² López Austin, "The Research Method of Fray Bernardino De Sahagún."

1. Gods, religious beliefs, moral philosophy and cosmology,
2. Humanity (society, politics, economics, including anatomy and disease),
3. Natural history (animals, plants, rocks, soils and landscapes).

This reflects the late medieval European approach to knowledge.

The manuscript pages are generally of two columns, with Nahuatl, written first, on the right and a Spanish translation on the left. Most of *Historia general* is text, but its 2000 pictures provide vivid images of sixteenth century New Spain.²³ Some of these pictures directly support the text; others are thematically related; others are for decorative purposes. Some are colorful large, and consume most of a page; others are black and white sketches. Half of them represent various elements of the natural world. The illustrations offer remarkable detail about life in colonial New Spain. Several different artists' hands have been identified, and the drawings convey a blend of Indigenous and European artistic influences.²⁴ Bernardino's innovative methodologies were developed in partnership with collaborators, most of whom had been his students. He named them, and described their contributions. Bernardino accorded greater credit to Indigenous collaborators than did any other sixteenth century European researcher.²⁵

²³ To see full color examples of these manuscript pages and their pictures, please refer to the Wikipedia entry on the Florentine Codex: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florentine_Codex

²⁴ For analysis of the pictures and the artists, see several contributions of John Frederick Schwaller, ed., *Sahagún at 500: Essays on the Quincentenary of the Birth of Fr. Bernardino De Sahagún* (Berkeley: Academy of American Franciscan History, 2003).

²⁵ Arthur J. O Anderson, "Sahagún: Career and Character," in *Florentine Codex: Introductions and Indices*, ed. Arthur J. O Anderson and Charles E. Dibble (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1982).

Controversies and genius

Bernardino sent copies of the *Historia general* back to the royal court of Spain and to the Vatican to convey the exotic cultural and environmental context they encountered in the New World, but there is no record of how these were received. He spent his last years editing, translating and revising this monumental work. The Spanish conquest was quite brutal, and European colonial officials were opposed to any effort that might lead to an Indigenous uprising (such as providing them additional understanding). Some of his Franciscan confreres and colonial authorities perceived the *Historia general* to be dangerous, for his documentary project could afford credibility to native voices and perspectives. Bernardino was aware of the need to avoid running afoul of the inquisition, which was established in Mexico in 1570.

His last years were difficult, and some of his final writings disclose feelings of despair. The utopian idealism of the first Franciscans in New Spain was fading while Spanish colonial project continued as brutal and exploitive; millions of Indigenous people died from repeated plagues and brutal oppression. The King of Spain replaced the religious orders with secular clergy, marginalizing the Friars in the colony. The pro-Indigenous approach of the Franciscans and Bernardino became highly suspect with passing years. He died in 1590.

Bernardino's work was essentially lost for about two centuries, until a scholar rediscovered it in an archive library in Florence, Italy (thus its name, Florentine Codex). A scholarly community of historians, anthropologists, art historians, and linguists has been actively investigating Bernardino's work, its subtleties and mysteries, for more than two centuries.²⁶ The *Historia general* is one of the most remarkable social science research projects ever conducted. Bernardino's methods for gathering information from the perspective from within a foreign culture were highly unusual for this time. He reported the worldview of people of Mesoamerica

²⁶ For a history of this scholarly work, see León-Portilla, *Bernardino De Sahagún*.

as they understood it, and not exclusively from the European perspective. "The scope of the Historia's coverage of contact-period Central Mexico Indigenous culture is remarkable, unmatched by any other sixteenth-century works that attempted to describe the native way of life."²⁷ Foremost in his own mind, Bernardino was a Franciscan missionary, but he may also rightfully claim the title as Father of American Ethnography.²⁸

Bernardino's Franciscan spirit

Bernardino has been described as a missionary, ethnographer, linguist, folklorist, Renaissance humanist, and historian and he was all of these.²⁹ Scholars have proposed different explanations for how he was able to engage all these different ways of knowing. Some have pointed to early renaissance humanism he learned at the University of Salamanca. Others have pointed to the intellectual influence of medieval encyclopedias or worldbooks.³⁰ These may have been the source of some of his inspiration, but they do not fully explain his actions and innovations. Few studies reference the influence of his Franciscan vocation, and none investigate him specifically as a Franciscan Friar.

An alternative explanation may be his training in Franciscan philosophy, specifically that of John Duns Scotus and his philosophical anthropology. The philosophy of Scotus is founded upon the primacy of the Incarnation, and was widely taught in Spain during his lifetime. A Franciscan humanistic philosophical anthropology expresses a vision and understanding of what it means to be a human being. In the context of dramatic differences across cultural frontiers such as that in New Spain, a philosophical anthropology

²⁷ Nicholson, "Fray Bernardino De Sahagún," 27.

²⁸ Anderson, "Sahagún: Career and Character."

²⁹ Munro S. Edmonson, ed., *Sixteenth-Century Mexico: The Work of Sahagún* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1974).

³⁰ León-Portilla, *Bernardino De Sahagún*.

guides the thinking and behavior of missionaries.³¹ The pro-Indigenous approach of the Franciscan missionaries in New Spain is quite consistent with the philosophy of Franciscan John Duns Scotus. Several specific dimensions of Bernardino's work (and that of other Franciscans in New Spain) reflect this philosophical anthropology. The native peoples had dignity and merited respect as human beings. The friars were, for the most part, deeply disturbed by how conquistadores abused the native peoples. In Bernardino, his pioneering methodologies and overall ethnographic project, we can perceive Franciscan respect for the human dignity of all peoples, including those perceived to be inferior.

He invested his life's effort in meeting, interviewing, and interpreting them and their worldview as an expression of his faith. He valued them. While others – in Europe and New Spain – were debating whether or not they were human, or even had souls, he was interviewing them, seeking to understand who they were, how they loved each other, what they believed, and how they made sense of the world. In his passion for evangelization, he fell in love with their culture. Even as he expressed disgust at their sacrifices and their "idolatries," he spent five decades investigating Aztec culture. Bernardino is one of the greatest Catholic missionaries of the sixteenth century, and deserves to be recognized along with Bartolomé de las Casas and Mateo Ricci. He was an outstanding pioneer of missionary activity, of scientific investigations in the New World, and in valuing the culture of others.

CONCLUSION: THE GLOBAL REACH OF OUR INTELLECTUAL TRADITION

The witness of Bernardino challenges us to expand our thinking about the Franciscan intellectual tradition. His nat-

³¹ Edwin Edward Sylvest, *Motifs of Franciscan Mission Theory in Sixteenth Century New Spain Province of the Holy Gospel* (Washington, DC: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1975).

ural and social science research helps justify the term “intellectual” tradition. His example demonstrates that our tradition has reached across space, time, and topic. To appreciate the geographic scope of our tradition, we should better incorporate our retrieval project to include the Iberian institutions (e.g., the University of Salamanca), but also evangelization projects in the Americas, Africa and Asia. The Franciscan intellectual tradition did not end in medieval European universities. Further research will doubtless demonstrate that Franciscans brought elements of this intellectual tradition with them wherever they travelled, and that they brought it to bear on their mission.

Bernardino challenges our understanding of the scope of inquiry possible within our intellectual tradition. He pursued research topics that we would today label geography or environmental studies; health sciences; and anthropology. He was very interested in nature, and the largest book in the *Historia general* is devoted to nature. Colonial New Spain was afflicted by many plagues, and he was keenly interested in diagnoses and remedies. Finally, he worked to further what we would call cultural understanding, long before this term was coined. Bernardino was profoundly open to Indigenous ways of knowing, a courageous stance in the context of a brutal colonial project. As the retrieval of our tradition continues into its second decade, we Franciscans would do well to recall the global breadth of interests in our history – in subject and geography.

Bernardino’s example demonstrates that our intellectual tradition is dynamic and evolutionary, organic and holistic. We should avoid the pitfall of conceiving of it in terms of lists of concepts. A suitable metaphor might be of assistance: our intellectual tradition is like the Incarnation. It is alive and responsive, and undergoing growth and development. It consists of an integral body of knowledge, but it also senses the richness and beauty of all creation, and thus, it that can guide our souls ever more deeply into God.

NOW AND FOREVER

Since God's love is now and ever
Since God's love is now
Since God's love is forever now.

Pulling into being, Sun and planets,
Hills and mountains,
Seas and rivers.

Calling into being, Trees and flowers,
Birds and animals,
People of every kind.

God, our Creator, has given you a place among the people:
In our Creator's care,
Felt in every dawn,
Witnessed by the lasting rock
Heard across the valley in a dove's lone cry,
You are guaranteed God's fidelity.

God's same love,
Pledged to Abraham,
Sealed in covenant with Moses,
Ratified in David,
Spoken by the Prophets,
Finally given in God's Son.

Was yours yesterday,
Still is yours today.
Will be yours tomorrow, forever.

Your God has called you,
With heart surrendered,
Using God's eyes to see,
And God's Love to love that
You might bring joy and peace.

You will always walk
In the strength of God's fidelity.
Since God's love is now and ever.
Since God's love is now.
Since God's love is forever now.

Sister Martha Herkness, O.S.F.

BOOK REVIEW

Defense of the Mendicants, Introduction and Notes by Robert J. Karris, O.F.M., Translation by José de Vinck and Robert J. Karris, O.F.M., Works of St. Bonaventure XV (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2010), 423 pp. \$45.00.

Bonaventure of Bagnoregio was crying. No. Better: He was bawling. As soon as the dense smoke emanated from the bottomless pit, polluting the air and darkening the sun, he could not control himself. His tear ducts shifted into high gear and spouted “copious tears.”

Bonaventure was aghast at Gerard of Abbeville’s attempt to define the Franciscans out of the church. The church had its pastoral system, Gerard argued, founded on the Seventy-Two disciples sent forth by the Lord. The system had no room, thank you, for Bonaventure and his brothers. Sure of papal support, as well as of the church’s need, Bonaventure set about dismantling Gerard’s argument. He brought his great learning and his knowledge of the times into play and reread the account of the seventy-two disciples, while updating Dionysius’s understanding of hierarchy. Mastering his sorrow, Bonaventure punished Gerard with his pen. Whether Gerard broke out in tears I do not know. I hope not, for Bonaventure aspired to free Gerard’s mind from a woefully inadequate grasp of the Lord’s exemplarity and of the realities of the times; he offered Gerard (and us as well) his *Defense of the Mendicants*, the *Apologia pauperum*.

Robert Karris, O.F.M., of the Chicago-St. Louis province of the Order of Friars Minor and The Franciscan Institute, has continued his relentless determination to get Saint Bo-

naventure's writings into English by laying before us, in English, Volume XV of the Bonaventure Texts in Translation Series, *Defense of the Mendicants*, the *Apologia pauperum*.

Karris presents Bonaventure's *Defense* of Franciscan life and his translation on pages 1-26. In the pages he explains why Bonaventure wrote the book and what he put into it. He answers several questions that help the reader get into the text and handle its characteristics: Why so many distinctions? How imitate Christ? He has a question of his own: Why read the *Defense*? Well, for general readers, it invites them to look at the struggle in the middle thirteenth century between secular theologians and mendicant theologians. For Franciscan readers, it promotes while explaining the evangelical life.

Our translator proposes, correctly, that his work is both faithful to the Latin text and readable for us today. Yet it is a medieval piece of writing, and for that reason his appendix to the text and his indices are a great help in getting the reader into Bonaventure's style and detail, as well as into its story. As for the appendix (357-86), it gives us a sermon (in translation) preached by Gerard of Abbeville on January 1, 1269. It puts his case against the Franciscans on display. Karris also gives Gerard a hearing (in English) by his many footnotes to the *Defense* drawn from Gerard's *Contra adversarium*. Then, in the three indices (389-423), where he distinguishes between scriptural, ecclesiastical, and philosophic plus canonical references, Karris gives the reader a map for exploring the witness of tradition sustaining and confirming Bonaventure's *apologia*. Karris's reader has in hand, then, a private course on Christian living and medieval church politics. It is a course well worth taking.

David Flood, O.F.M.
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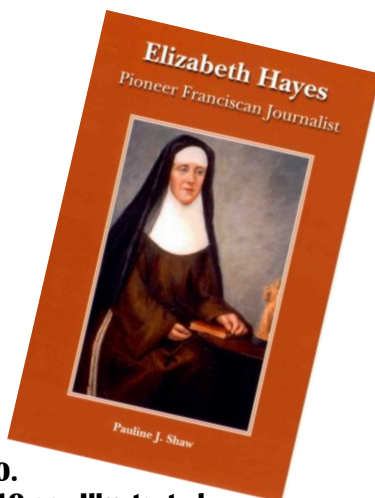
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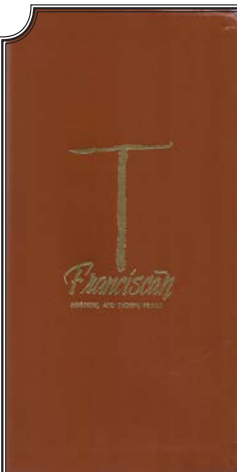
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Father Michael Crosby is a Capuchin Franciscan priest. He has authored seventeen books and his book on the Beatitudes, published in 1981, has had more than 20 printings. All of his latest books have received awards from the Catholic Press Association.



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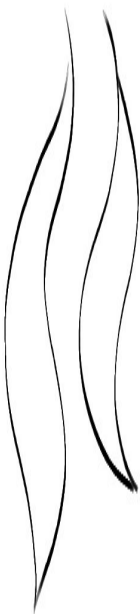
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God's Extravagant Love

Kathleen Bishop, SFO and Team

***July 10-14 Week II**

Poverty

The Poverty of Being Human

Michael Copps, OFM

Humility in the Cantic of the Sun

Clare Knowles, TOR

Francis and Clare: Models and

Metaphors of Servant Leadership

Mary Elizabeth Imler, TOR

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Conversion

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Colin Wilford, SSF

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Conversion: A Journey Into Light

Frances Teresa Downing, OSC

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Rule and Life of the Brothers and

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WEEKS 1-5: June 27-July 29						
560	3	Introduction to Franciscan & Medieval Studies	T,W,Th : T,Th 8:30-11:20 a.m. Wed 6:45-9:30 p.m. T,Th: Upper Library Seminar room Wed eve: Library Computer Lab - basement	Cyprian Rosen, O.F.M. Cap		Core
507	3	Early Franciscan Movement	M,W,F 8:30-11:20 am	Michael F. Cusato, O.F.M.		Core
528	3	Pre-Franciscan Religious Movements	M,W,F 1:00-3:50 pm			History
WEEK 2: July 4-July 8						
527	3	Rule of the Third Order Regular	M-Fri 1:00-3:50 pm M-Fri 7:00-9:00 pm	Margaret Carney, OSF	507	Sources
WEEKS 2,3,4: July 4-July 22						
518	3	Franciscan Hagiography	M-Fri 1:00-3:50pm	Jean-Francois Godet-Calogeras		Core
538	3	Development of the Franciscan Person	M-Fri 1:00-3:50 pm	Edward Coughlin, OFM		Elective
558	3	Readings in Franciscan Theology: Peter Olivi	M-Fri 8:30-11:20 am	Joshua Benson, Ph.D..	546	Theology
567	3	Franciscan Studio Painting	M-Fri 8:30-11:20 am	David Haack, OFM		Elective
564-03	3	Special Topics: Franciscan Obedience in Context	M-Fri 8:30-11:20 am	Jens Røhrkasten, Ph.D.	507	*Elective
597	None	Comprehensive Exams				
505	None	Integration Project				
ONE-WEEK ENRICHMENT COURSES – Week 1: June 27-July 1						
564-01	1	Saints and Cinema: The Portrayal of Francis and Others in Film	M-Fri 8:30-10:15am Plus evening film component: M-Th 7:00-9:00 pm	Paul Spaeth, MA, MLS		Elective
564-02	1	Franciscan Leadership in a Time of Crisis	M-Fri 1:00-3:50pm	David Couturier, O.F.M. Cap.		Elective
GENERAL ORIENTATION COURSES – June 27-July 8 & July 11-July 29						
501	3	Survey of Franciscan History July 11-July 29	M-F 8:30-11:20am	Fr. Maurice Carmody		Elective
520	2	Francis: Life and Charism June 27-July 8	M-F 8:30-11:20am	Mary Meany, Ph.D.		Elective

*This course can be used for the History track, with permission of the Dean prior to registration.

PRE-REQUISITES for all courses are waived for auditors

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DAVID B. COUTURIER, OFM, CAP., is the Director of Planning for the Archdiocese of Boston. He is the former Dean of the School of Theology at St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore, MD. He served for several years as President and Board Member of Franciscans International, the NGO at the United Nations. He teaches applied spiritual theology at the Pontifical Antonianum University in Rome and courses in Franciscan formation at St. Bonaventure University. He is the author of *The Fraternal Economy: A Pastoral Psychology of Franciscan Economics* and *The Four Conversions: A Spirituality of Transformation*.



564-01: Saints and Cinema: The Portrayal of Francis and Others in Film

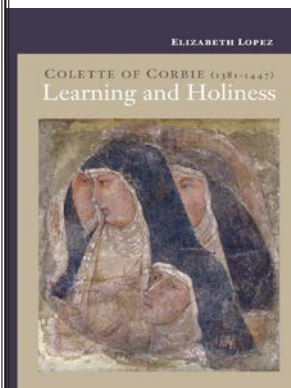
Taught by: Paul Spaeth, M.A., M.L.S.

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PAUL SPAETH is the Director of the Library & Special Collections Librarian at St. Bonaventure University. He is a 1987 graduate of the Franciscan Institute, where for years he taught the Research Methods course. In more recent times he has taught honors classes dealing with film, literature & religion. Among other publications he has been active in editing and promoting the writings of the poet Robert Lax.

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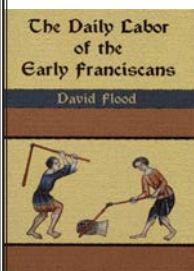
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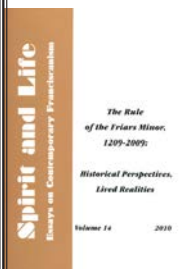
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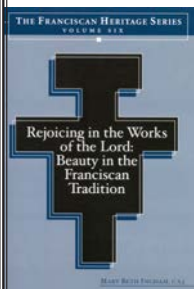
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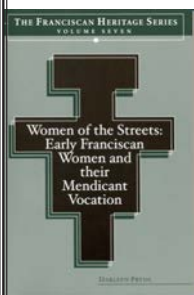
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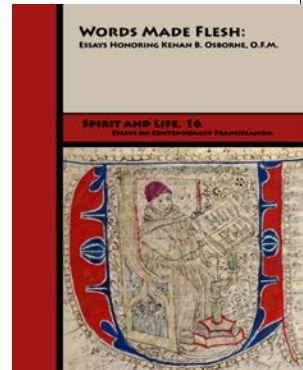


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