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#### **FRANCISCAN PATHWAYS**

The Franciscan Institute

St. Bonaventure University

St. Bonaventure, NY 14778

**MARCH, 1984** 

# The CORD

## A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW



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Volume 34, No. 3

### The CORD

#### A Monthly Franciscan Spiritual Review

Editor: Fr. Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M. Associate Editor: Fr. Julian A. Davies, O.F.M.

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## Standard Abbreviations used in **The CORD** for Early Franciscan Sources

#### I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun
EpAnt: Letter to Saint Anthony
EpCler: Letter to Clerics¹
EpCust: Letter to Superiors¹
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful¹
EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo
EpMin: Letter to a Minister
EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order
EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People
ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God
ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father
FormViv: Form of Life for Saint Clare

Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221
LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God
LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours
OffPass: Office of the Passion
OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix
RegB: Rule of 1223
RegNB: Rule of 1221
RegEr: Rule for Hermits
SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady
SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues
Test: Testament of Saint Francis
UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare
VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy
'I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

#### II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis 2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis 3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles CL: Legend of Saint Clare CP: Process of Saint Clare Fior: Little Flowers of Saint Francis

LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis LP: Legend of Perugia L3S: Legend of the Three Companions SC: Sacrum Commercium SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., Saint Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of Saint Francis (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., Francis and Clare: The Complete Works (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

**EDITORIAL** 



## What Does Observance Mean Today?

7E HAVE SEEN in these pages (September, 1983) an impressive WE HAVE SEEN IN these pages tooptomes, appraisal of the Conventual tradition and its contribution to Franciscan spirituality, thought, and activity. This made one ask, What then of "observance" and all of those, saints and sinners, to whom in the past this term was more than a shibboleth? The Oxford Dictionary might give only one meaning for the noun "observant," namely, "member of stricter branch of Franciscans"; but at the end of the last century, when that larger group of friars which descended from the Observance enfolded in its bosom the remaining smaller reform groups, it was decided to drop labels that suggested particular expressions of strictness (as that term had been understood). There was to be just the Order of Friars Minor which, with the Conventuals and Capuchins, would go to form the First Order in its three branches. It is a moot point whether people are either to regard as regrettable the continuing threefold division of the friars, or to applaud it as a situation which preserves a healthy tension and occasions mutual enrichment. It might also be asked whether in the present climate, taking due account of the historical circumstances, the jurisdictional separation ought not to be viewed as a viable form of Franciscan pluralism.

More relevant is whether friars (of whichever or each branch) still possess a "reform consciousness." The Conventuals, after all, would attest to a progressiveness and development on their part, stressing the "community charism," and significantly transfusing the cultural domain with Franciscan ideas. Capuchins would agree that an eremitical-apostolic thrust of a peculiar brand is in their spiritual blood-stream. Development there has always been; and closely allied to development is the notion of renewal. Analogous to the ecclesiological axiom, ecclesia semper reformanda, is the keep-

ing alive by Franciscans of the consideration that the Order ought never to rest on its oars, but rather to be constantly undergoing renewal; we also need experience and expression. Experience has been at least one of our best teachers. Expression through vital activities or life forms has always been a charismatic compulsion with us. Many have been at pains to explain this last point, which hinges of course on our special contribution to Christian spirituality and our part in the Church's mission.

Everybody in recent times, from Paul VI, through Constantine Koser and Eloi Leclerc, to Leonardo Boff, has been telling us we must (all of us or some of us?) insert ourselves into neighborhoods of the poor, actively concern ourselves with the marginalized. This, if our renewing, our reappraisals, and our reform notions are to be anything more than exercises in self-contemplation. That this is easier to proclaim in words than to universally implement in practice, even our mentors would not deny. But it means thinking in terms of being sent to bring good news to the poor. It is implied that formation (and re-formation) in the Order's charism must now, as it did in the best periods of the past, dovetail with the Church's evangelization and mission. This, surely, is to observe—in the double sense of to keep and to perceive.

Generous, and risky, involvement with all those starved of good news characterized the historic Observance at its peak. Few would disclaim that there we had a bold enterprise which sought an honest marriage between fidelity to the Rule's simplicity and austerity and a venturing on to new levels of evangelical influence. One has but to think of the inspiring zeal of such characters as Bernardine, Capistran, James of the Marches, Albert of Sarteano. But one should also recall the many who were neither priests nor preachers, but whose life and deeds were so full of robust humility.

As for today, strictly speaking (!), we do not need to elaborate a liberation theology for our own use; what we must do is live our minority in a style that is significantly simple, our fraternity so that it is not a secure and comfortable corporation, but a swarm of mutual service and charity, of healing and gladness. It is the life that matters, in this as in every century. In this issue, two friars address themselves from different angles to the problems of Franciscan identity. They examine our sources and the way we must look at them if they are to help the friar with his role in the modern world and be an essential part of formation, continuing education, and per-

sonal and corporate renewal. Confusing self-appreciation with spiritual chauvinism lulls too many of us into a conformism that blunts the edge on Franciscan living and working today. To be sure, in the realm of action we cannot claim to be able to go it alone, particularly in the pastoral and missionary fields, for now no Order is a perfect island. But surely our existence in the Church as a distinct religious family is justified only if we bring our unique charism to bear on all we do, either on our own or in cooperation with others. It is, however, in regard to our life, including our education and formation, that we ourselves have a duty not to neglect its special qualities: should we neglect them, nobody else may feel bound to succor our deficiencies.  $\Omega$ 

## Hymn for Lent

Forty days is a long time to go without bread. In forty days, a man could be dead if he had nothing to live on.

I am the Bread of Life . . . .

In Ireland, there were men who embraced starvation like a wounded comrade, like an old friend come back from the grave.

He who comes to me shall not hunger . . . .

In the desert of the heart, the spirit wrestles death. In the shadow of the cross, the tomb beckons; draw on the darkness of the night.

And I will raise Him up . . . .

Sister Edmund Marie Stets, C.S.B.

## Twisted Roots and Muddied Sources

COLIN GARVEY, O.F.M.

H, SAINT FRANCISI He's the saint who used to wander through the woods, and preach to the birds, and talk to the animals. There is a story about the wolf, isn't there? And he called the sun and moon his brother and sister. But you're not like him. You're not like him at all."

How often have we heard such things! How often have we been measured against the image of the Fioretti Saint Francis, and found disappointing! How often have we had to hear ourselves dismissed as the people who betrayed Saint Francis, and benefited from a travesty of his life.

In the heady days of Aggiornamento, we were all being told to go back to our roots, to discover again the charism of our founder, and to make it present once more in our world. There was nothing new about the idea, of course. In the 1950's, when I was in what is called "formation," such thoughts were common. We were being encouraged to go back to our roots, to study the writings of Saint Francis and the history of the Order, and to draw therefrom inspiration and encouragement for the task we would have to undertake.

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#### **Problems: Saint Francis**

BUT PERHAPS we did not appreciate sufficiently the problems of going back to the beginning, to find the original charism of the founder. The idea people had of this was of going back to a pure and clear fountain and using that as a source for renewal, and a standard by which to measure what we were doing. This would work very well for an order whose founder was a man who had set out his ideas clearly and copiously, and had embodied them in laws and structures which were comprehensive, and had been carefully supervised by himself. Saint Ignatius did this, and from what I hear, Mother Teresa of Calcutta seems to be trying to do the same today.

The simple formula of going back to the sources to renew the life of the Friars Minor is not so clear as many suppose.

But Saint Francis, even though he may have been a better organizer than he has been given credit for, was a very different kind of person. He started the Order, and presided over its development for the first few years, probably in a fairly hit or miss way, because he had nothing of the bureaucrat about him, and had a keen desire to be on the move himself with the message of the Gospel. He was more concerned with living the Gospel than with organizing others to live it. At first, it seems he accepted followers into the movement without any probation, until the Holy See insisted very wisely on a novitiate. It is all very well for a man to give away all he owns to the poor, but if it happens that he is found unsuitable for Francis' society, after some time, his last state will be very much worse than his first.

Francis' personal influence was of paramount importance, and remained so, but when the order grew rapidly, Francis was, it seems, unable to grasp the need for a change in his style of governing it. He was like a man whose family business had mushroomed into a chain store, but was still trying to run it as if it were a small family business. His personal style was autocratic, volatile, harshly ascetic, tender and loving, and above all marked by a charm and inspiration and transparent sincerity that overcame all opposition to him. It was, one might feel, an insidious gift, because it left too many issues unresolved.

At any rate, he lost control of the movement. His saying, "Would that there were fewer friars minor," seems to indicate the anguish he felt.¹ He got a bad shock when he learned what was happening while he was away in the Holy Land, and the Order was in the hands of the ministers, Gregory and Matthew. When he returned, he handed over the government of the Order to Peter Catanii.² It is to be doubted whether Peter had any greater success in shaping the development of the movement. In any case, he had very little time, for he died soon after. He was followed by Elias, who does seem to have taken control more firmly, and to have managed the affairs of the Order very efficiently, negotiating with the Holy See, the bishops, and the able men of the Order who had come to the fore in different regions of the Order, the people who are known in the early sources as "the ministers."

#### Founder versus Followers

A SIGN OF THE WAY things were is the incident of Francis setting aside and disobeying the decree of the ministers about not eating meat on Fridays, even if it were Christmas Day. Here was the founder of the movement subverting lawful authority in the movement, and giving the dangerous precedent to future generations of setting up the charism of the founder against this lawful authority.

The estrangement of Francis from aspects of the movement he had begun was not healed but rather developed in the last years. Thus we have the stories of the conflict between himself and the ministers over

<sup>1</sup>2Cel 70: "Paupertati cavens homo Dei multitudinem metuebat." This is in the context of poverty and reveals the Saint's fear lest uncontrolled numbers and visibility might give the impression of being well off.

<sup>2</sup>This appears to have happened in 1220, although earlier dates are not impossible. Peter died in March, 1221.

Francis seems to have surrounded himself in the last years with a band of like-minded disciples, Leo, Angelo, Ruffino, and others, and to have formed a kind of enclave within the Order. When in due course their stories were written down, they became the prime source for information about Francis and his outlook and inspirations. And the tension between the wishes and interests of Francis and what was actually happening in the Order was not concealed. Indeed, Rosalind Brooke in her fine book on the writings of the early companions suggests that Leo may have invented some details of the encounter between Francis and the ministers about the Rule at Fonte Columbo.<sup>4</sup>

#### Development of the Movement

THE FRANCISCAN MOVEMENT was, of course, developing in its own way. It was a very successful movement, and it attracted great numbers of men, some very able, and others, as one would expect, half mad. A good number seem to have joined the movement, not because of Saint Francis, but rather because it was new and exciting, and held promise of accomplishing great things. As evidence of this, one could cite Jordan of Giano, who in his chronicle makes it clear that he was not at all overawed or even impressed by Francis at the beginning, and only much later, after his death, realized how great he was (Jordan of Giano, Chronicle, 59). By then he had become the crucified Seraph of Assisi. Others who joined the Order, like Haymo of Faversham in Paris, may have been moved by the reputation of Francis, but would probably have had no desire to imitate his rather eccentric life-style.

The movement of the Friars Minor was a great movement of renewal and regeneration of Christian life in the 13th Century, and the Holy See was quick to see the potential of what Saint Francis had

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Cf., e.g., Test 27: "And I firmly wish to obey the minister general of this fraternity and any other guardian whom it might please him to give me"; and Test 38: "And I through obedience strictly command. . . ."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Rosalind B. Brooke, ed., Scripta Leonis, Angeli, et Rufini (Oxford: Oxford Medieval Texts, 1970), 66.

started. Possibly, no one ever thought that the movement should be modeled on Francis' own life-style, though Francis himself in his later years seems to have become more and more obsessed with his role as "forma et exemplar" for the friars. Anyhow, the brethren undertook the task of renewing and transforming the whole Christian life of the 13th Century, and very soon outgrew the humble life of labor and witness in the hillside towns of Umbria and Tuscany. They were to be found at the papal Curia, in the episcopal sees, crowding into the universities, undertaking diplomatic missions, preaching, teaching, organizing, administering and doing every task to which they were called.

#### Contradictions

IT WAS A FAR CRY from the simplicity of the early days, when Francis wandered about preaching and singing along the roads of Italy, begging his way and spending days and nights in prayer. The contrast or contradiction between the two ways of life was highlighted in a few areas in particular.

There was, for example, the contrast between the simplicity and indeed ignorance of the first friars, and the learning of those who went to the universities. There was the contrast between the dwellings of the early friars, Rivo Torto and the Porziuncula, and the solid and even splendid buildings the friars had now. The spectacle of the Porziuncula inside the great Basilica makes this point rather too obviously today. And there was the contrast between the little man Francis, living a simple humble life with his brethren, and the Minister General of the Friars Minor, who lived near the Pope, was a reliable and trusted assistant in managing church affairs, and had at his disposal a supply of energetic, able, and obedient friars who could be relied on to carry out the designs of the Holy See. Such a position gave power and influence, and the Minister General had a place in the company of the ... great prelates who administered the affairs of the Church. To suppose that such a man should be "simple and subject to all," as Francis wanted his friars to be, would be absurd. He was responsible for a great number of his brethren, and his task was to act with wisdom and prudence, and to take care of their interests.

There was a contrast, too, between the simple life in the towns and villages of Umbria, and the vast multi-national organization whose operations reached all over the Christian world and out beyond its borders. The friars would know what was happening in England and Ireland, in Spain, France, Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Greece, in

Morocco, Algiers, Palestine, Egypt, and even in Cathay and Mongolia, as they travelled, reported, sent messages, conducted negotiations, and tried to spread the Gospel. They were a force to be reckoned with.

And, of course, there was the contrast between the poverty of the early days, and the way of life of the friars who joined the large, successful, and influential organization that arose from those humble beginnings. This organization had grown up very speedily, and had acquired the basic skill of providing for itself by its labors and the help and support of those who believed in what the friars were doing. People who are genuinely detached from wealth and avoid accumulating it, attract wealth more than anyone else, and their credit rating is very high.

#### Contradictions in Saint Francis

THE ORIGINS OF THESE contradictions can be seen easily enough in Francis himself. For example, he wanted his brethren not to have any house or place or anything else. But on May 8, 1213, he accepted a whole mountain as a gift from Count Orlando. One wonders if he realized that his followers, when pressed hard by nobles and city councils and even kings to accept places and houses which they had built for the friars, might not follow his own example in this, particularly if they occupied them without formally owning them.<sup>5</sup>

Again, as regards poverty, Francis never ceased to live a poor and ascetic life. But when his Order developed, he was no longer really poor or at risk. For example, when his health broke down, he could get the best medical care available. God knows, Francis might have been better off without it. But it was available to him. Nowadays he would have been flown to the States, to be treated at the best clinic in the world, and probably get it free. Mother Teresa could get the same, couldn't she?

By the end of his life, Francis was surrounded by admirers and devotees who counted it an honor to care for him and serve him—this man who was a friend of popes, who was admired and sometimes followed by the nobility of Europe, who impressed the Sultan and was the talk of Europe. He was no longer one of the poor, living from hand to mouth, not knowing where the next meal would come from. The detachment and the asceticism were as great as ever, but the poverty

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Cf. 2Cel 57-58. The arrangement may be thought to encourage double-think.

was already a fiction. If wealth equals credit, Francis of Assisi was a multi-millionaire.

As already mentioned, Francis wanted his friars to be "simple and subject to all," in exemplary obedience. But Francis himself never really had to live under obedience from the time he left his father's shop and home. He had absolute authority over his followers, who willingly accepted his dictatorship, capricious and harsh as it was at times. And even though he was under total obedience to the Pope, he had no hesitation about offering the most stubborn resistance when he wanted to control the writing of the Rule. At the end of his life, his prestige was such that he could make the most extravagant protestations of obedience, but be in fact completely outside obedience and impose commands under obedience on others without authority to do so.

Again, Francis was anxious that his friars avoid seeking favors at the Roman Curia, in the form of privileges or briefs. But was he not the one who set the example of going right to the top to look for papal approval at the very beginning? And didn't he have influential friends among the cardinals? And didn't he ask for a special cardinal of his own, to govern, protect, and correct the friars? Provided, of course, he did it the way Francis wanted it! He seems to have wanted to be a humble outsider and a privileged insider at one and the same time. And being inside implied, whether he realized it or not, influence and power and opportunity for men of ability and intelligence and ambition.

#### Implications of these Contradictions

IF THE FRANCISCANS are to go back to their roots, the question arises immediately: "What roots?" Are they to try to recapture the life-style of Francis and his first followers, from about 1209 to 1219, setting themselves up in abandoned sheds and churches, which are not so plentiful in our overcrowded world, anyhow? Are they to become beggars and laborers, living out in the woods and the wilds? Perhaps a few people could do that again, but not in the context of the Franciscan Order as it is. What should they do, then? Adopt the life-style of the 1220's, and try to reproduce that? Does that mean the personal life-style of Francis and his friends, who seem to have withdrawn more and more from the general development of the Order? Or the

life-style of the main body, as it was developing under the leadership of the "ministers"?

A simple—too simple—answer would be, "Why not try living the Rule approved by Pope Honorius? The question still remains: Does one live it as Saint Francis seems to have wanted and indicated in the Testament, or does one live it in the way the Friars Minor interpreted it? Are we supposed to be Franciscans or Friars Minor? Are the two compatible?

One thing is reasonably sure: there won't be another Francis Bernardone, that irritating, inspiring, exasperating, lovable, unpredictable, harsh, and wonderful man. His personal magnetism and inspiration, which could make acceptable the most bizarre and eccentric practices, will not be around again. And his personal style of living can be followed only at great risk, and certainly not within the movement he founded.

#### Implications of the Primitive Life Style

FOR MANY FRIARS TODAY, the only honest way to follow Francis is to adopt the life-style of the early friars, the golden years of the movement, roughly from 1209 to 1219, recounted so memorably in the Fioretti and their sources, the Legend of Perugia and so on. Life in the Fioretti is exciting, full of marvels and adventures, heroic journeys to exotic places, and wonderful encounters with popes and princes, with robbers and bandits and heretics. And above all, there is the magnetic, dynamic, and inspiring personality of Francis, and the quasi-divine seal placed on his life and work by the stigmata.

If the authentic way to follow Francis is to adopt that life style, I think one should be logical about it, and accept that the kind of life envisaged is one of a predominantly lay brotherhood, uneducated for the most part, and being content with a very simple preaching, a simple life of labor and humble witness among simple people. Such a way of life would be harsh and monotonous, requiring great powers of physical and psychological endurance, without the excitement of rapid expansion, or the presence of great princes and prelates to provide stimulation or encouragement, or the magical personality of Francis to lead and inspire. It would be a very cramping way of life, and allow very little scope for development. A person of great intellectual gifts, for instance, would have no opportunity to develop them, and an illiterate person would get no encouragement to learn to read and write. There would be no opportunity to develop on the higher levels of musics or art, science or literature. A person of ad-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Cf. Fior 30: the incident where Rufino is sent to preach half-naked, without his habit.

ministrative gifts would get very little opportunity to use them. It would be a narrow, close-knit community, living a simple and harsh life, playing no part in, and ignored by the great world of popes and princes, devoted strictly to maintaining the purity and rigor of its way of life, settling in poor and abandoned places, and content with hard labor, poverty, and ignorance.

Even to maintain such a community would require a great deal of skill and luck. One of the hazards of a community of ignorant and uneducated people, is that they tend to produce from time to time very forceful people with strange ideas. I think we tend to underestimate the difficulties the early Franciscans had with such characters. The first friars tended to be pretty undiscerning about their recruiting, and to have had more than their share of crackpots. There was, for instance, Fra Giovanni di Cappella, who left the Order and hanged himself. The Fioretti compare him to Judas Iscariot, but one supposes the poor fellow was "of unsound mind."

With luck, that kind of organization might have lasted a few generations in the villages and towns of Umbria, and even further afield. It would have preserved to some extent the charism of Francis, and done good work in reminding the people of God of the Gospel. It might also have come to grief, like so many of the other popular movements of the time, and ended up in heresy and opposition to the Holy See.

#### The Order Which Developed

THE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR, however, turned out to be something quite different. Francis started the movement, and formed and directed its early development. But, as he ruefully acknowledged once, he didn't own it, and it soon took on a life of its own, and developed a scope and a comprehensiveness that far exceeded Francis' own personal vision, and that also developed his ideals in ways he found hard to accept (See LP 86, quoted at the end of this article). His last years were saddened by the way his offspring developed, but it was obvious that, for all his greatness, the movement had outgrown him. The Friars Minor have never ceased to venerate him and love him as their founder, but they could not accept his limits to their development.

The Holy See was, of course, a main agent in this. Francis' success

That is the Order that has played a distinguished and often heroic part in the history of Europe. It produced great philosophers and theologians, lawyers, scientists, mathematicians, musicians, missionaries, bishops, cardinals and popes, artists, sculptors, architects, and, above all, saints, in an astonishing variety and abundance.

#### Saint Bonaventure's Role

SAINT BONAVENTURE IS often credited, and more often blamed, as the man who shaped the Order in the way it developed. People have often made the contrast between the Order of Bonaventure and that of Francis—indeed, I heard this when I was only a novice. Bonaventure has often been called the second founder of the Order. He has even been called the founder of a second Order, by J. H. Moorman. Such descriptions would have been utterly repugnant, and even perhaps incomprehensible to Bonaventure himself. He was very clearly aware of the development of the Order, from the simplicity and poverty of the early days, to the later developments. It was, he wrote, one of the things which attracted him to the Order, that like the Church, which had started from a group of humble fishermen and became the great organization of later times, so the Order had grown from the primitive simplicity of the first friars to the great organization it later became (Cf. Opera Omnia, VIII, 336).

In fact, as Rosalind Brooke has shown very well in her excellent book on Early Franciscan Government, Bonaventure's achievement was nothing like a new foundation of the Order, but rather the culmination of a process that was happening from Francis' own lifetime, a process that had been notably furthered by the great hero of the Spirituals, Blessed John of Parma, who himself proposed Bonaven-

<sup>&#</sup>x27;See Chapter III of K. Esser's Origins of the Franciscan Order, for difficulties of the early days.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>He is thus described in a hymn of the Office for his Feast. I once heard that very fine scholar, Father Ignatius Brady, say that he regarded this expression as inaccurate, although he himself once used it.

ture to the General Chapter of 1257 as a successor, saying that he knew no better man in the Order.

I was rather shocked one day, many years ago, when a rather scholarly confrere "I hate Saint declared. Bonaventure." I asked him why, and he said it was the burning of the books. After he had written the Legenda Major, he ordered all the other Lives to be destroyed, so that his own version would prevail. It was a shrewd move, not unprecedented in his time, designed was and it presumably to prevent something he feared, namely the entrenchment of a group within the Order who saw the developments that had taken



place since the death of Francis as a travesty and a betrayal of everything Francis had stood for. Bonaventure knew who they were well enough, and had presumably spoken to them. He feared they would divide the Order, and prudently decided he would forestall that development.

He had a great measure of success. Most of the mansucripts were destroyed, and the rest disappeared underground, so to speak, for a long time. Under Bonaventure's leadership, the Order was going from success to success. He was obviously a great man, intellectually brilliant, very able in administration, and outstanding in holiness. The Order was attracting some of the greatest talent of the age, and it basked in the approval of the Holy See.

But the problem of the Order's identity remained, and the little band of Saint Francis' companions and their followers kept alive the founder's wish for a poor, humble, and unlearned following of Christ, led by simple laymen living in small hermitages and poor dwellings, preaching penance and giving witness, eschewing learning and the wealth it required and the power it brought. And perhaps the suppression of the manuscripts was not such a good idea either, because although they nearly disappeared in their original form, they flourished in a transmuted form in the Fioretti, for example, and in The Mirror of Perfection. The terrible chapter on Bonaventure in the Fioretti is, one may suppose, a kind of revenge of history (Fior 48). But, of course, it is absurd to personify history in this way, as the Marxists do.

IN BRIEF, THEN, Francis of Assisi started a movement which rapidly outgrew him in vision, in scope, and in life-style. He was bewildered by what was happening, tried to halt it, and when he saw that he was failing and his health was collapsing, he seems to have withdrawn into a kind of exile with a few chosen companions, and to have fought a kind of rear-guard action against the developments that were taking place. The Testament has to be seen as a last desperate effort, but when Francis wrote it, it was already an anachronism. He was no longer in charge.

After his death, respect and veneration for Francis increased and multiplied, and the new movement spread like wildfire through the whole world, untrammeled by Francis' opposition. This is not to say that the friars ignored his ideals. Far from it. But they did translate them into new and original forms that Francis never envisaged. The Order continued to cherish poverty and simplicity and the observance of the Holy Gospel, especially in the hermitages and poor remote places which still exist today. But now it found expression in the world of learning, popular missions, foreign missions, trades, professions, music, painting, the arts, and even in credit unions and other areas of life. And this, as I said already, is the Franciscan movement that has played such a large part in the culture of Europe.

#### A Possibility Unrealized

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN the life-style Saint Francis wanted, and the life-style of the Order as it developed might have been averted if it had been accepted that both were real ways of following Francis. Wouldn't it have been fine if it had been accepted that those who wanted to live in hermitages and caves and poor and abandoned churches, and wanted to live a life of witness, and engage in a simple preaching of penance could do so, while those who wanted to serve the Church and

<sup>9</sup>2Cel 157: "Mainly on this account [the bad example of badhrothern thidan Francis withdraw himself from the company of the brothers, lest it happens that he hear anything evil of anyone unto the renewal of his grief

transform the world by cultivating learning and undertaking pastoral work on a higher level, particularly as priests, were allowed to do that? In fact, the solution seems to have occurred to Francis himself in the "conscience clause," as we may call it, in the 10th chapter of the 1223 Rule: "The friars who are convinced that they cannot observe the Rule spiritually, wherever they may be, can and must have recourse to their ministers" (RegB X, 4). The translation is somewhat misleading here. The point of the sentence is that friars who find themselves in places where they cannot observe the Rule spiritually, presumably because of the life-style of the brethren, are entitled to have recourse to their ministers, presumably to request a transfer to a place where they can observe it.

What is the minister supposed to do? Receive them kindly and charitably, and talk to them sympathetically as if they were servants of the friars, rather than masters whom the friars had vowed to obey. That is all. He is not bound to give them the transfer they request.

This sentence of the Rule, which is distorted by most of the commentators for obvious reasons, clearly envisages conflict between the two life-styles, and tries to maintain the right of the primitive and simple life-style. Why would it not have been possible for the two kinds of life to develop side by side, so that each could be nourished by the other, and both could live in harmony?

As a matter of historical fact, reforms in the Order have mainly come from people who tried to go back to the primitive ascetical life of the first Franciscans, e.g., the Observantine reform of the 15th Century, and the Capuchin reform of the next century, and later reforms. But it is also a matter of historical fact that these reform movements went in for learning and their leaders had friends in very high places, and their great men became doctors, bishops, cardinals, and so on. The same patterns emerged as before.

Why didn't the brotherhood develop the two life-styles in peaceful difference? The difficulty seems to come again from Francis. He begins his Rule by promising obedience and reverence to the Lord Pope, and then he insists that the other brothers are bound to obey Brother Francis and his successors. The structure of the Order was totally centralized in himself and his successors, and there was no provision for autonomy at any level. The "knights" of Saint Francis' Round Table were bound by strict obedience, and they were to be trained in this. They were always men under orders. Saint Francis' provision for brothers who cannot live the Rule spiritually in a particular place, was subversive of this, and this is why the commentators have fudged it.

Thus a provincial who is looking for a man to fill a gap in a busy friary or a demanding mission is quite likely to ignore the wishes of a friar who wants to live in a hermitage, and put him under orders to go where he wants him. To the provincial the friar in question might be a spineless craw-thumper or a lazy dreamer: the friar, on the other hand, might see himself as trying to live an authentic Franciscan life. And it might not be so easy to decide who is right. But, at any rate, the people at the top have the power and authority, and everybody is bound to obey them. If they have little interest in, or concern about authentic Franciscan living, then so much the worse for it. They will see to it that people concerned about such things are neutralized, and, in particular, that formation is freed from their contamination, since formation is the chief means of reform in the Order—and, indeed, in any self-respecting institution.

In this event, there would appear to be four major possibilities. It could happen that those concerned about an authentic life lose heart and conform to the rest. Or they may go into a sort of internal exile from the movement—which is, after all, what Saint Francis did. Or they may abandon the movement altogether, disillusioned with its hypocrisy. This would appear to have happened with some of the advocates of the primitive life in our own times. Or they may lead a movement of reform, which must, more or less inevitably, lead to secession because of the highly centralized organization of the Order. This possibility, however, requires very extraordinary pesonalities, which are very rare. A last possibility, which may be mentioned in passing, is that the reformers get control of the levers of power at the top.

It is interesting to compare reform in the Franciscan movement with monastic reform, which works quite differently. The Cluniac reform, and other reforms, could be carried out simply by a few reformers managing to take over a monastery and setting up their regime. If support were forthcoming for their efforts, further foundations could be made, each one independent, but in communication with the mother house. This cannot be done in the Franciscan Order because of the high degree of centralization of authority in the Order.

#### Conclusion

I HAVE BEEN CONCERNED in this article with some of the problems involved in aggiornamento, and going back to the roots. There are, as I have tried to show, several contradictions at the heart of the Franciscan movement. The great development of Franciscan studies in our

time has made it easier for us to appreciate these, and to present them clearly.

The Franciscan ideal has continued to appeal to people in generation after generation, and it is not dead. There are obvious impracticabilities and absurdities in trying to resurrect Francis' own life-style, as I have tried to show. There are also absurdities in canonizing and sacralizing the status quo, which is often the reaction of authority under question. It is a reaction which solves problems by putting people under obedience.

The task facing the Franciscans is to construct a world of meanings, a universe of discourse, so to speak, in which all can share, and to which all can consent. Perhaps one element would be to allow a quasi-autonomous movement of return to primitive observance within the provinces. It would be necessary to re-examine the idea of the Franciscan life as the vita mixta, involving action and contemplation, the value of regular observance, and the place of the Liturgy, the role of learning and studies, the willingness of the Order to cooperate with the Holy See in its endeavors, etc. There is a great potential contradiction there: do the Franciscans do their own thing, or are they to be really subject and subservient at the feet of the Holy Father? Francis was treated very leniently and considerately by his popes, and had not the experience of later generals who had to deal with a pope bent on the destruction of the movement.

It seems to me that there is an enormous task to be accomplished of constructing an image, a world of meaning, and a life-style that will mediate between the extremes of "back to Francis" primitive observance people, on the one hand; and the "liberals" and pragmatists, on the other, who have no interest in such things and act in terms of functions and operations and the use of authority to solve all problems. Between them, they can wreck the Franciscan movement.

To end this way would, however, be rather negative. My argument has been that the simple formula of going back to the sources to renew the life of the Friars Minor is not so clear as many suppose, and that there are ambiguities and even contradictions there. This does not mean that we ignore the sources, or that we cannot draw nourishment from them. They will always remain an inspiration and a challenge to us, and Saint Francis will always be at the center of our way of life. But there is a great danger of oversimplifying his situation, and of ignoring the complexities and ambiguities of the early years of the movement he founded.

The Franciscan movement still has the power of attracting many followers, and leading to great holiness. This power operates, not mainly through ancient medieval texts, studied and interpreted by learned schollars, but through the living witness of men and women whose rule and life is the holy Gospel, as it was for Francis. Francis is present to the modern world through the book of their lives.

Worth remembering and pondering are the lines of the Legend of Perugia in which the Lord speaks to Francis who was painfully moved to the depths of his heart over what was happening in the Order:

Tell me, why are you so sad when a brother leaves the Order or when others do not walk in the way I have shown you? Tell me, who planted the Order of the brothers? Who converts men and urges them to enter it to do penance? Who gives them the strength to persevere? Is it not I? . . . In you I did not choose a scholar nor an orator to govern my religious family, but I wanted a simple man so that you and the others may know that I am the one who watches over my flock. I placed you in their midst as a sign, so that they may see the works that I accomplish in you and so that they in turn may accomplish them. . . . That is why I tell you not to be saddened by this; do what you have to do and do it well; apply yourself to your work, for I have planted the Order of the brothers in an everlasting charity [LP 86]. Ω

### **Cross-Eyed**

Staring at you, Lord,
fixing my eyes on you
as your hands and feet
are fixed to wood,
as your eyes have found your Father's.
Three hours is forever, Lord,
immobile, transfixed, horrified

immobile, transfixed, horrified, unable to wrench my glance away: while wood becomes blood-sodden I would become sanguine.

Sister M. Felicity Dorsett, O.S.F.

### The Cave

Most call it "tomb," for me, my rest.

Some call it "shroud," for me, my protection . . . from damp night air.

I call it "clothing," some say a "loin cloth" to soothe museum crowds.

I hope they wash my body before the anointing which preserves not three days but thirty-six hours.

Scripture is so inaccurate

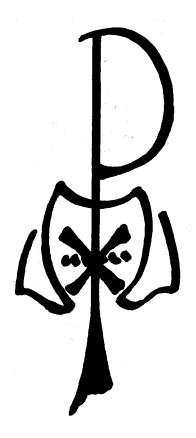
- for us,
- . . . meal two nights ere Pasch
- . . . remember, Passover is Saturday our Sabbath.

I inhabit my dead body, and visit the tomb-livers.

Guards roll back stone, dumbfounded.

Tomb for me is cave. Will the shepherds come again?

Patrick G. Leary, O.F.M.



### The Franciscan Charism

BONAVENTURE HINWOOD, O.F.M.

THING'S ACTIONS FLOW from what it is," says an adage dear to the hearts of scholastic philosophers. So genuinely Franciscan activity is most likely to flow from a person who is a genuine Franciscan. But there's the rub: what does it mean to be a genuine Franciscan?

From the use of the word in the documents of the Order, "charism" is the quality which defines a genuine Franciscan. The 1981 Plenary Council of the Order of Friars Minor in its document on formation, for example, tells us that "our Franciscan charism should be given priority in our life and activities" (§12). Yet nowhere does it say exactly in what that charism consists.

The reason for this probably lies with the preparatory committee, which worked through the preliminary responses from the whole Order. It considered that the Medellin (1971) and Madrid (1973) General Chapters had said enough about the Franciscan charism.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Problem of the Franciscan Charism

IF YOU LOOK AT THESE two documents, however, they describe what appear to me to be various forms of Franciscan activity, rather than the central core from which these spring. They mention activities such as brotherliness, living like little ones, apostolic outreach, faithfulness to the Church, joyful self-giving, obedience, poverty, chastity, undiscriminating love, working among others, and promoting peace.

<sup>1</sup>Medellin, In Pursuit of a Vision: Vocation and Formation in the Franciscan Order.

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The 1981 formation document picks up many of these in by-the-way remarks like "the search for God, fraternal life, availability to others, poverty, the refusal to dominate" (§12); "final commitment, fraternity, obedience, poverty, chastity, and work" (§27); "it is our life in fraternity and minority which constitutes our primary and fundamental means of announcing the Gospel" (§7).

Now, enlightening as these descriptions of how a Franciscan should behave may be, they still look to me like a list of manifestations, symptoms, or what I have previously called "activities." They do not get down to the spring of the life which expresses itself in these ways.

We need to take our heritage, try to discern its essential intuitions through its western cultural embodiment, and then find ways of expressing it adequately in other cultural circumstances.

A description of Franciscan life in terms of certain behaviors has the further drawback that it is endlessly complicated when you try to apply it in practice. A call to make a special effort at fraternity makes sense in the context of western individualism and the nuclear family; but how far do you go with fraternity in third world societies, which already live the fraternity of the extended family, without making religious life impossible? It is good to emphasize availability in the first world, where everyone is rushing around doing his/her own thing; but, when you have work to be done, what do you do about it in African societies which have a tradition of leisurely encounters, because they rate personal relationships higher than achievement in the work area?

Most Franciscans in Europe and America, and their offshoots, have a standard of living which looks like comfortable middle class to even the poor of their own countries, let alone the poor of Asia or South America. So how are we today to live out the poverty to which the Franciscan sources give such prominence? What does our profession of poverty mean in an African situation, in which even the minimum

facilities needed for a student house or for a priest to function look to many people like luxury?

The technological society all over the world is moving into the phase in which not the possession of capital, but access to information, is the main form of power. How do you exercise minority when your mere education as a religious or a priest equips you above the average to handle information, and so puts you among the elite?

Like myself, you have almost certainly been involved in many discussions about these and similar questions without being much the wiser. Do we, then, just give up in despair and muddle along as best we can, doing a spot of patchwork here and making the odd gesture there? I would like to suggest not.

It is my growing conviction that all the elements of Franciscan life already mentioned are secondary, that is to say derivatives or practical conclusions from a more central intuition. The nearest that our recent documents get to this core occurs in phrases like: "the Friar Minor promises constantly to compare his life to the Gospel" (Medellin, In pursuit of a vision, §24); "the newness and joy of the Gospel" (Madrid, The vocation of the Order, §3); "the Gospel life according to Saint Francis" (1981 Plenary Council, Formation, §25).

#### The Problem of Interpretation

SAINT FRANCIS LIVED eight centuries ago in central Italy, in a period of changeover from a feudal, largely subsistence and barter based lifestyle, to an industrial and commercial economy in which money played a decisive role. His foundational inspiration and his lived experience of it took place in that particular situation. Two things flow from this.

It is first and foremost necessary to discern the essential principles of Saint Francis' basic intuition from the experiences and behavior patterns in which they manifested themselves in the particular circumstances of his time. Without this we cannot find appropriate forms for expressing Saint Francis' essential vision in the very varied situations in which we, as members of the Franciscan family, have to live in the closing decades of the twentieth century.

From its very beginning the Franciscan movement has been bedevilled by desires to reproduce literally Saint Francis' life-style or that of the early members of his family. If we wish to be loyal to our founder, we dare not act like unthinking fundamentalists and simply take outward forms, in which Saint Francis realized his charism in practice in the thirteenth century, and try with cosmetic adaptations

to make them our practical norms today. We need rather to see through the outward forms of his life to its essential inspiration and embody this in the various social, cultural, and economic circumstances in which we live and work in different parts of the world.

The immediate consequence of this is that Franciscan Orders will have to tolerate a wide variety of expressions of Saint Francis' foundational inspiration (Ibid., §11). It is already evident that general chapters and ministers general can no longer effectively regulate the life of the Orders on the level of behavior patterns. Unity will remain possibly only if a definite common vision serves as a coherent wellspring of all the outward manifestations.

The second source of difficulty lies in the "sources." The documents in which Saint Francis expressed himself, and the early documents about him, are also the product of the particular thirteenth-century culture of central Italy in which they originated. In addition many of these "sources" are tendentious, if not polemical writings. They stand in need of thorough and scholarly exegesis before we can have any degree of certainty about various aspects of Saint Francis' life-style and thinking.

The final step following on such an exegesis must be to interpret the vision which inspired Saint Francis' life-style and thinking in practical terms for people today who live in cultures other than his and have mentalities differing from his own. This is the essential condition for an authentic application of Saint Francis' foundational inspiration to our own situations.

#### The Franciscan Charism in Essence

As I UNDERSTAND IT at this juncture, Saint Francis' central intuition would seem to have been that he had a Father in heaven, as he declared before the Bishop of Assisi,<sup>2</sup> a Father who is the Creator of all things, and of all people (RegNB XXIII; Adm V, VII, VIII [Omnibus, 50, 80–82]. This Father is all loving, provident, reconciling, and forgiving (RegNB XXIII [Omnibus, 50, 52]; EpFid I [Omnibus, 97]); hence he can be relied on and trusted utterly at all times (RegNB XXIII [Omnibus, 52]).

This, after all, is the core of the Gospel. Jesus lived his whole life in relation to, and in terms of, the One he called "Abba." He told his

followers that this One was their Father too (Jn. 20:17), on whose way of acting they had to pattern their lives (Mt. 5:45) so that they could mirror him to people just as Jesus himself did (Jn. 14:9-13). The Holy Spirit whom Jesus gives to his followers will enable them to share in something of what Jesus as the eternal Son has (Jn. 16:13-15), because he is the Spirit of sonship who makes them cry out, "Abba, Father!" (Rom. 8:14-17). This Father is always with them providing for all their needs in every situation (Lk. 12:22-32; Mt. 10:19-20).

For Saint Francis our model of how to be in this relation of sons to the Father is Jesus Christ, his only Son and our Mediator with the Father (RegNB XXII, XXIII; EpOrd [Omnibus, 49, 51, 103–04]). In this relationship, which lifts us far beyond the limits of our own resources, we can love, adore, and thank the Father and the Son, together with the Holy Spirit at all times (RegNB XVII, XXI, XXII, XXIII; EpFid I [Omnibus, 45–52, 94]).

Jesus showed his love and trust for the Father in complete self-emptying, self-giving, and self-abandonment to the Father, as well as in openness to the Father and to all his self-communication (RegNB XXII; Adm I and VI [Omnibus, 47, 50, 78, 81]). Jesus expected everything from the Father and waited on his good pleasure (EpFid I [Omnibus, 93]). This manifested itself for Saint Francis above all in Jesus' prayer, obedience, humility, poverty, purity, and preparedness to suffer (RegNB IX [Omnibus, 39]).

For Saint Francis, then, the way to a filial love of the Father was union with Jesus expressing itself in an exact living out of the essential meaning of Jesus' confident abandonment to the Father's care (RegNB XVI, XXII [Omnibus, 44, 49]; UltVol [Omnibus, 76]; EpFid, EpOrd, EpLeo [Omnibus, 96, 108, 118]). The mature liberty which this attitude gives Saint Francis was realized in his own life by his faith, self-emptying, continual conversion, penance, contemplation, simplicity, creatively critical attitude towards accepted norms, and openness to new possibilities (RegNB I, XVI, XVII, XXII [Omnibus, 31, 43-47]; RegB III, X [Omnibus, 60, 64]; Adm III, V [Omnibus, 79, 81]).

Jesus' self-giving to the Father was simultaneously a love for all people and all creatures, and a pouring out of himself for and to others (RegNB IV [Omnibus, 35]; Adm IV [Omnibus, 80]). For Saint Francis expressing this in his own life took on the form of generous service, characterized by brotherliness, availability, minority, detachment from possessions with the status, power, comfort, and pleasure which they can bring (RegNB VII, VIII, IX, XIV, XVII [Omnibus, 38-44]; RegB VI, X [Omnibus, 61-63]; Test [Omnibus, 68]). To his mind this

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>The references to Saint Francis' writings are not intended to be exhaustive. Equally valid or even more pointed references can be found in sources other than his own writings: e.g., 2Cel 12 (Omnibus, 372).

spirit of service took five main forms: mutual care within the fraternity (RegNB V, VI, IX, X, XI [Omnibus, 36-41]; RegB VI [Omnibus, 61]; Adm XXV [Omnibus, 67]), sharing the faith with and administering the sacraments to the faithful (RegNB XVII, XXI [Omnibus, 44-47]; RegB IX [Omnibus, 63]; Test [Omnibus, 67]), working along with other people (RegNB VII; Test [Omnibus, 37, 68]), caring for the needy and outcast (RegNB IX; Test [Omnibus, 39, 67]), and taking the Gospel to those who do not know Christ even at the peril of one's life (RegNB XVI, RegB XII [Omnibus, 43, 64]).

For Saint Francis, we meet and know Jesus in the tangible ways in which he continues to live and operate among us in his body, the Church (EpCler [Omnibus, 101]).

He is present and active in the Church's hierarchical ministers, whom the genuine Franciscan will love, venerate, and defer to, because Christ has chosen to make them channels through which to communicate himself and enable his members to live in submission to the Father (RegNB introd. [Omnibus, 31]; RegB I, IX, XII, Test [Omnibus, 57, 63, 64, 67]). Loyalty and obedience to the pope and bishops was Saint Francis' safeguard against the pride, self-will, and delusion which lead to heresy and schism.

Christ is heard in accepting the Church's teaching (RegNB XIX; RegB II, XII; Test [Omnibus, 46, 58, 64, 69]), which is why Saint Francis insisted that his friars be Catholics and not off on some deviant line. By participating in the Liturgy we join Christ in worshiping the Father (RegNB III; RegB III; Test [Omnibus, 33, 59, 68–69]). Christ is among the members of his body through the written word of the Scriptures (Test, EpCust [Omnibus, 67, 113]; as also his constant use of biblical texts), in his Eucharistic presence (RegNB XX; Test; Adm I; EpFid I; EpCler; EpOrd; EpCust [Omnibus, 46, 67, 78, 94–95, 101, 104, 113]), and in the sacrament of reconciliation (RegNB XX; RegB VII; EpFid I [Omnibus, 46, 62, 94]).

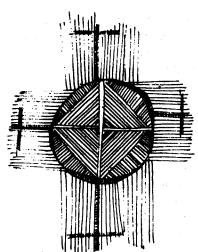
The Church's Head and Lord, by whom she has access to the Father, is the glorified Christ. Hence for Francis the Church must not be viewed only in its earthly dimensions. We must live at one with the community which enjoys the fullness of life in the glorified Lord. This expresses itself in devotion to Mary, the Mother who in her own way so perfectly lived out Jesus' own model of self-giving to the Father, and whom he gave to be our mother also. Saint Francis further enjoyed the company of and relied on the help of the angels and saints, because they are members of the same family sharing a common Father with us (RegNB XXIII; EpOrd; OffPass, Compline [Omnibus, 51, 105, 142]).

For the same reason he was concerned to offer prayers and sacrifices for the departed (RegNB III; RegB III [Omnibus, 34, 60]).

#### The Franciscan Charism in Practice

IF THE ANALYSIS just presented is correct, then being a Franciscan means to live in loving and confident self-giving to the Father in the awareness of being his child in Christ. All the various behavior patterns and activities in which Franciscan life is expressed should spring from this dynamic intuition of sonship.

Living in terms of the Fatherhood of God means cultivating the intimate relation to the Father, in union with Jesus through the Holy Spirit, which is God's gift to us in baptism. This will include, as it did for Jesus and for Saint Francis in dependence on him, time spent alone with the Father in prayer, enjoying an intimacy which overflows into daily living and activity. It will mean a growing oneness with Jesus as the Way to the Father, and an openness to the Spirit, grounded in Jesus' own availability to the Spirit (FormViv; EpOrd [Omnibus, 76, 108]).



This intimacy with the Father developed in prayer will further enable the Franciscan to speak with the conviction of experience rather than of merely repeating what he has read, according to the tradition of contemplata tradere. Jesus shared with others what his human consciousness knew from his experience of the Father through the loving action of the Holy Spirit, a consciousness largely acquired during the times he spent in private prayer, as Saint Luke so often reminds us. The Franciscan becomes like the One who sends him, if the source of his mission is that conscious union

with the Father, which Jesus shows continuously in his own mission. As Father Adolfo Nicholas, S.J., puts it: "Contemplation is mission at its source: it is the possibility of a true Christian mission, one which comes from the Father himself."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>"Formation and Spirituality for Mission," East Asian Pastoral Review 17 (1980), 105.

A life of intimacy with the Father through union with the Son in the love communicated by the Holy Spirit shows itself in a family attitude towards all creatures which the Creator has fathered forth. It involves a deep commitment to other members of the Franciscan family: just think of Saint Francis' many references to the friars as fathers, mothers, children, and brothers in relation to one another (RegNB IX; RegB VI; RegEr [Omnibus, 40, 61, 72]). It involves a sense of belonging to the other members of Christ's body, the Church, and towards all fellow human beings of whom Jesus is the prototype Image in whose likeness they are created (RegNB XXIII; EpFid I; EpRect [Omnibus, 51, 93, 115]). It involves a sense of brotherly love and concern for all the Father's other creatures (CantSol [Omnibus, 130–31]).

Several consequences follow immediately from such an understanding of life; and we will look at them one by one.

#### **Dedication**

LIFE LIVED IN THE consciousness of being a member of the Father's family issues first and foremost in a total dedication to Christ's social body, in which we encounter him in the Church's visible unity and especially in her Godward activity of liturgical worship, in those whom he has placed in positions of leadership, in the Gospel which she safeguards and preaches, in the sacraments by which Christ communicates himself to his members with special intensity, in the devotions which express the Church's response to her Head and Lord. Such a dedication shows itself by a generous and active sharing in the Church's mission of building up the body to full maturity of life in Christ and to its full dimensions in mankind as a whole, so that it can truly be a sacrament and sign of that unity in Christ which is the Father's will for his human children (cf. Vatican II, Lumen Gentium, 1).

Dedication of this kind also involves taking part in that other dimension of the Church's mission indicated by Vatican II as making this world a home more fit for God's children to live in (Vatican II, Gaudium et Spes, 57; cf. also 9, 26, 30, 55). So, with the Church the Franciscan shares in Jesus' compassion for the harrassed and dejected, the poor and needy, the sick and suffering. He shares with the Church, too, in Jesus' concern for the dignity of those destined by the Father to be his brothers by promoting human rights and encouraging people to fulfil their duties and social obligations.

#### Freedom

THIS FILIAL spirituality next means going ahead in loving trust in the Father and his providential care, both in our individual lives as Franciscans, and in our provinces and communities. This, as I understand it, is the essence of Saint Francis' concern with poverty. He wanted to avoid at all costs a worldly security based on assets, possessions, status, and fixed tenure of occupation, because the desire for security grounded in such things is an effective denial of the Father's solicitude for his children.

It is confidence in their Father which should give Franciscans a special characteristic of mobility: social mobility to be able to move freely among people irrespective of their class, culture, race, social position, education, or other distinguishing characteristics; occupational mobility to do whatever the Church, universal or local, requires of us at any time; geographical mobility to go where the Church needs us, without being held back by attachment to country, culture, climate, family, or standard of living.

The reason for this is that we, as Franciscans, have no mission except the Church's mission, which is an extension of Christ's mission, about which he himself said: "As the Father sent me, so I am sending you" (Jn. 20:21); "It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit" (Jn. 15:8). It is good to remind ourselves that we have the unique distinction of being the only Order founded without a purpose of its own. It would never have occurred to Saint Francis to have a purpose other than that of the Church.

#### Work

AS ALREADY MENTIONED, one of Saint Francis' most characteristic attitudes was his sense of belonging to the material world, which meant that other creatures had the same Father as himself, and hence were his brothers and sisters. His attitude was the direct opposite of the consumerist exploitation of nature for comfort and pleasure. The Father's creatures, for him, are to be cherished, and Sister Earth, our mother, be assisted to feed and provide for her children.

It seems most likely that this dimension of a life lived in awareness of the Father motivated Saint Francis' concern that the friars work, and the way he speaks about it in various places suggests that he had manual work in mind. So he exhorts his brothers to "work hard doing good" (RegNB VII [Omnibus, 37–38]) and wants those who do not know how, to learn (Test [Omnibus, 68]).

It is interesting to note that the preparatory committee for the 1981 Plenary Council was unanimous that all friars be formed to do at least a minimum of manual work as a regular part of their life. This is reflected in the mild statement in the Plenary Council's document on formation to the effect that "all the friars should be taught to be willingly and actively interested in the care and maintenance of the house, as a necessary part of fraternal life" (§21).

Wherever the Franciscan family finds itself this is equally applicable. The unwillingness of western Europeans to do the more menial forms of manual labor, e.g., has been one of the reasons for migrant workers being brought in. In many third world countries there is a tendency to associate manual labor with being uneducated. In societies where education is the status symbol, a stigma of inferiority easily attaches to those who earn their livelihood by the sweat of their brow. This syndrome is not uncommon among religious, and it is aggravated by the fact that in third world countries unskilled and semi-skilled labor is in abundant supply, so that it is easy for religious to have servants to do the dirty work for them. As a matter of fact it can even take on the appearance of virtue: out of charity providing a servant with a job and enabling him or her to earn a living.

In this whole white-collar world it is important that every Franciscan give practical witness to the fact that it is not below any man's dignity to work with his Father's material creatures and to let his material brothers and sisters dirty his hands. Even friars, and other members of the Franciscan family, who are earmarked for the clerical state or an academic or professional career should acquire the domestic skills necessary to keep a household running, and preferably a few extra ones as well. They should do this, as Saint Francis would say, "not from the desire to make a profit out of it, but for the sake of giving good example" (Test [Omnibus, 68]).

The other side of the coin, about friars who do not know how, being taught to work with their hands, is this. A friar, or other Franciscan religious, who is not going to be a priest, or else be specifically trained for a white-collar job like a business manager of an institution or a librarian, a teacher or a psychologist, should be formally trained for some quite definite manual task. Carpentry, auto repair work, tailoring, gardening, and catering are a few which come immediately to mind. In other words, every Franciscan religious should have some task for which he or she has been trained, and which is his or her particular contribution to the Franciscan family and the wider community. For this reason it is desirable that the basic training period after the

novitiate should be the same for all, whether they are destined for the priesthood or a profession or some other occupation.

I find this thought neatly reflected by the Medellin General Chapter in the words:

The fundamental formation which we give to all friars must be thoroughly human, Christian, and Franciscan. But it can also vary according to the tasks each candidate is preparing for. Nonetheless we must take care to ensure that all the friars receive the spiritual, academic, and professional instruction they need [In pursuit of a vision, §4].

Lest we lose Saint Francis' balance, it is well to remind ourselves that, for him, all those who belong to his movement are to be involved in making the Gospel better known and more faithfully practiced by people, as an aspect of their brotherly concern for them. So all Franciscans should be able to share their faith with others. For this reason an introduction to theology and catechetics at an appropriate level should be part of the training of any Franciscan not called to the priesthood.

#### Thought

SAINT FRANCIS' AWARENESS of Jesus as the way and the model for living as a son of the Father provided the special perspective which has permeated the philosophical, theological, and spiritual thinking of his Orders from their earliest years. Perhaps "radical Christocentrism" best describes it. This tradition continues on today, even after Vatican II, as a characteristic of Franciscan writers. Perhaps today it is less distinctive than in the centuries before 1950, but that is only because with Vatican II the Church's thinking as a whole has moved in that direction.

In the maelstrom of the Church's intellectual life today this Franciscan understanding of reality can become submerged. This is why the 1981 Plenary Council document insists that our Franciscan charism dominate a person's entire formation from the postulancy to the grave (§12). Our philosophical and theological heritage should be just as much to the forefront in this as our spirituality and way of life. Indeed, our spirituality and way of life will make sense and be consequential only if they are rooted in a theology which expresses Saint Francis' foundational inspiration. Such a theology can be constructed only out of a total understanding of reality in terms of the Father mediating himself to us in and through Jesus, and drawing us back to union with himself in and through Jesus. This vision enables the

theologian to make a comprehensive synthesis of our Franciscan perspective on revelation.

Ideally the entire curriculum of academic and pastoral training of members of the Franciscan Orders should be inspired by the philosophy and theology which arises out of our unique spirit. In many places, however, there is no option but to send our students to institutions not run by Franciscans. In these cases some other provision must be made for their thinking to become thoroughly impregnated with the Franciscan tradition (1981 Plenary Council, Document on Formation, §31).

Various means may be used to achieve such a goal. I immediately think of regular talks or projects, guided reading courses, or an annual workshop week. Being initiated into the tradition is not something important only for future priests. It is essential for every member of the Franciscan movement according to his or her situation and capacity.

True enough, the Franciscan tradition to date is a western, largely European, product. Members of our Orders from other cultures may perhaps be tempted to think that it is for that reason not applicable to them. This is not so. What is needed is to take this heritage, try to discern its essential intuitions through its western cultural embodiment, and then find ways of expressing it adequately in other cultural circumstances.

In this way Saint Francis' foundational inspiration of our being children of our heavenly Father in the Son, expanded upon and enriched by the experience and genius of generations of his followers, will continue to be the charism forming the personalities of those who make profession of the way of life bequeathed to the Church by the Poor Man of Assisi.  $\Omega$ 



## Franciscan Studies M.A. Program Summer 1984 Offerings

THE FRANCISCAN STUDIES PROGRAM offers a full schedule of courses in Franciscan theology, history, and spirituality, fully adaptable according to the varied goals of students.

All courses meet daily, Monday through Friday, in Plassmann Hall, except for those marked with an asterisk next to the days on which they meet. Those so marked meet in Friedsam Memorial Library. Three credit courses meet Monday through Friday.

Course	Title	Credits	Da	•
FS 500	Methodology and Bibliography		Days	Instructor
FS 502	Sources for the Life of St. Francis	2	MTWTh	Mr. Paul Spaeth
FS 504	Life of Saint Francis	3	M-F	Fr. Wayne Hellmann, O.F.M.Conv.
		3	M-F*	Fr. Conrad L. Harkins, O.F.M.
FS 506	Survey of Franciscan History	3	M-F	Fr. Lawrence Landini, O.F.M.
FS 508	History of Franciscan Thought	3	M-F	
FS 511	Medieval Latin: Franciscan Texts	2	MTWTh	Fr. Joachim Giermek, O.F.M.Conv.
FS 519	Theological Foundations of Franciscanism	2		Dr. Malcolm V. T. Wallace
FS 520	Writings of St. Francis and St. Clare	_	MTWTh	Br. William Short, O.F.M.
FS 535	The Franciscan Mission	2	MTWTh	Fr. Timothy Johnson, O.F.M.Conv.
FS 541	<del></del>	2	MTWTh	Fr. Thomas Mooren, O.F.M.Cap.
_	Franciscan Theology of Prayer	2	MTWTh	Fr. Joseph Doino, O.F.M.
FS 562	Dynamic Growth in Franciscan Community	2	MWF*	Fr. Maury Smith, O.F.M.
FS 650	Seminar: "God in the Writings of St. Francis and	2	MTWth	
	Contemporary Trends"	•	141 1 44 (11	Fr. Constantine Koser, O.F.M.
FS 599	Independent Research	4.0	_	
FS 699	Master's Thesis	1-2	By arrangement	Staff
- 200	wanted a thesis	6	By arrangement	Staff

WITH APPROVAL OF THE FACULTY ADVISOR AND DIRECTOR, STUDENTS MAY FULFILL A MAXIMUM OF SIX CREDITS IN ELECTIVES FROM COURSES OFFERED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF GRADUATE THEOLOGY.

#### CALENDAR

Registration	Monday Ivas at
Classes Ragin	Monday, June 2:
Classes Begin	Tuesday, June 26
Modern Language Exam	Friday July 12
Final Exams	Friday Angust 2
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#### FEES

Tuition per graduate hour	
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and Board	A
Pees are subject to change without prior notice.	Ψ0. 0.

dividual courses are subject to cancellation
 cause of insufficient enrollment.

#### PRE-REGISTRATION

Pre-registration forms are available from the Office of Graduate Studies, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, New York 14778. Students who preregister need not report for registration on June 25.

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