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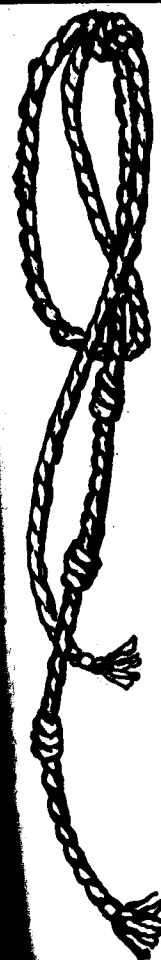
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Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions	Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo	LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun	LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony	OffPass: Office of the Passion
EpCler: Letter to Clerics ¹	OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix
EpCust: Letter to Superiors ¹	RegB: Rule of 1223
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful ¹	RegNB: Rule of 1221
EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo	RegEr: Rule for Hermits
EpMin: Letter to a Minister	SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady
EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order	SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues
EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People	Test: Testament of St. Francis
ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God	UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare
ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father	VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy
FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare	¹ I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis	LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis
2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis	LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis
3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles	LP: Legend of Perugia
CL: Legend of Saint Clare	L3S: Legend of the Three Companions
CP: Process of Saint Clare	SC: Sacrum commercium
Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis	SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies*. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. 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



Scholarship is Ministry and is Franciscan

It probably would have saved the order a lot of grief if St. Francis hadn't been canonized until St. Bonaventure was, and Bonaventure canonized shortly after his death. Then Franciscans would have had as role-models two early saints — Bonaventure and Anthony (canonized in 1232) — who saw learning as a way of God. And then perhaps some of the anti-intellectualism that runs as an undercurrent throughout Franciscan history would not be with us, as it still is today.

We know that the life and words of Francis offer us some excellent weapons to criticize those who see value in and feel called to a life of study and writing. That kind of life doesn't seem to have any immediate practical value and lends itself to accumulation of books, a yen for travel, and an inflated idea of one's own ego. But history and experience seem to indicate the last two find themselves into Franciscan lives regardless of interest in study. And with regard to immediateness of results, we just need to recall that ideas transform slowly — they are not amphetamines, and that human beings keep their traditions in writing, else they lack them.

Am I beating a dead horse or tilting at a windmill? Is it entirely uncommon that secretaries hired by the community have constantly upgraded typewriters (and computers) while some of those who write have to do so on vintage typewriters that thoughtful relatives gave them in pre-electronic times? Is it unheard of that someone who wants to prepare himself or herself for a career in teaching is assigned more pastoral experiences like visiting or assisting in hospitals, or serving in a parish during summers? Granted that writing about a soup kitchen or people engaged in AIDS counselling is not the first-hand experience of doing those things, but it is an experience for the writer, and it does make the type of ministry written about visible to many.

In my Province at least the ministry of artist seems to be getting recognition, even though it is kind of a loner's work. Equally shouldn't we acknowledge that research in poetry, literature, history, philosophy and theology is a worth-while ministry. When I say "acknowledge", I mean a policy. Too often, it seems, would-be scholars must be aggressive, even pushy — or else "political" to obtain leisure or support to pursue their ministry.

Though scholarship can be turned into a hobby, it certainly isn't one, but rather a demanding discipline. And scholars do minister, for they seek to open minds to the truth and beauty that other human visionaries have seen. Scholars give the teacher — and the formation director — what values, concepts, and traditions are to be passed on. Scholars seek to clear the human mind of ignorance, which St. Bernardine of Siena, with some rhetorical exaggeration to be sure, describes as "the cause of all the evils in the world." Just as the vow of poverty deprives us of something, only that we may possess the Lord more fully; so the scholar drives out ignorance in order that wisdom, "one of the greatest riches of the soul," may be found there.

There are a diversity of gifts and ministries as Paul reminds us. It has been a Franciscan tradition to recognize this. In our genuine pastoral concern and zeal, let us not forget that scholarship ultimately is people-work. And let us scholars and non-scholars not forget Francis' commission to St. Anthony, to proceed academically in such a way as "not to extinguish the spirit of prayer and devotion."

Fr. Julian Davis OFM



The "Virtues" in Admonition XXVII of the Writings of Francis of Assisi and their Usefulness in Spiritual Discernment

Rev. DAMIEN ISABELL, O.F.M.

Introduction

In my previous article I offered a brief reflection on each of the "vices" mentioned in Admonition XXVII and their importance for discerning the tension of the spiritual life. I said that each vice has its opposing virtue which opens up the life of the person to God and to others. Now I would like to follow the same method and study each virtue in the light of Francis' writings and of the legends in order to see how much an analysis might be helpful in the ministry to spiritual direction.

Before beginning my analysis, I want to remind the reader of the text we are studying:

Where there is charity and wisdom
there is neither fear nor ignorance.
Where there is patience and humility,
there is neither anger nor disturbance.
Where there is poverty with joy,
there is neither covetousness nor avarice.
Where there is inner peace and meditation,
there is neither anxiousness nor dissipation.
Where there is fear of the Lord to guard the house,
there the enemy cannot gain entry.
Where there is mercy and discernment,
there is neither excess nor hardness of heart. (AB, p. 35)

The January, 1988 issue of The Cord carried the first of Fr. Damien's articles on St. Francis' Admonition XXVII. This second article completes the study by the St. Louis based friar who is currently a missionary in Zaire.

I. SIGNS OF GOD'S PRESENCE IN THE PERSON'S ATTITUDES

Charity. "Where there is charity... there is no fear..." In English the word "Charity" is overly-charged with the idea of doing something for another, losing completely its primary meaning of God doing something for us. Charity is first of all God's gift of communion in His life which helps us understand why perfect love casts out fear. When one lives in charity one is not alone, and aloneness, according to many Africans, is equivalent to death.

Francis discovers this communion with God by contemplating his goodness: "He alone is good" (Ep Fid II; Reg NB, 17); "You are good, all good... and are love, charity..." (*The Praises of God II*; AB, p. 100; see the *Praises to be said at all the hours*, AB, p. 102). A similar insight is found in his *Prayer Inspired by the Our Father* (AB, p. 104):

O our most holy Father... who are in heaven
in the angels and in the saints,
enlighten them to love, (emphasis mine)
because you, Lord, are Light
enflaming them to love,
because You, Lord, are love...

This love which God has shared creates a desire in the person to return this love and to reach its fullest expression in communion with God. This love enters human reality "through Jesus Christ" (Reg NB, 17) and the human person returns to the Father "through" Jesus Christ:

And because all of us wretches and sinners are not worthy to pronounce your name, we humbly ask that our Lord Jesus Christ your beloved Son in whom you were well-pleased together with the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, give you thanks as it pleases You and Him for everything.
(He) who always satisfies you in everything through whom You have done such great things for us. (Reg NB, 23)

There is a marian dimension to this love for we bear Him in our hearts and bodies by means of love (Ep Fid I).

The concrete sign of this love is found in love for people among themselves (see Reg NB, 11). St. Clare interprets Francis' teaching in her *Testament* (AB, p. 231):

Loving one another with the charity of Christ, let the love you have in your hearts be shown outwardly in your deeds so that compelled by such an example, the sisters may always grow in love of God and in charity for one another.

Likewise, this love is familial (Reg B, 6; *Testament of Siena*) and even maternal (1221, 9; 1223, 6; 3S 41-42).

... and may we love our neighbors as ourselves by drawing them all with our whole strength to your love, by rejoicing in the good fortune of others as well as our own, and by sympathizing with the misfortunes of others, and by giving offense to no one... (AB, p. 105. See also p. 106 under "as we forgive those...")

This drawing of people into God's love (which could be a definition of the ministry to spiritual direction) is expressed throughout our sources: Ep Fid II, 1221, 4, 5, 11, 6, 7; Adm 25; Adm 11; 1223, 10; *Rule of St. Clare*, 10; Ep Min; Cant Sol, "Praised be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for your love and bear infirmity and tribulation..." (See also II C 89).

As we can see from all this, the person who shares this love will have nothing to fear. Consequently, in the ministry to spiritual direction, there has to be established a love relationship within which the persons will not be afraid to speak about their truth. As we have seen, each person is capable of communicating (or of hindering) God's love to another. If the person has never known love, the minister will have to walk through the stages of his or her life until the moment when he or she can love because of the love he or she has known.

In the spiritual diagnosis, the minister will help bring to consciousness one's fears and one's experience of love. By doing so, both can discover what kinds of relationships have fashioned the person's life. One question that will have to be faced: Is this person capable at this moment of being loved and of loving, in a word, of reciprocity? With great gentleness it should become clear what is the quality of the person's love, and which fears have to be put under its rule.

Wisdom. "Where there is... wisdom... there is no ignorance..." "Hail, Queen Wisdom, may the Lord protect you, with your sister, holy pure simplicity..." (AB, p. 151). "The Spirit of the Lord... above all things longs for the divine fear and the divine wisdom and the divine love of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Reg NB, 77). "The Son of God" is called "True wisdom of the Father" (Ep Fid, II). The role of this wisdom is clear; "Holy Wisdom destroys all the wisdom of this world, and the wisdom of the body" (AB, p. 152; also Reg. NB, 17). This wisdom works to recuperate the dignity of the person (Adm. 5). Because of the wisdom of the flesh, the person has lost his or her transparency (Reg AB, 17; Ep Ant; Reg B, 10).

This transparency recovered is reflected in the wisdom of the desert: "Do not judge a fornicator if you are chaste, for if you do, you too are violating the law as much as he is. For he who said thou shalt not fornicate also said thou shalt not judge" (Merton, p. 41). In this wisdom we find what was precious to Francis: agreement between belief and concrete action. At times he severely corrects those who pursue studies because they tend to lose themselves in a conceptual world, and tend to avoid the question: "But you, who do you say that I am?" According to Francis, it is not fair to leave a person thinking that the reality thought is the totality of reality. "To reach him whom you do not know you must go by a way you do not know." (Finley, p. 12). The person who comes with unrealistic expectations will certainly be disappointed:

Love is sought, not for the feeling it engenders but for its own sake. Looking for a direct experience of Christ, in the sense of trying to find out what goes on, is to condemn oneself to failure. Christ does not will to be reduced to an object of curiosity. God and the Risen Christ allow themselves to be seen through poor signs, which everyone possesses within themselves or their surroundings. To be discovered they must be lived out. Enough for us to live by this daily bread, seeking nothing other than the opening of our eyes, hearkening in order to be faithful, responding in love, discovering the Word of God in silence, finding his presence in what seems to be absence, feeling ourselves called to a life hereafter... It is a process of effecting a unity within oneself, to go on to meet even more closely the One who is God Love... This process is effected by the action of the same God and by our collaboration...

Prayer, and experience of God, does not mean the strict control of our interior lives in the sense that we achieve a peaceful balance or a psychological harmony in our lives. Rather, it is the response to the Love which is, of itself, a vital unity, union with God. This unity of life is something we in our poverty can achieve... (Biffet, p. 26-27)

Wisdom, then, will replace ignorance. True, culturally a person might remain ignorant, but it is far more serious if the person loses touch with herself and her God, it is far more serious to be ignorant of where one has come from and where one is going. In spiritual guidance, there must be truth in its most full meaning, so that the person, by discovering his or her true self, will not constantly run after substitutes to prop up a false understanding of oneself and of the world.

Patience. "Where there is patience... there is no anger..." As is often pointed out, "patience" comes from the Latin "pati" to suffer. I don't think that this means that a person has to passively and naively allow himself to be tread upon. Jean Mouroux speaks of "active passivity" which

is perhaps better translated in English by the word "receptivity." Once a person accepts to follow the footsteps of Jesus Christ, there will be many occasions by which this choice will be put to the test. For Francis, patience "begins with the contemplation of the Good Shepherd who suffered the passion of the cross to save his sheep" (See *Diz. Fran.*, col. 1227; also Adm. 6). "Take care not to be disturbed" (Mt. 24, 6); "For through your patience you will possess your souls" (Lk 212, 19); "whoever perseveres to the end will be saved" (Mt. 10, 22; See 24, 13 and 1221, 16). In this perspective, patience enables the person to act wisely, to keep before his or her eyes the reality of our graced and sinful world and to live in its perspective. "The Spirit of the Lord... strives for humility and patience and the pure and simple and true peace of the truly spiritual person." (AB, p. 123). "Instead, let them pursue what they must desire above all things, to have the Spirit of the Lord and His holy manner of working, to pray always to Him with a pure heart and to have humility, patience in persecution and weakness, and to love those who persecute us, find fault with us, or rebuke us..." (Reg B, 10). Note that humility and patience go together (Adm. 13), because anger or impatience often proceeds from our exaggerated sense of self-importance: "What good is it for a person to despise himself and mortify his body with fasts and prayers and disciplines and not be able to endure a single offense from his neighbor... And this is a warning sign, because his hidden pride is put to the test by the insult which he receives..." (Brown, p. 268 and read the whole chapter on patience; also Adm. 23).

This patience must be extended to those who sin: "Nor should he become angry with a brother because of a fault of that brother, but with all patience and humility, let him admonish and support him..." (AB, p. 70). Such anger against a sinner is misplaced, for sin is against God, not us, and God is always ready to forgive, so what is the source of our anger? Once again it is brother Giles who perfectly understands Francis' teaching: "Whatever a man does, whether good or evil, he does it to himself. So you should not be angry if anyone offends you, but you ought to have compassion for his sin" (Brown, p. 267; see also Cant Sol; II C 49; *Praises of God*, "You are patience."). The highest expression of this patience (and compassion) is found in a situation of "perfect joy": "I tell you this: If I had patience and did not become upset, there would be true joy in this and true virtue and the salvation of the soul" (AB, p. 166). Why? because patience is based on the conviction that "the Lord will realize his plan and will keep his promises" (I C 29; LM III 7; LM IV 7; 3S 18, 23, 36, 40; Sp 4; 5; I C 39, 12).

During times of sickness, when one must allow oneself to be served,

when one is "useless," true patience and humility are discovered (I C 102, 107; LM XIV 2; II C 177; 213). During St. Clare's final illness, Br. Raynald counselled her to be patient during the martyrdom of her sickness. Clare answered: "From the moment that I have known the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ through his servant Francis, no suffering has been bothersome to me, no penance burdensome, no illness difficult" (CL, 44). This same spirit is revealed in Francis' answer to a brother who offered to read him the Bible: "I have already made so much of Scripture my own that I have more than enough to meditate on and revolve in my mind. I need no more, son; I know Christ, the poor crucified one" (II C 105).

Patience is the condition of perseverance. "Francis... walked in the footsteps of Christ through innumerable labors and severe illnesses, and he did not draw back his foot until he had brought what he had perfectly begun to an even more perfect end" (II C 210). This patience is a sign of God's own action:

Christ himself had said: 'I will not leave you, nor abandon you,' and another time, 'Do not fear, little flock, for it has pleased the Father to give you the kingdom, besides all you need for your lives.' Indeed St. Francis used to say that the omnipotence of God shines forth in the faith and in the patience of the saints... (Fior, p. 1756)

Fidelity depends on God's power:

Let not the magnitude of the struggle deter you, nor the greatness of the labor, for you will have a great reward... Hold fast the confession of your hope without wavering. Run with love to the fight set before you. Run through patience, which is extremely necessary for you, that doing the will of God, you may receive the promise. For God is able to bring a happy consummation by his grace to what you have undertaken beyond your powers, for he is faithful to his promise. (*Omnibus*), p. 1594)

We can summarize Francis' teaching on patience under three headings: a) patience with God, b) patience with our brothers and sisters, c) patience in trials. Patience with God has two meanings: first, being patient with the way God deals with me (which is identical with patience with oneself), and secondly, being patient with God's own patience, he who is patience. To understand "patience with God", read I C 67-10 which describes Francis' painfully slow conversion. The patient person lives in God's hope (Adm 28, 19; Ep Fid II) and the example of Jesus (who lives in God's fidelity) and the saints bolsters our hope (Adm. 6).

Patience with our brothers and sisters enables one to bear correction that comes from another just as if it came from oneself. In this context,

the other is no longer an enemy nor a source of my anger, but rather the messenger who appeals to the wisdom in our hearts. "Francis cherished with greater kindness and supported with greater patience those sick he knew were tossed about and bothered by temptation and were fainting in spirit" (II C 177). Francis' patience was tested to the extreme by his brothers, but God brought him back to peace (LP 77; II C 158; LP 68, 76; II C 188; LP 75; Adm 15; L Min 1-10). To what extent can patience strengthen one in community? We find the answer in Adm. 3: "a religious who prefers persecution rather than be separated from his confreres certainly perseveres in true obedience."

Patience in tribulation is needed by those who have given up their whole being to the Lord Jesus Christ" (Reg NB, 16). It is possible because of the great good that one looks forward to: "So great is the good I foresee that all suffering is a pleasure" ("Tanto è il bene che mi aspetto, che ogni pena mi è diletta" (II C 191-192; *Diz. Fran.*, col. 1227-1238). Lady Poverty asked the brothers to show her their cloister. "Taking her to a certain hill, they showed her the whole world as far as she should see and said: 'This, Lady, is our cloister.' (She answered) ... 'persevere in the things you have begun... let not the magnitude of the struggle deter you...' (63-67; See also LF 114; II C 21, 115; 3S 18; I C 10,12,51-52, 57...).

From the viewpoint of spiritual direction, discernment requires the minister to explore the stability of the person and his or her reasons for hope and perseverance (cf. James 1, 6-7). Excessive haste in the conversion process is a sign of impatience. The way of humility is the way of realism. Signs of anger must be looked at (Eph. 4, 26; Prov. 16, 32; James 1, 19), "hot anger" (col. 3, 8; Gal. 5, 20; Eph. 4, 31) and "cold anger" (sarcasm, withdrawal, planning revenge, crabbiness, annoyance). (See the helpful little book by Therese Cirner, *The Facts about Your Feelings*. Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1982, p. 82-83). In the area of patience, as in so many others, it will be a question of the vision a person has: "A person who does not see great things, will think that small things are great."

Humility. "Where there is humility... there is no disturbance..." It has been impossible to speak about patience without in the same breath talking about humility, just as anger and disturbance are inseparable companions. I have the suspicion that one arrives at humility. Francis spoke first of love, then of wisdom, thirdly of patience and now of humility. Is it not the result of certain relationships, of certain life experiences? Life itself offers us the grace to discover our limits.

Francis' understanding of humility is difficult to understand. Armstrong translates *The Salutation of the Virtues* in the following way: "Holy humility destroys pride, and all the people who are in the world, and all things

that belong to the world” (p. 152). Brady’s translation is closer to the original Latin, and to the French and Italian translations: “Holy humility *confounds* pride and all the people who are in this world and in like manner all things that are in the world” (Brady, p. 39). God is humility (Brady, p. 25). It seems that humility does not eliminate pride, people and things, but it does put them into question. It shames pride by its truthfulness, it puts all people and all things in their just relationship with God. This seems confirmed by the *Canticle of the Creatures* which, after having shown the place of all things and of the person in the universe, Francis concludes: “Praise and bless my Lord and give him thanks, and serve him with great humility.” Humility means finding one’s place.

After having experienced many humiliations (study again his process of conversion), Francis discovered that God reveals himself in Jesus Christ in a permanent act of humility: “O sublime humility. O humble sublimity. That the Lord of the universe, God and the Son of God, so humbles himself...” (*Omnibus*, p. 105; See also *Praises of God*, Adm 1; Ep. Fid. II, I C 84; St. Clare’s Fourth Letter). God takes up his abode in this world in shared meal rather than in the trappings of worldly glory, because this shared life is his truth.



Jesus’ own example is the source of the brothers’ humility. “All the brothers should strive to follow the humility and poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ, and remember that we should have nothing else in the whole world.” And to show that this humility is not simply an attitude of mind, but a concrete way of “taking one’s place” in this world, Francis continues: “And they must rejoice when they live among people who are considered to be of little worth, among the poor and the powerless, the sick and the lepers, and the beggars by the wayside...” (Reg NB, 9; see LP 37, 38). In fact, Francis seems to have taught this humility in a very concrete way:

So at the commencement of the Order he wished the friars to live in leper houses to serve them, and by so doing to establish themselves in holy humility. For whenever anyone, whether noble or commoner, entered the Order, among the other instructions given him, he was told that he must humbly serve the lepers and live with them in their houses... So he laid foundations both for himself and others on the deepest poverty and humility, for when he might have become a great prelate in the Church of God, he chose and willed to be humble, not only in the church but among his own friars as well. For in his opinion and desire, this lowliness was to be his highest dignity in the sight of God and men. (SP 44; see also LM I 6; SP 58; LP 102; Fior 25; 1221, 9; I C 38, 103).

It is clear from this that humility is an attitude of one’s heart as well as the choice of a certain social status. Francis and his brothers were not disturbed when they did not have a high social status in the ordinary judgment of the world, for they knew the glory of their humble vocation. Humility is not only the honest definition of oneself before God, but the clear and confident definition of oneself within society.

Blessed Giles develops Francis’ insight when he writes:

A great degree of humility in man is to know that *he is always opposed to his own good.* (emphasis added) I also think that the fruit of humility is to give back what does not belong to us and not to appropriate it for oneself — that is, to attribute all good things to God, to whom they belong, and all bad things to oneself. (Brown, p. 265).

“All bad things” means all those things we do which are opposed to our own real well-being. Humility is also the recognition of how we abuse ourselves, and the willingness to eliminate all that is opposed to our real well-being (lies, false glory...).

Where did this humility, product of the contemplation of Jesus Christ, lead Francis? He considered himself “small among the brothers” (*Test.*), as a “humble servant” (Ep. Fid.); Ep. Rect; Ep. Ond; Ep. Brd. ; Reg NB, 7; Adm 230; Reg NB, 6). He was ready to confess his faults (a sure

sign of humility! Ep. Ord; II C 123; LP 23; *Fior* 31, 9), and to admit that he could still have children (II C 133; LM VI 3). All the good that he had and recognized was to God's glory (LP 104; Reg NB, 17; Adm 123). In his answer to why the whole world chased after him, Francis remembered God's love for the *anawim* (*Fior*, 10) Because of his rootedness in God's love, he willingly accepted to live the scandal of the cross and to imitate the humble status of Christ in the Eucharist. Nothing could frighten him, no humiliation could break him (*Test*; LM II 6; SP 68; LP 114; II C 30...)

Just as the wedding ring is the symbol of the bond of love between man and wife, so for Francis poor clothing, poor housing and so forth were symbols of his solidarity with the Most High God, who humbled himself to become like us (Reg NB, 2; Reg B, 2. These social choices have profound spiritual consequences in the life of a person.) Begging was another sign of his solidarity with Jesus and with the poor. For Francis begging was the necessary consequence of his initial act of almsgiving at the beginning of his vocation (Reg NB, 2; Reg B, 2). Because of this initial choice, a brother and sister also chooses to overcome shame in their lives. In spiritual direction it will be important to see if the person has the courage to change behavior which will have social repercussions (Reg NB, 9; Reg B, 6; II C 74; LM II 7; LP 62; *Fior* 12).

This same attitude of humility, the knowledge of one's own truth and place in the universe, makes a person ready to share the humble condition of others (Reg NB, 9; LP 88; II C 8; 3S 10) and to share the work of tending to the cleanliness of creation (I C 38; LP 61) such as sweeping churches, carrying water, working with one's hands, serving the lepers and so forth.

Language is likewise a sign of what is in one's heart. Francis has a teaching on the relationship of language and humility, an element of capital importance in the ministry to direction which often must simply depend on what the directee says because the minister to direction does not live with him or her. What is the language of the humble? It is not charged with anger nor with a desire to conquer the other (Reg NB, 11; Reg B, 3; Adm 27). It is simple and direct, not evasive nor rhetorical (I C 1; LM XII 7). Part of communication is the ability to listen and the willingness to answer (I C 29; LM III 7). Language about one's life must be rooted in personal experience and practice (Reg NB, 17). Finally, true communication must have the "you", the other, in mind, and not long discourses that are unintelligible (Reg B, 9).

Humility, consequently, is not a peaceful possession, it must be tested to be genuine. "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God. The servants of God cannot know how much patience

and humility he or she has within as long as everything goes well... But should a time come when those who should render him his due go completely against him, as much patience and humility as he then shows, so much he has and no more" (Adm 13). What is this relationship between peace and humility? Humility removes barriers ("give back what does not belong to us." Bl. Giles, p. 9 *supra*) to peace; pride, possessiveness, need to dominate others, unwillingness to listen, unwillingness to allow another to be different. We may laugh at some of the ways Francis' tested the humility of his brothers (I C 38, 40 etc), but we should take very seriously the task of discovering why there are conflict situations and how much they depend on the lack of humility. Francis even uses a "fantasy trip" to test his humility (II C 145; LP 83), a very useful technique in the ministry to direction (See also *Fior* 8).

The presence of humility is tested especially when a person is in charge of others. In Francis' case, little people were not afraid of him (LM XII 2; Brown, p. 262: "If you love, you will be loved. If you fear, you will be feared. If you serve, you will be served. If you treat others well, others will treat you well.") His attitude was that of a servant (L3 S 57), and he refused to appeal to seniority as a source of privilege. He was ready to obey even a novice of one day (LP 106). According to his way of thinking, a minister should be ready to wash the feet of the brothers rather than to seek glory because of his office (Adm 4; Reg NB, 5; Reg B, 10; II C 185-186; SP 80; Clare, *Letters* 3 and 4).

The learned are especially tested in their humility and they have to be ready to enter the school of the humble Christ (II C 140, 194; *Fior* 12; II C 191-192. See also I C 77; SP 44; II C 142, 144; 1221, 5; 1223, 10; II C 102, 152; 1221, 20; Adm 24; Reg NB 23; II C 146; LM IV 7; LP 106; see *Diz. Fran.*, col. 1869 - 1902).

Is the purpose of this testing to lead to self-hatred, as the terminology of St. Francis would sometimes indicate? I am of the opinion that excessive introspection is the contrary of humility, because it makes the subject the center of attention. The humble person, I believe, participates as one of the others, with others, in the common project of life, in relative self-forgetfulness. C. S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* helps us:

Do not imagine that if you meet a really humble man he will be what most people call "humble" nowadays: He will not be a sort of greasy, swarthy person, who is always telling you that, of course, he is nobody. Probably all you will think of him is that he seemed a cheerful, intelligent chap *who took a real interest in what you said to him*. He will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all. (emphasis added. See Kinzer, p. 16-17)

In another book, *Screwtape Letters*, Lewis continues this theme. Screw-tape, the senior demon, instructs an apprentice demon how to pervert a Christian's idea of humility:

The great thing is to make him value an opinion for some quality other than truth, thus introducing an element of dishonesty and make-believe into the heart of what otherwise threatens to become a virtue. By this method thousands of humans have been brought to think that humility means pretty women trying to believe that they are ugly and clever men trying to believe they are fools. (*ibid.*, p. 28).

I believe that humility replaces disturbance because the person is at peace with the fact that he or she has sprung from the hand of God, and all others have sprung from the same goodness. To praise God for the goodness in others is to recognize in one's own limitations the call to be completed by others.

Poverty with Joy. "Where there is poverty with joy, there is neither covetousness nor avarice." "St. Francis' love of absolute poverty won for him a share in the wealth of holy simplicity. In the whole world he had nothing he could call his own, yet everything in the world seemed to belong to him in God, the Creator of the world" (LM III 6). There is a fine distinction here between possessing something and having something that belongs to us in God. Possessing something means that this thing is an extension of myself; having something that belongs to us in God means that what I have is an extension of God, something lent to me. Thus, if an object is stolen or threatened, my extended self is also threatened if it is my possession. But if, from the start, all belongs to God, if something is taken away, it is simply being restored to its true Owner. The result of this attitude is Joy (3S 33, 13; II C 9).

The source of Francis' joy was Jesus himself: "The brothers who lived with him knew how his daily and continuous talk was of Jesus... he was always occupied with Jesus..." (I C 115, read the whole paragraph; II C 95). During his suffering (and other times as well) Francis composed music, in particular the "Praises of the Lord" (LP 24, Sp 121). True, this absorption in God was tinged with joy and sorrow. "He was overjoyed at the way Christ regarded him so graciously... but the fact he was nailed to a cross pierced his soul with a sword of compassionate sorrow" (LM XIII, 3).

From his experience Francis understood that this joy was "the safest remedy against the thousand snares and wiles of the enemy... When... the soul is wretched, desolate and filled with sorrow, it is easily overwhelmed by its sorrow or else it turns to vain enjoyments..." (II C 125;

see also II C 126-127). To one brother burdened with sadness Francis said: "It is not becoming for a servant of God to show himself sad or upset before men... Examine your offenses in your room and weep and groan before your God. When you return to your brothers, put all your sorrow and conform yourself to the rest" (II C 128; this is a reflection of Francis' own words: "Let the brothers beware lest they show themselves outwardly gloomy and sad hypocrites; but let them show themselves joyful in the Lord, cheerful and suitably gracious" Reg NB, 7; II C 128; Phil. 4, 4). In this example we see how possessiveness leads to sadness; joy comes from "letting go" sin, from "stripping oneself" of sin and its dominion. St. Clare understood this:

It was God of such splendor and greatness who entered the womb of the Virgin. It was his choice to be despised, needy and poor in this world so that men who were so very poor and in such deep need and in dire hunger of heavenly nourishment might be rich in him and possess the heavenly kingdom. Therefore you should respond with full joy of spirit and set no limit to your rejoicing and you should be filled with a mighty joy and in true spiritual happiness because you have chosen to set aside the world rather than to be drawn in quest of its honors. (*Workbook*, p. 84; AB, p. 192).

The freedom from self-concern makes the person "the helper and one who lifts up the languishing members of the ineffable body of Christ. Who is there, then, who would not encourage me to rejoice over such marvelous joys?" (AB, p. 200; *Workbook*, p. 87). Joy, therefore, means being able to give oneself with no hidden agenda, with no second thoughts about the risk involved or the cost of the commitment.

If a minister to spiritual direction finds that a person is not in joy, he or she can look for one of several causes:

a) Unrealistic expectations: is there a discrepancy between hope and fulfillment, between clinging to something that does not correspond with reality:

- b) A poor self-image, living out "shoulds" that should not be;
- c) Self-pity, clinging to "if only" in life;
- d) Excessive introspection, a proud desire to "figure out" everything;
- e) Unrepented sin (Ps 32; Ps 103);
- f) Spiritual oppression by the "Enemy";
- g) Physical exhaustion or sickness.

(Cirner, ch 8, p. 93f; Read SP 95)

Inner peace, Quiet. "Where there is quiet... there is no preoccupation..." "Where there is inner peace... there is no anxiousness..." "The Lord revealed to me a greeting, as we used to say: 'May the Lord give

you peace' ” (*Testament*). In this way Francis extended the apostolic command of Jesus to give peace to those who welcomed the apostles into their homes. Likewise, Francis opened each sermon or exhortation with the greeting “The Lord give you his peace!” (I C 23). His method is well-expressed in 3S 58 (*Anon Per*, 38):

Since you speak peace, all the more so must you have it in your hearts. Let none be provoked to anger or scandal by you, but rather may they be drawn to peace and good will, to benignity and concord through your gentleness. We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way. (Reg NB, 16 contains the “mission method”)

In Adm. 15 we read: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God’ (Mt 5,9). The true peacemakers are those who preserve peace of mind and *body* for love of our Lord Jesus Christ, despite what they suffer in this world” (see also Mt. 10,13; Lk. 10,5). It is interesting to note that peace of “body” goes together with peace of mind. Does this mean that Francis recognized the importance of bodily discipline? Does this mean that frenetic activity is contrary to “peace-making?” Today we have discovered the role of the body in the spiritual life; is it a new discovery?

Certain situations will challenge this peaceful attitude of mind and body (cf. Adm 11 and 14), so “in the face of a certain situation over which the brothers have no control, they must assert an interior attitude, flowing from the sources of the spiritual life which must dominate the conditions of life....” Shortly before his death, Francis added a strophe to the *Canticum of the Creatures* in order to call the bishop and the mayor of Assisi to a mutual reconciliation:

Praised be you, my Lord, through those who give pardon for your love and bear infirmity and tribulation. Blessed are those who endure in peace for but you, Most High, they shall be crowned. (*Omnibus*, p. 130-131; SP 100-101; *Workbook*, p. 59-62.

“The last two verses seem clearly inspired by Adm. 15. In one case, it is a question of protecting (public) peace, in the second case a question of keeping peaceful... Francis does not invite the bishop and mayor to conclude a peace agreement... Rather he begs them to find within themselves the inner spiritual energies which permit them to transcend their suffering, to dominate their anger, to avoid disturbance, to remain in peace...” (*Diz. Fran.*, col. 1192-1193).

Francis and the brothers went among the warring cities of medieval Europe. “Go ... announcing to men peace and repentance unto the for-

givenness of sins” (I C 29). By bringing all people back to Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, he knew that he was bringing them to the source of peace and reconciliation: “... the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in whom that which is in the heavens and on earth is brought to peace and is reconciled to the all powerful God...” (AB, p. 656). The life of the brothers revealed its eucharistic roots: “Amid all these things, they strove for peace and gentleness with all men and always conducted themselves modestly and peaceably...” (I C 41).



This moral effort was in line with Francis’ teaching on the “spiritual person”: “The Spirit of the Lord... strives for humility and patience, and the pure and simple and true peace of the spiritual person” (Reg NB, 17). “You are Peace,” Francis said of God, and those who share his life are in his peace. But as we see in II C 48 this peace does not preclude personal struggle. Rather, it consists in the ability to “endure” tribulation (Cant Sol), to “preserve peace... despite what they suffer” (Adm. 15). A symbol for this need for inner peace despite exterior suffering is found in LP 95.

In our own day we have to remember that peace is the fruit of having no-thing other than what is real as the basis of one's life. Thomas Merton's remarks capture a source of anxiousness for us today:

The idea that you can choose yourself, approve yourself, and then offer yourself (fully 'chosen' and 'approved') to God applies the assertion of yourself over against God. From this root of error comes all the sour leafage and fruitage of a life of self-examination, interminable problems and unending decisions, always making right choices, walking on the razor edge of an impossible subtle ethic... All this implies the frenzied conviction that one can be his own light and his own justification, and that God is there for a purpose: to issue a stamp of confirmation upon my own rightness. In such a religion the Cross becomes meaningless... (Finley, p. 68).

Meditation. "Where there is meditation... there is no dissipation." In this admonition we find the only occurrence of the word "meditation" in Francis' writings. But the reality, without a specific method, is scattered throughout his writings. For example: "Let us pay attention, all my brothers, to what the Lord says..." (RNB, 22), "But that which is sown on good soil are those who hear the word with a good and noble heart and understand it and keep it and bear fruit in patience..." (RNB, 22), "... let us be very much on our guard so that we do not lose or turn away our mind and heart from the Lord..." (RNB, 22).

Francis' example is more striking than his words. "He would recall Christ's words through persistent meditation and bring to mind his deeds through the most penetrating consideration..." (I C 84. Read the whole section); "One night as he lay awake thinking about God..." (LM V II); "He called the Rule the book of life... the marrow of the Gospel... he wanted it to be had by all, to be known by all, to be the object of meditation by the interior man..." II C 208); "These are my knights of the Round Table: the brothers who hid in abandoned and secluded places to devote themselves with more fervor to prayer and meditation..." (LP 71).

The same spirit animated Clare. In her *Testament* she wrote: "... Beloved sisters, we must consider the immense gifts which God has bestowed on us..." (AB, p. 227); "Look at him who has become contemptible for you... gaze upon Him, coonsider Him, contemplate him, as you desire to imitate him" (*ibid.*, p. 197); "Look at the parameters of the mirror..." (*ibid.*, p. 204); "... look up to heaven... never let the thought of him leave your mind but meditate constantly on the mysteries of the cross and the anguish of his mother... Pray and watch at all times" (*Ibid.*, p. 208)

From all of this we can understand how meditation precludes dissipation for it is constantly centered on God and his works. Every method or form of meditation is meant to create a permanent attitude of meditation so

that the person's whole life will be centered on God. In spiritual direction one looks for the ability and willingness to reflect, one looks for centeredness.

Fear of the Lord. "Where there is fear of the Lord... there the enemy cannot find a way to enter." Shortly before his death, Francis "extended his right hand over his brothers who were sitting about and beginning with his vicar, he placed it upon the head of each one. 'Farewell,' he said, 'all you my sons *live in the fear of the Lord* and guard yourself always therein'" (II C 216. The Italian version differs from the English).

The "fear of the Lord" in question here is better translated, perhaps, by "reverence" and it finds its roots in an experience of God's holiness as well as his judgment. Never do we find Francis speaking lightly of God, the "most High." "'Fear the Lord and give him honor'. The Lord is 'worthy to receive praise and honor'. All you who fear the Lord, praise him..." (AB, p. 42). The idea, of course, is completely biblical. When the all-holy God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, he commanded: "Do not come near; put off your shoes..." (Ex. 3, 5) Later on Isaiah posed the question: "Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the voice of his servant, who walks in darkness and has no light, yet trusts on the name of the Lord and relies upon his God?" (50, 10). According to Jeremiah those who do not fear the Lord are those who forget him. (5, 24; 33, 9).

In Franciscan writings "fear of the Lord" extends to "fear" of God's commandments. Obedience to his commandments is a way of showing God reverence (II C 41). At times, the brothers have to make judgments that will make them appear foolish before the world, but the "fear of the Lord" prompts them to act despite the consequences" (II C 30). This same "fear" must extend to the concrete signs of God's presence in the world:

Listen, my brothers: if the blessed Virgin is so honored, as it is right, since she carried him in her most holy womb; if the blessed Baptist trembled and did not dare touch the holy head of God; if the tomb in which he lay for some time is so venerated, holy, just and worthy must be the person who touches him with his hands, receives him in his heart and mouth, and offers him to others to be received. This is he who is now not about to die, but who is eternally victorious and glorified... (AB, p. 57)

In other words, the spirit of the Lord enables one to see the manifestations of the risen Christ and to revere them (Ref NB, 17).

"Fear of the Lord" precludes a flippant attitude towards God and service of God. It is not hasty to claim that "this" or "that" is God's will, but out of respect for the Lord, it takes time to pray and fast in order to discover

his will (LP 93). But once His will is clear, the "fear of the Lord" helps one obey promptly (SP 49). In fact, fear is a basic attitude during prayer: "He was anxious to honor God's name with special reverence..." LM X, 6). Likewise, the "fear of the Lord" prompts the person to guard God's secrets, "fearfully", that is, with reverence (II C 96; LM XIII, 4; Adm 22. Wittgenstein somewhere made the remark: "All that really matters in life is precisely what we must be silent about.").

"Fear of the Lord" guards the house of the believer that has been consecrated to God and it helps the person act with courage for what is of God, even in the face of opposition. By reason of this reverence, "the enemy" finds no room to work in the person's life.

Mercy. "Where there is mercy... there is no superfluity." As with all other attitudes, God is the origin of mercy. Francis was lost in admiration for what God had done in salvation history (I C 26) and he prayed: "I will praise you in the midst of all peoples, Lord, for your mercy is great as the heaven" (*Office of the Passion*). Francis is deeply aware that "God will save us by his mercy alone" (1221, 23): "Almighty, eternal, just and merciful God..." (EpOrd); "I trust in your mercy" (Off Pass). He asks for himself and for others the goodness of God: "And forgive us our debts, by your ineffable mercy..." (Exp Pat).

The mercy Francis had received from God was the mercy he showed the lepers (*Test*; I C 17; 3S 11-12). God continued to show Francis his mercy by enlightening him with regard to his mission (3 S 13). Francis' own words reveal how deeply this mercy had touched his life: "If Christ had shown such mercy toward the greatest criminal in the world, I am convinced that he would be much more grateful; to God than I am" (LM VI 6).

St. Bonaventure, the theologian of Franciscan experience, summed up the tradition which remembered the role of mercy in Francis' life (LM VIII 5; I C 76; II C 83; 85; p LP 89; SP 30, 37; LM I 2):

Francis sympathized lovingly and compassionately with those stricken with any physical affliction and he immediately referred to Christ the poverty or deprivation he saw in any one. He was kind and gentle by nature and the love of Christ merely intensified this. His soul melted at the sight of the poor or infirm and where he could not offer material assistance he lavished his affection... One day he rebuked a brother saying: 'My dear brother, when you see a beggar, you are looking at an image of our Lord and his poor Mother. When you see a sick person, remember the infirmities he bore for us.'

Within his fraternity he expressed this mercy especially to those who

were sick and "tossed about and bothered by temptations and were fainting in spirit..." (II C 177; 3 S 59). His counsel for those in authority is also based on mercy: "Those who have received the power to judge others should exercise judgment with mercy as they themselves desire to receive mercy from the Lord. 'For judgment will be without mercy for those 'who have not shown mercy' " (Ep Fid II). But the *Letter to a Minister* is perhaps the finest description of the extent to which mercy must be carried:

... there should not be any brother in the world who has sinned, however much he may have possibly sinned, who, after he has looked into your eyes, would go away without having received your mercy, if he is looking for mercy. . . . (Read the whole letter; see also Reg B, 7; Rule of St. Clare, 9).

Pardon is an exalted expression of mercy (Reg NB, 21; *Exp Pat Inspired by the Our Father*; II C 89; *Diz. Fran.*, col. 997-1006).

Mercy, however, is not sentimentality, "an excessive degree of emotional excitability and response to experience." Some people, like Francis, are easily drawn by physical and psychological suffering of others. But we should never forget the beginning of Francis' life: "When I was yet in my sins, it seemed to me unbearably bitter to see lepers. And the Lord himself led me among them and I showed mercy to them" (*Test*). At the start Francis was *not* drawn towards those who were sick. If later on we see him with the sick and poor by preference it is because God himself had intervened in his life and had unblocked his resistance to the suffering other.

Mercy excludes superfluity in the individual's own life because it creates bonds of solidarity with the needy-other. Perhaps Francis would also like to add that it excludes superfluity in our dealings with others, an excessive concern, an excessive desire to give that proceeds more from sentimentality or guilt than from reason and faith. When concern for oneself or for others is excessive, it probably is an unhealthy form of compensation for one's guilt feelings, for one's desire to dominate another or from one's dissatisfaction with one's home situation.

Today we have to enlarge the sphere of mercy and not consider only the immediate suffering of individuals and groups, but also the causes of their suffering. In Francis' *Letter to the Rulers of the People* we see how he had a high sense of the responsibility of civil officials. All those compromised by violent structures are worthy of mercy because they also have, perhaps, "lost their souls" because of them (*Omnibus*, p. 1429f).

Discernment, Discretion. "Where there is discernment, there is no hardness of heart." Mercy that is not genuine can lead to a perversion of love as Flannery O'Connor demonstrates so well in her stories, that which

Francis calls excess. "Hardness of heart," the inability to move away from one's impulsive needs, shows us the great need for discernment. The Latin word *discretio* has two meanings: a) prudence, b) good judgment.

Francis counsels prudence to those brothers who performed excessive penances or who studied or worked beyond their powers (1221, 17; 1223, 10; *Ep Anth* etc.). This same prudence taught him to guard secrets (II C 135-136; LM X 4; Adm. 28). The measure of discretion for one will not be the same for another. "You do with a pure intention what you must do; but then I also with good intention will do what I judge I must do in conscience" (Fior, p. 2688).

Good judgment, or discernment, enabled Francis to deal differently with different people (LM XV, 1; Fior 18, Adm 18). He never pretended to know one way for each person who sought his guidance, he was no ideologue (I C 57; II C 31). In his guidance he insisted on balance (LP) and he "reproved his brothers when they were too harsh on themselves... they appeared to be hating themselves..." (3 S 59; LM V 7). Nonetheless, he did not always seem so discerning in his own life (II C 129; Fior 11). If someone was sick, he allowed them special clothing, food and drink (II C 69; 1223, 2). When a brother was "dying" of hunger, Francis ordered the cook to prepare a meal for all the brothers lest the hungry brother feel "shame" to eat alone (LP 1; LP 3; II C 21).

In II C 129 (SP 97), we find what has been called "a long discourse on discernment" which is also a discourse on prudence. According to Francis 'the brothers' vocational choice demanded a certain discernment in order to be faithful: amount of work (SP 82; LP 78), kind of work to be chosen by brothers (Reg. NB, 7; Reg B, 5; I C 39), tools necessary for work (Reg B, 7), when one may beg (1223, 6; LP 71), adaptation to places, times and cold climes (Reg B, 4, 2); times for fasting and for not fasting (Reg B, 3); when one could travel on horseback (Reg B, 3); how to act when outside the convent (Reg NB, 3); the freedom to adapt to needs and circumstances (LM V 7; SP 28, 42; Reg NB, 8); the choice of candidates (II C 187; Reg B, 2); choosing friars to go to mission countries (Reg NB, 16; Reg B, 12) or to preach (Reg NB, 17); how to correct the friars (Reg NB, 5; Reg B, 7); how to command under obedience (SP 49; II C 153); how to teach theology (*Ep. Ant.*); how to deal with recalcitrant and sinful brothers (*Ep. Min.*); how to be a minister (II C 187); the relationship between the sexes (II c 112; II C 113).

Discernment in the spirit makes the prudence of the flesh look ridiculous. In the *Chronicles* of Thomas of Eccleston we read: "There are three things necessary for bodily health: food, sleep, and good humor... Once... (the superior) commanded a melancholy brother to drink a full cup of the

best wine, as a penance, and when he had grudgingly drunk it, the superior told him: 'My dearest brother, if you would perform this penance more frequently you would also have a better conscience' (Fior, p. 2554). Discernment keeps a person from becoming hard on themselves and hard-hearted.

But discernment was easier to exercise on a personal level than on the community level. Even during Francis' lifetime different 'readings' of Gospel life were in conflict: an itinerant life or a life of stability, studies or no studies, clerical or lay, monastic forms or not, poverty or possessions (SC 38-40, 44). It was not always easily to distinguish the "spirit of the Lord" from the "spirit of the flesh." But no one ever claimed that discernment gave absolute certitude. Perhaps it is within this climate of conflicting values that Francis composed Adm. 2:

And whatever he does and says which he knows is not contrary to his prelate's will, provided that what he does is good (note the need to discern), is true obedience. And should the subject sometimes see that something might be better and more useful for his soul than what the prelate may command him, let him willingly offer such things to God as sacrifice. (Note the relativity of decisions made after discernment. Note also the need to live a eucharistic life). Instead they should earnestly try to fulfill the wishes of the prelate. For this is loving obedience because it pleases God and neighbor. (See *Diz. Fran.*, col. 413-432)

II. RECAPITULATION: THE VICIES AND VIRTUES OF ADM. XXVII

Most High glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart, and give me, Lord, a correct faith, a certain hope, a perfect charity, sense and knowledge, so that I may carry out your holy and true command. (AB, p. 103)

DARKNESS

1. Fear: impediment to action, to sharing, to trusting.
2. Ignorance: impediment to a spiritual perception of reality. Superficial. Not live out what one believes.
3. Anger: inability to accept others, oneself, one's situation because of unreal expectations.

LIGHT

1. Charity: loved by God. Participant in the love of others. Trust. Importance of the person.
2. Wisdom: Ability to judge life from a faith-perspective, to carry out what one believes. Recognition of creatureliness. Faith in self and God.
3. Patience: strength to accept others and contradictions and the slowness of life. Realistic goals, confidence in providence.

4. Disturbance: inner turmoil. Frustrated in one's desires. Result of fear, anger or sin.
5. Greed: excessive desire for what is not necessary because of one's dissatisfaction with self. Impedes disinterested relationship with others.
6. Avarice: spirit of possessiveness, putting one's trust in things instead of in relationships with God and others.
7. Anxiety: impediment to a clear vision of life. Exaggerated fear or concern, impedes calmness of body and reflective life.
8. Dissipation: mental and physical restlessness; a life of curiosity, impeding one to concentrate on what is important.
9. Enemies: idleness. no responsibility for one's life, work and study. Interior and exterior threats to faith life; satan.
10. Excess: overdoing a good or a bad thing. Loss of perspective: sentimentalism, excessive work because of faulty self-image. Excessive food, drink, drugs, meetings, TV...
11. Hardness of heart: inability to recognize God's action in signs; closed to one's deepest feelings, to feelings of others, to correction of others. Rigidity, ideology.
4. Humility: Feeling sure about one's true place in life. No exaggeration nor denial of who one is. Willingness to respect, to pardon.
5. Joyful poverty: gratitude for God's gifts, especially of self. Living with what is necessary. Concern for the needs of others. Communion with others, stewardship of goods which are God's.
6. (same as 5)
7. Inner peace: reconciliation with oneself, neighbor and God. Quietness of body and spirit.
8. Meditation: concentration of mind and activity; take time to reflect on God's word.
9. Fear of the Lord: reverence for the All Holy God, for his commandments and for other signs of his will and presence.
10. Mercy: ability to accept God's concern for me and for my well-being. Capacity to leave excessive self-concern to enter into the heart of another. Concern for my well-being.
11. Discernment: capacity to make a creative judgment according to God in each circumstance of life. Prudence. Sense of vocation, liveliness, dedication, search.

Conclusion

In this brief analysis of Admonition XXVII we recover the experiential dimension of Francis' writings. We see that his life and his writings provide us with a certain structure by which we can diagnose spiritual experience.

Each element needs, to be sure, much more study, especially in the light of the spirituality of his day and in the light of contemporary psychology and spirituality. I hope that this article will open the door for some researcher who has more time than I, and will be of some help to those who exercise the ministry to spiritual direction.

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 T. Cirner, *The Facts about your Feelings*. Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1982. (= Cirner)
 J. Finley, *Merton's Palace of Nowhere*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria, 1978. (= Merton)
 A book which I did not use but which came into my hands in Zambia offers some helpful insights into spiritual direction/counseling from another perspective than the one Catholics are used to: J. E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel*. Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1970.



The Warblers Return

Bright birds they were, and it was spring,
 And so we trailed in wonderment,
 Amazed that God could fashion such
 A fragile, lovely, passing thing;

To flit across the greening scene
 And then to wander on and on
 Until at length it spent itself
 And passed on to an earthen grave.

Now birds are here and leaves are green;
 But you are gone; I know now why.
 And, as I scan the evergreen and yearn
 At length for your return, I know,
 My lifelong friend, though you have gone
 On home, the warblers did return.

Fr. Joyce Finnigan, O.F.M.

St. Francis Challenges the Yuppies

ED McCORMACK

ALTHOUGH the title of this article appears to indicate two diametrically opposed views towards life, Francis and the Yuppies both have one goal in mind. Both are striving to deal with reality in such a way that life becomes meaningful and satisfying. Yet that is where the similarity ends: the radical Yuppies approach life through self-indulgence and seeming self-sufficiency, while Francis approaches it through poverty, self-denial and dependence on God, his Father.

In many ways modern man finds himself at this fork in the road where the Yuppies and Francis part. Each day is a choice between one attitude or another. By taking a closer look at the two options we may make more informed choices and choose the road that best speaks to our true self.

To do this I will analyze the Yuppie and Franciscan approaches to meaning and then see how Francis challenges their attitudes towards wealth and self-sufficiency.¹ To round out the discussion I will also look at their different approaches to joy and happiness. In other words, how do these two attitudes approach questions like: What is our basic attitude toward life? How do we find meaning? How do we quiet this infinite desire for satisfaction within us? How do we deal with possessions and other people? Where does God fit in?

The Search for Meaning

The Yuppie seeks meaning and satisfaction in striving to get rich and accumulate power. They define themselves by what they own and how much they control. In short, satisfaction is found in acquiring things.² In US News and World Report an article on Yuppies explains that their top priorities are making money and their work. The article emphasizes this attitude when it reports that one Yuppie went as far as to schedule job interviews on her honeymoon! Yuppies even use leisure for advance-

The author teaches Religion at Seton Hall Prep in New Jersey. He is a graduate student of Theology at Immaculate Conception Seminary, Seton Hall University.

ment, and work while at play.³ In an article in Newsweek some Yuppies express their own attitudes: "It is a mistake to choose a low paying field that you like." "Couples with money are usually happier than those with little." "Charity begins at home," which is often limited to their friends at the bar at the South Street Sea Port in New York City!

Francis found meaning and freedom in a life of Poverty. How different from that of the Yuppies! He saw that through detachment, not attachment to possessions, a person comes to realize his true self and experiences meaning and satisfaction. Poverty is the basis of his spirituality and the food of his humility. Through it he was able to achieve simplicity based on a deep dependence upon God. He saw all good coming from God, and this was the root of his joy, gratitude and meaning. While the yuppie is constantly trying to own things, Francis in his rule of 1221, 1223 and through his life encourages his Friars to live without property and to give all money to the poor.

In contrast to this life of poverty and simplicity, the Yuppies are conspicuous consumers with an insatiable appetite for designer clothes, videos, computers, pasta makers, espresso machines and BMW's.⁵ One girl claims to own \$1,200 worth of pots in her kitchen, but eats out all the time! Working a 12 hour work day to pay for luxuries is commonplace, especially when it is a \$600 a monthly health spa. Achieving status is very important and many say that they will sacrifice marriage, free time and family for their careers. No wonder Joanne Martin of the Stanford Business school predicts that in the next decade we will see the biggest mid-career crisis ever!⁶

To demonstrate Francis' belief in the value of poverty let us look at some examples from his two Rules. His rule of 1221 (chapter 2) says the friars should own a habit, with a hood, cord and trousers and should avoid expensive clothes. In chapter 8 he encourages fasting without looking gloomy and says that the friars should have no more concern for money than for dust. In chapter 9 he tells them not to search for status, but to delight in lowliness and poverty. In chapter 22 he says that they should strive to put away every attachment, be free from self-seeking and attachment to earthly goods and be free from anxieties and worries that will dull the heart. In the rule of 1223 he again stresses serving God in poverty because God in Christ made himself poor and it was this that led Francis to the land of the living. In the Rule of 1223 he is emphatic when he states: "Cling to poverty with all your heart." Francis was so adamant about the value of poverty that he describes his own relationship to it as a marriage to "lady Poverty." It was this deep sense of the hidden value of poverty that gave him a sense of utter dependence on God.

Self-Sufficiency or Dependence on God?

The Yuppies are striving for a sense of self-sufficiency and independence by trying to become the best educated, and wealthiest group. Their possessions often give them this apparent sense of self-sufficiency. This ideal borders on an inability to see their need for God, and often leads to a set of false expectations. "Who says we can't have it all"?, "We were brought up thinking we could have tremendous jobs, wonderful houses, exotic travel, great marriages and wonderful families."⁷ One Security Pacific VP summed it up when he said: "We want fancy toys and many life experiences."⁸ The bumper sticker on many BMW's also captures this attitude: "The one who dies with the most toys wins."

Francis, on the other hand because of his life of Poverty had a deep sense of dependence on God. He saw the world utterly dependent on God's mercy, not on fashion, wealth, or even Wall Street. Because of a sickness, he returned early from soldiering — a crushed, defeated and humiliated man. It was out of this experience of humiliation that he gained a new vision of the world. He proceeded to give back his father's possessions, and he spent a great deal of time in a cave reflecting on his humiliating situation. G. K. Chesterton in his classic biography of St. Francis sees that at this point Francis was a crushed, defeated man. He has gone from being a leader, partier, merry-maker and promising soldier to being at the lowest point in his life. To explain Francis' conversion Chesterton says Francis was like a man who begins to dig down into the earth and eventually begins to turn upward. He came out with a whole new worldview. In other words, Francis came out of his conversion seeing Assisi held upside down, by the hair of the mercy of God. Thus those structures that in the eyes of the world seem so secure are from this point of view in the most peril.⁹ This image is vivid if one thinks of New York city!

The constant search by Yuppies for possessions and meaning has led many people to become bored, cynical and under the surface unhappy. According to Faith Popcorn, who works for the brain reserve, a New York marketing research firm, "this generation is very bored." She goes on to explain that Yuppies are constantly searching for something new. This is also expressed in an article in the International Herald Tribune, which states that this generation is bored and restless.

Typical attitudes that arise out of the notion of finding satisfaction in owning are Carnie Gilbert's, "I could live comfortably on \$200,000 a year. Money means a lot to my happiness." She buys two outfits a week, "because the way you look is more important than what you do." Also, Rob Young says, "I want to be rich, have more money than I can spend, own a Jaguar and a quarter of a Million dollar house." The preacher of

the Yuppie movement is the Rev. Terry Col-Whittaker. She is the author of the book *How to Have More in a Have-not World*. Her theme is: You can have it all now.¹⁰

Francis thought that self-denial, fasting, doing without, and poverty would satisfy one. *Unlike the Yuppies he saw acquiring goods not as a way to meaning and happiness, but as a way to dissatisfaction, boredom, emptiness and one of the causes of the thirst they are trying to quench.* Acquiring possessions for Francis is like trying to quench your thirst with salt water.

In reading about Francis one is struck by his joy, freedom and gratitude. This sense of gratitude enabled Francis to reach the very rock of reality. He saw all as dependent on the mercy of God. Since all was a gift to Francis he had no expectations. "He who expects nothing enjoys all." He saw all coming from God. The fact that at every moment we are dependent on God is a fact the Yuppies are trying to cover up in their search for meaning in possessions. For Francis, the Truth was that the world is held in its existence by the mercy of God and the Great Lie is that man doesn't need God who in fact often gets in the way.

Francis knew that all of life looks better when it is seen as a gift. Everything gave him joy and thus he didn't need to go searching everywhere for joy, meaning and satisfaction. Since his security depended on God, he was free from the need to be popular, receive attention and own things. He was free from seeking security in power, wealth and manipulating people. He was so free that looking into his eyes must have made one feel that this man is really interested in me and values me. He was free to love all.

The Yuppies' concern for owning things, status, and image can lead to a condescending, elitist attitude based on how much one owns. The value of a person is measured by what he owns, not who is is. What you wear, where you work, what you eat and whom you associate with is very important to the point where many new York City accountants are afraid to be seen with a loosened tie on a Friday night in the city!

Francis, however, because of his poverty and sense of dependence on God was a very humble man. For Francis a man is really who he is only before God (Adm. XIX). He was aware of the vast difference between the creature and the Creator. His love for God and his sense of sinfulness led him to fast, and deny himself. He had his friars fast from all Saints day until Christmas and from the Epiphany to Easter. He had no concern for his status or for impressing people. In the Rule of 1221 he tells his friars to welcome friend, foe, and robber. In Chapter 9 he tells them to be delighted to follow the lowliness and poverty of the Lord, to be glad

to live with social outcasts, the poor, helpless and the lepers and beggars. Even as they are insulted they should thank God. In Chapter 11 he advises them to answer everyone humbly, not to give way to anger, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling and to turn the other cheek. In chapter 17 the friars are told to humble themselves at every turn, not to boast, to have humility and patience, to be gentle and peaceful. In chapter 22 he claims that our friends are those who cause us trouble, suffering and shame; those are the ones we should love. He warns that *knowledge* is not to let people know that a person is learned, but is for serving others (Adm. VII).

To conclude, let us return to our title: How does Francis challenge the Yuppie ideal? By his life of poverty and detachment he challenges the Yuppies' search for meaning through acquiring wealth. His sense of dependence on God challenges their sense of self-sufficiency and independence. His real joy and gratitude in the face of poverty and suffering challenges their illusory search for joy, their boredom and unhappiness. His humility and ability to accept others regardless of their social status flies in the face of their arrogance, need for status, and elitist attitude.

Since this writer and many of us in the US are influenced in explicit or subtle ways by the Yuppies, we should examine their attitudes and listen to the challenges of Francis. He offers us another option that points to the one who 2,000 years ago called himself "the way, the truth and the life."

Footnotes

¹In the article I am using the word "Yuppie" to designate the basic ethos associated with the term. I do not intend to say that every Yuppie exemplifies this ethos totally.

²*Newsweek*, December 31, 1984.

³*U.S. News and World Report*, April 14, 1984.

⁴*Forbes*, February 24, 1986.

⁵*Newsweek*, December 31, 1984.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Newsweek*, February 3, 1986.

⁸*New Republic*, July 9, 1984.

⁹G. K. Chesterton, *St. Francis*. (Image Books: New York, 1924) 70.

¹⁰*Newsweek*, December 31, 1984. International Herald Tribune, Thursday, June 5, 1986. "The U.S. Video Generation: 'Images, Impressions are what count; not Words.'" Margot Hornblower.

Book Reviews

The Gracious Mystery. Finding God in Ordinary Experience. By James J. Bacik. Cincinnati, Ohio: St Anthony Messenger Press. 1987. Pp. 141. Paper, \$5.95.

Reviewed by Michael J. Hart, O.F.M. Cap. STL (Spirituality) Antonianum, Rome.

The Gracious Mystery arises out of the author's experience with those who, from many walks of life, find themselves thrust into a religious or spiritual quest. Many of the 'solutions' presented to these modern day wayfarers fall short of the demands of a profound search for religious meaning in our modern world. For those of us who face this challenge there is a need for a transforming yet balanced approach to the spiritual life. The author attempts to present a readable series of spiritual reflections aimed at those who, while dissatisfied by the superficiality of the technical age, do not find the answers to their search in the excesses of some of the more fundamentalist approaches to spirituality. He does this by combining solid theological insights (indeed his debt to Karl Rahner is evident) to an active dialogue with the experience of life in the United States.

He divides his reflections into two main parts. In the first we find what the author calls the "framework for cultivating a deeper awareness of self and God." This awareness is based on the spiritual return to the Gracious Mystery

of God which can be experienced in everyday life. This awareness begins with the experience of ourselves as beings of finite capabilities endowed with infinite longings. The author calls his readers into this reflective life accompanied by acceptance, an acceptance of self as dependent upon the mystery of God and an acceptance of our finitude and eventual death in total surrender to that Mystery. This first part also includes sections on the other necessary attitudes and virtues one must have in this search for meaning. He provides as well an exercise for cultivating the awareness of the Mystery of God in our lives and various reflections on fundamentalism.

The second part of *The Gracious Mystery* is a rather diverse collection of essays which express some concrete examples of the encounter with the 'mystery.' This part contains sections on the negative aspects of our world, the meaning of resurrection, the lives of various public figures (Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton and Martin Luther King) and various other aspects of daily life which can draw the reader into the awareness of the Mystery of God. He ends this part with an intriguing presentation of certain liturgical, cultural and natural seasons of the year.

The entire book ends with a "contemporary creed" in which the author capsulizes many of the insights of his book. I found this section very well done and thought provoking.

I have to applaud the effort of James Bacik for an approach to spirituality which begins at the core of a person's existential experience and for trying to incorporate good theology into a spiritual tract. While the first part is at times difficult to follow, it certainly orients well the person who wishes to continue this search for the mystery of God. I felt that there could have been more emphasis on how this spirituality might bring one into the concrete mission of Christ in the world however. Despite this I feel that *The Gracious Mystery* is enriching reading for those who wish to put aside the superficiality in their lives and live in the reality of the Gracious Mystery of God.

Mother Angelica's Answers not Promises. By Mother Angelica with Christine Allison. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row Publishers, 1987. Pp. x-275. Cloth, \$13.95.

Reviewed by Sr. Frances Ann Thom, O.S.C. Monastery of St. Clare, Lowell, MA.

The readers of Mother Angelica's book will find exactly what she promises — answers — answers from her personal and loving study of the life of Christ, as well as from her own interesting unique background. Mother begins her book by sharing some of this background with the reader in order to place her present life style as a Poor Clare in the correct perspective with her TV station. The author then moves into some very heavy and current religious and moral questions asked of her during her TV shows and in private discussions with persons who visit her and her nuns at their monastery. Using her own per-

sonal experiences or experiences as they have been related to her by others. Mother tackles some universal themes such as: love, hate, despair, guilt, evil, goodness, as well as God's ability to understand the human beings he has created. Her conversational style makes the book easy reading, and one feels as though Mother Angelica is only a chair away.

While mother does not get into any real theological interpretations, she does adequately handle the questions the ordinary Christian is concerned with today. She helps the prayerful person talk to and with God by learning how to accept the challenges he sends. She further demonstrates that God, at times, also needs to be challenged by the person of faith.

As Mother Angelica attempts to ease the pain of loneliness, loss and doubt, which all persons experience at some time in their lives, and points out that it is something to be accepted, understood and valued as part of the human condition, the reader becomes aware of the heart to heart conversation which had taken place. The book, as a whole, is a sharing of deep faith, love and devotion written by a woman who has dared to be different in her approach to spreading the Good news.



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