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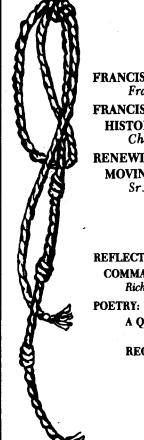
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FEBRUARY, 1991

The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW



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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 St. 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 St. 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 Ladv SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues Test: Testament of St. Francis UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy ¹I, 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 St. 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., 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).

Reflection:

Religious Game Playing and The Second Commandment

RICHARD ROHR, O.F.M. and JOSEPH MARTOS

Ever since Eric Berne wrote Games People Play, many people have become aware of the ways that people distort interpersonal relationships in order to avoid really getting to know and communicate with each other. Instead, they engage in patterns of behavior that allow them to feel good about themselves even at other people's expense. They think of life in terms of winning and losing, and the object of every game, of course, is to win.

Religion is at heart an interpersonal relationship — a relationship with God which affects the ways that we relate to ourselves and to other people. Like all relationships, religion too can become distorted by game playing, some types of which are as old as the Bible. Even people who are aware of this, however, do not realize that the second commandment was originally a prohibition of religious game playing.

A first type of religious game people play is the merit system. These people see only the stern, even angry, father side of God and they find him unapproachable, even unforgiving. Although they go to church, they inwardly don't like God, and they basically don't trust God. They see

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only one side of the Trinity, blind to that side of God which is merciful and forgiving. So the game they play is a form of trying to get right with God.

In Catholicism, the most common form of this game is legalism. Catholics love to play doctrinal legalism, in which the object is to find out the right things to believe and then hold on to them no matter what. When you die, St. Peter will examine your beliefs and, if you've got all the right ones, he'll let you into heaven.

Another form of this game is moral legalism. The goal here is to find out what things *not* to do, and then avoid them like the plague. When you die, St. Peter will not ask you any catechism questions, but he will be very concerned about your behavior, especially in the area of sexual morality. It does not matter much what you did with your life; as long as you did not do any of the bad things on his list, you're in.

Protestants play legalism, too, although the rules are somewhat different. You have to consult your local denomination to learn which doctrines are in and which sins are out. One Protestant variety of this game which has become more popular in recent decades is fundamentalism, which is a short list of fundamental beliefs which you have to accept in order to get right with God. Another variety is salvationism, which is the simplest game of all. All you need to do is say that you accept Jesus, and you are saved.

The main reason religious people feel the need to play these games is that they have no sense of their real relationship with God. They cannot envision themselves as brothers and sisters of Christ and as temples of the Holy Spirit. In psychological terms, they are not aware of their Godgiven ability to build healthy and creative lives without someone telling them what to think and what not to do. In theological terms, they are not in union with the God the Father and so, lacking the spiritual energy to discern and act in accordance with the Father's will, they need a rule book to guide them. In terms of spirituality, they substitute petty certitudes for the certainty of who they are in themselves and in relation to God—which comes only with struggle, through spiritual development.

Another game that has become popular lately is religious consumerism. People get religion not to get right with God but so God will get them what they want. They want an abundant life, which for them means the good things of this life. Or they want healing for various real and imagined hurts.

One consequence of this approach is the domestication of God. Instead of encountering the righteous Yahweh of the Old Testament or the demanding Christ of the New Testament, these game players prefer to make God a household word and turn Jesus into a home remedy for all that ails them. Instead of embracing the burden of crucifixion, they turn the

cross into a little lunch box with a handle on it — something that they can carry around with them so they can open it and feed on Jesus whenever they are hungry. They think of God as Dr. Feelgood — which to them is much more preferable than the image of God as Great Policeman, which is what the legalistic game players are into.

God gets domesticated when people are afraid to enter God's reign and so they bring him down into their own domain. It is a sort of spiritual infantilism. Not having grown to discover the kingdom of God, spiritual infants turn God into a toy that will fit into their religious doll house. Not having surrendered their common masculine or common feminine ego, they cannot find the deep masculine and feminine of God. Instead, they play with God, and play at being religious.

If anyone let God be God, it was Francis.

The domestication of God produces a serious distortion in our interpretation of the second of the ten commandments. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." Did you ever wonder why God would get upset if someone used his name as a swear word? You would think that the Almighty is above such petty sensitivity, but in the Catholic Church we even had a Holy Name society to reduce the incidence of such profanity. Devout Protestants too felt they had to protect the sacred name of God and Lord, Christ and Jesus from abuse by unthinking or malicious blasphemers.

That's not what the second Commandment was originally meant to prevent, however. This commandment was originally a prohibition against using God loosely and taking God lightly — like when we use God to justify what we want to do. The name of God, to the Hebrew mind, stood for the person of God, so the commandment is actually talking about the vain — meaning empty or frivolous — abuse of God himself.

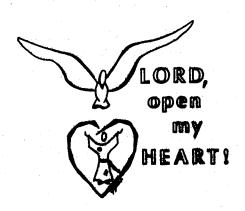
Whenever people use God to legitimate their own interests, they are abusing God. Whenever people use God as a front for their self righteousness, they are violating God. If you can parade God in front of what you do, you can justify practically anything. And everybody does it. God has been brought in to fight every war since the beginning of time. God has been made to bless the troops on both sides, for each side was always the side that God favored. The Germans used to engrave Gott mit Uns, "God With Us," on their swords and belt buckles. We Americans are not

quite that crass; we only put "in God We Trust" on our money. The domestication of God is the abuse of God.

People who are spiritually mature don't have to play that game. They can see the game for what it is, and they do not try to domesticate the wild God. Whether they be men or women, they have come in contact with the deep masculine and the deep feminine, and they have met God where those two energies complement and enhance each other. Since they are in touch with God's masculine energy, they are free to follow wherever the Spirit leads them. Since they are in touch with God's feminine energy, they are free to embrace whomever the Spirit brings before them. Since they experience the Trinity of God, they know the mystery of God, and they let God be God.

St. Francis of Assisi is a shining example of such spiritual maturity. Once he heard God's call to sell everything and give it to the poor, he did it freely and immediately. Whether he heard the Lord asking him to rebuild his house or to preach to the infidel, he responded with abounding energy and a glad heart. His embrace of Lady Poverty led him also to embrace the ugly and the unwashed, and even the leprous. Yet he also extended his arms to welcome Brother Sun and Sister Moon, the birds of the air and the beasts of the field.

If anyone let God be God, it was Francis. In that letting go, therefore, he could also let Francis be Francis. Without embarassment, he could be God's child, God's fool, God's clown. With zest he could do what the Lord asked of him, and when the Lord was not asking him to do anything, he could play. His total devotion to Christ and the cross allowed him to be totally joyful toward all of creation. Since he did not have to play God, he did not have to be perfect, or even admired. Yet by doing that he become a model of Christian discipleship and one of history's most admirable figures.



A Question for Francis

Francis, I wish to ask you a question —

a question asked in the midst of war, in the midst of death, in the midst of man's disregard for man,

a question asked as a whale's body is slashed clean, and a seal cub's blood dampens a thoughtless club,

a question asked as the megaton wolves of Gubbio point in all directions, and the gun and bomb are eloquent all over this world —

the question? — Can Brother and Sister have any meaning today can they?

Séamus Mulholland, O.F.M.

Francis — A Man and A Saint

FRANCIS BERNA, O.F.M. and JOHN HOLCOMB

Introduction

Human sexuality is a subject that in recent years has sparked a great deal of debate and reevaluation within society as well as the Roman Catholic Church. Out of this process, a growing number of thinkers have begun to explore the role sexuality plays in many areas previously believed to hold no relationship at all to sexuality and sexual awareness. Any connection between sexuality and the spiritual life was negative — denial of sexuality promoted growth in holiness. As many feminist thinkers have come to recognize a connection between sexuality, the feminine, and the experience of the holy, spirituality, so men have a need to see their sexuality, their masculinity, in their relationship with themselves, others and God.

To this end Francis offers a credible and interesting path. In his Writings he outlines the way of holiness, a following of Christ by observance of the gospels. And, the witnesses to his life attest that he lived this spirituality as a man, a somewhat unique man, a saint. Fr. Eric Doyle explored this latter title as a "fully individuated personality," a self able to integrate the masculine and feminine dimensions of the psyche. For Doyle, the stigmata marks Francis as one who has brought together the conscious and unconscious, animus and anima, self and Self. As most of the current literature explores the relationship of masculinity and spirituality with the same psychology, there is a solid foundation for exploring these insights in relation to Francis' way of holiness.

This timely article was co-authored by Fr. Frank Berna, O.F.M., Assistant Professor of Theology at St. Bonaventure University and John Holcomb, one of his students. Mr. Holcomb, presently a graduate student in mathematics at the State University of New York in Albany, provided a thorough review of the contemporary literature on male sexuality and spirituality while Fr. Berna developed his work in reference to Francis.

To understand how being a man interacts with an understanding of self, others and God, it is necessary to first refine the meaning of "sexuality." All humans are sexual beings. Sexuality constitutes the human way of being part of the world as people. Sexuality involves far more than genital activity, as it is the recognition that humans are "embodied" people—in male and female bodies. Sexuality is the desire for emotional and physical intimacy, the power which drives us from aloneness to communion, from separation to intimacy. Sexuality offers the capacity for sensuousness—enjoying the earth—and the capacity for love.²

With this overview in mind, one can begin to discover the elements of sexuality unique to men. Male sexuality has a biological reference which generates certain kinds of experience beyond cultural definition. Biological reference and cultural definition need to be recognized to develop a masculine spirituality which can lead to healing and wholeness individuation.

One area needing healing concerns the confusion and contradictions about the man's place in society today. Traditionally the man has seen himself as the breadwinner and financial supporter of the family. Modern economics force men out of this role which often times can lead men to feel deficient in living up to their underlying notions of masculinity. Aware of the feminist insight many men feel themselves caught, unsure of how to get on with being a man in the world. Men have difficulty understanding their relationship to the new roles and responsibilities of women.³

Francis certainly found in his father, the merchant, a typical example of the male provider. While his mother may have exercised some power in naming her son "John," upon the Father's return the boy's name was changed to "Francis." (L3S I,3) There is nothing in the text of the biographies to suggest that the Lady Pica exercised any role beyond that of what was typical for women in the Middle Ages.

More popular film and literature depict the same image. In Zeffirelli's "Brother Sun, Sister Moon," Lady Pica tends to favor and spoil her son. While she attempts to moderate the rage of Pietro she acquiesces to his demands of being wife over mother. With a strange twist of biography Hermann Hesse depicts Francis as spoiled by his father and admonished by his mother. However, it is interesting to note that at the end of the story the mother is the one to understand the young Francis, even better than he understood himself.

Hesse offers something else of great interest in his story. After playing a game of "mille fiori" with the young children of the village Francis fears that he has not lived up to what should be expected of the young man who longs to be a knight. He has not been manly. The mother consoles

him telling him that even knights dance when they are happy or wish to give joy to others. Typical of his novels, Hesse has the feminine bringing Francis to life and to God. Such life comes as the notion of what is masculine is expanded. Something similar would seem to be behind Zeffirelli's work. Perhaps one may see this as a parallel to Celano's narration of Francis freed from chains by his mother only later to be denounced by his father. (1 Cel VI, 3).

As Nelson, Kelsey and others point out, men today often find themselves lacking in meaningful emotional relations with their fathers, sons, other friends and women. ⁵ While men may desire closer and more meaningful relationships, it is this very intimacy which scares them. As this yearning for life-giving relations with other people would also reflect a desire for a closer connection with God, it is apparent that men long for a deeper connection between sexuality and spirituality. That is, they search for a deeper connection between the way they find themselves in the world and the God they long to know.

Francis' "Letter to a Minister" readily demonstrates his connection of human intimacy, an intimacy among males, which discloses something of the holy. He writes,

... There should not be any brother in the world who has sinned, and who, after he has looked into your eyes, would go away without receiving your mercy, if he is looking for mercy. And if he were not to seek mercy, you should ask him if he wants mercy. And if he should sin thereafter a thousand times before your eyes, love him more than me so that you may draw him back to the Lord. (Ep Min 9-11)

In this very moving letter Francis perceives sin as alienation. He knows how uncomfortable this minister must feel. Yet, he calls this minister to embrace what sickens him, embrace the brother who has sinned, even if he does not ask for mercy. The tenderness of human action is to lead to the experience of God.⁶

Another more difficult area in the experience of Francis needs to be examined at this point. All of the biographies and related literature fail to mention Francis ever re-establishing a meaningful relationship with his parents. Zeffirelli has Francis return to his home only to be ignored by his parents even though this pains the mother.

Celano's Second Life relates the conversion experience of Francis stripped naked before his father, the bishop and the people of the city. Francis exclaims, "From now on I can freely say Our Father who art in heaven, not father Peter Bernadone." (2 Cel VII, 12). Through the use of a low born, simple man Francis has attempted to work through the abuse hurled upon him by his father. Still he is forced to renounce his inheritence and his father. He now claims God in place of his father.

One can see here an embrace of the archetypal image of father in Francis' experience of God. And this is complemented with his embrace of the archetypal mother, the earth. One has to question though the possibility of fully embracing the archetypal image without embracing the concrete expression of that archetype in one's experience. Is it possible to embrace the archetype without its symbol? While certainly God is "father" for Francis, and earth his "mother" one must acknowledge a seeming lack of integration in the particulars of the saint's life.

Nelson, who seems to hammer away at the father-son issue for male sexuality and spirituality, offers a rather significant insight. He cites the story of the prodigal Son — interestingly enough not a story connected to the life of Francis. The gospel text shows an image of the Holy One as completely accepting, unbelievably forgiving and loving with no sense of this being deserved or earned, typical masculine requirements. For many men this gospel portrait of a father and God simply do not exist. To know the truth of the story fathers and sons need to be embraced by one another. Part of Nelson's journey has been to forgive his father and recognize his own need to be embraced and understood by his son. Again, one is painfully aware of the distance in Francis' relationship between himself and his father.

Still, more needs to be said. Elie Wiesel after suffering in a Nazi concentration camp angrily poses the question of God's need for forgiveness. For Wiesel nothing other than God can account for so great a suffering especially that of innocent children. In the very parable of the prodigal son the son who has slaved for his father is very angry. Many would see the justice of such anger. The father begs him to understand. Might one not suggest that the father is asking his son to forgive his being too generous?

The experience of generosity separates Pietro Bernadone as father from God as father. As the biographies detail, Pietro's life is marked by selfishness and greed. A love of money keeps him from the embrace of his son. Francis sees generosity as authentic fatherhood, true masculinity, and cannot embrace its complete contradiction. Yet, in relation to the holy, Francis repeatedly praises the magnificent generosity of God. Does Francis have to forgive God? It would seem not. God is consistently praised as all-good, all-powerful, most kind. Perhaps the gratitude of Francis, his appreciation of divine generosity, comes from his journey not to take hold of God, but allowing God to take hold of him. Rather than having to work through his images of the divine, Francis allowed the mystery to enfold his existence. Francis was not only comfortable with giving, he was also happy to receive, to be taken care of. One need only recall his joy as a

habit was given him while he lay dying naked on the ground. Owning his own weakness proved to be his strength. Perhaps this is the very key for men in the continued self discovery as a discovery of the divine.

The Exterior Male and the Interior Spirit

Spirituality refers in a broad sense to the ways by which a person relates to that which is ultimately real and worthwhile. A male spirituality is grounded in the experience of the male body. In this respect men need to understand the experiences of masculinity as male phenomena rather than accepting it as the universal human experience as it was assumed for centuries.

The external character of the male genitalia enables men to appreciate the visually erotic and value strong sexual play. At the same time the male body and its expression harbor a real danger. Men can be trapped into thinking of sexuality as merely sex. The emotional, intimate nature of relationships can be neglected or ignored. For many men it is quite possible to engage in genital activity "which doesn't mean anything." Many men think of sex as acts, acts involving genital expression. With such an orientation it becomes easy to perceive why male sex organs become important self-images. Sexual performance can become focused on penetration and orgasm. Male sexual activity can stand in sharp contrast with a traditionally feminine appreciation of the internal, relational and mysterious quality of sexuality. For men the mystery is often viewed as external to the self.

With regard to spirituality the object of the spiritual life is viewed as "out there" rather than a mystery dwelling within. The desire is to grasp, understand, penetrate, analyze and possess. The transcendent character of God dominates divine immanence.

As noted above, Francis was willing to receive, to be taken care of by God. While Francis praises the transcendent God as creator and trinity, as Bonaventure Hinwood observes, he also appreciates the indwelling character of God. In fact, for Francis, the transcendence is the immanence — the trinity a community of love and creation alive with the creator. The Christocentric view of Francis speaks of the nearness of God.

The interiority of Francis' spirituality can also be found in Bonaventure's description of the journey to God. After detailing how God can be found in the created order, the *Itinerarium* calls the pilgrim to "look within." After considering the oneness of God's being, the pilgrim is to consider the overflowing goodness of God as trinity.

A richer, more fulfilling masculine spirituality may well depend upon new ways of learning to be sexual. Nelson contends that male biology seems to offer a "deep, dark instinctual energy that we want and need to tap. On the one hand males relate to the desire to penetrate and explore the mysteries of others, a desire important to human fulfillment. Yet this aspect of the male nature seeks to be balanced through the development of a more receptive and vulnerable male sexuality. Nelson suggests that the latter can be found in the nurturing character of fathers — an experience often left to mid-life or later, though now often more common in two career households.

... powerful images in his writings and the stories of his life... offer a model for being a man which corresponds to the challenges of contemporary psychology.

On the other hand, a father not often physically present and emotionally distant, who bestows love based on performance achievements, helps shape a male for independence, self-protection and competition. However, the male often lacks preparation for intimacy, vulnerability and mutuality. Yet, these too are important and powerful experiences in life. God as distant father encourages human initiative. But often this is at the expense of a genuine relationship with God.

Men, Friendship and Spirituality

Another example of how an understanding of sexuality affects the perceptions of life and God can be seen in the lack of true friendship among many men. Generally men are much more self-disclosing to women than other men. For men sex seems to be the greatest intimacy, thus the notion of loving someone seems to suggest something genital. Few models exist exemplifying adult intimacy without genital activity.

One serious element in this estrangement is fear: fear of vulnerability. One does not want to reveal to another man self-doubts and weaknesses, for then he would not fit the mold of a "strong normal male." Thus, many men become overdependent upon women, particularly one woman for all emotional support. This is not healthy for either and can lead to serious problems in relationships. Furthermore, the denial of fellow male

friendship denies a special kind of disclosure that can occur only between men. Sam Keen states:

There are stories we can tell only to those who have wrestled in the dark with the same Demons. Only men understand the secret fears that go with the territory of masculinity. 10

A serious threat to such intimacy among men is the fear of being labelled a homosexual. Nelson uses the term "homophobia" to describe among other things a personal dread of same sex attraction and erotic expression. The reasons for this phobia are complex and deeply rooted in Western culture. Unfortunately the complex reasons cannot be examined here. However one immediate factor would be the male tendency to equate intimacy with genital expression. Not skilled in other ways of demonstrating friendship and affection, men often have difficulty in positively expressing their care for one another. It is interesting to note how often men actually express their like for one another with a playful exchange of punches or by calling one another derogatory names. While one might suggest other more positive forms of exchange, perhaps it is best to accept and start with identifying this kind of behavior for what it is — men showing affection to one another.

In contrast to many modern men, Francis maintains a most intimate relation with Leo. Francis writes, "I speak to you my son, as a mother." (Ep Leo 2). And, Francis was not afraid of his own weakness, not afraid of intimacy. The "Rule for Hermitages" also details the kind of intimacy that is to exist among the brothers.

"Two of these are to be mothers, and they may have two sons or at least one. The two who are mothers should follow the life of Martha while the two who are sons should follow the life of Mary... The sons shall sometimes assume the role of mothers." (Reg R 1,2,1i)

While the imagery of Martha and Mary has a wide use in the Middle Ages, Francis' use of the terms does suggest a high integration of the masculine and feminine. This is underscored with his references to "mother" as descriptive of the friars caring for one another. Not being afraid of the feminine imagery shows that Francis has no homophobic concern and has achieved a high level of intimacy with his brothers. The sense of balance between male and female can be seen in those special friends, Leo and Sylvester, as well as the deep relationship he had with Clare.

As in the other areas, alienation between men has consequences for the spiritual life. Not knowing male acceptance, men can have difficulty feeling accepted by God as father. Love becomes likened to respect and that respect must be earned.

At first glance one may see Francis' acts of penance and poverty as "earning respect." But they are not that at all. For Francis life is a thanksgiving, a praise of God for his many gifts. Francis uses poverty and penance to see the things of life in their true perspective, for their worth. In Celano's Second Life Francis is asked by a brother to give an opinion of himself. Francis says, "It seems to me that I am the greatest of sinners, for if God had treated any criminal with such great mercy, he would have been ten times more spiritual than I. (2 Cel LXXXVI, 123)

This statement, and the many like it on Francis' "humility" do not inhibit his development of a positive self-image, the healthy self-love critical to an integrated sexuality. Any kind of intimacy depends on a solid sense of identity for each of the partners. Emotional intimacy is threatening to the person who lacks self-affirmation. With selflove comes a sense of identity which allows one to expose the depths of self. Kelsey makes this clear emphasizing that growth in self-esteem can often take place as one tries to see oneself in the eyes of God. One can also grow in this area by learning to accept forgiveness and believing it is morally wrong to devalue, dislike and despise the self. While Francis continually sees himself as the greatest of sinners, in fact grows in this conviction, he doesn't see himself as distant from God. His sinfulness becomes an ever more powerful awareness of divine generosity, an amazing event of God being interested in this poor little man.

Eros and the Spiritual Life

Eros — desire and passion, constitutes another essential element in friendhip. It is the desire for fulfillment through communion. Eros is sensuousness and bodily. One longs to feel, to touch, to experience the other.

Males find this problematic in that many of them have been taught to fear this desire. Eros has its proper release only in the dark bedroom. One's capacity for eros is diminished the more it is separated from friendship. Without eros, selflove becomes cold, friendship is seriously limited and sexual desire becomes merely an act. Eros invites the experience of the Holy because it encourages men to loosen their grip and the need to control. Eros makes the male admit his own neediness. It can lead to humility and the realization that one need not be always strong, cheerful, proud or a winner. By admitting the yearning, thirsting and fear of genuine friendship a man may find grace in knowing that he belongs to God.

Eros can be found in the passion with which Francis lives life. The "Canticle of the Creatures" shows how he has filled his sense with creation's beauty. Francis finds that it's OK to be a fool for Christ's sake. When the task had grown too large, Francis willingly handed over the leadership of the Order. He was convinced that the Order was God's, not his, and that the true Minister general was the Holy Spirit of God. In eros Francis found freedom.

Another way in which a man's understanding of his sexuality affects his perception of the world is a withdrawal from the idea of "body connectedness." Nelson contends men, in a sense moreso than women, have to recover a part of themselves that has been submerged. Men tend to see their bodies as a car or truck which they drive around in. Nelson advocates a "Resurrection of the Body" in which men affirm their natures as creatures of flesh and deny the body/spirit dualism.

A great many benefits may be derived from such an affirmation. One such benefit would be the recovery of male capacities for feeling. Often feelings are conditioned away from men, they are left for women and often a man is not expected to have intense feelings, except perhaps anger or jealousy. Often enough men do not know what they are feeling and thus are unable to disclose to another the nature of those feelings.

Secondly, when one is detached from one's body reality, he becomes detached from the body reality of others. A recovery of body recovers a capacity for pleasure. Nelson reports a study which shows that in a great number of societies a close correlation exists between peacefulness and the expression of bodily pleasure in contrast to cultures of violence with the suppression of bodily pleasure. It seems societies which pass on to their children sex positive, body positive, images are more demonstrative and peaceful societies. On the other hand, pleasure deprived youngsters are much more likely to be violent adults.

In recovering a sense of pleasure for ourselves we can recover an understanding of a pleasure loving God. The God of Ancient Israel had a sense of humor and playfullness. The God of Ancient Israel could be described as the passionate lover in the "Song of Songs." Jesus, the Word Incarnate, comes in the flesh. He comes not as an ascetic but as one who fully enjoyed the company of others, as man with real friends, a man who enjoys a good meal.

Where is Francis in all this? Certainly his strict asceticism is hardly a literal following of Jesus or an appreciation of the body. In fact it takes him until the end of his life to be reconciled to "brother body" whom he has treated too harshly. But, as in many of the other areas there is another side to Francis. One is reminded of his awakening all of the brothers in the middle of a night to eat with a young brother who was hungry. Francis

did not want the young brother to feel embarrassed. In both Rules Francis writes that the sick brothers are to be cared for as any one of them would like to be cared for.

Celano's Second Life presents another ambiguous event. After failing to overcome a temptation toward lust with scourging and rolling in the snow, Francis makes another attempt.

Then gathering handfuls of snow, he made from it seven lumps like balls. And setting them before him, he began to speak to his body: "Behold," he said, "this larger one is your wife; these four are your two sons and your two daughters; the other two are your servant and your maid whom you must have to serve you. Hurry," he said, "and clothe them all, for they are dying of cold. But if caring for them in so many ways troubles you, be solicitous for serving God alone.". (2 Cel LXXXVII, 117)

On the one hand Francis is very much in touch with his body and sexuality. He is aware of and can well imagine genital expression and the creation of family. Francis does not negate himself as a sexual being. On the other hand, the scourging, the rolling in the snow and seeing genital expression resulting only in family responsibility suggest a limited appreciation on the part of Francis. However, his sexuality is no different than any other area of his life. Sexuality, like everything else in life must be integrated to his service of God. Consistent with his asceticism, Francis' rejection of genital expression in this temptation is not a rejection of the goodness of sexuality, the goodness of creation. Rather it is his consistent rejection of whatever he perceives as distracting him from God, a valuing of the creature above the Creator. In this sense there is real integration and consistency in Francis. He integrates his self-expression with who and what he understands and embraces as the direction of his life.

A Sense of Fulfillment

Consistent with some of the associations established by Nelson one can suggest further grounds to establish a healthy integration in the saint. Francis lays aside violence while maintaining a sense of chivalry. He is ever the gentleman to his Lady Poverty. As previously noted, tenderness marks his life. He is a man of emotion, capable of great joy and moved by great sadness. He could laugh and weep freely.

One of this most evident forms of male sexual alienation is simply the lack of a solid sense of manhood. Martin Pable, A Man and His God, points out the Western society's picture of a man is the college educated individual possessing a perfect body. ¹³ He is the irresistable yet tender lover, who is tough and competitive on the job. The reality is that most men are average looking, struggling to hold on to unglamorous jobs,

working to hold on to marriages, and worrying about providing a secure home for their children. It is easy to see why men can feel so insecure about themselves. Measuring self against the ideal leaves a man with a sense of failure, a contradiction of the success he is supposed to be.

Francis certainly confounded the meaning of masculine success operative in his day. He holds out a different ideal and formulates that vision in his writings. Certainly there is some refashioning of the ideal man in contemporary culture, but it would seem even this ideal, like the popular stereotype and the vision of Francis, can do nothing more than lead to a sense of frustration and failure.

There is a difference with Francis. Throughout his life, he always sees himself as "on the way." While he never sees himself as having reached perfection, this honest recognition of himself does not generate frustration or despair. Rather, the recognition is the impetus to keep growing. "Brothers, let us begin to serve the Lord, for up to now we have made little or no progress." What a statement for the end of his life! Yet it is not a statement of personal failure, disappointment or anger. Life remains growth to the end. "I have done what was mine to do, may Christ teach you what is yours." In the last moments of life Francis had a sense of satisfaction. He had been faithful to the call of God. Fidelity to the gospel call stands as the absolute of the ideal held out by Francis. It is the being of onself, the giving over of one's whole self, to the mystery of God as God awakens that mystery in one's life.

Conclusion

A quick review of the recent literature on the topic of male spirituality indicates that there are many more avenues to be persued. And, looking at Francis, it should be immediately apparent that there are some serious questions about the degree of his sexual integration. However, as has been shown, there are some powerful images in his writings and the stories of his life which offer a model for being a man which corresponds to the challenges of contemporary psychology. Perhaps the most powerful image arises from the fact that it took him his whole life to achieve the integration with which he is credited. The passionate, courageous and often times foolish way in which he lived his life brought him a sense of satisfaction and happiness. He died at peace with himself, with life and with God.

Endnotes

¹Eric Doyle, O.F.M. St. Francis and the Song of Brotherhood, London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1980, pp. 21 & 29. Fr. Doyle notes his obvious use of Jungian categories for understanding the human psyche.

²James B. Nelson, *The Intimate Connection: Male Sexuality, Masculine Spirituality*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1988, p. 28.

³Helen Mayer Hacker, "The New Burdens of Masculinity," in Sol Gordon and Roger Libby, Sexuality Today and Tomorrow. North Scituate, MA: Suxbury Press, 1976, pp. 28-29.

⁴Hermann Hesse. "The Childhood of St. Francis of Assisi," Stories of Five Decades. Translated by Ralph Manheim. London: Triad Grafton Books, 1976.

⁵Morton Kelsey, Caring: How Can We Love One Another? NY: Paulist Press, 1981.

⁶Cf. Sr. Frances Ann Thom, O.S.C. "Francis: the Tender," *The Cord*, 32 (1982) 67-71.

⁷Eloi Leclerc, O.F.M. The Canticle of the Creatures, Symbols of Union. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977, pp. 21, 135ff.

⁸Bonaventure Hinwood, O.F.M. Conv. "St. Francis and God," *The Cord*, 37 (January 1987): 3-21.

⁹Nelson, p. 43.

¹⁰Nelson, o. 51.

¹¹Nelson, p. 60.

¹²Kelsey, pp. 46-66; Nelson, pp. 52-54.

¹³Martin Pable, O.F.M. Cap. A Man and His God. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1988, p. 43.

Recollection

silence seeps through colored panes laced like leading with birdsong

soon a pool laps gently hushed at memory's shore

Sr. M. Felicity Dorsett, OSF

Franciscan Evangelization II: A Brief Historical Overview

CHARLES V. FINNEGAN, O.F.M.

"I now begin a noble subject, for I begin to write of the glorious and exceedingly great labors of [Franciscans] throughout the entire world, of sufferings and death, endured for the sake of Christ and His Church." So wrote the Franciscan historian, Dominic Gubernatis (+1689), as he began his work on the history of Franciscan missions.

Gubernatis died before completing his work, and today his words might seem a bit chauvinistic. It is nonetheless true that, notwithstanding many flaws (characteristic of even heroic human endeavors), our Franciscan missionary heritage is a very inspiring one.

"Sent Into the Entire World" (Ep Ord, 9)

The history of the Franciscan family is, to a great extent, a history of missionary activity. As Stephen Neill notes: "Before the thirteenth century is out, we shall find Franciscans at the ends of the known earth." By 1500, Frnaciscan missions extended from Lapland to the Congo, from the Azores to China, and even into the "New World."

Without making an attempt even to list all the major missionary undertaikings of St. Francis' followers, the following instances of early Franciscan evangelism on various continents may serve as examples.

1. Europe

At the Portiuncula chapter of 1219, Francis sent friars to France, Germany, Hungary, Spain and into the provinces of Italy where they had not been before.

This is the second in a series which began in the January 1991 issue of The CORD and which will continue through this year.

By 1230 there is a province in Slavonia, and in 1233 a Franciscan mission in Georgia. By 1240 we find friars in Albania, in 1246 a Franciscan mission in Armenia, and in the 1280s letters of Pope Nicholas IV mention Franciscans in Bosnia, Serbia and Bulgaria.

John of Piancarpino, before going as a papal envoy to the Great Khan of China in 1245, had already pioneered founding the Order in Bohemia, Poland and Norway.

Later, in the 17th century, missionary work among Eastern Europeans would be undertaken mostly by Conventual friars, for they were debarred by royal decrees from taking part in the evangelization of the "New World."

2. Africa

While Christianity had flourished in North Africa in the early centuries, it was practically wiped out by the Islamic jihads in the seventh century, except for the Coptic Christians in Egypt and in Ethiopia.

Blessed by St. Francis at the conclusion of the general chapter of 1219, six friars set out for Marocco. Their leader, Br. Vitalis, became ill and had to remain in Spain. The others, under the leadership of Br. Berard, became the protomartyrs of the Order, on January 16, 1220. A Franciscan province was established in North Africa in 1235. During the 13th century Franciscans are found along the entire northern coast of Africa, from Morocco to Egypt.

Among the most remarkable missionaries to Africa was the Franciscan tertiary Raymond Lull, who died a martyr in 1315. With great forsight and zeal he established a school where friars received specialized training before going to Islamic peoples.

Franciscans carried on a heroic ministry after 1400, especially on behalf of Christians who had been enslaved by Moslems in North Africa. When the "Portuguese Crusade" to evangelize Africa began in the 15th century, the first missionaries were often Franciscans. One of the great glories of the Capuchin Franciscans was their mission to the Congo, beginning in the 17th century.

Although today the majority of North-American black Christians are Protestants, the first Christianity to be adopted by the ancestors of African-Americans was Catholicism, thanks largely to the missionary work of Franciscans.

3. The Holy Land

In 1217, several friars under the leadership of Br. Elias, left for Syria and the Holy Land, where the general chapter that year had created a new province. It included the south-east Mediterranean basin, extending from Egypt to Greece. With the fall of Acre in 1291, 14 friars and 64 Poor Clares were put to death. Other Franciscans took refuge in Cyprus awaiting the opportunity to return. The definitive return of the Franciscans to the Holy Land occurred in 1342, and they have been there ever since carrying on what is surely the most famous of the Order's missions.

4. Asia

Turning our attention to this, the largest continent, we note that the Franciscan, John of Piancarpino, the first papal envoy to Asia, brought letters from Pope Innocent IV to Genghis Khan in 1246, and was well received. More importantly, from a missionary perspective, was the work of John of Monte Corvino, who between 1294 and 1305 baptized 6,000 Chinese. He translated the New Testament and the Psalter into the language of the people and became the first Archbishop of Peking, in 1308. His suffragens were also Franciscans.

The first Franciscans arrived in India in 1500 and a province was erected there in 1612.

The first stable Franciscan mission in Indonesia was established in 1588.

The first Franciscan missionaries to Japan were St. Peter Baptist and his companions who arrived in 1593 and were martyred on 5 February 1597.

In Vietnam there is a Franciscan presence as early as 1584 and in 1592 we find three friars in Cambodia.

5. The "New World"

It is almost impossible to exaggerate the enthusiasm with which thousands of missionaries came to the Americas, starting in the 15th/16th centuries, to establish a "new Christendom." The Franciscans were assembled in general chapter in 1493 when word reached Europe that Columbus had discovered a "new world" full of "Indians" waiting to be evangelized. The friars reacted with such enthusiasm, says the chronicle, that they were like "thirsty elephants sniffing fresh water."

Among the first missionaries to the New World there were at least two Franciscans: the lay friars, Juan de Deule (who appears to have baptized the first native convert), and Juan de Tisin. They accompanied Columbus

on his second voyage, in 1493. According to historian Lino Gomeza Canedo:

[T]hese two friars seem to have been the only ones who labored at that time for the conversion of the Indians, together with the hermit, Ramon Pane... This was the first missionary work realized in America... In search of help they went back to Spain and returned in 1500 with 3 Franciscans... Two years later (1502) seventeen Franciscans, thirteen of whom were priests [came to the New World].

By 1500, Franciscans claimed to have baptized 3,000 natives.

Throughout the colonial period the Franciscans sent the largest number of missionaries to the New World. That's understandable since they were by far the largest religious order in the church at that time. In 1680 there were sixty thousand friars in the world, and their numbers increased to 76,000 by 1762. At least a third of these were living in the Americas, according to some estimates.

In 1505 the Franciscan province of the Holy Cross was established in Santo Domingo, the first religious province in the Americas.

The first missionaries to Brazil were Franciscans who accompanied the Portuguese discoverer Pedro Alvares Cabral in 1500, and the friars were the only evangelists in that country until 1549 when the Jesuits arrived.

The very flourishing Franciscan missions in Mexico began in 1523, and in Peru in 1527. From there they spread throughout much of South America.

Turning our attention to what is presently North America, we note that Franciscans accompanied Ponce de Leon in 1513 on his discovery of Florida (an area that included Georgia and South Carolina). In 1527 four Franciscans came to this territory as missionaries, including the first bishop of Florida, Fray Juan Juarez. For almost two centuries pastoral work in this area would be done mostly by Franciscans. Among the most revered of these missionaries were the five martyrs of Georgia who were put to death in 1597 for their defense of Christian marriage.

The area known today as New Mexico, Arizona and most of Texas was discovered in 1539 by the Franciscan Marco de Nizza of the Mexican province of the Holy Gospel. He gave the present area of New Mexico the name "The New Reign of St. Francis." For more than two centuries the work of evangelism would be carried on only by Franciscans.

Farther north, the first Franciscans (three priests and one lay friar) arrived in Canada from France in 1615, and Franciscans began working in English-speaking North America (in Maryland) around 1673.

In California, the famous work of the friars began with founding the Mission San Diego de Alcala (named in honor of a 15th century lay friar

missionary to the Canary Islands), on 16 July 1769, and lasted until 2 February 1848 when California became part of the U.S. Between 1769 and 1846, the friars baptized 98,055 Indians, celebrated 28,040 weddings and 75,340 funerals.

The Franciscan missionary enterprise had its flaws to be sure, but our heritage is an inspiring one...

One final note on Franciscans in the New World. The first martyr in the Americas was Fernando Salcedo, killed in the Antilles in 1516, and another Franciscan, Juan de Padilla, gave his life, probably at Kerington, Kansas, around 1542, the first martyr of North America.

It is easy to agree with the opinion of Canedo: "[The Franciscan missionary effort] was unequaled in the American continent."

More Recent Franciscan Institutes

The subject is a vast one, beyond the limits of this essay. Nonetheless, we need to recall that in the past few centuries literally hundreds of Franciscan apostolic institutes have been founded by women and men who derived their inspiration from St. Francis and the whole heritage of Franciscan commitment to evangelization.

Conclusion

The Franciscan missionary enterprise had its flaws to be sure, but our heritage is an inspiring one, as can be seen even in a sketchy summary. As we today read the signs of our own times, can we not discern in the world, as did so many of our predecessors, "a powerful and tragic appeal to be evangelized" (Paul VI)? We too need to make our own the words of Jesus: "I must proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God; that is what I was sent to do."

Questions for Reflection (preferably in common)

- 1. This essay mentioned only a few of the highlights of Franciscan missionary activity. Can you expand on those mentioned or think of others?
 - 2. Among the most remarkable figures in Franciscan mission history

is the Third Order Franciscan martyr, Blessed Raymond Lull. What can you find out about his life and ministry and how is his example relevant today?

3. In Evangelii Nuntiandi (n. 55), published in 1975, Pope Paul VI claimed "that it would not be an exaggeration to say there exists [in the modern world] a powerful and tragic appeal to be evangelized." What signs can you detect in our world today of that same appeal?



Renewing the Franciscan Community Moving Towards Union/Mission

SR. JOAN MUELLER, O.S.F.

To technically define a charism is a seemingly impossible task. Even the apparently obvious attempt to classify the Franciscan charism as "evangelical" has lead to insightful critique. Yet the need to identify charism in the search for communal mission is an ever-pressing one. Mary Jo Leddy in her new book Reweaving Religious Life: Beyond the Liberal Model calls again for the radical search for charism and for the need to be present and committed to the process of religious life. In a Franciscan community struggling with the contemporary situations of aging, lack of new members, diversity without common energy, etc., what will the next paradigm look like? Can we believe that the Holy Spirit is offering all the ingredients necessary for the bold proclamation of the Gospel today?

In an excellent presentation "Transformational Leadership in a Time of Diminishment" Donna J. Markham, O.P., develops three stages of organizational transformation within the present context of religious life: managing the ending, dealing with the neutral zone and launching the new beginning. Under the concept of ending Markham discusses the familiar topics of losing attachments, institutions, friends, structures, control, future vision, etc. In various presentations and articles in the last twenty years, these topics have been both identified and grappled with. Yet if our grieving is not to become pathological, it must of needs eventually come to an end. Many communities today, therefore, find themselves in

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In Franciscan gatherings attempts to define the future energy often reveal similar but vague themes. Attitudes such as joy, simple living, trust, dependence, mission and contemplative prayer are common. These common themes seem to say something about who the Franciscan community is and yet, often the community process gets stuck after their emergence.

The Gospel Life

That the Gospel is absolutely central to the Franciscan life as it is to all Christian life is presupposed here. Our purpose, however, is surely not to identify Franciscans as a group which alone possesses the charism of the Gospel or even as one which interprets that charism in a specific way. Rather it is preferred here to leave the charism/identity of Franciscanism to the realm of mystery and therefore to acknowledge it as experienced, albeit in a variety of ways, but also to perceive it as a gift of God beyond empirical definition.

Once free from the compulsive search for pragmatic identity, the Franciscan heart spontaneously moves to the Gospel as the rule of life. Although Franciscans must admit that their history accuses them of erring in this direction, for Francis the movement towards the Gospel was never a fundamentalist one. In discerning various themes which arise within the Franciscan assembly, therefore, a facilitator must constantly ask: Does this theme have the potential of speaking the entire Gospel within this particular congregation and to the world today?

The question is an important one. Some themes such as simple living or contemplative prayer have become loaded with agendas in particular community situations. In searching for Gospel dynamics agendas that have the capacity to become oppressive and fundamentalist must be avoided at all costs. The Franciscan goal is simply to become and to preach the Gospel. If the particulars of simple living or contemplative prayer or service to the poor prevent the radical living and proclamation of the Gospel, they must be tempered and delegated their appropriate place as servant of the Gospel within the contemporary milieu. The Holy Spirit brings life and energy to a group. If an assembly can be convinced to adopt a particular attitude only through recourse to guilt tactics, then the agenda does not emanate from the Holy Spirit. Perhaps capturing the reasoning of such a process will illumine its error. Let us take, for example, this abbreviated scenario of a communal process:

The love of Francis and Clare was poverty. Because of this Franciscans should also love poverty. Therefore if you do not approve of a particular agenda (living in community houses, fewer cars, less money for travel, etc.), of what this countercultural poverty looks like, you are not a good Franciscan. Since everyone at this assembly wants to be a good Franciscan, we adopt this particular agenda as who we are.

Putting this bluntly it is easy to observe where the error occurs. The fallacy is the premature equating of a particular agenda with a deep-seated value. Because the assembly knows it believes in the value, it is often tricked into accepting an agenda which appears to promote this value, but which in the lived reality creates not the value but rather oppression. Again it must be emphasized that this is not a movement of the Holy Spirit.

Another movement seems common within contemporary assemblies. Unlike the above action this inclination is in line with the movement of the Holy Spirit but it is rapidly becoming out-dated and out of sync with the desires of communities renewing in the 1990's. The movement referred to here is the self-help movement.

Early in renewal efforts to identify and heal individual wounds, addictions, disabilities in community life was imperative and necessary. Coming from the institutional model which often squelched individual responsibility for the sake of the institutional mission, the removal of institutional structure left many members ill-equipped to move responsibility into the future. Many addictions, co-dependencies, grudges, etc., that were tolerated previously needed to be healed before renewal could occur. Although communities will always need to be sensitive and responsive to this agenda within the lives of particular individuals at different times, a community does not exist to function merely as a support group for its members.

A community that feels itself within "the neutral zone" will grow impatient with the constant return to the self-help agenda. Although this movement brought needed peace and consolation in the past, it will offer only disappointment for communities whose corporate spirit has grown beyond this. Hence one will often notice in an assembly two dynamics. First, there might very possibly exist the temptation to run to the place of past consolation simply because a group does not know where else to search. The path to self-help is well-worn and familiar. The spiritual masters have long cautioned against such movement. One must fall in love with the Holy Spirit of God and not with consolations.

Secondly, there will always be those in the group who have not grown beyond their own self-help agendas and will attempt to impose this personal need upon the community. It needs to be kept very clear that while the community does exist to encourage and support its members in their service to the church and in the love of God, it does not exist solely to help people through the basic dynamics of coming to personal responsibil-

Gospel Living: Essential Elements

One has every right to be leery of the phrase "essential elements," but it seems fitting to suggest its appropriateness here. If the Gospel is to be for the Franciscan the "rule of life," then what concretely does this mean? What are we to look for in assemblies struggling to discover and then to articulate their Gospel mission for the future?

I would like to propose five mysteries of our faith that seem to summarize these dynamics. It seems that these mysteries when played together illustrate the tensions and paradoxes of true life and of true religion. In the history of spirituality and of theology these dynamics can be found in different variations in the life of the saints and in the spiritual and theological tradition. The mysteries as they will be developed here are vocation, repentance, incarnation, passion and union/mission.

Vocation

In the sacrament of baptism one is adopted as a son or daughter and invited into Trinitarian life. In appropriating the grace of this sacrament one becomes aware of being both unconditionally loved and uniquely created. Therefore a basic level of self-confidence and security are essential to the Gospel life.

In religious life this basic level of knowing that one is both loved and uniquely chosen is fostered by contemplative prayer and by a challenging and loving community life. Although this dynamic of vocation is absolutely essential to the Gospel life, a community which finds itself in "the neutral zone" cannot solely concentrate its energies here for long. When one has experienced the love and call of God, one will need to move. Thus the dynamic of appropriating the grace of unconditional love and uniqueness will be ongoing in religious life, but it cannot be the sole focus.

Repentance

Eventually one will realize that although one is loved and chosen, one is also wounded and responsible for the wounds of others. In the Catholic tradition one almost spontaneously equates this dynamic with sin and in

one sense this is true. Woundedness does prevent the free and undisturbed embrace of Trinitarian union. Yet this does not automatically imply that one is personally responsible for inflicting upon oneself the sin one carries. Most wounded with co-dependency, addiction, negatives tapes, etc., do not choose these disabilities.

However, each person is called to holiness; to work with their particular giftedness, even if this giftedness is in the form of a disability, for the glory of God. Therefore working through addictions, co-dependencies, negative attitudes, etc., are and always have been essential to Gospel living. Yet, like the previous dynamic, the inspiration for religious life includes, but does not spring from this dynamic.

Incarnation

The Gospel begins when the divine struggles to lead a human life. One common temptation for the Franciscan charism is to escape into the divine without integrating it with contemporary human reality. For instance, if it is to be true to the Gospel, a focus such as "contemplative living" would need to take particular care to ground itself in the nitty-gritty.

On the other hand, a focus such as "social justice" would need to center its attention on the Holy Spirit who is its source of energy. Franciscan movements eager to be of service can also be guilty of the heresy of Pelagianism which attempts to live the Gospel without acknowledging where the power to do this comes from. A community who chooses the focus of social justice would therefore need both to clearly articulate that its energy comes from the Spirit of God and practically live its life in such a way that begging for that power in prayer played an important communal role.

The mystery of Incarnation is frequently the beginning inspiration of religious life. Orders often develop when there is a human need and religious people bring their love for God into that need.

Passion

Passion is the crisis of religious life as it is of Christian life. It is here one discovers that love is not loved. It is here that one experiences that one's image of God is false and one feels abandoned and disillusioned. It is here that violence and hatred seem to strip love of its power and mock its wounds.

The Gospel gives only one solution to this supreme trial — the solution of forgiving love. This love is a decision of the will, not a feeling. It is a firm resolution to hold onto love and to will to forgive despite the hatred and mockery.

Yet as followers the passion one day comes to an end, and one is beset with confusion and emptiness. It is true that the Lord shows himself now and then, but on the whole one only experiences a community held together by a vague dream. One has given one's life for this! At times all seems empty, but still one can no longer lose hope.

Union/Mission

This focus makes no sense to those who have not embraced the passion. To those who embrace the passion and who wait in hope, this dynamic will be given. Union/mission cannot be planned, but is rather a gift of the Holy Spirit which comes to a community in the fullness of time.

Vatican II was for many the call of the church to renew communal life in the Gospel Spirit. Many religious took this call seriously. This call has meant for most a healthier life style as well as an embrace of personal responsibility and maturity. It has also meant decreased membership, loss of security and a vague sense of mission. Valiantly communities have struggled to maintain hope. They have in their own particular ways continued to be about the mission of Jesus. Yet a quarter century after the Council they now are face to face with the consequences of their generous eagerness. Many are dying, some are merging, some are transferring, some are leaving.

There is, however, movement in the tomb and anticipation is mounting. What will the new Spirit look like? What will it empower us to do? What will it empower us to be?

Those in "the neutral zone" wait for the union/mission of Pentecost. Like the early church the Gospel tells them simply to wait and pray. Union/Mission cannot be planned; it can only be given. All one can do is reject the temptations to run backwards, to attempt to satisfy oneself with dynamics that no longer have the capacity to satisfy and then to wait and pray together for the new outburst of the spirit of Francis and Clare, the spirit of the Gospel, the Spirit of God.

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. Amen.

Endnotes

¹See the contribution of Thaddeus Horgan, SA, and Jeanine Morozowich, CSSF, in the "Franciscan Federation Newsletter" August/September/October, 1987.

²See the article by Sr. Jane Kopas, OSF, "Reflection on Franciscan Life as Evangelical" in the November, 1989, issue of The CORD.

³Mary Jo Leddy, Reweaving Religious Life: Beyond the Liberal Model (Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1990).

⁴This talk was presented to the LCWR Region VII, April 18, 1988.

⁵See for example St. Bonaventure's outline in *The Tree of Life* in which he divides his reflection on the Gospel into the mystery of the origin of Christ, the mystery of his passion and the mystery of his glorification. The *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola divide the Gospel dynamic into the knowledge of God's unconditional love (Principle and Foundation), the coming to awareness of one's woundedness (week 1), integrating religious desires with the reality of human life (Week 2), embracing the cross (Week 3) and coming into the joy of mission (Week 4). In his work *Directions in Fundamental Moral Theology* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985) pp. 29-62, Charles Curran describes a five-fold mystery of the salvific process as creation, sin, incarnation, redemption and resurrection.

⁶From St. Francis' "Prayer Before the Crucifix."



FRANCISCAN FEDERATION — Final Vow Program —

COMMITMENT TO FRANCISCAN VALUES

June 30 - July 22, 1991

Portiuncula Center for Prayer St. Francis Woods, R. R. 4 Mokena, IL 60448 815 - 469-4880

KEY PRESENTERS: Roberta Crusack, OSF Clare Andrew D'Auria, OSF Jordan Hite, TOR Mary Evelyn Jegen, RC Kevin Queally, TOR

DESIGNED FOR: Sisters and Brothers preparing for final profession in 1991/1992

PROGRAM COST: \$900 Federation Members \$1000 non-Members

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: May 1, 1991

Further Information from the Federation Office 223 37th St., Pittsburgh, PA 15201 Phone: 412-687-0312

WASHINGTON THEOLOGICAL UNION A Roman Catholic School For Ministry

Franciscan Symposium Clare of Assisi: Model for Franciscan Women April 19, 20, 1991

Medieval Women Mystics: A Foreign World?

Dr. Elizabeth Dreyer

Images of Women in the Writings of Clare Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Cap.

Forma Sororum:
Clare as a Weaver of New Patterns of Women's Religious Life
Margaret Carney, OSF

Living the Spirit of Clare in Today's World Mary Francis Hone, OSC

For information/registration contact: Washington Theological Union 9001 New Hampshire Avenue Silver Spring, Maryland 20903-3699 301-439-0551

WASHINGTON THEOLOGICAL UNION A Roman Catholic School For Ministry

SUMMER SCHOOL '91

June 10-14

Franciscan Tradition & the Environment (1 credit)

Michael Blastic, O.F.M. Conv.

In the light of the current discussions concerning the environment from a perspective of the Christian Tradition, the Franciscan Tradition's contribution to these contemporary issues will be examined. Special attention will be given to Francis of Assisi's Canticle of Brother Sun as well as to Bonaventure's theology of creation as expressed in his Collation on the Six Days.

June 7 - 21

Clare of Assisi (1 credit)

Michael Blastic, O.F.M. Cap.

A critical reading of Clare of Assisi's life and writings in the broader context of medieval women's religious experience will provide the basis for an appreciation of Clare's contribution to the Church as foundress, mystic, and woman. The insights of contemporary feminist psychology will be used as an aid to understanding Clare's personal appropriation of the Franciscan spirit.

June 28 - 30

Building With Living Stones Workshop

(non-credit)

Team: Anselm Moons, O.F.M., Barbara Fried, SMIC, Charles Finnegan, O.F.M., Bart Korn, O.F.M.

A weekend study and reflection program which promotes greater awareness of and enthusiasm for the Franciscan Mission Charism. Designed for all Franciscans, lay and religious.

(\$85 workshop fee; \$20 book, if needed).

For information/registration contact:

M. Roberta Kerins, S.C. Washington Theological Union 9001 New Hampshire Avenue Silver Spring, Maryland 20903-3699 301-439-0551