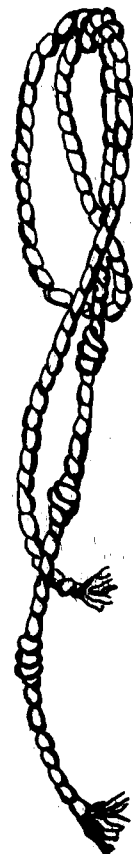


SEPTEMBER, 1992

The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

FRANCISCAN FEDERATION'S COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE: TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF TOR RULE 1982-1992



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Volume 42, No. 9

The CORD

A Monthly Franciscan Spiritual Review

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The **CORD** (ISSN 0010-8685) USPS 563-640) is published monthly with the July and August issues combined, by the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778.

Subscription rates: \$15.00 a year; \$1.50 a copy. Second class postage paid at St. Bonaventure, NY 14778, and at additional mailing office.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The **CORD**, P.O. Drawer F, St. Bonaventure NY 14778 USA.

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
Form Viv: 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).

Guest Editorial

Genesis...The 1982 Rule — a personal remembrance

ROLAND J. FALEY, T.O.R.

It is hard to believe that a decade has passed since the present pope approved the new **Rule of the Franciscan Third Order Regular** on December 8, 1982. It is even more difficult for some of us to remember that the Rule's inception began for members of the Third Order Regular family ten years before that. I was privileged to be part of that from the start.

To pinpoint an actual date is not easy twenty years after the fact. I remember the first conversations taking place in my office in Rome on a beautiful fall day in 1972. It was a highly theoretical, unfocused talk between Thaddeus Horgan, S.A. and myself about the inadequacy of the 1927 Rule in the light of the Council and all the work that had been done subsequently on the T.O.R. charism.

As Sister Kathleen Moffatt OSF, Executive Director of the Franciscan Federation, began the initial design of this commemorative issue on the Rule of the Third Order Regular it seemed no better place to begin than with the first architect of the renewed understanding of the TOR charism, Roland Faley TOR.

*Roland Faley was Minister General of the Third Order Regular Friars at the time of the writing of the new Rule. His biblical scholarship on *metanoia* and his study of the 800 year tradition of Francis' Third Order led to the Order's self-understanding as modern day penitents.*

*Presently, Roland is Spiritual Director for the religious and clerics of the diocese of Austin, Texas. His new book **FOOTPRINTS ON THE MOUNTAIN, Preaching and Teaching The Sunday Readings** will be published by Paulist Press at Christmas time.*

In both of our communities, the work of revising constitutions had already begun and we regretted the absence of a strong basic document, owned by all Tertiaries, to give direction to the work of revision. We ruminated aloud about the possibilities of revising the Rule, the alleged sacred and untouchable character of which remained an almost undiscussed given. We had no idea of what the possibilities were. But with the undaunted and mindless courage of youth (certainly true at the time!), we decided to test the waters and attempt a revision of the Rule. Our task was gargantuan, of course, in light of the fact that several hundred congregations of Franciscans followed the Rule. Moreover, the greater number of these were women.

Nonetheless we began work in earnest in 1973 to produce the first draft of a new Rule based on the Order's largely rediscovered charism, conversion of life or *metanoia*. Since the congregations with which we had an historical and direct contact were the male communities, we first wanted to measure their reaction to the initiative. The men had their own organization, known as the Inter-obediential Congress, which had met periodically over the past twenty year period. Therefore, we had a structure in place through which to work. The men and women had no history of a joint organization wherein common issues were addressed. During the generalate of Louis Secondo, T.O.R., after consultation with the other men's communities, it was decided to hold another international meeting to explore the possibility of a revised Rule. There was a unanimous consensus around the idea. The meeting was set for April, 1974, in Madrid, Spain. For the first time, representatives of women's congregations were asked to join us. The enthusiastic reception which the whole idea evoked was most encouraging.

In the meantime Thaddeus and I, with the help of valuable experts in matters Franciscan, worked on the draft to be presented for consideration in Madrid. The document was wholly centered around the conversion theme; the vows were seen as an expression of conversion. There was the earnest effort to remain true to Francis' own vision as expressed in his writings, as well as the best values found in the various revisions of the Rule through history. The Madrid Congress took the draft article by article, made its own recommendations, and then gave the final version its approval. This became known as the **Madrid Statement**, which circulated widely in the Franciscan Tertiary world during the next decade. Many communities included it with their revised constitutions as an expression of charism.

As encouraging as all of this was, we were still far from a revised Rule. Little did we realize at the time how far away we were. There were

landmines in abundance on the terrain still to be traveled. It became evident as work on the **Madrid Statement** progressed that other Franciscan bodies, in particular countries, had already launched their own initiatives to revise the Rule. Efforts were well underway in France, Germany and Holland. The most prominent of these, the French undertaking, was much further ahead than we. By the mid-1970's, the Tertiary congregations in France and many in Italy had lined up in support of this Rule project, which was written for women only.

We realized that to continue along separate tracks, without bringing these initiatives together, could be disastrous by ultimately splintering a centuries-old unity around a single Rule. It would be even worse if the division were along lines of gender. The Vatican had indicated that a joint undertaking should be pursued. Yet all of this was more easily said than done. We were no longer at the beginning stage. Much work had already been done and approved on both sides. After much thought, a new collaborative effort was seen as essential, one to be marked by diplomatic expertise as much as by history or theology.

At this point there were only two main contenders for Rule revision: the French document, intended only for women, and marked by strong Minorite leanings; and the **Madrid Statement**, intended for women and men, and focused mainly on the tertiary or Penitential charism. The French work had been remarkably well done, with great fidelity to Franciscan sources and largely drawing on the words of Francis himself. What it lacked was any strong reliance on the Tertiary history and tradition. What the **Madrid Statement** lacked, with all its clarity regarding charism and its inclusiveness of men and women, was that strong emergence of original Franciscan sources that the French had drawn on so effectively.

The two groups decided to come together to work out a compromise position. Most of the 1970's, after Madrid, were spent in tackling what gave every appearance of being irreconcilable differences. In his Master's thesis, **The Development of the New Third Order Regular Rule**, Paul McMullen, T.O.R. has capably outlined every step of this journey. But in recounting facts, much of the emotional investment is omitted. And that, at this point, is all for the best. Suffice it to say that more than one gathering ended in a spirit of total frustration. There were moments when both sides felt that it might be better to go it alone. But there was always some glimmer of hope. A joint working group was finally established to work out a compromise document. Both Thaddeus Horgan, and Margaret Carney, O.S.F. represented Madrid's best interest in a collaborative mode and played a vital role in the felicitous outcome.

The day finally arrived. March 1982. Ten years after **Genesis I**; eight years after Madrid. Some two hundred Franciscan major superiors of women and men, representing nearly two hundred thousand religious, gathered in Rome to debate, amend, and hopefully approve a new Rule of the Third Order Regular. I remember heading toward the large hall for the opening session with a deep sense of foreboding. We had made gains in understanding but I was by no means certain that these were sufficient. As the representative of my own Order, which takes its roots in the first group of Francis' Penitents, I could not vote in favor of a document that did not express satisfactorily the origins and charism of our Institute. I went to the opening with fear and trepidation. It was the beginning of ten vitally important days.

Ever so slowly my outlook changed. I could actually feel the answer to prayer. The Spirit was in the atmosphere. Attitudes changed; friendships were made; logic held sway. Defending one's turf was not center stage. People were searching for the good of the whole. A sense of openness prevailed. Both viewpoints had their defenders and they did it well. The value of the penitential charism never had better defenders than the Franciscan women generals from the United States, members of the Franciscan Federation. They had done their homework well and were highly qualified to address the issues. But they were not intransigent nor were the champions of the French document. Inclusion of men and women in the Rule's purview was by this time a foregone conclusion.

What began to emerge was the realization that we could have the best of two worlds. The French had drawn on four fundamental Franciscan values in constructing the Rule. These it was felt were important and shared by all Franciscans. Moreover, the French let Francis speak for himself in articulating the values, without extraneous commentary. This was a genuine plus. What Madrid proponents argued with effectiveness was the necessity of highlighting one of the four values, conversion of life, since to treat it on the same plane as the other values would betray the penitential tradition. This direction was overwhelmingly accepted by the hall. The overarching priority of conversion can be seen clearly in a careful reading of the Rule.

On the final working day, the Rule was approved article by article, chapter by chapter. There were few dissenting votes. The consensus of some two hundred participants was practically unanimous. I remember going home that final night, knowing that we had made history. This was an event not to be repeated in our lifetime and probably that of many others. There was lightness to my step and a "Te Deum" in my heart. Never before or since in my lifetime have I so concretely experienced the truth of the psalm, "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it".

The text of the rule went to the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes where it received some minor modifications. It was approved by Pope John Paul II before the end of 1982. Of course, Rules are not like books or finished projects. If the proof of the pie is in the eating of it, the proof of a Rule is in the living of it. Only history will tell how effective the work of the last twenty years has been. My own terms as Minister General of our Order ended within months after the Rule's approval. And let it be said for the record that I felt that it was a great note to end on. The 1982 Rule will outlive all of us. It has already outlived one of its prime architects, Thaddeus Horgan, who was one of the first to be called home. I was not present for his funeral. But on the day it occurred I remembered that fall day in Rome when, with leaves falling outside the window, we dreamed of a new spring. □



Art for this issue by
Sr. Marie Monica Borden, O.S.F.

"Everywhere and in Each Circumstance"

Reg. N.B. 23:11

The TOR Rule — 10 Years Later...

An Interview with The Original Work Group

SISTER ALMA DUFALT, F.M.M.

"Our small blue planet spins breathlessly towards the end of a century..." wrote Sr. Margaret Carney ten years ago in her introduction to the Commentary on the Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis. We have already counted down, 10...9..., in the last decade of this millennium. Not only do we see this planet without frontiers, but somehow we seem to see better the layers of its historical transformation that permit us to distinguish the constants and the variables that provide familiar landmarks and new terrains as its history and ours has unfolded. Just as we gain new perspectives when we see things from a distance so, after ten years' experience in Franciscan living according to the renewed Rule, these few pages share with the reader contemporary reflections of some of those who drafted the Rule. When they set about the herculean task of up-dating the Rule, they pierced the layers of seven centuries of TOR life and the vision it expressed in its three

Sister Alma Dufault FMM was the first Secretary General of the International Franciscan Commission (IFC), Rome, Italy, which was created to assure the collaboration that had been the Order's experience in writing the new Rule. Sister Alma was Superior General of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (over 8,000 members in 70 countries) while the Rule was written and promulgated ten years ago. Presently, Alma ministers with immigrant Mexican people in Chamberino, New Mexico. She is a member of the Spirit and Life Committee of the Franciscan Federation. Her letters and phone calls to France, India, Brazil and Italy, and subsequent translations of the Work Group's responses to her interviews, give us this special article.

previous Rules. In a deep spirit of prayer, community and universal fraternity, and with steadfast scholarship in their work, they implemented for the TOR the two guidelines of Vatican II for the renewal of religious life: a return to the charism of Francis of Assisi, and attention to the signs of the times.

Those seven members of the Work Group remain bonded by that experience though now scattered in different directions: **Fr. Thaddeus Horgan, SA**, in his Eternal Dwelling with the God whom he loved and served so fully in life; **Sr. Margaret Carney, OSF**, fully alive today in her God-given role of "serving" her congregation and animating TOR life on the national and international level. **Sr. Marianna Jungbluth, FHF**, who is in an interior mission in Zaire, Africa, a country wrought with political, social and religious upheaval, probably never received our request for her reflections on "ten years later." Our gratitude and prayer accompany her as she "announce(s) peace"(30).

Sr. Honoria Montalvos, FMI, presented to the nearly 200 superiors assembled in Rome in March, 1981, Chapter 8 of the Rule, "The Obedience of Love". She has since been involved in formation in her congregation in Colombia, after two years in Peru collaborating in the program "Evangelization 2000". Most recently she worked in social and pastoral promotion of people in the conflictive Red Zone of Almaguer. The spirit of universal fraternity in the Franciscan family has urged her and her sisters to respond to the demanding call of John Paul II for a NEW EVANGELIZATION, "to accompany our people in giving birth to a continent that is different, fraternal, at the service of the civilization of love." Her community's specific mission is the proclamation of the Gospel and human promotion. In seeking to implement personally and communally the spirituality of the Rule and Life, with its permanent attitudes of conversion, contemplation, poverty and minority, they have felt impelled to be more closely inserted among the poorest, the weak. The "Obedience of Love" has encouraged them to "go against the current of the many attitudes that are destructive of peace and unity, so common in our Third World, assuming the consequences if necessary of 'those who suffer persecution for justice sake'(Mt.5,10)." The "obedience of love" proposed by Francis of Assisi calls forth today as it did ten years ago...800 years ago...2000 years ago..."effective collaborators with the Creator to eradicate hunger, ignorance and poverty, and to begin a new era that recognizes the rights of each human being, in communion and participation and that will witness a new People of God journeying towards a land of justice, order, liberty and peace."

Sr. Maria Luiza Piva, CF, another member of the Work Group, writes from her new mission in Curitiba, Brazil. She had presented to the

The Rule and Life is a bridge of unity among Franciscan congregations.

Assembly of 1981 Chapter 3, "The Spirit of Prayer", and now recalls the rich experience of having lived and worked with the Work Group. She shares her reflections, born out of her work with a group of Franciscan womens' congregations. "Delving into the Rule and Life", she notes, "is integral to the process of renewal of Franciscan congregations. The method used in this work permits the participation of a great number in the study and reflection on our Franciscan origins, the history and plan of evangelical life. With the dynamics used, congregations have welcomed the text with "carinho," love, at their Chapters, seminars, retreats and during the different stages of formation."

"The Rule and Life is a bridge of unity among Franciscan congregations. It has inspired them in renewing their Constitutions. Congregations from northern and southern Brazil, together with a group of brothers and sisters in Angola, Africa are collaborating... There has been much participation, sharing and creativity; there has been questioning, searching for ways to live our Franciscan charism in the midst of realities marked by injustice and poverty, where so many people are bruised, living on the margins of society." Maria Luiza writes again: "In this context, we feel strongly challenged. The Rule and Life, written with Francis' own words, continues to speak to us loudly and calls us to be truly brothers and sisters who assume the mission of: creating fraternal relationships; struggling for justice, peace and the integrity of creation; living with minorities, the poor, the marginalized and making their causes our own; sharing with each creature the love of the Trinity. The Rule and Life is a gift and a blessing for our Franciscan life and mission... Now, after ten years, if I were to re-write the text, I would start over again with the Franciscan sources and write the words of Francis and Clare, letting Clare speak more than in the actual text. I would reinforce our mission of justice, peace and the preservation of creation, and our mission with the poor."

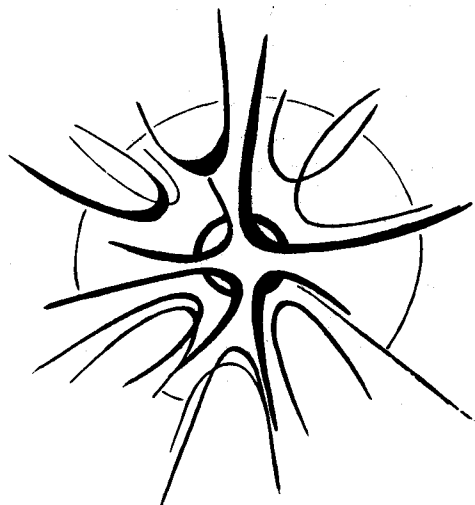
Sr. Marie-Benoit Luchernet, SF, received our request for her reflections just when she returned to France after nine years in Togo, Africa, and the completion of her General Chapter. "My reflections are probably influenced by my long time in Africa", she writes. She had presented Chapter 7, "Fraternal Love", to the 1981 Assembly and now recalls that ten years ago,

in the Work Group, they had spoken briefly of something that, today, she considers essential, i.e., that "the Rule, which was composed from the writings of St. Francis, calls for an ongoing deepening knowledge of the Franciscan sources. In fact, our Rule needs to be seen in that context of the sources which are always under study, if we are to give it all its meaning and worth. The Rule becomes for each one of us a kind of "materialization", a visible sign of our belonging to the greater Franciscan family and of a living Franciscan spirituality."

Sr. Marie-Benoit shares her central thought: "This work of deepening our understanding of the texts can only be done **together with the whole franciscan family**. Consequently there is a need for all branches of the family to come closer, to work together, First and Second Orders, Third Order Regulars and SFO, **not only on the texts** but also in the commitments that are the outcome of collaboration... The common basis [of our Rule] has already brought about more common efforts among some Franciscan congregations (associations, federations) and the Rule has clearly inspired the writing of many of their Constitutions." She remarks too that there have been more frequent and deeper commitments between secular and religious brothers and sisters. "There is evidence of greater union with the First Order in regard to mission, firmly based on a search for peace, with commitments on the international, national, regional levels, particularly being involved in Justice and Peace Commissions. But also at the grassroots level, this demands [of the Sisters] strong Gospel attitudes, Franciscan attitudes, in face of ethnic conflicts (30). A sensitivity to care of the earth, which goes beyond ecological folklore, has brought about new commitments, too, at all levels. The phrase "As poor people" (18) has inspired the choice of new insertions, of new types and places of work, of service in the Church, almost as a natural consequence of a deeper understanding of our call." She asks: "But doesn't the manifestation/visibility of the Franciscan charism call us to an ever greater common witness with the whole Franciscan family, brought together in the 'obedience of love'?" (Chapter 8) In answer to our question: "Now after ten years, is there one thing more or different that you would write into the Rule?" Sr. Marie-Benoit comments that "The texts chosen for the Chapter on chastity jarred somewhat the flow of the rest of the text," and she suggests that some part of the Antiphon of the Psalter of St. Francis, or an extract from the Second Letter to the Faithful, 48-54, might be more appropriate.

Sr. Ignatia Gomez, of N. India, who presented Chapter 6, "The Life of Poverty", to the 1981 Assembly, has since worked with tribals in a remote area of India and presently is administrator of a hospital and nurse's training school in Ajmer, as well as conducting seminars at the Franciscan

Institute of Spirituality in Bangalore, S.India. Now, ten years after the "inspiring, enlightening and enriching" experience of working and living with the Work Group, she shares "how the revised TOR Rule has affected my personal life". . . her prayer life, her life of poverty, obedience, chastity, her fraternal and apostolic life. She is "surrounded by Hindus, Moslems, Jains and others. Here I realize the importance of witness through love" and the Franciscan call "to be an instrument of peace." The four fundamental values take on a special significance in her milieu and in the service that is hers. In conclusion, she feels that: "Even today, after ten years, I do not feel I would add anything to the Rule. There is so much in it to strive for, if we really wish to live up to it." The responses of these four members of the Work Group of ten years ago confirm the wisdom of having decided to use the words of Francis in composing the Rule and Life. **These words continue to impact new generations, to motivate groups of Franciscans to live the fundamental values that permeate the Rule and that call us to be among the marginalized, the poor, the weak of our times and to serve their causes in action for local and world-wide peace, justice and the preservation of creation.** Words such as: "whenever they meet each other, they should show that they are members of the same family" are a continued call to increase collaborative efforts among the different branches of the Franciscan family in witness to universal love and mission. □



A Decade of Development

MARGARET CARNEY, O.S.F.

One of my favorite stories of the early franciscan brotherhood is the description of the return journey from Rome to the Spoleto valley after the approval of the Rule in 1209. Let Celano's words refresh our memories:

"While they were going along the way, they talked with one another about the number and the quality of the gifts the most kind God had bestowed upon them, and about how they had been received most kindly by the vicar of Christ, the lord and father of the whole Christian world; about how they might be able to fulfill his admonitions and commands; about how they could sincerely observe the rule they had taken upon themselves and keep it without failure; about how they should walk in all sanctity and religion before the Most High, and finally, about how their life and conduct might be an example to their neighbors by an increase of holy virtues." (ICel XIV: 34)

Many times in the past decade I have had the distinct feeling that I was living this description in a twentieth-century context. The re-incarnation has happened countless times as members of the Third Order Regular have convened in their own congregations or in workshops or retreats in order to reflect on how we "could sincerely observe the rule [we] have taken upon [ourselves]." Like those primitive companions we have known the incredible

*Margaret Carney OSF, newly re-elected General Minister of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God, Whitehall, PA, is co-author of the T.O.R. Rule, and author of the soon-to-be-published **The Rule of St. Clare and the Feminine Incarnation of the Franciscan Evangelical Life**, her 1988 Antonianum Doctoral Dissertation.*

Margaret is also an Instructor at The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, Summer Session, and was the first Chairperson of the Spirit and Life Committee of The International Franciscan Commission, Rome, Italy.

Margaret is known throughout the English-speaking world as both the message and the messenger of a vibrant re-discovery of TOR life and rule.

gift of seeing our Rule and Life approved by Pope John Paul II after years of work. We have been thrust into a critical examination of the motives and means by which we live our particular aspect of the franciscan life as this text becomes more and more central to our identity and consciousness. What have we learned as we have searched individually, corporately and globally for the answers to the very questions our ancestors were asking during that stay in Orte seven centuries ago?

A Communitarian Vocation

First of all I would suggest that we have learned something crucial about the communitarian nature of our franciscan vocation. Even as we have struggled with both the power and the inadequacy of language, (terms such as *fraternity/sisterhood*, *evangelical life*, *minority* have not always translated easily) we have recognized the compelling centrality of relational spirituality for us. The very nature of the Rule Project enabled us little by little to grope our ways towards that realization.

Various cooperative attempts to formulate contemporary understandings of the Third Order Regular vocation began as early as 1965 when the French and Belgian Third Order Regular sisterhoods began their work on the text. The next fifteen years were to witness a variety of such national and international collaborations. Following the Assisi assemblies of 1976 and 1979 it became increasingly clear that separate initiatives promoting the composition of a new Rule had produced a range of responses and developed a new critical and energetic sense of identity for franciscans of the penitential tradition. It was equally clear that the separate initiatives had also produced separation. Adherents of one or another project, one or another national identity, one or another historical interpretation often found themselves at loggerheads in attempting to resolve differences. (An excellent summary of this evolution will be found in Raphael Pazzelli's *The Franciscan Sisters: Outlines of History and Spirituality* soon to be published in English by the University of Steubenville Press.)

With each new stage in the evolution of the text ultimate resolution of difficulties emerged in response to prayerful and disciplined engagement of numerous participants in the various commissions. When the complete history of the project is told at some future date, it will be replete with "little flowers" depicting individual sisters and brothers who came to moments of conviction along the way. The dawning of these moments brought increasing light to bear on the complexities of the work. Even though it is possible to look back and see extraordinary talents emerging in certain persons' contributions, it is equally evident that the final product was always the culmination of a communal effort and discernment.

I doubt that any one member of the original work group would deny that while each was assigned specific charges at various moments in the progress of our task, all of the work, in all of its parts was truly the achievement of a community that reflected on the "working of the Holy Spirit" as found in life experiences of vocation as well as in authentic sources and historical analyses. (Members of the group responsible for the final redaction of the text were: Sister Margaret Carney, USA; Br. Jean-Francois Godet, Belgium; †Fr. Thaddeus Horgan, USA; Sister Ignatia Gomes, India; Sister Marianne Jungbluth, Belgium; Sister Marie Benoit Lucbernet, France; Sister Maria Luisa Piva, Brazil; Sister Honoria Montalvo, Columbia.

An abiding "amazing grace" gradually drew this group of individuals from several continents and cultures into a community rooted in an indescribable experience of God's favor which in every age, as Mary foretold, is poured out upon the poor, the hungry, and those of low estate.

When Francis directed prayer upon prayer to the Trinity, he addressed himself to the Community of life and love that is the source of All. When Francis discovered the gift of brothers and sisters as a source of this same goodness, he discerned therein a manifestation of this most intriguing mystery. In placing this rootedness in fraternity at the center of his scheme of things he intuitively placed a Trinitarian understanding of human reality within the grasp of all who would come later into this way of evangelical life. The Rule itself is testimony to the necessity of community for fullness of revelation to be heard, understood and assimilated in wisdom and charity.

A New Historical Consciousness

The second reality that manifested itself in the progression of this work was the necessity of re-examining our ways of teaching and writing franciscan history. It has become clear that enormous amounts of work wait to be done in order to provide adequate materials on the development of the Third Order in both its religious and secular forms and the history of the Second Order. Related to this is a need to examine the evolution of franciscan women as a topic in itself. This effort needs to be undertaken in such a way that the lives and contributions of franciscan women will be made accessible in studies that will emphasize common threads of spirituality and history without segmenting consciousness artificially by insisting on too great a demarcation between the women of the Second and Third Orders. Each Order needs its particular chronicles to be organized and documented for a wider reading public. At the same time, attention to lessons learned in the contemporary woman's movement will demonstrate the necessity among franciscan women to approach these tasks in a spirit of solidarity, not one of separation and competition.

Let it be said as well, that there is an urgency to giving recognition to the particular history of the congregations of brothers who hold a unique and indispensable place in the Third Order family. At the moment there are — such communities. In the existence of these fraternities of lay men we find modern mirrors of the aspirations of the early franciscan movement. Some of these congregations are facing a serious decline in numbers. In developing nations new brotherhoods are being formed. Attention to the importance of this expression of our charism is a common responsibility. Support and encouragement for new foundations should be of interest to all. Collaboration and communion with those of longer standing is an important aspect of franciscan mutuality.

The work involved in these three commitments to expand our knowledge of the Second and Third Orders, franciscan women and the Third Order brotherhoods is of almost inconceivable scope. Until it is done, however, our understanding of the manifold ways in which the franciscan charism draws breath will be limited. The great danger of such limitation is its power to abort the imaginative fecundity necessary to carry our vocation into the next millenium.

An International Structure

The third reality that emerges out of the Rule project and the Rule's promulgation is the necessity of creating and sustaining regional, national and international linkages of Third Order Regular franciscans. Some of the most painful experiences of the long journey to completion of the new text resulted from the lack of any previous communication among the hundreds of separate TOR institutes. The years between 1976 and 1982 were filled with experiences of misunderstanding and tensions created by the simple fact of forging a path through a communications wilderness. When one considers that never in our history had there been an attempt to create a global consultation of the Third Order Regular, the success of the effort borders on the truly miraculous. In 1985 we succeeded in forming a permanent International franciscan Conference of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular. Thus the work preceding the Rule which included the effort to communicate with one another in our Order for the first time in history has been translated into a permanent structure.

This organization has since celebrated a major assembly on the theme of the franciscan contribution to the renewal of the planet, peace and service to the poor. Prior to this assembly (Assisi, 1989) the IFC-TOR gave the first international endorsement needed to begin the work for the Franciscan NGO at the UN. Thus, our new TOR organization is demonstrating a capability to unite us in major initiatives for developing our self-understanding and translating that into global mission.

This power to expand and, in that expansion, to touch lives across continents is a new fact of franciscan existence for those with eyes to see and ears to hear.

Continuing Educational Needs

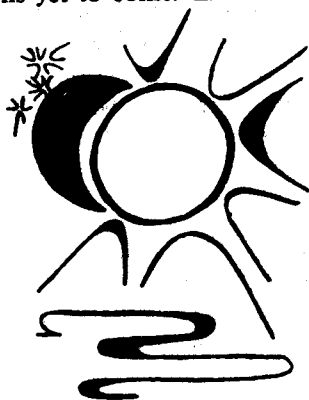
Much has been done in the efforts to provide adequate and engaging experience in initial and continuing formation programs on this Rule. The fact remains that in each country there are congregations that opted, for various reasons, not to make this education a priority. And there remain entire countries where a poverty of resources and communication technology make the efforts to do this work nearly impossible. Another ten years will not be enough to allow all who desire some education/formation experience to help internalize the text to achieve their goals completely. A whole new field of communication is also opening before us with the emergence of the religious orders of Eastern Europe, most of whom were prevented from cooperating in the consultation of 1982.

We also need to develop commentaries that allow for different cultural and ecclesial perspectives on the Rule and Life text to be articulated and disseminated. We lack, so far, a reading of the text from the vantage point of liberation theology. We lack an Asian perspective in written form, although the Franciscan Institute of Asia has provided admirable leadership in offering seminars on the text. In Africa, where young members are often numerous, few directors of formation have had direct contact with the sources they need. In the summer of 1991, the IFC-TOR did sponsor a very successful program for formators from Third World countries to begin to close this gap. The Federation of the USA pioneered in the innovative "Roots and Wings" seminars that were replicated hundreds of times throughout congregations. Today, however, additional groups need resources and models to use for initial and continuing formation programs of their own.

As religious women and men of the Northern Hemisphere face a new century, we acknowledge that this is a moment of transformation for religious life in our cultures. Recent research sponsored in the U.S. by LCWR and CMSM offer a great deal of data and analytical narrative to help us discern trends that seem to offer paths into future models of religious life and ministry. How can we allow our Rule and Life to speak

to this effort to forge new models and mentalities that will allow the emergence of a future religious life in a world labeled, post-modern and post-Christian? What is the meaning of the fact that we have retrieved a source that roots us in seven centuries of evangelical life and that it is providing a basis for global connectedness as we enter into this uncharted phase of development?

When I entered my Third Order Regular congregation thirty-three years ago, my world of franciscan meaning was circumscribed by the small community of sisters who taught me, the energetic young Capuchins who ministered to local youth, and the occasional friar retreat director who reminded us of our lofty ideals with greater or lesser success each year. (Not a bad circumscription at that!) Today my world — and my community's — includes franciscans from every part of the U.S. and many other international franciscan friends as well. That this is the result of extraordinary opportunity and God's gift I do not deny. But I also insist that it is sign and symbol of the possibility of becoming a family whose boundaries become more and more inclusive with each generation. This power to expand and, in that expansion, to touch lives across continents is a new fact of franciscan existence for those with eyes to see and ears to hear. I believe that the courage to dream of a new Rule began that expansion. I believe that the courage to accept the task of writing and approving that Rule encouraged and enfolded that expansion. I believe that the lived experience of making that Rule the focus of contemplative faith and the matrix of ministerial choices will continue to create a new world of franciscan meaning. Francis recommended from his death-bed that we seek what is "ours" to do. Clare reminded us that this immense gift is something we receive daily (Cl. Test 2-11). Ours it is, then, to write our own page of franciscan history, to live in the happiness of re-founding and re-weaving this vocation and handing it on the better for our lives and our labor to generations yet to come. □



"Hold Back Nothing" ... Remembering Our Brother EpORD 29

DENIS SENNETT S.A. & JOANNE BRAZINSKI, O.S.F.

At the end of Francis of Assisi's own life he declared to his followers: "I have done what is mine to do, may Christ teach you what is yours."

As we celebrate this 10th anniversary of the TOR Rule these words seem to echo in our hearts from two of our brothers — Francis and Thaddeus.

Thaddeus Horgan, S.A. along with Margaret Carney was a member of the International Franciscan Commission and formed part of the work group to re-write the Third Order Rule. After that monumental task he gave much time to workshops and conferences sharing with others about the newly revised Rule.

His untimely death on April 19, 1990, left many in a state of shock and disbelief. In many of us questions flourished: "Why? Why now? He was doing so much to help our understanding of the Rule. How could this be?" To all of the questioners and to each of us, it seems that Thaddeus replies: "I have done what is mine to do, may Christ teach you what is yours." Somehow Thaddeus' death seemed a catalyst for many to stop and realize more profoundly the challenge of incarnating the values of the TOR Rule, to embrace the Gospel, and to be enthusiastic and excited about doing "what is ours to do."

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Matthew 10:8 can simply summarize Thaddeus' contribution to the Rule, to the Franciscan Order and to the world: "The gift you have been given, give as a gift."

Those who knew Thaddeus, knew the Gospel was important to him. It seems as if the passage from Matthew 10:8 can simply summarize Thaddeus' contribution to the Rule, to the Franciscan Order and to the world: "The gift you have been given, give as a gift." On this anniversary of the TOR Rule it seems as if Thaddeus invites each of us to "give graciously what we have been given" to form the unique mosaic that we call the Franciscan evangelical life.

Thaddeus indeed gave the gift he had been given without charge. He was brother, animator, fun-lover, Gospel oriented. His work on the writing of the revised Third Order Rule is just one example of this. He brought to the work committee his energy, insight and deep sensitivity to the Gospel life and to the ecumenical movement. This latter gift was his to offer because of wide personal experience in ecumenical ministry.

Thaddeus' life as an Atonement Friar was one of proclamation and reconciliation. He saw, felt and understood the misunderstandings which not only caused disunity among Christians but also, in some cases among Franciscans as well. He always tried to bring together, in his ministry and life, proclamation of the Gospel and a reconciliation within today's world. This gift was Thaddeus' to offer because he lived the experience of listening, sharing and praying with God's children of all faiths, which gave him a sensitivity and an insight to offer the Franciscan Federation guidance and direction in preparing the TOR Rule.

The Gospel revealed to Thaddeus that all creation has intrinsic harmony; the proclamation of the Gospel meant a participation in the celebration of this harmony. As we thank God for these 10 years of living the newly revised TOR Rule, we say:

Thanks to God for the gift of Thaddeus, thanks to God for the gifts we have been given, thanks to God for the challenge of our Franciscan evangelical life.

"To Desire One Thing Alone" (Reg.B.10) The Holy Spirit and the TOR Rule

MARGARET ELETTA GUIDER, O.S.F.

On December 8, 1992, the tenth anniversary of the ratification of the **Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis** will be commemorated throughout the world. This occasion gives us reason to pause and reconsider once again the initial questions that inspired and guided the process of renewal, namely: **Where have we been? Where are we going? and Who are we?** In giving ourselves over to these questions, we continue to grow in our understanding of how the particular gifts which the Spirit has bestowed upon us are given not only for our own renewal, but for the face of the earth.

At the present time, we live in a world in which the image and works of the Holy Spirit engage the religious imagination of ever-increasing numbers of Christians. Pentecostalism and various forms of charismatic renewal give particular expression to this phenomenon as do communities of faith endeavoring to behold the feminine face of God. As Franciscans, our own expressed desire to have the Spirit of God at work within us, serves as an indicator of our own predilection for the Font of Life and Fire of Love. It is not surprising to find divine inspiration, grace, revelation, the virtues, gifts and beatitudes, to be prominent and recurrent themes in the works of Franciscan theologians and spiritual writers, including those of our own time.

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As we consider the significance of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Third Order Regular, we find that the **Rule** informs and enriches our understanding.

In accord with the **TOR Rule**, we discover the Holy Spirit is our reward for doing good and the means by which we are united to Christ. The Spirit is the Holy Paraclete, a beautiful and admirable Spouse, the object of our affections and the reason for our labors. The Spirit participates in our creation into the divine image and likeness and seeks to abide within us. The Spirit fills us with blessing and provides us with the words that are spirit and life.

In essence, the **Rule** highlights for us the images and attributes of the Holy Spirit that have been central to the Church's teachings since the early councils of Nicea and Constantinople. Though, in and of themselves, the images and attributes are constants, it is important to be conscious of the meanings and nuances that are particular to our own time and experience.

... meanings given to longstanding images and attributes at the close of the twentieth century may not be identical to that which were given in the thirteenth century, much less the fourth century or the first.

Shaped as we are by the theology of the Holy Spirit, as expressed in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, we must grapple with the fact that the meanings given to longstanding images and attributes at the close of the twentieth century may not be identical to that which were given in the thirteenth century, much less the fourth century or the first.

Given the diversity that exists within the worldwide Franciscan family, a common preunderstanding of images can no longer be presumed. For example, our own essential difference as women and men, our very embodiment and the human experience relative to it, affect our preunderstanding of a concept such as spouse, in ways that are fundamentally distinct.

A Consideration of Context

As we attempt a foundational understanding of the Holy Spirit that builds upon both tradition and experience, it is essential to reflect upon the ways in which the Holy Spirit is at work not only within us, but within

the **TOR Rule** as well. To this end, the **Commentary**¹ is an invaluable resource for coming to terms with the interpretation and application of the **TOR Rule** in diverse cultural and sub-cultural contexts. The following values are perceived to have particular significance. They include: **metanoia** (art. 2), **vocation and inspiration** (art. 10), the **Greatest Commandment** (art. 23), and, **beatitudes and martyrdom** (art. 30).

Implicit in the value of **metanoia** is an acknowledgement of the Spirit of truth, the light of consciences, who makes her way into the human heart through human history. The saving power of the Holy Spirit reaches into the unfathomable depths of the human conscience. As deep calls unto deep, **metanoia**, the experience of conversion and forgiveness is accomplished.² Not only is it an experience of **turning away** from evil and **turning toward** good, it is also an experience of **turning with** the Holy Spirit. Building on this process of conversion, **vocation and inspiration** are understood to be expressions of communion and confidence. Not only do we turn with the Spirit of God, but we are **joined with** this Spirit in faith and faithfulness. Such fidelity manifests itself in **single-heartedness**, as the influence of the Paraclete abounds and the desire to will one thing finds its fulfillment in the freedom to love and to serve. An undivided heart makes it possible to **see with** the Spirit, to create an inner space for **contemplation**. Within this space, the **greatest commandment** is given roots and wings as we attune ourselves not only to the Spirit of God, but to her holy manner of working. Alert to the exigencies of the Reign of God, blessedness and courageous witness, the **beatitudes and martyrdom**, confirm that the Holy Spirit is truly at work within us and among us.

Conclusion

In and of themselves, these considerations are but a starting point for reflection. They are indicators of possible directions for ongoing inquiry and investigation. Above all, they serve to remind us of the significance of fostering in ourselves and in our communities the desire for one thing alone: the Spirit of God at work in us.

End notes

¹See Margaret Carney, OSF and Thaddeus Horgan, SA, **The Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis and Commentary** (Pittsburgh: Franciscan Federation, 1983).

²See John Paul II, **Dominum et Vivificantem** (The Holy Spirit in the Church and the World), art. 45.

The Third Order Regular Rule and Franciscan Spirituality

THADDEUS HORGAN, S.A.

"Now that we have a new Rule, will that change our franciscan spirituality?" some are asking. The answer is "no." The Rule Text puts into sharper focus and clarifies just what our spirituality is in this post-Vatican II era. Yet it is written in Francis' own words, a definite mark that our spirituality, like all spirituality, is as it always has been: a way to God. That way, however, is distinctive. Spiritualities are not essentially different, only distinctive. Franciscan spirituality is the life-process of applying to ourselves Francis' way of encountering and experiencing God. For Francis God is known eminently in Christ, the Christ of the gospel who announces repentance and peace for all. To know God is a gift of the Spirit (hence "spirituality").

Because of our call by the Spirit to be franciscan, Francis' life, example and experience are most important. This is why, it seems, Francis went to such great pains in the **Testament** to tell us of them (Test. 1-23). Like Francis we are to embrace charism, God's gift of insight into the mystery of salvation and God's grace enabling us to appreciate and respond to it in a threefold way: personally, according to the spirit of our particular congregation, and in our current circumstances. For us in the Penitential,

As the height of intense interest and study on the TOR Rule, Sister Ann Carville OSF, as Executive Director of the Franciscan Federation, began a series of PROPOSITO'S for the NEWSLETTER of the Franciscan Federation. This one by Thaddeus Horgan S.A., co-author of the new Rule, was the very first one.

As a member of the Work Group of seven international franciscans, Thaddeus' zeal for presenting the Rule's values touched thousands of franciscans worldwide. His untimely death, April 19, 1990, left both an ache and a legacy in the telling of the Rule's story. It is a privilege to present this special contribution to that story from 1982.

*"To know God, to adore God, to serve God
in true conversion of heart."*

or Third Order Tradition this particularly means responding to the Lord's call to be turned totally and continuously to the Lord and to neighbor by following in Christ's footprints as Francis did but to do so in our way, today.

The prologue of the text focuses on the charism of **conversion** or **metanoia**. Its first two chapters further clarify it. And article two explicitly spells out the practical meaning of continuous conversion which is the very center of the gospel message. This is done in the words of Francis (RNB 23:4). Three expressions in that passage summarize the whole Rule as well as our franciscan spirituality. The new Rule then calls us to a renewed fidelity to the spirit of Francis. Unfortunately, neither time nor space allows for an extended exposition of that spirituality. Therefore, through a schema — using Francis' three expressions about our charism — let us begin to reflect and apply our spirituality as the Rule projects.

Francis' three expressions are: ". . . **eum cognoverunt et adoraverunt et ei servierunt in poenitentia** . . ." "To know God, to adore God, to serve God in true conversion of heart."

A) **TO KNOW GOD** for Francis is to be open to true faith and to our loving compassionate God (RNB 23:7; II Ep. Fid 63-71) who loves the world so much that He sent his only Son. And they sent their Spirit to make us perfectly one in God and with one another. (cf RNB 23:1-7) Being one with God is only possible in Christ (Ep. Fid II:48-53) So we must put on Christ. All franciscans do so by assimilating the values and attitudes (Phil. 2:5) of the Lord. We penitential franciscans literally and throughout life "Turn to God and believe the good news." (Mk. 1:15) We do what Christ did in His life of presence to God and neighbor. Like Francis, we make ourselves experience Christ and who Christ was because of his values and attitudes. This is all possible because Christ experienced our humanity totally through the Incarnation. For Francis we do this, as the Lord did, by adoring God and serving our neighbor.

B) **TO ADORE GOD** is more than a form of prayer for Franciscans. Following Christ's example, adoration for Francis was the total investment of self, the total handing over of self to God, and the total commitment of self to God's purposes. Francis recognized that God's greatest glory

is the obedience of Christ (Ph. 2:5-12). God's will is humanity's salvation. For this Christ emptied himself and became obedient. To do what is salvific, then, is God's greatest glory. According to Francis there is only one way to be salvific: the way of Christ in his humanity. In his humanity and through human experience, Jesus taught his followers how to be turned genuinely to God. This is discipleship: listening and learning from the Lord how we are enabled to be present to God and to be filled with God's life. Francis' scriptural reflections taught him that to adore the Lord is a total life-style, the life-style of Jesus in his humanity, a life-style characterized by prayer, poverty, minority and fraternity.

1) **Prayer** is consciously being with God so God can be fully with us in our experience, and with all humanity in theirs. (Mt. 10:37-42) Adoration and praise, the substance of prayer for Francis, is our thankful and loving response to the love, the care and the goodness of God for us (the pardon, provision and protection themes of the Lord's Prayer) which are expressed in the paschal mystery now Eucharistically celebrated, in all of salvation history, in creation, and in our relationships with God's people (II Ep. Fid. 61-62). To live this prayerfulness is a) to "recall Christ's words through persistent meditation and bring to mind his deeds through the most penetrating consideration" (ICel.84); b) to do all one can to transform our faith in the reality of our unity with the Father in Christ by the Spirit into an experience. This is done by devoted prayer in which one remains open to the surprises of God who continually reveals his wonders in Creation, the Church and in the circumstances of life! c) to join with Christ in the rhythm of his church's daily priestly intercessory prayer, (The Liturgy of the Hours) and to do these things with purity of heart and a sense of total consecration to God.

2) **Poverty** is the commitment to assimilate values revealed by God rather than those of this world (Col. 3:1-3). It requires as it did of Christ and Francis that we live as pilgrims here, emptied of worldly value systems, and captured by those proclaimed by the Lord in the beatitudes (Mt. 5:1-10). Status, manipulative self-seeking power, and wealth that is greed or depriving to God's people, we reject as the Lord did. We live simply (ITim 6:8) having "enough food and sufficient clothing; with these we are content." We are to use well this world's goods to fulfill our needs, the needs of one another and the other poor, especially the helpless (RNB 2:4).

3) **Minority**. Because prayer implies that we realistically accept and gratefully acknowledge God's plan for the world's salvation, and because poverty implies our acceptance of God's values for living salvifically and God's will that we use well the gifts in this world, Christian life is equated with dependence on God. The attitude necessary for a healthy dependence on God, Francis well knew, is minority. In one sense it is interiorized

prayerfulness and lived poverty because it is childlikeness. Biblical littleness is the one thing necessary for entrance into the Kingdom (Mk. 10:15, Lk. 18:17, Mt. 18:13, Jn. 3). An aspect of Francis' insight into the gospel was to note that the other qualities of gospel life are counsels. Childlikeness is an absolute (cf Mt. 19:14 vis-a-vis the rest of that chapter). The childlike spontaneously come to the Lord (Mt. 11:29, Jn. 6:44); remain with the Lord (Mk. 8:34) and experience what their destiny in the Lord is. (Eph. 5:1-2) The adult experience of childlikeness is the joyous awareness that one has been and is the object of the pure love and favor of God. Possessing this littleness is total conversion, the changed mind and heart that is the result of knowing the God who loves us in Christ and sees in us what Christ is to God, Child (Beloved Son).

Minority also is seeing in ourselves who Christ is "for us" because we are "in Christ." Jesus is the servant of God sent into the world showing us how to be gentle, meek, humble, compassionate, peaceable, patient and singlehearted. Like Christ the attitude of minority impels us to love the world, the "place where" of our redemption. It is where we work out our redemption and do God's redeeming will for and with our brothers and sisters. Minority also infers going into the world as efficacious servants of redemption bringing good news to the poor, proclaiming freedom to captives, giving sight to the blind, setting the downtrodden free and announcing the Lord's year of favor (i.e. the self-conscious of Christ, cf. Lk. 4:17-19).

4) **Fraternity** for franciscans is life together, but lived in the consciousness that we are gathered in the Lord's name (Mt. 18:20) Jesus is in our midst as BROTHER (II Ep. Fid.56). Our fraternity is a sign of the Church, Christ's Body, within the Church for the world. Francis' notion of fraternity is identical to Vatican II's expectation that religious life itself should be a sign of Christ's presence among us. (Mt. 28:20). We are called also to live out the gospel with those called to share life with us (Jn. 15:12ff; RNB11,5). This must happen before we can bring Christ to others. Our fraternity then is itself a particular and special witness to the Church and a source of efficacious ministry. It ought to make credible what we proclaim and call people to, namely, to be the Church in the world. The Church is God's believing, praying, worshipping, and serving community in this world preparing the way for the Kingdom. Fidelity to fraternity as well as fidelity to intercessory prayer for the Church and world are the signs of our fidelity to the Church.

The Rule Text further points out in chapter 2 that fraternity is or should be an ongoing formation experience. **Metanoia** is ongoing. The presence of Christ among us is ongoing. Fraternity then must be the same. For Francis, fraternity is never ideal, but always concrete. His Admonitions

show how practical Francis views our gospel living together. Fraternity shows how down to earth franciscan spirituality ought to be.

C) **TO SERVE GOD** is to live continuously and concretely God's law of love (I Jn. 2:3 ff). In our tradition, this has meant doing the works of charity and living fraternal life. In both instances, it requires that we do justice and be instruments of peace, effecting reconciliation with God, with one another and among all God's people.

The gospel call to free men and women from every form of alienation (Lk. 4:16-22) so all can realize their God-willed destiny to be fully brothers and sisters to Jesus our Brother and to one another is our shared Franciscan service to God. This is seeking first the Kingdom of God and its justice. This is possessing the attitudes and doing the deeds of gospel life concretely (Mt. 5:10) (RNB 16:10-12). The Franciscan attitude toward establishing the justice of the Gospel requires deeds — or as one says today — involvement. Think of Francis' love of the Cross. Think of the meaning of the Cross on which Jesus embraces all the inhumanity and alienation men and women can muster. Think of Christ establishing our peace and reconciliation out of obedience to the Father. He overcame all inhumanity and poured our new life on humanity. Grasping and being this with our entire selves through repentance and lived gospel values along with doing what is renewing, reconciling and restoring among men and women is franciscan spirituality. It is integral gospel living.

While it is true that we each may not be graced to be and do all our franciscan penitential calling and charism summons us to, we are, by the fact of vocation, able to be committed totally and constantly to realize within and among ourselves the giftedness God gives us individually and communally. That we must do realizing that there is a variety of gifts but one Spirit. This is the basis of that mutuality and sharing that should characterize our lives. This is the basis of that joyful humility which recognizes God's gifts in self and one's brothers or sisters, gifts for upbuilding the Body of Christ, the Church, in our world. Holding fast to, clinging to and assimilating into the reality of our lives the words, the life, the teachings, the deeds and the holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ (RNB 22:41) is how Francis put it. The proposed Rule uses Francis' words throughout and attempts to present his inspired way to God through Christ in the Spirit faithfully yet briefly, thoroughly but reflectively. This is thoroughly franciscan for we are renewalists today in an age of renewal. We begin anew, as we should, with ourselves. □



"That They Might Give Witness" (Mission as Third Order Regular Franciscan)

ARLENE MC DONOUGH, O.S.F.

"Let the sisters and brothers glorify the Lord in all they do. For God has sent them into the world so that they might give witness by word and work to his voice and to make known to all that the Lord alone is God?"

TOR Rule 9:29

We wait and God comes to us. The world has seen peace and prosperity, strife and starvation. Generations have come and gone. People have experienced life, joy, struggle, reconciliation, fear, hope. Their lives have been touched, graced, inspired by a God who comes and enters into their world. They know their God as one who brings deliverance, healing, comfort, life. And at some precise moment in time, this God, who-is-for-us, comes to us, as one of us. God comes to us in Jesus.

We are frequently summoned by Isaiah who speaks to us of hope and promise, lambs and lions, a God who yearns to be with us and who is called Emmanuel. In the twelfth chapter of the book of the prophet Isaiah we are addressed: "Give thanks to Yahweh, call God's name aloud. Proclaim God's deeds to the people, declare God's name sublime. Sing of Yahweh, for he has done marvellous things, let them be made known to the whole world." Isaiah 12:4-5

As Third Order Regular Franciscans in 1992, how do we attempt to "proclaim God's marvellous deeds to the whole world"? As we approach

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Our awareness of mission has been evolving and expanding, as we have attempted over recent decades to clarify our identity and charism, to develop our mission statements, to rediscover TOR values and to live faithfully our daily lives.

the twenty-first century how do we say to the world that God is "great in the midst of us," and is called Emmanuel?

Our awareness of mission has been evolving and expanding, as we have attempted over recent decades to clarify our identity and charism, to develop our mission statements, to rediscover TOR values and to live faithfully our daily lives.

We need now to respond to the call to deepen our sense of what it means to be missionary, for that is what we are. It has been said that "to be a Christian, to be a Franciscan, is to be... in mission, to be a missionary." Walbert Buhmann, a Capuchin missionary, holds that "even if missions have come to an end, mission continues."

We will explore the meaning of mission by using a simple three-step tool. First, we will describe mission. Then we will consider the source of mission. The third step is to look at Jesus' mission.

I'd like to share an idea I borrowed from Gerald O'Collins, an Australian theologian. O'Collins wrote an article which appeared in the Christmas issue of *America* magazine in 1988. In that article he pointed out a pattern which I would like to apply in today's reflection. O'Collins sees a pattern in which **action** is followed by **witness** and witness is followed by **presence**. In Scripture O'Collins traces God's revelation first in creative **Activity** then in the **Witness** of the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures, and finally in the **Presence** of Jesus among us. **Action, Witness, Presence**. God acted to share love for and with all creation. The Hebrew Scriptures tell of a God who acts in behalf of those who wander in strange lands, acts in behalf of those who need to be saved, those who are in captivity, those without influence.

As centuries passed the prophets recalled God's involvement in history and **witnessed** to the saving power of God. The prophets unraveled and

explained the meaning of God's love for the people. They witnessed to God's promise to save and restore those who believe.

Action, Witness, Presence. The gospels tell us of Jesus who by his Presence reveals the power of God. Jesus is drawn by the needs of his contemporaries, and by his Presence ushers in the reign of God.

Asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was to come, he gave them this answer. The coming of the kingdom of God does not admit of observation and there will be no one to say, Look here! Look there! For, you must know, the kingdom of God is among you.

Luke 17:20-21

Can't this same progression from Action to Witness to Presence be traced in our general pattern of life? In the enthusiasm of youth we invested energy in the acting out of our convictions, doing for others. No effort demanded by ministry was too much.

Later, having acquired some experience and some time to reflect, we turned to attesting to the gospel message, explaining its meaning. Thus, bearing Witness became the method for making God known to others. We became proclaimers of the Lord.

For those who have arrived at "ripened" maturity a new way of being in mission has emerged. Haven't we grappled with the question of "being" versus "doing"? The importance of Presence has begun to be recognized and valued.

Missionary experience and praxis have been going through an evolution similar to the pattern just described. It is this evolution which we address today.

1. The Meaning of Mission

To be in mission is to enable the peoples to discover that God is in our midst.

To be in mission is to be a living witness to the presence of a loving God, as Christ witnessed to the goodness of the Father (Ep Ord 9).

What has the term "mission" meant for us in the past? How does this differ from "being in mission"?

2. The Source of Mission

Mission is rooted in the mystery of the Trinity. It is the mystery of God, who sent the Son into the world, testified to the Son on the cross, and raised him from the dead in the power of the Spirit. Jesus is to reveal

to humanity the mystery of God. He is to show us who God is. God takes the initiative "to send" Jesus as the great missionary of God.

The U.S. Bishops pastoral statement on the missions entitled, "To the Ends of the Earth," describes Jesus as a missionary. As God's beloved Son, he was anointed with the Holy Spirit and sent to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God. . . In his very person, in all that he did and said, that kingdom was already breaking into the world, (but it will be perfectly established only in the fullness of time).

Mission finds its life in the heart of the Triune God. No one knew that better than Francis of Assisi. Mission is directly related to the Trinity as a community of love, and sharing and reciprocity. If I try to look at Jesus as a missionary, what do I see?

This leads us to a third consideration of the Incarnational context of mission: Jesus' Mission: The Reign of God.

3. Jesus' Mission — The Incarnation and the Reign of God

When the Second Person of the Trinity became flesh, Jesus was sent to live among us, to be one with us. God was no longer an abstraction. Jesus, Emmanuel, God-with-us, was with us as a baby, son of a poor Jewish refugee couple who settled in Nazareth, his father was a woodworker. His neighbors knew the boy as Jeshua bar David.

The Son of a Jewish woodworker made God tangible. How does my "being in mission" enable God to come into our world?

As Jesus' awareness of his mission unfolds, it is grounded in his Jewish heritage. God is always for Israel a saving God. When the time is right Israel, and Jesus, (aware of himself as a son of Israel), believed that God's saving power will prevail and show itself in a reign characterized by gratitude, reconciliation, peace, justice and liberation. The God Jesus knows is powerful, yet immediately responsive to his people.

It is Jesus' awareness of the reign of God or kingdom of God which helps us to understand the importance of presence as the mode or method of the missionary. In a book entitled **The Biblical Foundations for Mission**, Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmuehler call attention to the relationship of Jesus' mission and the mission of the early church.

The authors make the claim that the kingdom metaphor at its deepest level was the saving relationship between Yahweh and his people. While Israel experienced itself as chosen or favored by God, it also inherited a prophetic intuition of God's presence among the nations. That is, even though God's name was revealed to Israel, the "others," the "outsiders" might also know something of the mystery of God. Israel was to be a light to the nations.

Within the early church this conviction about God's favor toward and presence among the nations became an explicit and dominant concern.

The early church's missionary spirit was grounded in their experience of Jesus.

Senior and Stuhlmuehler describe it in the following way:

The catalyst that triggered the missionary consciousness of the early church and shaped its basic message was the person and ministry of Jesus. In him the centrifugal forces we have detected in the Old Testament reach their point of explosion; in him the worldwide perspective of early Christianity finds its source. But a careful look at the biblical data reveals that this missionary impulse did not come from Jesus of Nazareth in the form of an explicit, clean-cut, and immediate missionary program.

What then are the characteristics of Jesus' person and mission which inspired the early church's missionary impulse and so grasped the heart of Francis?

Jesus' image of God,
awareness of his heritage, and
attention to the world in which he lived
led him
— to call God "Abba"
— to give sight to the blind
— to have dinner with tax collectors
— to restore twisted bones and pick corn on the Sabbath
From within his relatively small world
he crossed boundaries
— by touching and being touched by the unclean
— by entertaining discussion with the Samaritan woman
— by claiming to be brother to all created by God

It is the **person** of Jesus, his teaching and action which becomes the catalyst for and the shaper of **our sense of mission as TOR franciscans**. Our inheritance from Jesus' Kingdom Ministry, according to Senior and Stuhlmuehler is threefold: Jesus has given us:

An expansive image of God
An inclusive view of God's people
A positive view of human destiny
and a glimpse of life in the Reign of God,
as found in the Beatitudes.

We wait and God comes to us. The world has seen peace and prosperity, strife and starvation. Generations have come and gone. People have experienced life, joy, struggle, reconciliation, fear, hope. Their lives have been touched, graced, inspired by a God who comes and enters into their world. God comes to us in Jesus. □

Seeding a New Hope

What: The Franciscan Federation is piloting the first of a national series of gatherings to celebrate the **10th Anniversary of the TORule**, and nurture our Franciscan life and presence in a new millennium — to serve the Franciscan family, regionally and/or congregationally as best meets your needs.

Where: Franciscan Center in Tampa, FL

When: October 21 - 23, 1992

The first of a number of such events to be planned!

Cost: \$125.00 complete! For fees, meals and accommodations!

How: This is a specially designed four session retreat event integrating our **Franciscan TOR charism** and the **LCWR/CMSM transformative elements of religious life** presented by a carefully selected regional team of recognized and committed Franciscan women and men.

Seeds scattered and sown

+ by reflecting on our individual and community experience of "transitus" times, and remembering the women and men that have been our inspiration.

The transformative elements

+ by addressing courageously our fears, honoring our finest hopes, and inspiring renewed confidence in our contemporary experience of the transformational elements of our vowed life:

- + prophetic witness
- + contemplative attitude toward life
- + poor and marginalized persons as focus for ministry
- + spirituality of wholeness and global interconnectedness
- + charism and mission as sources of identity

The Franciscan perspective

+ by considering these transformative elements in light of the evangelical life, the **TORule**, and the Franciscan charisms.

What has been given us to do

+ by networking, celebrating, and mutually dedicating our renewed energies to Franciscan life as we stand together on the threshold of a new millennium.

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SAN DAMIANO CENTER

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Aston, PA 19014

20 minutes from Media, PA

30 minutes from Wilmington, DE

30 minutes from Philadelphia International Airport

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| Oct.24-25 | "LET THE CHILDREN'S LAUGHTER
REMIND YOU..."
Lynne Lavelle |
| Oct. 30-Nov. 1 | COMING IN TOUCH WITH MASCULINE
SPIRITUALITY
Vincent Fortunato, OFM, Cap. |
| Nov. 6-8 | MYSTICISM IN EVERYDAY LIFE
Gabriele Uhlein, OSF |
| Nov. 20-22 | "WINING AND DINING IN THE KINGDOM"
Robert Calabrese, OFM, Cap. |
| Dec. 4-6 | THE NERVE OF MARY, THE MOTHER OF
JESUS, AND HER SUPPORT GROUP
Joseph G. Donders, M.Afr. |

For information write or call 215/459-4125.