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The CORD

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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 the P

EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of the People ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father Form Viv: 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

RegNB: Rule of 1221
RegEr: Rule for Hermits
SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady
SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues
Test: Testament of St. Francis
UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare
VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy
'I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis 2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis 3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles CL: Legend of Saint Clare

CP: 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).

Zikomo Zambia! Refections from Africa

TIMOTHY J. JOHNSON, O.F.M., CONV.

A gentle, mild breeze embraced me as I stepped onto the tarmac in Lusaka. That initial experience in Zambia came to typify the tenor of my brief sojourn in the heart of Africa. The warmth of the people and the spaciousness of the land speak of peace in the midst of a continent ravaged by the twin plagues of war and famine. Indeed, I didn't need to look far beyond the border to the chaos of Zaire and Angola to realize that this land has been uniquely blessed.

Zambia - no longer simply a word for a far distant point on a map where our friars have labored for many years in relative obscurity. In the following months this place called Zambia became incarnate in the faces of countless men and women and the simple beauty of their land. These images remain vividly alive in the memory of my heart.

It was with the Poor Clares that I first recognized the attractive, appealing power of African Christianity. There must have been at least two hundred Franciscans at the monastery who gathered to mark the Feast of Saint Francis with a day of prayer and relaxation. During the Eucharist, one of the Poor Clares professed her final vows. The ceremony was replete with symbols which spoke of the solemnity, risk, and promise of religious commitment. For example, the newly professed sister received a tree branch to remind her of the call to be fruitful. Her head was also circled with smoking embers to recall her consecration. But what I remember most was the vase she carried to the altar during the rite of profession. At a certain point she sang her promises and threw the vase to the ground. As it shattered I could see that flowers, which had been hidden inside the vase, were now strewn at her feet. The power of the symbol was overwhelming.

Fr. Timothy, a regular contributor to The CORD and a member of the summer faculty of the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, went to teach for a semester at the Franciscan Center in Zambia. Here he shares some reflections on his sojourn in Africa.

The earnest students who gathered for a twilight Eucharist celebration at St. Bonaventure College opened my eyes to the present richness and future promise of the Conventual community in Africa. We were outside because, once again, there was no electricity and the chapel was dark. The blessing of the moment was apparent, however, as we prayed in silence and song. The temperate breeze and the sounds of the evening contributed to a spirit of reflective thanksgiving. As 1 stood at the altar and looked into the faces of the friars, I was captured by their peaceful attentiveness. These young, talented men have much to give to the Church. Already in their singing of the psalms and their liturgical ministries they reveal an appreciation for worship. Their ability to reflect upon, discuss, and preach the Scriptures, which I had experienced any number of times with them, demonstrates a love for the Word and People of God.

The commitment of our friar missionaries also speaks of a great love of God's Word and People. These men manifest a pioneering spirit seen in years of dedicated service in a land far from home. They have, I believe, much to be proud of as they look back over the years at the fruit of their labors. Conscious of God's blessings, I hope they can rejoice in what God has accomplished through their sacrifices. The efforts of these men to live the dream of Franciscan life in Zambia has given birth to an entire new generation of young African men willing to dream again of the Gospel life. Like others of their generation, the older friars are now faced with the challenge of passing on the burden of leadership to the next generation of friars. It is a slow transition requiring patience, hard work, and the willingness to accept the strengths and weaknesses of the young and old, foreign and native friars, alike.

There is certainly no lack of patient acceptance and hard work in Zambia. One day I saw a woman on her knees diligently scrubbing a floor with a baby strapped to her back. When I looked more closely I noticed that the baby was sleeping. The ability of the baby to sleep so soundly as her mother worked struck me. No wonder, as someone suggested to me, the people are able to deal so well with what seems, at times at least, to be nothing other than a constant series of inconveniences, delays, frustrations, and setbacks. For example, when the bus broke down on the way from Ndola to Lusaka hardly a complaint was heard - even though the bus carried no spare and we were forced to hitchhike the remaining distance to Lusaka. I couldn't help but wonder what would have taken place had this situation been transposed to the United States. Yes, once again, I was reminded that my expectations and limitations are much different than the people of this land.

I remember, too, another trip from Ndola to Lusaka marked by the haunting, mesmerizing sight of grass fires in the darkness of the still night. Black and red, two popular colors in African liturgical vestments, were predominant while driving one evening with a young American Mennonite couple. Now almost

licking the side of the highway, now dancing on the distant horizon, the fires wove back and forth across my field of vision. I'm told the reasons for the fires are many. As the rainy season draws near, the fields are set aflame to produce a fertile ash. This same ash impedes the passage of snakes. The burning also leaves rodents dead in their holes which provides another source of food. One friar suggested to me that the origin of the fires had a deep psychological reason. Sparsely populated, the Zambian bush can be the home of fear born from isolation. When the fields of tall grass are burned, spaces open up between villages dissipating the sense of isolation and fear like so much smoke from a fire long cold and dead.

Isolation and fear were far from the faces of the children who greeted me at a Sunday Eucharist with the Poor Clares. Their engaging eyes, filled with wonder and quiet expectation, drew the best out of me. My African journey was now drawing to a close where it seemed to have begun. Once again the sisters, together with all those who came to celebrate the promise of Advent, mirrored for me the rich goodness and beauty of the African Church. In the presence of such blessings, Eucharist was the most natural response.

As I prepare to depart, words of thanksgiving again come to me and all I can really say is, "Thank you, Zambia! Zikomo, Zambia!"

* * *

"Seeding a New Hope"

DONNA BAIOCCO, O.S.F.

Today we stand on the precipice of a whole new millennium. This is only the third time this event has happened since the time of Christ. All of us are familiar with the change that a new decade brings about... few of us have experienced a change of even a century let alone of a millennium! Image for a moment what life was like twenty years ago in 1973: get a mental picture of cars, technology, Religious Life.... Now go back in your mind to 1893. What was life like then? The changes that have occurred over the past century alone have been mindblowing. It is overwhelming to imagine what changes the next 100 years will see, let alone the next 1000. Just as the world has changed dramatically between the year 1000 and 2000, one can imagine that in 3000 life as we know it won't exist. We are the first Franciscans in history to stand on the precipice of a new millennium. Francis did not even face this call for change. As we change millennia we are called to a radical conversion from mindsets which governed the past and to adapt ourselves to the present and future. As with any movement we can enter into this change process with a deep sense of God-rootedness in our Franciscan life or we can let the tides of change shape us. We can actively shape our future or passively let the future happen to us... and as futurist writers warn us, if we do not change radically, our Franciscan life will not live to see the next change of millennia. If we are to participate actively in this shaping we must have a firm grasp of our timeless Franciscan values. We can use them to enlighten this change process.

A new program created by the Spirit and Life Committee of the Franciscan Federation and designed by Gabriele Uhlein, Wheaton OSF, is the "Seeding A New Hope" experience. Integrating the transformative elements of religious life from the LCWR/CMSM study with the essentials of our franciscan evangelical life, this program is offered throughout the USA. Sister Donna Baiocco OSF of Denver, Colorado gave this address to her own Assembly in June, 1993 after having participated in the Seeding A New Hope Program in Tampa, FL with the Federation Committee. Many Federation communities are designing the Program as an Ongoing Formation opportunity.

Sister Donna Baiocco, OSF is a graduate of the Franciscan Institute presently in ministry at the Magdalen Damen Center, Denver CO, for Single Women with Children. She is a member of the Midwest Province of the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity.

Bonaventure in his work the *Tree of Life* gives us a definite perspective on what is most human and timeless by showing us what is within the heart of God and how we as human creatures can become "images of the Godhead" (*Third Letter of Clare to Agnes of Prague*, 13). Bonaventure shows Jesus' heart as one which is driven by compassion. In one place he says it is "bathed with tears" (*Tree of Life* 13). In another he says:

The good Jesus, wept for us in our misery not only once but many times. First over Lazarus, then, over the city and finally on the cross, a flood of tears streamed forth from these loving eyes. Not forgetting compassion, when the crowd was singing a hymn of praise, he lamented over the destruction of the city (*Tree of Life*, 14).

Jesus' experience was on a deeper level than most people's experience. He looked at the reality of people's lives and was deeply moved. He saw reality/injustice clearly when most people hardened their hearts. He felt the pain of the human condition without denying it or covering it over with defense mechanisms. He allowed his experience to be one of compassion, not anger or hatred. Bonaventure describes the scene where Jesus is taken by the guards as:

How readily Jesus' spirit was to face his passion was clearly evidenced by the fact that when men of blood together with the betrayer came by night with torches, lanterns and weapons to seek his life, he spontaneously hurried to meet them, showed himself plainly and offered himself to them. That human presumption might know that it can do nothing against him unless he permit it, he cast these evil guards upon the ground with a word. But not even then did he withhold his compassion in anger" (*Tree of Life*, 18).

Jesus retains the ability to see injustice clearly and yet respond with a heart of compassion even to those who perpetrate that injustice.

Bonaventure's description of a person who is most human is one who is able "to groan and cry out in spirit" (*Tree of Life*, 23) against injustice. He describes the scene at Jesus' death in terms of the heart of those seeing the event:

Oh human heart, you are harder than any hardness of rocks, if at the recollection of such great expiation you are not struck with terror, nor moved with compassion nor shattered with compunction nor softened with devoted love (*Tree of Life*, 29).

Bonaventure tells us then that the human heart is fundamentally compassionate, capable of deep empathy, able to sense another's pain, capable of tears in the work for justice. It is the compassionate heart which is capable of feeling the pain that exists in a child's life who has been abused and neglected. But this compassion does not stop there, if it is the compassion of Jesus. It takes on

an active element. It advocates and works for alleviation of that child's pain. According to Bonaventure that is who God is, and that is who we are to be.

According to Bonaventure, God was driven to enter into the human experience not so much as to "save" us, but Jesus came because of this compassionate nature and drive to experience life in the same manner as those who God loves.

Clare describes another foundational concept in the spirituality of our Franciscan life when she says:

... so great and Good a Lord... on coming into the Virgin's womb, chose to appear despised, needy, and poor in this world, so that people who were in utter poverty and want and in absolute need... might become rich in Him by possessing the Kingdom of Heaven (First Letter to Agnes 19, 20).

Bonaventure calls this the co-incidence of opposites. In knowing the opposite sides of someone we know the truth of that person. So to know the totality of God we need to know the Almighty... and its opposite... the powerless. As a member of the Godhead, Jesus was great, powerful, almighty, omnipotent. The motivation, if you will, of a God who is almighty and comes into the human experience is to save, draw one out of sin, in a sense, to eclipse humanity. This God can do everything because of an intrinsic strength. One who is powerful acts differently than one who is powerless. Clare fell in love with the powerless Christ. In the above description of the Poor Jesus, Clare tells us how Jesus became transformed into the opposite and calls us to do the same. She says that "so great and Good a Lord... chose to appear despised, needy and poor." Clare knew well what power was like from her family... but she chose to reject it and follow the poor Jesus. The God whom Clare describes is found in the opposite of the Almighty. This Jesus is poor, despised, and needy. This Jesus is weak. This Jesus is powerless. This Jesus is vulnerable and dependent. The motivation of this God for coming into the human experience is a profound compassionate love. God comes as servant. One who stands under rather than dominates. One who frees by the love given rather than through coercion.

So the Franciscan perspective is one which sees from a stance of power-lessness. It feels what the powerless feel. It is driven by compassion. It sees the reality that exists between those who have power and those who are controlled by that power. It is free of the denial which allows power differentials to remain intact. It is critical for us as Franciscans to carry these two characteristics of the Crucified into the next millennium. They are the characteristics which will shape our presence within the next 1000 years. So now let us take five of the ten transformative elements and shine the lights of compassion and powerlessness on them.

1. The first transformational element is contemplative attitude toward life. From the Franciscan stance of compassion and powerlessness what does our contemplation look like as we enter this new millennium? Jeanne Schweikert in her book Toward the New Millennium: National Vision of Religious Life says "Our prayer is radical and authentic when it leads to a personal regrounding which affects our disposition, leading us to a new perspective and new attitudes." What better perspective can we have but that of Clare:

Place your mind before the mirror of eternity! Place your soul in the brilliance of glory! Place your heart in the figure of the divine Substance! And transform Your whole being into the image of the Godhead Itself through contemplation, so that you may feel what God's friends feel (*Third Letter to Agnes of Prague*, 12-14).

What Clare invites Agnes to do in the letter is to place herself as it were before the mirror, and actually feel what God's friends feel. Contemplation to Clare is a deeply emphatic process of feeling what God's friends feel. It gives birth to compassion within one's heart.

As we move into the year 2000 what are the friends of God experiencing? Do we know? What do our women's hearts feel? What do the countless women in Croatia who have been beaten and raped feel? The oppressed masses in El Salvador? The gays and lesbians in Colorado after the vote on Amendment 2? Women in society in general and in the Catholic church in particular? Abused children? What is the living body of the earth herself experiencing? This new millennium calls us to open our spirits which is in our nature as women and let the experience of others enter into us, to feel what the poor feel. Many of us then will have to give up our ways of hardening ourselves, or of dealing with things only in our heads. What does our Franciscan sense of compassion and of powerlessness show us in relationship to this element as we move towards the year 2000? Do we as Franciscans "groan and cry out in spirit" as we contemplate?

"Oh human heart, you are harder than any hardness of rocks, if at the recollection of such great expiation you are not struck with terror, nor moved with compassion nor shattered with compunction nor softened with devoted love."

2. The next element, spirituality of wholeness and global interconnectedness, moves us into "compassionating" with the world. From the Franciscan stance of compassion and powerlessness what does our sense of the whole look like as we enter this new millennium? Awareness of other cultures, peoples, world events has been heightened with the blossoming of technology. Because of television especially, we much more easily see ourselves as part of a global community. We are aware of the suffering of the Blacks in South Africa and of their years of fighting for justice. With the Franciscan

heart an injustice perpetrated on a person across the world becomes an offense to us. So too our awareness of the earth has changed dramatically. Many writers today say that the earth is Gaia, a living organism in her own right. Gaia Mother Earth. Did Francis not have that same sense when he wrote of Sister Mother Earth? Of Brother Sun and Sister Water? If we feel compassion as Francis did that these elements are a living vestige of God, then how can we not conserve? How can we not stand up for environmental issues? Would we let a person we love drink toxic chemicals? Then why do we let Sister Water become filled with them... as we do nothing?

What does our Franciscan sense of compassion and of powerlessness show us in relationship to this element as we move towards the year 2000? Do we as Franciscans "groan and cry out in spirit" in relation to all persons of the earth and in relation to Gaia herself?

"Oh human heart, you are harder than any hardness of rocks, if at the recollection of such great expiation you are not struck with terror, nor moved with compassion nor shattered with compunction nor softened with devoted love."

3. The next element is poor and marginalized as the focus of ministry. From the Franciscan stance of compassion and powerlessness do we know what the poor, the friends of God feel as we enter this new millennium? Through this element we are called upon to go beyond contemplation and the sense of oneness and to put our energy into our society where there are power imbalances. Perhaps this is the element which is closest to the Franciscan perspective because it brings us face to face with the Crucified Jesus of today. As Jesus did not deny the violence that he was experiencing at his death nor where it was coming from, so we too are called openly to see where injustice exists and to focus our energies there. As Francis could not ignore the class system which kept the lepers captive, so we too are called to identify the persons and groups in our society who are held captive also by unjust systems. And like Francis we are called actually to live with them. This means peacefully and without judgment living with gay and lesbians, the homeless, abused kids, women who have been hurt by the power structure within churches or society. The temptation for us is to take the comfort we experience as Americans and allow that to sedate us so that we cannot be filled with compassion... and we forget the poor... the friends of God. As we move into the new millennium and make decisions about retirement, our individual ministries, or those we sponsor as a community, can we remember what the friends of God feel, or will we spend our energies and resources on those who are not poor? This is especially tempting as we watch our own resources dwindle. We are tempted to opt for security and financial stability because our times our so uncertain. But can we ground ourselves in the compassion of God? What does our Franciscan sense of compas

If we do not change radically, our Franciscan life will not live to see the next change of millennia. If we are to participate actively in this shaping, we must have a firm grasp of our timeless Franciscan values.

sion and of powerlessness show us in relationship to this element as we move towards the year 2000? Do we as Franciscans "groan and cry out in spirit" in relation to the poor and marginalized, in relation to the friends of God?

"Oh human heart, you are harder than any hardness of rocks, if at the recollection of such great expiation you are not struck with terror, nor moved with compassion nor shattered with compunction nor softened with devoted love."

4. The next element is change of the locus of Power. From the Franciscan stance of compassion and powerlessness what does our sense of power structures look like as we enter this new millennium? Francis showed acute awareness of the power differential that existed in his day when he addressed letters to the Rulers in the secular society as well as letters to the clerics. In all of them he called for conversion from the stance of power back to the stance of the powerless Jesus. In the Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples he blatantly says to them in a warning "And when the day of death comes, everything which they think they have will be taken from them. And the wiser and more powerful they may have been in this world, so much greater will be the punishments they will endure in hell."

Our world is fraught with power imbalances. Our Catholic church is fraught with power imbalances. This reality is disturbing to many of us and it is an area where we have great resistance and denial. We were taught as children not to question or doubt the authority and teaching of the hierarchy, so even to think of doing this fills many of us with guilt and a sense of shame. We think that any type of questioning is disloyal and morally wrong. Yet that is what Francis did, that is what Jesus did. Their actions are acceptable to us. We know the prophetic nature of their questioning. Our resistance is what insures a childlike faith, when in this new millennium, what is needed is adults of conscience speaking out of a sense of compassion, for the powerless, whoever they may be. It calls us to switch our own locus of power and to feel what God's friends feel. It calls us to examine where we are coming from: do we come out of a one-up-man-ship stance in our everyday lives and thus live our own version of a hierarchical structure? Be it in our thoughts, attitudes, relationships, or lifestyle? Our Franciscan heritage asks us to become again "minores," those

who see others not on hierarchical planes but who see and revere all persons as having equal and profound dignity. *Minores* see from the stance of Jesus when he was at the most powerless time of his life. *Minores* see what the powerless see. *Minores* love as the powerless love. Francis examined his own affinity for powerplays and effected a deep personal conversion. From that deep spiritual experience he recognized the same affinity for power in the Catholic church of his day. That felt knowledge coupled with his love for the Catholic church drove him to call it to the same change he had experienced... to let go of what was not really of the Poor Jesus. What does our Franciscan sense of compassion and of powerlessness show us in relationship to this element as we move into the year 2000? Do we as Franciscans "groan and cry out in spirit" in relation to the powerless within the churches and society?

"Oh human heart, you are harder than any hardness of rocks, if at the recollection of such great expiation you are not struck with terror, nor moved with compassion nor shattered with compunction nor softened with devoted love."

5. The next element is *Prophetic witness*. This one draws from the preceding four elements. From the Franciscan stance of compassion and power-lessness what does our sense of prophetic witness look like as we enter this new millennium? Jeanne Schweikert in her book *Toward the New Millennium*: National Vision of Religious Life, describes prophetic witness as implying:

the need for ongoing social analysis in order to be aware of the "consciousness and perception" of our own cultural reality. Only then can we engage in theological reflection on that reality which leads to alternative perceptions, visions, and dreams. It is the alternative stance that is at the heart of a prophetic mission. Judgments about situations and decisions for action are influenced by this alternative stance. The call to prophetic action then expresses itself in the form of critiquing the existing social order and by presenting alternative ways that offer hope to the people.

The "alternative stance" for us as Franciscans is not hard to discern. It is what we have been discussing... the sense of compassion and powerlessness, in a world which has become hardened and obsessed with wealth and power. What do the friends of God feel? Francis' witness came in word and in deed. He verbally challenged the power structures of his day, but he also set up an alternative stance in the form of his itinerant lifestyle for the friars, and in the form of the Third Order lifestyle for the laity. In effect he showed the society and churches of his day that there was another way to live and to do things.

A powerful example in our day which is a prophetic witness against power, wealth, and competitiveness, is a collaborative effort where eighteen communities of religious women have formed the *Intercommunity Housing Association*, a not-for-profit corporation in St. Louis. For 30 years the Sisters of Loretto ran a school and day-care in the building. When the corporation was formed the Lorettos gave the building; other communities gave revenue; and others gave personnel. From their combined efforts they achieved together what none of them could accomplish alone. They began a housing complex for people who had been living in substandard housing or who were homeless. Through this prophetic action they created a new model... a feminine model... which comes out of collaboration and not competition. It allows the friends of God to be remembered. What does our Franciscan sense of compassion and of powerlessness show us in relationship to this element as we move into the year 2000? Do we as Franciscans "groan and cry out in spirit" in relation to the people who have no voice and need a prophetic witness?

"Oh human heart, you are harder than any hardness of rocks, if at the recollection of such great expiation you are not struck with terror, nor moved with compassion nor shattered with compunction nor softened with devoted love."

The main contention of the CMSM/LCWR Assembly which discerned the transformational elements was that for any religious community to be viable in the new century it must have integrated these elements into its present day reality. I think it is plain for us to see that, as Franciscans, our authentic spirituality not only fits into the needs of this new millennium, but we can also help create a profound renewal. Our primary values as Franciscans are timeless values which are based not only in scripture but are also based within the compassionate and powerless heart of God... and are thus mirrored within each of us. Our call is to discern how much of our daily living, attitudes, and perspectives are shaped really by our charism and how many of them have been created and shaped by false structures, values, and prejudices from the environment around us. It's a tremendously difficult task because it calls us out of our traditional role as women who have been taught to deny the truth of our own spirits. It is also difficult because we are the first Franciscans in history to experience such a change in paradigm. It calls us to be like our foundress, Magdalen Damen, who knew in her soul what her call was and who would not be dissuaded from this truth by others who tried to deny her. As we know from her many trips to the bishop, she would peacefully yet persistently repeat and restate her beliefs until they were heard and respected. It calls us to be like Francis who opened his spirit to the whole of creation and who could "groan and cry out in spirit" for the friends of God. Can we then re-shape our lives so that we give life to Francis of Assisi in the new millennium?

Duns Scotus and Teilhard De Chardin The Cosmic Christ: Two Visions, One Voice

SÉAMUS MULHOLLAND O.F.M.

There is in the minds of some scholars of both Duns Scotus and Teilhard de Chardin a discoverable affinity between their vision of Christ at the centre of the cosmos. Authors such as N.M. Wildiers and Christopher Mooney SJ¹ have intimated such. Certainly both Scotus and Teilhard have been criticized for their seeming failure to give an adequate place and role to sin in their systems, and where Scotus emphasizes the motive of the Incarnation, Teilhard emphasizes the motive of the Redemption.²

However, while these differences would be interesting to pursue at a further time, I would like to emphasize the positive aspects of their Christocentricity, not with a view to side-stepping important and not easily resolvable issues in their work, but rather to stimulate interest in the harmony of their visions.

It goes without saying that when we speak of Teilhard and his thought we are speaking of a 20th century scientist, not a theologian/philosopher like Scotus. It is important to bear this in mind as this was how Teilhard saw himself and wished to be thought of by others³; and so his thought must be presented in his own terminology. At the same time my purpose is to try to show the affinity between Scotus' doctrine of the Primacy, and Teilhard's concept of Christ the Pieroma, or Omega Point.⁴

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Teilhard's Thought In Brief

Teilhard's thought is extremely complex, and the crowning point of his life's work was his masterpiece *The Phenomenon of Man*. It is not a book about theology or metaphysics, but about the science of humanity, and he intended it as an introduction to an explanation of humankind and, implicitly, as a basis for theologians and philosophers to work and reflect upon. Teilhard's thought is based on *phenomena*, that which is observed.

Teilhard is a scientist, and as such he takes as scientific fact the process of evolution⁵, and he takes the whole manifestation of humanity in the cosmos as the basis of his reflection. In Teilhard this means that the cosmos has a propensity which drives it from the simple to the complex, which he calls the law of complexity-consciousness⁶. This being so, the cosmic phenomena must be explained, and such an explanation lies not just with externally observable phenomena, the without of things but also with the within of things.

This may be explored further by looking at a concept which predominates Teilhard's thought i.e. *Genesis*, or *Becoming*. The law which governs that *genesis* is the law of complexity-consciousness. This means that the more anatomically complex a thing is, the greater its degree of consciousness. What Teilhard is suggesting is that consciousness does not come from the *without* of anything, but from the *within*; in other words consciousness is not brought into matter from outside but is one of matter's fundamental properties.⁷

This is further explained by Teilhard when he distinguishes two types of energy: *Tangential* and *Radial*. The former unites an element with all others of the same complexity as itself in the cosmos, and the latter pulls the element to even greater complexity i.e. forwards. This being the case, it follows that the emergence and development of life is governed by the same law of complexity-consciousness and is produced by interior energy i.e. the within of the thing.

The evolutionary development of matter Teilhard calls Cosmogenesis and this creates the Geosphere. The law of complexity-consciousness leads in turn to the development of life-forms, Biogenesis which is the Biosphere. Eventually, there is the development of thought, Noosgenesis, which is the Noosphere, the 'thinking' layer around the cosmos. This last phase in evolutionary development is crucial, for it is nothing other than consciousness so concentrated upon itself that the limit between the biosphere and the noosphere is crossed and a new order of self-consciousness evolves: Humanity. Thus, in Teilhard's vision, Man is the crowning point of the evolutionary process and the Noosphere the work of the whole of nature.

Christ: The Omega Point In Teilhard

It has been necessary to outline briefly Teilhard's schema in his own terminology in order both to do justice to him and to understand his vision. Teilhard says that the cosmos is moving towards even greater complexity-consciousness. Yet, after all these transformations from life to consciousness, is there nothing left? Has the cosmos stopped developing or do we simply move in cycles? Either nature is closed to the demands of the future, in which case thought, the fruit of millions of years of evolution, is stifled and stagnant, or else an opening does exist — that of the Supersoul above our souls. Between these two extremes of pessimism there is no middle way because progress is all or nothing. On neither side, says Teilhard, is there any tangible evidence in support of hope: there are instead only rational invitations to faith.

We are now at the center of Teilhard's thought: the vision of *Christ the Evolver*, and it is here that Teilhard and Scotus begin to move together in harmony. It is in the realm of thought and self-consciousness that evolution now begins to take place. In others words, says Teilhard, humanity has to become *MORE HUMAN* and this he calls *Hominization*. ¹⁰ Consciousness must go on developing since it is now self-reflective (the law of complexity-consciousness) and the end point towards which humanity is moving in consciousness development is *Point Omega*.

This is the goal and the totality of his development. Both the fact of evolution and the development of the cosmos postulate and require an axis, a center, and that center is Christ the Evolver, Point Omega. Teilhard titles Christ in this way because it is He who pulls or directs creation forwards towards its end point, and the emphasis in Teilhard's thought here is the greater unification and spiritualization of the universe — through Christ the universe is becoming more Christified. Teilhard believed that St. Paul made reference to Christification when he wrote of the fullness of Christ, the pleroma tou Christou.

The Affinity Between Scotus and Teilhard

We need at this point to ask ourselves a question: Did Teilhard ever study Scotus? Certainly if one were carefully to read G. Allegra's book, My Conversations with Teilhard de Chardin on The Primacy of Christ, 11 (well worth a study in itself) it would be clear that not only had Teilhard studied Scotus under Fr. Allegra's direction, but quickly came to see the points of contact between himself and Scotus. Close reading of the text shows Teilhard engaging in a journey through Scripture, especially Sts. John and Paul, the Fathers, and Scotus himself. Indeed, on more than one occasion during the discussion of Scotus' doctrine, Teilhard exclaimed Voila, la theologie cosmique! Voila, la theology

d'avenir. 12 This was the theology that Teilhard himself hoped for: a theology of the future, a cosmic theology.

The points of harmony and affinity between Scotus and Teilhard are close at this point when they speak of Christ as the center of the cosmos. Scotus' vision of the predestination to grace and glory, or Christ, the Incarnation of the Word, which forms the basis of the Primacy doctrine, 13 has similarities with Teilhard's conception of Christ as Evolver/Omega Point. Scotus argued that creation was made for and through Christ; He is its beginning, its middle and its final end. As the entirety of creation came to be through Him, so it is directed towards him and being brought to its final fulfillment. Here Scotus and Teilhard are speaking of a cosmic Christ — a Christ who stands at the apex of created reality. A Christ who in holding the Primacy and as Evolver is the focus and locus for all futurity and existential facticity. And though the context of their separate visions differ, Incarnation in Scotus is prior to redemption: in Teilhard Christ must be redeemer since it is a work of the whole of Christ (Teilhard would not accept an abstract Christ). The medieval theologian/philosopher and 20th century scientist speak with one voice but in different terminology.

One Christ, Differing Cosmic Visions

We need, at this point, to introduce a word of caution and, in a sense, a justification. Regardless of the affinity between Scotus and Teilhard, their visions of the cosmos differ as static and dynamic respectively. Indeed, one would not expect Duns Scotus even to imagine the dynamic cosmos of Teilhard de Chardin. Yet, perhaps even here Scotus has something to say to the world of science today because the work of contemporary cosmologists evinces the fact that we seek to understand our cosmos ever more closely and to give answers to the pressing questions that challenge and confront us in relation to our beginnings, our place and our role in that same cosmos — and our ultimate destiny.

Setting aside these differences, though bearing them in mind, there is still one important similarity between Scotus and Teilhard which repays further research and study: the place of Christ in the cosmos. The work and thought of Scotus makes it clear that for him the universe is utterly and absolutely inconceivable without Christ; the same is true of Teilhard de Chardin. In both their visions Christ is the alpha and the omega, though more strongly developed in Teilhard. For both Scotus and Teilhard the cosmos was made for and unto Christ; He is its axis and completeness. He is its reference point and its goal. The more I study Teilhard the more interesting it is that the Scripture texts he uses to support his thesis are the same ones used by Scotists to expound and support the Primacy doctrine.

In the same way, Teilhard is convinced that his vision of evolution moving towards Christ Omega Point is a development of the Pauline texts. I would argue, even more so today, that even given Teilhard's dynamic vision of the cosmos and the findings of contemporary cosmology, the vision of Christ in Scotus still stands and may even be strengthened and enriched. As I see it, the Teilhardian vision is a development of both Paul and Scotus.

Neither Paul nor Scotus knew anything of evolution or cosmology as it was known to Teilhard. Even since then we have progressed, and we could surely argue that not all the implications of the doctrine of the Primacy were known to Scotus. But we, after all, have had another 600 years to reflect on Scotus' doctrine and nearly 2,000 to reflect on Paul. Yet this is no way detracts from either Paul's or Scotus' thought: the Pauline texts were understood by Scotus as being the inspired word of God. And both Scotus and Teilhard found in them their visions of one reality: the utter centricity of Christ in the cosmos. From totally different thought patterns, from totally different phenomenology's, from totally different times, cultures and backgrounds, the medieval Franciscan and the 20th century scientist both arrived at the same conclusion — that Christ is the meaning, center and final scope of the whole of created cosmic reality, whose role and function as Son of God is predestined from all eternity and not occasioned by sin, as if it was only in a guilty humanity that Christ had any role to play (and a moral and juridical role at that) i.e. Redeemer.

The Uniqueness of The Incarnation And Contemporary Science

In Scotus and Teilhard, through their exploration of the Pauline texts, theology and science have a meeting point and there is something of a unity and harmony. As Franciscans we can only thank God that Scotus' doctrine has contributed to the making of a better world, even if we ourselves, like Scotus, have not yet realized its full meaning and impact and potentiality. The harmony between Scotus and Teilhard gives us an indication that a closer relationship between theology and science is possible, even desirable, and more so today. The research of contemporary cosmologists and evolutionists gives us a cosmos whose size is staggering: we cannot cope with numbers such as 1,000,000,000,000,000 or imagine that a star — one star in a galaxy of hundreds of millions, in thousands of millions of galaxies, is millions and millions of light years away from us. The mind reels and staggers at our cosmos. Our horizons open up to new vistas of understanding and as our universe expands so too does our understanding of it. Perhaps this is what Teilhard meant when he spoke about hominization, humanity becoming more human, reaching out beyond himself to grasp the mystery of its own being. For Scotus and Teilhard in different centuries, at the highest point in this cosmos stands Christ.

These are serious questions and cataclysmic mistakes have been made in the past because of theology's refusal to listen to science (Galileo). But perhaps the answer to these questions lies in posing another: Is the human person Jesus the center of the cosmos with primacy over all things? The whole thrust of Scotus' doctrine and Teilhard's conclusion is a resounding YES and this is crucial for our faith today. Contemporary cosmology will not wait for theology, and perhaps Thomists and Scotists need to sit down and raise their discussions to new levels.

The points of harmony and affinity between Scotus and Teilhard are close at this point when they speak of Christ as the center of the cosmos.

However, given my limited knowledge of Scotus, Teilhard and cosmology I would say this: It seems that once we grasp and understand that Scotus' doctrine is not hypothetical but is discoverable from Holy Scripture, in which Christ is first in the mind of God and thus the reason and explanation of the cosmos — and for Scotus and Teilhard it means the entire cosmos — then it is a useless question whether there could have been or could be Incarnations in other worlds. The reason is that there is simply no necessity for them because the Incarnation of the Word of God is nothing other than a unique, once-and-for-all event.

The Incarnation, while taking place within a specific historical moment is nevertheless of profound cosmic significance whereby Christ is not just the center of sacred history, but the center and meaning of all human and cosmic natural and evolutive history. Scotus asserts that Christ is foreseen first in the mind of God as being closest to the end before the foreseeing of sin. Given this, the Incarnation is not dependent upon the fall of any one part of that creation. Thus the fact that Christ would still have come even if there had been no sin attests to the uniqueness of that Incarnation. If there is life on other worlds, as there probably is, they also share in the once and for-allness of the Christevent; and that means the totality of the Christ event since it is He and He alone

who holds the primacy over ALL things. Thus, the cosmic nature of Christ's primacy, the Incarnation, the cosmic significance of His saving death and resurrection in which the whole of created reality is redeemed renders any other Incarnations unnecessary. The Incarnation is already foreseen by God, before creation and before the fall in sin, so too is the remedy for that fall, the Passion and Death and Resurrection of Jesus. It is in His Incarnation, Death and Resurrection that Jesus is constituted Lord of all Creation in love. For us this must also mean any other life forms share and participate in the fullness of Christ. John Duns Scotus spoke to the genius of Teilhard de Chardin, and has much to teach the world of science today about the beginning, center and end of the cosmos which science seeks to explore and understand, that we too might ultimately understand ourselves.

Endnotes

- ¹ N.M. Wildiers, An Introduction to Teilhard de Chardin, German edition 1963, Trans by Hubert Hoskins, 1968, New York; C. Mooney, Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ, USA, 1968.
- ² See the discussion of this topic in Mooney, op. cit., p. 130.
- ³ Teilhard said, "I am neither a philosopher nor a theologian, I am a studier of phenomenon, a physicist in the old Greek sense." *Nouvelles Litteraires*, 11 January 1951, Interview.
- ⁴ Reference to this abounds in Teilhard's works; see, for example, *The Phenomenon of Man*, English translation, pp. 267-8; also L'esprit de la terre, 1931, Ouvres, VI, 52-7.
- ⁵ There are differences of opinion as to whether evolution is fact or theory, see for example: How I believe, Harper and Row, 1969; Let Me Explain, Harper and Row, 1972. A discussion of whether or not Teilhard is in fact a biological evolutionist is found in M. Motto: The Omega Point and Teilhard de Chardin, Rome, p. 9.
- ⁶ On the Law of Complexity-Consciousness see Wildiers, pp. 74-79, in Teilhard, *Phenomenon of Man*, p. 49, 55, 60-61, see also C. Mooney's treatment of the matter, pp. 45-49.
- ⁷ Phenomenon of Man, p. 78. In Teilhard the genesis of life on earth belongs to the category of absolute unique events which, once they have happened can never be repeated.
- ⁸ Both Widlers and Mooney give good summaries of these two forms of energy. Wildiers, pp. 74-79; Mooney, pp. 44-45, 75-76.
- ⁹ Teilhard, The Future of Man, Harper and Row, 1969, p. 192.
- ¹⁰ Phenomenon of Man, pp. 100-107, see also On The Trend and Significance of Human Socialization, 1948, 2 which was a lecture delivered in New York.
- ¹¹ Franciscan Herald Press, 1971.
- ¹² Allegra, op. ci., p. 27.
- ¹³ For the Scotus texts: Ordinatio, III, dist. 7 q. 3; 32, n. 10; Opus Oxioniensis, I d. 18, q 3 n, 31.

The Life Of Penance Logical Outcome Of The Mystery Of The Passion

DOMINIC SCOTTO, T.O.R.

We live in a world of signs and symbols. Our entire process of earthly communication is based upon signs and symbols, be they words, looks, actions or objects. Within that process of communication they function on two different levels at once, and yet mediate between them. A person receives a letter from a very dear friend. Enclosed within the letter is a photo of the loved one. Although both letter and photo belong to the material, inanimate world, they nevertheless make a deep impression upon the receiver. Reading the words and looking upon the photo produces a profound impact upon the mind and emotions which do not belong to the physical world but to a different level of reality. While the letter and the photo remain simply material objects, they nevertheless exist in the emotional or mental world as well, and act as a bridge between both levels. Through them the receiver is effectively placed into a sensitive, intellectual connection with the missing loved one. One can almost feel the absentee's presence as he reads the words and gazes upon the photo although the presence is purely emotional and mental.

On the other hand, sacred signs and symbols while essentially performing the same function, communicate and mediate for us the presence of the Lord, a function essential to our spiritual life. Although these signs and symbols are composed of familiar physical forms such as sacred objects, fire, oil, water, etc., they effectively link our physical reality to the spiritual reality of God's presence.

On an even more meaningful level are the liturgical, sacramental signs and symbols which are brim full of real meaning. They are sacramental in the precise, theological sense of the word because not only do they symbolize grace, namely, human participation in the life of God, but they actually effect it.

At the very heart of the liturgical, sacramental life of the Church is the Eucharist. This sacrament, under the species and appearances of bread and wine

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offered in sacrifice, becomes really and substantially the body and blood of Jesus Christ. It is a symbolic representation of the one sacrifice of Christ, but a symbol which makes the reality of Christ's sacrifice really present in a sacramental manner. Bread and wine, basic signs and symbols of the staple foods of man's natural life, through the Eucharistic celebration as sacred meal, become truly sacramental as they are transformed into the Real Presence primarily to nourish us in Holy Communion.

In Baptism the ritual use of the signs and symbols of works, gestures, water and oil on the physical level become the signs, symbols and instruments of one's actual entry into the community of the disciples of Jesus the people of God, heir to the kingdom of heaven, reborn into His redeeming death, animated by his spirit, actually sharing in His sonship, and carrying the seed of his glorious resurrection and future immortality. All the sacraments may be seen in this very same light.

It is in this very same sense that we are able to refer to Christ as the sacrament of the encounter with God. As the Word made flesh, Christ becomes the mediator between God and human beings. He and the Father are one and no one can go to the Father except through Him (Jn. 14:6-7). Therefore, Christ in his humanity, as the Word made flesh, becomes the primordial sacrament par excellence in that He not only symbolizes and communicates the Father's love for all humankind, but He actually effects that love in his Paschal Mystery.

We truly live in a world of signs and symbols, those that communicate to us within our human, secular experience, and those wonderful, sacred, grace filled liturgical signs and symbols that form a living bridge between the now and the not yet, between God and man.

For Saint Francis of Assisi all the great phenomenon of nature as well as all the material elements of the universe spoke to him of God. Through these signs and symbols the divine presence became real for Francis. For him all nature was a reflection of the loving God who had created it and Francis respected and loved it as such (Cel. 1:81).

There was a certain sign and symbol which held a very special place in the heart of Francis and that was the sign of the Tau, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In the year 1215, five years after he and his first band of followers had traveled to Rome to seek the approbation of their new Rule from Pope Innocent III, the Pope convoked the Fourth Lateran Council. Francis, at that time the head of a family of nearly five thousand brothers, most likely found himself in attendance at least in the capacity of an observer, to receive the instructions and admonitions of the Holy Father. This Council was essentially one of reform for the Church and undoubtedly Francis was deeply touched by it since all his later works seemed to be so strongly influenced by its spirit.

Commenting on a text from the prophet Ezekiel (9:4-6), the Pope called upon all those present to mark themselves and all Christians within their ministry with the sign of the Tau, a symbol of penance and of the cross. The Pope went on to affirm that as the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet the shape of the Tau indicated a cross and as such would be symbolically borne upon the heads of all those who manifested its radiance in their own lives. Those who truly embody this life of penance must affirm within their own lives the words of Saint Paul, "as for me, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world ..." (Gal. 6-14). The Pope then exhorted all present to be champions of the Tau and of the Cross. Concluding with the affirmation that God does not will the death of a sinner but his conversion, the Pope then admonished all the participants to go forth and to preach penance and forgiveness everywhere.

This seemed to be the perfect message for Francis, and it was most likely at this time that he chose the Tau as the symbol of his penitential life and as the resume of all his preaching. Consequently, it became the concrete sign and symbol of the participation of his Order in the reform of the Church and of souls called for so forcefully by the Pope. From that point onward the Tau would serve Francis as a personal signature for his life and works as both Celano and Bonaventure testify (2 Cel. 106-109, LM. VI:1-9; LM X, 7-9), and as a precedent for the day when on Mount Alvernia the stigmata would reproduce in his very flesh the spiritual power of this mystical letter already imprinted upon his heart.

Today there are only three short writings of Saint Francis in existence which he wrote with his own hand on two small pieces of parchment. One of these, which is preserved in a reliquary at the Sacro Convento in Assisi, bears on one side Francis' "Praises of God Most High." On the reverse side it bears the famous "Blessing of Brother Leo." This side of the Chartula carries not only the blessing which Francis wrote for Brother Leo, but also a large and thickly drawn letter T, the sign of the Tau, which extends downward and across the center of the parchment. Celano saw in Francis' use of this sign a moving expression of his deep love for the Cross of Christ and undoubtedly this was most likely the symbolism intended by him.

Therefore, the Tau became for Francis a very sacred symbol, a constant reminder to him of the Cross of Christ and of his need to be continually transformed through a penitential life into the image of the suffering and crucified Christ. For Francis the symbol was rich and brim full of meaning, signifying something very dear to him, and he sought to embody its significance in his own life and in the lives of all his followers.

To sum up the spirituality of Francis, in all simplicity we would have to say that essentially it is the imitation of Christ offering himself on the Cross as

a sacrifice for the salvation of all humankind and ultimately for the glory of the Father. For Francis Christ was the great sacrament of the encounter with the Father. In His humanity, as mediator between God and humankind, He was the visible image of invisible divine love and grace, who had lived out the essence of this mediatorship in sacrifice, the supreme sacrifice of the Cross. Therefore, the essence of Francis' spirituality, of his unique life force, is imitation, resemblance, coalescence with Christ in his life and work, and most particularly in His passion and death. For in that very passion and death Francis realized that Christ had fully affirmed what He had preached, "if anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (Lk:23).

There was a certain sign and symbol which held a very special place in the heart of Francis and that was the sign of the Tau

Throughout the life of Francis, beginning with his conversion and concluding with his death, the vision of the crucified Christ becomes progressively well defined with the clearest revelation achieved in the full vision of Alvernia and of the Transitus. While immersed in prayer at San Damiano it was the crucified Christ who spoke to him and initiated him into a life of total self denial for the love of Christ crucified. From that inspired moment onward, through a life of prayer and self denial, the cross became central to his life. The Tau became his personal signature, and as he sought to live out its deepest meaning in his life he was slowly but surely drawn to its full realization on Mount Alvernia. It was there that he was divinely sealed by the six winged seraph, Christ himself, with the authentic signs of his own passion. Francis understood only too well that just as he had sought to imitate Christ in all that he did in this life, so he must also seek to conform himself to the suffering and agony of His passion before he departed from this world (LM XIII, 2). He had indeed become a sign and symbol himself in that his whole life was so closely integrated into the life of Christ, particularly into His passion and death, that in his life, in his work and in his death he made Christ present to all whom he touched. And so it must be the goal of all his followers to seek to do likewise.

In the opening section of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium, of Vatican II, we find the following statement:

Since the Church, in Christ, is in the nature of sacrament — a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men —

she here proposes, for the benefit of the faithful and of the whole world, to set forth as clearly as possible, and in the tradition laid down by earlier Councils, her own nature and universal mission (LG, Chap. I, 1).

Likewise, the Council intended that each member of the Church and each group within the Church should, with the guidance of this document become more fully aware of its true position within the Church. Different chapters of the Constitution deal with the various states and functions among God's people so that each group may clearly understand its true role. For example, Chapter III deals with the Hierarchical Structure of the Church, while Chapter IV treats of the Laity. But that which concerns us most directly is Chapter VI on Religious, and what is their true role within the Church and the world.

The Church has traditionally looked upon consecrated persons as authentic images of herself, and the bonds by which they vow themselves to the faithful practice of the evangelical counsels become a complete and vibrant expression of the union that exists between Christ and His bride the Church (LG: 44). The Constitution is even more specific in pointing out that religious life is a striking expression of the holiness of the Church and therefore "this practice of the counsels gives and must give in the world an outstanding witness and example of the same holiness" (LG: 39). Religious, therefore, are to be living signs and symbols of that holiness which the Church is commissioned to produce in all of its members. As such, the religious state lived faithfully must clearly demonstrate to all the faithful the unsurpassed breadth of the love of Christ the Lord and the infinite power of the Holy Spirit marvelously working within the Church. Consequently, the profession of the evangelical counsels must shine before all the members of the Church as a sign and symbol of God's holiness which should in turn inspire them to an effective and prompt fulfillment of their Christian vocation (LG: 44).

Ultimately, the people of God have no lasting city here below, but are striving to achieve the fullness of the kingdom of God. The religious state in its embrace of the evangelical counsels must more clearly manifest to the faithful here below the reality of that same kingdom that is to come. In a special way, therefore, religious are called upon to be living signs and symbols of the end product of all salvation history, namely the kingdom of heaven.

While in the world as part of the pilgrim people of God they are, through their profession and living out of the evangelical counsels, not of this world. They must bear witness by their lives to the other worldly, the kingdom to which all humankind is destined. This is the eschatological role of religious life (LG: 44), and it is a role essential to the life of faith of all the people of God.

In the midst of a world that is filled with violence, division, hatred and distorted values, the consecrated religious has an especially important role to play. Within all this spiritual darkness which seeks to reject and ridicule the life of faith in the world today, the religious is called upon to be a light shining on a mountain top, to be a reassuring beacon to all people of faith. As such all religious must truly be signs and symbols of the kingdom that is to come. However, not only must they bear witness to the end time, but in a sense they must be sacramental signs as Francis was, not only signifying holiness but actually effecting it in their own lives. There must be a faithful relational clarity between the sign and that which is being signified.

Unfortunately, when this relationship is badly distorted or does not exist at all, then the power of the symbolic value of a religious life has lost its true meaning. To lose that significant affiliation because of human respect, political correctness, or human pride would be a tremendous waste of God's grace. When this occurs, then instead of being a counter sign to the false values of this world, the religious becomes a co-signer of those same false values, actively seeking to bend the Church to fit his or her own needs and to conform it to the prevailing social climate. This not only destroys the true significance of a religious life, but is also the cause of great scandal and harm to the people of God.

Therefore, it is especially urgent today that as Franciscans, we are not only sincerely seeking to be true signs and symbols of the Kingdom, but in a special way we must all be signed with the sign of the Tau. Our holiness must be lived out by seeing Christ in all things and everything in Christ, to dedicate all of our efforts for Christ, with Christ and in Christ, in that Christ stripped of all on the cross. This is the heart and soul of our Franciscanism. Each of our Franciscan virtues rooted in our vowed life, and every Franciscan activity flowing out of the observance of our Rule, has its source, its meaning and its definition in the Cross.

But how should we interpret this embracing of the cross of Jesus Christ, this identification with Francis in the passion and death of the Lord? Fundamentally it must be expressed in the true purpose of our lives as Franciscans, namely, to live in penance.

When the first friars ventured forth to preach penance in central Italy and were asked by the curious people of the region who or what they were, they simply identified themselves as penitents from the town of Assisi. Similarly, in the opening words of his Testament, Francis affirms the ideal that had guided him as God's inspiration to embark upon a life of penance. This goal which Francis had pursued his whole life long with such commitment under the guiding hand of God and had set before his brothers and sisters as the ideal to follow, was first and foremost the life of penance.

This life of penance is not to be interpreted in a narrow sense of the term implying hairshirts and the practice of all kinds of physical severities. While we know that Francis often undertook such external penances and practiced them to the highest degree, it was not what he had in mind when he spoke of, and strove for, a life of penance. What he did have in mind was something greater and deeper since he understood "penance" and "doing penance" primarily in the sense of gospel metanoia. This translates into a change of mind, heart and direction, the complete and unceasing renewal of a person who tends to God with his whole heart, mind and soul. It is a radical sensitivity and receptivity to the promptings of the Holy Spirit with a concomitant response of one's whole being. It is in this state of ongoing conversion that every follower of Francis must become a living sign and symbol of that transformation into Christ our savior, especially into his passion and death.

In his "Letter To All The Faithful" Francis is very explicit in relation to this very point:

And it was the Father's will that His blessed and glorious Son, whom He gave to us and who was born for our sake, should offer Himself by His own blood as a sacrifice and victim on the altar of the cross; and this, not for Himself, through whom all things were made, but for our sins, leaving us an example that we may follow in His steps (*Omnibus*: 93-94).

In these simple, faith filled words is contained Francis' entire theology of the Cross. In them he presents to his brothers and sisters the "life of penance" as the logical outcome of the mystery of the passion. His words are an invitation and a challenge to all of us to meditate on that mystery and to examine our own lives in the light of that great truth. It is the Cross that must lead us into the mystery of the inner life of the Church. And it is the Cross in its full meaning and power that must be communicated faithfully to all the people of God through the sign and symbolic value of our own lives.

Virgin Made Church: Holy Spirit, Mary, and the Portiuncula in Franciscan Prayer

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The experience of God documented in the writings of Francis of Assisi and in the biographies and stories of his life are so rich and deep that it is difficult to describe them from one point of view. For instance, one of the more obvious characteristics of Franciscan spirituality is its Christocentrism. Francis makes it quite clear that he is trying to follow in the "footprints" of Jesus Christ. While much insight can be gained by examining Francis' religious experience from this perspective, closer examination of his spiritual theology discloses that his focus on Christ is really just a part of a Trinitarian understanding in which the Holy Spirit has a vital role. There are also other surprises in Francis' spiritual life. Clearly his relationship to his father was a crucial element in his understanding of God. After his renunciation of this relationship before the bishop of Assisi, he vows to call only God his father. Yet, the writings of Francis are full of maternal images as well, and he develops a close relationship to Mary, the Mother of God. Finally, poverty is an important element in Francis' spirituality. He practices strict poverty and encourages his followers to imitate him in the practice of this virtue. He is very upset on his return from the Holy Land to discover that the brothers have acquired substantial buildings for friaries, and he fights this trend (ultimately unsuccessfully) as contrary to the poverty that is so essential to his experience of God. Yet, he tells his brothers always to keep the church of St. Mary of the Angels, the Portiuncula, where the Order began.

This paper will show that these paradoxes are related. The Holy Spirit played an important role in Francis' religious experiences, particularly his conversion after encountering the leper. I believe that Francis came to understand this experience of God through his prayerful reflection on the role of the Holy Spirit in the Annunciation to Mary and through his life of prayer and fraternity at the Portiuncula. An understanding of this connection will help us to re-envision the role of Mary and the place of prayer in our Franciscan charism.

The Role of the Holy Spirit for Francis

That the Holy Spirit is a central element in Francis' spiritual life can be seen by the many references to the Spirit in his writings. In his Later Rule for the friars he advises, "let them pursue what they must desire above all things: to have the Spirit of the Lord and His holy manner of working . . . "(RegB X:8). Francis sees all else in reference to this and warns that other activities must not interfere with the following of the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In advising St. Clare and her sisters. Francis tells them that cultivating the interior life of the Holy Spirit is more important than any work they might do in the world outside their monastery (Cant Exh, 3). Francis also emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit in giving spiritual advice to those who wanted to follow him while remaining in the world. First, he proposes five practices to remove the people from their natural inclination to the ways of the world and to introduce them to the life of God. These preliminary steps make a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit within the person. "Oh, how happy and blessed are these men and women when they do these things and persevere in doing them, since the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them" (Ep Fid I 1:5-6). The culmination and ultimate purpose of Francis' use of the term "Spirit of the Lord" is seen in the beautiful prayer at the end of his Letter to the Entire Order:

Thus,

inwardly cleansed,
interiorly enlightened,
and inflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit,
may we be able to follow
in the footprints of Your beloved Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ.

And, by Your grace alone,
may we make our way to You,
Most High . . . (EpOrd 51-52)

The Holy Spirit enables us to follow in the "footprints" of Jesus Christ. And it is in the power of the Spirit and the imitation of Christ that we are led to the Father who is "Most High." Thus, we are enabled to enter into the very life of the Trinity.

The early biographers of Francis also realized the importance of the Holy Spirit in his life and that of the brotherhood. St. Bonaventure describes an incident in which a learned doctor of theology is amazed by the wisdom and insight into Scripture that Francis, a man of little schooling, had. Bonaventure points out that Francis, "through the abundant anointing of the Holy Spirit, had their Teacher within himself in his heart" (LM XI:2). Thomas of Celano, the first biographer of the saint, states that Francis saw the Order in relation to the Spirit. "Upon the foundation of constancy a noble structure of charity arose, in which the living stones, gathered from all parts of the world, were erected into a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cel 38).

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Francis' conversion was a gradual process, occurring over a span of at least several years. Certainly, one of the crucial elements in this process was his embrace of the leper, which is mentioned so prominently in his Testament (*Test* 1-2). Lepers engendered horror and revulsion in Francis. Given the terrible effects of this disease, this may be natural on a human level, but it had more profound spiritual implications. In Francis' sinful state the leper seemed to be beyond the love of Christ. Inspired by his resolution to conquer his selfishness, Francis runs to embrace the leper (*LM* I:5). He finds himself overwhelmed by God's love, by an experience of the Holy Spirit. In the leper he sees that the most dehumanized person is taken up in the love of God. He also finds Christ embracing his sinful self totally. This is a completely undeserved gift. Aware of the invasion of God's love, Francis becomes a man inflamed with love for God, a man of desires.

The Place of Mary in Franciscan Spirituality

Being a person of prayer, Francis would naturally seek an explanation of his profound experience wit the leper in his relationship with God. Being a person of the Middle Ages, Francis would be familiar with Scripture, even though he was not well educated. His writings give ample evidence that he was well versed in the Bible. He was also imbued with the language of liturgy. "Francis' prayer is firmly rooted in Scripture and liturgy." Through these resources he undoubtedly sought to understand the meaning of what he had experienced.

Under the influence of St. Bernard and the Cistercians, meditations on the humanity of Jesus were common in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Francis took up this practice, but focused particularly on the birth and death of the Lord. The Incarnation was a central focus in his meditations. The birth of Jesus so took over his thoughts and imagination that he created the practice of a living creche for Christmas in the village of Greccio. Thus, it is likely that Francis meditated on the infancy narratives in Luke's gospel. Given his experience of being overpowered by the presence of Christ and the Holy Spirit following his embrace of the leper, Francis may have been attracted to the Annunciation in which Mary is "overshadowed" by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:26-38). This was certainly a central event in the Marian theology of Bonaventure. The wide variety of his writings on Mary (theological, Scriptural, liturgical and mystical) "are profoundly one at the core: they all turn around reflection on the central event of Mary's life, the Annunciation."² Furthermore, Bonaventure saw the Annunciation as a paradigm for the understanding of God's relationships with humanity.3 In this he may have had an insight into Francis' own thoughts.

Immediately following the Annunciation in Luke's gospel, Mary goes to visit her kinswoman Elizabeth, who the angel told her had conceived a son. A remarkable exchange occurs between these two women. In response to Elizabeth's greeting Mary sings her song of praise, the Magnificat, in which she gives voice to her reaction to God's intervention in her life. Luke presents Mary as one of the Anawim, the lowly of God, who have no earthly power. "But the God of Jesus breaks into this barrenness and fulfills the promise, bringing new life where it was judged impossible by every human standard." The Magnificat clearly indicates how God acts in the world on behalf of those considered unimportant. "God uses the weak to confound the strong, the lowly to dethrone the mighty, the poor to despoil the rich, the virgin to show that the divine sonship is not the work of the flesh but the gift of the spirit."⁵ Francis may have understood God's action through him on behalf of the leper in terms of this prayer of Mary. In fact, Francis' own description of this incident in The Testament is phrased in an antithesis reminiscent of those in the Magnificat. "I had mercy upon them (lepers). And when I left them that which seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness of soul and body" (Test 2-3). Elizabeth Johnson describes the Magnificat as "a hymn of liberation, fiercely on the side of the oppressed, and fearlessly indicating the powerful who abuse those considered 'non-persons'." The lepers were such non-persons in medieval society and for the pre-conversion Francis. The "powerful" Francis was changed forever by God's intervention on their behalf.

Out of littleness comes greatness, out of poverty comes richness, out of virginity comes motherhood.

The image of Mary presented in the Magnificat has much in common with Franciscan spirituality, particularly with regard to humility and poverty. "Mary proclaims that there is nothing of herself that is to be honored or acknowledged, but only what God has done. Again this is the constant message of Francis, which was expressed so clearly... In Admonition XIX." As mentioned above, the Magnificat describes Mary as being one of the Anawim, the poor of God. "The poverty of the Anawim is perceptive and open to the Holy Spirit of God and it recognizes that all goodness and grace come from Him."

Bonaventure studied the Annunciation and the Magnificat extensively in his Commentary on Luke. In the Annunciation the Virgin Mary is made fertile by the action of the Holy Spirit. Bonaventure also examines the manner in which Mary praises the Lord in the Magnificat. She praises God for the divine mercy shown in the redemption of humanity and the generosity shown in the

gift of the Holy Spirit.⁹ Bonaventure's emphasis on the Spirit seems to follow Francis' own concentration on the third person of the Trinity.

If Francis was in fact influenced in his conversion by the Annunciation and the Magnificat, it would help to explain why Francis was so attracted to Mary. Thomas of Celano tells us that "toward the Mother of Jesus he was filled with an inexpressible love, because it was she who made the Lord of majesty our brother" (2 Cel 198), Francis also put the Order under her protection. Bonaventure points out that Francis prayed to Mary, and that it was through her intercession that "he conceived and brought to birth the spirit of the truth of the Gospel" (LM III:1).

The Mother of God appears extensively in the writings of St. Francis. The Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a litany of praise to Mary. The Office of the Passion contains an antiphon, to be repeatedly used during the praying of the office, that praises the Virgin Mary. Such repetition would have inserted a strong Marian influence into the life of the friars. Mary is mentioned often, if briefly, in the other writings of Francis. Most often these references are in the conjunction with a reference to Jesus. "Francis' love of our Lady formed one whole with reverence and love for the poor Christ." This connection of Mary to Christ was proper theology in Francis' day and still is in our post-Vatican II church.

Mary also appears regularly in the writings of Clare of Assisi. In several places her rule instructs the sisters to follow the poverty and humility of Jesus and Mary and so does her Testament. The Rule also presents the love of Jesus and Mary as a motivation for the life of poverty(Reg CL 2:18). Further, Clare advises Blessed Agnes of Prague to stay close to the Mother of Christ (EpAg III, 2:18).

Bonaventure's writings concerning Mary are extensive and varied. One of his favorite themes is that of Mary as the perfect model of the Christian soul. Mary received the Holy Spirit at the Annunciation. So the soul receives the Holy Spirit by grace. In *The Five Feasts of the Child Jesus* Bonaventure reflects on the infancy narratives and further develops the comparison between Mary and the soul. "In a sort of dialectical motion, attention shifts from the historical Mary, Mother of Jesus, to the spiritual Mary, the Christian soul, and then again to the historical Mary, who is also spiritual . . . She should therefore serve as model and companion in the mystic journey of the soul as 'spiritual Mother." "11

In both the writings of Francis and of Clare the binary references to Jesus and Mary stress their poverty and humility, the same virtues seen to be so prominent in Mary in the Magnificat. Possessing neither material goods nor one's works and very self creates a total emptiness in the soul. In Mary this emptiness is filled by the gift of the Holy Spirit and she bears Christ physically. In Francis, Clare, and other disciples, meditating on the mysteries of Christ's life enabled the Holy Spirit to fill the emptiness with the spiritual presence of Christ. "His comprehensive understanding and practice of the way of humility and poverty of Mary enabled Francis to become pregnant with Jesus or to conceive him in his heart." 12

This idea of poverty and humility leading to the conception of Christ points to several unique images in Francis' writings. In the antiphon from *The Office of the Passion* Francis calls Mary the spouse of the Holy Spirit. He seems to have been the first to use this term. Mary is the handmaid who accepted God's will for her. She is also the one who through the action of the Holy Spirit brings Christ into the world physically. This same dynamic can be at work spiritually in the lives of all believers in Christ. "We are mothers, when we carry Him in our heart and body through divine love and a pure and sincere conscience and when we give birth to Him through His holy manner of working" (*EpFid* I 10). The working of the Holy Spirit enables us to conceive Christ spiritually in our hearts for the benefit of our own spiritual life and to bring Christ to "life" in our world for the benefit of others.

This ministerial (and therefore ecclesial) dimension of the work of the Holy Spirit in Mary and in us is made more explicit in *The Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary* where Mary is called "the virgin made church." Mary is involved in the founding of the church because she is the instrument used by the Trinity to bring about the Incarnation. ¹⁴ Through her (though still a virgin) Christ entered the world and through Christ (and therefore through her) the church was founded. Her fecundity leads to the birth of not only Christ but also of new believers in her Son. Thus, Francis' image can be seen on both Marian and ecclesial levels. These dual layers of meaning are also seen in the other titles in *The Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Palace, Tabernacle, Home) which apply equally to Mary and to the Church.

The Portiuncula

What happened through the Holy Spirit physically in Mary can happen spiritually in other humans. Just as she gave birth to new believers by bringing her Son into world physically, so we can generate new believers by birthing Christ spiritually. This is exactly what happened to Francis. And the birthing process was centered in the church of St. Mary of the Angels, the Portiuncula. Before his experience of the leper, Francis repaired this church and came to live there. Bonaventure tells us that he specifically chose this church because of his love for Mary. (LM II:8) The name of the church may have had an influence in directing him to the experience of Mary in the Annunciation and the Magnificat in order to understand his experience with the leper. Therefore, the Holy Spirit, the biblical stories of Mary, and the church named in her honor worked together to complete his conversion. When he had given birth to Christ spiritually, his life became a model that drew people to him. And so in his virginal openness to the Spirit he became "church" also, "This little chapel was the womb in which the order was conceived and from which it was born."15 This location became the symbol of all the elements of Franciscan spirituality. It was dedicated to Mary, the humble and poor one who brought forth the Savior through the action of the Holy Spirit. Its name (Portiuncula) means little

portion; it was small and humble of stature. Francis and the brothers who came to live there desired to be poor, as Jesus and Mary were. Humility and poverty combine to create an emptiness that the Holy Spirit can fill with fecund power. The poverty and humility of the namesake and the residents are "concretized" in the structure itself. "The paradox imposes itself upon the self-image of the entire brotherhood. For, as Celano sums up, precisely in this place, the Order of Minors had its beginning, and with this very church as its foundation it grew in numbers to achieve its 'noble structure.' . . . Out of littleness comes greatness, out of poverty comes richness, out of virginity comes motherhood." 16

Conclusion

Franciscan spirituality and prayer are Trinitarian. We are led to union with the Father through our following in the "footprints" of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. The action of the Spirit is affective. We should not try to deny or repress our desires, just have them redirected by the Spirit as Francis did. In order to do this, however, we must provide a dwelling place for the Spirit. In this the Mother of God is our exemplar. The externals of Marian piety are optional. Imitation of her in making oneself into a dwelling place for the Spirit is essential. This involves humility and poverty to create an emptiness. It also involves the imitation of Mary in pondering in our heart the word of God and His actions in our lives (Lk 2: 19). Finally, we cannot deny the importance of location for our prayer. We and our Savior are incarnated into the world. The places we choose for our prayer will have to have an impact on its fruitfulness.

Endnotes

- ¹ Séamus Mulholland, "Our Lady in the Writings of St. Francis," *The Cord* 41 (1991), 151.
- ² George H. Tavard, Forthbringer of God (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1989), 185.
- ³ Tavard, 169.
- ⁴ Donald Senior, "Gospel Portrait of Mary: Images and Symbols from the Synoptic Tradition," in *Mary, Woman of Nazareth* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), ed. Doris Donnelly, 106.
- ⁵ George T. Montague, *The Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), 266.
- ⁶ Elizabeth Johnson, "Reconstructing a Theology of Mary," in *Mary, Woman of Nazareth*, 83.
- ⁷ Larry Dunphy, "Mary, A Model For Franciscan Spirituality," *The Cord* 38 (1988), 136.
- ⁸ Mulholland, 154, ⁹ Tayard, 69, ¹⁰ Mulholland, 154, ¹¹ Tayard, 158.
- ¹² Dunphy, 135. ¹³ Mulholland, 152. ¹⁴ Mulholland, 153. ¹⁵ Dunphy, 132.
- ¹⁶ Joseph Doino, "Francis and Mary Revisited," The Cord 37 (1987), 142.

BRILLIANT BLESSINGS

The sun is full of starlights And magnificence today And I can hardly Bear to think Tomorrow will be Winter once again When today is full Of brightness and shimmering effulgence Like a Springtime afternoon! Today is full Of dazzle-diamonds, Glitters in pink puddles On the city's sidewalks, Golden honeydrops of Window luminosity And blazing blushes Turning upward to This sparkly afternoon Catching brilliant blessings Of exhilarating sun!

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