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FRANCISCAN CHRISTOLOGY

Edited by Damian McElrath 1980

This is an anthology containing a cross-section of Pre-Reformation Franciscan writers whose pastoral, theological, philosophical, and spiritual views share a common tradition and source in Francis's vision of the Incarnate Word. These authors represent the Franciscan Christological tradition. They reformulate and translate Francis's personal relationship with Christ and the need to imitate Christ according to the letter and the spirit of the Gospel. Included are selections from John of La Rochelle, St. Bonaventure, James of Milan, Peter Olivi, Duns Scotus, William of Ockham and St. Bernardine of Siena.

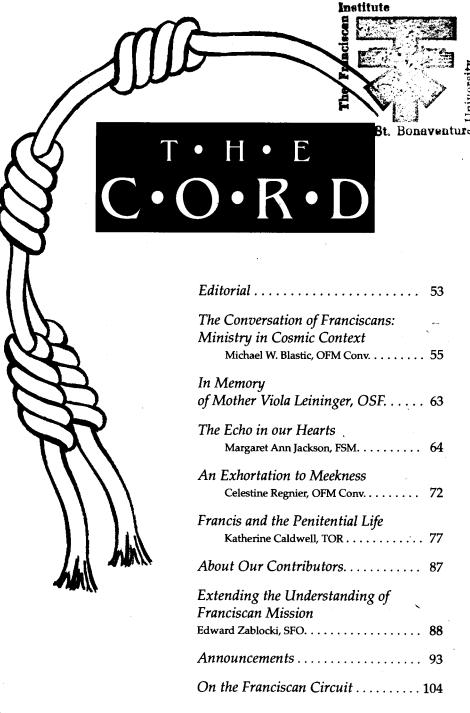
A short introduction places each selection in its proper context and provides a brief biography of the author and a short but scholarly bibliography.

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THE CORD

A Franciscan Spiritual Review

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To save unnecessary delay and expense, contributors are asked to observe the following directives:

- MSS should be submitted on disk or typed on 8 1/2 x 11 paper, one side only, double spaced.
- 2. The University of Chicago *Manual of Style*, 13 ed., is to be consulted on general questions of style.
- 3. Titles of books and periodicals should be italicized or, in typed manuscripts, underlined.
 - Titles of articles should be enclosed in quotation marks and not underlined or italicized.
- 4. References to Scripture sources or to basic Franciscan sources should not be footnoted, but entered within parenthesis immediately after the cited text, with period following the closed parenthesis. For example:

(1Cor. 13:6).

(RegNB 23:2).

(2Cel 5:8).

(4LAg 2:13).

A list of standard abbreviations used in *The Cord* can be found inside the back cover. The edition of the Franciscan sources used should be noted in the first reference in a mss.

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The Cord, 46.2 (1996)

Editorial

Our journey through the Lenten/Easter season is a particularly good time to reflect in a focused way on our vocation as "penitents." Retrieving our spiritual tradition challenges us to translate our inheritance into terms understandable for our own times. Studying the lives of Francis, Clare, and the first followers makes abundantly clear to us that the Franciscan way is inseparable from the penitential way, and the penitential way is a life of on-going conversion.

Bernard Lonergan provides us with a contemporary description of the experience of conversion:

Conversion... is a radical transformation on which follows, on all levels of living, an interlocked series of changes and developments. What hitherto was unnoticed becomes vivid and present. What had been of no concern becomes a matter of high import. So great a change in one's apprehensions and one's values accompanies no less a change in oneself, in one's relations to other persons, and in one's relations to God.¹

This contemporary description raises echoes of Francis's own words in his *Testament*, recalling how he had begun "to do penance": "The Lord led me among [the lepers] and I had mercy upon them. And when I left them that which seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness of soul and body" (Test 2-3).

In this issue of *The Cord*, we look at conversion as our way of life. Michael Blastic offers a stimulating reflection on the relationship of conversation to conversion and concludes that conversation is a peculiarly Franciscan way of responding to our world. Katherine Caldwell shares a study that helps us understand what it meant for Francis to be a penitent in his own times. Margaret Ann Jackson finds that relating to the poor and outcast of our society is powerfully transformative for us Franciscans, just as Francis found his experience with the lepers transforming.

A "voice from the past" is Celestine Regnier, who in 1956 wrote "An Exhortation to Meekness." We reprint it here as a call to a quite unpopular and inauspicious virtue for our times. And finally we share Edward Zablocki's reflection on the special character of the secular Franciscan vo-

cation, finding its meaning in everyday engagement with the Church's mission in the world.

As we celebrate together the Paschal Mysteries, we are graced with remembering how our dying to self is a movement into the very passion of God and a rising to new and unimagined LIFE. Who knew this better than Francis and Clare?

Since our last issue of *The Cord*, in which we announced the formation of a new editorial board, we have welcomed another member. Murray Bodo, OFM, of the Province of St. John the Baptist, Cincinnati, has graciously agreed to serve. In a future issue we will share with our readers biographical profiles of our board members.

Finally, we invite our readers to keep us informed of significant programs and publications which can be shared through *The Cord*. We would especially appreciate receiving information about books in English being published in countries other than the United States, since it is sometimes difficult for us to be aware of these. It is our hope that *The Cord* will become a networking vehicle for sharing a common reflection on our way of life throughout the English-speaking Franciscan world.

Endnote:

¹As quoted by Walter Conn, ed., Conversion, Perspectives on Personal and Social Transformation (New York: Alba House, 1978) 13.



The crosses featured in this issue of *The Cord* are the work of Francis X. Miles, OFM.

THE CONVERSATION OF FRANCISCANS: MINISTRY IN COSMIC CONTEXT

Michael W. Blastic, OFM, Conv.

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The presentation of Zachary Hayes, OFM, to the joint conference of the Franciscan Federation and the Franciscan Friars in Anaheim, CA, in August, 1995, has provided the Franciscan world with a magisterial synthesis of the Franciscan worldview. His reflections are foundational; that is, Zachary articulates the wisdom approach of the Franciscan tradition which derives from the religious experience of Francis and Clare of Assisi and the theological reflection on this experience by the doctors of the Order. This tradition provides a context in which Franciscans can and should evaluate and reflect upon their own life—its structures, expressions, spirituality, mission, and ministry—in order that we might be, in Zachary's words, "responsible stewards of a treasure that has much to offer for the healing of humanity and of the world at large" (Hayes, 17).

Zachary's reflection on the tradition exposes the logic which connects the insights of Francis's spiritual experience with the tradition of Christological reflection, characterized by Zachary as cosmic Christology. He states that the reflective dynamic of the Franciscan masters such as Bonaventure and Scotus moved "from the story of Jesus and the cross/resurrection to the widest possible horizon." This means concretely, as Zachary suggests,

looking out at the entire world as one sees it at a particular time and trying to perceive the possible relations between the story of Jesus and the larger picture of the world. We might summarize the conviction of the early Franciscan theologians by saying simply that a world without Christ is an incomplete world. Or, in another formulation, the whole of the created cosmos is structured Christologically (Hayes 6).

I. Implications for Franciscan Ministry

This style of theological reflection which moves by means of its own inner logic from the religious experience of Francis to the cosmic Christology of the Franciscan doctors leads to a particular style and understanding of ministry. Based on Zachary's description of the Franciscan theological perspective, one could define ministry as service to the divine aim in creation. Or, again, ministry might be described as service to the transformation and completion of the world as intended by God. Using strictly Bonaventurian concepts, ministry could be defined as a *reductio*, i.e., a returning of all things to God. We recognize and respect the inner relationship of all things to God as all things have flowed from the creating hand of God. In this context ministry could also be described as respect for reality—letting all things be what they are as intended by God.

What we are speaking of when we attempt to describe Franciscan ministry is a *style* of ministry. The Franciscan style of ministry, based on the vision Zachary has articulated, implies the effort to make connections between the ordinary, everyday human experience of men and women ("looking out at the larger picture of the world") and the story of Jesus (the gospel as rule and life). Franciscan ministry attempts to discover the inner logic of things as intended by God. One way of approaching this Franciscan style of ministry is by employing the metaphor of conversation—Franciscans minister by "engaging in conversation," by looking out at the wider world of humans' life experiences and engaging that world with the story of Jesus through attention to, care and respect for the concrete individual engaged at that moment.

An insight into this Franciscan style of ministry emerges from a story about Francis told by Thomas of Celano. A Dominican doctor of theology approached Francis with a request to interpret the text of the prophet Ezekiel 3:18, in which Yahweh, addressing the prophet, states that if the prophet does not "proclaim to the wicked man his wickedness, I will require his soul at your hand." The Dominican was aware of the learned interpretations of the text but sought Francis's own understanding. With reluctance, Francis responded:

If the passage is to be understood in a general meaning, I would take it that the servant of God should be so aflame in his life and his holiness that he would reprove all wicked men by the light of his example and by the words of his conversation. So, I say, the splendor of his life and the renown of his fame will proclaim to all their wickedness (2Cel 103).

Celano's account of Francis's response to the Dominican reflects his basic stance to the understanding of scripture: to the extent that the Word is embodied in word and example, that is, in the brothers' manner of life, to that extent is the Word understood—life becomes proclamation.² It is this connection of example with understanding, of conversation with proclamation, which reveals an important insight of the early friars into the nature and style of their ministry.

This style of ministry is described in words by Francis himself as he addresses a chapter gathering of the friars, where, according to the author of the *Legend of the Three Companions*, Francis says:

The general behavior of the friars must be such that all who see or hear them may be drawn to glorify our heavenly Father and to praise him devoutly. . . . Since you speak of peace, all the more so must you have it in your hearts. Let none be provoked to anger or scandal by you, but rather may they be drawn to peace and good will, to benignity and concord through your gentleness. We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way. Many who may seem to us to be children of the devil will still become Christ's disciples (L3S 58).

Here Francis emphasizes the behavior, the manner of life of the friars, as the word which leads men and women to glorify God. The behavior itself becomes proclamation—it effects healing, unity, and reconciliation. This way of being with men and women as the friars went about the world, this engagement with their world, this style of ministry, is conversational.

Conversation is thus more than a mere speaking of words. Conversation implies exchange, a sharing of thought and feeling, a familiarity and close association with another, and even a style of life, or as the medieval person might express it, a manner of life.³ The latin *conversatio* is used by the author of the *Legend of the Three Companions* in the text cited above, translated by the English "general behavior."⁴ The medieval use of the Latin *conversatio* as manner of life or behavior was based on the monastic use of the term in the context of the monk's life of conversion which took place within the monastery. It has its origin in the *Rule of Benedict*.⁵

While Francis himself uses the term *conversatio* in his writings, especially significant for our purpose are two texts from the *Earlier Rule*. The first of these texts characterizes the location of Franciscan conversation:

And they must rejoice when they live among people (quando conversantur inter viles et despectas personas . . .) [who are considered to be] of little worth and who are looked down upon, among

the poor and the powerless, the sick and the lepers, and the beggars by the wayside (RegNB 9:2).6

Here Francis specifies a privileged context for the conversation of Franciscan life with the poor and lepers. The use of the preposition "among" (inter) suggests a certain intimacy of life, even implying the existence of a single fraternity with the poor and suffering on the margins of Assisi. It was above all in the poor and suffering men and women he encountered that Francis was able to see the image of Jesus Christ, making a living connection between that particular, concrete history of a poor person and the story of Jesus. Here, Francis's conversatio was articulated and effected at the level of personal relationship and mutual presence with these people from this concete and specific social location. This specific social location does not place limits on where Franciscans are to converse, but does describe some conditions for honest conversation.8

There is a second text of Francis in the *Earlier Rule* which is also significant in this context and treats of the Franciscan mission beyond the Christian world:

As for the brothers who go, they can live spiritually among [the Saracens and nonbelievers] in two ways (duobus modus inter eos possunt spiritualiter conversari) (RegNB 16:5).

Here, as Zachary suggests in his paper, the implications of the Franciscan tradition for inter-religious dialogue becomes evident (Hayes 16-17). Francis emphasizes that the way of being with non-believers is itself a spiritual conversation. This chapter of the Rule further specifies that the first way of going among the non-believers is not to "engage in arguments or disputes," but to be subject to everyone and acknowledge that this way of being is Christian. This clearly implies that the behavior of the friars, the manner of life of the friars takes the place of words. The life of the friars speaks the gospel, embodies the gospel that it might be heard, so that in the hearing of the friars' life, others might become engaged with the story of Jesus. This manner of life among the non-believers makes visible the sacred structure of reality revealed in Christ-that in Christ all men and women are brothers and sisters. The sacred structure of reality revealed in Christ demands respect for difference and diversity. Faith in this Christ demands a response of radical openness to reality and the truth of God revealed there.

The relationship between Francis and the brothers and Clare and the sisters in a common ministry of "repairing the church" is situated in this context of conversation. Clare remembers in her *Testament* Francis's pro-

phetic announcement of the arrival of the Poor Ladies at San Damiano, even recording the very words which Francis used on that occasion:

Come and help me in the work [of building] the monastery of San Damiano, because ladies are yet to dwell here who will glorify our heavenly Father (cf. Mt. 5:16) throughout His holy, universal Church by their celebrated and holy manner of life (quarum famosa vita et conversatione sancta glorificabitur Pater noster caelestis in universa ecclesia sua sancta) (TestCl 14).9

With striking clarity of insight, Clare realizes that her ministry and that of her sisters, as announced by Francis, was precisely conversation—it was their holy manner of life which would give glory to God in the church. Later Clare further specifies the nature of this conversation:

In the Lord Jesus Christ, I admonish and exhort all my sisters, both those present and those to come, to strive always to imitate the way of holy simplicity, humility, and poverty and [to preserve] the integrity of our holy way of living (ac etiam honestatem sanctae conversationis), as we were taught from the beginning of our conversion by Christ and our blessed father Francis (TestCl 56-57).

Clare places their "holy way of living" on the same level as "simplicity, poverty, and humility," linking the expression of life with these values in an inseparable manner. Clare thus specifies the content of their holy conversation in terms of simplicity, humility, and poverty, describing them as the way—underscoring with insistence that this conversatio is incarnate in a particular manner of life which Clare experiences as the same life of conversion taught by Christ and Francis. Clare connects her own and her sisters' concrete experience of life with the story of Jesus as spoken in the life of Francis. It is this engagement at the level of behavior which links the friars and the poor ladies in a ministry that has ecclesial significance: the effect of this *conversatio*, of this manner of life, is the edification of the church. The conversation of Francis and Clare has ecclesial significance in terms of effect (the rebuilding of what has fallen apart), but it is also consititutive of the reality of the church which is built up through conversation. For Francis this conversation began with the experience of hearing the crucified speak and address him personally in the broken down church of San Damiano from the broken body of the Crucified. It continued in the manner of life of Clare and her sisters who, as Francis prophesied, came there to live. 10

Clare continues to characterize even further the nature of this conversation in terms of charity. Charity, Clare insists, is fostered by simplicity, humility, and poverty. She encourages her sisters to love "one another with

the charity of Christ," allowing the "charity you have in your hearts [to] be shown outwardly in your deeds" (TestCl 59). It is this example of charity which edifies, which leads to growth in love of God and one another, engaging all the sisters in the conversation of gospel living. This is the *forma* vitae which Clare struggled to protect throughout her life.

II. Franciscan Ministry as Honest Conversation

An honest conversation does have rules or guidelines. David Tracy suggests rules for conversation which are appropriate to our context. For Tracy, conversation demands a willingness to follow the question wherever it may go. He continues to develop this approach to conversation through rules intended to protect the integrity of the process:

Conversation is a game with some hard rules: say only what you mean; say it as accurately as you can; listen to and respect what the other says, however different or other; be willing to correct or defend your opinions if challenged by the conversation partner; be willing to argue if necessary, to confront if demanded, to endure necessary conflict, to change your mind if the evidence suggests it.¹¹

We might translate Tracy's rules for conversation into Franciscan criteria or foundations for ministry. One could say that in order to have an honest conversation, to live lives of integrity which speak the gospel in human flesh, the Franciscan must engage in ongoing conversion (the life of penance) and contemplation, both of which challenge one to see Jesus Christ as the key to understanding the world, as Zachary suggests.

To state the obvious, Franciscan life begins with and is sustained in conversion. The experience of conversion, while common to all who respond in faith to Jesus' preaching of the kingdom of God, is nonetheless understood and experienced in a particular way by Franciscans. This Franciscan approach to the experience of conversion is linked to Francis's own experience, which he describes in his *Testament*, and where he reveals that he began to do penance when "the Lord Himself" led him among the lepers (Test 2). Here Francis learned that the life of penance begins with the action of God, who literally led Francis out of himself, out of his own bitterness and disgust, and turned him to the lepers. As Francis's experiences teaches, the life of penance is about being turned by God toward the other, and in that experience of being turned toward the other, coming to know and recognize that in the experience of conversion one is embraced by God when one embraces the other. Franciscan conversion—the life of penance—

is not something one does primarily for oneself. Franciscan conversion is what God does for us—it is the location in which God can be found and experienced and tasted; it is the place of Franciscan mystical experience.

Francis comes to recognize Jesus Christ particularly among the lepers, in the suffering and the poor. Here he finds an answer to the question "What are we as human beings?" Turning toward God's created image in the other (conversion), we come to recognize that "rooted in the earth yet created in the likeness of the one who is the divine Likeness, we are destined to embody something of the divine Word in our own individual lives (Hayes, 14). Conversion allows honest conversation. In exchanging the bitter for the sweet, in looking beyond ourself toward the other, we are able to respond to God's word spoken to us in the life of the person with whom we are engaged, to whom we attend with attention and respect. 12

This turning toward the other in conversion brings us out of ourselves and places us before the mystery of God as that finds expression in the created world. Thomas of Celano describes this activity of Francis as contemplation. Francis sees Christ in the poor; he sees Christ in creation; he ultimately becomes what he sees in the vision on La Verna—a crucified man. This seeing Christ in the world is what contemplation is all about. Throughout his life, Celano insists, from the first moment of his conversion until he drew his last breath, Francis constantly contemplated the mystery of God as that appeared before his eyes in the lives of everyone and everything he encountered. As Zachary comments: "Giving ourselves to the cause of Christ is not losing the world. It is ultimately finding the world in its truest reality in its deepest relation to God, the ultimate origin and end of all that is" (Hayes 12). Francis did not choose between God and the world. As the Canticle of Brother Sun proclaims, in choosing either Francis has both.

In this light, Celano's insight into the stigmata was simply that Francis finally became what he saw. Somehow, in the vision of La Verna, the final identity of the human person and the entire created order is revealed in the crucified man whom Francis saw and subsequently became in his own flesh. Celano describes the experience in this way:

Solicitously [Francis] thought what this vision could mean, and his soul was in great anxiety to find its meaning. And while he was thus unable to come to any understanding of it and the strangeness of the vision perplexed his heart, the marks of the nails began to appear in his hands and feet, just as he had seen them a little before in the crucified man above him (1Cel 94).

The mystery of the stigmata is thus the ultimate revelation of the truth fully embodied by Jesus in the Incarnation wherein God embraces the human condition with its limitation, vulnerability, and fragility. The stigmata of Francis is proof that we can bear the pain of the other, and in that embrace we can come to experience the sweetness of God. In this experience the Word takes on flesh, becomes flesh again to engage the world in conversation. Perhaps the Franciscan understanding of what Tracy means when he suggests that one of the rules of conversation is to "listen to and respect what the other says, however different or other," is exactly what God does in the Incarnation.

For the Franciscan "it is the shape of Jesus' history and ministry that embodies the divine clue as to the structure of all reality" (Hayes 9). The style of Franciscan ministry which derives from this conviction is thus conversational—it means engaging human experience with the story of Jesus, attending to the experience of the other and there naming grace. Conversion and contemplation are the foundation as well as the means to accomplish this ministerial task. Franciscans respond to the invitation of Christ to rebuild the church again in our own day through honest conversation. They speak with lives of integrity which embody the gospel anew in our age while attending to the mystery of God as that is revealed in the life of the other and the world at large.

Endnotes:

8 See the discussion in the next section of this paper which discusses the rules of honest conversation.

⁹ English translation of the writings of Clare is that of Regis Armstrong, *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents*. Revised and expanded (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1993).

¹⁰ See the reflection of Thomas of Celano in his *First Life* 18 where he suggests that Clare is the foundation of Francis's rebuilding of the church. See also the comments of Optatus van Asseldonk, "'Conversio' y 'conversatio' en la vida de Francisco y Clara," *Estudios Franciscanos* 89 (1988): 109-126; here at pages 116-117.

¹¹ David Tracy, Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion and Hope (San Francisco:

Harper & Row, 1987) 18-19.

¹² David Tracy comments: "In conversation we find ourselves by losing ourselves in the questioning provoked by the text. We find ourselves by allowing claims upon our attention, by exploring possibilities suggested by others, including those we call texts" (Tracy 19).

¹³ See 1Cel 76-94

IN MEMORY

On February 5, 1996, we received notice of the death of Mother Viola Leininger, OSF, former superior general of the Millvale, PA, Franciscans and Founding President of the Franciscan Federation, Third Order Regular of the Sisters and Brothers of the United States. A Sister of St. Francis for 72 years, Mother Viola had resided at the sisters' infirmary since the early 1980s. She



died Sunday, February 4. She will be remembered with admiration and gratitude by all who have benefited from the services of the Franciscan Federation over the past three decades. Just 30 years ago this month (February), Mother Viola wrote a letter to each superior general of women's Franciscan Congregations in the U.S. It invited them to share her dream that Third Order Sisters might move forward collaboratively in their renewal efforts. The response to this letter constituted the beginnings of the Federation which today serves Third Order Regular Brothers and Sisters throughout the country and is a networking vehicle for all U.S. Franciscans. Mother Viola's letter and the story of her role in the Federation's founding can be read in A Short History of the Franciscan Federation, published in honor of the 30th anniversary and available at the Federation office, 650 Jackson St., NE, PO Box 29080, Washington, DC 20017.

¹ Published as "Christ, Word of God and Exemplar of Humanity: The Roots of Franciscan Christocentrism and its Implications for Today," *The Cord* 46:1 (1996): 3-17.

² See Admonitions 6, 7, 21.

³ The American Heritage Dictionary (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1986) defines conversation as "1) an informal spoken exchange of thoughts and feelings; 2) social intercourse; close association; 3)close acquaintance; a circle of acquaintances; 4) manner of life; behavior."

⁴ The Latin text reads: "Talis deberet esse fratrum conversatio inter gentes ut quicumque audiret vel videret eos glorificaret Patrem caelestem et devote laudaret." Theophile Desbonnets, "Legenda trium sociorum: Edition critique," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 67 (1974): 132.

⁵ The Rule of Benedict uses the term conversatio in the sense of manner of life in the following passages: Prologue 49; 1:3,12; 21:1; 22:2; 58:1,17; 63:1; 73:1,2. See "Monastic Formation and Profession," in: RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English with Notes, ed. Timothy Fry (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1981) 459-463. Consult also, Terrence Kardong, The Benedictines (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1988) 94-98; 127- 129.

⁶ English text used for the writings of Francis is that of Regis Armstrong and Ignatius Brady, Francis and Clare: The Complete Works (New York: Paulist Press, 1982). Latin text for writings of Francis is that of Cajetan Esser, Opuscula sancti patris Francisci Assisiensis (Grottaferrata: Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1978). Latin text for the writings of Clare is that of M-F. Becker, J-F. Godet, T. Matura, Claire D'Assise: Ecrits (Paris: Editions du cerf, 1985).

⁷Consult 1Cel 76, where Francis reprimands a friar who refused to give alms to a poor man by saying, "Who curses a poor man does an injury to Christ, whose noble image he wears, the image of him who made himself poor for us in this world."

The Echo in our Hearts Being Formed in the Evangelical Life by the Lepers of Today

Margaret Ann Jackson, FSM

Introduction

The story of Francis's encounter with the leper is a touchstone for renewing within us the foundations of our life as Franciscans. Not only was it a turning point for Francis, but he also had a practice of sending his followers to spend time with the lepers as a way of initiating and forming those choosing to follow in the footprints of Jesus. Someone has suggested that the lepers may have grown tired of being formators for Francis, perhaps wearily saying to one another "here comes another new one to shape up" when they saw a stranger clad in penitents' garb on their horizon. If contact with the poor and outcast of society was important then, what is comparable to that today? What implications does contact with the lepers of today have for our individual and congregational ongoing formation in Franciscan evangelical life?

In his address to the 1994 Franciscan Federation meeting, Joseph Chinnici, OFM, spoke eloquently of the evangelical life. He invited us to enter into the conflicts of our society, holding all in tension, willing to be bombarded with the problems of our day. It is not the apostolic question of how to reach out to the poor in ministry, but rather how the lepers teach us to follow in the footprints of Jesus because we commit ourselves to being with them as sisters and brothers. We do this best when we enter into the spirit of the opening sentences of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World:

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men [and women] of this age, especially those who are poor or in any

way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts.

While all that is genuinely human raises an echo worth listening to, as Franciscans we have a special call to put ourselves into circumstances in which the poor and afflicted, the lepers of today who experience the glaring problems of our society and world, can reach our hearts and form us as followers of Jesus.

The Real World of the Poor

In my experience of working with homeless families and individuals, I find them to be a composite of our society's problems. But as we look toward placing ourselves in solidarity with the poor, we need to avoid romanticizing them and their struggle. They are not akin to the fanciful "noble savage" that a previous generation admired. The homeless family or individual has usually been struggling with one or more of the following:

- alcohol and/or drug addiction,
- mental illness.
- a physical or mental disability,
- a past history of some form(s) of abuse,
- domestic violence,
- trouble coping with life and functioning adequately,
- a prison record, time in jail,
- financial stress, bills piling up,
- loss of a job, "last hired, first let go,"
- lack of education and/or employment skills,
- illiteracy and/or learning disabilities,
- health problems and lack of health resources,
- AIDS.

Those of us who join the poor in addressing this daunting list find ourselves in a complex and untidy environment that defies easy solutions. We are often no more in control of the future than the people with whom we work. As professionals, we try to offer more choices, more doors to knock on, so that our clients can improve their lives. But how should I advise the homeless pregnant seventeen-year-old with a biracial child nine months old, who tells me that no landlord will rent to her because they don't consider her to be of age, even though in other ways she is classified as an emancipated adult? Furthermore, because of the chaos she has known

thus far in her short life, emotionally she seems several years behind her chronological age, which often makes her inconsistent in following through. What echo does that raise in anyone's heart?

As overwhelming as all this can be, in the midst of it there is an intangible human goodness waiting to be discovered by those able to look beneath a not-so-attractive surface. In some particularly troubled individuals, once their story of a childhood of abuse and turmoil emerges, I find it amazing that they can function at all. But even in the worst cases, I often catch a glimpse of the spark of goodness that flickers beneath the garbage heaped upon their spirit. In truth, the spark within them is probably a better witness to the Incarnation than my own, given the obstacles that have stood in their ways. An echo was raised in my heart by a poignant few minutes of listening to five or six homeless teenagers who were singing their favorite popular song in front of a group at the shelter. The song declares: "I swear, by the moon and the stars in the sky, I'll be there . . . for better or worse, I'll love you with every beat of my heart, I swear." Yet most of those teens are children of parents who have repeatedly let them down because of addictions to drugs and/or alcohol. With little or no experience of someone consistently being there for them, their longing for it has survived and become an ideal that moved them to song. Like all of us, they are yearning for the Eternal One who wanted so much to be with us that He fully and irrevocably became one of us.

Entering into this Formation Process

If we in some fashion place ourselves with the poor, God will use them to form us. It is not all that important to understand why God wants us there. It is far more important just to be where God is leading us. But there is a strong temptation to want first to understand and then to follow. We examine and analyze and evaluate and plan everything so that we will feel completely safe and secure before we are willing to act. There is nothing wrong with preparing for the future, as long as we remember that God likes to surprise us and take us places we thought we would never go, asking us to step out in faith. The apostles did not understand, yet they risked following Jesus. "Where do you live?" "Come and see."

The Spirit leads us forward by a rhythm of responding and reflecting, then responding again as the fruit of our reflection. We need to be with the lepers of today in whatever beginning way is feasible for us individually and communally. It is enough to know that it is God's call; the rest will follow step by step. We cannot make such a choice in full safety and security, for if we try to remove the risk totally, we are then depending on our-

selves and closing ourselves to the way God wants to act in our lives. This dialogue with the Spirit is not unlike a bit of wisdom some anonymous person has given us:

Come to the edge.

It's too high.

Come to the edge.

We might fall.

Come to the edge.

So they came,

and he pushed them—

and they flew.

Being Formed in the Four Franciscan Values

Once we have made the leap and are with the lepers, willing and privileged to be formed through them, what happens? I can speak only for myself, conscious that it is always an ongoing unfinished process. It means being further formed into who I truly am, a Franciscan; so I frame my thoughts in terms of the four fundamental values: humility, poverty, contemplation and conversion.

Humility is perhaps the most essential attitude to have. The poor are my brothers and sisters, in no way inferior to me despite their problems and difficulties. They raise an echo in my heart because I, too, have some of the same failings and flaws to struggle with. I must not try to take charge of their lives and make everything better, or I will become trapped on the unhealthy treadmill of control and codependency. I can present them with alternative paths to take and choices to make that will be for their good, but it is always their free decision to make. Neither do I try to manipulate them into choosing as I would. On the other hand, I do not become a party to negative behavior and unwise preferences. For example, the rules and policies of a homeless shelter do not change because someone finds them disagreeable. If they choose not to keep the rules, they are also choosing to leave. But I can still respect their choices and the consequent path and pace of their progress.

One family with four children struggled hard to pay debts, save money, and move out of our shelter. A year or so later they needed to come back again. This time we learned that the father had a drug addiction which had been and was still the underlying cause of their recurring predicament. We required him to receive chemical dependency counseling, as is our policy. He chose not to, and the family moved out, but with some im-

provements in place. If they come full cycle again, we will still be there for them. Perhaps then the father will be willing to address the deeper problem. I am certainly not superior to them, even though I wish they had chosen differently. I am still their sister, caring about them and their journey.

Poverty has many forms, all of them rooted in that most basic poverty we all share: our humanness. Everyone who enters a shelter is materially poor. Many come with virtually no belongings, particularly those women and children who have fled domestic violence, leaving all behind lest they lose their lives. We assist them with material necessities until they are able to provide for themselves, but it is far more important to address the underlying causes of each situation. What are the human limitations that have brought them to us? Mental illness? Chemical dependency? Illiteracy? Abuse and degradation of spirit? The poor and homeless are not really different from the rest of us, for we are all human beings struggling in some way with our inevitable limitations. Those of us who have escaped material poverty may operate under the illusion that because we are in control of certain areas of our lives, we can completely take care of ourselves. We are pained to have to ask anyone for anything, God included.

Being with the poor and homeless brings us face to face with human frailty in a way that cannot be denied. It is still possible for us to seek refuge in a we/they mentality, however. We can comfort ourselves with the lie that these needy ones are less than we are and different from us, that we are safe from ever facing what they face: our core poverty of being human and our utter dependence on God. Yet we ourselves may have made little progress in our lives compared to those who have never known the advantages we enjoy, yet inch forward day by day in their own way.

I am reminded of the father of a family who gave evidence of being paranoid and schizophrenic and refused to take medications for his condition because of their side effects. He tended to isolate himself, yet was always affectionate and caring toward his two small daughters, one of whom is not his biological child. Because he so rarely smiled and tended to distrust everyone, I was amazed to observe one day that another resident of the shelter had actually engaged him in a conversation, eliciting smiles and nods that I had seen only when he was with his children. Furthermore, the one drawing him out was a bit of a character in his own right, with irritating mannerisms and a sometimes volatile temper. The mentally ill father had taken a very large step forward. Sometime later his wife decided she could no longer live with him, and he became quite upset and depressed, but his friendly relationship with the other man continued none-theless.

Contemplation gives the opportunity to reflect upon one's experiences with the poor, seeking to value these special brothers and sisters as God does. Prayer is the place to bring them and their concerns to our loving Father, conscious that no one else can truly effect the changes that may be needed. It is also the place to struggle with one's anger and powerlessness over injustice and stereotypes. It is the time to ask for greater humility and openness to see the good that is always there. Being part of their lives is seldom dramatic, often challenging, and never flashy, but it is always worth pondering in the presence of God. Again and again I ask that I may be the presence of Jesus to them, indeed with them. I sometimes find myself searching for how to explain why being with the homeless poor enriches my spirit and draws me closer to God. It is much like trying to describe a deep experience of God's presence in prayer. Words always fall short. Thus far, the best expression I have found of how the poor become part of one's contemplation is a line from the song "Here I Am, Lord": "I will hold your people in my heart."

A couple came to stay in our shelter who had obviously lived on the street or out of doors for an extended period of time. When the woman became very seriously ill and was hospitalized, I went to visit her. Her condition had improved. She was glad to see me and talk about how things were going. I enjoyed seeing her gratitude to the nurses and the way she joked with her doctor, calling him her boyfriend. The next day I telephoned to check on her again. When I remarked that I had forgotten to pray with her the day before, she said: "Oh, your whole visit was a prayer." That answer conveys much more about her understanding of prayer than about my brief visit.

Conversion of heart is not any easier for us when we work with the poor than with anyone else. Conversion is about change, and we do not really want to find that we are the ones that need to change. We would like to believe that it is not particularly necessary in our own case. Our political system tends to see the poor simply as people who need to change, but do not want to change. This attitude does not acknowledge how it is hard for each and every one of us both to want and to try to change. Furthermore, it is expected that those who work with the poor are only justified in doing so if they are making these changes happen, as if anyone could actually compel others to transform themselves and the way they live their lives. I can only be responsible for my own conversion, and I find that generally it is the fruit of that rhythm of reflection and response. The people that I work with give me much to reflect on. Sometimes God speaks rather bluntly when I see that a person with far fewer material resources than I is more generous than I. Much of the time I find my own process of conversion to

be elusive, defying my inclination to treat it as my project and my accomplishment. At times I kick against the goad. For the most part, its daily nature puts me too close to it to see what is really happening, or perhaps not happening. Later on, sometimes only years later, I begin to see how the experiences and circumstances of my life have been used by God for my good. God is the One who integrates the activities and relationships of my life with contemplation so as to bring about the growth I need. As long as I am where God wants me to be, cooperating as best I can, I trust that the process is happening.

One day when I felt particularly tired and pressured, I overheard a critical remark about the shelter from one of its residents. I became angry and immediately stopped to tell him that I did not appreciate what he had just said. He accepted my reprimand and I went on. Later it occurred to me that I might have overreacted, so when I next saw him I gave a vague apology. His response: "Oh, I knew you didn't hear the whole conversation and you didn't understand what I was saying. I just blew it off. It's O.K." He was teaching me a humbling lesson about my tendency to be judgmental and his ability to be tolerant and understanding. I hope that it continues to echo in my heart when I need it.

Conclusion

We live in a wonderful time in the history of the Franciscan tradition, a time of discovering and understanding our roots in new ways that call us to follow more closely in the footprints of Jesus. Research about Francis and Clare has gifted us all. But it is not enough to know and understand what went before. It is also a time to put ourselves in the midst of the problems and conflicts of our society and our world and then share the fruits of that experience with each other. As Chinnici puts it:

While we long for a coherent intellectual and practical position, is it not true that genuine religious life has generally caught fire only in the midst of long, hard, practical experience, the acceptance of life's ironies, the struggle with others to put heart and mind and behavior together, and the discovery of God in that very experience?²

Putting ourselves in a position to listen well to the lepers of our day will lead us toward the fire that is of the Spirit. I offer some words from the song "Standing Outside the Fire," as sung by Garth Brooks, hoping they will echo in our hearts:

We call them cool
Those hearts that have no scars to show
The ones that never do let go
And risk the tables being turned.

We call them fools Who have to dance within the flame Who chance the sorrow and the shame That always comes with getting burned.

But you got to be tough when consumed by desire 'Cause it's not enough just to stand outside the fire.³

Endnotes:



¹ Joseph Chinnici, OFM, "The Prophetic Heart: the Evangelical Form of Religious Life in the Contemporary United States," address to the 29th annual Franciscan Federation, *The Cord* (Nov., 1994) 292-306.

²Chinnici 296.

³The song, "Standing Outside the Fire," is in the album *In Pieces* by Garth Brooks for Pearl Records, 1993.

An Exhortation To Meekness

Celestine Regnier, OFM, Conv.

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Like every founder of a religious order, congregation, or society, St. Francis became obsessed with the desire to imitate the example of Christ's life and so to graft the gospel to his daily conduct as to lose his identity in his Divine Master. Francis was appreciative of his abysmal unworthiness of divine recognition: "Who are you, O God, most dear, and who am I, your worthless little worm of a servant?" Nevertheless, he was enraptured by the embryonic possibility. "Please, O Lord, let the fiery, honeyed force of your love lap up my spirit from everything there is under heaven so that I may die for love of love for you" (2Cel 196).

During the course of his conversion, the qualities of Christ gradually came into focus and Christ's virtues took the form of a particular model to be imitated and embodied in Francis. That Christ had done all things well was a gospel fact, but particularly how and why he did so was to be resolved by a personal diagnosis of the Master and by a resultant emphasis upon special virtues which, to Francis at least, best mapped the way that followed his Lord.

Thus Francis could say, when he was striving to formulate a rule of life that would render his followers Christ-like: "I wish you not to speak to me of any other rule, not of Benedict, nor of Augustine, nor of Bernard." Not that one contradicted the other, nor that one's focus of Christ rendered all others blurred; but rather that, inasmuch as each one embraced Christ entirely with the motive of loving him completely, each also was drawn to one or more particular virtue which demanded special attention if one were to become Christ-like.

It is in this light that certain virtues may be called "Franciscan," for they are the ones which Francis believed to have been predominant throughout the diverse circumstances of Christ's life. Indeed, Christ had done all things well; but for Francis there had always been evidence of meekness, peacefulness, humility, and gentleness. Such virtues characterized the beginning of Christ's life: the stable, the manger, the unprivileged shepherds, poverty, the humble and self-effacing parents, Mary and Joseph. Such virtues also characterized the end of that life: a cross, nakedness, a borrowed tomb. And throughout the three public years there was the repeated evidence of Christ's own words: *I am meek and humble of heart* (Matt. 11:29).

As Francis paged through the gospels, ploughed and harrowed their lines to cultivate a rich crop of truth and virtue, the meekness and humility of Christ held his eye, like the silver ribbon of the moon's reflected light across the dark, mysterious ocean. So it was that he wrote in his Rule: "I counsel, admonish and exhort my friars in the Lord Jesus Christ, that when they go about in the world, they should not quarrel, argue, nor judge others; but they should be meek, peaceful, modest, gentle, and humble" (RegB 3:10-11).

It was elementary logic that he should so exhort his followers, for Christ had said of himself that he was meek and humble of heart. So, then, must Francis be; so, then, must be his followers. Nor was this to be regarded as a lesser virtue—optional, so to speak; for Francis exhorted, urged, that this virtue of meekness be especially evidenced in the lives of his disciples, who were at all times to be harbingers of peace. "Peace be to this house." Unless the kindly warmth of meekness permeated their entire being, they would not truly be called *Fratres Minores* nor would they be said to be "following the teaching and footsteps of Our Lord Jesus Christ" (RegNB 1:2), as Francis counseled, admonished, and exhorted. They would be lacking in one of the essential ingredients of Christ-likeness, according to the Franciscan ideal.

The particular beauty and magnetic attraction of the Franciscan way of life spring from what may be termed "the silent virtues." This is evidenced particularly in meekness, which holds anger in check and locks the tongue so that no quarrel or vituperation may escape to disrupt the peace or sear the hearts of others. This quiet virtue steers attention to humanity, specializing in the recognition, appreciation, and understanding of its qualities, characteristics, ideals, foibles, day-to-day difficulties, likes and dislikes, expressed or patently implied in daily words or conduct. Seemingly unoccupied, the disciple is engrossed in mental observations to increase ways and means of fostering concord, to avoid even the conception of a trial or pang within the neighbor. Meekness is an examining physician of

human frailty, seeking how to lessen it; it is a probing spectator of the human race, seeking how to help it. In the realm of worldly affairs it is the discerning diplomat at the conference table; it is the pleasing personality that disperses discomfort and uneasiness and makes one feel in place and wanted; it is the palliatory business director who magically causes accounts to multiply.

By means of an habitual, unnoticed observation of others, the disciple increasingly realizes that the thoughtless word or deed can be a thrust of a dull, jagged knife; that frequently what is summarized as an unintended hurt or sorrow is in reality a lack of consideration, concern, and consciousness of another's over-all make-up; that the over-worked rejoinder, "I'm sorry," or, "I didn't mean it," has as its foundation an uncultivated sensibility for the peacefulness of another. Meekness has no hand in fashioning human-made crosses, for it is concerned not with self, but with others. It prefers to listen than to talk, to be the audience rather than the performer who gains the plaudits. It is happy to applaud, to console, to help even without recognition, to waive what is due, and to estimate values in relation to eternity. It allows for considered opposition to a viewpoint expressed or of an action performed, but never to the exclusion of reined emotions, so that a clear evaluation of benefit or futility prevails at all times. Futility of conversation is quickly recognized, and then the priceless wisdom of mortification stems the possibility of erupting passions.

Meekness possesses as one of its many facets the pervading awareness of the existence in others of human defects and of countless personal idiosyncracies, which, in their overall insignificance, have the power to ignite the spark of impatience, temper, uncharitableness, spreading discord, hurt, and inner turmoil. The disciple is perpetually on guard against the sudden display of another's imperfections and weaknesses, and, therefore, is seldom surprised and propelled into exhibitions of equal frailty. Patience, understanding, and a prevailing spirit of forgiveness are ever accessible tools, which the disciple strives unceasingly to master. "Blessed is the person," said Francis, "that puts up with the fraility of his neighbor to the extent he would like his neighbor to put up with him if he were in a similar plight."

In order to render this virtue more keen and sensitive in practice, disciples practice moderation. They resist talking too much or without cause, for too often the wagging tongue renders inaudible the sage whisperings of common sense, balance, altruism, and tact. They think well before speaking, and, like the diplomat, having thought twice, say nothing, for the unweighed word, once expressed, falls heavily upon another's heart. They laugh genuinely, but not without sobriety. Like words, unbridled laughter

can rankle, disturb, annoy, bore, and even wound. They are conscious of the fact that they do not convey or transmit their inner thoughts, emotions, and reactions by words alone, but also by tone, gestures, and facial expressions. These, too, must be studied and controlled, for, while the tongue is silent, the eye may trumpet anger, impatience, and dislike as loudly as a verbal explosion. They realize, too, that silence is not always wise nor most fruitful, but that at times it may prompt discomfort, embarrassment, and even resentment within the neighbor; and so there will be situations which will elicit a few well-tempered words in order to ease a tense or uncomfortable situation and set everything in proper balance and value.

Wisely, then, did Francis urge his followers to be meek; it is Christlikeness as described by Christ himself; it is the product of temperence, patience, fortitude, and charity; and it is proof positive that virtue and sanctity can be attained only by a vivid and studied awareness of the countless opportunities provided by daily living. "Meekness," wrote Saint Jerome in his Commentary on Galatians, 5:20, "is a mild virtue; it is kindly, serene, gentle in speech, gracious in manner; it is a delicate blending of all the virtues." And he goes on to pinpoint the virtues even more precisely; "Kindness is akin to it, for, like meekness, it seeks to please; still it differs from the latter in that it is not as winsome and seems more rigid, for though equally prompt to accomplish good and render service, it lacks that charm, that gentleness that wins all hearts."

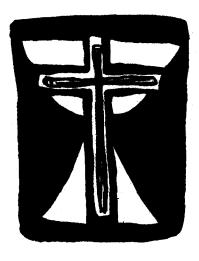
As the adult is humored and enchanted by the innocence of a child, so the countless failings of humankind are overcome by the winning virtue of meekness. For good reason, then, all have been directed by Christ to become as little children, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. In his insistence on meekness there was a keen realization in Francis of the tragic possibility and flagrant contradiction of a person of prayer and dedication, self-centered, of volatile temper, bombastic, inconsiderate, harsh, uncouth. "For my part," said Francis, "I want just this privilige from the Lord, never to have any other privilige from anybody than to do reverence to everybody and by obedience to the holy Rule to convert everybody by example more than by word" (MP 50).

To Francis, spirituality was not so much something to own as something to give; something by which others were to be helped, lifted up, assuaged, and restored to peace. It was a tender bloom to be watered and nurtured privately, but to be displayed publicly so that its sweet scent might fill the air. Meekness, in its delicate blending of all the virtues, looked out on a vista of limitless spiritual horizons: "I became all things to all people that I might save all" (1 Cor. 9:22).

In his daily study of his Master, Francis must have noted what Isaias prophesied of the Messiah: "The bruised reed he shall not break, and the

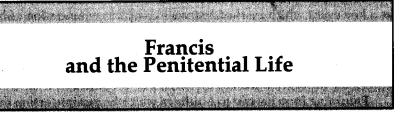
smoking flax he shall not quench" (Is. 13:3). This was how the Savior was to be recognized. Francis observed the Lord with his apostles; how He bore with their faults, their ignorance, even their rudeness; how he was patient when impatience seemed justified to hurry the *slow* process of their education. He heard the Lord preach meekness unceasingly. The apostles must be simple as doves, meek as lambs, and they must forgive seventy times seven times. To walk in the footsteps of Christ meant, for Francis, to be

meek, for then would the soul be emptied of self and filled with God.



And the Lord gave one such paith in churches that I would simply pray and speak in this way: "We adore You, Lord Jesus Christ, in all Your churches throughout the world, and we bless you, for through your holy cross you have redeemed the world" (Testament of St. Francis 4-5).

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Katherine Caldwell, TOR

Introduction

In the early biographies of St. Francis of Assisi, he is described as both a penitent and hermit. The purpose of this study is to examine the influence which the penitential and eremitical movements had on Francis's life. Through examining the sources for the life of Francis within his historical context, we will see that Francis had become a penitent embracing the eremitical lifestyle during the two years (1206-1208) between his initial conversion and the beginning of the brotherhood. This period of his life was a formative time, which helped to shape his Gospel vision of life.

Francis Becomes a Penitent

The conversion of Francis was a gradual process which began with his imprisonment in Perugia in 1202 (2Cel 4 and L3S 4) and eventually led him to a complete renunciation of the world and a total consecration to God in the service of the Church in 1206. In 1205, on his way to battle in Apulia, Francis had a spiritual experience which changed the direction of his life. Francis heard a voice speaking to him: "Who can do more for you, the Lord or the servant?" "The Lord," Francis answered. "Then why are you deserting the Lord for the servant, the Prince for the vassal?" Francis asked: "Lord, what do you want me to do?" "Go back to your own land" the voice replied, "and do what the Lord will show you." (AP 6b). Following this experience, Francis went back to Assisi, withdrew from the bustle of the world and devoted himself to prayer in order to know God's will. The biographies indicate that Francis meditated on the Gospel parable of the man who sold everything to purchase the hidden treasure (Mt. 13:44-46)

(1Cel 6-7, L3S 12, LM 1:4). His great desire for God alone, his heavenly treasure, led him to a series of events in which he renounced himself and the world and embraced God his Father in the service of the Church.

Early biographers of Francis describe his experience of kissing the leper as a key event which marked Francis's complete renunciation of himself (1Cel 17, 2Cel 9. L3S 11). Francis, in his Testament, expresses the importance of his experience with lepers (Test 1-3). He not only renounced himself, but the following events show how he renounced the world and embraced the life of a penitent in the service of the Church.

Returning from his trip to Apulia in which he put into action the Gospel text of Matthew, he sold everything, even the horse he was riding. He went to San Damiano and offered the money to the priest. The priest refused the money, but agreed to let Francis stay with him (1Cel 9, L3S 16, LM 2:1). According to Pazzelli, Francis was received as an oblate, which was an official form of a penitent who gave themselves to the service of God by committing themselves to the service of a church, monastery, or episcopacy.² Pazzelli supports his position by critically examining Celano's Latin text in comparison to the language used during this time to refer to an official penitent. Based on Fortini's historical research of Assisi, the words, *morari* and *mora*, used in Celano's text, are the same words used to describe an oblate in Assisi documents.³

Further proof for Francis's state as an official penitent is found in the description surrounding Francis's trial before the bishop, particularly evident in *The Legend of the Three Companions*. At that time in history, clerics and religious, including official penitents, were not subject to the civil court. Their cases were heard by their local bishops. The description in *The Legend* clearly indicates that Francis was not subject to the civil court, and his case was heard by the Bishop of Assisi. Furthermore, the language used in the trial between the Bishop and Francis in the *Legend of the Three Companions* also clearly indicates his state as an oblate. The Bishop addressed Francis, "Si tu vis Deo servire . . ." ("If you really want to consecrate yourself to the Lord . . ."). Francis replied: "Quia Deo servire proposui . . ."

"("Since I have decided to dedicate myself to the Lord . . ."). Hence, the evidence seems to show that Francis became an official penitent.

Development and Characteristics of The Penitential Movement

The penitential movement has its roots in the early Christians' struggle with the question: "What happens if a Christian sins after baptism?" What gradually developed was a process of reconciliation of the penitent sinner with the Church. In the third century, this process became a transitional

Order of the Church (Order of Penance) like the Order of Catechumens. Penitents were to embrace both an interior disposition of *metanoia* [conversion) and a lifestyle that reflected this stance in outward actions, such as prolonged time in prayer, contrition (ie: tears, public confession), and fasting (three periods of forty days). From the fourth century on, the Order of Penitents developed into a permanent state with ecclesiastical status. During the fifth century, members of the Church who were not guilty of grave sin were voluntarily entering the Order of Penance. These voluntary penitents embraced this lifestyle, as a means to grow in perfection. Especially after the seventh century, the Order of Penance provided a new alternative to monastic life for people who either did not desire to enter a monastery or who for some reason were not eligible.⁶

Becoming an official penitent was still a common practice during Francis's time. The person desiring to enter this state would present the bishop or his representative with a *propositum*, which was a statement of how he proposed to live. If the *propositum* was approved, the person would pass from the secular state into the religious. Penitents were distinguished from seculars by the following: 1) they wore distinctive dress (usually a gray woolen tunic), 2) they could not bear arms, hold public office, nor attend worldly entertainment, and 3) they performed works of penance and charity such as prayer, fasting, and care for the sick or travelers.⁷

There were different forms of penitent lifestyles: 1) oblates who attached themselves to and provided services to monasteries or churches 2) pilgrims who uprooted themselves from home and security in an act of penance and a search for grace, 3) hermits and recluses (women counterparts to hermits) who separated themselves from the world in order to devote themselves to prayer and also did works of charity, 4) married penitents, and 5) virgins who lived in their own homes.⁸

Francis's life during the two years before he received brothers (1206-1208) was characteristized by the distinctive marks of the penitential order. He was not under the jurisdiction of the civil court. He wore a distinctive garb, served the Church by repairing churches, performed works of charity by caring for lepers, and embraced a life of penance.

Francis Described as Both Penitent and Hermit

From the time after Francis's trial before the Bishop (1206) until he received his apostolic call in 1208, Francis is described as wearing a habit of penance and a hermit's garb: "He [Francis] returned to Saint Damian, gay and full of fervor, clothed in a hermit's garment" (L3S 21). Celano also likens Francis's garb to that of a hermit: "Meanwhile the holy man of God,

having put on a new kind of habit. . . . At this time [after he finished the rebuilding of the Portiuncula] he wore a kind of hermit's dress, with a leather girdle about the waist; he carried a staff in his hands and wore shoes on his feet" (1Cel 21). However, in the Treatise on the Miracles, Celano describes Francis's garb as the habit of penance: "Just because he was interiorly conformed to the same Cross, he wore the habit of penance, made in the shape of the Cross" (3Cel 2).10 It could seem as though there are discrepancies between the sources as to whether Francis was a penitent or a hermit. The most probable explanation of why his garb is described as both a habit of penance and a hermit's dress is that Francis was an official penitent who lived an eremetical lifestyle. He was both a penitent and a hermit, something common in his day.

Eremitical Life during the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries

It would be impossible to understand the development of Francis's Gospel form of life without seeing it within the religious atmosphere of his time. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries there was a revival in eremitical life. This revival was due in part to the growing dissatisfaction with monastic life and to the desire of lay people and secular clergy to pursue a life of prayer, independent of monasticism."11 It led to the development of new eremetical orders, such as the Camaldolese (1012) and the Carthusians (1084). The lay hermits in the latter group were often official penitents who lived an eremitical lifestyle. Many of these hermits (both lay and cleric) also became itinerant preachers.

During the eleventh and twelfth centuries there was a growing desire to live a poorer and more eremitical life than was lived in the monasteries. The new eremetical life had a different nuance from that lived by the traditional desert hermits. Leyser uses the term "new hermits" to distinguish them from the traditional. Constable calls the movement "eremetical cenobitism."12 Like traditional hermits, the new hermits desired more solitude than cenobitic monasticism provided; however, they did not seek complete solitude like the desert hermits. Solitude for the new hermit did not mean without company, but to be away from the bustle of secular society. Degrees of solitude varied according to the foundation and the desires of the individual hermits.13

The concern, desire, and aim of the new hermits was different. from that of the monks of their time. The new hermits were primarily concerned with "asceticism and austerity" and that they desired to live according to an "objective standard." Hence, they aimed at developing a rule of life (an objective standard) which was based on the life of the apostles, the model

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of the early church and the Scriptures.14

The observances of the new hermits were different in other respects as well. Most of the new hermit groups lived a stricter poverty than the monasteries, simplified liturgical prayer, did manual labor, and performed works of charity. In regard to poverty, as opposed to monastic standards, the new hermits embraced personal as well as communal poverty. They refused to hold any land charters or to receive tithes which would have given them security. They hermits simplified liturgical prayer so that they could perform manual labor. In addition, they did not isolate themselves from the poor and sick nor ritualize their charity as had happened in monastic life. Many groups of new hermits gave personal care to travelers, the poor and the sick.15

The eremitical life was also seen as a form of penitential life. This was the case for Francis. During his conversion Francis sought solitude and hidden places like the hermits of his time. He adopted many elements of his spirituality from the eremitical life. 16 Schmucki states:

Beside the circumstance of solitude, we clearly see his life of penance resulting from his sense of sorrow for sin, by which he lamented bitterly the years of his past. We also notice the little prayer of the publican in the Gospel (Luke 18:13b) which our saint repeated again and again as an ejaculatory prayer. These items are easily connected with the spiritual resolutions of the hermits who embraced the canonical state of penitents, either to expiate their public sins or as a voluntary self-discipline. 17

In addition, Francis's description of his hermit brothers shows that he connected a life of prayer with penance: "Behold my Knights of the Round Table: the brothers who hide in abandoned and secluded places to devote themselves with more fervor to prayer and meditation, to weep over their past sins and those of others" (LP71). Francis's spirituality was influenced by both the penitential and ermetical movements of his time.

Francis as Penitent/Hermit before His Apostolic Call

The two years before Francis received his apostolic call, while he lived as a penitent/hermit, was a significant time in his formation. The sources describe both the internal and external changes that were happening in him. Francis's transformation was rooted in his deep desire to respond fully to God: "Francis the servant of God was now stripped of all worldly things and free to serve divine justice. He held his life of no account and dedicated himself to the service of God in every possible way" (L3S 21).

His dedication bore fruit in the internal transformation he experienced. The Legend of the Three Companions describes the amazement of the townspeople over Francis's great patience in suffering persecution from his father and brother (L3S 23). The sources describe also how the Holy Spirit was operative in Francis's life in a special way during this time. Celano describes him as being "in a kind of spiritual intoxication," prophesying in French and being "filled with the ardor of the Holy Spirit" (2Cel 13). This was a graced time for Francis, a time of spiritual consolation.

This internal transformation manifested itself also in Francis's actions. During these two years Francis embraced a life of penance and mendicant poverty, worked on restoring three churches, embraced and cared for lepers. Francis, who had been used to an easy life, now embraced a life of manual labor and penance: "It would be difficult to specify all the hard work that had to be done to restore the church. At home Francis had been coddled, whereas now he carried a load of stones on his own shoulders and endured many hardships for love of God" (L3S 21).18 Francis is even described as being worn down by his life of penance: "half dead from penance and hardships" (L3S 23). He struggles with his first experience of mendicant poverty, begging for his daily food. At first, his bowl of scraps was repulsive to him, but he overcame his disgust and found himself filled with joy, realizing that he could endure anything for the love of God (L3S 22; 2Cel 14). Francis also cared for and dwelt among lepers. "While I was in sin, it seemed very bitter to, me to see lepers. And the Lord himself led me among them and I had mercy upon them" (Test 2-3; 1Cel 17). "After that [his return from Gubbio], in his love for humility, he devoted himself to the lepers and lived with them waiting on them all, for love of God" (LM 2-6).

This period as penitent/hermit was a formative time for Francis, in which many of the things he learned remained as central values throughout his life. Here we see the beginning of his embrace of poverty and minority. Poverty became an internal value which enabled him to experience a deep joy in the Lord. Like the poor, he also embraced manual labor and was not afraid to identify with those who were most despised in society. The way Francis cared for and lived among the lepers shows that he had embraced the value of minority, which was to become the mark of his brotherhood.

Development of Francis's Gospel Form of Life

The development of Francis's Gospel form of life, like the foundation of many eremitical communities, was a gradual process. "Behind the found-

ing of any hermitage it can be supposed there had been months, in some cases years, of doubts, discussion, speculation."¹⁹ Founders sought solitude or went on a pilgrimage (sometime with one or more followers) to seek God's will and learn from the wise.²⁰ This was the case for Francis during his conversion and his two years as a penitent/hermit when he was earnestly seeking to know God's will for his life.

Clarity came to Francis one day while he was attending Mass at the Portiuncula, which Bonaventure says was the Mass of the Apostles (LM 3:1). Francis heard the Gospel text of Jesus sending out his disciples to preach, and he knew this was his call:

The holy Francis, hearing that the disciples of Christ should not possess gold or silver or money; nor carry along the way scrip or wallet or bread; that they should not have shoes or two tunics but that they should preach the kingdom of God and penance, immediatly cried out exultingly: "This is what I wish, this is what I seek this is what I long to do with all my heart." Then the holy father, overflowing with joy, hastened to fulfill that salutary word he had heard. . .(1Cel 22).

After this experience Francis began to preach penance and attract his first followers (1Cel 23-25). Together they began to live according to the instruction of Francis and the Holy Gospel (1Cel 26-31; AP 14-30; LM 3:7; L3S 36-45).

Despite Francis's original clarity, after the brothers returned from having their Rule approved in Rome, they began to question whether they should dwell among other people or in solitary places (1Cel. 35). Bonaventure describes an incident in which Francis questioned whether he should give himself solely to prayer or to go out preaching. With the assistance of Clare and Silvester, he realized he should preach (LM 12:1-2). He embraced preaching in imitation of Christ and for the love of souls.

Although it was clear that Francis and the brothers were called to preach, this call did not cause Francis to abandon his former penitential and eremitical lifestyle. He gave himself to both contemplation and preaching: "It was his custom to divide up the time given him to merit grace, and, as seemed necessary to him, to give part of it to working for the good of his neighbors and the rest to the blessed retirement of contemplation" (1Cel 91). Furthermore, the penitential and eremitical lifestyle of the brothers provided the context which enabled their preaching to be effective.

When the people saw them rejoicing in their sufferings and patiently enduring them for the Lord, unceasingly engaged in devout prayer, neither accepting nor carrying money like other poor people, and having such great love for each other, by which they were known to be the Lord's disciples, many, through the kindness of the Lord, experienced a change of heart (AP 24a).

The lifestyle of the brotherhood was a rhythm of prayer, work and ministry (caring for lepers and preaching). In the early brotherhood, prayer was the foundation of their life, manual labor was a means of example, and ministry arose from their desire to save souls. Francis describes the life of the early brothers: "We who were clerics used to say the office as other clerics did; the lay brothers said the Our Father . . . and I used to work with my hands. . . . The Lord revealed to me a greeting, as we used to say: 'May the Lord give you peace'" (Test 18-23). Jacques de Vitry describes the lifestyle of the brotherhood as follows: "During the day they go into the cities and villages, giving themselves over to the active life of the apostolate; at night, they return to their hermitage or withdraw into solitude to live the contemplative life." Even later, when the brothers went on missionary journeys, Francis instructed them that prayer was to be the foundation of their life, both in solitude and when among the people:

In the name of the Lord go out two by two with becoming dignity. In the morning, observe silence until after tierce by praying to God in your heart. Let there be no useless conversation, for although you are traveling, your conduct must be upright as if you were in a hermitage or in your cell. Wherever we are, wherever we go, we bring our cell with us. Our brother body is our cell and our soul is the hermit living in that cell in order to pray to God and meditate. If our soul does not live in peace and solitude within its cell, of what avail is it to live in a man-made cell? (LP 80).

The uniqueness in Francis's vision was that the brothers were to be hermits whether they were in an actual hermitage or in the world.

The ermetical aspect of Francis's Gospel form of life is also seen clearly in the description of the lifestyle at the Portiuncula (2Cel 18-19 and LP 9) and in his Rule for Hermitages.²² In examining these texts, Schmucki describes the following characteristics which the brothers had in common with the eremetical life:

- 1) striving for unceasing prayer,
- 2) physical isolation from the world,
- 3) evangelical silence,
- 4) interior recollection and detachment,
- 5) limitation of food and drink, and
- 6) manual labor.

Schmucki concludes by pointing out some unique aspects of the Franciscan eremetical life—his use of the relational terms of mother/Martha (servant) and son/Mary (praying brother) to describe the roles of the brothers and his concept of rotating these roles. In addition, although poverty had been the ideal of every age of hermits, Schmucki believes that the radical degree of poverty embraced by the early brothers was unique.²³

Merton points out the unique realities of fraternal and universal love found in Franciscan eremetism: "Here [Rule for Hermitages] Saint Francis has completely reconciled the life of solitary prayer with warm and open fraternal love. . . . Franciscan eremetism had another aspect: it was open to the world and oriented toward the apostolic life."²⁴

For Francis, solitude not only increased his love for God, but also his love for all people. Even after Francis experienced the heights of mystical prayer at Mt. Alverna, he came down from the mountain, and, motivated by great love for people, he preached even when he was too weak to walk (1Cel 98; LM 14:1). It was for love of God and for souls that Francis embraced his Gospel form of life of prayer, work, and ministry:

He [Francis] would not think himself Christ's lover, if he did not compassionate the souls whom he redeemed. It was for souls that he wrestled in prayer, for souls that he was so active in preaching, and it was for souls that he went beyond all limits in giving good example (LM 9:4).

Conclusion

As a Third Order Regular sister, I appreciate the significance of the way in which Francis integrated the eremitical lifestyle as a penitent and how he maintained aspects of the eremitical life even after he received the apostolic call. Since the Madrid Document in 1974, the primary emphasis in the Third Order has been on penitential spirituality. There seems to be a growing need to explore further the eremitical dimensions of our Franciscan pentitential tradition. Communities, such as the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY, have integrated this tradition in establishing the Ritiro, a contemplative house within their congregation. It will be interesting to see if this eremitical dimension will revive as Franciscan religious sincerely grapple with their identity and lifestyle.

In my own congregation we have been grappling with how to live out the contemplative dimension in our lives. From our conception, we have seen ourselves as contemplative/active sisters. We live a fully contemplative life in regard to prayer and community life, but we are not cloistered. This enables us to do corporal works of mercy. Constrained by the practi-

cal limitation of being a new community with most of our sisters in formation, our contemplative life has a monastic bent. Gradually, we have been able to incorporate more eremitical aspects, such as weekly hermitage days and more solitude. Eventually, as sisters are received into final profession, the eremitical aspects of our contemplative life will develop more fully. With this in mind, I find it important to study Francis's life and the development of Third Order communities. We can learn so much from those who have gone before us.

Endnotes:

¹The Battle of Collestrada took place in 1202 and scholars (following the time in L3S) believe that Francis was imprisoned for about one year.

²Raffaele Pazzelli, St. Francis and the Third Order (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1989) 30.

³Pazzelli 184. Also see Arnold Fortini, *Francis of Assisi*, trans. Helen Moak (New York: Crossroads, 1981) 217.

⁴Pazzelli 88, 184; Fortini 217, 222-230.

⁵Pazzelli 89.

⁶Pazzelli 11-24; Robert M. Stewart, "De Illis Qui Faciunt Penitentiam": The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order. Origins, Development., Interpretation (Rome: Istituto Storico Dei Cappuccini, 1991) 91-106. For a thorough investigation of the development and characteristics of the Order of Penitents see: Joseph A. Favazza, The Order of Penitents: Historical Roots and Pastoral Future (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1988).

⁷Pazzelli 39-40.

⁸Pazzelli 38-40.

⁹The author of *the Chronicle of the 24 Generals* wrote that the date of Francis's apostolic call while hearing Mass in the Portiuncula was 1209 or perhaps 1208. Modern chronologists use 1208.

¹⁰Translated in Pazzelli 185 from Analecta Franciscana X, 273.

¹¹Thomas Merton, "Franciscan Eremetism," The Cord 16 (1966): 359.

¹²Giles Constable, Monks, Hermits and Crusaders in Medieval Europe (London: Variorum Reprints, 1988) 239-240.

¹³Henrietta Leyser, Hermits and the New Monastacism: A Study of Religious Communities in ₩estern Europe 1000−1150 (London: Macmillan, 1984) 18-19.

¹⁴Leyser 21-26.

¹⁵Leyser 56-65.

¹⁶Octavianus Schmucki, "Place of Solitude: An Essay on the External Circumstances of the Prayer Life of St Francis of Assisi," *Greyfriars Review* 2 (1988): 72-86, 91-96.

¹⁷Schmucki 82.

¹⁸For other sources on Francis's efforts to rebuild the three churches see 1Cel 18, 21; 2Cel 11; LM 2:7-8: TestCl 4.

¹⁹Leyser 38.

²⁰Leyser 39.

²¹Jacques de Vitry, "Jaques de Vitry's Letter, 1216, Letter I," St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of Sources, ed. Marion A. Habig (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983) 1608.

²²For a commentary on *The Rule for Hermitages* see Kajetan Esser, "Die 'Regula pro eremitoriis data' des heiligen Franziskus von Assisi," *Franziskanische Studien* 44 (1962): 382-417. Unpublished English translation by Bernard Doerger.

²³Octavian Schmucki, "Mentis Silentium: Contemplation in the Early Franciscan Order," Greyfriars Review 4 (1990): 35-64.

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²⁴ Merton 361.

Extending the Understanding of Franciscan Mission: Secular Franciscans and the Renewal of the Temporal Order

Edward Zablocki, SFO

The importance of mission has always been characteristic of the Franciscan movement. Do Secular Franciscans today have anything to add to the Franciscan sense of mission and efforts at evangelization? Does the Secular Franciscans' rootedness in a life consumed with commitments to family and work preclude any meaningful contribution to Franciscan mission?

Secular Franciscans, who, under their previous Rule lived out a life of piety as Third Order members, are today called to an apostolic life nurtured in "dynamic, evangelizing" fraternities. The Secular Order is undergoing an awakening and is in the throes of birth pangs from which a truly international order is being born—at least 750,000 Franciscans all following the same way of life—the 1978 Pauline Rule. If we accept the premise that Secular Franciscans are a necessary and constituent part of the Franciscan movement then it behooves all of the Franciscan family, in the spirit of seeking a "vital reciprocity" with the Secular Order, to come to appreciate the unique aspects of the Secular Franciscans' call to mission.¹

To begin to develop this appreciation, a reconsideration of the breadth of the Church's evangelical mission is the necessary starting point. Limiting our understanding of evangelization to the proclamation of Jesus Christ as Lord and Redeemer captures the essential core of the Good News, but misses the vast penumbra of our Church's understanding of evangelization surrounding the kerygma.

In the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, this broad sense of mission is captured succintly:

The work of Christ's redemption concerns essentially the salvation of men; it takes in also, however, the renewal of the temporal order. The mission of the Church, consequently, is not only to bring men the message and grace of Christ but also to permeate and improve the whole range of the temporal (no.5).

Paul VI, in *On Evangelization in the Modern World*, gives fuller expression to the Church's all-encompassing appreciation of her mission:

Evangelization will also always contain—as the foundation, center, and at the same time summit of its dynamism—a clear proclamation that, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who died and rose from the dead, salvation is offered to all men as a gift of God's grace and mercy (no.27). . . . But evangelization would not be complete if it did not take account of the unceasing interplay of the Gospel and of man's concrete life, both personal and social. This is why evangelization involves an explicit message, adapted to the different situations constantly being realized, about the rights and duties of every human being, about family life without which personal growth and development is hardly possible, about life in society, about international life, peace, justice and development—a message especially energetic today about liberation (no. 29).

What is the value of reminding ourselves of this expansive understanding of the Church's mission? If we fail to do so, there is the clear danger that Secular Franciscans' most important efforts at carrying out the Church's mission will not be understood. For the *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* continues: "Laymen ought to take on themselves as their distinctive task this renewal of the temporal order" (no.7).

Tragically, laypersons are generally unaware that their quotidian efforts to maintain and improve the world, are, in fact, helping to achieve an aspect of the Church's mission.² Secular Franciscans are increasingly becoming an exception to this unfortunate situation as they deepen their appreciation of and commitment to their new "way of life," which is both fully Franciscan but also fully consonant with the Second Vatican Council's trenchant portrayal of the vocation and mission of the laity.

Not that this understanding was easily attained. In "De Illis Qui Faciunt Penitentiam," The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order: Origins, Development, Interpretation, Robert M. Stewart, OFM, observes that the first attempts at developing a new rule for Secular Franciscans failed to incorporate the radical change which the Second Vatican Council represented in terms of the understanding of the vocation and mission of the laity. While the Rule Project began in 1968, as late as 1974 the draft Rule had a serious omission—the distinctive lay spirituality enunciated by Vatican II. "[T]he 1974

Basic Text does not consistently present a "secular" spirituality [and] contains little that would not also be appropriate within a rule for a canonical religious Franciscan group."⁴

This situation was reversed in 1975 through the efforts of an International Commission that "most strongly criticized the 1974 Basic Text for its failure to present adequately a specifically "secular" spirituality." An entirely new section called "In the Midst of the World" was added to address this omission. Note this section's congruence with the Church's distinctive mission for the laity as noted above:

Like all members of the Franciscan Family, we are sent to the entire world. As seculars, we have our own vocation: living in the midst of the world, engaged in various duties and works of the world. It is our duty to enlighten and to direct all temporal realities to which we are closely united in such a way that they may work and prosper constantly according to Christ and may be to the glory of the Creator and Redeemer. Also, as members of secular society, we will know how, according to the gifts given by the Lord, to take our share of responsibility, bringing to the management of temporal things the spirit of the Beatitudes. By our witness and our action, joined with that of other men and women, we will work in these different sectors towards the realization of the plan of God for the world. It is first of all in our family that we will live the Franciscan spirit, striving to make it a sign of the world already renewed in Christ. We will make our work a participation in the development of creation, the redemption of men and women, and a service to the whole human community. Finally, we are aware that it belongs to the whole Church to make people capable of building the temporal order well and of orienting it toward Christ with a clear distinction of the rights and duties of ecclesial communities. The secular fraternities will assume their apostolic and social responsibilities and commit themselves to concrete evangelical choices.6

This paragraph from the 1975 draft became the basis for Articles 14-18 of the approved 1978 SFO Rule. These articles define the evangelical mission of Secular Franciscans:

Article 14. Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively. Mindful that anyone "who follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes more of a man himself," let them exercise their responsibilities competently in the Christian spirit of service.

Article 15. Let them individually and collectively be in the fore-front in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public

life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith.

Article 16. Let them esteem work both as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption, and service of the human community.

Article 17. In their family they should cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life, striving to make of it a sign of a world already renewed in Christ. By living the grace of matrimony, husbands and wives in particular should bear witness in the world to the love of Christ for his Church. They should joyfully accompany their children on their human and spiritual journey by providing a simple and open Christian education and being attentive to the vocation of each child.

Article 18. Moreover they should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which "bear the imprint of the Most High," and they should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship.

In order to move these articles from words on paper to praxis, the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States has established four Apostolic Commissions: Justice & Peace, Work, Family and Ecology. These Commissions are mirrored at the levels of regional and individual fraternity. Initial and on-going formation emphasizes these Commissions. The results are impressive. A recent survey response from 57 fraternities in the eastern US belonging to Holy Name Secular Franciscan Province found 1,352 instances of peace & justice related commitments, 951 family related apostolates, 568 examples of efforts to improve the environment, and 368 examples of Seculars upholding the dignity of work.

Let us remember that in striving to enflesh the challenge contained in their Rule, Secular Franciscans are doing more than just improving their world and achieving humanitarian objectives; they are carrying out, along with other laypersons, their "distinctive" role of renewing the temporal order. Keep in mind that these efforts have a missiological dimension—they are an important contribution to Franciscan mission.

Lay people, whose particular vocation places them in the midst of the world and in charge of the most varied temporal tasks, must for this very reason exercise a very special form of evangelization. Their primary and immediate task is not to establish and develop the ecclesial community—this is the specific role of the pastors—but to pursue every Christian and evangelical possibility latent but already present and active in the affairs of the world. Their own field of evangelizing activity is the vast and complicated world of politics, society and economics, but also the world of culture, of the sciences and the arts, of international life, of the mass media. It

also includes other realities which are open to evangelization, such as human love, the family, the education of children and adolescents, professional work, suffering. (On Evangelization in the Modern World, no. 70)

Or—to put it in lay language—above the exits inside every church there ought to be signs posted reading: "Now Entering Mission Territory."⁷

Endnotes:

¹Hidden Power III: From Gospel to Life—The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1979).

²Russell M. Shaw, *Understanding Your Rights: Your Rights and Responsibilities in the Catholic Church* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Servant Publications, 1994).

³Robert M. Stewart, OFM, "De Illis Qui Faciunt Penitentiam," The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order: Origins, Development, Interpretation (Rome: Istituto Storico Dei Cappuccini, 1991).

4Stewart 257.

5Stewart 257.

6Stewart 270-271.

⁷William L. Droel and Gregory F. Augustine Pierce, Confident & Competent: A Challenge to the Lay Church (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1987).

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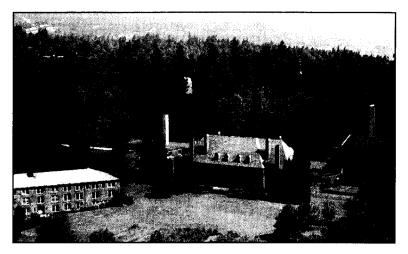
The **Franciscan Center** is a Retreat and Conference Center. Our Chapel has just been renovated. It is a sacred place of prayer.

For more information contact:

Franciscan Center

459 River Road Andover, MA 01810

Phone (508) 851-3391 FAX (508) 858-0675



The Franciscan Renewal Center, sponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, seeks to share its Franciscan heritage in an atmosphere of hospitality, simplicity and joy. The Center offers diverse spiritual and educational experiences to people of all faiths.

Six-Day Retreats - 1996

May 28 - June 2

"Letting Jesus Question Us:

An Interactive Retreat Around John's Gospel"

Presenter: Michael Crosby, OFM Cap.

August 4 - 10

"Radical Love:

Cosmic Energy for Body/Soul Transformation" Presenter: *Dr. Dorothy H. (Dody) Donnelly*

Private directed/non-directed retreats available.

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A SPECIAL INVITATION

TO OUR BROTHER FRIARS FROM YOUR POOR CLARE SISTERS IN GREENVILLE. SC

Are you looking for a new idea for your retreat this year?

CONSIDER THIS: We have a simple, but lovely one bed room apartment overlooking six acres of beautiful, wooded property plus a neighborhood that's great for walking. You will find solitude in a quiet, prayerful environment. And a warm, participative community to celebrate Eucharist with (as well as Liturgy of the Hours, if you wish). Also, delicious healthy, home-cooked meals. All within the framework of a custom designed private or directed retreat according to your needs and preference. Fee: None. Free will offering accepted at your discretion.

SOUND INVITING? PLEASE CALL OR WRITE FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Monastery of St. Clare • 1916 N. Pleasantburg Drive Greenville, SC 29609-4080 Phone (803) 244-4514. Contact: Sr. Jean.



Greyfriars Review is a journal that extends to the English-speaking world a goldmine of contemporary Franciscan theology, spirituality, and history through the translation and publication of articles that are either not readily accessible or not available to many in the English-speaking world.

Some of the things to come in 1996:

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"The Virgin Mary in the Works of St. Anthony of Padua"
by René Laurentin
History of the Secular Order by Prospero Rivi, OFM Cap.

Some past selections:

Christ Our Joy: Learning to Pray with St. Francis and St. Clare by Michael Hubaut, OFM (Vol. 9: Supplement)

"The Sermones of St. Anthony and Franciscan Theology" by Alfonso Pompei (Vol. 9, No. 3)

"Clare of Assisi's Mysticism of the Poor Crucified" by Ingrid Peterson, OSF (Vol. 9, No. 2)

Cost per yea\$30.00 (includes Issues 1, 2, 3 and the supplement)

Send subscription requests to: Greyfriars Review, The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 USA

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FRANCISCAN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

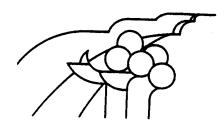
in
Spiritual Direction
and

Directed Retreats

27th Session March 21-June 14, 1997 (Deadline: December 15, 1996)

A three-month ministerial and experiential program born out of the conviction that our Franciscan charism enables us to bring a distinctive Franciscan approach to our ministries.

Helpful to religious and lay formators, retreat directors, parish and hospital ministers, contemplatives, missionaries, community leadership, personal renewal.



For more information contact:

Marilyn Joyce, osf; Tom Speier, ofm St. Francis Center 10290 Mill Road Cincinnati, OH 45231 Phone (513) 825-9300 • FAX (513) 825-3329



FACING THE CHRIST INCARNATE

"What we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon and our hands have touched.

We speak of the Word of Life." (1 John 1:1)

A PROGRAM

- •Called by the members of the *Franciscan Federation*, and the representatives of the *Friars Conference* during the historic 1995 Joint Assembly at Anaheim, CA.
- •To re-claim the wisdom and the prophetic challenges of the Franciscan theological tradition;
- •Addressing the deepest concerns of our culture;
- •With opportunities for *collaboration and networking* among all persons and groups inspired by the spirit of Francis and Clare of Assisi;
- •Creating an exchange of learning, prayer and commitment to action as 'custodians of a charism' that offers hope and vision.

DATES AND LOCATIONS

April 26-28, 1996 July 13-15, 1996 September 29-October 1, 1996 October 13-15, 1996 December 8-10, 1996 March, 14-16, 1997 April 4-6, 1997 September 26-28, 1997 TAU Center, Winona, MN
St. Bonaventure University, NY
Mount St. Francis, Colorado Springs, CO
Franciscan Retreat Center, Portland, OR
Franciscan Renewal Center, Andover, MA
St. Joseph Renewal Center, Tiffin, OH
Avila Retreat Center, Durham, NC
Madonna Retreat Center, Albuquerque, NM

INFORMATION

COST: \$225.00 includes registration fee, program, room/meals, materials.

TIME: Two and a half days.

PARTICIPANTS: Together with every member of the Franciscan Family we welcome:

- •Those new to the Franciscan way of life
- •Leadership/Governance Groups Councils
- •Formation Personnel
- •Administrators and Trustees of Franciscan-sponsored Institutions, i.e, Colleges, Health Care, Renewal Centers, etc.
- •Regional Fraternities of the Secular Franciscan Order
- •Parish Teams/Refounding Groups
- •ALL those with whom Franciscans share life and service

The content and experience of this Program, Facing the Christ Incarnate, is at the heart of all that most missions us today in the spirit of the Gospel.

For further information and/or Registration Brochure *Please write/fax or call:*

Meigan Fogarty, OSF - Administrative Assistant
Eleanor Granger, OSF - Executive Director

The Franciscan Federation, T.O.R.
650 Jackson Street NE / Washington, D.C. 20017
Phone (202) 529-2334 FAX (202) 529-7016 or

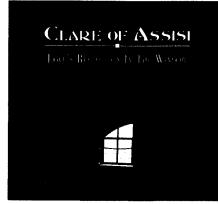
Kathleen Moffatt, OSF - Program Director
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NEW PROSE/PHOTO ESSAY ON THE SPLENDID ST. CLARE OF ASSISI

ne October afternoon in 1993, having finished their duties as tour guides at the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, Italy, Friars Robert Melnick and Joseph Wood decided to walk across the city to view an exhibit on the life of St. Clare. They were amazed to experience the 13th century Clare coming alive through the medium of modern photography and spoken narrative.

Their imaginations fired, the friars began to build upon the idea of transforming photographs into symbolic images through written narrative. Robert and Joseph painstakingly and lovingly photographed Assisi and its surroundings in black and white. They selected thirty-three of the most moving photos, created some marvelous poetic prose, and developed the heart of this newly published work, Clare of Assisi: Love's Reflection in the Window, from Marytown Press.



A GREAT GIFT: Large 10" x 10", coffee-table style w/dust jacket
 96 pages, poetic-prose interprets 33 moving photos
 Introductory essay
 Foreword by Ramona Miller, oss

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FAST DELIVERY! 800-743-1177 riars Robert Melnick and Joseph Wood, OFM CONV., lately have become a dynomic duo of creativity, collaborating on a number of artistic projects while working at the Franciscan Vocation Office in Assisi, Italy. Robert has just finished his MA in divinity, and is preparing for ordination in the Byzantine Catho-

lic rite. Joseph has served on the Art Commission of the Diocese of Buffalo and writes regular columns in the Franciscan media.



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July 16-20, 1996

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For more information:

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ON THE FRANCISCAN CIRCUIT COMING EVENTS 1996

Saturday, March 2

Region 4 Franciscan Gathering. "How Did We Get from Assisi to Ellis Island?" "How Did We Get from Ellis Island to the Mississippi?" William Short, OFM. At St. Francis Hospital, Lacrosse, WI. Contact: Michon Desmond, FSPA, 3560 Highway 51 N., Arbor Vitae, WI 54568-9540.

Saturday, March 23

Francis and Clare: The Legend Continues, a day of reflection, imagining and hope led by Joe Nangle, OFM and Marie Dennis, based on their book, St. Francis and the Foolishness of God. Co-sponsored by Franciscan Federation Region II and Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. At Newman College Life Center, Aston, PA. Fee: \$10. Contact: Kathy Donovan, OSF, 609 S. Convent Road, Aston, PA 19014; ph. 610-558-7716; fax 610-558-1421.

Friday, April 26-Sunday, April 28

Facing the Christ Incarnate. Tau Center, Winona, MN. Sponsored by the Franciscan Federation. (See detailed ad, pp. 100-101.)

Saturday, April 27

Seeding a New Hope, a workshop on Transformative Elements for lay and religious Franciscans, co-sponsored by Franciscan Federation Region II and the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. Presenters: Celeste Crine, OSF and Kathy Donovan, OSF. At St. Joseph's Church, Columbia, SC. Cost: \$20 includes breakfast and lunch. Contact: Noreen Buttimer, OSF. Ph. 803-795-3821 (days) or 803-762-6058 (evenings).

Friday, May 17-Saturday, May 25

The Soul's Journey Into God. André Cirino, OFM and Josef Raischl. Contact: Director, Franciscan Spirit and Life Center, 3605 McRoberts Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15234-2340; ph. 412-881-9207.

Saturday, May 25-Tuesday, May 28

Second Bi-Annual Networking Seminar for Franciscan Renewal/Retreat Centers and Franciscan Spiritual Directors. At Serra Retreat Center, Malibu, CA. Contact: Julie McCole, OSF, St. Clare Renewal Center, 608 B Legion Road, Aston, PA 19014, ph. 610, 459-4077.

Tuesday, May 28-Sunday, June 2

Retreat: "Letting Jesus Question Us: An Interactive Retreat around John's Gospel." Franciscan Renewal Center, Portland, OR. (See detailed ad, p. 96.)

Friday, June 7-Friday, June 14

Retreat: "Freedom in the Service of God." Tau Center, Winona., MN. (See detailed ad, p. 94.)

Sunday, June 16-Friday, June 21

Institute on Nonviolence. Peter Damien Massengill, OFM, Conv. and Tau Center Staff. (See detailed ad, p. 94.)

Writings of Saint Francis

Adm	Admonitions	FormViv	Form of Life for St. Clare
BenLeo	Blessing for Brother Leo	1Fragm	Fragment of other Rule I
CantSol	Canticle of Brother Sun	2Fragm	Fragment of other Rule II
EpAnt	Letter to St. Anthony	LaudDei	Praises of God
EpCler	Letter to the Clergy	LaudHor	Praises to be said at all the Hours.
EpCust	Letter to the Custodians	OffPass	Office of the Passion
1EpFid	First Letter to the Faithful	OrCruc	Prayer before the Crucifix
2EpFid	Second Letter to the Faithful	RegB	Later Rule
EpLeo	Letter to Brother Leo	RegNB	Earlier Rule
EpMin	Letter to a Minister	RegEr	Rule for Hermitages
EpOrd	Letter to the Entire Order	SalBMV	Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
EpRect	Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples	SalVirt	Salutation of the Virtues
ExhLD	Exhortation to the Praise of God	Test	Testament
ExhPD	Exhortation to Poor Ladies	TestS	Testament written in Siena
ExpPat	Prayer Inspired by the Our Father	UltVol	Last Will written for St. Clare
=		VPLaet	Dictate on True and Perfect Joy

Writings of Saint Clare

1LAg	First Letter to Agnes of Prague
2LAg	Second Letter to Agnes of Prague
3LAg	Third Letter to Agnes of Prague
4LAg	Fourth Letter to Agnes of Prague
LEr	Letter to Ermentrude of Bruges
RC1	Rule of Clare
TestCl	Testament of Clare
BC1	Blessing of Clare

Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel	First Life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano
2Cel	Second Life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano
3Cel	Treatise on the Miracles by Thomas of Celano
AP	Anonymous of Perugia
CL	Legend of Clare
CSD	Consideration of the Stigmata
Fior	Fioretti
JdV	Witness of Jacque de Vitry
LM	Major Life of St. Francis by Bonaventure
LMin	Minor Life of St. Francis by Bonaventure
LP	Legend of Perugia
L3S	Legend of the Three Companions
Proc	Acts of the Process of Canonization of St. Clare
SC	Sacrum Commercium
SP	Mirror of Perfection