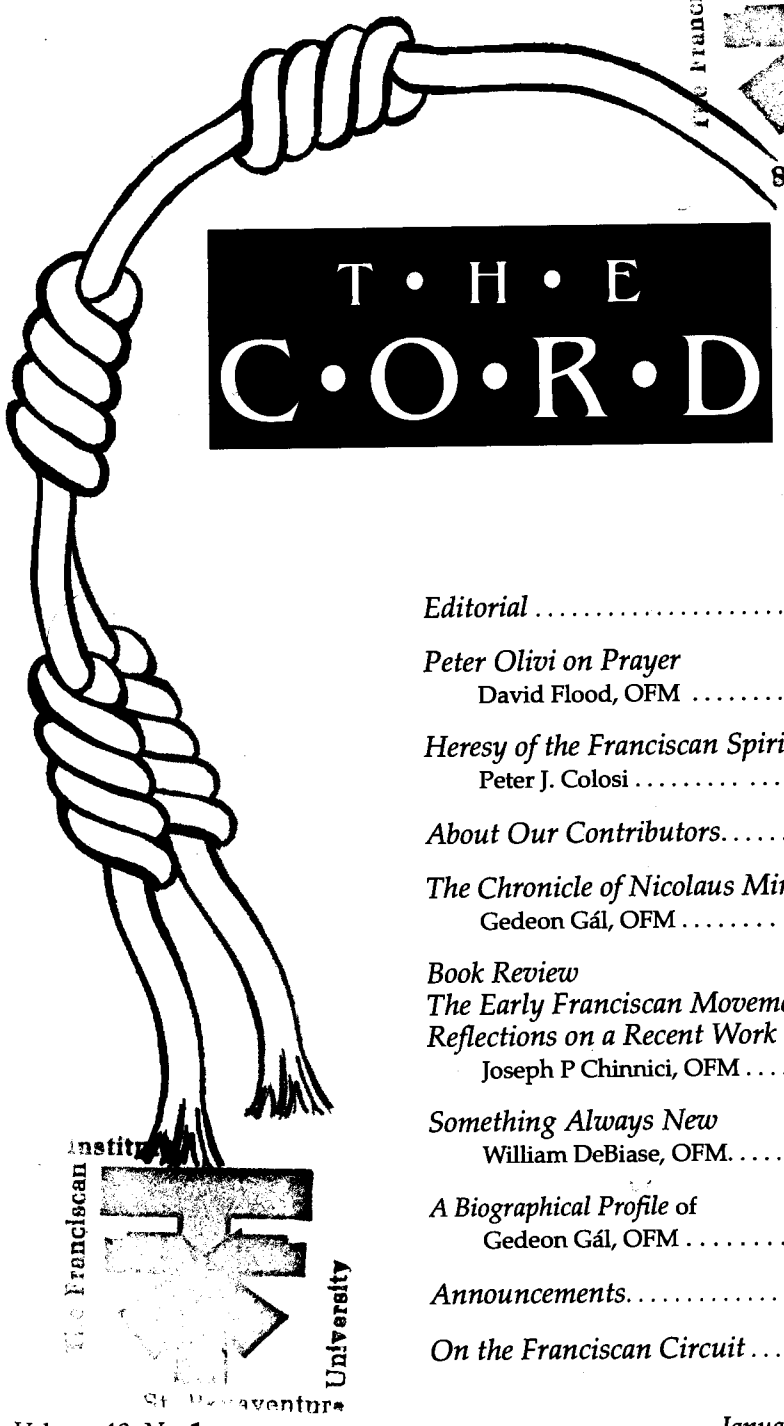
A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW



THE CORD

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THE CORD
A Franciscan Spiritual Review

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Editorial

The word apocalyptic begins to appear with increased frequency as the year 2000 draws closer. It is a perennial phenomenon that human beings begin to radicalize their times and enhance them with the expectation that great and dramatic events are at hand. These events, it is believed, will transform peoples, societies, nations, the earth itself and change them into something more acceptable. Evil will be definitively overcome; peace will reign; and God's original intention will at last prevail.

In this issue of *The Cord*, we look at another moment in history when an apocalyptic view of the world was giving rise to great enthusiasm and great concern. And right at the heart of the movement were the Franciscans! In the first flush of their rapid growth, of the support they received from the papacy, and of the admiration and following they experienced from the populace, the Franciscans of the late 13th and early 14th centuries could hardly be blamed if they believed that a new and wonderful era was being ushered into the world through their way of life and their ministry.

This highly optimistic view received a big boost from the teachings of Joachim of Fiore, whose teachings were eventually condemned by the Church. Caught in the political and social struggles to which this enthusiasm gave rise were a number of others whose orthodoxy became questionable as a result of their leaning towards Joachimism. Among these was the Franciscan, Peter of John Olivi. In March we will observe the 700th anniversary of his death. After such a long time the contribution of this writer and teacher is again up for review. In this issue *The Cord* offers some information and reflection on his career and a sample of his writing on the Scriptures. It also offers some related articles that show us the complexity of the times in which he lived and the turbulent century that followed his death.

Peter of John Olivi was born at Sérignan, in southern France, c. 1248. He died in March, 1298, having lived as a Franciscan friar for thirty-eight years. It seems that he was only twelve years old at the time of his entrance into the Order. After his novitiate at Béziers, he studied at the University of Paris. For reasons that are not clear, he never became a master, but by the late 1270s he was teaching in Franciscan houses in southern France, where he became noted for his knowledge and for his commitment to a strict interpretation of the Rule, especially regarding the observance of poverty.

In the early 1280s his teaching became suspect and in 1283 some of his writings were censured by a commission of seven Parisian Franciscan scholars.

This censure had, of course, a negative affect on his academic career. In 1387, however, the Chapter of Montpellier vindicated his orthodoxy and the new Minister General, Matthew of Aquasparta, sent him to teach at the studium in Santa Croce in Florence.

His works continued to be controversial, however, especially as he became an exponent of the popular apocalyptic movement of his time—a movement which had been given great impetus by the teachings of Joachim of Fiore and which had a great appeal to the Franciscans.

Olivi's commitment to a strict interpretation of Franciscan and Gospel poverty made him a target for those factions in the Order which believed, for a number of reasons, that a more relaxed view was necessary. The division in the Order over poverty became highly political and engaged Church authority at the highest levels. Eventually it became an issue of orthodoxy and the very self-understanding of the Order was called into question.

Zealots in the Order saw in Olivi a model and a hero of sorts. Some of his writings suited their purposes well and they "canonized" him to their cause. After his death they developed a cult around his name and venerated his tomb as though he were a saint. The General Chapter of Lyons in 1299 condemned his writings and the General Council of Vienne in 1312 came down on three points of his teaching. In 1318 his tomb was destroyed by the friars.

Today there is an effort to review the story of Peter of John Olivi, a man as unfortunate in his friends, it seems, as in his enemies. Caught in the political cross-fires of his own historical moment, he found himself at the center of powerful and strongly emotional movements, both within the Order and within the Church. While some of his teachings might have been marginal in their orthodoxy, he managed to acquit himself well on those occasions when he had a chance to defend his positions. He appeared to have a healthy respect for authority, both in the Order and in the Church. It is an irony of history that the work of such a one should be used to precipitate a revolt against that very authority and, in the century after his death, give rise to a scandalous and revolutionary drama which would alter the self-understanding of the Order and its relationship with the Church for generations to come.

Seven hundred years later we cannot know what went on in the heart of the man, what he was like in his person, what sufferings he may have endured through the controversy that swirled around him. We can, however, take another look, with cooler heads, at the work of one who spent his life teaching Scripture and Christian doctrine and observing to the best of his ability the way of life that Francis had spelled out for his followers. Perhaps also, without canonizing him, we might see in him a figure for our times—one whose writings might inspire us to a renewed integrity in our own Franciscan commitment.

(See the *Catholic Encyclopedia* for general source material on Olivi.)

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Peter Olivi on Prayer

Translated by David Flood, OFM

The seventh centenary of Peter Olivi's death (March 14, 1298) has not only led scholars to accord him a little extra attention, it has invited them to take stock of the growing interest in his story and his writings.

Peter Olivi promoted Franciscan living theoretically and pastorally in southern France and northern Italy in the late thirteenth century. Because the Spirituals of the early fourteenth century drew on his teachings, their political ineptitude was laid at his door; he was made responsible for events which transpired after his death.

In his commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, after an introduction, Peter Olivi begins reading closely the first chapter. He gets to the line: "They were as one deep in prayer" (1:14). He pauses to reflect on prayer, the passage translated below.

In his explanations, Olivi often uses the words *habitus* and *virtus*—habit and virtue. *Habitus* has to do with the steady direction one has given one's life, whereas *virtus* covers a pattern of positive action which one readily brings into play within that general direction. In what Peter Olivi says about prayer, then, we have to do with an emergent style of life.

I have not tried to match the abstract diction in English. I have tried rather to translate the reflection.

David Flood, OFM, Translator

I.

They gave themselves to prayer. Did they ask for God's grace and his spiritual gifts or for temporal gifts as well? It seems that prayer, in its immediate sense, usually means this.

We recall that the verb "to pray" seems to come from the practice of public speakers. They end their discourse persuasively as they try to win the minds of judges and listeners to their way of thinking. In this sense, prayer to God means any act whereby we address God by trying to draw his mind to us in our favor. Since any act of this sort, as such, does draw attention, we take prayer as an appeal to God.

However, sometimes the mind at prayer does little more than wish for God's gifts without asking for them explicitly, and sometimes it engages in simple contemplation, tasting and enjoying in loving union God and things divine. These states and others like them we include under prayer.

There are several reasons for this. As long as we are in our present state, such prayer wins us merit, both when we implore and attract or when we move towards the final grace and glory we do not yet possess. Then, mixed into such actions is the intention to pray and to call on God. Furthermore, the whole process of divine worship in this life develops in longing, in prayer, and in the acquisition of grace, rather than as rest with the kingdom won. Consequently in the act of prayer we include all these things.

II.

If we take prayer this way, does the action result from some special virtue, from several virtues, or from all of them? It seems from several and from all because all the inner ways of virtue come into play here. When we pray, we long for and ask God for all virtues. In meditation and contemplation, we taste and examine them, and so they gain in clarity, take fire, and grow strong. Furthermore the very act of prayer should be humble, pure, chaste, faithful, confident, hopeful, and so on.

On the other hand, prayer seems to spring from charity alone. Basically it expresses a love which desires or enjoys or calls on and implores God and the things of God. All of this comes immediately from charity and leads to God.

. . .

On this point some say that prayer brings all virtues into play, for they all flow together in holy love of God. Others say that prayer expresses the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. A third group says that, although prayer seeks a response, it arises immediately from the virtue called religion. Religion engages in worship of God.

A fourth group proposes that we can take the origin of prayer as virtue and habit in two ways: insofar as the power to pray is there and insofar as, beyond this, the power to pray regularly occurs in the right way. Furthermore we can take these two ways in a double sense. First, if we examine what the act of praying generally implies, we see that, through prayer, the mind is led to offer God reverence and to bind itself to him. Second, we can look on prayer insofar as it branches out in holy desires and petitions and in holy enjoyment and affection in God.

If then we consider the act of prayer and its origins, we see that we can pray to God and that sometimes we do engage in prayer and pray easily and enjoyably without any special virtue moving the will. That means that it happens from love of God or from our attachment to God. And although charity

does not pray without faith guiding it and without hope encouraging it, that does not mean that faith and hope call prayer forth, just as they do not call forth love of God and things divine, although they guide and encourage charity to engage in prayer.

If we consider prayer as it unfolds and branches out into various expressions of other virtues and if we look at prayer's origins within us in our readiness to pray, we can say that more than a deeply-rooted love for God is required. We need a firmness of purpose which regularly orders and applies the mind to prayer and to a particular kind or intensity of prayer. We can call that customary prayer. This belongs to the practice of religion, as one species of a genus or a part of the whole. Here we take religion to mean the general ability and intention of a mind committed to interior and exterior acts of worship of God.

It might be that someone takes charity to cover not only its primary source but also the way it branches out in many offshoots of love of God and things divine. Then charity as routine and as word includes all virtues which have any connection or implication with the love of God. Under this supposition we can say that the simple act of praying comes from charity, if the act is pure grace. That is not the case with every act of prayer. Nor is this surprising, for not every such act is virtuous. For example, someone can wish a thing and, out of pure avarice or pride, ask for it from God; or someone can ask for it presumptuously or hypocritically or insincerely.

Answer to the Arguments

The first argument concluded that prayer involved many virtues or all of them. To this we can say that the grace of charity includes its extension into virtues necessary for salvation. Therefore the steady intention of prayer, whence comes the perfect practice of praying, includes the usual dispositions of those virtues which the intention of prayer calls into play and exercises in prayer. This does not mean that such virtues as these, taken in themselves, give rise to prayer, but only insofar as they are brought into play and lead to prayer, given the steady intention of praying. Not every inner act of chastity or sobriety or liberality is an act of prayer, but only when engaged in principally out of an intention to pray to God in words or in contemplation. Then these virtues relate to prayer as cords of a lute or a viol relate to the melody of lute music. There the movement of the hand and the plectrum by which the chords are strummed and vibrated is the first and principal movement.

We may mention as well that prayer often consists in many acts of prayer, with one prayer prior and deeper and more encompassing, the cause and motor of the other prayers. Such a prayer has more amplitude and involvement in prayer. This does not happen with those other virtues, which it activates and

uses as its means in particular and secondary acts of prayer.

From what has been said, we can see that, with regard to the other arguments, we can concede some points, others we clear up by making distinctions. Our discussion also shows that the fourth opinion agrees with the other three. For the first three can be explained in a way which agrees with the fourth.

And this is enough for now.

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The Heresy of the Franciscan Spirituals

Peter J. Colosi

This paper will investigate some key points in the history and thought of the Franciscan Spirituals, those groups of Friars Minor who chose to live according to the Rule of Saint Francis in its primitive severity and, because of this, broke away from the main body of the Friars Minor, many of them eventually drifting into heresy.[1]

The picture we get from many of the early histories of these brothers is that of a protesting minority rather than a revolting faction. They had not yet thought of a separate order, but only of a purified order. They had not developed a theology, for their whole creed was obedience to the ideal of poverty as pursued by Francis. They endured persecution, not because they boldly advanced new heresies, but because they refused to drift with the tide of prosperity and accept a standard of life prescribed for them by the pope and his advisors,[2] a life judged by them to be at odds with the lifestyle Francis mandated.

It would therefore be an error to hold that the Spirituals were, in essence, heretics from the beginning. Rather, one must see their sincere beginnings and attempt to understand exactly which points led to certain radical, even heretical positions.

The Historical Development of the Franciscan Spirituals

It is a well-known fact that from the very beginning of the Franciscan Order there existed two divergent tendencies among the Friars Minor.

> One was the determination to make the Order a potent influence on the age and a world factor in history by securing its close connection with the papacy, acquiring numerous convents, increasing membership as rapidly as possible, building fine churches, securing privileges and exemptions from the pope—in a word, by entering into competition with the established monastic orders. The

other tendency was the equally strong determination to preserve the Order from the corrupting influences of wealth and privilege, to keep the members true "Brothers Minor," imitators, not only admirers, of St. Francis.[3]

One could say that in the early years of the Order, Elias of Cortona represented the first of these positions, while Leo and the so-called "zealots" represented the second.[4] As Minister General (1232-1235), Elias, by force of his personality, combined with his executive abilities, greatly increased the material development of the Order, its missionary activity, its numbers, and its influence in Christendom. Convents were enlarged and moved to better and more populated areas, and the study of theology among the brothers grew at his encouragement.[5] Meanwhile the Spirituals retreated to the hermitages.

It was not until the middle of the thirteenth century that the Spirituals actually consolidated into an organized party of their own. Muzzy suggests three reasons as the driving force behind this consolidation. First, John of Parma, a friar sympathetic to the Spirituals, was elected Minister General (1248-1257). Second, the Spirituals took the heretical writings of Joachim of Fiore to themselves and employed them in their hopes for the dawning apocalypse. And third, John's successor, Bonaventure (1257-1274), immediately made it clear that there would be no hostility to the See of Rome or tolerance of an esoteric authority of Francis's companions.[6]

Between 1274 and 1316, the Spirituals developed into three distinct branches. The first was the group in the March of Ancona, led by Peter of Macerata (also known as Liberato) and Angelo Clareno. The second was in Tuscany, represented by Ubertino of Casale. The third was made up of the French Spirituals of Provence, whose inspiration was derived from Hugh of Digne and Peter John Olivi. All held to these three tenets:

1. The desire to observe to the letter the Rule and the Testament of Francis. The words of Francis in his Testament provided the basis for this belief:

> And through obedience I strictly command all my brothers, cleric and lay, not to place glosses on the Rule or on these words, saying: They are to be understood in this way. . . . The Lord has granted me to speak and to write the Rule and these words simply and purely, so shall you understand them simply and without gloss, and observe them with [their] holy manner of working until the end (Test 34).[7]

2. A very high estimation of the Rule, such that they considered it to be on the same level as the Gospel. One justification for this belief they found in chapter 1 of the Rule itself where Francis says: "The Rule and Life of the Friars Minor is this: to observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ." (RegB 1). On these grounds the Spirituals refused Papal interpretations of the Rule: "The pope cannot dispense from the Gospel, and thus he cannot dispense from or even explain the Rule in any other than a literal sense."[8]

3. The belief that the writings of Joachim of Fiore were true prophesies and that his words applied quite directly to themselves.

The Three Groups

A brief history of these three groups of Spirituals might be useful. The Spirituals of the March of Ancona were led by Peter of Macerata until his death in 1307, when Angelo of Clareno became the leader. At the Council of Lyons (1274), among the topics under discussion was the Franciscan Spirituals. A false rumor began to circulate that the mendicant orders would be told that they must begin to hold property in common.[9] There was already discontent in the Order, and this rumor acted as a catalyst for those friars who did not want to turn from the Franciscan ideal of renunciation of individual and corporate property.[10] The Provincial Chapter ordered the leaders of the group—Peter of Macerata, Angelo of Clareno, Thomas of Tolentino, and Traymundus—to recant their protestations. They refused and eventually ended up in prison on charges of heresy and of being destroyers of the Order.[11] When they were released from prison, they defended the doctrine of *usus pauper* and acclaimed Peter John Olivi as their master.[12] The group was excommunicated on Dec. 30, 1317, by Pope John XXII in the Bull *Sancta Romana*. After this they continued to exist as *Fraticelli*.[13]

The Spirituals of Provence were inspired by Hugh of Digne and Peter John Olivi. Although Hugh of Digne was concerned about the materialism infiltrating the Church, he was more deeply concerned about his own Order and struggled to defend a life lived strictly according to the Rule. He died around 1257 and, because of his writings and teaching, has been referred to as the father of the Spirituals.[14]

Peter John Olivi (1248-1298), successor to Hugh of Digne, was born in Serignan in Languedoc and joined the Order at the age of twelve in Beziers. A later part of this paper is devoted to his apocalyptic thought.

By 1289, because of the controversy surrounding his writings, there was already a group rallying around Olivi. They seem to have consolidated as a group of Spirituals in Provence around 1309 when Arnold of Villanova, a lay theologian and physician of Charles II of Sicily, appealed to the King to write to the Minister General demanding that the persecutions of the Spirituals in Provence cease. In this same year the citizens of Provence also gave vocal support to the Spirituals there. As a result of this commotion, Pope Clement V

summoned the leaders of the Spirituals and appointed a tribunal of three cardinals to hear their case. He also issued the Bull *Dudum ad apostolatus* protecting the Spirituals from the harassment and jurisdiction of the Order during the time of these proceedings.[15]

The result of this meeting was, generally speaking, twofold: the Spirituals did not receive their desired goal of a formal separation from the Order such that they could go somewhere to live the Rule literally and in peace. Yet, at the same time the pope enjoined a stricter observance of the Rule upon the Order, and, while he exhorted the Spirituals to return to their convents, he also deposed some of the superiors who had treated them unfairly. To these ends the pope issued the Bulls *Fidei catholicae fundamento* and *Exivi de paradiso*. One of the means by which the Community (the larger group in the Order against whom the Spirituals were in disagreement) attempted to keep the Spirituals from separating and forming their own order was to discredit as much as possible the teachings of their inspirer, Peter John Olivi. The Bulls, therefore, also contained condemnations of many of Olivi's errors which had been brought to light during the discussions of 1310-1312.

In 1314, Pope Clement V and Minister General Alexander of Alexandria both died and the harsh superiors were restored to office. The Spirituals of Provence responded by forcibly taking the convents at Beziers and Narbonne and ejecting the members of the Community. The Custos of Narbonne, William of Astre, excommunicated the Spirituals, whereupon, in 1316, they made an appeal to the General Council of Narbonne. In 1317 they were brought before Pope John XXII to be examined. The leaders were imprisoned and the others detained in convents. John XXII demanded obedience from them, insisting that they give up all peculiarities and submit to the mandates of the Minister General. Twenty-five of the Provence Spirituals refused to do so and were put before the Inquisition whereupon twenty-one converted. The other four were handed over to the civil power and burned as heretics at Marseilles on May 17, 1318.

The third group of Spirituals, led by Ubertino of Casale, are referred to as the Tuscan Spirituals. Ubertino of Casale joined the Order in 1273, and by 1284 was fighting full force for the spiritual cause, having met and been deeply impressed by John of Parma, Angela of Foligno, and Peter the combmaker of Siena.[16] According to Ubertino of Casale the Community friars in Tuscany were the most blatant of all of those who betrayed the ideals of St. Francis: "They had full cellars and granaries. They had amassed wealth and put it out at usury. They had even added dishonesty to avarice."[17] Because of this and also because of the violent sort of persecution which the Community in Tuscany directed against them, the Tuscan Spirituals elected their own general according to the Rule of Francis (which action ruined their reputation) and fled to

Sicily.[18] After this the Popes, Clement V, and later John XXII, easily accepted the terrible reports about the Spirituals and, along with many cardinals and the Inquisition, sought their suppression. In the Bull *Gloriosam ecclesiam*, issued by Pope John XXII on January 23, 1318, the Spirituals were formally condemned.[19]

Three other points about the Tuscan Spirituals are worth noting. The first is that they staged an uprising before their departure to Sicily in which they attempted to remove forcibly the brothers of the Community from the convents of Carmignano, Arrezzo, and Ascanio; but they were overcome by arms and fled.[20] Second, they made attempts to send messages to both Clement V and John XXII that they would obey them; however, the brothers of the Community captured and imprisoned the messengers so that they never reached the pope.[21] And finally, although they constituted a small group whose influence did not last, this whole episode was "... significant chiefly for the rapidity with which the breach with the Order was consummated. It gives us a singularly clear picture of the irreconcilable status and claims of the Community on the one hand and the Spirituals on the other."[22]

In summary, the struggle between the two factions of the Order existed almost from the beginning. The Community group supported papal interpretations of the Rule and desired to be of service to the Church in light of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215; yet many of them tended to stray from the Rule in ways which the popes did not intend. The Spiritual group sought to live the Rule unadorned and in its purity, yet tended to treat the directives of the popes and general chapters with disdain.

The Influence of Joachimism

More fundamental to the Spiritual movement than the teachings on poverty and the Rule of Francis, and a key source of the struggle between the Spirituals and the larger Church, was Joachimism, a popular medieval theological schema of salvation history that was eventually condemned as heretical. Every dispute which the Church raised against the Spirituals, whether it was concerning poverty within the Order, the Rule of Francis, or the Life of Christ and the Apostles, was seen by the Spirituals as part of the struggle involved in the transition from one stage of salvation history (and also church history) to the next. A contemporary of Francis, Joachim of Fiore (1132-1202), taught that, according to the Apocalypse commentators, the world would go through three stages: a carnal stage, a stage which is partially carnal and partially spiritual, and a stage which is completely spiritual.

The Franciscan Spirituals, following Joachim, saw themselves at the dawn of the stage of totally spiritual people. They also saw themselves as precisely

that new order of which Joachim spoke, whose purpose it would be to usher in the third and final stage. With this understanding the Spirituals began to perceive each of the teachings of the Church which opposed their own to be carnal elements from the previous stages, refusing to let go and allow the third age of spiritual enlightenment to happen.

From this concept of stages there developed still another teaching of the Spirituals, namely, the distinction between a carnal church and a spiritual church. Ernst Benz,[23] traces the stages of the development in the thought of the Franciscan Spirituals which led them to a most radical view of the Roman Church—namely, that it is identical with Satan's church. It would seem odd, to say the least, that a group of holy Catholic hermits could come to make such violent and ultimate claims about their own church; yet the progression which Benz lays out gives a good explanation of how this occurred.

Benz asserts that the Spirituals were not coming from the position of arrogant heretics. Rather they were experiencing terrible suffering and inner torture resulting from severe persecution, including the burning at the stake of some of their members. Benz claims that their radical position—that the Roman Church is the Antichrist and the whore of Babylon—was not a well-thought-out theological presupposition of their mission, but rather a reaction to severe persecution, which developed over time.[24]

The Position of Peter John Olivi

Peter John Olivi, the inspiration of the Provence Spirituals, had developed the distinction between the spiritual and the carnal church in his commentary on the Apocalypse.[25] Building on the theories of Joachim, Olivi thought the Church had to go through a seven-stage history. He recognized the legitimacy of the Church; he saw its preparation in the synagogue in the time of the Old Testament; he saw it as founded by Christ and as the institution of God for the salvation of the world in history;[26] he recognized the universality and totality of the Church. But Olivi also held that throughout the history of the Church the great holy persons and orders, which were held together with an inner historical unity, constituted the real spiritual Church. It is this concept which led to the heresy of the Franciscan Spirituals.[27]

The Spirituals did not see the bureaucratization of the Church as the beginning of its downfall. Rather, they saw it as the intervention of God, for a time, to set the harsh call of the Gospel aside in order to reach a larger number of people.[28] Thus, Olivi also held that the institutional Church, the old Church, was legitimate even during its period of moral decay.

However, for the Spirituals and Olivi the Church of the new time was not just the perfect Church which would exist beside the institutional Church or outside of it, but rather, it was the true Church of holy people which had

existed from the beginning. And they saw the mission of this true and spiritual Church to be the regeneration of the whole Church—indeed of the whole world—morally and spiritually. It had to fulfill this task even in the face of resistance from the old Church. Indeed, they held that the old Church must be dissolved into the spiritual one.

In order to understand the justification which the Spirituals felt they had for this belief, we must recall that for Joachim of Fiore the history of salvation occurs in three stages or ages—the age of the Father, the age of the Son, and the age of the Holy Spirit.[29] In the third age there would be two new spiritual orders of priests who would usher in a new and spiritual way of life. According to Joachim the spiritual Church would have its inception in the fortieth generation, which meant after the year 1200. Francis's conversion was in 1206, and the Spirituals conceived of this as the beginning of the third age spoken of by Joachim. Joachim also held that this third age would complete its inception by the forty-second generation, which means after the year 1260.[30]

Olivi, developing the thought of Joachim, gave examples of the persecution which would be leveled against the evangelical perfection of the spiritual Church during the forty-second generation—the fight over poverty, the University of Paris controversy, and the great error of those who held that the position of the mendicants is lower than that of the secular priests.[31] For Olivi, these events happened in a period which, when completed, would mark the beginning of the final period of peace. And it is this period which corresponded to Joachim's third age now dawning.

Thus, for Olivi and for the Spirituals, the fight over poverty, was just the tip of the iceberg. Lurking below it was a world view which presupposed that resistance from any group indicated a remnant from a former age which must pass away. Thus, Olivi and the Spirituals came to see themselves as the true followers of Christ and the Roman Church as the Antichrist.

The Roman Church, for Olivi, had been the true Church during the first five periods of its history. And during some of that time it even existed as the true Church while not striving for Gospel perfection; namely, during the period when it grew in numbers and power at the expense of Gospel living. The end of that period coincided roughly with the end of the second age in Joachim's schema, a brief transition period between the time of the carnal age and the fully spiritual age.

A good student of Joachim would subject himself to the Roman Church because he knew that his lifetime existed during the second age when the Roman Church was still the true Church.[32] Joachim openly taught, however, that in the third age the Church would exist without an official hierarchy and without a Roman Pope or Primate of Peter.[33] This is another point, taken over by Olivi and the Spirituals, which led them into heresy.

The new Church, they thought, would take the best traditions of the Church which had existed since the beginning and carry these on to the highest form of moral and religious life.[34] Thus, in the understanding of the Franciscan Spirituals, the universal Church as such could not be the whore of Babylon or the carnal church. It could not be such because the true Church, according to them, is that Church which has existed through the first two ages of world history, the age of the Father and the age of the Son. In the third age, the spiritual orders (presumably the mendicant Franciscans and Dominicans) were in place and active, and some of the members of the old true Church had become corrupt and struggled against the fulfillment of the new Church. This group of members who fell away became the *ecclesia reprobarum* or the *ecclesia carnalis*. These members were spread throughout the Church of Christ and included the pope. They became the church of Satan. But the true Church became the spiritual Church of the third age about which Joachim prophesied.[35]

This Church, which had always existed within the Church and had now emerged as the spiritual Church of the third age, had a concrete outline in history. It began with the Apostles, continued with the martyrs, proceeded to the Greek hermits and monks and then to the Benedictine monks and on to the Cistercians, Cluniacs, and finally to the Franciscans.[36] This Church within the Church was united throughout history in that it lived and carried on the true apostolic life of poverty, humility, and renunciation.

The spiritual Church was not understood by Olivi to be an official or institutional church. Olivi understood its inner structure to be radically different from the inner structure of the Roman Church. The inner structure of the spiritual Church was such that all its members were filled with an inner illumination driving them towards the realization of the Apostolic life. An official hierarchy or monarchical person was not present in this Church; rather, a spiritual democracy guided it.[37]

Olivi developed two further ideas in this regard—first, that the spiritual Church would have a primate, though not a pope; second, that there was and always had been a relationship existing between the two Churches. The primate of the new Church would be the Spirit itself which was to fill all of the members. The relationship between the two Churches, the spiritual, apostolic, and evangelical Church, and the universal, hierarchical, official Church was that they had always existed side by side, in a sense looking into each other. Indeed, Olivi held that the authority of the Papal Church was grounded in the uninterrupted history of the spiritual Church. The spiritual primate was to have its full authority and realization only in the time of the uncompromised living of the Gospel life during the final period.[38]

Benz, in summary, names five sources of the schism which resulted between the Roman Church and the Spirituals. The first was the very strong

belief of the Spirituals that these were surely the end times. This impression caused them to make the most stringent demands on the Roman Church. They also made three unorthodox claims for themselves: that their spiritual power was the only true and valid one; that their way of life was not only the highest form of life but also universally binding; that their time was the final time and the time of fulfillment. Finally, they demanded that the universal Church be completely absorbed into the perfect spiritual Church.[39] They claimed that the Church of Rome had become the false and carnal church, taking as evidence of this the simony, power, financial politics, worldly dealings, and vices of its members. They also saw a great error in what they called the feudal structure of the papal church.[40]

The Spirituals took these flaws as signs that the Roman Church was the Antichrist. They believed that this Roman Church was directing much of its energies specifically against them. In the Church's softening and explaining of the evangelical rule, and in its rejection of the Franciscan ideal of poverty, the Franciscan Spirituals saw the Roman Church as denying the fulfillment of its own true destiny to be perfect.[41]

In 1319 the Catalan Commission submitted its condemnation of many of the tenets held by Olivi. Among them were his view of Francis as an apocalyptic figure heralding the new age and his identification of the Franciscan Rule as synonymous with the life observed by Christ and imposed on the disciples.[42] His idea that the Roman Church had become the carnal church was also condemned. Another serious tenet of Olivi that was recognized as error was his use of the poverty issue as a criterion for determining where one stood in the great apocalyptic struggle and in predicting that those in positions of authority would be on the wrong side.[43]

Conclusion

The divisions and factions during this period in the Franciscan Order were both positive and negative. The Community was attempting to serve the Church in light of the Fourth Lateran Council. They attempted to maintain a balance between the ideals of being a religious order within the Church and the ideals of St. Francis. On the negative side many members of the Community took the privileges given to the Order by the Church as an exemption from the task of pursuing the ideals of Francis and became lax in their way of life.

The positive contribution of the Spiritual movement in the Order was its strict adherence to the Rule and way of life which Francis had given to the friars by word and deed. The negative side was its rejection of the words of counsel from the Church.

The struggle between these two groups within the Order not only characterized a tumultuous period, but had a deeply tragic result—tragic for the Spiri-

tuals in the suffering they had to endure, tragic for the Order because of the break up of its unity, tragic for the Church in that energy with potential for good was turned towards division.

Endnotes

[1]Cf. "Spirituals," *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1912.

[2]David Saville Muzzy, *The Spiritual Franciscans* (New York: American Historical Association, 1905), 14.

[3]Muzzy, 53.

[4]Rosalind Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government* (Cambridge: University Press, 1959), 137-57.

[5]Brooke, 145-147.

[6]Muzzy, 53-54.

[7]All references to the writings of Francis are from *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, ed. Regis Armstrong and Ignatius Brady (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

[8]"Spirituals," *Catholic Encyclopedia*.

[9]John R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order: From its Origins to the Year 1517* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1988), 188.

[10]M. D. Lambert, *Franciscan Poverty* (London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1961), 160 and Moorman, 188.

[11]Moorman, 188-189.

[12]Lambert, 160.

[13]The word "Fraticelli" was a term of endearment meaning "the Little Brothers," but its meaning became changed throughout these developments such that when the pope used it in the Bull *Sancta Romana* (1317) it signified rebellious heretics. Cf. Muzzy, 45-46.

[14]Moorman, 189.

[15]Muzzy, 32.

[16]Moorman, 190-91.

[17]Muzzy, 40.

[18]Muzzy, 39.

[19]Muzzy, 40-41.

[20]Muzzy, 40-41.

[21]Muzzy, 40-41.

[22]Muzzy, 41.

[23]Ernst Benz, *Ecclesia Spiritualis: Kirchenidee und Geschichtstheologie der Franziskanischen Reformation* (Stuttgart: Verlag von W. Kohlhammer, 1934), XII.

[24]Benz, 307.

[25]Peter John Olivi, *Lectura Super Apocalipsum.*

[26]Benz, 308.

[27]Benz, 308.

[28]Benz, 309.

[29]Morton W. Bloomfield, "Joachim of Flora," *Traditio* 13 (1957): 249-311.

[30]Benz, 314.

[31]Benz, 314.

[32]Benz, 309.

[33]Benz, 309.

[34]Benz, 309.

[35]Benz, 309-10.

[36]Benz, 310.

[37]Benz, 309-10.

[38]Benz, 311.

[39]Benz, 312.

[40]Benz, 312.

[41]Benz, 313.

[42]David Burr, *Olivi's Peaceable Kingdom: A Reading of the Apocalypse Commentary* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 242.

[43]Burr, 242.

About Our Contributors

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David Flood, OFM, a friar of the Montreal Province, has recently published *Work for Every One* (Quezon City: CCFMC office for Asia/Oceania, 1997). (See book review, page 26.) He co-authored, with Thaddée Matura, *The Birth of a Movement: A Study of the First Rule of St. Francis* (Franciscan Herald Press, 1975). His collaboration with Gedeon Gál, OFM, is making available significant sources for the history of the Franciscan Spirituals.

Gedeon Gál, OFM, a member of the Holy Name Province, has served at The Franciscan Institute since 1963. He is well-known for his collaborative efforts in producing critical editions of the works of medieval theologians and philosophers. See the biographical profile on page 34 for a more detailed account of his life.

The Chronicle of Nicolaus Minorita

Gedeon Gál, OFM

[This article is a summary of the account recorded by the friar Nicolaus Minorita in the 14th century. The article was originally published in *Editori di Quaracchi, 100 anni dopo bilancio e prospettive atti del Colloquio Internazionale, Roma 29-30 Maggio, 1995*, Pontificio Ateneo Antonianum, Rome, 1997, pp. 337-344, and is reprinted here with permission.]

The chronicle of Nicolaus Minorita concerns principally the poverty of Christ and his apostles and secondarily the poverty practiced by the Franciscans according to the Rule of St. Francis of Assisi. The controversy arose by chance in 1321, and it soon involved almost the whole of Christianity. The debate started between a Dominican inquisitor and a Franciscan lector, but it was soon joined by the pope, cardinals, bishops, theologians, and even by a king, Robert of Naples, and an emperor, Louis of Bavaria. The Franciscan's trump card was the bull of Nicholas III, *Exiit qui seminat* (August 14, 1279) which, interpreting the Rule of St. Francis, solemnly declared that the poverty of the Friars Minor, who owned nothing either privately or in common, was the highest (*altissima paupertas*) because that is what Christ preached and practiced (*verbo docuit et exemplo firmavit*) together with his apostles. According to *Exiit* the friars had no "use of right" (*usus iuris*) but only "use of fact" (*usus facti*) and that should be moderate (*usus moderatus*).

The Beginning

In 1321, in the city of Narbonne, a Beguin (very likely associated with the Third Order of St. Francis) was accused by the Dominican Inquisitor, John of Belna, (considered an enemy of the Franciscans) of having said, among other things, that "Christus et apostoli, viam perfectionis sequentes, nihil habuerunt iure proprietatis et dominii in speciali nec etiam in communi" ("Christ and his apostles, following the way of perfection, had no property whatever, either personally or in common"). Among those present was the Franciscan,

Berengarius Taloni, lector at the Narbonne friary. When he heard the charge, he protested, saying that it was not heresy but an article of the Catholic faith, defined as such in the constitution *Exiit qui seminat* by Pope Nicholas III, edited August 14, 1279. The inquisitor ordered him to retract his statement immediately. Berengarius refused. He went instead to Avignon and appealed to Pope John XXII. But the pope, who shared the opinion of the inquisitor of Narbonne, ordered him thrown into jail. At the same time, the pope proposed in writing to all the prelates and theologians in his Curia the question: Is it or isn't it heretical to assert pertinaciously that Christ and his apostles owned nothing either personally or in common?

Since Pope Nicholas III had forbidden, under pain of excommunication, change in or even discussion of the terms of *Exiit*, Pope John XXII, in his constitution *Quia nonnunquam* (March 26, 1322), suspended that prohibition, claiming that it was his right to change the decrees of his predecessors when he saw that they caused more harm than good. The Franciscans considered the definition of Nicholas III an article of faith, and now it became clear to them that Pope John intended to define the opposite.

Reaction of the Franciscans

They took matters into their own hands, and two months later, at the general chapter of Perugia (May 30, 1322), published two solemn declarations, one by the minister general and the provincials, the other by the minister general and the masters and bachelors present at the chapter. These documents, addressed to all Christendom (*universis Christifidelibus*), explained and defended the Franciscans' opinion concerning the poverty of Christ and his apostles as it was defined by Nicholas III's bull *Exiit*, § *Porro:* "Dicimus quod abdicatio proprietatis omnium rerum, tam in speciali quam etiam in communi propter Deum, meritoria est et sancta, quam et Christus, viam perfectionis ostendens, verbo docuit et exemplo firmavit." This bull, they said, is now included in the sixth book of the *Decretals* of Boniface VIII and accepted by the universal Church which is infallible.

Ad conditorem

Pope John was not pleased. How did the friars dare to decide a question which was pending in the Roman Curia? On December 8, 1322, he published the constitution *Ad conditorem canonum*, stating that since the bull *Exiit* caused more harm than good, the Holy See no longer accepted the ownership of the goods the friars used. He denied that it is possible to separate ownership and use with regard to things which are consumed by use. Pope John also said that

he could not believe that his predecessor, Nicholas III, intended to reserve to himself the juridical ownership of every piece of bread, cheese, and egg the friars ate.

On January 14, 1323, the procurator of the Franciscan order, Bonagrazia of Bergamo, a lay brother, but a learned lawyer (*utriusque iuris peritus*), in his own name and in the name of the Order, appealed, in open consistory, against *Ad conditorem*. He was promptly arrested and thrown into a foul jail (*atro*, according to one document, *teterrimo*, according to another), where he was kept till Christmas day, 1323. The pope revised *Ad conditorem*, refuting the arguments of Bonagrazia, and published it again with the same date as the earlier version. He went even further, and on November 12, 1323, published another constitution, beginning with the words *Cum inter nonnullos* (November 12, 1323), in which he decreed that from then on whoever dared to say and hold pertinaciously that Christ and his apostles owned nothing either as private persons or in common, was a heretic. The Franciscans were very upset.

The Pope and the Emperor

Meanwhile, Pope John had other headaches. Since the beginning of his pontificate, he had been involved in a bitter fight with the King of the Romans and later Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Louis of Bavaria, whose election he refused to recognize. Louis claimed that his election was valid and he did not need the approval of the pope. On May 22, 1324, in Sachsenhausen, he published a solemn declaration by which he declared Pope John deposed and appealed against him to a General Council (to be convoked). The Emperor's decree included the friars objections against *Ad conditorem* and *Cum inter nonnullos*, and called the pope a heretic. John answered Louis's accusations with the constitution *Quia quorundam* (November 13, 1324), in which he defended his constitutions and forbade further criticism of them under penalty of excommunication.

Michael of Cesena

In mid 1327, the pope summoned Michael of Cesena, general minister of the Franciscan Order, to his presence. Michael, claiming ill health, did not reach Avignon before December 1. The next day, Pope John received him kindly. They talked about certain problems concerning the Order of St. Francis. The pope wanted Michael to remain in Avignon.

In 1327, Louis of Bavaria descended with his army into Italy and on January 17, 1328, was crowned emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. John suspected the involvement of the Franciscans, especially Michael of Cesena. On April 9, 1328, he held a consistorium. Michael

was ordered to be present. The pope reprehended him very severely, especially on account of the declarations of the chapter of Perugia, which he repeatedly called heretical. The general had the courage to withstand the pope openly and directly (*in faciem restitit*, like St. Paul to St. Peter), defending the orthodoxy of the Perugia declarations. The pope called Michael stupid, insane, hardheaded, tyrannical, and a promoter of heretics. He forbade Michael to leave Avignon without papal permission. On April 13, the general composed an appeal against the pope to be made public after he and his closest associates had escaped from Avignon during the night of May 26.

The Emperor's Decree

On April 14, the emperor promulgated a law in Rome against those who committed lèse majesty or fell into some heresy. The target of that law was Pope John XXII. On April 18, 1328, in the presence of the Roman authorities, both civil and ecclesiastical, and of a great concourse of the Roman people, the emperor promulgated his decree, *Gloriosus Deus in sublimis*, by which he declared Pope John a dangerous criminal and a notorious heretic and reaffirmed his deposition. A few weeks later, on May 12, which was the feast of the Ascension, in order to provide the Church with a legitimate pontiff, Louis installed, with the assistance of the Roman clergy, a new pope in the person of Peter of Corvaro, an elderly Franciscan, who had previously been the provincial minister of the Roman province. (Nicolaus Minorita later calls him *summus cuculus*, the greatest cuckoo).

Michael Takes a Stand

Michael of Cesena, fearing for his life, during the night of May 26, escaped from Avignon in the company of Bonagrazia of Bergamo, William of Ockham, and others. At Aigues-Mortes they boarded a galley, supposedly sent for them by the emperor, and went to Pisa, where they later met the emperor and the antipope. On June 8 the Pope John XXII deposed Michael of Cesena from the office of minister general and excommunicated him together with the other fugitives. Curiously, the general chapter of the Order, in session in Bologna, on June 5, reelected Michael as general of the Order. Naturally, Pope John did not recognize the election and appointed the Franciscan cardinal, Bertrand of Tour, as vicar general of the Order. Michael, now residing in Pisa, on July 9, 1328, sent a letter to the whole Order, explaining the reasons for his escape and forbidding the friars to obey the heretic pope, justly deposed by the Roman clergy and the emperor

In Pisa, on September 18, 1328, Michael of Cesena published a solemn appeal, to Holy Mother Church and to a future General Council, against John

XXII. It is called *Appellatio in forma maiore* and is 170 pages long! In it he points out the many errors and heresies the pope incurred in his three constitutions: *Ad conditorem*, *Cum inter nonnullos*, and *Quia quorundam*. Michael's criticism is supported by hundreds of authorities, adduced from the sacred Scriptures, from the Fathers of the Church, and from both the Canon and Civil Laws. Naturally, this book-length appeal was a work of collaboration between a number of learned friars, all masters of theology, with Bonagrazia of Bergamo, *armarium utriusque iuris*, contributing his spectacular juridical expertise.

There was no reaction to it from Avignon. Perhaps, Michael realized that it was not reasonable to expect the pope, or even his assistants, to read a 170-page appeal. Therefore he condensed it into no more than twenty-five pages. It is called *Appellatio in forma minore*. Although he dated it September 18 (the date of the long appeal), it was not published till December 12, 1328.

It is this shorter appeal that Pope John answered, almost a year later, on November 17, 1329, with fifty-five pages of a long polemical pamphlet (not considered a constitution), which begins with the words *Quia vir reprobus*: that depraved individual. In it the pope (or rather some of his Dominican theologians) refutes the arguments of the Franciscans, letting the accusation of heresy fly against Michael as freely as it was hurled against the pope in Michael's appeal.

Michael's Deposition

In the meantime, some of the friars found Michael's appeal objectionable. The chronicler recites three of the objections with their refutations. The general chapter of the Order, convoked by the vicar general, Cardinal Bertrand of Tour, in Paris, on June 10, 1329, deposed Michael of Cesena and elected as general the candidate of John XXII, Gerald Odonis. Cardinal Bertrand made sure that provincials favorable to Michael were not present at the chapter. He had them deposed and appointed friars willing to vote according to the wishes of the pope.

After the chapter, four masters, Henry of Thalheim, Francis of Ascoli (Marchia), William of Ockham, and Bonagrazia of Bergamo stood up for the rights of Michael of Cesena with a twenty-six page appeal, *Allegationes religiosorum virorum*. In this document they attempted to prove with many arguments that Michael was still the legitimate general of the Order and Gerald an illegitimate intruder, elected by a manipulated chapter which voted according to the intentions of a heretic pope.

Michael of Cesena considered Pope John's pamphlet, *Quia vir reprobus*, an enormous insult not only to his own person but also to the whole Franciscan Order and to the Catholic faith. Michael answered John from Munich, on March 26, 1330, with a 237-page appeal, addressed to all the faithful (*universis*

Christifidelibus), refuting the pope's arguments against him one by one, returning insult for insult.

John's Erroneous Teachings

Around 1330 Pope John was about eighty-five years old, but he kept on preaching, and sometimes he said things which did not sound strictly orthodox. For instance, in one sermon he said that the blessed in heaven will see, as a great novelty, that the three persons of the Trinity are not distinct at all. Novelty, indeed; it was the heresy of Sabellius. In another, he preached that the Son is greater than the Father or the Holy Spirit (*salva reverentia Patris et Spiritus Sancti, Filius est maior utroque*). Why? The Father and the Holy Spirit are only God, but the Son is both God and man. Another time he said that there is no difference between God's absolute and ordained power—error of Peter Abelard: God did what he did because he had no other choice. Statements such as these may have been no more than slips of the tongue; but he had one particular conviction which he held constantly, insistently, and firmly: the souls of the faithful departed, no matter how pure they are or free of sin, will not enjoy the beatific vision before the day of the last judgment, nor will the damned go to hell before that day. Otherwise the description of the last judgment in Matthew 25:31-46 is meaningless. He claimed that St. Bernard was of the same opinion.

This was contrary to the accepted teaching of the Church, yet it became a fixed idea in the mind of the elderly Pope John. He promoted those who shared (or pretended to share) his opinion and persecuted those who dared to preach against it. At the insistence of some of his cardinals, he retracted it on December 3, 1334, a day before he died. But Michael of Cesena and the dissident Franciscans did not consider John's retraction truthful, sincere, and adequate. According to them, he died a heretic. Michael made sure that all the Franciscans were informed of the pope's errors and heresies.

Michael's Position Hardens

In the meantime, some notable friars tried to convince Michael of Cesena to return to the unity of the Order. Michael explained again the reasons why he felt justified, nay obliged, to refuse obedience to a heretic pope. Michael's letter was handed to Gerald Odonis while Gerald was presiding at the general chapter of the Order, convoked, at Pope John's direction, at Perpignan, May 19, 1331.

Gerald answered with a vituperative letter, calling Michael the minister of Satan and renewing the condemnation of the Paris general chapter against

him and against his four closest associates. Michael disdained to answer such a venomous and defamatory letter. Instead, Nicolaus Minorita himself answered it, starting with a verse from the book of Proverbs: "Answer the fool according to his folly, lest he become wise in his own eyes": Gerald is not a legitimate general, his letter is false and worthless and deserves to be thrown into fire together with its author.

After the chapter of Perpignan, Gerald also wrote a personal letter to Michael, opening it with a verse from the prophet Jeremiah: "Why are you trying to justify your wicked ways?" Michael answered him and his accusations in a thirty-page letter, written in a more moderate tone, ending with an exhortation taken from a letter of St. Augustine to Pascentius the Arian: Let's not waste our time with insulting each other but pay attention rather to the problems which concerns both of us.

Benedict XII

Pope John died December 4, 1334, and on December 20, 1334, the cardinals elected James of Fournier who took the name of Benedict XII. He was a learned man, but after his election the first thing he said to his cardinals was: "you have elected an ass." Michael of Cesena and the dissident friars were not happy with Benedict XII's papacy. It is true that Benedict in his bull *Benedictus Deus* (29 January 1336) reaffirmed the traditional teaching of the Church concerning the beatific vision, but he did not condemn the other errors and heresies of his predecessor. Rather he tried to excuse them and called Pope John '*felicis recordationis*' (of happy memory). On August 23, 1338, Michael published in Munich a twenty-page appeal against Benedict and addressed it to a General Council to be convoked in the near future. He listed again the principal errors and heresies of Pope John which Benedict had failed to condemn. The appeal was cosigned by the three most faithful assistants of the deposed general, who were with him in Munich: Henry of Thalheim, William of Ockham, and Bonagrazia of Bergamo.

The Emperor's Position Hardens

The emperor also had his reservations. His initial hopes for reconciliation with the Holy See and for lifting the excommunication of Pope John came to nothing, due mostly to the interference of the king of France, Philip VI. On August 6, 1338, Louis published a solemn declaration in Frankfurt, emphasizing that imperial power and authority do not derive from the pope but directly from God through the electors. Whoever is legitimately elected is the rightful emperor without confirmation by the pope. In defense of his imperial jurisdiction he also appeals to a future General Council. Subsequently, he lists the rights of the empire and his grievances against the abuses of John XXII and Benedict XII. The same day he also published a law, to be observed in perpetuity (*ad perpetuum valitura*), reaffirming that the imperial authority comes directly from God.

Since earlier, at the request of John XXII, some subjects of the empire had taken an oath not to obey the emperor, Bonagrazia of Bergamo, *utriusque iuris peritus*, assured them that they were not obliged to observe it. On the contrary, by observing it, they would endanger the salvation of their souls. The emperor forwarded all these documents to Pope Benedict XII but received no answer.

Nicolaus Minorita's chronicle ends with a sixty-page treatise concerning the powers of the pope: *De potestate papas*. It is called 'beautiful and useful' (*pulcher et utilis*). It was composed, at the request of the emperor and other notable personalities, by a group of experts learned in theology and in both civil and canon laws. They seek to show, with a great display of erudition, that the pope does not have the fullness of power (*plenitudo potestatis*) in temporal matters either by divine or by human right. Further, they claim that the pope does not have fullness of power even in spiritual matters, because he cannot dissolve a valid marriage; he cannot impose upon the faithful the observance of virginity; nor can he make a law which would exempt him from a charge of heresy. If he has no fullness of power in matters spiritual, how can he have full power in matters temporal, they ask.

The *Chronicle of Nicolaus Minorita* (Franciscan Institute Publications, 1996) is a 1200-page collection of important documents edited by Gedeon Gál, OFM. It is not a critical edition but a *sourcebook*—"a fundamental document or record upon which subsequent writings, compositions, opinions, etc., can be based." As an introduction to the sourcebook, David Flood, OFM, wrote a forty-page introduction: *Franciscan Property: A Brief Survey from the Time of St. Francis to Pope John XXII*. Flood also summarized in English the chronicle and the documents it includes. Thus the *Chronicle of Nicolaus Minorita* will be understandable even to scholars who do not read Latin. Clement Schmitt, OFM, former editor in chief of the *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, recognizes this work as a most important contribution to the history of the Franciscan Order.

Accept with kindness and a divine love
the fragrant words of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . .
They are spirit and life.
. . .Preserve them together with
their holy manner of working even to the end.
(Francis, 1EpFid, 20-21)

The Cord, 48.1 (1998)

Book Review

The Early Franciscan Movement: Reflections on a Recent Work

Work for Every One, Francis of Assisi and the Ethic of Service by David Flood, OFM. Quezon City, Philippines: CCFMC Office for Asia/Oceania, Interfranciscan Center, 1997. USA/Canada/Europe, 195 pp., paper $12.50.

There are a few scholars in our Franciscan orbit who make a concerted effort to relate their historical research to developments in the contemporary Church and society. David Flood, OFM, is one of these, and it is with pleasure that I review his most recent book. While reading the book, it became clear to me that it raised significant issues of a much deeper nature for our Franciscan family; and perhaps some reflections on it could stimulate other people to offer their views on the formational, educational, ecclesiological, and social questions which are confronted almost every day in our experience and which can be informed by scholarly progress.

Indeed, since the publication in German of his doctoral thesis work on the *Earlier Rule* in 1967, David Flood has shed the light of his prodigious and original research on the original intention and subsequent development of the early Franciscan movement. The present work is one of a piece with the earlier critical studies summarized in *The Birth of a Movement* (1975) and *Francis of Assisi and the Franciscan Movement* (1989). The earlier works concentrated most specifically on the redacted text of the *Regula Non Bullata*, interpreting it against the social and economic background of Assisi and in a dialectical movement with the brooding shadowy presence of the more powerful ecclesiastical world. *Work for Every One*, however, concentrates on the alliance the early friars formed with the laity of their time through a shared evangelical understanding of "work as service."

Flood furthers his earlier studies by drawing significant parallels between

and interrelating the text of the Earlier Rule with "The Message" (Second Letter to the Faithful). As always, the author rightfully insists on the social and economic meaning of the movement within the context of Assisi's Peace Pacts, especially the Charter of 1210. He furthers positions taken in *Haversack* and more extensive scholarly articles on the movement's economic critique of Assisian society and the general collapse of the critical alliance formed between the friars and the lay penitents after the papal interpretation of the movement rendered in *Quo Elongati* (1230). The scholarship is presented with the overall aims of both extending the horizons of our thinking about the early movement and stimulating a genuine social involvement with practical consequences for the followers of St. Francis.

Work for Every One follows a developmental outline. After situating his argument within a contemporary context, Flood analyzes the social meaning of the Earlier Rule (chapters 1, 7-10, 17, 21, and 23) while making insightful comments on the Admonitions (e.g.6 and 18), the Message to the Rulers, and Salutation of the Virtues. Those familiar with his earlier works will appreciate this initial summary of his approach. The heart of the book is Chapter 2, "Hard Work," in which the structure and content of The Message receive full consideration. Here the sentence outline of this most important Franciscan writing is very helpful and deepens our understanding beyond that of Esser, Lehmann, and others.

The key line, Flood argues, is vs. 40: "We should also deny ourselves and put our bodies under the yoke of bondage (*servitus*) and holy obedience, just as each one has promised the Lord." He summarizes the meaning of the Latin text: "*Servitus* suggests the service in which one engages, the labor one contributes to the common cause. The reference to obedience, which controls and guides *servitus*, confirms that meaning. Consequently, in these words, Francis sums up the movement's policy of work as service" (p. 96).

This penitential life of work is something which the friars learned as they labored alongside the lay men and women in the almshouses and leprosaria of the day. Work, in the hands of the early followers of the movement, was a tool of social transformation which made people "subject to each other." A person engaged in work as a common task in order to promote the dignity of the neighbor. This notion stood in stark contrast to that of Assisi's competitive society where work existed in order to accumulate property, to appropriate, and to acquire status and power. This presents a different picture of the early followers of Francis engaged as they were in a dynamic project of social change with its own theory, its critique of the dominant society, and its ethic.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of *Work for Every One*, with a glance at *Quo Elongati*, Haymo of Faversham, the prologue to the *Constitutions of Narbonne*, and a "policy statement on the Penitents" from c. 1268 trace what the author calls the Order's "fall from historical grace." The book concludes: "Work for everyone. It is a

good story. It is not the story usually told about Francis of Assisi. We can use good work stories today, whereas, more and more, the usual Francis stories are losing their luster. Their day has passed" (p. 184). An appendix contains helpful translations of sections from the Earlier Rule, The Message, and the policy statement of the 1260s.

This short book is insightful in its analysis and challenging in its implications. Coupled with Thaddée Matura's recently translated *Francis of Assisi, The Message in His Writings* (Franciscan Institute, 1997), *Work for Every One* provides a fresh and needed look at the social, spiritual, and theological unity of the Franciscan movement and its meaning for our time. It advances from a different perspective the analysis begun by Theophile Desbonnets in *From Intuition to Institution: the Franciscans* (1988), and the reader can delight in the wonderful story about Flood and Desbonnets repeated on page 50 of the present book. It should also be noted that many of Flood's insights, especially those into the Earlier Rule, find great support among lay professional historians who are revisioning the traditional picture of the early Franciscan movement, the relationship between the men and women, the popular base of penitential spirituality, the meaning of poverty, and the stresses and strains which culminated in the development of the Later Rule and eventually turned a movement to the service of the pastoral policies of the ecclesiastical establishment.

In general, eschewing the hagiographical tradition of the biographies, this revision emphasizes the Earlier Rule, The Letter to All the Faithful, and the Testament. (See the recent publication *Francesco d'Assisi e il primo secolo di storia francescana*, Einaudi, 1997). The thrust of this research raises a host of questions for those who teach Franciscan history and spirituality and particularly for practicioners of the Franciscan life who wish to take the charism and its life in the Church seriously. Scholarship has cut a large part of the ground out from a perspective dominated by the canonical categories of the First, Second, and Third Orders.

Having said all of this and conscious of my own background in administration, lack of expertise in the area, and the important qualities of *Work for Every One*, I would like to conclude this review with some critical observations. The reader can be somewhat dismayed at the often tendentious and gratuitous nature of many of the comments in Flood's work. Francis himself is not immune. According to the historian's lights, the Testament's third admonition, on obedience, "sanctions a hierarchical notion of obedience at clear odds with movement life. . . . From Francis or not, the admonition and its obedience puts too much confidence and power into the hands of the ruling body and has to be discussed, criticized, and set aside" (p. 140). A similar dialectical and confrontational understanding emerges from the discussion of Chapter 5 of the Early Rule which is interpreted as a discussion of the misuse

of power and the need to "control the ministers" (p. 133).

Does this whole reading presuppose idealized notions of democratic and hierarchical processes? From my own reading of the writings of Francis and Clare, I have the impression that there are two languages always at work in their history and their experience, languages which espouse both vertical and horozontal understandings of the locus of authority. It is precisely the interaction of these different fraternal and hierarchical dimensions of obedience which provide the context for their social project and their following of Christ. I have found an interactive and dialogic grid to be more illuminating than a dialectical one.

In the same fashion, there is Flood's brief comment about the Later Rule: "One purpose of the change from the Early Rule to the Rule of 1223 was to separate the basic text of the brotherhood from the realm of experience and put it under the control of canon law" (p. 74). Perhaps. But while restoring Francis to his own history, what does such a statement say about the history of its participants? Does a methodology which concentrates on the writings of Francis here presuppose an argument which emerges fully only in the later biographies? Or is some other historical grid involved? Does such a reading presuppose an overly conflictual reading of the Earlier Rule and the life of the brothers? Could it be that the self-understanding of Francis and Clare about their place in Church and society evolved, albeit with tensions? Along the same lines, while one can criticize *Quo Elongati's* interpretation, could it be that Gregory IX's viewpoint reflected his own struggle with forces much larger and even destructively suspicious of the young Franciscan movement?

Internal developments after the death of Francis receive an especially difficult treatment. Although there is a brief theoretical defense of learning (p. 91), sprinkled throughout the book are fairly consistent remarks about the twisting influence of the "learned brothers": "Or, to put it differently, they were no more than prudent and helpful and wisely sensitive as they let the spirit of the world worm its way into Franciscan discourse" (p.132; cf. pp. 101, 110, 129. 132). Haymo of Haversham, admittedly the architect of some profound changes in the Order, "sort of entered it as the head of his own little order of high-powered clerics" (p. 143). "The critical consensus of a movement faded and the organization turned into a machine of salvation" (p. 147). The complete gloss on the movement occurred with the *Constitutions of Narbonne*: "Gospel life now means sitting at home. As told. Worrying about the snake. Without having challenged and debated the ruling on work, the constitutions have not only made the popular mingling of early Franciscan labor impossible; they have made it wrong" (p. 167).

Much of this development is symbolically focussed in Chapter 3 of *Work for Every One*, a discussion of a story about the conversion of a lay couple to a life of penitence. I believe that there is a germ of insight here, but the presup-

positions for the interpretation offered would need to be fully stated, the eisegetical nature of the presentation more fully acknowledged and weighed against an historical picture which refuses to elevate the early movement into a state of pre-lapsarian nature and grants to all participants a place within their own history.

Running throughout the work appears to be a theory of social change which is dependent on a bi-polar understanding of society. Such an analysis can be illuminating but perhaps overly constrictive. The world of Assisi is equated with "the politics of the body," with its concern about appropriation, the construction of a social self, competition for wealth and status, exclusion of the weak. This is contrasted with the movement's "politics of the Lord," which is characterized by a system of stewardship, work as service for others, the returning of all good things to God, the inclusion of all people. Was either the world of Assisi or the world of the brothers that unified?

In a parallel way, historical developments from 1209 to 1260 are described as the change from social to moral discourse; from solidarity with people to pastoral service for them; from work to official preaching; from a movement critical of society to an Order which participates in society's structures; from a fraternity to a subinstitution of the hierarchical Church; from a project based on dynamic interaction, shared poverty, and experience to one based on mutual restraint, ascetical poise, and canon law (cf. pp. 21, 74, 111 for some examples). Even Victor Turner's relationship between *communitas* and structure is more processive than this description of a "fall from historical grace." I wonder what would happen to such an analysis of Franciscan history if a more dialogic view of social change informed the discussion? (Cf. Mary Douglass, *Risk and Blame, Essays in Cultural Theory.*)

My own expertise is in the history of popular religiosity in American Catholicism, and perhaps a parallel example from that field might be helpful. During the 1960s the historiography of popular religion was dominated by an interpretive grid which placed a dialectical and adversarial interpretation on the terms elite/popular, literate/illiterate, official/spontaneous, institutional/personal, much as society itself was divided into communal and hierarchical blocks of interest, and religious life was understood to operate within the charismatic/institutional polarities of the Church. More recently, in the last ten years, historians have moved beyond this type of bi-polar analysis to see the mediate relationships between the popular and elite sectors, defining both experiences as existing within a much larger field of discourse. In fact, elite and popular expressions of religion interacted, were mutually appropriated, and became agents of reciprocal change. Here the long view of social development dominates, and in the mind of this historian-administrator, a more historically accurate picture is allowed to emerge, one which makes of all participants dramatic actors in the same human story.

At this point the discussion might appear to be overly academic. I do not think so. From my experience, how we envision the relationship between the two Rules, the interaction between Francis, Guido, and Hugolino, the interplay between *fraternitas* and *ordo*, or the role of Bonaventure has significant manifestations. It affects our formation programs, our attitudes towards the Church, our view of Franciscan institutional life, and our general stance on the role of religious in society. Are we counter-cultural examples? ecclesiastical pastoral agents? mediating figures dwelling in some intermediate zone between the marginated and the powerful? Or a mixture of these stances and many more? Are formation programs designed to establish an ideal "style" in interface with provincial communal life, or are the two dimensions of initial and ongoing formation continuous? Do we idealize some aspects of our own history and omit others? What is our understanding of obedience? How do we frame our own commitment to social change or ecclesiastical reform and what expectations guide us?

I mention these questions in closing precisely because I find *Work for Every One* insightful in its analysis, challenging in its picture of our origins, and provocative in placing its finger on important historiographical, theological, ecclesiological, and political questions. And, for our own guidance, it is time that our Franciscan family began seriously to address these issues which go way beyond the experience of Francis and Clare. This book is reviewed in *The Cord* because those of us concerned about the Franciscan charism, the Church, and society, must begin to interface scholarly approaches and pastoral concerns in a way that is conversant with contemporary experience and fruitful for the Gospel way of life. However we approach his work, it is to David Flood's credit that he witnesses academically and socially to the importance of that endeavor.

Joseph P. Chinnici, O.F.M.

Those of us concerned about the Franciscan charism, the Church, and society, must begin to interface scholarly approaches and pastoral concerns in a way that is conversant with contemporary experience and fruitful for the Gospel way of life. (Chinnici)

The Cord, 48.1 (1998)

Something Always New

William DeBiase, OFM

The Franciscan charism has many attractive elements. Among these is its newness. There is something within the message which is always generating new life. After eight hundred years one would expect it to have been plumbed to its depth many times over. It seems almost impossible that the corpus of Franciscan literature could hold another volume. After eight centuries the poor man of Assisi still attracts people The facts speak for themselves. New books about Francis are constantly coming out, fresh and exciting insights are being revealed, and people are still being drawn to him. It just does not seem to be getting old.

When we say something is new we say a lot about it. It is unused. It holds a dream. It may also inspire fear. To be new does not mean simply the novel, the faddish. These come and go, usually without leaving too much in their wake.

The Franciscan charism is unused. This is a difficult statement considering its eight hundred year history. We can say something is unused in the sense that its full meaning has yet to be revealed. In marriage, for example, two people can maintain the springtime of their youth simply by being constantly surprised at the personality of the other. A man once told me that on his wedding day he thought he knew and understood his bride perfectly. After thirty-five years of marriage, he has come to the conclusion that he does not understand her at all. Something new was always coming forth even after all those years.

In this sense, Francis is "unused." His charismatic personality has not yet been fully revealed. His vision is always being looked at in the context of the times in which it has to be lived. It is as unused as the Gospel upon which it is based. The Gospel is always entering the world, the lives of people, in new and

very surprising ways. A thing becomes fully used only after all its potential for surprising has been exhausted. The Gospel will never get to this stage and therefore neither will the personality of Francis. To put it simply, the charism still has the power to surprise people.

The new thing holds a dream. Young couples preparing for marriage radiate overpowering dreams—they are on a different planet. But isn't that the nature of a dream? It places us in a different world. To have a dream means that we are not tied down by the present. It expresses a part of our being that says today is worth living. The dream of Francis is not finished. To have a dream is the promise of "newness." Without a dream life gets to be drudgery. The Franciscan dream is to share in the dream which God has for the human race. Francis did not live his own dream but that of God. This is never finished but is always being worked out inside the lives of people and events. A real dream never gets old and no dream is more real than the dream of God for us.

There can be a certain amount of fear in facing something new, in facing our dream. Once again we look at the example of young couples shortly before their wedding. Many times they enter into a state of uncontrollable nervousness. This new thing which they are entering upon is also frightening to them. The thing which they want more than anything else is a two-edged sword. The great joy that they experience is mixed with the intuitive sense that they will have to let go of many things if their love is going to grow. This letting go is the promise of newness. The young couple realizes that from the wedding day on they will not be making decisions just from their own viewpoint. Letting go will be part of their lives. Once they stop things will become cold—the romance disappear. To the extent that they let go new worlds will unfold.

The Franciscan charism is a call to letting go. It is breaking loose from the confines of my own world and entering into the world of another—God. This letting go is the willingness to live not my dream but the dream of God. A very important incident in the life of Francis is the time he gave his clothing to a poor knight. This clothing for Francis was the symbol of a dream—his desire to be a knight. He gave that dream up and in doing so became free to follow another dream. Before giving his clothes away Francis's life was determined. He would be a knight in shining armor. He would go dashing off, cover himself with honor, and find the lady of his dreams. Things were to be different, however. When Francis gave those clothes away, he did not know what the future held. If he had held onto those clothes it is possible that we would never have had a Francis of Assisi.

After saying all this it seems that perhaps the greatest challenge we have as Franciscans is to be open to the revelation of the charism in our lives. To be aware that there are still unused parts, to be convinced that the dream is still real, and to have the courage to let go of one dream for another.

A Biographical Profile of Gedeon Gál, OFM

The Franciscan Institute
St. Bonaventure University
St. Bonaventure, New York

Father Gedeon Gál, OFM, was born in Toszeg, Hungary, on January 9, 1915. When he was only eleven years old he left home to attend the secondary school at Szolnok, ten miles away, where he lived with the Franciscan friars. In 1932, Father Gedeon entered the Franciscan novitiate at Szécsény and in 1933 made his first profession. He did his theological studies at Gyöngyös, a Franciscan seminary that was founded in the 15th century.

Father Gedeon was ordained on September 10, 1939, and began to teach religion in Jászberény at two state schools; but just two years later he was sent to the Pontificio Ateneo Antoniano in Rome to study philosophy. The Second World War had already begun, and in 1943 an American bomb was dropped on the house in Grottoferrata near Rome where Father Gedeon had been staying. His research on a modern Hungarian philosopher was completely destroyed plus the sources he was using. This event influenced him to turn his attention to medieval philosophy, and he began to work on John Duns Scotus's *Theoremata*. After attaining his degree, he was not able to return to Hungary because of the war.

In 1945 Father Gedeon received an assignment to Collegio Internazional di S. Bonaventura, Quaracchi, near Florence, and here worked with Victorin Doucet, OFM, Celestino Piana, OFM, and Ignatius Brady, OFM, to produce fourteen volumes in the *Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi*, two volumes in the *Bibliotheca Franciscan Ascetic Medii Aevi*, and to begin the third edition of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*.

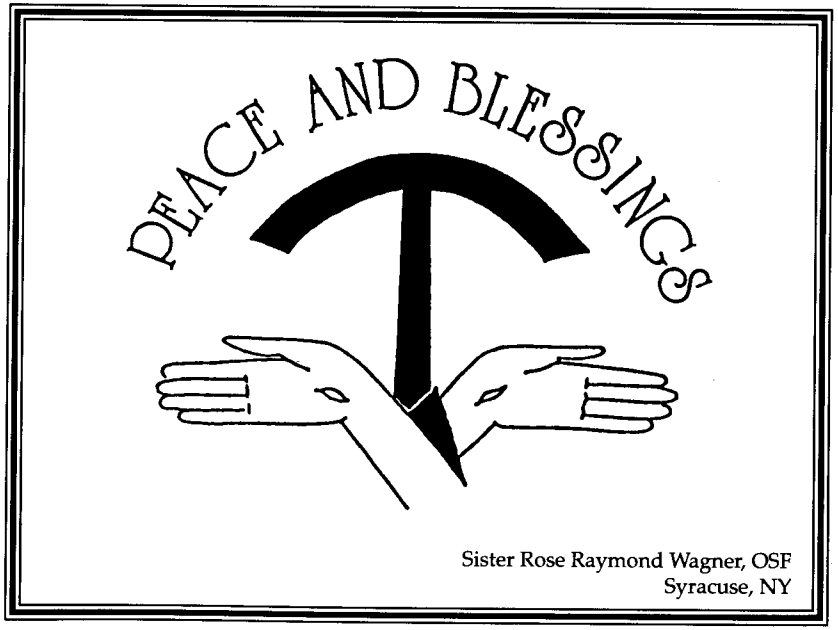
Father Gedeon joined the research staff at The Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure's in 1963. In the years since then he has collaborated with other researchers in producing the seventeen volumes of the *Philosophical and Theological Works of William of Ockham*, the *Lectura secunda* of Adam de Wodeham, and the *Philosophical Works of John Duns Scotus* (in progress).

Father Gedeon continues to be a strong presence at The Franciscan Institute. He has recently published, with David Flood, OFM, *Nicolaus Minorita Chronica*, (documents tracing the 14th century poverty controversy, see pp. 18-25 of this issue), and *Peter of John Olivi on the Bible.*

Many of those who have worked with Father Gedeon remember him fondly. In a recent issue of *Franciscan Studies*, Stephen Brown reminisces:

> Working with Father Gedeon was always enjoyable—calm and enjoyable. He is a very unassuming man, who, as he might say, preferred editing philosophical or theological texts to pumping gas. It was a job; but some jobs are better than others. He never imagined, and even less claimed, that he was doing something earth-shaking. He created an atmosphere of relaxed seriousness. . . . He is a practical, humble friar. Working with a man who never taught formally is an experience in the mystery of learning. He never stopped teaching—and I feel myself to be one of the luckiest pupils alive, benefiting so much from this quiet Magister (*Franciscan Studies*, 53 [1993], 1, 5).

(Details about the life and work of Father Gedeon Gál can be found in *Franciscan Studies* 45 [1985], vii-xii, and 53 [1993], 1-5.)



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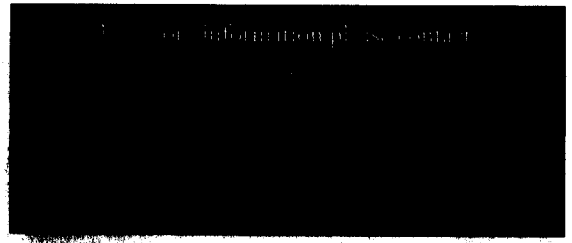

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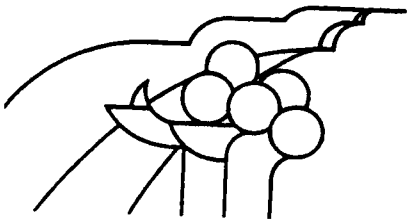

For more information contact:
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ON THE FRANCISCAN CIRCUIT
COMING EVENTS 1998

Saturday, January 31 (snowdate, Feb. 7)
Franciscan Evangelization Today. With Mary Motte, FMM. Sponsored by Franciscan Federation, Region I. At Francisan Missionaries of Mary, 399 Fruit Hill Ave., Providence, RI 02911. Contact: Marie Bernadette Wyman, OSF, Immaculate Conception Motherhouse, 49 Jackson Ave., Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706.

Sunday, February 1-Friday, February 6
Franciscan Gathering XVIII. Toward a Franciscan Spirituality for the 3rd Millennium. With Gabriele Uhlein, OSF. At Franciscan Center, Tampa, FL. Contact: Jo Marie Streva, OSF, Franciscan Center, 3010 Perry Ave., Tampa, FL 33603, ph. 813-229-2695, fax 813-228-0748.

Tuesday, February 3-Friday, February 13
Mexico GATE Pilgrimage Retreat for Franciscans. Roberta Cusack, OSF. Contact: GATE, 912 Market St., LaCrosse, WI 54601-8800, ph. 608-791-5283, fax 608-782-6301.

Sunday, February 8-Sunday, February 15
Walking in His Footprints. A Retreat for Franciscan Friars. With Joseph Rayes, OFM. At the Franciscan Center, Andover, MA. (See ad, page 42.)

Friday, February 13-Monday, February 16
A Franciscan Hermitage Experience. Contact: Franciscan Renewal Center, 0858 SW Palatine Hill Rd. Portland, OR 97219; ph. 503-636-1590.

Monday, February 23-Friday, March 6
Living in Our Franciscan Experience. (LIFE program.) With Joseph Rayes, OFM and Madonna Hoying, SFP. At the Franciscan Center, Tampa, FL. Contact: Madonna Hoying, 2473 Banning Road, Cincinnati, OH 45239, ph. 513-522-7516.

Thursday, March 5-Sunday, March 8
Legenda Major: Francis' Life as a Paradigm for the Spiritual Journey. With Regis Armstrong, OFM Cap. At Tau Center. (See ad, page 40.)

Friday, March 6-Saturday, March 7
Meeting Our Prophetic Tradition: Walking Beyond the Margin. With Marie Dennis and Joseph Nangle, OFM. At the Franciscan Center, Syracuse, NY. Contact: Marion Kikukawa, OSF, 2500 Grant Boulevard, Syracuse, NY 13208, ph. 315-425-0103.

Friday, March 6-Sunday, March 8
Franciscan Discernment Retreat. With Clare D'Auria, OSF. Franciscan Spirit and Life Center. (See ad, page 44.)

Friday, April 3-Wednesday, April 8
The Prayer of Francis and Clare. A retreat with André Cirino, OFM. Franciscan Spirit and Life Center. (See ad, page 44.)

Thursday, April 16-Sunday, April 19
A Franciscan Hermitage Experience. Contact: Franciscan Renewal Center, 0858 SW Palatine Hill Rd. Portland, OR 97219; ph. 503-636-1590.

Thursday, April 23-Thursday, April 27
Franciscan Challenge. Inter-congregational workshop on Franciscan sources/spirituality. $275. At Tau Center. (See ad, page 40.)

Writings of Saint Francis

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