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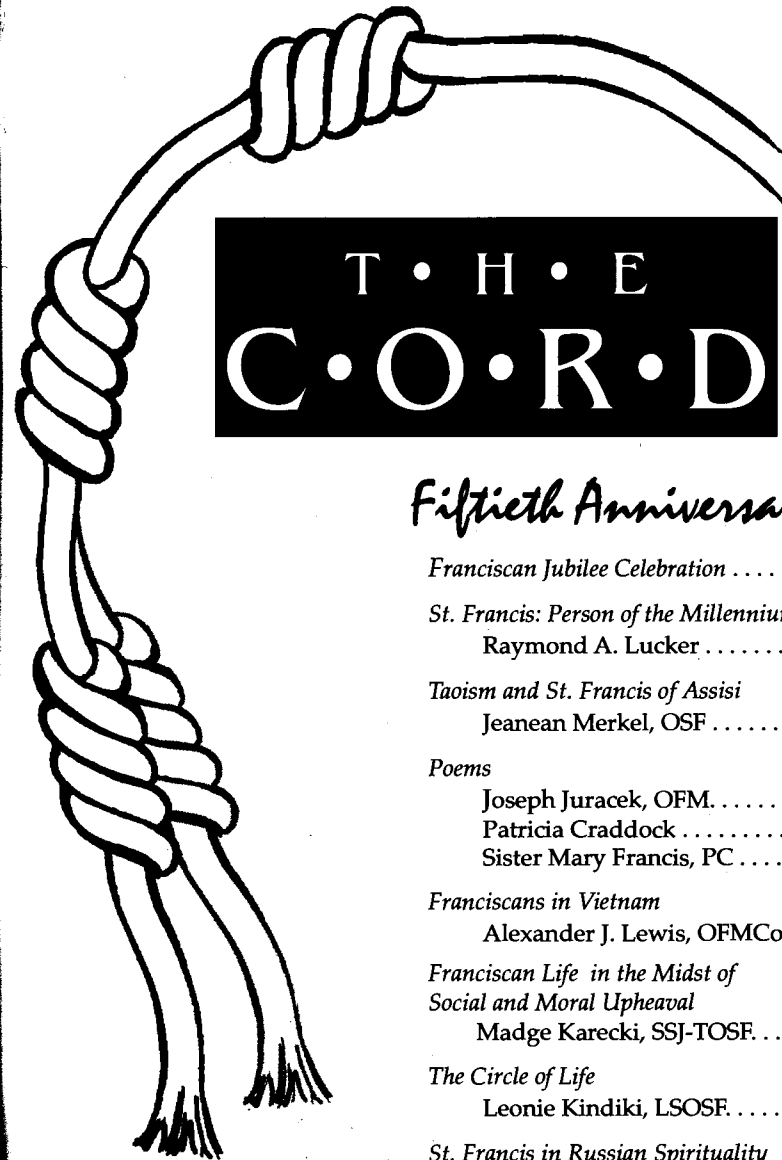
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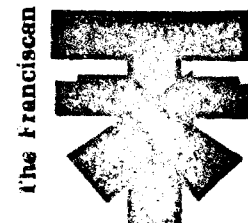


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Institute



THE CORD
A Franciscan Spiritual Review

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

1. MSS should be submitted on disk (or typed on 8 1/2 x 11 paper, one side only, double spaced).
2. The University of Chicago *Manual of Style*, 13 ed., is to be consulted on general questions of style.
3. Titles of books and periodicals should be italicized or, in typed manuscripts, underlined.
Titles of articles should be enclosed in quotation marks and not underlined or italicized.
4. References to Scripture sources or to basic Franciscan sources should not be footnoted, but entered within parenthesis immediately after the cited text, with period following the closed parenthesis. For example:
(1Cor. 13:6). (2Cel 5:8).
(RegNB 23:2). (4LAg 2:13).

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

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The Cord, 50.5 (2000)

Fiftieth Anniversary Year!

Editorial

Almost the first Christian . . . to attempt to act [respectfully toward non-Christians] was Francis of Assisi. . . . [The] trip made by Francis to Egypt was more than an expression of personal interest or missionary zeal. It meant that a new spirit had come into the Christian world.¹

In his earlier Rule (1221), Francis provided, for the first time in a religious rule, for his brothers to go "among the Saracens and other nonbelievers" (RegNB 16:3). For Francis, a "nonbeliever" was one who had not yet become acquainted with and embraced Jesus Christ as God's own self-revelation. Francis's approach to those who did not share his faith, however, was humble and reverent. He knew that they were also sincere believers in their own right and that their beliefs deserved his respect. He directs his brothers to live simply and openly as Christian among these "others" and "to be subject" to them. There is no hint of any sense of superiority, but rather a realization of one's own "littleness" among those of different religious backgrounds. By living simply, humbly, and peacefully as brothers to one another and to all with whom they came into contact, the friars would proclaim in persuasive ways that here was a new spirit to be reckoned with.

Today, Franciscan men and women live and serve on every continent among persons from a great variety of cultural and religious contexts. The missionary call of Jesus Christ rings in their ears: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mk. 16:15). It is echoed by the directive of Francis: "Live spiritually among [these others]; . . . be subject to [them]; . . . acknowledge that you are Christians. . . . Announce the Word of God, when [you] see it pleases the Lord, in order that [they] may believe in almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Creator of all" (RegNB 16:7).

In this issue, we look at a number of ways that Franciscans live and serve among peoples of a wide variety of cultures and even different faiths. The manner of serving is respectful, humble, and dialogical. The brothers and the sisters learn from others even as others learn from them and continue to carry on the "new spirit" that came into the world in the person of Francis of Assisi.

Elise Saggau, OSF

¹Stephen C. Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1971), 116.

Franciscan Jubilee Celebration

Rome, April 9, 2000

Excerpts from reflections given at the Franciscan Jubilee celebration held in Rome on April 9, 2000, and attended by 6,000 Franciscans. Included in a letter from Eleanor Granger, OSF, Franciscan Federation, April 2000.

An intense spiritual atmosphere marked the Jubilee of the great Franciscan family, which was held on Sunday, April 9, 2000, in the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome. It included a concelebrated Mass presided over by Cardinal Roger Etchegaray. The celebration had begun on Saturday morning in Assisi with a pilgrimage on foot from St. Mary of the Angels to the Basilica of St. Francis.

The Pope wrote a message for the occasion, in which he refers to "the innumerable multitude that up until today has followed in Christ's footsteps by imitating Francis and Clare of Assisi. . . . It is the limpid testimony of the fruitfulness of their charism. They have offered the world the challenging proposal of their original evangelical experience. . . . It is more necessary than ever to remember and give credible testimony that God alone is the real wealth that fills our life with meaning. In him there is hope and profound joy, which the attractions and promises of the world cannot give."

Capuchin Raniero Cantalamessa, Papal Household preacher, said: "What defines the strength and contribution that the Franciscan Order can make to the Church and the world is the spiritual sap that circulates within it; spiritual sap means that Christ is at the center, as are prayer and supernatural and spiritual values. I think that altogether this Jubilee has helped to make this need the focus of our attention."

Cardinal Etchegaray defined the Franciscan spirit as the word "fraternity," which, he said, "is truly at this time at the heart of all our effort; also, Francis's poverty was imprinted on this spirit of fraternity. Francis did not want to own anything, because he knew that property divides, it pits some against others, creates conflict. We know of very thought-provoking episodes in this respect. Indeed, this man incarnated the spirit of the Bible, of the Gospel, in a way that only the Holy Spirit can inspire and we are well aware how the whole world today longs for this fraternity."

St. Francis Person of the Millennium

Bishop Raymond A. Lucker

[This is a reprint of an article originally published in *The Prairie Catholic*, official newspaper for the Diocese of New Ulm, Minnesota, in March, 2000, p. 2. Reprinted with permission.]

Time magazine recently conducted a national survey asking for nominations for the Person of the Century. It was looking for a person who for good or ill has had the greatest impact on the world during the last one hundred years. The names of Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, John Paul II, Mother Teresa, and even Stalin and Hitler were submitted. The magazine finally settled upon Albert Einstein.

That set me to thinking that this is not only the end of a century but the closing of a millennium. Indeed as we celebrate the Jubilee Year we look back on two thousand years since the birth of Christ. We give thanks for God's presence among us in Christ Jesus. We recall how Christians have responded to the Lord's invitation to be his disciples in bringing God's love, justice, and peace into every aspect of our lives and our society. We are also invited by our Holy Father to ask forgiveness for the sins and failures we have committed as individuals and as an institution made up of ordinary human beings.

As I recalled all of that, I wondered who might have had the most effect on the world for good during the last thousand years. I immediately thought about St. Francis of Assisi who has been called "the most Christ-like person since Christ."

Francis, son of a rich merchant, had a promising career ahead of him in the military and in business. He heard the voice of Jesus from the cross of San Damiano saying, "Francis, go repair my house which is falling in ruins." He gave his money to the poor and literally began rebuilding a little chapel in Assisi. It was only after a period of time that he heard a second call through the gospel of St. Matthew to go from town to town proclaiming the good news of the reign of God. He heard Jesus saying to him "heal the sick," "comfort the

poor," "be my hands and feet," "rebuild my Church which is a living body of Christ."

Immediately people flocked to him and followed him in his call to follow the nonviolent Christ, to work for peace and justice, to live in poverty, and to value all of creation. In a short time hundreds of thousands were following him, working for the renewal and reform of the Church, especially within the hearts and souls of the faithful. In the last thousand years, millions of people have been affected by his teaching and example—great leaders such as Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Dorothy Day. It is strange that we so easily forget the very center of the message of Jesus. We begin to work on just the externals of Christian living as Francis himself did at first when he thought that Jesus was calling him to repair church buildings.

As we begin a new millennium there is nothing more important than really hearing the message given to St. Francis: "Repair my house which is falling in ruins." That means that the Church has to be renewed from within. We are all members of the body of Christ and we will be ineffective if our relationship to Jesus is weak. Our prayer is always: "Lord, I believe. But help my lack of confidence. Send me your Spirit so that with the power of the Spirit I may witness to you in all I am and all I do. Help me to make you present in every structure and every institution of society."

For me one of the most significant statements of the last thousand years is: "The Church is always in need of reformation and renewal." This was the message of St. Francis and it was a teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

We are called to follow Jesus in all aspects of human life from conception to natural death. We are to be committed to a nonviolent way of life following the example of Jesus who said "love one another as I have loved you," "forgive one another," "if someone strikes you on the face, turn the other cheek," "go the extra mile," "if someone takes your coat, give them your shirt as well." We see so much violence in our society against unborn children, against people of different races or ethnic backgrounds, against women, against people with different sexual orientation. We use violence to solve conflicts between nations and to settle disputes with our neighbors. Violence has so entered into domestic life and into every aspect of our society that we almost take it as normal.

St. Francis tried literally to follow the gospel, to go from village to village and town to town preaching the kingdom of God, proclaiming "peace be to this house," giving everything he had to the poor, bathing and caring for lepers, and living on the good will of others by begging. His life was one of living the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount.

Our diocesan celebration of the Jubilee this first year of the new millennium makes use of RENEW 2000 as our vehicle of rebuilding the Church. Each one of us is called to conversion and a renewal of our faith. We are all

invited to participate in small faith-sharing groups where we read the scriptures, pray together, and share how the loving God has touched our hearts.

That is what Jesus meant by building the kingdom. He started out alone, then chose disciples and sent them two by two to proclaim "the kingdom of God is at hand," "reform your lives," "listen to the Good News." Along with that he healed the sick, cured the paralyzed, gave comfort to the widow, cleansed the leper. St. Francis did these things, too.

The movement of Christianity has had its ups and downs throughout the last two thousand years. It was in great need of repair during the early thirteenth century when Jesus spoke to Francis from the cross. The Franciscan movement and that of St. Dominic and other Church reformers, including theologians and mystics, led millions of people to what has been called the "Age of Faith." We need only to look around and discern the "sign of the times" and see that again we are called to rebuild the Church, a reform that begins in the heart of each of the believers.

Yes, Francis of Assisi has my vote as the person of the millennium!

Guidelines for Poetry Submitted to *The Cord*

The Cord is a Franciscan spiritual review published for English-speaking Franciscans and those associated with or interested in the movement. Its purpose is to spread knowledge and appreciation of the Franciscan spiritual tradition as well as to present testimony on the way in which Franciscan life is being lived and experienced in our own times. Poetry published in *The Cord* should reflect this purpose. It should have the following characteristics:

- 1) originality
- 2) creativity
- 3) a Franciscan theme
- 4) a sense of unity
- 5) content, form, and purpose

A poem may be rhyming or free verse. It should not be longer than 25 lines and must not have been previously published. It must not be submitted to another publication at the same time as it is under consideration by *The Cord*. Each poem must be typed, double-spaced, on a separate sheet of paper with your name and address typed on the right hand side near the top.

We will try to send a response within six weeks. Poems will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Please keep a copy of your poem in case of loss or damage. Poetry critiques will not be given. A published poet will receive two free copies of the issue in which his or her poem appears.

All poetry should be submitted to:

Poetry Editor, *The Cord*
The Franciscan Institute
St. Bonaventure University
St. Bonaventure, NY 14778

Taoism and St. Francis of Assisi

Jeanan Merkel, OSF

While separated by continents, cultures, religious traditions, and more than a millennia and a half, two significant religious figures can nonetheless be compared by their core values which continue to inspire seekers today. The religious figures are the Taoist, Lao Tzu, (fifth century, BCE) and the Catholic saint, Francis of Assisi (twelfth century, CE). The core concepts that cross East-West boundaries, transcend time, and bring together the thinking of a Chinese philosopher and an Italian Christian mendicant are self-effacement, a description of an unconventional way of life in opposition to prevailing societal values, the lifting up of one "Way" over all others, weakness overcoming strength, the value of simplicity, and presenting nature as part of understanding God's/the Way's fulfillment.

These comparisons are not without corresponding contrasts, which will also be addressed in this paper: Francis's definition of the Way of Christ as opposed to Lao Tzu's refusal to put any limitations, even a name, on the Way; individual vs. communal approaches to achieving the Way; and a difference in the understanding of *how* the Way should be achieved—non-action vs. service.

Notwithstanding the significance of these contrasts, this paper will attempt to examine two visionaries who define a Way strikingly different from their worlds at war. They are consonant in their call to a necessary conversion or change of heart in order to embrace the Way, and they offer compelling personal examples of recognizing the divine in the natural world.

Self-Effacement

A primary message in Lao Tzu's *Tao Tè Ching*¹ is that one does not seek "fame and fortune." In being a seeker of the Way, one will be fulfilled beyond all expectations. In discussing the Way, he notes that "It is because it never

attempts itself to be great that it succeeds in becoming great" (XXXIV, 76b).

Lao Tzu's sage "avoids excess, extravagance, and arrogance" (XXIX, 68) and in that way reflects the Way itself. The paradoxical nature of the Way, according to Lao Tzu, is that what most people think of as small can really be great in a larger scheme if it does not *seek* to be great. "For ever free of desire, it can be called small; yet, as it lays no claim to being master when the myriad creatures turn to it, it can be called great" (XXXIV, 76a). So, for Lao Tzu, if one is small in the essential elements of the Way—desires, greed, pride, and so forth—one might achieve greatness.

Just as Lao Tzu thought that "to be overbearing when one has wealth and position is to bring calamity upon oneself" (IX, 23), the lexicon used in the writings of St. Francis of Assisi² is full of warnings against self-aggrandizement. In fact, he refers to his followers as "lesser brothers" and "useless servants" (RegNB 23:7).

Francis reminds his brothers that "through our own fault we are rotten, miserable, and opposed to good" (RegNB 22:6). Rather than serving as a means of punishment, these admonitions reflect Francis's conviction that "All the brothers should strive to follow the humility and the poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ" (RegNB 9:1).

Francis's insistence on humility and minority come out of his reading of the Gospels and the example of Christ. In his community life, Francis designated that "no one should be called Prior, but all generally should be called Friars Minor" (RegNB 6:3), for it was Jesus who washed the feet of his disciples, not the disciples who performed that service for the master.

Francis referred to himself, as well, in terms that reminded him of his inadequacy. He was "a useless man and unworthy creature of the Lord God" (EpOrd 47). In a letter to mayors, magistrates, and rulers throughout the world, he calls himself "your little and despicable servant in the Lord God" (EpRect 1). He warns the leaders that unless they acknowledge God or a higher power, they may suffer in another world. "And the wiser and more powerful they may have been in this world, so much greater will be the punishments they will endure in hell" (EpRect 5).

An Unconventional Way of Life

"The whole world recognizes the beautiful as the beautiful, yet this is only the ugly," says Lao Tzu. "The whole world recognizes the good as the good, yet this is only the bad" (II, 4). The Way that Lao Tzu presents in the *Tao Tè Ching* is not something obvious nor readily achievable. It is countercultural, and the follower must work at finding the path and continuing on it.

Like his description of a sage, "he who was well versed in the way" (XV), Lao Tzu presents the *tao* as "worn and yet newly made" (XV). This is not so

nonsensical as it sounds at first reading. The well-versed sage will constantly find a new insight into how to live the Way. And, because the Way is illimitable and not definable in human categories, it is ever new. That the Way, or the *tao*, is illimitable is addressed throughout the *Tao Te Ching*. Its “way is broad, reaching left as well as right” (XXXIV, 76). In the *Tao Te Ching*, Lao Tzu describes the Way in the negative, since that will not put limitations on what it *can* be:

Its upper part is not dazzling;
Its lower part is not obscure.
Dimly visible, it cannot be named
And returns to that which is without substance (XIV, 33).

While in some instances St. Francis is much more definite about what Christ requires of his followers, he, too, claims that it is impossible to describe Christ. This “Savior of all who believe in Him,” is:

Without beginning and without end
unchangeable, invisible,
indescribable, ineffable,
incomprehensible, unfathomable . . . (RegNB 23:11).

The first line of the *Tao Te Ching* illustrates the importance of submission to the natural life cycle. “The way that can be spoken of is not the constant way” (I, 1). Only submission to change, constant transformation, yet without force, guarantees life. “The reason why heaven and earth can be enduring is that they do not give themselves life. Hence they are able to be long-lived” (VII, 18), encompassing all of life in a great cycle of being “too profound to be known” (XV, 35). “Bowed down then preserved” (XXII, 50, 50d) is the Way. The flow of the language describes how waves wash upon the shore:

Being great, it [the Tao] is further described as receding,
Receding, it is described as far away,
Being far away, it is described as turning back (XXV, 56a).

So we have in both the language and form of the *Tao Te Ching* complementary ways of transmitting the great lesson: The Way can only be achieved by conforming oneself to the natural cycle of life, submitting one’s personal will to natural forces so that greatness will be achieved:

Man models himself on earth,
Earth on heaven,
Heaven on the way,
And the way on that which is naturally so (XXV, 58).

Natural relationships also figure in the analogies Francis makes in writing to the faithful, those who seek to follow the way of Jesus Christ. Like Jesus, Francis speaks in imagery that his audience would understand:

We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined to our Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. We are brothers to Him when we do the will of the Father Who is in heaven. We are mothers, when we carry him in our heart and body . . . and when we give birth to him through His holy manner of working (1EpFid: 1:8-10).

One “Way” Over All Others

Lao Tzu, in the *Tao Te Ching*, insists that the idea of the *tao* as “nothing” is the only adequate description of that which is illimitable. Indeed, the *tao* presented here is cosmological, encompassing all physical and spiritual life. Even Heaven models itself on the way (XXV, 58). Only “dimly visible, it cannot be named” (XIV, 33).

Unlike the Confucian understanding of the *tao* as a path that could be defined by specific rites and relationships, Lao Tzu’s *tao* cannot be limited by words nor understood in human terms. It has some of the natural, maternal, nurturing qualities of *Hsing*, which Yang Chu and Mencius raised to the philosophical level. But as Lao Tzu describes *tao*, it is the natural way of things, rather than a specific way of thinking about nature.

Still, in the *Tao Te Ching*, Lao Tzu shows his followers how natural it is to follow the way. He invites the reader to become that newborn baby, the uncarved block, to empty him or herself, to fall apart, “like thawing ice” (XV, 35) in order to be, like the Way, “worn and yet newly made” (XV, 36). So, one might interpret this as being the only way to achieve fulfillment.

Similarly, St. Francis of Assisi repeats a mantra throughout his writings—we, as followers of Christ’s way, are to “love the Lord God with all our heart, all our soul, with all our mind and all our strength (cf. Mk. 12:30)” (RegNB 23:8). Just as for Lao Tzu the One is the creator of all, St. Francis believes that the Lord God “has given and gives to each one of us our whole body, our whole soul, and our whole life” (RegNB 23:8). And so, it is inconceivable to Francis that one would not give back “every effort, every affection, every emotion, every desire, and every wish” (RegNB 23:8).

The follower of the way, according to Francis, will be “inwardly cleansed, interiorly enlightened, and inflamed by the Holy Spirit” (EpOrd 51) in order to follow in the footprints of Jesus Christ. Francis himself sought only to follow the example of Jesus. After his conversion to following Jesus, Francis prayed at the foot of a crucifix in the Church of San Damiano:

Most high, glorious God,
enlighten the darkness of my heart
and give me, Lord,
a correct faith,
a certain hope,
a perfect charity,
sense and knowledge,
so that I may carry out
Your holy and true command (OrCruc).

Weakness Overcoming Strength

“The submissive and weak will overcome the hard and strong,” according to Lao Tzu (XXXVI, 79a). This theme, repeated throughout the *Tao Te Ching*, offers another paradox for the follower of the Way. The Way of the sage is “bountiful and does not contend,” Lao Tzu writes (LXXXI, 196). This key Taoist paradox is illustrated in many situations. The Way is not aggressive, contentious, nor forceful, yet it is powerful. Like water, the way is submissive and weak. “Yet for attacking that which is hard and strong nothing can surpass it” (LXXVIII, 186).

In Lao Tzu’s philosophy, strength and hardness are not beneficial qualities. “A man is supple and weak when living, but hard and stiff when dead” (LXXVI, 182). It is clearly better to be flexible, even weak, so that one is less likely to break. Boldness and aggression can lead to death, but “He who is fearless in being timid will stay alive” (LXXIII, 177).

In his advice to rulers, Lao Tzu lectures them not to “press down” on the people so that they “will not weary of the burden” (LXXII, 175). The softer and more flexible the ruler, the more willing the people to be subjects. And in dealing with other nations, “There is no disaster greater than taking on an enemy too easily” (LXIX, 169). Instead, it is the “soft” side, the one that is “sorrow-stricken,” that wins. And in Chapter LXVII, Lao Tzu lists his three treasures as compassion, frugality, and not daring to take the lead.

St. Francis reminds his brothers that, in surrendering themselves to following Christ’s way, “they must make themselves vulnerable to their enemies, both visible and invisible.” (RegNB 16:10). As with most of his writing, this notion comes from his study of the Gospels. Basing this belief on the Gospel of Luke, Francis reiterates that “Whoever loses his life for my sake will save it” (Lk. 9:24).

In his Rule, St. Francis writes that the brothers are not to “slander or engage in disputes” (RegNB 11:1) nor are they to quarrel among themselves or with others. They are to welcome all visitors, “friend or foe, thief or robber” (RegNB 7:14) with kindness and greet one another “wholeheartedly and lovingly.”

In a blessing that is repeated throughout Franciscan Orders to this day, Francis’s focus on peacemaking is evident:

May the Lord bless you and keep you;
May He show His face to you and be merciful to you.
May He turn His countenance to you and give you peace
(BenLeo, 1-2).

The Value of Simplicity

Lao Tzu’s picture of the Taoist hermit who turns away from the world in order to strip down to the essentials is mirrored in the conversion of Francis Bernardone from a wealthy young soldier to the poor mendicant we know as St. Francis of Assisi. Francis’s conversion began with a forced withdrawal, an illness that isolated him from his high-spirited companions. This was his removal to the mountaintop. Influenced by his religious mother, he began to see the uselessness of war and the selfishness of wealth.

In Chapter XIX of the *Tao Te Ching*, Lao Tzu says: “Exhibit the unadorned and embrace the uncarved block” (43a). Further, he says, “Have little thought of self and as few desires as possible” (43a). Francis of Assisi certainly embraced poverty of material goods as well as desires. When he left his home, he stripped himself of all clothing (a bold statement for the son of a Florentine cloth merchant) to stand before the bishop, giving up everything he had. According to one biographer, he “hastened with great joy to do what was demanded of him” (1Cel 6:14).³

“When the brothers go about through the world, they should carry *nothing* for the journey,” Francis requires (RegNB 14:1). They are not to carry nor receive money for any reason. Instead, they should rely on the generosity of the people they visit. Rather than seeking to acquire goods, the brothers “should give to all who ask, and if anyone takes what is theirs, they should not demand that it be returned” (RegNB 14:6).

Simplicity, in the Franciscan vision, is really more the basis of a way of life than simply a value to be measured. It is expressed in the first chapter of the first “Rule of Life” that Francis wrote for his followers. “The rule and life of these brothers is this: to live in obedience, in chastity, and without anything of their own, and to follow the teaching and footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ” (RegNB 1:1).

Francis accepts that learning can be beneficial so long as it does not overtake the prayers and devotions of the followers. In a letter to St. Anthony of Padua, who joined the Franciscan Order in about 1220 as a teacher, Francis tells him: “It pleases me that you teach sacred theology to the brothers, as long as—in the words of the Rule—you ‘do not extinguish the Spirit of prayer and devotion’ with study of this kind” (EpAnt 2).

In Praise of Nature

Both Lao Tzu and St. Francis write eloquently about how the natural world can be seen as part of the “religious experience.” In poetic language, they raise up elements of nature that can be seen as ways of praising what is beyond human understanding. In Lao Tzu’s language, that is the “One”; for St. Francis, it is God.

Lao Tzu uses natural imagery to help explain the qualities of the Way:

Heaven in virtue of the One is limpid;
Earth in virtue of the One is settled;
Gods in virtue of the One have their potencies;
The valley in virtue of the One is full;
The myriad creatures in virtue of the One are alive;
Lords and princes in virtue of the One become leaders
in the empire (XXXIX, 85).

For St. Francis of Assisi, the creatures of the earth can be models for human beings in service, understanding, and proper relationship to God. While “He created you and formed you to the image of His beloved Son [in other words as an incarnation of God’s divine nature], . . . all the creatures under heaven, each according to its nature, serve, know and obey their Creator better than you” (Adm 5:1-2).

Francis uses natural imagery and, in fact, seems to become one with—related to—the wonders of creation in order to acknowledge the interconnection of creature and creator and to express a relationship between the two that rivals that of immediate family:

Praised be You, my Lord, with all your creatures,
especially Sir Brother Sun,
Who is the day and through whom you give us light.
And he . . . bears a likeness of You, Most High One.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon
and the stars,
in heaven You formed them clear and precious
and beautiful (CantSol 3-5).

After praising Brother Wind, Sister Water, and Brother Fire, St. Francis ends his list of the creatures and elements with praise to:

Sister Mother Earth,
who sustains and governs us,
and who produces varied fruits
and colored flowers and herbs (CantSol 9).

Wu-Wei vs. a Franciscan Ethic of Service

In *doing* one runs the risk of causing harm, possibly going against the Way: “That which goes against the way will come to an early end” (XXX, 70). And, “whoever does anything to it will ruin it; whoever lays hold of it will lose it” (XXIX, 66). In another image: “Turning back is how the way moves” (XL, 88). So, for Lao Tzu, the Way is not a linear path with mileage posts and street signs to direct one on the journey.

The cyclical nature of the Way, as Lao Tzu describes it, means that there is not a discernible onset, a definable middle, nor necessarily a clear end. “That is why I know the benefit of resorting to no action,” says Lao Tzu (XLII, 99). The rules of physics don’t apply to the ineffable. Its genius is that, through seeming inaction, the Way is achieved.

St. Francis, in contrast, might perceive this as idleness, a vice and “the enemy of the soul” (RegNB 7:11). “All the brothers should always be intent on good works [for] . . . the servants of God must always give themselves totally to prayer or to some good work” (RegNB 7:10).

The Way vs. the Way of Christ

The end reasons for following the Way, which Lao Tzu expresses in the *Tao Te Ching*, are endurance, acceptance, and conformity to nature. “If even heaven and earth cannot go on for ever, much less can man,” he notes. “That is why one follows the way” (XXIII, 51a). The secret is to find fulfillment in the present in order to endure. “Know contentment and you will suffer no disgrace; know when to stop and you will meet with no danger. You can then endure” (XLIV, 100). And again, the man who knows contentment and who perseveres in purpose, will endure (XXXIII, 75).

Finding the Way is a different process from that of learning, according to Lao Tzu. While the person pursuing learning knows more every day, “in the pursuit of the way one does less every day” (XLVIII, 108). He seems to be saying that in not seeking the Way, one will discover it. “One does less and less; until one does nothing at all, and when one does nothing at all there is nothing that is undone” (XLVIII, 108).

Still, in Lao Tzu’s thought, “beautiful deeds can raise a man above others” (LXII, 144). And, there is a form of the golden rule in the *Tao Te Ching*: “Those who are good I treat as good. Those who are not good I also treat as good” (XLIX, 111). In so doing, Lao Tzu’s sage gains in goodness himself. In the same way, the sage gains in good faith by having faith in those who possess good faith as well as those who do not.

For Francis of Assisi, the way is following the example of Jesus Christ, and the end result is to find a place at Jesus’ right hand in heaven. All one’s actions

in this life matter because of the reward to come in the next life, not because of any reward in this life. "The Lord Jesus says to His disciples, *I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me,*" Francis writes (Adm 1:1).

In order for his Rule of Life to be accepted by the pope, Francis professed his obedience and reverence to the Catholic Church, to the pope, and to the pope's successors. This Rule adheres, then, to the Magisterium and beliefs of the Church. Representative of such beliefs is Francis's promotion of the idea that those are condemned who do not believe in the Trinity of God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Those "who do not believe according to the Spirit and the Godhead . . . are condemned" (Adm 1:9). In Francis's writings, it seems essential that all recognize priests as the transmitters of the Eucharist, which Catholics believe is transformed in the Mass into the body and blood of Christ, and accept the primacy of the Spirit through which understanding of God is accessible.

Individual vs. Communal Commitment

In the language of the *Tao Tè Ching* there is an inherent bias toward the individual. "All return to their separate roots," writes Lao Tzu. "Returning to one's roots is known as stillness. This is what is meant by returning to one's destiny" (XVI, 37). All knowledge of the Way, Lao Tzu believes, arises from individual interpretation. Acting on this interpretation "will lead to impartiality, impartiality to kingliness, kingliness to heaven, heaven to the way" (XVI, 38).

There is knowledge and experience that is not for the common person, according to Lao Tzu. "The teaching that uses no words, the benefit of resorting to no action, these are beyond the understanding of all but a very few in the world" (XLII, 99). The reward for decoding the path from earth-bound knowledge to heaven to the Way, is that "at the end of one's days one will meet with no danger" (XVI, 38).

In contrast, Francis of Assisi encourages his followers to put themselves into unknown situations, even if dangerous, in order to achieve their reward in the kingdom of the afterlife. In Francis's thought, expressed in his writings, there is a focus on the service the brothers are to provide to their neighbors and even to their enemies. The purpose of the life is to be for one another and to spread the good news. It is not for individual understanding and greater knowledge of God. The faithful, the followers of the way, are to be "in the service of [the Lord's] love and of nothing else" (ExpPat 5). That service is to be expressed through "love [of] our neighbors as ourselves, by drawing them all with our whole strength to Your love" (ExpPat 5).

In his Rule, Francis includes numerous passages detailing how the brothers are to interact with each other, that they are to be equals and to serve one another. They are to take care of those who are sick and to make decisions about their life together at an annual meeting called a chapter. The brothers are to pray together daily and to assist each other in living out the Rule to which they have committed themselves.

In his discussion of the sage, Lao Tzu does include some sense of acting on behalf of the common good. The sage, "always excels in saving people, and so abandons no one," Lao Tzu says (XXVII, 61). There is an interaction between people and even good and bad provide models for each other. "Hence the good man is the teacher the bad learns from; and the bad man is the material the good works on" (XXVII, 62).

Lao Tzu also uses the image of tree and root to show the relationship of people to each other. The "superior must have the inferior as root; the high must have the low as base," he writes (XXXIX, 86). He frowns upon the lords and princes who refer to themselves as solitary. "There are no words which men detest more than 'solitary,' 'desolate,' and 'hapless,'" he says (XLII, 95).

Conclusion

In Lao Tzu's thought, one cannot be proud and still endure, and, as this paper has suggested, endurance is the purpose for following the Way. "He who brags will have no merit; He who boasts will not endure" (XXIV, 55). The things of this world are not necessary to the follower of the Way. "He who has the way does not abide in them," according to Lao Tzu (XXIV, 55a).

Lao Tzu's Tao is cosmological. St. Francis, too, had a cosmological view of God. His idea of nature is expressed in the Canticle of Creation. Both Lao Tzu and Francis saw themselves as part of a dynamic, ever-changing world.

St. Francis was responding to a culture at war and a Church in "ruins" because of extravagance. His message of simplicity and peace was countercultural. This is in the pattern of Taoism, which was responding to the strictures of a society too tightly bound in ritual and of rulers who argued among themselves. In both Lao Tzu's writing and in the life of St. Francis of Assisi, there is an urgency to get back to the essence, to be genuine. And while they promulgated different "creeds," they are consonant in their fresh interpretation of traditional texts and in their unconventional approach to achieving a life in union with the One Way. After studying the writings of both Lao Tzu and St. Francis of Assisi, the reader can only conclude that what we so often experience as "murky" and "ineffable" is much clearer for their efforts at illumination.

¹All references to the writings of Lao Tzu are taken from *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching*, translated by D.C. Lau (Penguin Books, 1963).

²Unless otherwise noted all references to the writings of Francis are taken from *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, trans. Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Cap., and Ignatius C. Brady, OFM (Paulist Press, 1982).

³References to early biographical sources are from *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies*, ed. Marion A. Habig (Franciscan Herald Press, 1985).



Robert Pawell, OFM

a prayer to st. francis

Naked you stood up
to your father
following a voice
in your head
setting off on a journey
to rebuild churches.

Naked you stood in
the pure snow
following a conviction
in your heart
setting all pleasure free
except Yours.

Naked I stand
before you
following your voice
in my head
setting off in my world
your spirit.

TWO POEMS

by Joseph Juracek, OFM

oh hugger of lepers

howling
wolves, howling
deus meus
eavesdropped the moon
et omnia

a hugged leper bandages a leprous world

his wounded hands impart the stigmata upon all creation

illuminating the illuminator

chirping
birds, like an earnest concerto
pax
to all that breathe
et bonum

**Franciscans in Vietnam:
Faithful Sons and Daughters**

Alexander J. Lewis, OFM Conv.*

This article is dedicated to Anthony Pham, OFM Conv. who lived the Gospel every day and who entered eternal life on August 16, 1999.

It is Christmas in Vietnam 1998. I am traveling through the countryside in the south as I begin writing this narration. I catch a glimpse of the landscape: fertile rice paddies, green fields of land and water, and common country folk nurturing the earth. An elderly friar in the van notices my contemplation of the countryside and leans over to share with me the Vietnamese word for country, *dat nuoc*, which literally means land water.

There are legends which talk about the birth of this country. One story conveys the marriage which took place between the Fairy *Au Co* and the Dragon King *Lac Long* which created a union between the land and the sea. This relationship between the land and the water is evident everywhere in Vietnam. The people depend on the land and the water to give them their daily sustenance. Mostly the water is a friend. Sometime, however, it is a foe. Only three weeks ago there were heavy storms which caused great destruction in several parts of the country. Travelers to Vietnam do not drink the polluted water or use the ice for fear of getting sick. *Dat nuoc* reminds us of the *yin* and the *yang*. It is often the chaotic and challenging experiences of life which bring with them the potential for growth and harmony. Or at least, that is the hope.

The legendary and romantic visions of picturesque landscapes in Vietnam disguise for only a brief moment the suffering of a people who have endured the hardships of warfare and the present reality of poverty experienced by ninety percent of the population. It is the common folk of Vietnam who have understood well the sensitive balance of *dat nuoc* and the *yin* and *yang* of life.

*The author and editor apologize that the Vietnamese diacritical marks are missing.

The Vietnam War is referred to here as "the event." Today it is clear that the country still does not have a solid infrastructure. There is widespread economic corruption within the country which does not allow financial prosperity to reach the poor.

Reminders of "Agent Orange" still exist with two and a half million acres of forest still suffering from defoliation and a high rate of birth defects in the Vietnamese population. Add to this the vast deforestation which takes place each year for the sake of the immediate needs people have for firewood and land for agriculture. One fourth of the timber cut down each year is never reforested. Deforestation and pollution in Vietnam present an ecological disaster. It receives little attention, however, since the daily priority is subsistence living.

It is difficult to be concerned about the environment when much of the population worries about where the next meal is coming from. The past always teaches us that it is the common folk who suffer most in the wars perpetrated by conflicting ideologies which often have nothing to do with peace and justice but only indicate an obsession with power.

Today Vietnam is a country of about seventy-six million people. Since the government's initiation of *doi moi* (open door) policy, Vietnam walks a tightrope between the government's relaxation of control and its constant need for control at one and the same time. On the one hand, the government is opening the country's doors to increased free enterprise, less centralization, and more investment from other countries. On the other hand, the government keeps a suspicious eye on all activities. Even mail is subject to confiscation if the authorities do not think an item should enter the country. It is a confusing paradox. The Church is among those highly scrutinized by the government. Ten percent of the population is Roman Catholic, which makes the Church by far the largest religious body outside the traditional beliefs of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. It is truly marvelous to experience the Catholic community of this country operating under the constraints of the government. Wherever there are Catholics in Vietnam, there is a great deal of joy and devotion.

I had never dreamed of going to Vietnam. In June 1997, our Province Chapter appointed me prefect of formation for our Province. I quickly became aware of the steady flow of Vietnamese students entering our formation program. All of them had been born in Vietnam. Some of them were among the "boat people" who had fled Vietnam after the fall of Saigon in 1975. Of the two and a half million Vietnamese people who now live outside Vietnam, half live in the United States. It is no secret that California has an abundant population of Vietnamese people. Many of them are Roman Catholics and are a vibrant part of ecclesial life.

Some of the Vietnamese friars and postulants of our Province hope to return to their homeland one day to work among their people. While this is not possible at the present time, given the delicate balance of the relationship between the Church and the State in Vietnam, they look to this as a future possibility.

And so it happened that three of our Vietnamese students and I visited Vietnam during the Christmas break in 1998. All three men have siblings and extended family living in Vietnam. They had not seen these family members for ten years. Our arrival at the airport in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) was an encounter filled with deep emotion. You can imagine what it is like not to see a brother or sister for many years and then, all of a sudden, to be back in one's homeland.

As I encountered the countryside on Christmas day, I felt compelled to share with others how the Church and the Franciscan community are very much alive in Vietnam in a constant balancing act with government officials. It is a balancing act they have learned to do well. In particular, I want to share the vibrancy of our Franciscan brothers and sisters in Vietnam, who live daily a tense existence in a socialist country. That they have not only survived but grown in numbers through the turmoil is a living witness of what incredible human beings these Franciscan men and women are. Above all, the Vietnamese Franciscans are a prayerful community who work closely with the poorest of the poor. They are a close-knit family. They are people who exhibit strong evangelical convictions. They live the Gospel.

As I write these words, I am constantly aware of the sensitive climate in which our Franciscan brothers and sisters live in Vietnam. They have learned how to walk in the midst of the tension and still be effective in their ministerial settings. And so I write with prudence since I do not want to publish anything which might hurt the delicate balance the Franciscans encounter there. I want to respect the boundaries they have established in their current relationship with the government. Having been blessed with a sacred experience in Vietnam, I want to share it with other Franciscan brothers and sisters in a way that allows us to pray and to support the Church and the Franciscans there. I encourage all of us to understand the sociological reality Franciscans live with in that troubled country and to experience great joy in knowing that we have members of our Franciscan family living in that part of the world who daily dedicate their lives for the sake of the Gospel.

Including the pre-novitiate students, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM) have one hundred and fifty-six sisters in twelve locations in Vietnam. Their ministries include a lot of social work. This is a particular way of gaining acceptance from the government, which shows more interest in religious communities who can offer social services. The FMMs work among two ethnic

minorities, lepers, street children, and young people who are blind. They operate at least twelve government-recognized schools for young people who have been displaced in society and would otherwise not receive special attention educationally. The FMMs call these programs "Love Schools." Their goal is to help educate illiterate young people before it is too late for them to find their way in society. In addition, the FMMs operate free medical dispensaries which are recognized by the government. The sisters see these dispensaries as a way of helping the poorest of the poor enter into the medical system which otherwise would not be available to them.

The Friars Minor number one hundred and forty-four, including the novices. They have seventeen postulants. Altogether, there are eighteen friaries. I had the opportunity to visit several of their houses. Everywhere I was treated with the greatest hospitality, and I found in the friars very patient teachers as I spent a great deal of the time studying the language. Their joy and humor were wonderful to behold. In truth, I found Franciscan men and women in Vietnam to exhibit a joyfulness and laughter that was very contagious. The friars, like the FMMs, are involved in a lot of social work. They are also responsible for continuing to build many churches. This seems very Franciscan to me—building places of worship and building up the community of believers. I attended a Mass in which a new Franciscan church was blessed by the local bishop. Over fifteen hundred people attended the celebration. In addition, the friars are involved in HIV/AIDS ministry, as well as farming, teaching theology and philosophy in the major seminary, working with lepers, street children, the Secular Franciscan Order, and Franciscan Youth. Formation ministry is a priority in Vietnam because there are so many students at this time. They are studying a variety of subjects (including architecture, sociology, electrical engineering, medicine, psychology, language, computer skills, philosophy, theology, and music) as they prepare for a future in which they can more comprehensively serve the needs of the Church and the poor. Like the FMMs, the friars have learned how to provide social services which the government finds acceptable.

On Christmas eve I visited a Poor Clare monastery just outside Saigon. These are the only Poor Clares in the country. The community numbers around thirty nuns of a variety of ages. As I struggled during Mass to work my way through a section of the Eucharistic prayer in Vietnamese, I could see the amusement on the faces of the nuns at my awkward pronunciation. It is my experience that Poor Clares everywhere in the world exhibit the joy of true contemplatives. They also enjoy being connected to other parts of the Franciscan family. After Mass, we all shared in a meal which included lots of singing. One of the sisters sang "Jingle Bells" in English, while I was coaxed into singing the same song in Vietnamese. A few days later, I received an envelope

from the abbess which included photographs of the monastery and pictures of St. Clare and the Blessed Mother to give to the Poor Clares in Aptos, California.

The Secular Franciscan Order in this small country of Vietnam has over three thousand members representing seventy-five fraternities. In Vietnam, the SFO is not officially recognized by the government. I had the pleasure of meeting the national minister of the SFO on Christmas day, who came to spend some time with the Franciscan Youth. It is clear that the members of the SFO in Vietnam understand their existence in three dimensions: 1) to live the Franciscan way of life, 2) to become an energetic voice for the Church, and 3) to become a strong voice in a socialist country. In the parishes, the Secular Franciscans are leaders among the people of God. Pastors love them because they are humble servants, and bishops love them because they all love St. Francis. The members of the SFO are also catechists and choir directors. They have a house of prayer, support farming projects, and are forerunners of evangelization among the people.

The Franciscan Youth organization, supported by the SFO, numbers almost a thousand young people in twenty-five fraternities. I spent most of Christmas day with a group of Franciscan Youth who took the occasion of Christ's birthday to go fishing. I had never heard of a group of teenagers getting together on Christmas morning to go fishing in the countryside. The site was a pond operated by the SFO—a place to breed fish to help feed people. It was wonderful to see the sheer joy on these young faces as each of them caught their share of fish with simple bamboo poles and string. Later they cooked some of the fish for lunch and shared an afternoon of traditional food, laughter, and song. The Franciscan Youth gave the remainder of the fish to four groups of people they visited that afternoon: a home for blind children, a home for the aged, disabled people, and a house dedicated to helping extremely poor women take care of their babies.

As I try to place myself in the mind and heart of our Holy Father Francis and Holy Mother Clare, it is most likely they never thought their Rules of Life would reach this distant country made up of land and water. Francis and Clare did not even know Vietnam existed. They had no idea that one day there would be such a strong group of Franciscan brothers and sisters to carry on their message of Gospel charity in Vietnam. What we do know is that Francis and Clare understood the challenges of life and the realities of the imperfect world in which they lived. They did a lot of letting go, soul searching, and trusting that God would see their Rules of Life grow. They chose poverty and a life of prayer over material wealth and secular living. They became poor, not because being poor was something fancy to behold, but in order to be evangelical witnesses of Christ's love for the Church and the world.

I imagine Francis and Clare are both filled with joy in knowing that their historical roots have reached the *dat nuoc* of Vietnam. Francis envisioned a way of life in which following the Gospel of Christ would include everyone. His was a vision which included every man, woman, and youth. His was a vision which invited the participation of the married and the single and those desiring the consecrated life: friars, nuns, and brothers and sisters of penance. There was room for everyone in the Franciscan family.

I have no doubt that Francis and Clare are happy in knowing that the vision God created through them made its way to the *dat nuoc* of Vietnam. Their spirit is alive there. The general population, especially Catholics, know who the Franciscans are. They are the people who live close to the poor and are willing to be poor themselves. They are the ones who live simple lives and exhibit joy in the midst of suffering. They are the ones who pray with the people, sing with them, and pray with them through the liturgical life of the Church.

Lest anyone think that I have romantic notions about the Franciscans in Vietnam, I wish to say that life in Vietnam is not easy. Franciscans there did not achieve their effectiveness overnight. It is clear that the Franciscans of Vietnam experience the same challenges of community living, ministerial duties, and differing viewpoints as Franciscans do in other parts of the world. We are all part of the human condition and cannot escape the challenges Francis gave each of us to live poverty, to be men and women of prayer, and to live true fraternal lives. It would be unwise for myself or any of us to think that Franciscans in Vietnam have built the perfect fraternity. Furthermore, it is clear that Franciscans in Vietnam have succeeded in living under economic and political constraints which do not exist in many other parts of the world.

Given the social challenges with which Vietnamese Franciscans live on a daily basis, it is clear that the vision of Francis and Clare is abundantly alive in Vietnam. Life there is not a romance novel but a real challenging saga filled with both historical and ongoing pain. As my month in Vietnam came to a close, I was aware that the calendar had turned its page to the new year. It was the beginning of 1999, and the beginning of the third millenium of Christianity was only a year away. In a few days, Vietnam would celebrate Tet, the three day festival ushering in the lunar New Year. It is a time in which families come together, incense is burned to pray for good luck in the new year, altars are erected, offerings of food are made to the gods and the deceased, cemeteries are visited, and flowers are everywhere. Even the poorest of the country use their salaries to celebrate Tet.

I have thought to myself how important it is for the people of Vietnam to celebrate Tet. For a moment, it takes their minds off their problems and allows them the chance to hope for a better future. It is a future which Vietnam de-

serves after the many years of war and economic disaster. The Franciscan men, women, and youth of Vietnam challenged me greatly and enriched my spirituality. I know that I will return. I have new Franciscan brothers and sisters there. I have new friends. I want to see the fertile countryside again and to be reminded of the relationship between *dat nuoc*, the land and the water, the *yin* and the *yang*. I want to pray daily for the people of Vietnam and to continue exploring ways in which the life and the ministry of our Franciscan brothers and sisters can be supported here.

We who are Franciscans at the beginning of the twentieth-first century have a challenging call to be who we profess to be—lesser brothers and sisters in a very imperfect world. I am reminded in this present moment of the first phrase I learned in my studies of the Vietnamese language. It is a quotation from Hebrews: “Gie-su Kito van la mot, hom qua, hom nay, va mai mai [Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (13:8)].” It is Christ’s message we preach and live. It is His Kingdom we proclaim. It is the Kingdom of love, justice, and peace for all peoples of the earth. In Vietnam, I am happy to say, the message of Christ’s Kingdom has found faithful followers in the life and spirituality of our Franciscan brothers and sisters.

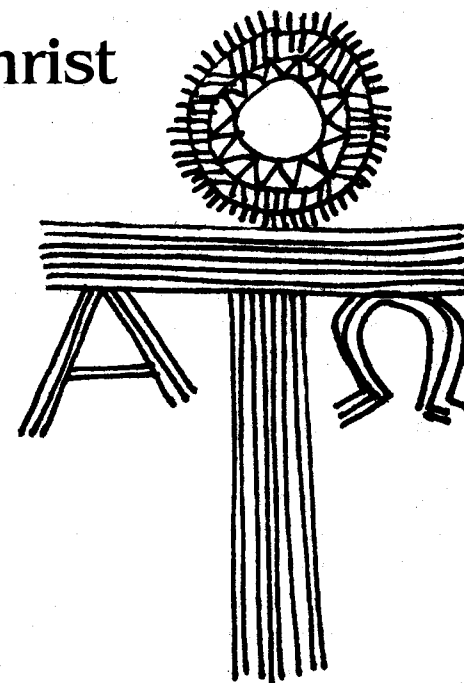
Jesus Christ

the same

yesterday

today

forever



(Heb. 13:8)

Robert Pawell, OFM

Franciscan Life in the Midst of Social and Moral Upheaval

Madge Karecki, SSJ-TOSF

In April 1994 the world celebrated South Africa's "miracle." The transition to a majority-ruled democracy that was accomplished without a civil war or racial bloodbath. Three hundred years of colonial domination and forty-six years of legalized apartheid were thrown off at the country's polling stations as millions of South Africans voted for the first time in their lives. The victory of the ANC (African National Congress) led to the triumphant inauguration of Nelson Mandela, the country's first Black¹ president. A political prisoner for twenty-seven years, his personal struggle against apartheid embodied the struggle of the nation. Mandela was president and the nation gave a collective sigh of relief.

The inauguration was followed by a honeymoon period. International journalists almost ceased covering South Africa; there was no violence to report! In the first six months the Government of National Unity² (GNU), went about the business of organizing itself and was left in relative peace. Apartheid had been eradicated, at least legally. Is there need of a Franciscan witness in what is called "the new South Africa"?

South Africa under Apartheid

The apartheid system of racial separation was rigid and well defined. Every person knew his or her place. Signs marking public places indicated who was allowed in and who was not. "Right of admission signs" can still be seen above the doors of restaurants and some public buildings. Things were clear-cut in those days. Behavior was also clearly defined. White people were "bosses" and "madams" and Black people were garden "boys" and maids. Along with these titles the behavior followed. Relationships developed in the apartheid

context. Friends "across the color bar" were frowned upon; after all, Blacks had to know "their place." Hendrik Verwoed, a former prime minister, had defined the the role of Black people in South Africa as being "hewers of wood and drawers of water." Subservience was the expected mode of behavior for Black people. Hence, education for them was limited to the practical skills necessary to serve their masters and madams. It only followed then that their salaries, housing, and means of travel all fell well below what was available for the White population. Thus the tragedy of apartheid played itself out. The crimes of the apartheid system not only left an imprint on the lives of Black people, but on the lives of their perpetrators as well.

Racial separation bred fear and suspicion among all the peoples of South Africa. Whites, priding themselves on their superiority, felt threatened by the Black people because of their sheer numbers. Whites built walls around their homes and installed elaborate security systems to protect themselves! The situation was ironic: Whites were in control, but feared they could not control the Blacks so they sought to keep them out of their world. The net result is that both Blacks and Whites bear the mark of apartheid within them. New South Africa has not changed that fact. Whites continue to be afraid and Blacks have adopted what Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu has called, "a culture of entitlement."

Under apartheid Black people were not, for the most part, paid a living wage. To compensate for this, White employers supplemented their earnings with packets of maize meal, sugar, and flour. If the employers were generous, some meat might also be included. Now many Blacks believe they are "entitled" to things without paying for them. Politicized by the ANC in the apartheid struggle, people were encouraged not to pay for rent, water, or electricity because housing and utilities were supplied by the government. Now many people feel entitled to services without paying. This problem is being addressed by the GNU in a national building program called *Masakhane* which means "let us work together." Though this is indeed important, there are tremendous social and moral questions facing the nation. Apartheid and its accompanying world view have been dismantled, but for many people, no social and moral norms have replaced it. The result is that the country is in the throes of social and moral upheaval.

Though it is true that tribal life in African society had a strict moral and social code of conduct, years of migratory labor practices have had serious consequences on family life. Materialism and the apartheid system have eroded the moral fiber of African family life. Social analysts now conclude that South Africa is in a state of moral and social upheaval. The norms of tribal life and the norms which held the society together under apartheid no longer prevail. A sense of lawlessness pervades much of society. Some people justify their

behavior and the ensuing chaos by appealing to the hurts inflicted upon them because of apartheid, while others say that they act in one way or another because of fear. How does one live as a Franciscan person under such circumstances? Does the Franciscan charism have relevance in this situation?

Living as a Franciscan in a Changing South African Society

How one lives is always a matter of choice. For me the choice is to draw inspiration from St. Francis's vision of gospel living. I have been in South Africa for over ten years. I remain here because I believe that the charism, if lived well, has much to say to the people of South Africa.

I live and work as part of a team with two Franciscan Friars. We have a special purpose. Our task is to establish a Franciscan Institute in Southern Africa. We consider this very important work since there is a need to sink the roots of the Franciscan charism more deeply into the soil of the African continent. Our very work keeps us mindful of the need not only to teach the charism but to live it.

Some basic elements of the Franciscan tradition help me respond to the people and events in South Africa. First there is the basic conviction that Christ is present in this situation. It is this incarnational stance that allows me to approach people and situations in faith and with understanding. Basically most South Africans are trying to cope with the social and moral change with good will and honesty even if it is with a measure of confusion and disillusionment. Faith in Christ brings serenity and gives direction. Christ's gospel message provides me and many others with a way to respond to the changing times.

Secondly, a commitment to a way of life marked by simplicity helps one to give priority to the essentials of life. Materialism has taken hold of South African society. As more and more Black people realize what was available to White South Africans, they want to share the wealth. All segments of society need to be challenged to distinguish needs from wants and to allow the gospel, not the past regime, to be the measure of economic justice.

Thirdly, there is an African proverb that says: "A person is a person with others" (*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*). Community is the great African value. As a Franciscan I, too, hold community as an essential value. This is a significant meeting point with African culture. The Franciscan vision of community challenges the African view because it widens out the community to embrace people of every ethnic, racial, and social background, not just the tribe. Franciscan community goes further still because it brings in the faith dimension. Community is not just human relationships, but human relationships in Christ. The bonds created among people because of baptism moves us to seek the common good.

Finally, there is the Franciscan mandate to announce peace to all. The mission to be a reconciler is an essential one. Peace cannot become a reality unless people are willing to be reconciled. Reconciliation does not deny the past, but provides one with a vision that goes beyond the past. Reconciliation gives new energy for creating a more just society, one where peace is the order of the day. Some of the current violence in South Africa is rooted in rage, long suppressed and without a forum for expression. Some of the violence is the outcome of undisciplined living in a society where social and moral norms have crumbled. Peace and reconciliation cannot become realities unless basic social questions are addressed. Justice will come only when there is reconciliation.

South Africa is certainly not in the same situation as Bosnia, Burundi, or Rwanda. We are not in a state of civil war. We are, though, in a state of profound social and moral confusion rooted in the apartheid experience and propelled by governmental corruption, inadequate examples of moral rectitude, and an amoral stance toward social questions. Is it possible to live Franciscan life in this context? Yes. Does Franciscan life have anything to offer such a society? Yes. The challenge is continually before us.

Endnotes

¹The term "Black" is not a derogatory term in South Africa. All the peoples born here are Africans, hence the word "Black" only denotes specific ethnic origins.

²The Government of National Unity is made up of various political parties all of which had to get 5% support from their constituencies. The three largest are the African National Congress (ANC), the National Party (NP) and the Inkhatha Freedom Party (IFP).

As for the brothers who go,
they can live spiritually among the Saracens
and other nonbelievers in two ways.
One way is not to engage in arguments or disputes
but to be subject to every human creature for God's sake
and to acknowledge that they are Christians.
The other way is to announce the Word of God,
when they see it pleases the Lord,
in order that [unbelievers] may believe in Almighty God,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Creator of all. . . .

RegNB 16: 5-7.

The Circle of Life: A Symbol of Union and Strength

Leonie Kindiki, LSoSF

Webster's Dictionary defines a circle as a closed plane curve. The definition is simple and straightforward. We associate a circle with completeness, fullness, wholeness, and unity. We can, of course, find many other images to reflect these values. I personally think that there is plenty of food for thought in a circle.

Symbolism of the Circle in African Traditional Societies

The symbol of a circle permeates almost every aspect of African life—God, nature, relationships, daily activities, death, and life after death. The circle is a symbol of vital union and life. Vital union is expressed in a bond of human relationships—in the family, village, clan, etc. We in Africa strongly believe that where there are relationships there is life, and life is sacred.

The African conceives of God as the Supreme Being. None can add or take away anything from God. Among the numerous names attributed to God are: *Ggwe byonna*, meaning "God you are all," and *Nyamuzinda*, meaning "God is the completion of everything." It is in this Being that everything finds its completion.

God is the giver of life. This is depicted in the "movement" of the sun and the stars, the phases of the moon, the cycle of seasons, and even moreso in nature's cyclic rhythm—sowing and harvesting, birth, life, and death. The circle figures quite prominently in traditional rituals, too. Everything has its beginning and end in God. God alone is the ultimate source of life.

Human relationships are extremely important in African cultures. Note that I am not saying "culture"—for there are as many cultures in Africa as there are races and tribes! In every culture, however, the center of existence

is the family, clan, and the community at large. These three aspects are brought together in one huge celebration of life—and the circle is paramount in these celebrations.

Every important event in the life of the village is commemorated by ceremonies which include music, dancing, eating, and drinking. There is great cohesion and mutuality in sharing our meals; as the proverb says, relationship is in the eating together. In our cultural beliefs, food and drink are closely bound with life processes. The family sits around the food in a circle. Every passerby or caller, friend or foe, is graciously invited to partake of the meal. At a meal (which is believed to be shared with the living dead, the ancestors), discord, bitterness, and ill-feelings are forgotten. All are one, for sharing food carries the symbolism further. It expresses the fact that life is shared in peace and harmony with others.

In many areas of Uganda, men and women come together to share a pot of beer after the day's chores. A pot of beer is placed in the compound in the cool of the evening. People then sit around it and amicably share its contents. No one needs an invitation—all are welcome because joining the "circle" is seen as a participation in the life of the community.

There is a continuous flow of life which binds the living and the ancestors together. It is believed that the life of our dead is re-lived or reborn in the young. Children, for example, are named after their long dead relatives. There is thus a living communion which forms a strong solidarity between the living and the living dead. Life thus becomes a symbol of union binding us into ever closer ties with God, nature, and the community, thus completing the circle.

Christian and Franciscan Implications

The Christian implications for this symbol can be derived from the Eucharist. We gather together daily as a community to share and to participate in the life of Christ through the Eucharistic celebration. Through Holy Communion we enter into an intimate relationship of love with God and with others.

The sacrament transports us into the realm of the deep mystery of the Trinity, for the Trinity is the symbol of union and love. Through the Eucharist, our relationships with others are strengthened, thus bringing us into the close bonds of a Eucharistic community.

Francis, without being a theologian, came to realize that the Eucharist is a relational sacrament as well as the summit of our apostolic ministry. We are empowered with the life of the Spirit, so we must go out and empower others too. The Eucharist thus compels us to get out of our complacency and self-centeredness, to go out to the other in humble service and

love. This is a sharing, not only of material benefits, but of our time, talents, and skills, as well as of our spiritual gifts without discrimination. Through mutual sharing the community grows and expands to embrace others outside the fold.

In the Eucharist, our woundedness is healed. In solidarity with Christ and the saints, we plead for God's healing mercy. Not only are we healed as individuals, but as a community. Francis found on-going conversion in the mystery of Christ's Body and Blood. He exhorted his followers to have a deep reverence for the Eucharist because through "the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ that which is in the heaven and on earth is brought to peace and is reconciled to the all powerful God" (EpOrd 12-13). Our lives can find fulfillment and completion only in union with God, For us Franciscans this is the goal of our spiritual journey into God. Our lives begin and end in God.

Thus, as Christian and as Franciscan, we come together around the Eucharistic Christ to gain strength for the give and take of social relationships which help us appreciate life. Through the Eucharist we celebrate the love and joy of the communion of saints as an anticipation of our future life with God in heaven.

Like the Holy Spirit of the Lord
ever-present everywhere the shining presence
of the followers of St. Francis, shining spirit
outlives centuries, outlasts time.

It speaks above the din of endless battle,
consoles our dread of dying, of the dead,
anoints the hand of peace with a kiss,
and comforts worldly sorrows with a song.

Where would that tender Saint kneel to pray?—
to whom preach . . . how clothe the naked,
feed the starving, bless the martyred . . . touch
such needful souls—were he still here?

He is. He preaches still, to all creation,
kneels in mud stirred with blood and tears,
bids the sun bedazzle clouds of war, and
embraces suffering, others', as his own.

So do Franciscans, loving earth and heaven, choose,
like Maximilian, to pay the price of sacrifice.

**THE
"FRANCIS"
IN
FRANCISCAN**

by
Patricia Craddock

The Cord, 50.5 (2000)

Voices from the Past

**St. Francis
in Russian Spirituality**

Lyle Peyovich, OFM Cap. and
Gregory Francis Smutko, OFM Cap.

This article was originally published in
The Cord, 4 (October, 1954), pp. 310-314.

St. Francis is one of the few western medieval saints who has been highly venerated in Russia. Since there is a striking similarity between Franciscan and Russian spirituality, Christian Russia embraced Francis as her own, recognizing in him her own spirit and life. And even though he is a Roman Catholic, his feast is celebrated throughout Russia on October 4. The Fordham Russian Center assures us that the immortal *Fioretti* has so captivated the Russian heart that it is the most popular Catholic book in the Russian language.¹ All of Russia knew whom Lenin referred to when on his death bed he cried:

I have made a great mistake. Our main purpose was to give freedom to a multitude of oppressed people. But our method of action has created worse evils and horrible massacres. You know that my deadly nightmare is to feel that I am lost in this ocean of blood, coming from innumerable victims. It is too late to turn back now, but in order to save our country, Russia, we should have had ten men like Francis of Assisi. With ten such men we would have saved Russia.

The core of the Franciscan spirit is Christ, the God-Man. For Francis, the life of the Friars Minor is to observe the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ. St. Bonaventure, who is considered the foremost exponent of Franciscan spirituality, adopted St. Francis's view of Christ as the center of all things, not only of philosophy and the sciences, but of theology as well. No one can read Dostoevsky or Solovie, the two great thinkers who have succeeded most admirably in expressing the aspirations of the Russian people, without being struck

by the thoroughly Christocentric and Franciscan spirit that moves them. Berdiaev points out with gratification that ultimately Russian mysticism does not differ from the mysticism of St. Bonaventure.

In her golden book, *The Humiliated Christ in Modern Russian Thought*, Nadejda Gorodetzky shows that one of the most constant features in Russian folk-lore, literature, and theology is the figure of the humiliated Christ. Dostoevsky, who has revealed and immortalized the soul of Christian Russia in his world-famous novels, summarized this attitude in the words: "I have never been able to conceive mankind without Christ." And again: "If it were not for the precious image of Christ before us, we should be undone and altogether lost." In fact, his whole purpose in writing was to bring Christ back into the center of Russian social, political, and economic life. In both Franciscan and Russian spirituality, therefore, Christ is the key to everything.

Whoever is preoccupied with seeing Christ in the center of all things will illuminate the world with his joy. But with what do we associate St. Francis if not with exuberant joy? We find him saying: "What are the friars but joyous minstrels of the Lord, who move and excite the hearts of men to spiritual joy?" This joy is reechoed by Dostoevsky: "Love all God's creatures and pray God to make you cheerful. Be cheerful as children and as the birds." What is remarkable about Franciscan and Russian joy is that it thrives on suffering. St. Francis composed his Sun Song while prostrate with illness and almost blind. The Russian people, as Dostoevsky points out again and again, also realize the atoning power of their suffering and with tears of joy bless God and cause others to bless Him.

"With all thy heart love the Love which loves thee, love the Love which desires thee, and has created thee to draw thee wholly to Himself" (SP). What more shall we say of our holy Father's love of God? We cannot even picture St. Francis without some manifestation of this love. Now we see him caring for the lepers, his brother Christians; at another time, giving his habit to some ragged beggar; again, with a lark on his shoulder, a lamb at his feet, and the Sun Song on his lips: "Praise be to Thee, my Lord, through all Thy creatures. . . . Praise be to Thee, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth. . . . Praise and bless the Lord and give Him thanks and serve Him with great humility."

Dostoevsky, in a like vein, gives words to the Russian soul which might well have been sung by Francis himself: "Love a man even in his sin, for that is the semblance of Divine Love, and in the highest love on earth. Love all God's creation,—the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything." It is this sublime dogma of love which has made Dostoevsky peerless among Christian novelists and has made the world pay tribute to the all-embracing love of the Christian Russian soul.

What saint has had a more tender devotion to the Immaculate Mother of God than St. Francis? Celano assures us that he rejoiced like a child over every mark of love and esteem shown her. St. Francis consecrated himself and his entire Order to Mary and always cherished St. Mary of the Angels as the cradle of his Order. The beautiful Marian prayers of the liturgy and the Little Office could not satisfy his devotion to Mary, which overflowed in hymns and prayers composed in her honor. The most charming of these is his "Salutation of the Blessed Virgin." His children in all three Orders have always cherished this devotion to Mary as their personal heritage. St. Anthony, St. Bonaventure, Blessed John Duns Scotus, St. Bernadin of Siena, and St. Lawrence of Brindisi—all champions of Mary's prerogatives—burned themselves out to enlighten the Church with their profession of Mary's glory. St. Lawrence of Brindisi speaks for the whole Order when he concludes that Mary is, after Christ, God's greatest blessing to the Universal Church, the blessing of blessings than which none greater could be thought of, since she can do all things for us with God, the Almighty. Franciscan spirituality cannot be imagined without this tender devotion to Mary.

Now devotion to the Mother of God is also an essential part of Russian spirituality. The Holy Father in his Marian Year Encyclical calls upon our Russian brethren to unite their prayers with ours, "knowing full well how greatly they venerate the Mother of Jesus Christ and celebrate her Immaculate Conception." The Byzantine liturgy is at once the source and expression of Russian devotion to the Mother of God. It is resplendent with numerous and exquisite prayers to Mary, such as this solemn commemoration:

It is indeed proper to bless thee, Mother of God, the eternally blessed and completely sinless one and the Mother of God. Higher in honor than the Seraphim, who without harm to thy virginity didst give birth to the word of God: thee we extol, true Mother of God.²

The Russian liturgy insistently repeats this versicle in the first antiphon: "through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us."³

An excellent example of Russian devotion to Mary, the Mother of God, is the veneration of icons. Nearly every Russian Christian reserves a place of honor in his home for an icon of Mary. He keeps a lamp burning before it and kneeling there recites his prayers. Thus, Seraphim of Sarov, one of the latest Russian saints, expired while kneeling before his beloved icon, "The Holy Virgin of Tenderness."⁴

What is the Mother of God? Dostoevsky, groping for words to express the Russian love for Mary, replies that she is "the great Mother, the hope of the human race." He created a positive type of Russian sanctity in the person of Father Zossima, who gained literary immortality because of radiant joy and

seraphic love. Dostoevsky's model for Zossima was St. Tychon of Zadonsk, the most beloved saint of modern Russia, whose spirituality was centered around the Cross, the sufferings of Christ, and Divine Love crucified. St. Tychon, like St. Francis, taught this to the people and assured them that this image of the humiliated, crucified Christ would preserve them from sin and lead them to beatitude. Father Zossima so resembles the Poverello that he is called the Russian St. Francis. Ivan, one of the "Brothers Karamazov," even calls him "Seraphic Father." This, we believe, is the fundamental reason why Zossima is the ideal Russian saint and why St. Francis enjoys such popularity in Russia—because they are *seraphic* fathers, one in fiction, one in reality.

Bishop Sheen lists love of humankind as "the first characteristic note of the Russian people" (*Life is Worth Living*); and Helen Iswolsky, in her penetrating *Soul of Russia*, shows that every ideology in Russian spiritual and cultural history was formed by love.

No one should be surprised that we have relied to a large extent on literature to reveal the spirit of Russia, for the spirituality and culture of every civilization finds its best expression in its literature. This is especially true of Russia, for Solovie insists that the basic idea of Russian literature is a religious and moral one founded on the conviction of the sanctity of human personality and human life.

We have frequently quoted Dostoevsky because his message is the message of Christ, his model is the life of Christ, and his philosophy is the philosophy of Christ. With these three he has been able to portray the Christian spirit of Russia better than any other author. The message, model, and philosophy of Dostoevsky are the same as those of St. Francis; hence, his great appeal to us Franciscans.

These are but a few of the similarities between the Franciscan and Russian spiritualities which bring us to a greater understanding and love of our suffering Russian brothers and sisters. These spiritualities move us to greater obedience to the pleas of our Mother, pleas that we pray and sacrifice ourselves that Russia soon may be one with us in love, in freedom and in faith.

Endnotes

¹The eighth Russian edition has sold out. The Fordham Russian Center would like to publish a new edition if it could find some assistance.

²The Byzantine Liturgy, Fordham Russian Center, 1953, p. 50.

³Ibid. p. 20.

⁴More examples of Russian devotion to Mary can be found in "Mary in the Eastern Liturgies" by Very Rev. Cuthbert Gumbinger, OFM Cap., and in the Encyclopedic *Mariology* (edited by Father Juniper Carol, OFM, published by Bruce Co.)

Because October languishes with love,
Flinging quick beauty down like words,
Sighing out leaves through the night
For her beautiful Lover,

Because October walks unshod,
Is wounded entirely with purple loneliness,
Has no defenses for her incredible dreams,
This was your hour.

This was your hour, with the blood that once
Scorched this whole arteried map with riotous flame,
Seeping like sighs from five most perfect wounds.
This was your hour, and your eyes that owned
The universe once, like dollars, now exchange
The Umbrian hills, the spread of stars on sky,
For penury of blindness.

Will they stand
Around you, Francis, weeping?—Let song split
The stones, and tear the hearts out of the trees,
For Christ has kissed you dead!

No other hour
Is yours, none knows your soul except October
When the whole earth is dreaming of her Lover
And the air waits all day and night, like a woman.

O great, dark mystery, cleave me flesh from bone!
How Christ shall kiss me dead
When I am blind.

Sister Mary Francis, PC

[This poem was first published in *The Cord* in October, 1951 (Vol 1) page 221.]

Franciscans in Mindanao

Erwin Schoenstein, OFM

Spanish Conquistadores bringing Christianity to the Philippines in the sixteenth century found Muslim communities in many areas especially in Mindanao. Since that time difficult relations between Christians and Moslems have peaked and waned up to the present.

Baloi, Lanao del Norte

Franciscans of the San Pedro Bautista Province in the Philippines, inspired by St. Francis's visit with the Sultan of Egypt in 1219, volunteered to live among Muslims in Mindanao to show that Muslims and Christians could live together as brothers and sisters.

Bishop Bienvenido Tuddud of the Prelature of Marawi welcomed friars Jerome Oringo, Lino Corpin, and Erwin Schoenstein in 1983. They made their start in Baloi, a town over nine-five percent Muslim. There the friars developed some lasting friendships, but also faced threats, fires, and even a grenade. They stayed on, however, and their house has even become a formation center where friars who have finished their college and two years of theological training spend one year preparing for final vows. There are eleven integrees in formation in Baloi at present.

Campo Uno, Basilan

Other friars of the Province went to Basilan in the southernmost area at the invitation of Bishop Jose Maria Querexeta, CME. He offered them a place in Campo Uno, which had a population of about twenty thousand, ninety percent of whom were Muslims of the Yakan tribe. Friars Gabriel Bertos and Augustine Fraszak arrived there in August 1986 with Lino Corpin following in November. Gabriel picked up the dialect quickly and became a peacemaker in the area. Augustine became famous as a doctor of herbal medicine and acupuncture. He dedicated long hours in serving the Yakan neighbors until Octo-

ber 1992 when he was kidnapped and held for sixty-nine days. Lino, an agriculturist, fit in easily with the local farmers. In 1995, with the backing of the bishop, the friars established a new parish in the Look area. At present there are five friars in the Campo Uno-Look area.

Josefina, Zamboanga del Sur

Josefina has a different beginning. Friar Bertram Tiemeyer arrived there in June 1991 to be chaplain for the Poor Clares who were already there. He took care of them, formed members of the Secular Franciscan Order in the area, and helped in the parish. But within a year, Bertram turned his attention also to the thousands of indigenous people who lived in the area. These people—Subanens—were not Muslims. They were still practicing their own religion. Bertram studied their dialect and gathered valuable accounts of their folklore, tribal experiences, history, beliefs, rituals, and prayers. He is now translating hundreds of pages into Cebuano and eventually into English. In 1995 a Franciscan community was set up with the arrival of friars Emmanuel Cordinello, Noel Filemon Gayrama, and Lino Corpin. This community is dedicated to a dialogue of life and faith with Subanens.

Kidapawan, North Cotabato

Friars entered this area on the invitation of Bishop Juan de Dios Pueblos, the Bishop of Kidapawan. The friars who arrived there in 1994 were Ray Anthony Ferrer and Erwin Schoenstein. Others followed. On Easter Sunday 1995 the friars took over the Parish of New Cebu, a rural parish of twenty-six thousand Catholics located sixteen kilometers from Kidapawan. In the same year they started a college level formation center for applicants for the Order from the island of Mindanao. Friar Froilan Cruz has been in charge of this Damietta Aspirancy Center for five years and now has ten aspirants.

Davao City

The one friar who works in the eastern part of Mindanao is Ferdie Mercado, who had worked in Baloi and had taken Islamic and Arabic Studies in Rome. He now lives with Bishop Fernando Capalla and helps him set up seminars, meetings, etc. for Dialogue with Muslims. He is especially involved in the ongoing Bishop-Ulama Dialogue meetings which are trying to promote peace and mutual understanding between Christians and Muslims in Mindanao.

A special feature of the friars in Mindanao is that yearly all of them—over twenty-five at present—meet to share their experiences with Muslims and other indigenous groups. All have committed themselves to make a dialogue of life and faith the first priority in their pastoral efforts.

Contributors

Patricia Craddock, a native of Atlanta, Georgia, attended Oglethorpe University and has taught English to college-level foreign students, but her passion is for Italian poetry and art and for St. Francis of Assisi as endlessly inspiring poetic subjects. Her poems have been published in this country and in England and Italy.

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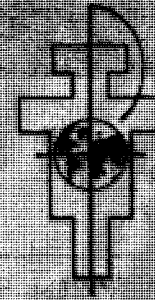
Alexander J. Lewis, OFM Conv., is a friar of the St. Joseph of Cupertino Province, California. Born in Hong Kong, he has participated in a variety of multi-cultural ministries. A licensed marriage and family therapist, he also produces photographic art. He is presently on sabbatical for further studies in Vietnamese and Spanish.

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True Followers of Justice: Identity, Insertion, and Itinerancy among the Early Franciscans. Ed. Elise Saggau, OSF. Spirit and Life, Vol. 10, 2000. 175 pp. Paper. ISBN: 1-57659-171-9. \$14.00.

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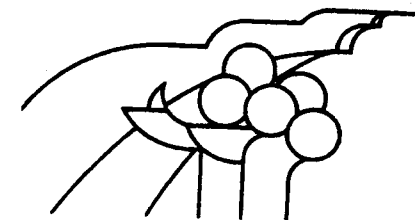
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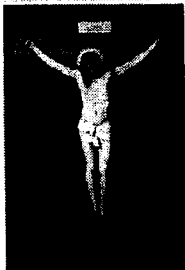
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The Strategy That Saved Assisi

The Real "Assisi Underground" During World War II

Francesco Santucci, historical documentation
Aldo Brunacci, preface and appendix
Josef Raischl, SFO, editor
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Don Aldo Brunacci describes Alessandro Ramati's book and movie, *The Assisi Underground*, as "truly a wonderful work of fiction, but pure fiction, because it distorts the historical truth." *The Strategy That Saved Assisi* provides what is necessary to satisfy people's legitimate desire to know this truth.

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On the Franciscan Circuit Coming Events, 2000

Friday, September 22-Sunday, September 24

Franciscan Retreat Weekend. With James Gavin, OFM^{Cap}. \$100. At Franciscan Center, Hastings on Hudson. Contact Franciscan Center, 49 Jackson Ave., Hastings on Hudson, NY 10706; ph. 914-478-3696.

Friday, September 29-Sunday, October 1

The Canticle of Conversion. Sponsored by The Franciscan Federation. At the Franciscan Center, Aston, PA (see ad, p. 251).

Friday, October 13-Sunday, October 15

The Prayer of Francis and Clare. With André Cirino, OFM. At the Franciscan Spiritual Center, Aston. Contact: 609 S. Convent Rd., Aston, PA, 19014; ph. 610-558-6152; e-mail: fsc@osphila.org.

Thursday, October 19-Sunday, October 22

The Franciscan Connection. With Ingrid Peterson, OSF, and Diane Jamison, OSF. Sponsored by Franciscan Federation, Regions 4 and 5. At St. Joseph Center, Milwaukee. Contact: Rosemary Reier, OSF at 414-384-1515, ext. 5255.

Friday, October 20-Sunday, October 22

The Canticle of Conversion. Sponsored by The Franciscan Federation. At Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee (see ad p. 251).

Saturday, October 28

Forming a Culture of Peace in the New Millennium. With Michele Balek, OSF. Franciscans International Mid-Atlantic Chapter. At Alvernia College, Reading, PA (see ad p. 254).

Friday, November 17-Sunday, November 19

The Canticle of Creatures. With Bernard Tickerhoof, TOR. \$100. At Franciscan Spirit and Life Center, Pittsburgh. Contact: Franciscan Spirit and Life Center, 3605 McRoberts Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15234-2340; ph. 412-881-9207; email: fslccom@aol.com

Friday, November 17-Sunday, November 19

The Canticle of Conversion. Sponsored by The Franciscan Federation. At Tau Center, Winona, MN (see ad p. 251).

Friday, December 8-Sunday, December 10

Advent Retreat Weekend. With James Gavin, OFM^{Cap}. \$100. At Franciscan Center, Hastings on Hudson. Contact Franciscan Center, 49 Jackson Ave., Hastings on Hudson, NY 10706; ph. 914-478-3696.

Writings of Saint Francis

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