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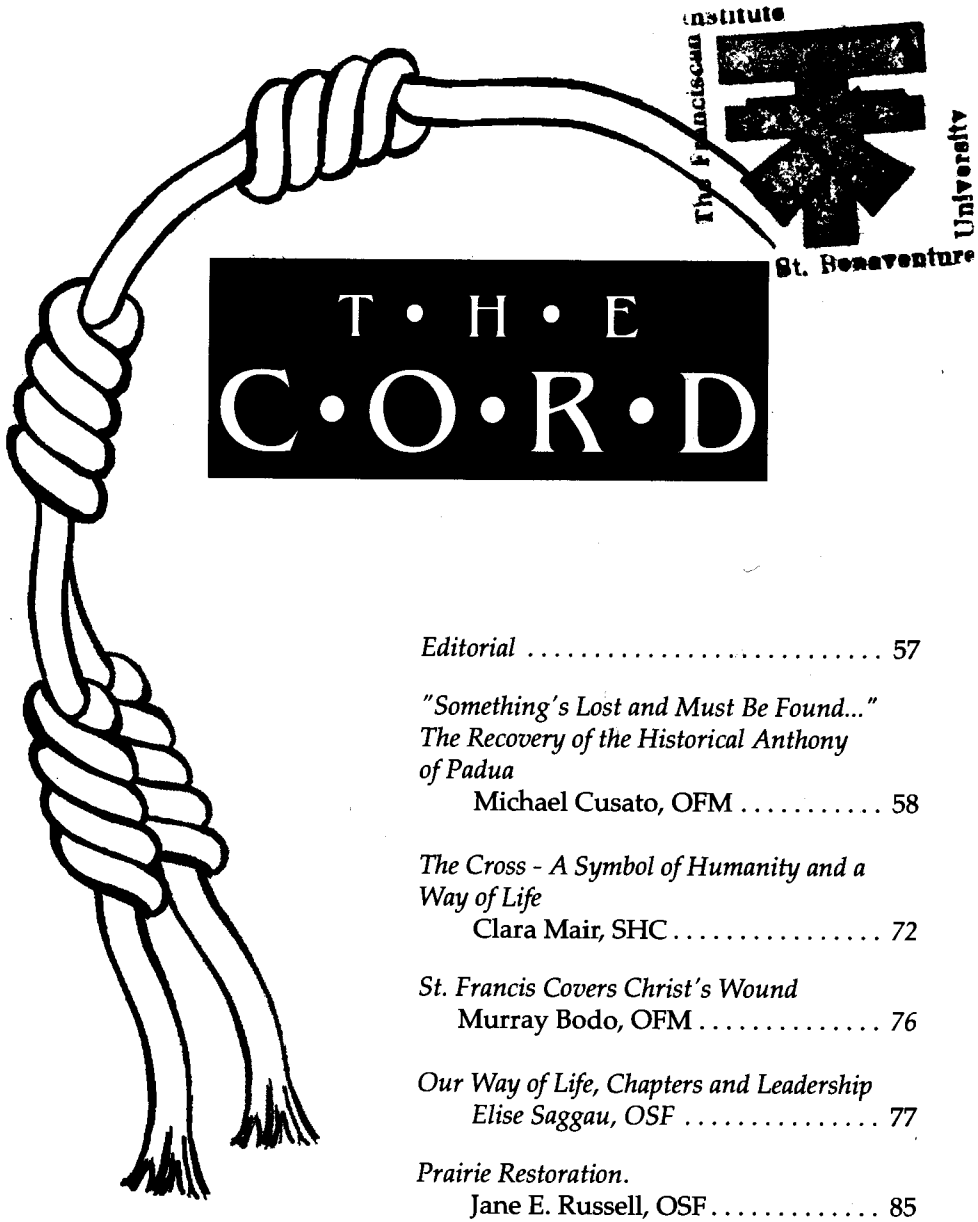
A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW



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THE CORD
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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).

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Editorial

As this issue of the *The Cord* goes to press, it marks a transition on many levels. It is my first endeavor to fly solo as the editor. Last December Sr. Elise Saggau mentored me through the production process and the multitude of details that go into selecting material, editing articles, page layout, and designing new announcements. Her love of *The Cord* shone through every step of the way and illumined my entry into this aspect of Franciscan ministry. I am most grateful for her loving care and solicitude.

Transitions are ever a challenge. The first that I face is maintaining the quality of *The Cord* and serving its readership well. I hope that I have made a good beginning, although I am aware that no venture such as this is without some difficulties. It is my hope that errors will be few, minor, and quickly remedied as I move along the path of learning during the first year at this desk. I welcome your comments, suggestions, and feedback. At this time there are no changes in store for the format of the journal. As time passes, however, new possibilities may unfold, and other transitions might be called for. For now, we will take one step at a time....

One of the beauties of *The Cord* is the variety of material that can be published here. In this issue we present a taste of that diversity. Our lead article puts forward a new perspective on the life of St. Anthony of Padua based upon a historical reconstruction of bits of information scattered in European-language resources. We also offer an article that gives opportunity for personal theological reflection on our understanding of the Cross as Christian symbol. Please note that the author wrote this long before the events of September 11, 2001; in some ways, it seems that the paper is prescient about how we would be called to new levels of suffering and compassion after those events. Murray Bodo's poem helps us embrace our role in the Paschal Mystery. Another piece focuses in very concrete ways on praxis with respect to chapters and leadership in Third Order Regular communities. Finally, the Dubuque Franciscans recently decided to return to prairie many acres that had long been cultivated as farmland. "Prairie Restoration" celebrates their Franciscan stewardship of creation (and perhaps will invite others to similar action.).

Peace and all good!

Roberta A. McKelvie, OSF

The Cord, 52.2 (2002)

"Something's Lost and Must Be Found..." The Recovery of the Historical Anthony of Padua

Michael F. Cusato, OFM

Anthony of Padua is surely one of the most enigmatic figures in Catholic hagiography. On the one hand, he is associated with (perhaps more than any other saint in Christian history) some of the most fantastic miracle stories whose specifics defy credulity even among the most generous of believers. For example, Anthony is said to have delivered an eloquent sermon to a group of attentive fish which lined up in perfect rows to hear the famous preacher when the townspeople of the area refused to listen to him. In the context of a debate with an Albigensian heretic, he is reported to have been instrumental in getting a starving mule to forego the hay offered to him in order to first genuflect in homage before the Eucharist. More famously, he is said to have successfully prayed for the safe return to the friary of a precious commentary on the Psalms stolen by a devious friar; this is the origin of the belief in Anthony as a restorer of lost articles. And, perhaps most spectacularly, it is claimed that he completely restored the foot of a sinner who had amputated it himself, having taken too literally the stern counsel of the gospel to cut off and throw away what had been the cause of his sin. Such exploits, coupled with the traditional depiction of Anthony in statuary and iconography in which he is represented as a meek, soft-skinned man holding either a lily or the child Jesus (or sometimes both) would seem to place him at a considerable remove from the critical and skeptical sensitivities of contemporary men and women who prefer to locate holiness in the realm of the rugged and the real.

And yet, on the other hand and contrary to all expectation, Anthony still remains-and always has been-one of the most popular saints in Roman Catholicism. Indeed, the large majority of churches the world over-even if they no longer hold the traditional Tuesday devotions to St. Anthony-still boast of statues, stained-glass windows or paintings representing this most popular of saints.

What is curious is that the popularity Anthony has enjoyed throughout the centuries seems to have had, in fact, very little to do with the historical Anthony of Padua (the Anthony of history). Indeed, ever since the time of his death the cult of Anthony has been based almost exclusively on the portrayal of the friar as he appears in the hagiography prepared for his canonization–and that image is primarily what historians call the thaumaturgical Anthony: that is, Anthony as miracle-worker. The question is: should this trouble us? Is not today's devotion to Anthony a demonstration of faith as it has been throughout the ages? Without answering that question directly right now, suffice it to say at this point that, for men and women of the 21st century, such devotion, devoid as it is of any firm historical underpinning, *does* trouble us and *should* trouble us. Can you image a cult of Francis today based primarily upon the miracles attributed to him after his death, or based merely upon the stories found in the *Fioretti* (the Little Flowers of Saint Francis) rather than upon his deeds, his writings and the historical development of the Franciscan movement? Today that would be quite unacceptable. Why then should it be any more acceptable with respect to the Evangelical Doctor?

An answer to that question is a bit more complex than it might first appear because there is, in fact, an interesting connection between the popular image of Anthony of Padua found in his cult and the actions of the historical Anthony; a relationship, in other words, between the issues addressed in the miracle stories and the values which Anthony espoused in his historical life. In these few pages, such an answer is an important but more complicated task. The aim here is actually a little easier. First, we can lay out various historical events, culled from the hagiographical sources, that comprised the life of Anthony in order that to have a deeper appreciation of the spiritual journey of the man: his struggles, the major turning points in his life, his primary achievements and his importance to the Franciscan Order. Secondly, we can examine two particular aspects of that life which are emblematic of the most important contributions Anthony made to the Church of his day (and perhaps can form the basis of his importance to ours as well). A firm understanding of the **historical** Anthony will, I hope, put us all in a better position to understand the meaning of the **hagiographical** Anthony which is–like it or not–the stuff of most Catholic devotion to Anthony today. For my bias is this: while the ahistorical may lay the basis for a fervent piety, it is the historical that lays the basis for a genuine faith. Piety has to do with religious sentiment; faith is grounded in the evangelical values of Jesus.

So let's look at the historical Anthony in light of a few general, over-arching remarks about the saint. First of all, it should be said that St. Anthony is one of those key figures of early Franciscanism whose importance is more often assumed than really understood. That importance, moreover, is attributed to two things: the spontaneous cult which rose up around him immedi-

ately after his death and the fact that he serves as a kind of linchpin between the initial suspicion of studies by Francis and his early followers and a second generation of friar-clerics for whom study was deemed essential to competent ministry within the Church of the thirteenth century. Second, Anthony did not live a very long life; indeed, many of his 43 years on this earth (if we assume 1188 to be his date of birth) were marked by a fragile health that, paradoxically, rarely deterred him from engaging in active ministry. He died in 1231-a mere five years after the death of Francis. Third, Anthony's life can be seen as a series of steps in which God continually frustrated and redirected his own wishes and desires for the good of the Church and the Franciscan Order. He began as a canon but became a friar; he wanted to be a foreign missionary but became a domestic preacher; he became a successful and articulate preacher only to be conscripted for internal service to the Order. In other words, God often had other plans for Anthony-plans which his obedient and willing spirit acceded to. Fourth, in spite of these constant reorientations of life, Anthony was still able to enjoy and combine the three primary loves of his life: contemplative prayer, study of the Scriptures, and a preaching which had, as its goal, conversion of life and reconciliation with one's enemy. And lastly, known for the boldness of his preaching, Anthony, however, never lapsed into denunciation or lack of charity; hence his success and appeal as a preacher, a friar, a man of God: in short, a saint.

In order to give a sense of form to the spiritual journey of Anthony, I have taken the liberty to divide his life into a number of different stages (eight in number), a summary of which is provided at the end of this article. These stages are, of course, entirely arbitrary; they are simply a teacher's tool to help give you a sense of the geographical movement and spiritual development within Anthony's life.

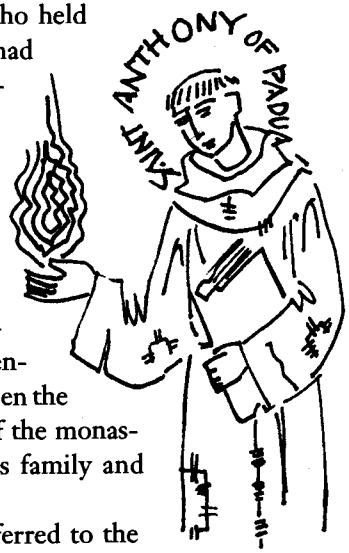
Stage 1: Birth and Early Life (c. 1185-1210)

Contrary to popular assumption, Anthony of Padua could actually more rightly be called Anthony of Lisbon since he was born and spent the first 30-35 years of his rather short life not in Italy at all but in Portugal, his native land. Born sometime between 1185 and 1188 to noble parents in the city of Lisbon, Anthony began his life under his baptismal name of Fernando. His father was apparently a vassal and knight of the Portuguese king, Alfonso I, who, by this very fact, would have been actively involved in the struggle of the crown against Islam and the Muslims. Indeed, this conflict represents the central historical context for the early life of young Fernando as the Kingdoms of Spain and (since the mid-12th century) Portugal were engaged in the *Reconquista*: that battle of the Christian kings of the peninsula to retake the land from the Muslims.

Stage 2: Early Education/First Vocational Aspirations (1210-1220)

Education in the Middle Ages was not a right, it was a luxury usually available only to the aristocracy. Being of aristocratic origin, Fernando benefited from an excellent education at the local cathedral school, the school sponsored by the local bishop of Lisbon where his uncle was both a canon and a teacher. It was there that Fernando received his early studies in the seven liberal arts. Although such an education often served as the first step towards the priesthood, it could also simply prepare a young man for a useful career in the world, a way that would lead him to contributing his talents to the affairs of the world.

Fernando, however, opted for the first route. In 1210, he requested permission of his family to enter a community of reformed canons who lived outside the walls of the city of Lisbon at São Vicente de Fora (St. Vincent-Outside-the-Walls). Although this was a monastery of reformed canons regular that been founded ostensibly to live a more austere form of priestly poverty in accord with the example of the apostles who held their possessions in common, the fact that it had been established by the Portuguese royal family ensured that it would be a well-endowed and fairly comfortable form of religious life. Nevertheless, Fernando's entrance into a monastery of canons illustrated his desire to prepare himself for the priesthood with the education that such a step would require. Fernando entered St. Vincent's in search of peace, contemplation and an atmosphere of study. What he encountered, however, was a running battle between the prior and the king over the property rights of the monastery and a constant flow of visitors from his family and friends.



Therefore, in 1212 he asked to be transferred to the mother-cloister of Santa Cruz in the capital city of Coimbra (about 120 miles away). Set in the capital and the seat of its powerful bishop, Coimbra's monastery of canons was also the most important center of studies in the Portuguese kingdom. Indeed, two of its canon-professors (Raymond and John) had just returned from their studies at the newly formed University in Paris. Santa Cruz counted 60 canons and a rich library. Access to such resources was critical to Fernando's intellectual development during the next eight years. Here also, however, the monastery became embroiled in a series of ugly disputes with the Portuguese king, Alfonso II, over its rights and properties. Such an environment most likely fractured the tenor of its religious life

as numerous canons simply went their own way, feathering their own nests, neglectful of their profession.

Stage 3: Decisive Turning: Entrance/Early Years in the Franciscan Order (1220-1222)

Thus, in spite of the rich intellectual environment that he found at Santa Cruz, the wrangling and more importantly the growing worldliness of the canons there sowed a negative seed of dissatisfaction within Fernando about his life as a canon regular. Without a doubt, one of the major thrusts of the recent Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 had been precisely the reform of priestly and religious life. That was the negative push; was there a positive pull? The positive seed was apparently planted by the presence in Coimbra of a new fraternity of poor brothers who had come to Portugal in 1217 and, through the benefaction of Queen Urraca, had established a small residence and chapel in an olive grove on the edge of the city dedicated to the hermit, Antony of the Desert. The friary was called Sant'Antonio dos Olivas.

Unfortunately, hagiographical sources do not give us much insight into the spiritual turmoil that might have motivated Fernando to ask for permission to leave the canons regular and join the Friars Minor. What can be said with surety, however, is that the most significant trigger was the mission of another group of these Franciscans among the Saracens of Morocco in 1219. The story is well known. Five friars (Berard, Peter, Otto, Adjutus and Accursius) arrived in Coimbra on their way to their mission among the Muslims. Having obtained the support of the Queen, they went first to Seville, a major Spanish city still under Muslim control. Their preaching, however, landed them in prison. Condemned to death, they were eventually pardoned and released. Undeterred, the friars traveled to Morocco, gaining the support of Peter, Alfonso II's brother-in-exile, who was in the service of the caliph of Morocco. The brothers got themselves arrested once again (one assumes their preaching either directly attacked the Islamic religion or insulted the Prophet-or both). Freed through the intercession of Peter, they were then re-arrested and finally beheaded on January 16, 1220. Peter managed to get their martyred bodies shipped back to Coimbra. Since the friars' grounds were too small to accommodate their remains, they were buried at the royal monastery of Santa Cruz -the burial site of the Portuguese kings. Whatever the negative elements troubling his soul before, it is this one event-the preaching of Jesus Christ unto death by men dedicated to a life of poverty-that prompted Fernando in the summer of 1220 to ask permission to leave the canons regular for the life of a Friar Minor.

The request, though granted, was poorly received since, in medieval canon law, one could not transfer to another form of religious life unless it was to a

stricter way of life: hence, such a transfer was seen as an indictment on the supposedly reformed life of the canons. Fernando joined the Franciscan province of Santiago whose provincial was none other than John Parenti, future minister general of the Order. Upon embarking on his new way of life and indicative of his own love of contemplation, he chose to change his name to that of the hermit patron of the friary he was now entering. Henceforth, Fernando the canon would be known to history as Anthony the friar. Since the requirement of a year's novitiate was only imposed on the Order later that year in September of 1220 (through the bull *Cum secundum consilium*), Anthony made immediate profession as a Friar Minor.

Faithful to what had just impelled his change of religious community, he asked to go to Morocco as a missionary. Having obtained the permission of his provincial, he embarked with his companion, Philip, for North Africa near the end of 1220 but immediately fell ill upon his arrival in Morocco. This illness lasted through the winter and into the spring of 1221, at which point his companion convinced him that he should abandon his plans to preach among the Saracens and to sail back to Coimbra. But God had other plans for him. Not unlike what had happened to Francis himself, a storm blew his ship off course so that both he and his companion ended up off the coast of Italy on the island of Sicily. Disembarking, they were fortunate to learn that the friars had a friary in Messina.

That late spring the friars of Messina were preparing to leave shortly for Assisi to take part in their annual General Chapter. Francis had resigned as minister general at the previous chapter in 1220 in favor of Peter Catania. However, Peter died just prior to the 1221 Chapter, so the meeting was led by Elias of Cortona-Francis's choice to run the affairs of the Order. As a new member of the Order and a friar of the far-flung Spanish province, Anthony was unknown to most of the other friars. At the conclusion of the chapter when the friars were sent out again on mission, for unknown reasons Anthony approached the provincial of the province of the Romagna (which encompassed all of northern Italy) and asked him to ask Elias if he could remain in Italy and minister in that province. Elias agreed and Anthony was assigned to the hermitage of Monte Paolo outside the northeastern Italian city of Forlì, not far from Rimini. It was a hilltop hermitage with a commanding view of the surrounding countryside, conducive to the contemplation Anthony cherished so much. Yet there might have been a more practical reason for the assignment: it would have been known that Anthony was ordained and could therefore provide the sacraments and preaching to the friars in this hermitage. What appears certain is that the friars had not yet come to know and appreciate the talents that the young Portuguese would bring to the Order. They would not have to wait very long.

Stage 4: From the Eremitism of Monte Paolo to Active Ministry in the Romagna (1222-1224)

About a year later, in the summer of 1222, the provincial of the Romagna province sent several friars, including Anthony, to an ordination of Franciscans and Dominicans in the town of Forlì. At the dinner celebrated afterward in the Dominican *convento* the Franciscan provincial suggested that one of the Dominicans give an impromptu sermon. When no one dared come forward, the provincial asked Anthony, who reportedly delivered an amazingly eloquent and polished homily. It immediately became apparent that such talent for preaching must not remain hidden under a bushel basket in some remote hermitage. At the provincial chapter the following September (on the Feast of St. Michael), Anthony was given the mission to preach throughout the entire territory of the province of the Romagna. The explicit aim of this preaching seems to have been to mount a frontal assault on the Albigensian or Cathar heresy that had taken root in the cities of northern Italy during the first decades of the 13th century. Anthony's mission, (to which I will return in detail in the second part of this article) lasted from 1222 to 1224 and used the friary of Santa Maria delle Pugiole in Bologna as its base. It is also quite possible that at this time he took full advantage of the libraries and faculties both in Bologna and Vercelli in order to strengthen his knowledge of the Franciscan tradition. We know that he made the acquaintance of a certain Thomas Gallus, who had studied theology at the famous Abbey of canons regular at St. Victor in Paris, and from whom Anthony attempted to learn (in Vercelli) the intricacies of mystical theology. Indeed, it was precisely during this same period, probably toward the end of 1223 or early 1224, that Anthony would have approached Francis asking for permission to begin to teach other friars in the area the rudiments of theology. Francis honored Anthony's request in his famous *Letter to Anthony* on this very subject.

Stage 5: Preaching and Ministry in Southern and Central France (1224-1227)

Thanks, it would seem, in large measure to his effective preaching against the Cathar heresy in northern Italy, Anthony found himself transferred in 1224 to the region that was the primary source of Catharism in the Europe of his day: southern France or, more specifically, the region known as Languedoc. This region, and specifically its major cities of Toulouse, Carcassonne, Narbonne, Béziers and, of course, Albi (from which the Cathars got their more popular name of Albigensians), had been, since the 1170s, the seat of a rival form of Christianity that had its own theology, its own bishops and even its own dioceses. In fact, it was in the same area that St. Dominic had begun his vocation in 1205 as a preacher against this heresy.

Much had happened in the region since the preaching of Dominic. After the assassination of the papal legate Peter of Castelnau by a Cathar heretic, Pope Innocent III had launched the infamous Albigensian Crusade with its pitched battles between Cathar and Catholic forces during the years 1213-14. Catholicism as a result appeared to regain the upper hand. By 1224, however, the tide had begun to turn again against the Catholic party. With the French King Louis VIII refusing to enter the fray, the situation began to look dire. Anthony's mission into the region must be seen in this context. He arrived east of the region in the old Roman city of Arles just in time for the provincial chapter at the end of September, 1224. We know that Anthony participated in the chapter and that he was asked by the minister provincial, John Bonelli, to address the brothers. Thomas of Celano tells us in his *Vita prima* that, as Anthony spoke, a certain priest named Monaldo saw a vision of St. Francis hovering over the friars and blessing them while Anthony preached to them. In Celano's account, this vision of Francis in Arles occurs shortly after the time when Francis had received the stigmata on La Verna in Italy. The purpose of this deliberate parallel created by Celano was not only to give credence to the miracle of the stigmata of Francis but also to underscore the important role that Anthony had come to play in the life of the friars by 1229 (the year in which Thomas was writing) that is, introducing the friars to the study of theology .

Immediately after the chapter Anthony went from Arles to Montpellier, the major center of Catholic resistance to the Cathar heresy, and then moved further west to Toulouse, the stronghold of the heresy itself. Along the way he held public debates with the leading spokesmen of the heretical party. Dressed in a poor and simple habit, Anthony was a model of Catholic integrity whose life and actions matched the evangelical truth of his words. Indeed, his knowledge of Scripture, his theological depth and his eloquence were an equal match for the most brilliant Cathar preachers. Unfortunately, little information is extant on the specific content or success of these disputations in France.

Soon after, however, Anthony found himself named guardian at the friary at Le Puy, a full 180 miles north of Toulouse. This new task would force Anthony to leave the front lines of theological battle and to devote himself primarily to ministering more directly to the friars themselves. He did, nonetheless, participate in a major ecclesiastical synod held in central France, in the city of Bourges, on November 30, 1225. Called by its archbishop, Simon of Sully, in order to assess the deteriorating situation of Catholicism in the south of France, the primary aim of the synod was to try to convince Louis VIII-who was in attendance-of the necessity of immediate action in the region. In the course of the proceedings Anthony was called upon to preach to the assembled

dignitaries. Contrary to expectation but consistent with Anthony's fearless manner, the Evangelical Doctor delivered a sermon which addressed not the errors of the heretics (who were not even present at the synod and who could not so easily be changed) but rather the clerics and prelates who had it in their power to change themselves (their lifestyle and their theological ignorance) so as to rob the Cathari of the major brunt of their criticism against the Church.

Sometime after the synod, Anthony then found himself named *custos* of the friars at Limoges. At this stage of Franciscan history, each province usually had one provincial and four *custodes* to aid the provincial in the administation of the province and especially in the visitation of the various convents. Thus, Anthony entered more fully into a phase of internal ministry to the friars, moving from convent to convent, encouraging, correcting and instructing the brothers in the Franciscan life. During this time he was responsible for founding a number of new convents in the region, including the one at Brive, south of Limoges, where he created a special hermit's grotto for his cell and where a large number of miracles are attested to in the hagiographical sources.

Stage 6: Provincial of the Romagna (1227-1230)

Francis of Assisi died on the evening of October 3, 1226. Anthony in his official capacity as *custos* attended the general chapter in Assisi in May, 1227, in which a successor to Francis as minister general had to be elected. This chapter elected Anthony's first minister provincial, John Parenti, as the new general. John, in his turn, asked Anthony to return to Italy as provincial of the large sprawling province of the Romagna. Anthony may have agreed to accept this new charge because it could give him the opportunity once again to confront the powerful heretical currents in northern Italy. But as provincial he became engaged even more thoroughly in full-time ministry to the friars, spending the vast majority of his time traveling the breadth of the province visiting and encouraging the brothers. Nonetheless, there are numerous testimonies of Anthony engaging heretics in the various towns to which he had come to visit the friars, sites too numerous to list here. Generally, but with a few key exceptions, Anthony is reported to have been fairly successful in drawing them back to Catholicism.

Perhaps a more important detail from this period of 1227-30 is that the peripatetic preacher found time to begin putting down in writing his own sermon materials for the eventual use of his confrères. These materials consisted not of full-blown sermons but rather of sermon outlines that could later be used in the preparation and delivery of the friars' own homilies. Indeed it is only through these writings that the theological vision that shaped the preaching and values of the saint can be known.

Finally, being in Italy during this time, it seems quite likely that Anthony would have been present in Assisi for the canonization of Francis in July, 1228.

Stage 7: The Eventful Final Year (1230-1231)

As provincial of the Romagna, Anthony also would have been present both for the fiasco of the translation of the remains of Francis from the Church of San Giorgio to the crypt of the newly constructed lower church of San Francesco and the chaotic proceedings of the general chapter of Assisi on May 25, 1230. One of the reasons for its chaos was the impasse that the friar delegates (especially the clerics who saw reality through the lens of juridical categories) reached when they tried to determine the precise meaning of the Franciscan charism as contained in the *Rule* and most problematically in the *Testament* of Francis. Most nettlesome, of course, was the problem of what it meant to live poverty in the real world (and what it did not mean). Unable to reach agreement, the chapter designated a small, ostensibly representative group to take these outstanding issues to Pope Gregory IX-an expert canonist-in Rome to have him resolve these matters for them. Anthony, by this time an esteemed and articulate member of the Order, was a part of this delegation of seven friars. The fruit of their delegation was the monumental bull *Quo elongati*, promulgated September 28, 1230.

However, given his declining health and his desire to continue work on his sermon materials, even during the chapter itself Anthony had asked to be relieved of his duties as provincial of the Romagna. John Parenti granted the request and shortly after his work in Rome had been concluded, Anthony returned to northern Italy and settled just outside of the city of Padua, at a small friary next to the Poor Clare monastery of Arcella. There he met and became the companion of a friar named Luke Belludi. Eventually, Luke would become provincial of the province and be the one responsible for building the basilica in Padua that would become the final resting place of the saint.

Anthony had lived for a brief time at Arcella, between the end of 1227 and early 1228. When he returned near the end of 1230 he began an extremely busy period of work. First, he completed the Sunday sermon outlines that he had been working on for some years. Then he began work on a series of feast-day sermons for the church year, apparently upon the request of Gregory IX. Forsaking for a time an active engagement in the ministry of preaching, he also set himself to studying the moral teaching of the Church.

If Anthony did preach, he preached in the friary church in the city at Santa Maria *Mater Domini* or more rarely in some of the other area churches. From the winter of 1230 until Lent, 1231, he worked assiduously on finishing his sermon outlines for the feasts of the church year. But then Anthony also decided to preach the season of Lent in Padua in 1231. Although nothing

remains of these famous sermons, we know that he preached from February 6 until March 23, 1231 (from Ash Wednesday to Easter). Anthony created an entirely new model of Lenten preaching as he preached every day, moving from place to place, church to church, working his way through the city to engender a spirit of profound conversion among the citizenry of Padua, great and small, rich and poor. The key themes of this preaching were forgiveness and reconciliation among peoples, especially among political parties; the return of things acquired unjustly, especially through usury; the release of debtors from prison; and the conversion of life in conformity with Christian morality. These themes reached their culmination not in one final summary sermon-as would have been customary-but in the presentation of a formal request on March 17th (Monday of Holy Week) to the city's civil authorities to formulate a new law for the commune that would incarnate some of the values just propounded by Anthony in these Lenten sermons.

By this time in his career reconciliation had become the pre-eminent theme in Anthony's life and preaching. A further example of this is found in his ill-fated intervention in the conflict between Riccardo, count of Sambonifacio and Ezzelino da Romano. Put simply, Riccardo, leader in the city of Verona, had been overthrown, captured and put in prison in June, 1230, by the partisans of Ezzelino, who was attempting to control the entire region of north-eastern Italy. A delegation came to Padua asking for intervention on the part of its leading citizens to free Riccardo. The most powerful abbot of the region, Giordano Forzate, suggested that his friend Anthony, who had just concluded a Lenten mission centered on the very theme of reconciliation, should make the appeal. Anthony journeyed to Verona, but his entreaties to Ezzelino fell on deaf ears and his mission ended in failure.

Returning from Verona, Anthony went not to the friary of *Mater Domini* in the city, nor even to the little friary at Arcella. Tired and in poor health, he instead retired to a place called Camposampiero (about eight miles outside the city) whose owner, Count Tiso, had donated land where the friars could establish a hermitage and small chapel. It was there that Anthony supposedly built for himself a kind of hermitage high up in a huge walnut tree that once stood on the property. But Anthony's stay at Camposampiero lasted only a few weeks. On June 13, 1231, after climbing down the tree for the noon meal, he fainted and then asked to be taken to the friars' church in Padua, *Mater Domini*. Luke Balludi and a certain Roger took Anthony in a cart on a journey that took six hours, reaching Arcella by evening. There, surrounded by a few friars and Poor Ladies, the Evangelical Doctor surrendered his spirit to God.

Stage 8: After the Death of Anthony

When word began to spread that the great preacher had died, typical of medieval piety, the scramble for his relics was on! Fearful of what might occur, the friars and sisters at Arcella refused to transport the dead friar into the city. Meanwhile, the friars of *Mater Domini* pressed their claim to the body; after all, such had been Anthony's dying wish. An ugly standoff then ensued, pitting the two groups of friars against each other and each supported by its own contingent of civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Eventually the minister provincial, Albert of Pisa, had to be called into the unseemly affair, deciding in favor of *Mater Domini*. Anthony was thus finally buried there on June17th. Canonization proceedings were initiated shortly thereafter by the citizens and dignitaries of Padua. Less than a full year later, on May 30, 1232, Anthony was enrolled in the catalogue of saints in a ceremony presided over by Gregory IX in the cathedral of Spoleto. Fifty-three miracles had been attested to by then; these testimonies served as the basis for the first hagiographical account of Anthony, called the *Assidua*. At the conclusion of the ceremony, to honor the new saint, Gregory intoned the versicle known as *"O Doctor optime"* (O excellent Doctor)-an antiphon normally reserved for doctors of the Church. Official status as Doctor of the Church, however, had to wait until 1946 when Pius XII proclaimed him *Doctor Evangelicus*, the Evangelical Doctor.

Parallel to what had occurred with Francis, work began almost immediately (1232) on a basilica to house the new saint. Due to political upheaval in the city involving tensions between the papacy and the Emperor Frederick II and his allies, notably, Ezzelino da Romano, work was suspended in 1240 and resumed only in 1256. Anthony's remains were transferred from *Mater Domini* to the new basilica on April 8, 1263, with the minister general, Bonaventure, attending. However, apparently so poor was the initial construction of the basilica that two years later, in 1265, work was begun on a total reconstruction of the facility.

Such was the life-journey of the historical Anthony. There are two particular aspects of that life which represent the importance of Anthony to the Franciscan Order and to the Church of his day: his preaching against heresy and his concern for the social welfare of his fellow human beings, especially the most vulnerable. A better understanding of these two themes will give concrete content to the commonplace assumption that Anthony was not only an outstanding preacher but also the first Franciscan theologian. Both of these areas will be examined in the next issue of *The Cord*.

Editor's note: This text has been revised from a manuscript based upon a lecture first given by the author at St. Peter's Church in Chicago, Illinois on June 12, 2001.

THUMBNAIL SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA

STAGE 1: Birth and Early Life (c. 1185/ 88–1210)
- Lisbon (Portugal)

STAGE 2: Early Education / First Vocational Aspirations (1210-1220)
- St. Vincent-Outside-the-Walls (Lisbon, Portugal)
- Santa Cruz (Coimbra, Portugal)

STAGE 3: Turning Point: Entrance / Early Years in the Franciscan Order (1220-1222)
- St. Anthony-of-the-Olive-Grove (Coimbra)
- Morocco
- Messina (Sicily)
- Montepaolo (outside Forlì, northeastern Italy)

STAGE 4: From Eremitism of Montepaolo to Active Ministry in the Romagna (1222-1224)
- Numerous cities in northern Italy, particularly Rimini
- Bologna (Santa Maria delle Pugiole)

STAGE 5: Preaching and Ministry in Southern and Central France (1224-1227)
- Arles / Montpellier / Toulouse (southern France)
- Le Puy / Bourges / Limoges / numerous other cities (central France)

STAGE 6: Provincial of the Romagna Province (1227-1230)
- Bologna
- Numerous other cities (northern Italy)
- Assisi

STAGE 7: The Eventful Final Year (1230-1231)
- Padua/Camposampiero

STAGE 8: Posthumous Career of Anthony = *il Santo*

Bibliographical Orientation:

Solid writing on the historical Anthony has not been, until quite recently, very plentiful. The English language, in particular, has been poorly served in this regard. However,the following titles can help orient the reader to the major historical events in the life of the Evangelical Doctor:

Sophronius Clasen, OFM, *St. Anthony Doctor of the Church*, trans. Ignatius Brady, OFM (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973). Probably the most authoritative synthetic work on Anthony available in English. Originally published in German in 1960.

Lothar Hardick, *"He Came to You so that You Might Come to Him": The Life and Teaching of St. Anthony of Padua*, trans. Zachary Hayes, OFM (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1989) Originally published in German in 1986. In part dependent on Clasen's work, the second half of this presentation also adds several extended reflections on the theological vision of Anthony.

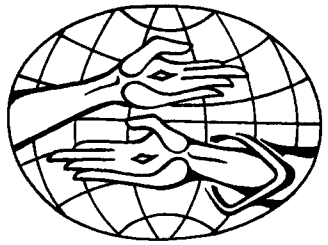
Of particular value for this article have been the following four works-all in Italian:

Grado Giovanni Merlo, "La santità di Antonio e il problema degli eretici," *Il Santo*, 2 ser., 36 (1996): 187-202;

Giuseppina de Sandre Gasparini, "La pace in Antonio e nella 'devotio' dei mendicanti del 1233," *Studia patavina* 28 (1981): 503-508. This volume contains other presentations given at a conference titled "S. Antonio di Padova tra storia e profezia";

Cesira Gasparotto, "La grande missione antoniana a Padova nella Quaresima 1231," *Il Santo* 4 (1964): 127-152.

Gustavo Cantini, "Vita apostolica e azione sociale di Sant'Antonio," *S. Antonio dottore della Chiesa* (Città del Vaticano: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1947), 223-248.



The Cord, 52.2 (2002)

The Cross - A Symbol of Humanity and a Way of Life

Clara Mair, SHC

The journey to true incarnation includes accepting the contradictions in our lives and in ourselves. As human beings we belong at the same time both to earth and to heaven. We are outstretched between light and darkness, God and human, between male and female, between height and depth, between good and evil. The cross unites all contradictions.

The human being is like a cross.[1] The **vertical** part of the cross rises upwards; it towers into heaven. By the grace of God, we do not remain turned in ourselves; we must come out of our own world and move beyond ourselves. Our character is to be open to receive the grace of God and to be touched by him.

This openness means being without protection, to be vulnerable, and so the cross clamps us into position between two poles. We cannot relieve this tension; it is necessary to bear it. This engages all our capacity. The **horizontal** beam of the cross brings us into community. We are never only for ourselves. In everything, we are already influenced by other people or things and also through our life we shape others around us.

The cross challenges us to give up focusing on ourselves, to stop being self-centerd and to show solidarity with all people. The cross exposes us to the touch of others and to the world. That means opening ourselves to other people and allowing ourselves to be touched or wounded by them.[2] But if we are not centered in our life, then to be outstretched between heaven and earth and to be open for others can be too demanding. The horizontal (being in relationship with others) has to be borne by the vertical (the grace that impels us toward God) so that we do not lose ourselves in others or in the world. Our turning towards the world has its source in the center. The center is God, to whom we have access through the crucified Jesus Christ. He shows us the way to unify all opposites and tensions in our life. This is the holistic way to become more human. The cross puts our contradictions in the right order.

Having the cross as our center and the symbol of our salvation means accepting our own inner conflicts, enduring the unsolved problems in life, and in this tension letting ourselves become more and more open to God.

A Way of Life

According to Jürgen Moltmann, the crucified Christ clarifies our image of God and humanity.[3] The more we become Christ-like the more we become fully human. In looking at the cross as the archetype of humanity we are shown the mystery of the human person, which God clearly reveals in Jesus Christ "when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared" (1 Titus 3:4). Taking the theological to the level of praxis becomes the challenge. Our way of life is not like a one-way street in which we move closer and closer to God by self-control; it is more like a crossroad. Again and again our life journey and our plans are intersected by good and bad experiences; the journey is often an up and down motion. We might that say our life is disturbed by God. Only when we accept that we have been thrown out of gear can we find the way into God. Becoming more open to God and people on the journey is the way of love. We will be touched and maybe wounded by people until God's love penetrates these wounds and transforms and heals them. The one who is not vulnerable is the one who is not able to love.[4]

There is significant scriptural basis for such an interpretation. Moses, in his encounter with Yahweh, discovered a new direction: he must do what God commands (cf. Ex. 7:6), he must lead the people of Israel to freedom from slavery in Egypt. Jesus also came to be with God's people to set them free. The end of Jesus' earthly life shows us clearly the significant and concrete cost of discipleship, because the cross is the price to pay ***for*** a concrete commitment at the sight of the poor, weak, lowly and contemptible.[5]

Right understanding of the meaning of the cross creates a way of life boundaried by contemplation and action. We come to this kind of understanding by realizing that the motive for the Incarnation was not the cross. If it had been, then our God would be masochistic. The person who focuses on the cross alone has a masochistic view of Christianity. Rather, the reason for the Incarnation and human life is the overflowing love of God. The cross is the end. It is a murder weapon, the instrument of the powerful to remove an inconvenient prophet. It is the price Jesus paid consciously and freely, giving all to his God and to his mission for the poor and lowly. On this basis, the cross becomes a way of life with a double meaning: **contemplation and compassion.** Contemplation of the cross leads us to Compassion for all creation.

Contemplation

The contemplation of the Cross or, in other words, meditating on how Jesus gave his life, led Francis to give up everything for the healing and salvation of creation, the wholeness of humanity. I believe that Jesus in his incarnation and in his death on the cross points to the injured dignity, suffering and the

sacrifice of martyred creatures. Through meditation on the cross we become sensitive to all suffering in the world. Doing this, we empathize with suffering which is not our own. In contemplating the cross we do not remain in our own sorrow; we open our eyes and heart to the trials and suffering of others.

Francis's way of being was that of profound contemplation, contemplation viewed not as withdrawal from the world but as entry into the mystery of life, the presence of God in life. He moved through life in contemplation, that is, in a fundamental attitude of receptiveness to the Spirit and a primary attunement to the reality around him at all times. His manner of contemplation led to a very deep experience of life; the awareness of God's presence shaped how he lived every moment.[6]

As Christians we can find authentic "contemplation in action" nowhere else but in the following of Jesus. Within the framework of discipleship, we can contemplate history, God's history. Discipleship is the authentic locale of contemplation. It is there that we can see what sin and injustice are and what love and hope are. It is there that we can find out who exactly the [Human One] is, the One who preceded us on the same road. Finally it is there we can find out who God is, who keeps opening out history until God eventually becomes "all in all" (1 Cor 15:25).

Only in " following in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ" (LtOrd 51) do we undergo the conversion of eyes, ears, and heart that makes it possible for us to see, hear, and respond as Jesus did to God all around us.

Compassion

The cross is not only a holy image of meditation, it is also a model for Christian action. To be called to discipleship in Christ is a vocation to espouse the same aspirations as Jesus. We do not live simply for ourselves; we give our life for the other. It is not necessary to seek out the cross, but we are not to avoid it if it comes into our life. After the encounter with the Crucified in San Damiano, Francis was formed by "compassion" (L3C 14). So, too, we must be formed into compassion. "Compassion is not to feel for; it is to feel with and to be moved to act on behalf of another. Compassion, the outstanding characteristic of Jesus' life, means 'to have one's guts torn apart' with feeling."[7] Francis could not pass by, apathetic and unconcerned, the suffering of any creature. He always moved toward kindness in word and deed when he encountered the pain of any creature.

Conventional wisdom trains us to be dispassionate in the face of suffering multitudes, not to see the enormity of human pain. So shattering and excruciating is the suffering of so many that we run from it with such practiced dexterity that we fail even to notice our own running. To face suffering, we

think, would be unbearable; it would paralyze us; it is too excruciating. But compassion, sympathy, affection, sensibility for others is an urgent need in our contemporary time. One Franciscan founder taught a community he founded that the need of [a given] time is the will of God.[8] Franciscans learn through the cross that drawing people's attention to the needs of suffering in the world remains an important and obligatory task for us.

The Cross: A Sign of Protest Against Forgetfulness of Suffering

The cross does not permit us, in looking at the passion of Jesus, to forget or ignore the corresponding passion of the world. In looking at his crucifixion we cannot ignore the crucifixion of the world. "We have to relearn the capacity to suffer."[9] Without this conversion, there may be further progress in technology and civilization, but with regard to freedom and truth there will be no growth.

Contemplation opens the door to seeing and to compassion so that we are able to recognize Christ in the suffering and Christ accompanying the suffering. It likewise enables *us*, too, to look at the suffering, to approach, touch and suffer deeply. The cross is like an "organ of perception" for the Christian. It sharpens our eyes to see what is not good, what is evil, not in order to condemn and search for the guilty but to feel with and be moved to act on behalf of another. Again and again the cross says: Ecce homo!

Ecce homo: look at this person, disconcerted and abused. Move then to those people who do not experience safety or security, who do not have a home. Become the sister of the raped woman, of the child who was given birth under inhuman conditions; become a brother of the man who has no place in the shelter, of the stranger who is forced out of his town, every town, exiled even in his homeland.

Ecce homo: perceive those people who cannot find a community to live with and therefore go through life always thrown off balance, unhappy and unfulfilled. Be aware of those who live on the edge of society, expelled and excluded from affluence and wellbeing. Have a heart for anyone who moves around aimlessly.

Ecce homo: go to the people who suffer, who are handicapped, needy and poor, who are crying for bread, love and justice.

Ecce homo: go to the people who share the fate of the Crucified, stand up for them because it is God who takes their part on the cross.

To belong to God means one must *be with* those victims. To know the Crucified is to develop a clear awareness of the wounded and show solidarity for the weak and poor. There is no Christian faith without this "ecce homo," there is no religious life without attention for the suffering. The cross turns

our values upside down; the cross reveals the wisdom of God to us. We must not fear to ask ourselves how we receive it.

Endnotes

[1]Ingrid Riedler, *Formen-Kreis, Kreutz, Dreieck, Quadrat, Spirale* (Stuttgart Kreuz Verlag, 1985), 39.
[2]Riedler, 41.
[3]Jürgen Moltmann, *Der gekreutzigte Gott* (Munich: n.p., 1972), 65.
[4]Anselm Grün, *Das Kreutz* (Munich: Munserwarsach, 1996), 93.
[5]Anton Rotzetter, *Neue Innerlichte* (Freiburg: Herder, 1992), 141.
[6]Marie Dennis, Joseph Nangle, O.F.M. et al., *Francis and the Foolishness of God* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, :993), 147.
[7]Dennis, 152.
[8]Theodosius Florentini, O.F.M. Cap., (1808-65), founder of the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross.
[9]Grün, 82.

St. Francis Covers Christ's Wound

When he was dying, he placed his bandaged hand over the wound in his side, and turning his bright face to his brothers, he said, "The Lord has shown me what was mine to do; may Christ show you what is yours."

How relieved they were he covered his wound, for who could follow such suffering or invite Christ's wounds praying: "May I feel in my flesh your crucifixion and in my heart your great love that embraced it"?

Now they are free to cover their own uninvited wounds, love less heroically like the tropical plant which blooms and drops its flowers every day, that small death and rising enough, though no one sees.

Murray Bodo, O.F.M.

Our Way of Life, Chapters, and Leadership

Elise Saggau, OSF

> Following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ who made his own will one with the Father's, the sisters and brothers should remember that, for God, they have given up their own wills. Therefore, in every Chapter they have, let them "seek first God's reign and justice" (Mt. 6:33), and exhort one another to observe with greater dedication the rule they have professed and to follow faithfully in the footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let them neither dominate nor seek power over one another, but let them willingly serve and obey "one another with the mutual love which comes from the spirit" (cf. Gal. 5:13). This is the true and holy obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ.
> (Third Order Regular Rule, Article 25)

As the season for chapters rolls around, a congregation feels a deep stirring within it. Sometimes this just seems like an upset: we have an uncomfortable feeling that things are going to be all re-arranged for us again – and just when we were starting to feel a bit settled! For others of us, anticipation of a chapter feels exciting. There is a recurrent hope that *this time* we are going to do it right; *this time* we will do something that will really make a difference in the congregation and in the world around us. For others yet, the chapter is just another time when we will gather to hear fine words, have a few debates, do some impressive praying together, raise our hands or our colored cards to promote or repel a variety of motions, and then go home and take up life exactly where we left it before the chapter.

Do any of these scenarios sound familiar? Obviously some chapters make a real impact on our lives; significant things change for us; we feel an inner movement to respond to our life call in a more authentic way than we have in the past; some things make more sense than they did before. Our renewal chapters, thirty or so years ago, were surely such experiences, which many of us well remember. Perhaps those most affected by a chapter, however, are the sisters who are designated to take up the responsibility of leadership. Obviously, for them a profound change takes place in their lives and ministry.

Let's consider what awaits both the grass-roots members and those who will take up the burden of leadership at chapter-time. At a recent preparation session for a certain congregation, one of the statements that emerged from the organizing meeting called members to "clarify and express [their] identity as Franciscan women in light of present global realities." One of the sisters in the group remarked in a rather weary way that "This question of identity comes up in every Chapter." As she said that, it struck me that this is precisely right. The reason it comes up in every chapter is that this is *why we have chapters*: to remind us *who we are* (or perhaps more to the point, *why we are.)* Article 25 of our Rule says:

> In every Chapter they have, let them 'seek first God's reign and justice' (Mt. 6:33), and exhort one another to observe with greater dedication the rule they have professed and to follow faithfully in the footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is a statement of purpose about which we all need consistent reminders. We need to look into a mirror once in a while, lest, as James says, we forget what we are like (James 1:22-24). Our chapters are (or should be) occasions for looking at our corporate selves in the "mirror" of our Rule and Constitutions. How willing are we to take a close look at who we are?

Being Beginners

One thing a chapter confronts us with is the notion that we are always beginners in this mysterious process of living the Gospel life in the manner of Francis and Clare and the early followers. John Holt tells this story:

> Not many years ago I began to play the cello. Most people would say that what I am doing is "learning to play" the cello. But these words carry into our minds the strange idea that there exist two very different processes: 1) learning to play the cello; and 2) playing the cello. They imply that I will do the first until I have completed it, at which point I will stop the first process and begin the second: in short, that I will go on "learning to play" until I have "learned to play" and that then I will begin to play. Of course, this is nonsense. There are not two processes, but one. We learn to do something by doing it. There is no other way.[1]

Our lives are like that. Look at us. We have had a lot of experience in living; we have had a lot of insight into living our Franciscan way of life. Don't

we say to ourselves "Shouldn't we all be experts by now?" Maybe, maybe not. If we expect this of ourselves and of one another, we lose the most essential attitude that keep us always open to new possibilities in our lives: humility. A famous Zen teacher once said: "In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities; in the expert's mind there are few." This is an important truth for us. If we, as Francis recommended, keep seeing ourselves as beginners, the path stays open to us. If we are beginners, we are humble, because there are many things we do not yet know, many things we have not yet tried, and many things we are not yet really very good at. If we are beginners, we can never settle down and say: "It is enough now; I've done enough; I've tried hard enough; I've become as good as I can get."

Why should we read and re-read our Rule, the Gospels, the Scriptures? What new discoveries can be made there after ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, or even sixty years? We are always beginners. (I read just recently that even someone who is eighty-five years old is still a novice at being eighty-five years old!) Every day our vocation is renewed by God's grace. Every day we have a new chance to come a little closer to living more authentically what we have been learning for many years. We are always aspirants, asking for acceptance; we are learners, seeking to know ourselves and to know God better. Every day we are again inspired to turn more completely to God and God's ways, to be changed, converted by God's power and grace; to be more authentically persons of real prayer; to let go of those encumbrances in our lives that keep us from true spiritual freedom; to recognize our own littleness, our frailty, our dependence on God and our need to trust in God's loving care for us.

And that is why we choose to join others in following a Rule. The Rule encapsulates and articulates our desires, the longing of our hearts, our best inspirations, our profoundest aspirations. Yes, we are all aspirants, aspiring to the goals described in the Rule. We look at the end and know we are at the beginning and we are glad, for there are so many possibilities for us as beginnners on this beautiful way. Francis danced it and sang it; he prayed it; he wept it. He laughed it and raged over it. He did not do it perfectly either. Francis, like us, was always beginning. That accounts for the remarkable freshness of his words, which still live powerfully for us today in this Rule and in his other writings.

As we recommit ourselves to living this way of life, we must be mindful that we are little ones, beginners. We don't do it perfectly. We don't even do it very well much of the time. There is room for laughter and warm humor and great patience as we put up with our own beginner's clumsiness and lack of expertness, as well as that of our brothers and sisters. Yet as aspirants we admire and marvel at our own desires and know that only God's grace could move us to *want* the ideals formulated in this Rule, in this Gospel. Today is the only day we have. We can only start from where we are. Today is the day we

will begin. We are little, but God guides our steps and will do for us what is impossible for us alone. We need to open ourselves to Francis's words in his Letter to the Faithful: "How happy and blessed are these men and women when they do these things and persevere in doing them, since the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them" (1 LtF5-6).

What Can Help Us?

As we begin again, then, we look for what can help us in the serious enterprise of being what we are called to be. As we gather in Chapter we draw from many sources. As ecclesial women, we look to the greater Church and its challenges. As ministers of the Gospel, we look to the needs of our society, our world, and even now, our cosmos. As inheritors of the Franciscan tradition, we review our Rule and our particular spiritual tradition to draw from it the peculiar wisdom that is ours and examine how our personal and corporate experience embodies that wisdom tradition today. Michael Himes wisely advises us to "go back periodically and reclaim those ancestral lands. . . . [those] many important, vital, necessary experiences, images, sources of wisdom which have grown up in religious life in the Western church over the course of fifteen centuries."[2] Our special ancestry is the Franciscan story, only eight hundred years old, but replete with its own peculiar "wisdom." It is our own "treasury," from which we can draw as we examine how we are doing. This, the story of Francis and Clare and the early followers, is a story with openings in it for us.[3] The question is: How do we fit into the story today? How do we pass this story on to a future generation of which we will not be a part?

As Third Order Regular Franciscans, our special access to this tradition is through our Rule, which embodies those values and virtues that we desire to radiate as Franciscan followers of the Gospel. This is our guidebook for the way of life (the *forma vita*) that provides a common agenda for us as Franciscan persons-in-community. Our insertion into this way of life is not primarily for ourselves, but for the sake of the "other," and first of all the "Other" that is God, Source of our life and our love and end towards which we strive. It is secondarily for the "other" who is our neighbor, distant or near. With our focus on God to whom we owe our worship and total life-response, we become instruments of God's goodness in the world, God's compassion for this broken, suffering, human enterprise. As our Rule bids us in the words of Francis, we "desire one thing alone, namely, the Spirit of God at work within us" (Article 32). This echoes Francis's directive in the friars' Later Rule: "Let them pursue what they must desire above all things: to have the Spirit of the Lord and Its holy manner of working" (RegB 10:8).

Once every four or five years religious congregations set aside a time to do this corporate "review of life" which helps us to hold up to ourselves the mirror of our important documents such as the Rule or constitution in order to see if we can discover therein an actual image of ourselves. It creates an opportunity for us to determine if there are areas within this mirror in which we fail to recognize ourselves and, if so, to see how we might sharpen or renew that image or make it more effective for our times. One of the questions we need to ask at a Chapter is "What time is it?" Each gathering occurs in a specific time that has specific needs and requires different kinds of responses. "What time is it in this congregation? in this Church? in this world? What, in our way of life, is being particularly challenged or called upon at this time? What do we need to focus on now? What kind of leaders do we need in our congregation now?

Supporting Leaders

Leadership in a religious congregation is a gift. Margaret Carney, OSF, reminds us that leaders come from among ourselves, from our own ranks. Good leaders are born of good members.[4] She suggests that leaders will ordinarily not be better than the members of their congregations. This is something to think about. Sometimes we have the notion that leaders are really different from ordinary members, that they come from some kind of special species among us. Leaders, however, are not *ipso facto* better than the other members of the community. Even after their election or selection, they have the same responsibilities, obligations, and privileges that any member has. This includes the right to be treated with respect and compassion, to be allowed to make mistakes, to fail at times, just as each one of us does. But, the elected leader has, in addition to her responsibilities as a member, some greater responsibilities by virtue of the office we entrust to her by choosing her. She is vested with the kind of authority that empowers her to "oversee," "teach," "challenge," even to "insist upon" what is needed for the congregation to be faithful to its public commitment in the Church. This is a service that is required of the designated leader; she needs "to call members to the original and renewed vision of the community," as Margaret Carney says. A leader should have a special gift for "putting the ideal into words, inspiring others to act in order to reach the ideal." She, of course, must live this way herself and not expect from members anything she cannot or would not do herself. So, in this sense, we look for persons to lead us who manifest gifts, skills, and talents that can serve this larger purpose for the congregation. This is not for anyone and everyone, in fairness to the person, in fairness to the congregation. We need to seek these gifts in our members as we prepare to designate new leaders.

A few years ago Margaret Carney and Margaret Guider collaborated on an excellent text that describes in a very beautiful and understandable way the leadership qualities of Clare of Assisi.[5] They identified qualities that members of any congregation might look for when it begins to discern its leadership

needs. I summarize some of the qualities they describe:

- *Solicitude and prudence.* Clare was always careful to have the consent of the sisters in decisions for the whole community. For her, "the bedrock of governance [was] the mutuality of hearts and respect for the operation of the Holy Spirit in each member."
- *Vigilance in care.* Clare was concerned "to maintain certain forms of order, certain practices, and certain attitudes. . . . She called the sisters to a constant conversion and a constant awareness of the kinds of discipline and directions required for commitment to the path of publicly vowed religious witness."
- *Diligent in reminding.* Clare recognized the kinds of activities that were destructive of community. She "did not hesitate to call the sisters continually beyond the limitations of human frailty and ego-centricity in her desire to see to it that the common heart was rooted in Jesus and in the Gospel message."
- *Constant in compassion.* This was a hallmark of her leadership. She had a "profound concern for the sick," she carefully instructed the young, she was assiduous in offering hospitality to guests, she maintained a mutual regard for the friars. She was able to make exceptions, modify policy, dispense from or bend the rule "when charity, necessity, or human frailty" required it.
- *Skillful in governmental administration.* "Clare understood very well the structures and the origins of the structures by which she lived. She had a consummate skill in addressing the realities of current church law, traditions handed down from generations of monastic practice, new policies or legislation arrived at by common consent as well as by long and proven experience. At the same time, she never lost her . . . enthusiasm for the fresh new charism that she shared with Francis."[6]

Joseph Chinnici, OFM, in an unpublished article on Clare's leadership also comments upon some important leadership characteristics he finds in Clare:[7]

- *The experience of reciprocity:* he includes here *conversation* (the ability to maintain significant on-going relationships with higher ecclesial authority, with the friar community, and with others); *foot-washing* (the willing-ness to give humble, even menial service in the community); and *the participation of all* (her insistence on consulting all the sisters on matters that would affect them all).
- *Personal integrity*: a leader knows about the spiritual self, has experienced the self of conversion, the freedom of conversion, and is committed to helping others have this experience. This is fundamental to our "way of life."

- *Personal power as transforming*: a good leader possesses "a vitalizing energy which is not self-generated, but self-liberating and illuminating." This is significant in those places where there is an issue among women religious relative to the exercise of power. Chinnici cites the "fear . . . that any exercise of authority characterized by assertiveness and competency might confine women especially to their subordinate position in the older structure and their feelings of childish submission within their own religious orders." At issue here is the reaction of some women religious (after Vatican II) against pre-Vatican ways of exercising authority. An excessive reaction can undermine our ability to respond appropriately and fruitfully to a proper, energetic, and competent exercise of authority.
- *Promotion of the "form of profession"*: "The goal of an office of leadership is to relate the members of a community to each other and to the world within a particular way of life." Our preparations for chapter should help us see that "Evangelical leadership would take [the TOR Rule] seriously, laboring to instruct all in the spiritual and experiential dimensions of the Rule."
- *Accepting the creative "power" of her own frailty*: the leader depends on the sisters for acceptance and support and depends on God for the power to persevere. "Clare, because she is *with* the sisters, experiences her ability to lead as severely restricted, hemmed in by people, by their strengths and weaknesses, by circumstances, by institutions, and by her own tremendous limitations. The evangelical leader experiences her office as a burden and a limitation. In a very real sense, she is one who unites others by eliciting their help; who gathers the community around her own weakness; who is compassionate because she herself is frail."

This last quality truly points to the issue of minority, which we avow as a quality fundamental to our way of life. We are indeed, as members and as leaders, the "little, frail ones" who understand that any good that is accomplished through us is the very work of God and of God's Spirit in us and is never to be attributed to our own strength or goodness or superior gifts. For as Francis says in one of his Admonitions:

> A servant of God may be recognized as possessing the Spirit of the Lord in this way: if the flesh does not pride itself when the Lord performs some good through him–since the flesh is always opposed to every good; rather he considers himself the more worthless in his own eyes and esteems himself less than all others (Adm 12).

At chapter time and in ordinary time, looking in the mirror of self-reflection can be uncomfortable. Yet, I suggest that it is a necessary part of

evangelical life together. But it might be helpful to embrace the beautiful summary and challenge to us Chinnici offers us as sisters bonded in the common enterprise characterized by our Franciscan heritage. He says:

> What would happen to us if we perceived our leaders and ourselves in this fullness of our reciprocal experience-not only as powerful, but also as weak; not only as rich in resources, but also as poor; not only as proficient in the evangelical life, but as beginners; not only as adults, but as children? Would we not then begin to create, as Francis and Clare created so well, community out of our poverty, mission out of our need for help, and leadership out of the power of God in each other?[8]

Endnotes

[1]Rick Fields, ed., *Chop Wood, Carry Water A Guide to Finding Spiritual Fulfillment in Everyday Life* (NY: (Penguin/Putnam, 1984), 22.

[2]Michael Himes, "Returning to Our Ancestral Lands," *Review for Religious* (Jan./Feb., 2000): 7.

[3]Joseph Doino, OFM, notes from a class lecture, The Franciscan Institute, 1993.

[4]References in this section are from unpublished talks on leadership by Margaret Carney, OSF.

[5]Cf. "From Discernment to Concernment," *The Cord*, 46.3 (May/June, 1996): 106-116.

[6]Carney and Guider, 112-113.

[7]Joseph Chinnici, OFM, "Clare and Leadership," unpublished paper.

[8]Chinnici, 22.

Editor's Note: This article is based upon a presentation given to a group of Sisters in a time of chapter preparation.

About Our Contributors

Murray Bodo, OFM, a friar of St. John the Baptist Province, Cincinnati, is a priest and poet. He has authored a number of books and is an occasional contributor to *The Cord.* A former English professor at Thomas More College in KY, Murray in now a full-time writer.

Michael F. Cusato, OFM, a friar of the Sacred Heart Province of the Friars Minor teaches and conducts research as a member of the faculty of the Franciscan Institute. His work includes two essays in *True Followers of Justice Identity, Insertion, and Itinerancy among the Early Franciscans*, Vol. 10 of the Spirit and Life Series published by the Institute.

Sr. Clara Mair, SHC, is a member of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Austria. During 2000-2001 she studied at the Franciscan International Study Centre, Canterbury, England.

Jane E. Russell, OSF, is a member of the School Sisters of St. Francis, Milwaukee, having served in the past on their leadership team. She currently teaches at Belmont Abbey College in North Carolina.

Elise Saggau, OSF, is a Franciscan Sister of Little Falls, Minnesota. She has a Master of Divinity degree from Loyola University, Chicago, and a Master's degree in Franciscan Studies from the Franciscan Institute. A former editor of *The Cord*, she is currently on sabbatical in the desert country of the Western U.S.

Prairie Restoration

Ignoring gravity, the red-winged blackbird
sways atop a stalk of grass
and chirps peculiar code to fellows
perching on equally precarious
holds. They seem to love the tangled
mass of green and golden grasses,
purple climbers, yellow lilies'
jumbled scrawl across the hill.

Butterflies and bumblebees
enjoy the prairie too,
suck the juice from purple vetch
and store for winter.

As Francis set the rabbit free
en route to sale
and ransomed doves from fowler's snare,
his sisters have surrendered corn crops,
granting wildness license to return.
Sister Earth rewards this toss of chaos
only with a thousand smiles
of wings and song and creeping forest.
Paid in Earth's good coin,
we join the chorus.

Jane Russell, O.S.F.

Raphael Fulwider, OSF

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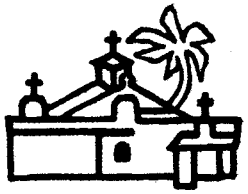

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May 24-16th	The Jewish Roots of Catholicism *Director: Bob Fishman*
June 7-9th	Troubadour for the Lord *Director: John Michael Talbot*
June 20-23rd	Simple Living Retreat *Director: John Michael Talbot and community*
June 28th-30th	The Power of His Presence *Director: Monsignor Frank E. Chiodo*
July 12-14th	Catholic, Evangelical and Eucharistic *Director: Dr. Scott Hahn*
July 19-21st	Mary, Our Jewish Mother *Director: Bob Fishman*
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-Blessing of St. Clare

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The Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University recently published a prayer book on this Little Office, **The Geste of the Great King**. *Josef Raischl, SFO, composed original melodies for the entire Office (available as a CD). Two artists, Marc Lisle and Christine Cavalier, illuminated the manuscript, producing artistic linkages between the written text and the iconic text of the San Damiano Crucifix (available in slides).*

For those who may wish to introduce groups, fraternities, or communities to this Little Office, the authors, Laurent Gallant, OFM, and André Cirino, OFM, are available for conferences or workshops.

Contact either at:

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Office of the Passion
of Francis of Assisi

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38th Franciscan Federation Conference

Theme:

Harmony of Goodness: Reconciliation as Franciscan Pilgrims and Strangers

Presenter:

Mary Beth Ingham, CSJ
(John Duns Scotus scholar)
and Franciscan men and women Reflectors

Place: Marriott Renaissance Hotel
Detroit, Michigan

August 18-21, 2003

On the Franciscan Circuit
Coming Events 2002

Palm Sunday, March 24-Easter Sunday, March 31, 2002

Holy Week Retreat. Franciscan Renewal Center, Scottsdale, Arizona. Contact the Center at 800-356-3247. For complete list of programs visit www.thecasa.org.

Friday, May 17-Sunday, May 20, 2002

"Singing the Cosmic Symphony. Sponsored by the Franciscan Federation, TOR. At Marian College, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis, IN 46222. Presenter: Gabriele Uhlein, OSF; Heritage Guest: Ramona Miller, OSF. Contact at 317-955-6102, or fax 317-955-61105.

Wednesday, May 22-Wednesday, May 29, 2002

"Inflamed by the Fire of the Holy Spirit." Preached retreat with Charles Finnegan, OFM. Franciscan Spiritual Center, Aston, PA. Register by May 8, 2002. (See ad, p. 91.)

Friday, May 24-Sunday, May 26, 2002

"Exploring Franciscan Identity in Our Culture Today." With many speakers, at The Franciscan Center, Washington Theological Union, Washington, DC. Contact Alyce Korba: 202-541-5219. (See ad, p. 87).

Tuesday, May 28-Monday, June 3, 2002

Intercommunity Sisters' Retreat. At the Franciscan Renewal Center, Scottsdale, Arizona. Conact the Center at 1-800-356-3247. For complete list of programs visit www.thecasa.org.

May 14-25, 2002

Assisi Alive! "Educational Mission of the Franciscan Tradition" Pilgrimage. Contact Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs, P.O. Box 321490, Franklin, WI. Phone 414-427-0570. (See ad, p. 90)

June 1-July 10, 2002

The 40-Day Franciscan Hermitage Retreat. Portiuncula Center for Prayer, Frankfort, IL 60423-8330. For more information, contact Kathleen Copp, OSF at 815-464-3850 or e-mail SKACOPP@AOL.COM. (See ad, p. 94).

Erratum: The book review in the last issue indicated that Bonaventure "lived from 1235-1274." The dates of his life are 1217-1274 and 1235 is the accepted date for his arrival at the University of Paris.

Abbreviations

Writings of Saint. Francis

Adm	The Admonitions
BlL	A Blessing for Brother Leo
Ctc	The Canticle of the Creatures
CtExh	The Canticle of Exhortation
1Frg	Fragments of Worchester Manuscript
2Frg	Fragments of Thomas of Celano
3Frg	Fragments of Hugh of Digne
LtAnt	A Letter to Br. Anthony of Padua
1LtCl	First Letter to the Clergy (Earlier Edition)
2LtCl	Second Letter to the Clergy (Later Edition)
1LtCus	The First Letter to the Custodians
2LtCus	The Second Letter to the Custodians
1LtF	The First Letter to the Faithful
2LtF	The Second Letter to the Faithful
LtL	A Letter to Brother Leo
LtMin	A Letter to a Minister
LtOrd	A Letter to the Entire Order
LtR	A Letter to the Rulers of the People
ExhP	Exhortation o the Praise of God
PrOF	A Prayer Inspired by the Our Father
PrsG	The Praises of God
OfP	The Office of the Passion
PrCr	The Prayer before the Crucifix
ER	The Earlier Rule *(Regula non bullata)*
LR	The Later Rule *(Regula bullata)*
RH	A Rule for Hermitages
SalBVM	A Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
SalV	A Salutation of Virtues
Test	The Testament
TPJ	True and Perfect Joy

Writings of Saint Clare

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

Franciscan Sources

1C	The Life of Saint Francis by Thomas of Celano
2C	The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul
3C	The Treatise on the Miracles by Thomas of Celano
LCh	The Legend for Use in the Choir
Off	The Divine Office of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer
LJS	The Life of St.Francis by Julian of Speyer
VL	The Versified Life of St. Francis by Henri d'Avranches
1-3JT	The Praises by Jacapone da Todi
DCom	The Divine Comedy by Dante Aliegheri
TL	Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale
1MP	The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version
2MP	The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version
HTrb	The History of the Seven Tribulations by Angelo of Clareno
ScEx	The Sacred Exchange between St. Francis and Lady Poverty
AP	The Anonymous of Perugia
L3C	The Legend of the Three Companions
AC	The Assisi Compilation
1-4Srm	The Sermons of Bonaventure
LMj	The Major Legend by Bonaventure
LMn	The Minor Legend by Bonaventure
BPr	The Book of Praises by Bernard of Besse
ABF	The Deeds of St. Francis and His Companions
LFl	The Little Flowers of Saint Francis
KnSF	The Knowing of Saint Francis
ChrTE	The Chronicle of Thomas of Eccleston
ChrJG	The Chronicle of Jordan of Giano