

A WORD FROM BONAVENTURE

Now the presence of truth and grace, which are manifest under the law of grace, could not be fittingly expressed in just one sign by reason of the loftiness and variety of their effects and powers. It therefore follows that in every age and under every law many sacraments were given, in order to express this truth and grace. . . . This variety was intended to express in manifold ways the grace of Christ. . . .

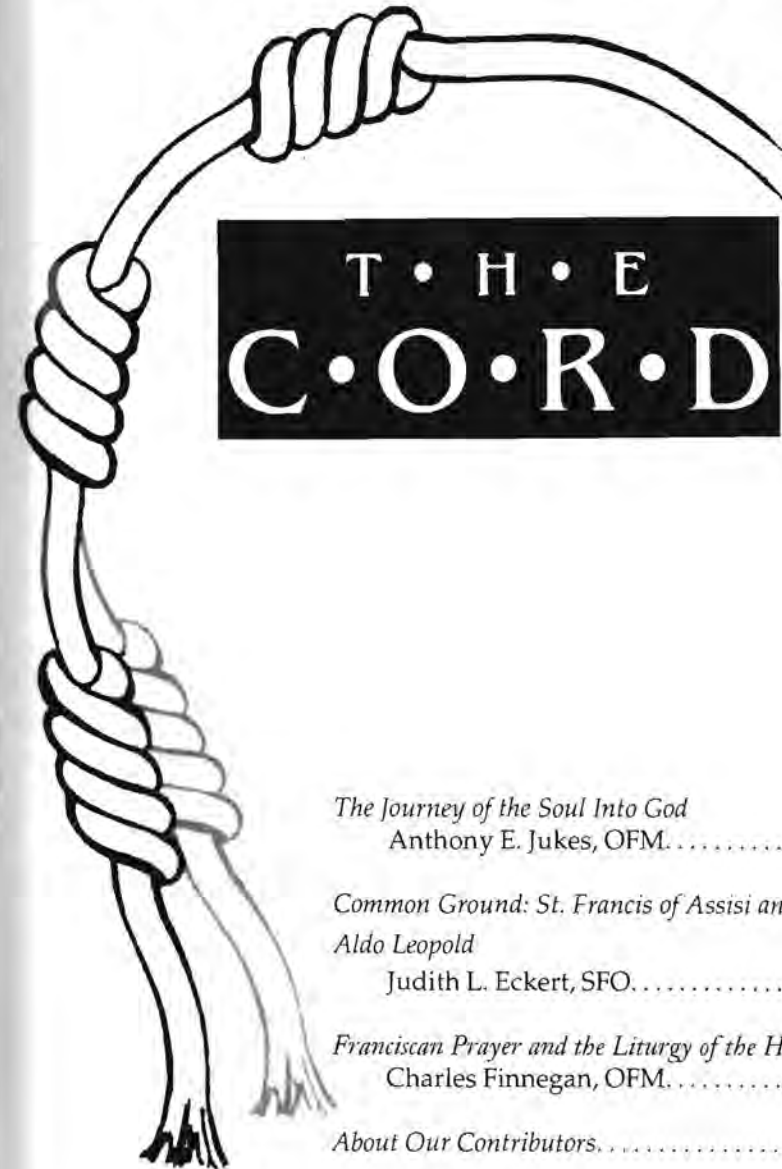
St. Bonaventure's *Breviloquium*
Part IV, Chap. 2.3

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THE CORD
A Franciscan Spiritual Review

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

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*, 14th 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, 56.2 (2006)

Editorial

Lent is upon us once again, and Easter is not that far away, either. Although this issue is not "dedicated" to a specific topic or branch of the Franciscan family, nor to the liturgical season itself, the selected articles call us to self-examination, or at least to meditation upon some very important themes: the journey of my soul, the value of *every part* of God's creation, the importance of our common prayer times, and the earthquake that most religious communities have experienced (at least once) in the last thirty years. Fitting subjects for Lent, indeed!

Anthony Jukes has planned a seven-week retreat program for a group of novices and postulants based upon St. Bonaventure's work, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*; it occurs to me that the exercises he proposes fit fairly well into the time frame of Lent/Holy Week. If you are looking for something a bit different than standard Lenten fare, why not use this piece? The article by Judith Eckert that recounts a moment of conversion that changed the life of Aldo Leopold forever is stunningly simple and powerfully moving. All interested in ecological spirituality will appreciate the story Eckert tells. And, praise God, I have been blessed to receive another gem from the hand and heart of Fr. Charles Finnegan, whose writing always challenges us to be better and do better in living our vocations to the full! The last article is by Margaret Carney, OSF, and is the fruit of her labor in giving a presentation to the Religious Formation Conference last year. Margaret had invited me to proofread it before her event took place, and I hid it my computer for future use. Well, that "future use" is now! And, yes, I have permission to print her text. As always Margaret is unafraid to name the earthquakes that shake up the status quo or, perhaps, preconceptions about what it means to be Franciscan and evangelical in 2006.

May we be gentle but firm with ourselves as we traverse the paths God shows us in the time that we call Lent. May the grace of salvation be received gratefully by each of us, and may we strive to live out the Gospel in ever deeper ways!

Roberta A. McKelvie, OSF

The Journey of the Soul Into God¹

Antony E. Jukes, OFM

Introduction

As part of the oral examination² for the course on Saint Bonaventure's work, *The Journey of the Human Person into God*, those taking the course for credit were invited to present a summary of the structure and a plan that could be used to teach the journey to a certain group of people chosen from a list. I decided to plan a seven week retreat program for a group of novices and postulants as they are relatively free from external commitments, though the program could be adapted for various other groups.

It struck me that though Bonaventure's work *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* is usually translated as "The Journey of the Soul into God," the course was titled "The Journey of the Human Person into God." There is a difference between the two. The term "human person" implies not just the soul but the body, soul and spirit, in other words the whole person. The idea of the whole human person entering fully into God was far more attractive as it speaks of the goodness of not just the soul but also our bodies that God has gifted us with. Therefore, I intended to plan a retreat that would involve the whole human person, the full being, body, soul and spirit. Such a retreat would involve the heart, mind and gut, the thoughts, feelings and emotions, using all the bodily senses to give a sensation of the whole human person journeying into God.

Daily Prayer and Mass

Daily community prayer will take place in the oratory at 7:00 a.m., 12:00 noon and 6:00 p.m., unless otherwise stated. Daily Mass will follow midday prayer. The exception will be Sunday morning when the novices and postulants will attend a Mass with the local community in the friary church. This is to maintain a sense of the wider community. For though we step away from the world during a retreat to spend time with God, the Sunday Mass will help serve as a reminder that we are journeying not just as individuals but as a

people, a community of believers, towards God. We need God but we also need each other, just as we are called not only to love God, but also to love our neighbor (Matthew 22:37-39).

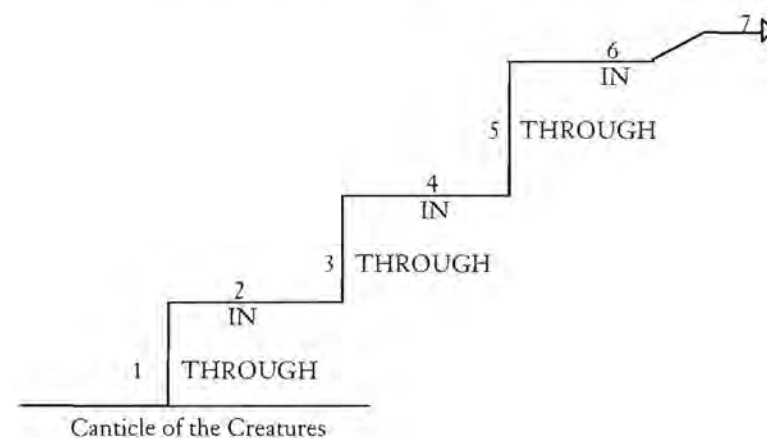
The Preparation Week

There will be a week of preparation before the retreat. This will include a brief history of the life of Saint Bonaventure. The Prologue of the Journey will be read, followed by open discussion on our desire for God and the cleansing of our interior mirror so that we may become clearer mirror images of the Holy Trinity, remembering how we were once made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27). There will be discussion on the use of the eyes, the window to the soul, and on how the contemplation of God leads to an interior peace which surpasses all our understanding; "a peace the world cannot give" (John 14:27).

Finally, on the day before the retreat is due to begin, there will be a reading of *The Canticle of the Creatures*, followed by reflection and discussion on how Saint Francis of Assisi calls on all of creation to join in the song of praise to our Lord and God.

Throughout the week of preparation chart 1 will be on display. Though it shows the seven stages of the journey, the rest of the chart is left blank. This will hopefully arouse a curiosity in the novices and postulants; after all, the journey to God is in many ways an unknown, full of surprises. Thoughts, concerns, words or reflections, even fears may be added to the chart throughout the week.

Chart 1: To be put on display during the week of preparation



The Seven Week Journey

The retreatants will receive the appropriate chapter at the start of each week.

Weeks 1 and 2

During these two weeks, Evening Prayer will take place outside at dusk to watch the sunset and the light fading. This is to help visualize that the footprints of God as seen in nature mysticism are sometimes unclear, perhaps only dim shadows.

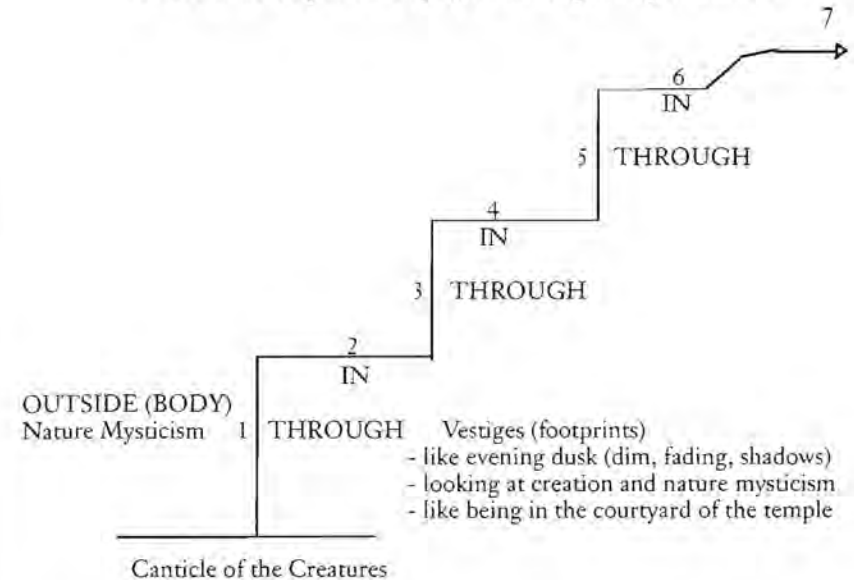
The focus for these two weeks is on nature mysticism, that which is outside and external, the material world and the body; hence the daytrips and the greater use of the external senses.

Chart 2 will be on display. Thoughts, words or reflections may be added to the chart throughout the two weeks.

Week 1: Chapter One – The steps of the ascent into God and the reflection on God through the vestiges in the universe

- Sun. READING CHAPTER, REFLECTION ON CHAPTER, DISCUSSION ON CHAPTER
- Mon. Contemplation of a flower.
- Tue. Discussion on whether the flower is opaque or transparent; in other words, though the flower is not God, are we able to see through the flower to the beauty of God? Are we able to look beyond the created to the creator; are we able to see God's reflection or footprint in the flower? (Matthew 6:25-34 on Trust in Providence may be of use).
- Wed. Day trip to a place of natural beauty, perhaps an ocean view or mountain scenery.
- Thu. Discussion on the beautiful scenery and whether it is opaque or transparent. Is it just a beautiful view or does it tell us something about God's power, magnificence and splendor?
- Fri. Daytrip to a zoo.
- Sat. Discussion on the variety and uniqueness of the animals and wildlife; again are they opaque or transparent? Are we able to look through creation to our creator God?

Chart 2: To be put on display at the beginning of week 1



Week 2: Chapter Two – The reflection on God in the vestiges in this sensible world

- Sun. READING CHAPTER, REFLECTION ON CHAPTER, DISCUSSION ON CHAPTER
During the previous week we tried to look through creation. Now we look at creation as it enters in our senses.
- Mon. Sight. Draw or paint a picture of the place of natural beauty visited last week. This may be compared to photographs to show how memory may be flawed and how we are unable to fully absorb an awesome sight in the same way we are unable to fully absorb and comprehend the full depth of God
- Tue. Hearing. Listen to a piece of classical music in the morning, enjoying its peaceful harmony. Attempt to hum it back in the evening. This may demonstrate how imperfect memories are formed through imperfect senses.
- Wed. Smell. Smelling and reflection on various fragrances, demonstrating how we make a judgment, either taking delight or not taking delight from creation entering our senses.

- Thu. Taste. Eat something quickly and eat something slowly, whilst using or not using the sense of smell. This will demonstrate how the senses may need time to allow creation to enter in and it will show how the senses are often dependent on one another.
- Fri. Touch. Try to identify different objects using only touch, and then gradually introducing the other four senses to identify the different objects. This will demonstrate the interdependency of the senses, showing how all five senses are needed to gain a more complete picture.
- Sat. DAY OF REST

Weeks 3 and 4

During these two weeks, Morning Prayer will take place outside at dawn to watch the sunrise and the light increasing. This is to help visualize that the contemplation of God through the soul and soul mysticism gives a clearer and brighter image than the contemplation of God through nature mysticism. This is because in all of nature, it is the human person that is created in the image and likeness of God and therefore the human soul is capable of giving a clearer reflection of our God.

The focus for these two weeks is on soul mysticism, that which is within and internal, the human soul; hence meeting people and reflection on Grace.

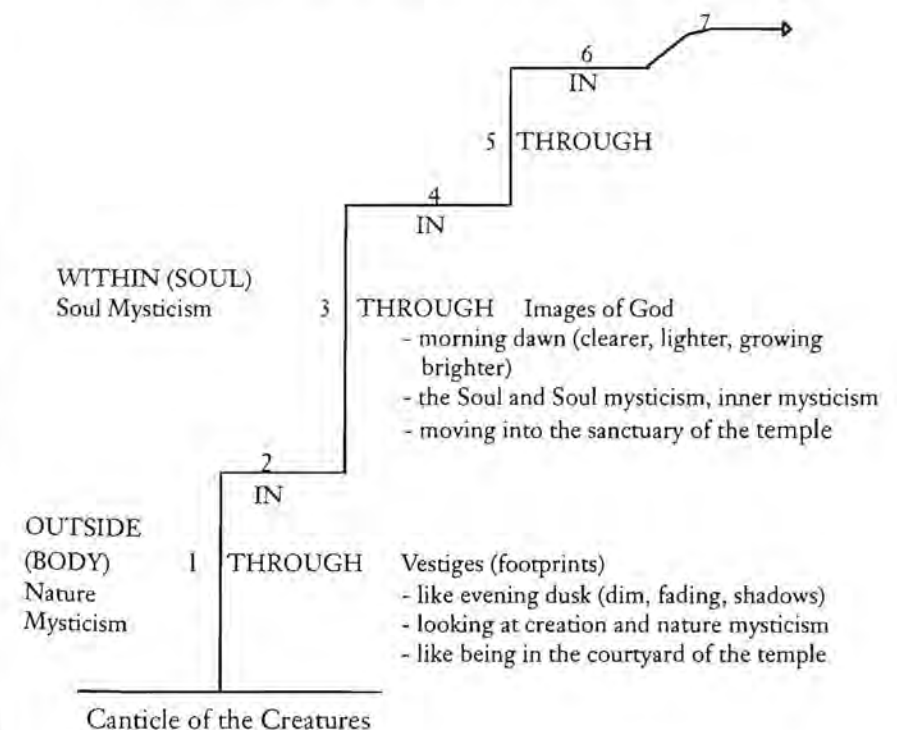
Chart 3 will be on display. Thoughts, words or reflections may be added to the chart throughout the two weeks. The charts from previous weeks will be left on display so that retreatants may look back over the journey so far. The journey is not necessarily continuous and linear. There may be movement towards later stages or movement towards previous stages of the journey already passed through. It is important to be flexible and to allow the Spirit to lead us.

Week 3: Chapter Three – The reflection on God through the image imprinted on our natural powers

- Sun. READING CHAPTER, REFLECTION ON CHAPTER, DISCUSSION ON CHAPTER
- Mon. Memory to Eternity (Father). Visit a home for the elderly and listen to childhood memories.
- Tue. Reflection and discussion on the previous day's experience, including how the memory retains the past, present and future. It remembers changeless truths and goes on and on and on, becoming eternal. We reflect on how we are eternally in the memory of God (Jeremiah 1:5).

- Wed. Intellect to Truth (Word / Son). Listen to lectures from adult teachers on Christian truths.
- Thu. Reflection and discussion on the previous day's experience, including how the intellect understands the meaning of terms and words, how it comprehends the meaning of propositions and is able to grasp conclusions and the Truth. We reflect on how the Word made flesh in Jesus Christ is "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).
- Fri. Will to Highest Good (Holy Spirit). Entertain a group of free spirited primary school children.
- Sat. Reflection and discussion on the previous day's experience, including how we are able to use the will to carefully deliberate before making a judgement that leads to a desire for the Highest Good. And how the Higher Good, the Spirit of love, the Spirit of truth "will lead you to the complete truth" (John 16:13), and how the "truth will make you free" (John 8:32). And how Memory, Intellect and Will when used together help to build up an image of God.

Chart 3: To be put on display at the beginning of week 3



Week 4: Chapter Four – The reflection on God in the image reformed by the gifts of grace

- Sun. READING CHAPTER, REFLECTION ON CHAPTER, DISCUSSION ON CHAPTER
- Mon. A reminder of our Baptismal Vows and the Graces we receive.
- Tue. Faith. Reflection and discussion on the strength of faith and on the doubts and struggles often associated with faith (Hebrews 11:1-40). We discuss how faith is often blind for “no one has ever seen God” (John 1:18). We remember how previously we used the physical senses of sight and hearing to see and hear beauty and harmony. And now we build upon these physical senses with the eyes and ears of faith to help reach the perfection of the spiritual senses, so that we may gaze with admiration on the beauty and harmony of our God.
- Wed. Hope. Reflection and discussion on hope and on the patience it brings during times of trial and suffering (Romans 5:3-5). We remember how the physical sense of smell was used to experience soothing fragrances that may calm us during times of stress. And now we build upon the physical sense of smell, using the scent of hope to restore the perfection of the spiritual sense, so that we may experience with devotion the soothing fragrance of our God.
- Thu. Love. Reflection and discussion on love and the commitment and work it requires, and how love is eternal (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). We remember how taste and touch were used to experience sweetness and delight. And now we build upon these physical senses with sweet and delightful love to help perfect our spiritual senses, so that we may rejoice with exultation in the sweetness and delight of our God. The film “The Phantom of the Opera” may be shown to help demonstrate the importance of touch and the damage done to a person when they are deprived of touch and love.
- Fri. A presentation on Mary, she is “Full of Grace.” Mary is what God would be in all of us. She carried the Word of God in her womb; we are called to carry the Word of God in the womb of our hearts. She gave birth to the Word of God in the stable in Bethlehem; we are called to give birth to the Word of God in our good works. And how, when all humanity is full of Grace, “God may be all in all.” (1 Corinthians 15:28).
- Sat. DAY OF REST

Weeks 5 and 6

During these two weeks, Midday Prayer will take place outside at noon when the sun is at its highest and its light is brightest. This is to help visualize the blinding light of God that we see as we contemplate the Divine Names of the Holy Trinity.

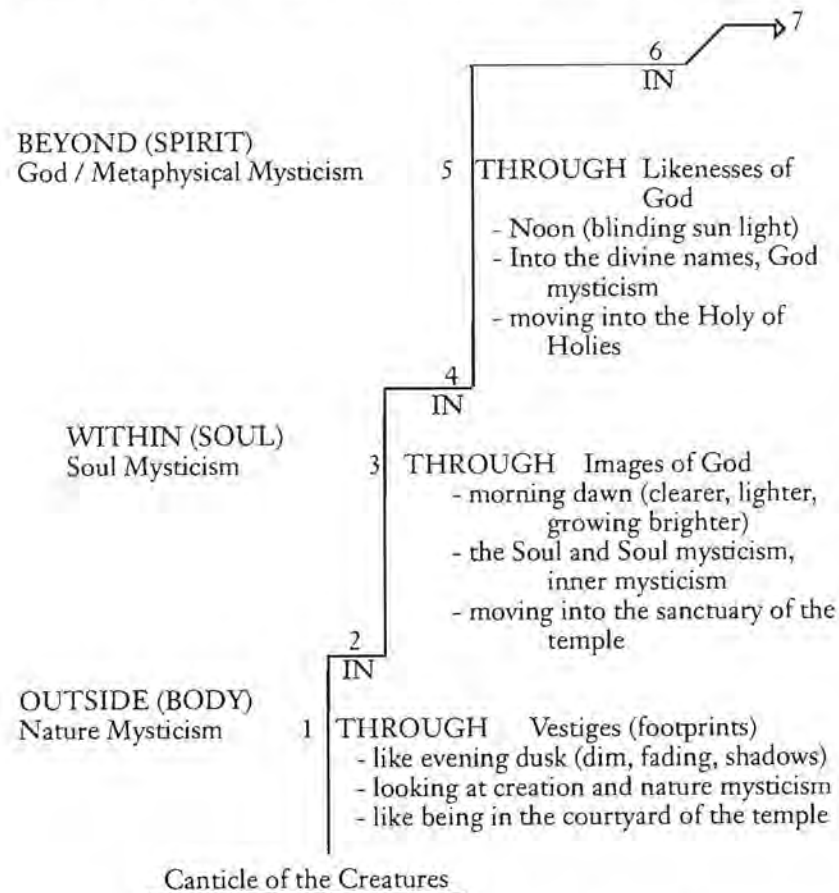
The focus for these two weeks is on God mysticism, the spiritual and that which is beyond; hence more quiet time for meditation and contemplation.

Chart 4 will be on display. Thoughts, words or reflections may be added to the chart throughout the two weeks.

Week 5: Chapter Five – The reflection on the divine unity through God’s primary name, which is Being

- Sun. READING CHAPTER, REFLECTION ON CHAPTER, DISCUSSION ON CHAPTER
Saint Francis of Assisi prayed “Who are you, Lord my God, and who am I?” This is the prayer that we will focus on throughout the week. For the first five days we pray “who are you Lord?” as we meditate on various passages from scripture.
- Mon. You are Being. “I Am who I Am” (Exodus 3:14).
- Tue. You are Good. “No one is good but God alone” (Luke 18:19).
- Wed. You are Truth. “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” (John 14:6).
- Thu. You are Unity. “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). We meditate on the unity of the Holy Trinity.
- Fri. You are Beauty. “A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). We meditate on the beauty of Jesus’ love for us, and how the beauty of this spiritual love on the Cross is in contrast to the bitterness and ugliness of the physical suffering on the Cross.
- Sat. We pray “Who am I Lord?” Not what I do, but who am I. It is only by knowing God that we come to know our own true self and the full dignity of the human person. I am made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Before God formed me in the womb God knew me; before I came to birth God consecrated me (Jeremiah 1:5). “Yahweh called me before I was born, from my mother’s womb he pronounced my name” (Isaiah 49:1).

Chart 4: To be put on display at the beginning of week 5



Week 6: Chapter Six – The reflection on the Most Blessed Trinity in its name, which is the Good

- Sun. READING CHAPTER, REFLECTION ON CHAPTER, DISCUSSION ON CHAPTER
- Mon. The God of Love. Reflection and discussion on Saint Augustine's image of the Holy Trinity as Love; where God the Father is the Lover, God the Son is the Beloved and God the Holy Spirit is Love itself flowing between the Father and Son.
- Tue. God the Father. Contemplate God the Father, the "creator of heaven and earth" (The Apostles' Creed), the "Fountain Fullness" and infinite source of all goodness who is freely self-giving.

- Wed. God the Son. Contemplate God the Son, the "Divine Exemplar," the full expression of the Father, the Word through whom "all things were created" (Colossians 1:16).
- Thu. God the Holy Spirit. Contemplate God the Holy Spirit, the "Breath of God," the "breath of life" (Genesis 2:7), and the free gift of God's love to creation and humanity.
- Fri. Reflection on how the perfect unselfish love and goodness of the Holy Trinity flows out into creation and is freely shared with humanity. And how God the Son, the Word became flesh in Jesus Christ to fully return all the love and goodness in creation perfectly back to the Father. And we are drawn to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit; bringing us into the unity of the Holy Trinity.

Sat. DAY OF REST

Week 7

Surrender of the whole human person, body, soul and spirit, to God; silence leading to solitude.

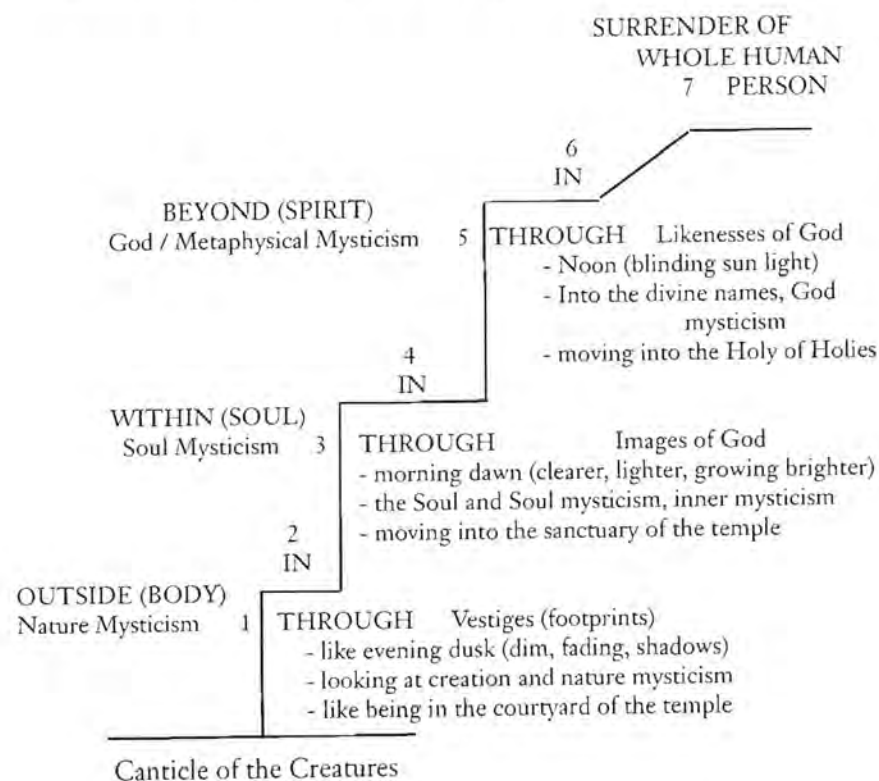
Chart 5 will be on display. Thoughts, words or reflections may be added to the chart, but not during the three days of silence. This is to prevent any distractions as we surrender ourselves wholly to God.

Week 7: Chapter Seven – The mental and mystical transport in which rest is given to our understanding and through ecstasy our affection passes over totally into God

- Sun. READING CHAPTER, REFLECTION ON CHAPTER, DISCUSSION ON CHAPTER
Words and knowledge can only take us so far, but the time will come when these will fail (1 Corinthians 13:8-12) and then we must surrender ourselves to God.
- Mon. Daytrip to climb a mountain. We begin at the foot of the mountain with our desire to reach the top. We use all our senses as we climb the mountain, contemplating the ascent into God. At the top we rest before surrendering ourselves to God. (For those unable to climb they may contemplate the ascent into God from the foot of the mountain, slowly raising their gaze from the base of the mountain along the route they would take to its peak, mirroring their own journey into God.)

- Tue. Visit a swimming pool with three diving boards at different heights representing the three steps of the journey as shown on the charts. As we climb the steps we reflect on the journey before taking the plunge. If we jump from the diving board it is a leap into the unknown, a passing over, surrendering to God as we fall into the silence and peace and darkness of the water below.
- Wed. SURRENDER – SILENCE LEADING TO SOLITUDE
- Thu. SURRENDER – SILENCE LEADING TO SOLITUDE
- Fri. SURRENDER – SILENCE LEADING TO SOLITUDE
- Sat. Final discussion on *The Journey of the Human Person into God*.

Chart 5: To be put on display at the beginning of week 7



Endnotes

¹Copyright © 2005, Antony E. Jukes, OFM, English Province of the Immaculate Conception.

²For André Cirino, OFM (Franciscan International Study Centre, Canterbury). The version of *The Journey of the Human Person into God* is a recent translation by Zachary Hayes, OFM included in *The Journey Into God – a Forty Day Retreat with Bonaventure, Francis and Clare*. Josef Raischl, SFO and André Cirino, OFM (Cincinnati, Ohio: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2002).



Image of St. Bonaventure by Tiberio d'Assisi; a detail from the "Madonna with Saints" found in the Church of St. Francis in Montefalco. (See *S. Bonaventura da Bagnoregio* (Rome: Ed. Antonianum, n.d.), 23.

Common Ground: St. Francis of Assisi and Aldo Leopold

Judith L. Eckert, SFO

In early March, 2004, a newspaper article caught my attention. It stated that in 2004 "the Wisconsin Legislature designated the first full weekend in March each year as Aldo Leopold weekend."¹ The inaugural celebration took place in 2005. Many of you are probably familiar with Leopold. He is "widely considered the father of wildlife conservation in the United States"² and is "best known for his *A Sand County Almanac*."³ I had often thought of reading this book. Reading the newspaper article gave me the impetus I needed to finally read it. What a wonderful book! It's as relevant today as when it was published in 1949. After finishing the book, I wanted to learn more about Leopold and checked out a biography written by Marybeth Lorbiecki.⁴ As I read the *Almanac* and the biography I couldn't help but notice similarities between the lives and thinking of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology, and Aldo Leopold, the "Father of wildlife ecology."

Aldo was born in 1887 in Burlington, Iowa on the banks of the Mississippi River. His maternal grandfather was an amateur naturalist who loved gardening and landscape design. He convinced the city to establish a park featuring native plants and natural contours. Aldo's father was an avid outdoorsman who taught him to hunt. At a time when there were few hunting laws, his father stressed a code of ethics which included taking only what one could consume and avoiding springtime hunting when young were being raised. Aldo's mother Clara encouraged him in the areas of literature and writing. At an early age Aldo went on nature outings, keeping a journal of observations about birds and plants. Aldo's father Carl was a furniture dealer. Near the turn of the century his father observed that the number of log-filled rafts coming down the river was dwindling. He sought out information about forest management and introduced his son to this topic. "When Aldo heard of Yale's new forestry training program and the new Forest Service"⁵ he decided that his place was in the woods.

As a Yale student, Aldo became distracted from his dream by sports and social events. He dressed in the latest fashions, attended parties and spent less time on nature outings. Things got so bad that he was put on probation. Fortunately a reprimand from his mother induced him to get back to his studies. Doesn't this sound a lot like Francis who Celano describes in this way: "He . . . endeavored to surpass others in his flamboyant display of vain accomplishments: wit, curiosity, practical jokes and foolish talk, songs, and soft and flowing garments" (1C 1:2).

Leopold entered the Forest Service in 1909 and was assigned to the Apache National Forest in Arizona Territory. ". . . Leopold and the rest of the rangers kept up a steady war against wolves, mountain lions, and grizzlies—the predators that ate the game species the foresters wanted to protect. The foresters shot, trapped, or poisoned these 'varmints,' earning bounties for their successes."⁶ There is a particularly important anecdote that reveals how Leopold may have begun what we can call a conversion:

One particular afternoon, Leopold and another crew member spotted a wolf and her pups crossing the river. They shot into the pack and then scrambled down the rocks to see what they had done. One pup was crippled and trying to crawl away. The old mother wolf lay snapping and growling. Aldo baited her with his rifle, and the wolf lunged at him, snatching it in her teeth. The men backed away, but kept their eyes on her, watching her die.⁷

Many years later, Leopold himself wrote about that day:

We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes. I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes—something known only to her and to the mountain. I was young then, and full of trigger-itch; I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunters' paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view.⁸

Francis of Assisi also had an encounter with a wolf that terrorized the people of Gubbio. He acknowledged the wolf's right to live. He understood the needs of the wolf and the people. He brought peace between the people of Gubbio and the wolf who had terrorized them. But it would be years before Leopold changed his mind about wolves and the role of predators in the natural world.

Since then I have lived to see state after state extirpate its wolves. I have watched the face of many a newly wolf-less mountain, and seen the south-facing slopes wrinkle with a maze of new deer trails. I have

seen every edible bush and seedling browsed, first to anemic desuetude, and then to death. I have seen every edible tree defoliated to the height of a saddlehorn. . . . In the end the starved bones of the hoped-for deer herd, dead of its own too-much, bleach with the bones of the dead sage, or molder under the high-lined junipers. I now suspect that just as a deer herd lives in mortal fear of its wolves, so does a mountain live in mortal fear of its deer. And perhaps with better cause, for while a buck pulled down by wolves can be replaced in two or three years, a range pulled down by too many deer may fail of replacement in as many decades.⁹

In the spring of 1913 Aldo's work took him to the Jicarilla Mountains. He became very ill and was taken to Santa Fe where he was diagnosed with nephritis, a serious kidney ailment, from which he nearly died. The only treatment was rest. The lengthy recuperation period gave Leopold time to read, write, and reflect. He determined that his mission was game management. Francis also experienced serious illness and a long recuperation after being imprisoned during the war against Perugia. Celano wrote that "he went outside and began to gaze upon the surrounding countryside" (1C 1:3). The experience eventually helped Francis to discern his mission in life.

Leopold saw the numbers of game species dwindling and wanted to reverse that trend so that future generations could enjoy the same experience he had while hunting with his father. He proposed to the Forest Service that game animals be considered forest "products" just as trees were, that game refuges be established, and hunting permits sold to support rangers enforcing game laws. The Forest Service rejected his idea and he turned to the private sector, namely, game protective associations. In an address to the Albuquerque Rotarians he said:

It is our task to educate the moral nature of each and every one of New Mexico's half million citizens to look upon our beneficial birds and animals, not as so much gun fodder to satisfy his instinctive love of killing, but as irreplaceable works of art, done in life by the Great Artist.¹⁰

The Leopolds moved to Madison, Wisconsin in 1924 where Aldo took a job at the Forest Products Laboratory. Five days after he left, the Forest Service approved Leopold's working plan for the Gila Wilderness area—"the first official wilderness area in a national forest."¹¹ In 1933 the University of Wisconsin hired Leopold to teach the nation's first graduate program in game management. In 1935 the Leopolds purchased an abandoned farm on the Wisconsin River near Baraboo. His goal was to restore the land to its pioneer state. This land was to be the inspiration for *A Sand County Almanac*.

Just as with Francis of Assisi, Aldo Leopold's life took many turns before he found his ultimate mission, namely, to articulate an American land ethic. The book jacket of Lorbiecki's biography describes this ethic very simply, quoting Leopold as saying: "How can we live on the land without spoiling it?"

In 1936, Leopold had a profound shift in the focus of his life, namely, from sick land to healthy land. He had visited Germany where he saw "wilderness" managed out of the forest. Afterwards he visited an unspoiled wilderness in Mexico. From that time on, his focus was on protecting existing wilderness areas.

In the article "Why a Wilderness Society?" he wrote:

The long and short of the matter is that . . . we do not yet understand and cannot yet control the long-time interrelations of animals, plants, and mother earth. . . . The Wilderness Society is, philosophically, a disclaimer of the biotic arrogance of *Homo americanus*. It is one of the focal points of a new attitude—an intelligent humility toward man's place in nature.¹²

Note the key word "humility"—one of the primary Franciscan virtues.

In the Foreword to *A Sand County Almanac*, Leopold stated: "Conservation is getting nowhere because it is incompatible with our Abrahamic concept of land. We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land (soil, water, plants, animals) as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect. That land is a community is the basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics."¹³ Leopold continued: "It is a century now since Darwin gave us the first glimpse of the origin of species. We know now what was unknown to all preceding caravans of generations; that men are only fellow-voyagers with other creatures in the odyssey of evolution. This new knowledge should have given us, by this time, a sense of kinship with fellow-creatures; a wish to live and let live; a sense of wonder over the magnitude and duration of the biotic enterprise."¹⁴ Note that Leopold used the phrase "kinship with fellow-creatures," so similar to the Secular Franciscan Rule, Article 18, which states: ". . . they should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship."

Later, his son wrote: "One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds. Much of the damage inflicted on the land is quite invisible to laymen . . . in a community that believes itself well and does not want to be told otherwise."¹⁵ Such an attitude requires a new ethic: ". . . a land ethic changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such."¹⁶

Francis of Assisi addressed his fellow creatures as “brothers” and “sisters.” In his *Salutation of the Virtues*, he spoke of obedience, not only to people but to animals as well. What better way to show respect than to allow them to live as God intended.

In closing, there is much “common ground” between Francis and Aldo. Above all, they both showed great love and tenderness towards God’s creation. It enabled them to go beyond mere preaching and teaching to charismatic leadership. They both affected generations that came after them. Aldo Leopold was not a Catholic but his writings certainly have a spiritual aspect, including Scripture quotations. Like Francis, Leopold experienced God’s presence in nature. His beloved wife, Estella, was Catholic and they married at the Cathedral of St. Francis in Santa Fe. What a coincidence!

Endnotes

¹Heather LaRoi, “State Marks Contributions of Conservationist Aldo Leopold,” *The Post-Crescent* (Appleton, Wisconsin, no date, no page).

²LaRoi.

³LaRoi.

⁴Marybeth Lorbiecki, *A Fierce Green Fire* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁵Lorbiecki, 24.

⁶Lorbiecki, 43.

⁷Lorbiecki, 43.

⁸Aldo Leopold, “Thinking Like a Mountain,” *A Sand County Almanac* (New York: Oxford University Press, [1949], 1987), 130.

⁹Leopold, 130.

¹⁰July, 1917, speech to Albuquerque Rotarians.

¹¹Lorbiecki, 96.

¹²Draft of essay published in *Living Wilderness*, vol. 1 (Sept., 1935); Aldo Leopold Papers.

¹³Leopold, Foreword, *A Sand County Almanac*, viii.

¹⁴Leopold, “On a Monument to the Pigeon,” *A Sand County Almanac*, 109.

¹⁵*Round River*, Luna B. Leopold, ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, [1953], 1972), 197.

¹⁶L. Leopold, 204.

“Conservation is getting nowhere because it is incompatible with our Abrahamic concept of land. We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land (soil, water, plants, animals) as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect. That land is a community is the basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics.” Aldo Leopold, 1949

Franciscan Prayer and Liturgy of the Hours

Charles Finnegan, OFM

As we prepare to celebrate the eighth centennial of the foundation of our Franciscan family in 2009, we rightly recall “the grace of our origins,”¹ reflecting with gratitude on St. Francis’s original inspiration and life of radical gospel living, to live that vision today creatively and with renewed enthusiasm.

The text “The Grace of Our Origins” could well have used the plural, Graces, since there are so many. One might think, for example, of the “Five Priorities,” every one of them a grace, named by the OFM general chapter of 2003:

The Spirit of Prayer and Devotion
Communion of Life in Fraternity
Life in Minority, Poverty and Solidarity
Evangelization and Mission
Formation

All branches of our Franciscan family agree in their documents that the life of deep prayer and worship of God is the first of our Franciscan priorities; it is indeed the priority of all our priorities. St. Francis considered work to be a grace, but always with the understanding that it “not extinguish the Spirit of holy prayer and devotion to which all other things of our earthly existence must contribute” (LR 5:2). Francis wanted those of his brothers called to preach to be competent, and so approved of study, but again with the proviso that study “not extinguish the spirit of prayer and devotion” (LtAnt). He was convinced that the malice of our adversary consists precisely in this: he wants to impede us from living “with our hearts turned to the Lord” (RegNB, XXII,19).

Hearts Turned To the Lord

If anything is clear in the life of St. Francis, after his conversion, it is the absolute primacy of God.

"Now that we have left the world, the only thing we have to do is follow the will of the Lord, and please God" (RegNB XXII:9). The only thing! "Let us desire nothing else, let us wish for nothing else, let nothing else please us and cause us delight, except our Creator and Redeemer and Savior, the one true God" (ER 23:9). Convinced of the absolute primacy of God in our life, Francis draws the obvious conclusion:

Therefore let nothing hinder us, nothing separate us [from God], nothing come between us. Let all of us, wherever we are, in every place, at every hour, at every time of day, everyday and all day, believe truly and humbly, and keep in [our] heart, and love, honor, adore, serve and bless . . . the most high and supreme eternal God, Trinity and Unity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (ER 23:10 ff).

Francis's first biographer is surely justified in making the claim that "his whole soul thirsted after Christ. He did not just say prayers; he himself became a prayer" (2C 94f). Francis is continually fascinated by the sheer goodness of God, and contemplating the divine mysteries he pours out his soul in a crescendo of praise and thanksgiving to God, "the fullness of good, all good, every good, the true and supreme good, who alone is good, and totally desirable above all else forever" (ER 23:11). Francis therefore rejoiced at the thought of his family as "pilgrims and strangers in this world," contemplative-evangelists, "the Lord's minstrels . . . going through the world preaching and praising God."² "The servants of God need to know how to dedicate themselves always to prayer and to some good work" (ER 7:11) wrote Francis, and the Divine Office, today usually called the Liturgy of the Hours, provided him and his family with an excellent means of doing that.

The "Hours" In St. Francis's Writings

In the first two chapters of both Rules Francis treats of the vows and the reception of new friars. In chapter 3 he begins to deal with the life and work of the friars, and in that context he mentions in the first place the Divine Office. It is as if in thinking of how he and his brothers would live the gospel together the first thing that comes to his mind – the first work he thinks of – is the Liturgy of the Hours.

All the brothers, whether clerical or lay, should celebrate the Divine Office, the praises and prayers, as is required of them. The clerical [brothers] should celebrate the office and say it for the living and the dead according to the custom of the clergy. And for the failings and negligence of the brothers let them say the *De profundis* (Psalm 129) with the Our Father. And the lay brothers who know how to read the

psalter may have it. The [other] lay brothers should say the I believe in God and twenty-four Our Fathers with the Glory to the Father for Matins; for Lauds they should say five; for Prime, the I believe in God and seven Our Father's with the Glory to the Father; for each of the hours of Terce, Sext and None, seven; for Vespers, twelve; for Compline, the I believe in God and seven Our Father's with the Glory to the Father; for the deceased, seven Our Father's with the Eternal rest; and for the failings and negligence of the brothers, three Our Father's every day (RegNB 3:3ff).

Those instructions were shortened in the approved rule:

The clerical [brothers] shall celebrate the Divine Office according to the rite of the holy Roman Church, except for the Psalter, for which reason they may have breviaries. The lay [brothers] shall pray twenty-four Our Father's for Matins, five for Lauds, seven for each of the hours of Prime, Terce, Sext and None, twelve for Vespers, and seven for Compline. And let them pray for the dead (RegB 3:3ff).

St. Clare follows the same pattern in her Rule. Chapters I and II recall how the "Form of Life of the Poor Sisters" was established by St. Francis and the obligations of obedience (to the Pope, to the successors of St. Francis, to Clare and to the abbesses who would succeed her), and provide norms for the reception and training of new Sisters. Chapter III begins to treat the life of the Poor Sisters, and the first activity Clare mentions—the first thing that comes to her mind—is the Divine Office:

The Sisters who can read shall celebrate the Divine Office according to the custom of the Friars Minor; for this they may have breviaries, but they are to read it without singing. And those who, for some reasonable cause, sometimes are not able to read and pray the Hours, may, like the other Sisters, say the Our Father's (RCI 3:1).

That St. Francis considered the Divine Office to be of great importance in his own life can be gathered from the surprising and public confession he makes in the most liturgical of his writings, A Letter To the Entire Order:

I confess all my sins to the Lord God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, to the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, and to all the Saints in heaven and on earth, to Brother H., the Minister General of our Order, and to the priests of our Order and to all my other blessed brothers. I have offended God in many ways through my grievous fault especially in not having kept the Rule which I promised the Lord nor in having said the Office as the Rule prescribes, either out of negli-

gence or on account of my sickness, or because I am ignorant and unlearned (38ff).

Francis considered the Divine Office to be of the greatest importance also in the life of his brothers, and in that same Letter reserves the harshest words found anywhere in his writings for friars who neglected to pray the Office: "I do not consider them to be Catholics nor my brothers, and I do not wish to see them or speak with them, until they have done penance" (44). He then instructed the friars about the importance of praying the Office, not out of routine or mechanically, but "with devotion before God, not concentrating on the melody of the voice but on the harmony of the mind, so that the voice may blend with the mind, and the mind be in harmony with God. [Let them do this] in such a way that they may please God through purity of heart and not charm the ears of the people with sweetness of voice" (41f).

Example of St. Francis

Our Franciscan Sources reveal the importance Francis gave in his own life to the devout praying of the Office. His first biographer noted that "He celebrated the canonical hours with no less awe than devotion," and even when ill would not lean against a wall or partition, but chanted the psalms standing upright (2C 96). Another early source recalls how once, while returning from Rome Francis traveled on horseback because he was very ill. In spite of a downpour, Francis dismounted when it was time to pray the Hours, "standing on the roadside despite the rain which completely soaked him" (AC 120). His main concern was to pray the Hours devoutly. Brother Leo, a close companion of St. Francis, testified that when Francis was too ill to recite the Office, he wanted at least to listen to it.³ When close to death, Francis wrote: "Although I may be simple and infirm I wish nonetheless to have a cleric who will celebrate the Office for me as contained in the Rule" (Test 29).

When Francis's first followers, led by his example, came to him with the question: "What should we do?" he answered: "Let us go to church tomorrow and consult the holy gospel." On the following morning they went to church, and Francis opened the Book of the Gospels, discovering three foundational texts for his brotherhood. One of the texts read: "Take nothing for your journey" (L3C 29, found in Lk 9:3). Ever since that revelation, Francis loved to think of his family as "pilgrims and strangers in this world" (Test 28) – itinerant evangelists, "going through the world preaching and praising God, as God's minstrels" (AC 83) – "taking nothing for their journey *except the books in which they could say their Hours*" (L3C 59). Interesting: Francis added those italicized words to what he had found in the gospel. When thinking of traveling essentials, the one thing Francis reminds us not to forget is the Office book!

According to an early Franciscan source, something similar happened that prompted Francis and his brothers to leave Rivo Torto. The usual explanation⁴ attributes their sudden departure to the rude action of a man who drove his donkey into the friars' hut, intending to take possession of it. Francis advised the friars that they had not been called to "entertain a donkey," so they left. The Assisi Compilation (56) offers an additional explanation: as the numbers of Francis's followers increased, he thought it well "to ask the bishop or the canons of St. Rufino or the abbot of the Monastery of St. Benedict, for a small and poor church where the brothers may recite their Hours." The difficulty he had with Rivo Torto was that "the house is too small since it pleases the Lord to multiply our numbers, and above all, we have no church where the brothers may recite their Hours." Above all! Neither the bishop nor the canons were able to help him, so the Benedictine abbot of the monastery of Mount Subasio, after consulting his brothers, gave Francis "the poorest church they owned," the church of St. Mary of the Portiuncula. That became the dearest place on earth to him, as St. Bonaventure noted: "He loved this place above all others in the world" (LMj 2:8). It was at Portiuncula that Francis had earlier discovered his vocation with clarity, exclaiming after hearing the mission discourse in the gospel: "This is what I want; this is what I am looking for; this is what I long to do with all my heart" (1C 22).

To assemble the friars in chapter, including the famous Chapter of Mats, he would call them to the Portiuncula, and from there send them out on mission. It was there he received St. Clare into his family, beginning with her the Second Order.⁵ In all probability the Third Order also (the Brothers and Sisters of Penance), known today as Secular Franciscans, from whom the Third Order Regular would develop, can trace their origins to the Portiuncula.⁶ From the Portiuncula Francis set out on his missionary journeys to France, Spain and the Middle East, and from there returned to the Portiuncula. When he knew that he was soon to die, he asked to be taken to the Portiuncula, where he welcomed Sister Death. Francis did not have a home on earth, but the closest thing he had to one was surely the Portiuncula. According to the above-mentioned Compilation, the reason Francis acquired the use of that sacred place was, "above all else," his desire that he and his brothers might have a suitable place to pray the Office.

Why Is the Divine Office Important?

Neither St. Francis nor St. Clare develop a "theology" of the Liturgy of the Hours⁷ – led by the Holy Spirit, they sensed its importance by a kind of "holy intuition" – but they would surely rejoice at the inspiring teaching of Vatican II on the Office, especially in nn. 83-85 of the Liturgy Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*:

83. Jesus Christ, High Priest of the New and Eternal Covenant, taking human nature, introduced into this earthly exile that hymn which is sung throughout all ages in the halls of heaven. He attaches to Himself the entire community of humankind and has them join him in singing his divine song of praise. He continues his priestly work through his church which, by celebrating the Eucharist and by other means, especially the celebration of the divine office, is ceaselessly engaged in praising the Lord and interceding for the salvation of the entire world.

84. The divine office . . . is so devised that the whole course of the day and night is made holy by the praise of God. Therefore when this wonderful song of praise is correctly celebrated . . . it is truly the voice of the Bride herself addressed to her Bridegroom. It is the very prayer which Christ himself together with his Body addresses to the Father.

85. Hence all who take part in the divine office are not only performing a duty for the Church, they are also sharing in what is the greatest honor for Christ's bride; for by offering these praises to God they are standing before God's throne in the name of the Church, their Mother.

Reflecting on the conciliar teaching, some points are deserving of special attention:

1. Before the coming of Jesus Christ, no human being ever offered God a perfect prayer. That changed when the Eternal Word of God became flesh: He introduced that hymn of perfect praise to God that is sung "in the halls of heaven." He introduced it because it was not here before His coming.

Indeed the Incarnate Word is that song of perfect praise, being "the exact representation of the Father's being" (Heb 1:3). On leaving this world and returning to His Father, Christ did not take His prayer away with Him: He entrusted it to us, commissioning us to continue His prayer on earth. More than that: He invited us into His prayer, so that His prayer would be our prayer also—what St. Augustine calls the prayer of "the whole Christ"—Christ the Head, together with us, the members of His body.

While on earth Jesus was, as the gospels make clear, a man of prayer: "He often went off to deserted places where he could be alone and pray" (Lk 5:16). Alone! That's the difference: He is no longer alone: the prayer is the same, for it is His, but it is also ours: He and we together, the "whole Christ," giving God worship, praise and thanksgiving, and interceding for the whole world. (We might think of it this way: when Jesus was on earth and went to deserted places to pray, what the Father heard was the lone voice of His Son; when we pray the Hours, what the Father hears is still the loving voice of His Son—the prayer is His—but He is no longer alone; the Father also hears our voice in perfect unison with that of His Son, praying His prayer which is now also

ours. As Augustine said: When the body of the Son comes together to pray, we do not separate ourselves from Christ our Head, therefore "Let us hear our voices in His voice, and His voice in ours."⁸

The Liturgy of the Hours "is the very prayer which Christ himself together with his Body addresses to the Father." That conciliar teaching is the single most important thing we need to know about the Liturgy of the Hours. To be caught up into the very prayer of Christ is indeed an awesome privilege and responsibility. Christ has entrusted us with the mission of continuing on earth something that was very dear to Him—His prayer to His Abba. To neglect that duty would be to say, "this doesn't interest me; I'm not interested in being part of that prayer." St. Francis's reply to that is to say, as his harsh words quoted above imply, "then you are not interested in being part of my family."

2. The specific purpose of the Liturgy of the Hours is, as its name implies, the consecration of time: "the whole course of the day and night is made holy by the praise of God." Time is God's creation; it is God's gift to us—we journey through time to reach eternal life. St. Francis understood life as that journey: "may we make our way to you, Most High, following the footprints of your beloved Son, inflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit" (LtOrd).

An important element in that journey of "making our way" to the Father, is "following the footprints of [His] beloved Son" in prayer, being drawn into His very own prayer. Every day we give back to God with gratitude the time God gives us—indeed the gift of time is consecrated by the Holy Spirit—as we pray the Liturgy of the Hours. In this context we recall the "special times" of the Liturgical Year (Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter seasons) when the Liturgy of the Hours, and especially the Office of Readings, provides us with a valuable means of entering into the spirit of the season.

3. There is a close connection between the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours. The Eucharist perpetuates the Sacrifice of the Cross, so that Christ's sacrifice might be our sacrifice also, and the Liturgy of the Hours perpetuates His prayer, so that His prayer might be our prayer too.

Both Eucharist and Liturgy of the Hours are the work of the "whole Christ." In addition, while we profess that the Eucharist is the "memorial of Christ's death and resurrection" (making present again the great saving event—"God's absolute masterpiece," as St. Augustine said), the purpose of the Liturgy of the Hours is to bring the praise and blessings of the Eucharist to all the hours of the day.⁹

No wonder St. Francis and St. Clare attached so much importance to it! The question for us is: how much importance do I attach to it? How much importance do we as a community attach to it? How careful are we to pray the Office "with devotion before God," as St. Francis wanted.

Conclusion

Giving witness to a life of deep prayer, and specifically the Liturgy of the Hours, can be a great service to the church. We find an early example of this in the prayerful Franciscan presence at the poor friary in Greccio. The friars there sang the Lord's praises each evening, "as was the custom in many places" (AC 74). The people of the city would come out of their homes, and standing on the roadside by the friary, would alternate with the friars, chanting in a loud voice, "Blessed be the Lord God!" The example of the friars at prayer called the people to prayer.

Today too we are encouraged to invite others to join us in praying the Hours. In the Apostolic Constitution promulgating the Office, Paul VI noted: "[The Office] has been arranged so that not only the clergy but also religious and laity may participate in it, since it is the prayer of the whole people of God." To facilitate that, certain psalms (for example, three imprecatory psalms [58, 83 and 109] have been omitted from the Hours, since they create psychological difficulties when prayed by Christians. The General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours, especially Chapter I, is a valuable tool helping us to grow in our appreciation of this "prayer of the whole Christ."

Endnotes

¹The title of a document approved by the OFM general definitory on November 4, 2004, and promulgated by the Minister General, Jose Carballo OFM, on December 8, 2004.

²AC 83.

³The "Breviary of St. Francis" was donated by Br. Leo to the Poor Clare protomonastery of Assisi and still preserved there. In the Inscription found at the book's beginning Leo wrote: "Brother Francis acquired this breviary for his companions Brother Angelo and Brother Leo, and when he was well he wished always to say the Office, as is stated by the Rule. At the time when he was sick and not able to recite it, he wished to listen to it. And he continued to do this for as long as he lived."

⁴Found in IC 44 and L3C 55.

⁵Cf. Legend of St. Clare 8.

⁶Cf. L. Canonici, in "Problemi sulle origini del TOF" (n.p., n.d.), 34-37.

⁷Nonetheless, in the ensemble of prayers that Francis put together in his Office of the Passion, and in The Praises To Be Said At All The Hours, it is obvious that he sees the Office as celebrating all the mysteries of our redemption. Those mysteries are "in some way made present" (Vatican II in Liturgy Constitution, 102) in the celebrations of the liturgical year, including the Office, so that celebrating these mysteries in faith, we might be drawn into them and experience their saving power. Hence the crescendo of praise and thanksgiving that we find in The Praises, compiled by Francis and intended by him to be used before praying the Hours.

⁸Cf. Discourse on Psalm 85, 1.

⁹Cf. General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours (found at the beginning of volume I of the four-volume Office book), 12.

All branches of our Franciscan family agree in their documents that the life of deep prayer and worship of God is the first of our Franciscan priorities; it is indeed the priority of all our priorities. St. Francis considered work to be a grace, but always with the understanding that it "not extinguish the Spirit of holy prayer and devotion to which all other things of our earthly existence must contribute" (LR 5:2). Francis wanted those of his brothers called to preach to be competent, and so approved of study, but again with the proviso that study "not extinguish the spirit of prayer and devotion" (LtAnt).

About Our Contributors

Margaret Carney, OSF, currently serves as President of St. Bonaventure University. Margaret has been past Director of the Franciscan Institute, the major superior of her congregation, and participated in the Rule Project that led to the revised TOR Rule some 24 years ago. She is well known throughout the Franciscan world for her dedication to all things Franciscan.

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Anthony E. Jukes, OFM, wrote his article as a paper while he was a student at the Franciscan International Study Centre in Canterbury, England.

Naming the Earthquake: Franciscans and the Evangelical Life

Margaret Carney, OSF

Introduction

On September 26, 1997 a devastating earthquake shook central Italy. While loss of life was relatively small, properties throughout Umbria and Tuscany were toppled. What made the world take note (and hold its breath) was the fact that among the ravaged buildings was the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi. In the months following the quake, I had many opportunities to hear about the experience from those who were in the city on that day and in the weeks to follow. I visited Assisi just three months later—at Christmas—with a delegation of Franciscan pilgrimage leaders. We saw the ruins on every street. We stared at the video of the Basilica's exploding ceilings evaporating into a thick amber cloud as it played endlessly in the visitors' center. We noted the weary faces of friends whose businesses had been shuttered and whose nerves were still raw. We heard the scientific explanations of seismologists and the folkloric assertions of the locals: "St. Francis is warning us. . . ." (The quake occurred on the day associated with the birth of Francis.)

In the years that have passed, near-miraculous restorations of frescoes and other artifacts have been unveiled. After a painfully long delay, the emergency "container" housing has disappeared. A visitor today might visit the town and its sanctuaries and be blissfully unaware of the devastation of six years ago. With the passage of time, and in repeated visits to this city, the earthquake and its lessons have given me much to ponder.

In this assembly we honor the fifty years of the Religious Formation Conference in the United States. In this context the earthquake experience offers me the metaphor I need to grapple with the challenge of describing the new dialogue of the Franciscan tradition with the questions of our era. We have many ways of describing the transition we are making from *pre-modern* to *modern* to *post-modern* awareness. We understand, though not well enough, that the collision of these various mindsets can be found at the dinner table or

chapter room of almost any community we know. This collision, like the moving of the earth's tectonic plates, creates, at times, the ferocious geological chaos we call an earthquake. Can we study this tectonic plate activity of our own religious identity-crisis and come to understand why the upheavals have been both costly and unnerving?¹

Four Objectives

How shall we proceed? My role in this conference is to offer as a type of "case study" the experience of Franciscans in constructing a new basis for formation during this same half-century. I will present important aspects of the refounding work of the Franciscan order/s that will serve to demonstrate the major themes of our keynote speakers. Allow me to propose four points that will guide this short presentation:

1. I want to examine the forces that have shaped the contemporary conversation among Franciscans about the nature of the "form of life" enshrined by Francis and Clare in their rules. This includes the hermeneutic, which now interprets those rules by all three branches of the Franciscan family.
2. I want to demonstrate that the post conciliar call of renewal and reform would not have generated such sustained effort without the establishment of university-level educational centers and the expansion of access to specialized knowledge of Franciscan theology, sources and history.
3. I want to explore some of the serious problems that contemporary North American Franciscans encounter in their attempt at living this "difficult inheritance." This will take the form of comparing pre-conciliar formation regarding material poverty with a new pedagogy of evangelical poverty.
4. Finally, I will try to describe the emergence of a consciousness that we Franciscans claim unique place within the forms of religious life recognized by ecclesial tradition—and formally by *Vita Consecrata*. Franciscans in the U.S. have christened this, "Franciscan Evangelical Life."

Part One: The "Double Helix" of Franciscan Identity

When Franciscans are required to "return to their sources," their origins, the task is always two-fold. All Franciscans share a common ancestry of rule and tradition that stretches back to mid-13th century Italy and the inimitable personages of saints Francis and Clare of Assisi. Over time the branches of the Franciscan family/order have diversified and differentiated to an extraordinary degree. To the uninitiated, the Franciscan family tree looks more like a rampage of kudzu than a stately diagram of identifiable branches. A briefly sketched description of the major entities of the Franciscan order/s may be helpful.

The First Order: The Friars Minor

The Franciscan friars trace their formal ecclesiastical approval to 1223 when Pope Honorius III approved their Rule text.² In the next three centuries the brotherhood was divided into three distinct branches by divisions over such issues as the observance of poverty and the place of pastoral, thus institutional, service in their lives. Today we have three distinct entities within the Order, each with its own Minister General and Constitutions. These are: the Friars Minor (OFM), the Friars Minor Conventual (OFM Conv.), the Friars Minor Capuchin (OFM Cap.). Each of these entities preserves the 1223 Rule as the base of profession. Each of these is divided into provinces, each of which is responsible for government and formation of members. Until the 20th century, the vast majority of scholars (theologians, historians, philosophers) were ordained clerics of a branch of the Order of Friars Minor. This fact has major implications for the manner in which Franciscan spiritual theology and formation developed.

The Second Order: The "Poor Clares"

In 1253, Pope Innocent IV approved the Rule of Clare of Assisi, thus bringing to a remarkable close the struggle of a small group of Franciscan women with the limits of medieval episcopal imagination.³ Again, the early movement of small beguine-like households of dedicated sisters in various locales yielded to autonomous monasteries with strict enclosure. Over the centuries, reforms have generated constitutional variations in the second Order. Today its members belong to federations of monasteries, linked to one or another branch of the First Order, but lacking a centralized authority or single profile of observance. A recent formation development among North American Clares was the Clarian Theology Project which resulted in a publication in 2000 of a compendium of theological reflections "from the base" of the participating monasteries. This collaborative work, guided by Franciscan theologian Margaret Eletta Guider, is indicative of new forms of shared identity in this branch of the family.

The Third Order Regular and Secular Franciscan Order⁴

The Third Order Regular renewed its Rule text in 1982. However, the TOR branch of the Franciscan Order can trace its origins to the time of Francis's public ministry. The first organized groups of Franciscan "tertiaries" emerge shortly after his death. Over the centuries many such institutes have been founded, flourished and disappeared. Founded at local, regional or national levels, they enjoy governmental autonomy within the Franciscan family. This allows for an enormous diversity of Franciscan religious congregations. The TOR branch contains a number of contemplative monasteries of women. How-

ever, the vast majority is dedicated to some form of the apostolic ministry. Voluntary national federations link these 400 institutes of sister or brothers and priests. A new International Franciscan Conference founded in 1985 provides the first global linkages of this most variegated branch of the Franciscan family.

The Secular Franciscan Order, which also traces its origins to the medieval penitents, renewed its rule text in 1978.⁵ The lay "Third Order" is made up of a vast network of local fraternities grouped into regions and national entities. An international chapter elects its Minister General and each nation elects its national leadership as well. Its members make a public and life-long profession of their form of life. Their current challenge is the restoration of the radical appropriation of Franciscan secular commitment. Following centuries in which only ordained friars were charged with leadership and formation of the secular Franciscans, new constitutions call for lay administrators and formators to take up leadership in the secular branch. The transition from clerical oversight to a fully realized lay governance progresses by slow degrees.

The Franciscan "*E Pluribus Unum*"

In these small sketches, we see how pluriform the Franciscan vocation is. At the same time, any Franciscan entity in the United States has a specific historic point of origin that plays an important role in the self-consciousness of the members. Most North American Franciscan provinces or institutes date their beginnings in the mid 19th to early 20th centuries. These modern beginnings are being explored by historians and archivists and have figured prominently in the attempts by the various provinces or institutes to name their place and their mission within the overall Franciscan order. Thus, when asked to speak of the founder/foundress many an American Franciscan will answer by describing the 19th and 20th century origins with a specific founding person or group. Francis may be seen as a founder, but in a more symbolic sense.

This "double helix" of identity poses interesting challenges. While the actual foundation may be the work of a 19th or 20th century pioneers, the group's spiritual and theological heritage may be highly influenced by the medieval writings of Francis and Clare and the vast literature that exists from centuries of reinterpretation of the original inspiration. But the opposite is just as likely. A group that belongs by canonically to the Franciscan family may pay scant attention to the medieval sources, and construct identity by recourse to a modern founding vision. Some groups clearly embrace one of the varieties of ministerial/apostolic spirituality that feature prominently among contemporary institutes of simple vows while claiming the patronage of Francis and Clare.

Additionally, involvement in the formal organizations for religious in this country (LCWR and CMSM to name the most prominent examples) has added important elements to the Franciscan North American profile. These organizations aided in the quest for our proper identity and cultural autonomy in the living out of public religious profession. At critical moments in the last 40 years, these groups created certain imperatives for their members aimed at protecting our unique gift as U.S. citizens and members of a global church. Participation in some of the critical developments of religious life in relationship to the Holy See or our own episcopal conference impacted the evolution of our identity in profound ways.

Franciscan religious institutes in this country do not operate in a vacuum. They participate for the most part in the national and international networks that have much to say—especially to leaders—about how identity is achieved and protected. Only gradually, however, did U.S. Franciscans come to understand how Eurocentric were our versions of Franciscan spirituality. We came to see that we were dependent upon scholarship and interpretations that were bound by a classic mentality which did not fit well with the turbulent and searching '60s and '70s. Only when a new generation of North American Franciscanists began to write and teach on their own soil did this change. The mediation between an "old world" sense of obligation to the past and a "new world" spirit of creative adaptation became the new task of Franciscan formation.

Even more gradually did American Franciscans come to see the need to develop a particular formational response to our cultural framework. In the years immediately following the Council, renewal was dominated by the break with anachronistic customs, including many which were strong outward symbols of Franciscan identity. This initial phase of removing outmoded customs had a deconstructionist tone and impact. At the time, the heady experiences of casting off these stultifying practices became synonymous with renewal. But, unknown to us, the many forays into "woods . . . lovely, dark and deep," had only begun.

American Franciscan formators gradually recognized the necessity of mastering the primary sources, history and pastoral applications of a more precise Franciscan theory of religious life.⁷ There was a lot of new wine to be had. So much of it was consumed that we failed to realize that we were carrying it around in old wineskins! A new and engaging argument would emerge to energize our trek towards another level of reform and renewal. This new level of conversation could not have happened without some important preliminary actions which created resources needed to achieve this sophistication and depth.

Part Two: The Resourcement of the Franciscan Charism

While most of us think of the work of the renewal of formation as taking place in earnest only after Vatican II, the very nature of the history of this conference reminds us that important forces were in play years before that white-robed column of bishops filed into St. Peter's on October 11, 1962. Franciscan formation practitioners can also look back to a long process of remote preparation for the first waves of the earthquake.

While the Sister Formation Conference dates from 1953, we would not be exaggerating to place the beginnings of the re-formation of Franciscan life at the turn of the 20th century. One example of this precocious attention is the program of Bernardine of Portogruaro. Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor from 1869-89, Bernardino led the work of unification of a badly splintered Order. Small fractious groups with their own governmental privileges dotted the map of Europe and exported their differences to missions in the Americas and Middle East. Bernardino intuited that a reunification of this branch of the Order required a common base of understanding the Franciscan source materials. To that end he founded the research center at Quarrachi (Florence) and the "Antoniano"—the Franciscan university—in Rome.⁸ The faculties of both institutions exerted influence on Franciscan scholarship worldwide.

The Franciscan friars of the United States created a very different structural approach in the establishment of the Franciscan Education Conference in 1919. Formed by the rectors and professors of provincial seminaries, this Conference would exercise a wide and salutary influence until its demise in the wake of the formation of the major theological consortia (Washington Theological Union, Chicago's Catholic Theological Union and the Graduate Theological Union at Berkeley) shortly after the Council.

Spurred no doubt by the impetus of the nascent Sister Formation Movement, the Franciscan sisters established their own Franciscan Sisters' Education Conference in 1952. The 1953 meeting at the newly dedicated Alverno College in Milwaukee brought one thousand Franciscan sisters together. (One of the conference proposals was the request that the works of St. Bonaventure be translated into English—a very avant-garde request for the times!) With the founding of the Franciscan Federation in 1968, the Sisters' Education Conference lost stature and soon dissolved. It is important to note that the FSEC focused on education as a ministry and its leaders were part of an elite corps of Franciscan women who served on faculties of the many sisters' colleges. The Federation, on the other hand, focused its agenda on internal education/formation in light of the demands of the conciliar program of "*aggiornamento*."⁹ Since, at that time few women had a specific expertise in Franciscan studies,

Federation leaders created partnerships with friar "*periti*" such as David Flood, OFM, Thaddeus Horgan, SA, and Roland Faley, TOR. In a parallel arrangement, many western European sisterhoods engaged the scholars of their own countries. Often this expertise made its way to the States via the provincial leaders and general chapters of these international congregations.

This was also the period of the foundation of several study centers, which continue to exercise enormous influence in the Franciscan Order/s, The Franciscan School of Theology at Berkeley's GTU, and the Franciscan Centre at Canterbury, England and the Franciscan Chair at WTU. St. Bonaventure's Franciscan Institute dates to 1939. In 1970 Conrad Harkins, OFM, then director of the Institute, developed Master of Arts degree in Franciscan Studies. This allowed friars of every branch to become credentialed as teachers of the tradition. The program was intended to meet formators' needs but rigorous enough to prepare its graduates for doctoral work. Even more dramatic was the fact that this program was opened from its inception to Franciscan sisters and lay members. For the first time all branches of the Franciscan Order had equal access to professional training in the specialized disciplines of Franciscan studies.

Part Three: Franciscan Formation Revisited

A recent publication introduces the felicitous term, "a difficult inheritance" to describe the Franciscan tradition. This expression conveys the constant struggle to achieve an adequate hermeneutic for the baffling extremism attributed to Francis and Clare. Franciscan formators have always struggled to provide novices with a safe passage through the romantic fascination of the founders to the rough reality of the Order here and now. Instead of describing this formative process of retrieval and re-translation in the abstract, let us look at the manner in which the availability of scholarly research impacted one cardinal aspect of Franciscan identity and the means by which directors of formation might approach it. That cardinal aspect is poverty.

The identification of Franciscans with a strict interpretation of the obligations of the vow of poverty is so universal that we have all heard at least one joke that plays on this image or seen more than one cartoon that caricatures it.

Several elements influenced the formation of the vow and virtue of poverty in the novitiates of yesteryear:

- The strength of hagiographical tradition that still had not been submitted to historical/critical analysis;
- The actual economic milieu of immigrant (and even 2nd and 3rd generation) Catholic families in which most religious were raised;
- The "common life" customs engendered by Tridentine reforms and continued by the Code of 1917;

- The Counter-reformation ascetical spirituality imported from European manuals that guided earlier generations of novice directors.¹⁰

The weight of these influences had become burdensome in the extreme for religious trying to address life in the United States. As American religious moved toward renewal, the first moonwalk and Woodstock, the Peace Corps of JFK and the iconoclastic art of Sr. Corita Kent, a spirituality focused on denial of human desire and fear of worldly contamination became insupportable. It is for this reason that the first experimental chapters after the promulgation of *Ecclesiae sanctae* seemed, at times, to be consumed by decisions we now regard as trivial. They were, in fact, trying to prevent the collapse of a whole system of outmoded norms by eliminating the most obvious hindrances to living in the complexities of this culture, which was itself in the midst of massive transformation.¹¹

An intricate legislative system was the container for the poverty practiced by most Franciscans prior to 1966. Customs books added intricate detail to the strictures of constitutions. Permission for any exception was required. Personal discretion or choice about material goods was very limited. Business transactions were the task of the elected superiors and their appointees. The period of dispensation from these strictures brought a heady sense of liberation. Gone were the stultifying rules that governed everything from the number of one's handkerchiefs to the inheritance of a family's fortune. However, as a tidal wave swept away anachronistic practices, the evolution of a more critically developed stance would take its own time to mature.

Scholarship Linked to Life

While many Franciscanists have added to a new wisdom in dealing with this issue, we cannot think of our reformed horizons without crediting David Flood, OFM, with some of the most important contributions to this end. David's preoccupation with the economic aspects of the early Franciscan movement found a ready audience in the first generation of Federation leaders. His thought was widely disseminated. While it often provoked as much heat as light, his work became a lightning rod for discerning Franciscans. Two examples will suffice to illustrate this point.¹²

1. *The Use of Money*: Francis forbids the use and possession of money. The prohibition is unequivocal. The only exception appears to be in cases of emergency care for the sick. For centuries, Franciscans have struggled with the burden of being involved in economic transactions feeling all the while the judgment of the founder hovering over their worried heads. Study of the economic situation of medieval Assisi revealed that the commune's powerful classes

created a debased currency with which to pay the migrant or day laborer. The currency of true worth was reserved to the classes in charge of the commune's economic project. Thus, the prohibition can be read as a refusal to participate in a structural situation of injustice. The brother worker asked instead to be paid in kind: wood for the fire, clothing, food, and medicine. With these real transactions a small fraternal group could live and live without fear of starvation or total ruin in hard times. Such a reading of early history freed modern Franciscans from a fundamentalist position regarding monetary resources and opened a path to develop contemporary equivalents of the early movement's choices.¹³

2. *Holding Offices*: Another difficult area for Franciscans involved the belief that holding any sort of official position or administrative role was somehow a proximate occasion of sin given *Il Poverello's* insistence on being the "lesser" of all. The roots were, once more, in too literal a reading of the 13th century rule. It forbade assuming offices of stewardship or administration in the houses/businesses of employers (read nobles). Once more we have a prohibition that has left many a Franciscan administrator feeling unfaithful to the Franciscan vision. An appreciation of how the early brothers were separating themselves from the feudal arrangements that were already in decline in the commune enlightens this point. Again David argues that the brothers gave evidence of being good and honest laborers. The wealthy were happy to employ them and felt that by advancing them to higher responsibility they could both benefit as administrators and, perhaps, control the religious enthusiasm sweeping the area. Francis and the others saw the danger. To accept such advancement was to return "to the world" where a hereditary "lord" had the power to command one's actions in peace and in war. Only the "Most High Lord" is the sovereign of the brotherhood. There can be no serving of two masters. Thus the insistence on choosing "lower places" as an act of humility had to give way to realizing that the position itself was not the problem. The difficulty for the first Franciscans lay in the temptation to support a feudal philosophy of natural superiority of certain persons.¹⁴

With just these two examples it becomes clear that today the Franciscan family has an array of tools to arrive at a renewed commitment to poverty and its twin, minority.

Poverty's Profile for Contemporary Franciscans

For some years now, many Franciscans have publicly expressed hope for a more publicly compelling and personally integrating formation in evangelical poverty. It is my view that in this period the major shift in the "practice of poverty" has been apostolic in nature. In other words, the meaning of fidelity to the poverty of the Franciscan calling migrated to the ways and means of our ministries and away from a scrupulous attention to personal possessions and

corporate lifestyles. There are a number of new "models" by which poverty is espoused and inculcated among us. I would characterize them as follows:

- Ministerial: Poverty is expressed through an insertion among the poor or activity in solidarity with the poor and in activity to alleviate poverty.
- Stewardship: Poverty is expressed through the use of resources to benefit the poor and to protect or increase an institute's wealth so as to provide for those with no means. Socially responsible investments, participation in economic projects through use of money, land, buildings, are some instances of this.
- Educational: The work of conscientization through education in all of its forms for the purpose of creating a more just social order is another mode of living poverty.
- Theological / Spiritual: A better comprehension of the writings of Francis and Clare and more study of the early Franciscan theology texts provide a clearer grasp of a Christological vision of poverty that is seen in "vernacular" form in Francis and drawn out into a systematic approach in Bonaventure. Franciscan mystical literature also gives evidence of poverty seen as apophatic experience of the absence of God
- Ecological: With increasing awareness of the manner in which our personal and communal decisions impact the environment, new policies and practices that mirror many traditional restrictions in the use of goods are promoted in Franciscan communities. However, the motive and often the means are quite unique to this environmental perspective. The degree to which this new mentality/spirituality is shared and become normative varies from group to group. It does, nonetheless, present a new opportunity for integration of personal and corporate renunciative practices.

Corporate Witness and Personal Asceticism

What remains is to reconnect the two aspects of poverty that became dissociated in the early decades of renewal. If today's "practice" has shifted to a public stance of advocacy, protest, and participation in work for justice and development, where is the personal commitment to simplicity, frugality, and—dare we say it?—real restriction in the use of a consumer society's affluence? While there have been brave attempts to rejoin the two sides of the equation, a kind of allergic reaction to any curb on personal options prevents new thinking and new strategies on this level. (This may be the reason that in many groups the ecological choices become identified with a "green party" minority. They are something to be tolerated or avoided, but certainly not embraced.)

We would not advocate a return to the controlling customs of years ago. However, should we also forbid honest conversation about our compromises

with the “perks” of the upward mobility of the Catholic population of this country? Is there any room in the new century’s custom books for hard questions and a searching examen about the daily details of lifestyle choices? Are we just as “gifted in ‘mall skills’” as any other citizen, and do we dare see that as incongruous? Is our use of scarce planetary resources exemplary? The way forward so worrisome to the survivors of previous eras of authoritarian discipline that there is little likelihood that these issues will be joined any time soon.¹⁵

Part Four (A): Naming the Earthquake: Franciscan Evangelical Life

For the last twenty years, the Franciscans of North America have engaged in a vital discussion of a new methodology to link the medieval wisdom of our founders to the modern questions that face us and that rise from within our own cultural matrix. The name that this conversational project goes by is “Franciscan Evangelical Life.” The term has come to signify an insight about the nature of the vocation of Franciscans that does not always fit easily with the categories of ecclesiastical tradition or with the received formation that most Franciscans over fifty years of age share.

Little of this has been published beyond Franciscan circles. Part of our reluctance has been the fear of creating the illusion of a successful definition of a new typology of Franciscan life. The ideas and questions generated in assemblies, chapters, classrooms, community conversations have been deliberately allowed to gain a quiet momentum and maturity. The conversation, however, has grown in importance over a twenty year period. Once again the Franciscan Federation provided multiple opportunities through national and regional programs. As friar David Flood functioned as arbiter of research at an earlier period, so Joseph Chinnici, OFM, has served as the principal architect of this conversation.¹⁶

A respectful attention to clarification of terminology is proper, especially in addressing an audience of religious of many traditions. Let me be clear about what Franciscans are NOT saying when we call our vocation a call to “evangelical life”:

- We are NOT pretending to be the only religious whose primary inspiration comes from the Gospels. The term has some of the unfortunate overtones of a kind of exclusive claim of purity of inspiration when it is clear that the Gospels are the starting point for all religious life charisms.
- We are NOT aligning ourselves with the electronic purveyors of evangelical holiness. This needs to be stressed since one of the most powerful forces in the electronic church (EWTN) is dominated

by Franciscan religious whose use of Franciscan symbols seems to give such concerns legitimacy. In fact, this situation has caused more than one thoughtful member of the Franciscan family to wish for some other vocabulary choices.

- We are NOT renouncing a commitment to strong ministerial involvements when we speak of an evangelical life that calls for consistent dedication to the forms of communal life and day-to-day relationships.

Then what are we saying? We are making the bold—and for many, confusing—claim that Franciscans belong neither to the “monastic” nor the “apostolic” forms of religious life that dominate ecclesiastical documents and discussions.

As I indicated earlier, more than one hundred years have passed since Franciscans began to subject their primary sources to the historical-critical methods and offer sophisticated tools to an increasingly wide audience of formators and leaders in the Order. As we mature in our use of the intellectual tools at our disposal, we U.S. Franciscans have come to see that the original Franciscan movement generated a historical/theological framework that has never been fully appreciated or accepted either internally or externally.¹⁷ Externally, Church formation through seminary curricula insisted on a Thomistic base for theological training. Only a tiny percentage of Franciscan teachers were formed in the theological tradition of the Order as giants such as Philotheus Boehner, Allan Wolter, Zachary Hayes, and Kenan Osborne mediated it. Significant themes of theological concern, significant dogmatic positions articulated by Franciscan masters never played a part in defining the horizons of orthodox inquiry. The fact that these voices were minimized by the imposition of a unitary Thomistic curriculum means that for the entire Church, not just for Franciscan scholastics, our theological inheritance has been consistently reduced to what Sandra Schnieders has called “the one right answer.”

As Franciscans begin to literally recover and rehabilitate an alternative theological/pastoral tradition we find ourselves walking in a new landscape. It includes:

- A vision of a Trinitarian God—not centered on the Father/Patriarch as dominant figure—but God understood as a “Fountain-fullness” of pure Goodness poured out in the act of Creation.
- A vision of the Incarnation whose primary cause is the very love of the creature/s and the will of their ultimate good, not the necessity of saving them from the folly of their sin. Christ comes then, in the words of the Christmas carol as “Love, the Guest” in the world created for his delight. He does not come only as one bound to undertake the onerous task of appeasement of the Patriarch’s anger.

- A vision of the cosmos as inter-related, with all creation springing from the same Source and destined to return to it. Thus our ecological concerns are grounded in a pro-found theological conviction about the nature and destiny of all beings.

- A vision of the human family as destined to fulfillment in relationships of brotherhood/sisterhood by the formation of the "commune"—the communion of hearts and hopes and horizons is itself our mission. The intersection of the lived experience of fraternitas-sororitas with our mission in and for the world is the axis of Franciscan existence.

Let me say a few words about this final point since it is the one that seems most open to misinterpretation in theory and practice at this point in the journey. The IUSG, USG, CMSM and LCWR have provided important direction in recent decades for creating an authentic apostolic spirituality. The stress of this work has led to a heightened commitment to a ministry of promotion of human development, just social structures, and peace building. The engagement with the world opens us to profound possibilities and characterizes the shape of religious formation for service, for prophetic denunciation, for new experiences of martyrdom. At the same time, the types of social and educational ministry that characterized earlier generations of religious apostolate continue to function in the promotion of human life and rights.

In an earlier time, these "apostolic" works emanated from communities that were tied to a monastic model that insisted on a stable and restricted environment of scheduled prayer and action and separation from secular social and business relationships. The insertion into the world was mitigated by a thousand details of discipline and an ironclad attitude of renunciation. With the dissolution of this monastic "container" for apostolic work, the focus on ministry, work, and apostolic availability became so dominant that the communal setting seems (still seems) in danger of being relegated to a mere sociological construct held over from a pre-modern culture. The resulting breakdown in commitment to and capacity for living in communal groups is the topic of many studies of the present moment.

One of the vivid questions that holds center stage in most discussions of Franciscan evangelical life is that of the relationship between living in an actual brotherhood/sisterhood vs. the necessity of living wherever and however the ministry of the individual dictates. What is the role of a primary "nuclear" community of residence or a primary "networked" community of relationships and accountability? Has the desire to live in an actual community declined beyond repair? What answer do we make to new members for whom such real "twenty-four/seven" sisterhoods/brotherhoods are the very thing they seek in choosing life with us?

Part Four (B): The Truth of the Matter

In recent years, my multiple engagements with the national and international Franciscan order have helped me to realize how very demanding the transition from a traditional monastic-apostolic life-style is to the brave new world of a Franciscan evangelical lifestyle and spirituality. I am gradually resigning myself to the possibility that its full blossoming will not occur for several more generations. We are probably naïve to imagine that a way of living as religious women and men that has been so powerfully promoted and so internalized for the last four centuries can be completely reinvented in the space of two decades! I have come to appreciate the necessity of reframing both expectations and questions about the future form and function of Franciscan life among publicly vowed religious.

In recent years, gatherings of religious of many traditions invariable involves at least one intervention at the "open mike" part of the agenda in which a plucky Franciscan participant reminds the group that "All of this talk of refounding apostolic religious life is fine, but some of us consider ourselves to belong not to that category, but to the Franciscan evangelical lifestyle." Heads nod appreciatively. Furtive questions are whispered. (What are they talking about?) The Franciscans go home happy that they have made a claim for their new niche. But, are we living a new model of religious life? It appears that the honest response would be "yes" and "no" in roughly equal parts.

The initial reflections on the evangelical life were circulated in the mid-1980s. It was a time of serious apprehension for many religious congregations. As we came to the final stretch of constitutional revision, we needed reinforcement for our intuition of being hemmed in anew as the Code of Canon Law was promulgated and Paul VI's patient formulation of pastoral questions gave way to a new assertion of "essential elements" for authentic religious life. We wanted to find "wiggle room" in the dialogue, and this new formulation rooted in careful analysis and historical research provided it. Is it, in fact, possible that at least some of our enthusiasm for the evangelical life debate was related to its role as a valid argument against the attempts of the Congregations in Rome to put a period on the era of experimentation?

In spite of enthusiastic adoption of the evangelical ideal and serious hard work on discussion and study involving many institutes in the USA, it appears that we continue to experience a schizophrenia of intent and actuality. We state verbally and in many of our written documents that we are committed to the evangelical life. However, the actual state of our personal understanding, and our corporate structures and processes, show that we continue embrace the primacy of apostolic effectiveness as our identity. Rather than see this as a terrible lack of integrity and a failure to understand our true destiny, let us try a little realism about our present prospects. It might be more honest and more

helpful to our refounding efforts if we acknowledge (without guilt or anxiety) all the ways in which we Franciscans—especially of the TOR branch—continue to function as apostolic institutes of religious life under the various Franciscan Rules. The actuality of this identity has a three-fold basis:

1. In the first place, we were founded for apostolic purposes. While it is true that the theological/spiritual goal of religious life has always been personal sanctity, it has been inextricably linked with service to others. Reading the masterful compilation of Sr. Margaret Slowick, OSF, on the foundation of the TOR congregations of this country, it is hard to miss the central role that meeting a need played in every instance: care of orphans, plague victims, immigrant communities, nursing care, teaching religion, and on and on.

2. In the second place, we have been formed for apostolic effectiveness. The powerful combination of real need and the American penchant for effective pragmatic action has created a mindset among us that is really a “second nature”—a powerful “habitus” that orients us to programs that work. We even speak of our communal relationships as “building community,” “working at our goals.” Even the vaunted rhetoric of “being” over “doing” does not minimize the fact that our capitalistic milieu disposes us to identify with our work and our function. Baptized with the motivation of zeal for justice, for the salvation of others in the temporal or spiritual order, our desire to be effective producers of apostolic services and goods *has* created an enviable record of achievement.

3. In the third place, our personal and corporate sense of purpose is closely connected to our role in the world of work or service. We continue to build congregational Chapter agendas on themes of mission and to explain our *raison d'être* in terms of services we provide. Our letters to donors, our vocational materials, our celebrations of anniversaries demonstrate this over and over. And is there any reason not to do this?

The dilemma, as I see it, is that given the option to choose a way of being that demands a strict balance of functions for both work and communal and personal life, the choice is almost invariably in favor of being effective in our work. This continues to be true even when it is apparent that the work in question militates against a healthy personal or communal lifestyle. I do not believe that this continues to happen because our members, now for the most part women of “mature years,” do not know that they are making these concessions constantly. I believe that it continues because we actually prefer this mode of living. It is what we believe to be our purpose for existence and it is what provides us with the antidote against the growing depression of seeing our numbers decline, our quality of life diminish and our public face be eclipsed.

We are goaded by the need to work harder because we are fewer or because more are leaving the ministry due to health or age. We continue to press

on being available to those in need, often beyond reason and sometimes to the actual detriment of the work or institution. Having been formed to dedicate ourselves with total generosity to a larger entity (the community, parish, school, hospital, etc.), we cannot restrict ourselves in the absence of the boundaries that community regulations once imposed. What suffers is the project of creating solid voluntary communities of adults who choose new primary relationships in lieu of marriage. Once the product of the superior's will and the rule book's prescriptions, the community is now an aggregate of persons who may not understand the dedication needed to engage one another in the absence of such formal structures and their formidable sanctions. And even if the group understands the need, the skills needed to develop the new communities required in the 21st century may be in limited supply. Invitations to acquire these skills involve no reward, such as continuing certification or licensure does in the professional realm. The eclectic nature of personal development modalities may also produce such pluriformity in the group that a common language or strategy may be unavailable. The gradual loss of roles of effective leadership at local congregational levels has also resulted in the dearth of means to engage and motivate a group to undertake this work and stay the course. It has become too easy to “opt out” when things become uncomfortable or conflict has no ready resolution. Thus, the local group becomes victimized by the instability of this “revolving door” approach to solving incompatibilities.

I do believe that the future form for Franciscan living will be different. But I also believe that the formation needed to generalize this possibility will take many more years to develop and institutionalize. In the meantime, the willingness and humor will be important. However, this statement betrays a certain disposition that also needs criticism. Is there any way to prove that the preferred future is one of a unitary approach to a Franciscan evangelical *forma vitae*? In other words, much of our speech indicates an assumption that we are moving in a linear progression from one model (apostolic) to a new model (evangelical) which all will embrace in existential harmony. Is it not possible that the evangelical life vision is intended to permeate a variety of forms of religious life? The post-synodal exhortation named six distinct forms of religious life: monastic life; the order of virgins, widows and hermits; contemplative institutes; apostolic religious life; secular institutes; and, societies of apostolic life. Then it provided a seventh category: new expressions of religious life. Why not assume that the evangelical model can subsist in any of the forms indicated by the synod? There might then be institutes that focus fully on the apostolate as well as those called to provide a new synthesis of communal living and forms of ministry and contemplation. The Franciscan movement has given rise to an incredible variety of expressions over eight centuries. Are we cheating ourselves by imagining that there is a single new “model” for

living evangelical life—one that we can “photograph” and “pin down” like a laboratory specimen?

In all of this I am conscious that I speak precisely from the Third Order Regular perspective where variety of type and experiment have always had prominence. The First Order's classic Rule is a document that does not commit the friars to a *particular* form of apostolic work but calls them to live the form of the Holy Gospel. (Note, however, that preaching “by word and example” is the real and symbolic form for all works undertaken by the friars.) It may therefore be more appropriate for the Franciscan friars to assert that no *apostolic* purpose explains their existence. I would simply note that for many TOR Franciscans the historical reality is quite the opposite. In that light, a desire to transform our apostolic institutes to institutes of evangelical life is a source of great inspiration. It has already demonstrated its power of persuasion. Let us be aware that we may do a great disservice to present and future congregations to insist that there is no room for the venerable tradition of institutes whose attachment to their apostolic calling is a primary hallmark.

These cautionary remarks should not dampen the enthusiasm of all who earnestly promote this transformation, whose attraction has been validated in numerous ways in the past twenty years. Rather, it is hoped that tempering this enthusiasm with a concern for the actual capacity of individual brothers and sisters and of congregations as a whole for the radical re-formation required will serve the spiritual health of all in the long run.

Conclusion

During the visits to Assisi following the great earthquake, one of the discoveries that remains with me was the ingenious ways that the traditional Christmas *presepio* was built in the churches and piazzas that year. In spite of the difficulties they endured that season, the “Assisani” lovingly created Christmas crèche scenes everywhere. In the *pensione* where we stayed the minimalist ceramic figures were huddled in a white tent, just like the emergency tents that dotted the landscape. In the plaza in front of the Basilica of St. Clare, the Holy Family sheltered in a multi-colored Land's End tent. Facing the Basilica of St. Francis, life size statues formed the Bethlehem scene. However, firemen arriving with ladders and emergency gear replaced the traditional wise men and shepherds. Perhaps the most touching was a small set of figurines in rough peasant garb located between the ancient church of St. Mary Major and the parsonage. There they stood, surrounded by elements of debris, rocks, and splintered wood. In front of the display was a crudely painted sign: “Jesus is with his earthquake people.”

Let this be our consolation as we continue to find our way through the uncertain present of rebuilding amidst the tremors of constant change, and

the future that holds its own unnamed dangers. Jesus is *always* with his earthquake people.

Endnotes

¹I am indebted to Thomas Grady, OSF, for originating this metaphor for religious life's post-conciliar upheavals.

²For a helpful summary of the complex history of the Franciscan family consult: William Short, OFM, *The Franciscans*, Religious Order Series, 2 (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1982).

³Further study of this event can be found in my book, *The First Franciscan Woman: Clare of Assisi and Her Form of Life* (Quincy, Ill: The Franciscan Press, 1993).

⁴Resources for the history of the Third Order Regular exist in a variety of publications. Short's book provides a helpful introduction. The most extensive study currently available is: Raphael Pazzelli, TOR, *The Franciscan Sisters: Outlines of History and Spirituality* (Steubenville, OH: Franciscan University Press, 1989). The Third Order Regular publishes its annual *Analecta TOR* from its generalate in Rome. The *Analecta* is a very useful source for tracing historical studies of TOR masculine congregations. It includes many excellent articles on TOR women's communities and the Secular Franciscan Order as well.

⁵*From Gospel to Life: The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order* (Chicago, Ill: Franciscan Herald Press, 1979).

⁶Margaret Slowick, OSF, *The Franciscan Third Order Regular in the United States: Origins, Early Years and Recent Developments* (Tiffin, OH: 1999). (This study—an MA thesis—was printed by Sr. Slowick's congregation and can be obtained from the Sisters of St. Francis, 200 St. Francis Ave, Tiffin, OH 44883.)

⁷Franciscan studies involves a “quest” for the historical Francis (and Clare) comparable to the quest for the historical Jesus that is such a prominent theme in New Testament studies. Generations of Franciscans never actually read the complete corpus of Francis's writings. Few had the skill to navigate the complex interpretive tasks of the hagiographical sources left in abundance by his earliest biographers.

⁸Maurice Carmody, OFM, *The Leonine Union of the Order of Friars Minor, 1897*, Daniel McLellan, OFM, ed., History Series 8 (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1994).

⁹More extensive treatment of the foundations of U.S. educational conferences can be found in my article, “Women in Franciscan Studies: The State of the Question,” *Spirit and Life* 8 (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1999).

¹⁰My own novice directress based her conferences on the Belgian master Adolphe Tanquary's *The Spiritual Life: A Treatise of Ascetical and Mystical Theology*, published in the USA in 1930. Each of us received a copy to enable us to study the material following in her classes.

¹¹*Ecclesiae sanctae* was the *motu proprio* of Paul VI, published August 6, 1966, that gave the specific directives for the special general chapters that were to implement the conciliar decrees.

¹²A complete bibliography of David Flood's contributions can be accessed on St. Bonaventure's Friedsam Library's website: <http://franinst.sbu.edu/filib>.

¹³David Flood, OFM *Francis of Assisi and the Franciscan Movement* (Quezon City, Philippines: FIA Contact Publications, 1989), 23-28.

¹⁴David Flood, OFM, *Work for Everyone: Francis of Assisi and the Ethic of Service* (Quezon City, Philippines: CCFMC Office for Asia/Oceania, 1997).

¹⁵There are other areas of Franciscan identity that might be studied in the same way: relationship to the church, the place of fraternity/sorority among us, peace-making, the relationship to creation, to name a few.

¹⁶In 1994, a keynote address to the annual Franciscan Federation assembly became the centerpiece of this small body of literature. The address, *The Prophetic Heart: The Evangelical Form of Religious Life in the Contemporary United States*, was published in *The Cord*, (Nov/Dec 1994). The same issue carried the *Response to the Lineamenta* of the Synod on Religious Life that summarized the Federation's appeal to the Synod participants to recognize the results of Franciscan theologizing in their deliberations.

¹⁷In 2000 the English Speaking Conference of the Order of Friars Minor created a Commission on the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition. The commission's charge is to implement an ambitious program of promotion of Franciscan research and study in service to the pastoral task of the contemporary church. Training of formators is a key element of the program. The commission is eager to encourage new generations of Franciscan scholars and to link their ministry to that of the missionary and pastoral agents within the family. Materials documenting symposia and handbooks on various study themes (postmodernism, creation, theological foundations, etc.) can be obtained from the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University.

"Having been formed to dedicate ourselves with total generosity to a larger entity (the community, parish, school, hospital, etc.), we cannot restrict ourselves in the absence of the boundaries that community regulations once imposed. What suffers is the project of creating solid voluntary communities of adults who choose new primary relationships in lieu of marriage. Once the product of the superior's will and the rule book's prescriptions, the community is now an aggregate of persons who may not understand the dedication needed to engage one another in the absence of such formal structures and their formidable sanctions. And even if the group understands the need, the skills needed to develop the new communities required in the 21st century may be in limited supply."

Margaret Carney, OSF

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WTU Ninth Annual Symposium. "Let Us Praise, Adore, and Give Thanks: Franciscans and Liturgical Life." May 26-28, 2006. At WTU, in Washington, DC. See ad, p. 100.

Guided Retreat on Mystics. June 11-18, 2006. Director: Pauline Wittry, FSPA. At Marywood Spirituality Center, Arbor Vitae, Wisconsin. See ad, p. 107.

Workshop for Franciscan Spiritual Directors. June 16-18, 2006. "Franciscan Spirituality via the Letters of Clare." Joan Mueller, OSF. At Stella Maris Retreat Center, Skaneateles, NY. See ad, p. 98.

Vacation with a Purpose: Watercolor Workshop. June 25-30, 2006. Director: Karen Kappell, FSPA. At Marywood Spirituality Center, Arbor Vitae, Wisconsin. See ad, p. 107.

"Praying With the Little Flower." June 4-19, 2006. At Holy Spirit Retreat Center, Janesville, MN. With Br. Joseph F. Schmidt, FSC. See ad, p. 106.

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The 40 Day Franciscan Hermitage Retreat. November 4- December 14, 2006. At the Portiuncula Center For Prayer, Frankfort, IL. See ad, p. 97.

Abbreviations

Writings of Saint Francis

Adm	The Admonitions
BL	A Blessing for Brother Leo
Cte	The Canticle of the Creatures
CtExh	The Canticle of Exhortation
1Frg	Fragments of Worcester 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 of the Praise of God
PrOF	A Prayer Inspired by the Our Father
PrsG	The Praises of God
OP	The Office of the Passion
PrCr	The Prayer before the Crucifix
ER	The Earlier Rule (<i>Regula non bullata</i>)
LR	The Later Rule (<i>Regula bullata</i>)
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
RCI	Rule of Clare
TestCl	Testament of Clare
BCI	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 Jacopone da Todi
DCom	The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri
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
LEI	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