A WORD FROM BONAVENTURE

Now, the blessed and glorious body of Christ cannot be divided into its physical parts, nor separated from his soul or from the supreme Godhead. Therefore, under each of the species the one Christ is present, whole and undivided, namely, body and soul and divinity. Hence, under the two species there is but one utterly simple sacrament containing the whole Christ.

St. Bonaventure's Breviloquium Part VI, no. 5

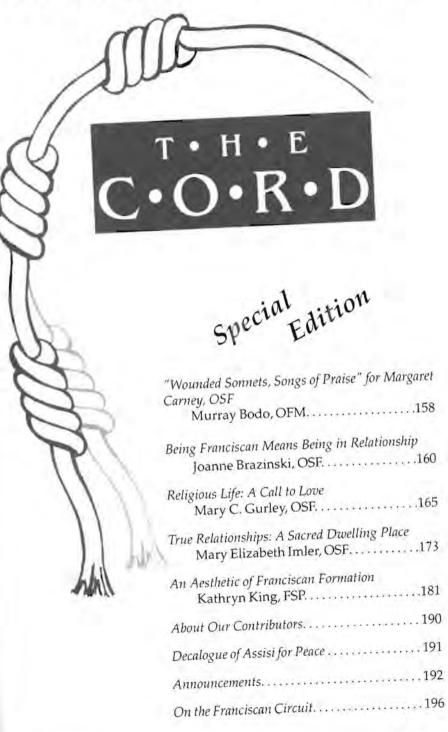
The Cord The Franciscan Institute St. Bonaventure, New York 14778

Periodical Postage Paid at St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 and Additional Office

Attention Postal Service:

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW



THE CORD A Franciscan Spiritual Review

Publisher: Michael Cusato, OFM Editor: Roberta A. McKelvie, OSF

Distribution Manager: Noel Riggs Production Assistant: Daria Mitchell, OSF

No material from this periodical may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, without permission in writing from the editor.

The Cord (ISSN 0010-8685 USPS 563-640) is published bi-monthly by the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778. (716.375.2160)

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$22.00 a year; \$3.50 a copy. Periodical postage paid at St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 and at additional mailing office.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Cord*, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 USA.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS: Address all manuscripts to Editor, *The Cord*, The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778. (Email: rmckelvi@sbu.edu)

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

- MSS should be submitted on disk (or typed on 8 1/2 x 11 paper, one side only, double spaced).
- The University of Chicago Manual of Style, 14th ed., is to be consulted on general questions of style.
- 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.

ADVERTISING: Ads should be sent to the editor at the above address. Cost: full page, \$50.00; half page, \$25.00. Ad deadline: first day of the month preceding month of publication (e.g., April 1 for the May/June issue).

Cover design: Basil Valente, OFM and David Haack, OFM.

The Cord, 56.4 (2006)



Editorial

Once again, you may have noticed, our cover bears the label "Special Edition." We celebrate the 65th birthday this month of Sister Margaret Carney, OSF, President of St. Bonaventure University—a woman possessed of many gifts and talents, a woman whose life so far is a catalogue of challenges met and surprises gratefully received. Margaret does not know that this issue (and the next) have been prepared as an *encomium* for all she has been and all she has done to facilitate the deepening of Franciscan life not just here at the university, but throughout the many places in which she has ministered over the last forty-some years.

A sixty-fifth birthday is a momentous occasion, and an invitation to introspective evaluation. Consequently, thinking about what to say in this editorial has been somewhat daunting. Margaret has been friend, colleague, immediate supervisor, and inspiring presence for me for some time. In truth, I have come back time and again to the phrase used by Elizabeth Johnson as a title for one of her books, written about the communion of saints: Friends of God and Prophets. For me, Margaret is one of the paradigmatic figures who is both of these, a friend of God and a prophet. She is touched by the fire of the Spirit of God, the passion of commitment. She has, as Beth has written, embarked on an adventure of the spirit to embody the gospel in new ways in new circumstances many times in her life. Her creativity and energy are gifts freely received and freely given, for the life of the Church. A catalyst, a leader, a sister-in-arms passionate about making Clare and Francis shining stars in the firmament of the 21st century, Margaret has helped "distill the central values of the living tradition in a concrete and accessible form." I am grateful for the opportunity to prepare these pages in honor of her many achievements!

By the time our readers receive this edition in their hands, it will have been presented to Margaret as part of the festivities of the feast of St. Bonaventure here on campus. We hope that the articles by our authors (all friends and colleagues in Margaret's journey/world travels) make her smile and praise God for the good graces bestowed upon her-and through her, upon us! Happy 65th, Margaret, and may there be more to come!

Roverta a Mexelvie, OSF.

COUNTY TO 1900

Wounded Sonnets, Songs of Praise (for Margaret Carney, OSF)

Murray Bodo, OFM

How to praise God with great humility has something to do with his father's mouth open in disbelief in the bishop's cortile as Francis lays his clothes at his father's feet and walks away from his mother standing behind his father—eyes red with grief and knowing that he will not return from his mad walk toward what she fears is a phantasm of his sick brain which walking cannot find a cure for although Francis finds it almost immediately when robbers throw him in the ditch and laugh at the nakedness beneath his threadbare sackcloth tunic and he is unashamed.

Sackcloth tunic and he is unashamed reminds him now of Lady Poverty how naked she embraced the naked Christ homeless where she alone lay upon the cross with him, his disciples fleeing that intimacy for something less than union which only stripping consummates like now as Francis sets aside former banquets for this gathering of scraps that fall from tables overfull of food not eaten by those who say they know the bread life-giving and eternal—yet drop it on Assisi streets as they make their way to church that eats a bread white and unleavened.

Church that eats a bread white and unleavened and no other eats Christ the Lord without the crust hard, its mold scraped off discarded, a Christ who does not exist for he is one bread one body, whole only when poor ones are one and one is many who need someone to bring them back to the giver of bread to make of them new seeds that die into wheat backlit in Umbrian light brightly honed to Christ's sharp stigmata that cuts through body and into the soul, a two-edged light that separates and brings together body and soul, sheaf and sheaves body soul bread wheat, human and divine.

Body soul bread wheat, human and divine. As they are to one another so is Francis walking toward what the walk becomes, pilgrimage as a way of prayer, of church. As he says to Pope Innocent, "A poor woman lived in the desert. The king passed by her hovel and seeing her he loved her and had sons by her too many to feed. The king himself fed and clothed them. Lord Pope, Jesus Christ is the king and I am the poor woman." And the Pope agrees. Francis becomes mother to his brothers, the poor Lady Clare and her sisters and all born of Francis and Christ on the road.

All born of Francis and Christ on the road take to the road outside Assisi's walls like Clare their first daughter who takes their words Gospel and rule, weaves her own patterned life: poor ladies of the King's wayside castle. Knights errant, the brothers vie for Lady Clare's hand, poor daughter of the Lord and his desert bride who go before them always, portable courts of church-making among those fallen by the wayside, the birds and animals, plants and heavenly bodies brother sun and sister moon and all things through and with and for and in which we learn how to praise God with great humility.

Being Franciscan Means Being in Relationship

Joanne Brazinski, OSF

Introduction

As we look at the life of Francis of Assisi we are often struck by the fact that he was a man who lived the gospel radically, embraced Lady Poverty completely and loved Jesus Christ passionately with every fiber of his being. Those of us who are Franciscan are often confronted with the questions: What does it really mean to be Franciscan? What is at the core of this life? How do we really come to understand and live what Francis and the early followers knew and believed? There are probably as many answers as there are Franciscans in the world. What follows is simply one woman's reflection of what it means to be Franciscan.

The Meaning of Relationship

A few clarifications as we begin. The definition of relationship is "the state of being related or interrelated." It signifies that there is a connection, a kinship, an affinity or bond between the parties. "Having a relationship" is very different from "being in relationship." To have a relationship can connote the idea of possession or the desire to keep for oneself or hold onto. Usually, when I "have" something, it is for my personal use. When we speak of "being" in relationship, however, there is a sense of presence, of identity, of existence for someone or something. Being in relationship means being concerned for and caring about another. It means being willing to take a listening stance to receive another's message and affection. It means being willing to enter into contemplative dialogue with another. It means loving and letting myself be loved by another.

Francis and Franciscans in Relationship

Within the confines of this article it would be impossible to explore the entire life of Francis and note the many ways his life reveals the mystery and grace of "being in relationship." I will simply attempt to explore selections from a few of his writings to begin to uncover what they reveal about his understanding of being in relationship. As I do that, I will leave the reader with questions for personal reflection that we might continue to explore together the challenge of being in relationship as Franciscans today.

When we look at Francis's life, we see that he often sought solitude, time alone with God. He took time to discover what God was communicating to him, revealing to him and asking of him. Francis didn't spend this time with God because someone dictated that it was important. He did it because he knew what it meant to be in relationship with God. This relationship was central in his life.

We might pause to ask ourselves: Is my relationship with God central in my life? Or is it just one of many relationships? Do I find that my relationship with God changes when I am stressed and burdened? When I am experiencing good times? Think about it for a moment, What does it mean for my relationship with God to be CENTRAL in my life?

The Praises of God

There are innumerable examples in Francis's life that point to his relationship with God being center stage. I would like to use his *Praises of God* to explore this. Take a moment to simply reread the *Praises*; or better yet, take some time to *pray* them. Note the many ways Francis tries to say that God is everything to him: "You are our hope. You are strength. You are our gladness and joy. You are our security. You are our charity. You are all our riches to sufficiency." These words are not a philosophical treatise about God as the prime mover in Francis's life, nor are they a theological reflection on God as the Supreme Being. They are an expression of Francis's experience of being in relationship with God; they are an expression of his experience of God.

We might compare the *Praises of God* with Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem: "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways." Francis's words leave us

with a sense of touching the depth of his soul. It seems as if we are eavesdropping on a very intimate moment of Francis with God. The *Praises* are an outpouring of his love for God. They are his way of saying: "You are the center of my life. Your love is enough for me." These are not mere words for Francis. He prays them after he has received the stigmata. He knows the depth of God's love for him and realizes his poverty as he senses his own inability to return such profound love. The *Praises* give us a glimpse of what it meant for Francis to be in relationship to God. This relationship was personal, powerful and passionate. It gave life and meaning to all other relationships. For myself, how might I describe to another my relationship with God? What is it that gives life and meaning to all of my relationships?

The Canticle of the Creatures

Because God was central in Francis's life and because Francis knew God as Father and Jesus Christ as Brother, he realized his relationship to all creatures. He took his place among creatures, not in the posture of control or domination, but rather in the stance of equality, mutuality, relatedness and reverence. In his Song of the Dawn, Eloi Leclerc reminds us that "being fraternal with all creatures means being willing to take one's place with them and rediscover one's links to them. This can't be done simply with will power. Only wonder can pull us out of our splendid isolation." Francis was a man of wonder, who could call all creatures "brother" and "sister," because he understood the depth of what it meant to be part of the harmony and beauty of the created universe.

Francis's Canticle of Creatures is an example of mystic poetry that reveals his experience of the fundamental unity and coherence of reality. "The Canticle brings reality to a fine point at which it is revealed that all beings are held in unity through a vast and intricate network of love relationships." Francis acknowledges his connectedness to Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Brother Fire, Sister Water, etc. There was something that Francis understood with his heart and tried to convey in the Canticle that is more than simply respect for all creatures; it is an affinity, a bond, an embrace of what it means "to be in relationship," an invitation to love all creatures.

In the numerous biographies of Francis, there are many stories about his relationships with creatures, but there is perhaps nothing so powerful and profound as his own *Canticle of the Creatures*. It calls all of us to take our rightful place in creation. It challenges us to a respect, reverence and connectedness to every creature that lives. It reveals the mystery that each one of us has the power to love all creation. By love and creativity the self and the world blend into an even finer unity.⁶ In loving we create and by creating we discover pathways to the future. Francis of Assisi's love for creatures made him unique and

original. His love heightened his sensitivity and endowed him with the precious gift of heart-sight.⁷ What does it mean for me to truly "be in relationship" with creatures? When was the last time I contemplated the connectedness of all of life? Do I have heart-sight?

Brothers and Sisters

If the lessons from Francis's life and writings stopped there, it would be enough of a challenge for a lifetime—to be truly in relationship with God and all creatures. This would indeed be a sufficient challenge for our life of continuous conversion. But Francis speaks of yet another way of being in relationship. He calls us to be "brothers" and "sisters" to every human being. What does that mean for us as we see scenes of human suffering from the war in Iraq, from the situation in Afghanistan, from the famine in Africa, from the devastation of hurricane Katrina? If we believe that these persons are our brothers and sisters, we are called not only to recognize this but do something about it. What new questions confront us before such scenes? Francis, you can't be serious about this challenge! Wouldn't it be enough if I try to be in relationship with God and with creation? Wouldn't it be enough if I were truly aware of my place on the planet? As we ask these questions, we are confronted by Francis's words in his Testament: "The Lord gave me brothers." The Lord showed Francis how to be in relationship to all. How do we hear these words and how are we challenged to live them? The rest of that quote goes on to say: "And after the Lord gave me some brothers, no one showed me what I had to do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel."8

The Challenges of the Gospel

In pondering the Word of God, Francis realized that Jesus Christ found himself in the midst of sinners, lepers, tax collectors and Pharisees. He responded to each of them as one in relationship to the other. The gospel passages continue to challenge us today: love one another (Jn. 15:12), love your enemies (Lk. 6:27), do good to those who persecute you (Lk. 6:27), forgive seventy times seven times (Mt. 18:22), go the extra mile (Mt. 5:41). We pause to ask ourselves: Am I really called to reach out to those who have hurt me, betrayed me and criticized me? What does the seventy times seven passage really call me to?

Literal gospel living requires Franciscans to live lovingly those relationships that Christ's fraternity effects. Thaddeus Horgan, in *Turned to the Lord*, summarizes very well the challenge of "being in relationship" in our world today. "Instead of competitiveness, Franciscans are called to mutuality. Instead of individualism, caring and shared living should be characteristic. Instead of negativism, support of one another ought to be typical. Service replaces control, solidarity destroys classism and respect overcomes domination. Over all these, one puts on love (1 Cor. 12)." ⁹

Speaking about the ideals of Francis is one thing; trying to incarnate them in our lives is quite another. The challenge of being Franciscan is really the challenge of being in relationship. If we do not love and are not trying to deepen that love, can any of us dare to call ourselves "Franciscan?"

Endnotes

Webster's Third International Dictionary; The Great Library of the English Language (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1971), 1916.

²Margaret J. Wheatley, Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2002), 19.

³Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, Vol. I, The Saint, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, Wayne Hellmann, and William Short (New York: New City Press, 1993), 109.

⁴Eloi Leclerc, OFM, Song of the Dawn, trans. Paul Schwartz and Paul Lachance (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977), 23.

Eric Doyle, OFM, St. Francis and the Song of the Brotherhood (New York: The Seabury Press, 1981; reprinted by The Franciscan Institute, 1996), 39.

Doyle, 40.

Doyle, 42.

*Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, The Saint, 125.

Thaddeus Horgan, SA, Turned to the Lord (Washington, DC: Franciscan Federation, 1983), 48.

Within themselves, let them always make a dwelling place and home for the Lord God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, so that they may increase in universal love by continually turning to God and neighbor.

TOR Rule II.8

Religious Life: A Call to Love

Mary C. Gurley, OSF

Introduction

The stark decline of applicants to religious life in the United States has fueled a flurry of dialog and questions. Of late, when religious women and/or men come together beyond one's congregation or order, the conversations are almost predictable. Barely have they identified one another's religious family when the topic turns to new membership or, more specifically, to the number of candidates or novices currently in preparation in one's community. This initial dialog is usually but a prelude to the real questions: Why are new applicants to religious life so few? What is it that our young adult men and women are seeking—or avoiding? What is "the message" of religious life that we advertise in our printed literature and in our encounters with potential candidates? And most important, who do WE (religious) say we are? All too often when we sit together mourning the "loss" of vocations, our analyses and suppositions become stimulating conversation; but just as often we walk away from one another without satisfying answers or direction.

A recent conversation with a friend, however, held my attention and set me on a journey of exploration into why young adults are or are not choosing religious life. Simply stated, my friend believed that we were over-emphasizing community and ministry as the focus of invitation to religious life when, in reality, most of us came to religious life because we loved God. Intrigued, I set to doing some research that began in Scripture, brought me back to the stories and writings of Francis and Clare, moved me into a library search and left me where I started—in the Gospels. From this journey of reading and reflection there has emerged a single theme that I would like to develop, namely: As vowed religious—women and men—we are called to a God whose essence is Love. We are called to love God with a lifelong passion. We are called to live Love. Everything else relative to religious life flows from this call.

Written as an eclectic overview to provoke discussion, the article will consist of four parts: (1) a reminder of the single-purpose vision of the call of Francis, of Clare and of their multitude of followers down through the ages; (2) an overview of some current understandings of the theological foundations that are of the essence of vowed religious life; (3) a review of current literature in the popular media and in sociological research that seeks to understand young adults vis-à-vis their experience of Church and their interest in religious life; and (4) reflections on mentoring young adults by the example of our lives as vowed Franciscan men and women.

In the Footsteps of Francis and Clare

The opening lines of the Rules for the First, Second and Third Orders of vowed Franciscans are but each a single sentence that has as its focus the following of the Gospel by living the vows. "The rule and life of these brothers is this, namely: to live in obedience, in chastity, and without anything of their own, and to follow the teaching and footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ" (ER 1:1). "The form of life of the Order of the Poor Sisters that Blessed Francis established is this: to observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, by living in obedience, without anything of one's own, and in chastity" (RCl 1:1,2). "The form of life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis is this: to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, in poverty and in chastity" (TOR Rule 1:1). Everything else–fraternity, community, ministry, service and leadership–flows from the individual's vowed covenant with God within the Rule that s/he professes.

Writing about Francis, Celano notes: "Overflowing with burning charity, ... [Francis] set out on the way of full perfection, reached out for the peak of perfect holiness, and saw the goal of all perfection" (2C 90). It is in words of passionate love for God that Clare reminds Agnes of their mutual call: "O most noble Queen, gaze upon Him, consider Him, contemplate Him, as you desire to imitate Him" (3LAg 20); and to Ermentrude she writes: "Be faithful dearly beloved to death, to Him to Whom you have promised yourself . .." (LEr 4). Francis's Letter to the Order exhorts his followers to "Hold back nothing of yourselves for yourselves, that He Who gives Himself totally to you may receive you totally" (LtOrd 23). Theirs was a grasp of the one thing necessary.

Other writings of Francis and of Clare and of the multiplicity of Third Order founders have chronicled the selfless ministry and service that Franciscans have accomplished over the centuries. However, no matter the place, the circumstance, or the ministerial need, the reality of who we are and what we do is always, first and foremost, a passionate and permanent commitment to the God of love. In the midst of our very busy lives and the tremendous needs of service and ministry, it's good to return to this grounding in the vows as the raison d'etre of religious life. Herein, I believe, we have an avenue of exploration of vocational call that might too easily be taken for granted or overlooked in our day-to-day interactions.

Theological Foundation of Religious Life: The God Quest

Consideration of religious life is often a counter-cultural experience for seekers and their questions are usually many in number and scattered in focus. It is important that potential members who approach religious for answers be guided through multiple stages of understanding as they make their life decisions. All of their questions are appropriate and need a response. The dilemma, however, is the chasm that can exist between the unsophisticated questions of the young seekers and the intricate theology that supports a vowed life. There is often a void between the content of the questions we are asked and the reality of who we are as religious. In our response to questions about religious life, we need to be clearly focused on the intrinsic meaning of our life as religious, and at the same time we need to speak in language understandable to the questioner. We need to name who we are as religious women and men without resorting to marketing techniques designed to make us interesting and relevant to young adults. We need to consider critically the recruiting brochures and websites-full of pictures of our smiles and our ministries-that we use. In the first place, today's youth, having grown up with omni-present media from their cribs, have learned to skim the surface of marketing. Second, in a Church that is peopled with energetic and committed lay ministers in all areas of service, today's youth often don't see vowed religious as anything unique or different. It might be a good challenge to ourselves to understand betterand be able to explain to others-what it is that defines and makes religious life unique. The essence of who we are as vowed religious is the primary content of what we should be putting in our brochures, in our websites and in our dialogue with young adults.

The question vis-à-vis recruiting and welcoming new members is relatively easy to frame: What is or should be our focus (e.g. community, prayer, ministry, etc.) in recruiting new members to religions life? The more important questions go deeper; i.e., what is at the center of our lives that we, as Franciscan religious, have to offer to those seeking religious life? How is it that we can be bold enough to dare to invite others to join us? Our answers to these questions are critical and must come from a deep place in the heart of who we are as religious, not from what we do in our ministries.

A number of contemporary writers in religious communities are using different terminology to put the concept of religious life into a nutshell. Sandra Schneiders, for example, begins with the simple statement that "there is no ministry performed by Religious that cannot be equally well performed by lay people." The point is further illustrated by Joan Chittister in the story of a prioress in dialog with novices: "Why have you come to religious life?" the prioress asked. "To give our lives to the church," the pious said; "To save our souls," the cautious said; "To convert the world," the zealots said. But no, no, no, the prioress signaled with a shake of the head. "Not that. Not that. Not that. You come to religious life," the prioress said, "only to seek God."

These observations are right on target for those who choose to commit themselves to vowed religious life. Yet, how often have we discussed, in our impromptu conversations with one another or in our assembly gatherings of the whole body, that prospective members are seeking community and/or ministerial service. Though certainly important elements and goals, community life and ministerial service are not the foundation of religious life. The call to religious life has but one focus: the call to love God, unconditionally, through the vow of celibacy. For the vowed religious everything else flows from and is an expression of that single commitment of vowed, celibate love. We sustain and deepen the vow by grounding our life in contemplative prayer. We vow poverty and obedience as outgrowths of our love affair with God. We support one another in community and move out into ministry, because that is how we both experience and share God's inestimable love. This is the message, the invitation and the challenge that we must share with young adults who are interested in religious life. In their passionate love for a God who is consummate Love (the vow of chastity), Francis and Clare embraced their cherished poverty as the compassionate response and extension of Love (the vow of poverty). The deep grounding of their single-hearted love of God was the Gospel injunction of "the one thing necessary;" "the kingdom of God within;" the reason to "sell all." It is in the Rule that every Franciscan follows: "to live in obedience, in chastity, and without anything of their own" (ER 1:1); "living in obedience, without anything of one's own, and in chastity" (RCl 1:1,2); living in obedience, in poverty and in chastity" (TOR Rule 1:1).

For young adults, celibacy is an important, haunting and confusing question, a question they would like to understand but hesitate asking. While central to the lives of vowed religious, celibacy is not usually the first piece of information that religious congregations and orders put into vocation literature or websites or in dialog with young adults. But celibacy, "the elephant in the room," needs a setting for dialog. For one of the best and clearest contemporary explanations of celibacy in context, we turn again to theologian Sandra Schneiders, who has written extensively on contemporary religious life and brings to the dialog a refreshing clarity of the primacy of celibacy. She writes:

The constitutive feature of religious life (not as Christian but as religious) is the commitment of religious to Jesus Christ in lifelong consecrated celibacy, just as the constitutive feature of matrimony (not as Christian but as marriage) is the commitment of the spouses to Christ through the lifelong commitment to each other in faithful sexual monogamy. Neither commitment . . . is intrinsic to the Christian vocation as such. . . . But for Christians who do make such a commitment it becomes the organizational principle of their specific Christian lifeform. This commitment generates the emphases and accents that will distinguish their lifeform from others within the Church and outside it. . . .

Aloneness is, in a certain sense, the inner structure of the life of the religious, as faithful and fruitful mutuality is the inner structure of matrimony. Religious life is organized around the single-minded Godquest, the affective concentration of the whole of one's life on the "one thing necessary," which is union with God. This aloneness, if cherished, attended to, and dwelt in as the heart of one's vocation, finds its positive meaning in contemplative prayer.'

Herein is the solid meat, the starting point of vocation discernment. Why do we choose religious life? We choose religious life because we have recognized within ourselves a passionate, personal love of God! It's that simple. And young adults are tuned into and understand this kind of love and commitment. We turn to this generation now.

Millennium Catholics: The New Generation

In the fall of 2002, Notre Dame University commissioned a task force to explore a variety of issues facing the Catholic Church. In their work of designing the necessary survey instruments, consultants James Davidson and Dean Hoge⁴ defined Catholics within four age groups: pre-Vatican II Catholics (born in or before 1940); Vatican II Catholics (born 1941-1960); post-Vatican II Catholics (born 1961-1977); and millennial Catholics (born 1978-1985). In their survey conclusions they noted (1) that the post-Vatican II Catholics and the millennial Catholics were basically the same in their views of Church, and (2) while there were no significant differences among the four age groups, the pre-Vatican II generation stood apart from the other three cohorts. Writing in a recent edition of Commonweal, Catholics Kaveny, a post-Vatican II Catholic who teaches millennial Catholics, describes the common elements of Church that she sees in her generation and in the generation with whom she works. Her six-point summary of their shared experience is helpful for understanding the focus and experience of this two-tier generation of younger Catholics.

The list is instructive:

- We (post-Vatican II Catholics and millennial Catholics) learned early and well that we were children of the triune God, who loved us very much. The specter of a vengeful, legalistic judge does not haunt us the way it seems to haunt some older Catholics.
- We really didn't learn much doctrine. The emphasis in our catechesis was on engaging our emotions, not on challenging our intellects.
- The coherent culture of the pre-Vatican church had broken up by the time we came along. We did not have the "Catholic-in-our-bones" sensibility.
- The end of the Catholic ghetto means that most young Catholics do not feel a need to prove themselves to the outside world.
- Our earliest experiences of the church were marked by tumult and controversy, not stability. The church is fragile to us.
- The tensions between magisterial teaching and American culture have only grown with time.⁵

As noted in a plethora of relatively recent articles in the popular press-Newsweek, America, Commonweal, Christianity Today6-today's young Catholics are seeking service, meaning and community in various ways. On most college campuses, students organize themselves for outreach to the poor: in food pantries and meal service programs; in Habitat for Humanity and neighborhood clean-up projects; through immersion and forms of communal living in inner city enclaves, and outreach to foreign villages either by fund-raising or actual presence. The number of large philanthropic grants given to colleges to encourage all of these endeavors is growing. More and more students are opting for alternative fall and spring breaks, giving up their holidays in the sun to travel to developing villages in countries foreign to them. Service learning is tied into academic courses. And a post-graduate year of service in a communal setting is becoming far more common across campuses. Spirituality is important to these young people, but it is often a spirituality of searching. It's a matter of picking and choosing elements of prayer and practice that "feel right for me." It's their developing of a sense of God that has outgrown childhood images and practices. The search is sincere though its grasp awaits a growing maturity.

At the same time, despite these positive signs of growth, involvement and outreach, a significant number of the millennial Catholics have taken the road of retreating to a former time period and are looking much like pre-Vatican II Catholics. Though their service outreach is twenty-first-century, the prayer, devotions, rituals and symbols are embedded in the 1950s. This group demonstrates a growing preference for the church of their grandparents, a safe

haven of predictability. The "old traditions" provide a surety and comfortable refuge for those who wish to escape from the world and validate their extremist views." Were this simply a matter of personal choice, there would not be cause for alarm. When, however, these young Catholics choose religious communities, mostly new start-up groups that have themselves retreated to pre-Vatican II paradigms and practices—traditional habits, outward signs of religious piety, the Latin Mass, Benediction, etc.—there is cause for concern. "These revivalistic movements," claims sociologist Patricia Wittberg, "never succeed in reproducing exactly the vanished cultures which they aspired to recreate." Indeed, this walking backwards is cumbersome at best and has the potential of being destructive to the walker, to the walking partners and to by-standers along the road.

Whatever the group, forward looking to a renewed Church or looking back over their shoulders to the nostalgic Church, millennial Catholics are searching. Their hearts are wide open; their energies propel them into service; and their service brings them back to their God with all kinds of questions. There is need to tend to them, to listen to their hearts, to answer their questions.

Framing the Conversation

There is great hope and genuine searching among the millennial Catholics. They have energy and an enthusiasm that is gift for the Church and they need to be encouraged in their gifts. Parents, parishes, campus ministry centers, teachers—all have a responsibility to mentor these Catholics. This includes filling in the gaps in their religious understandings, assisting them to become strong, prayerful Catholics who will share their gifts within the Church and providing them with the challenge to listen to their own particular vocational calls. It also means recognizing the seed of vocational questions arising in the young and welcoming the conversation.

Within this context, we who have professed religious vows also need to take seriously our role as mentors to the next generation. We must be very clear about the focal point, the heart-place, of our own vocational call, including the theological foundations that are of the essence of religious life. It is a question of authenticity: how do we-individually and collectively-define ourselves at our deepest core, and how are we visible examples of that truth. Am I still being led by my personal *God-quest?* Unless we can identify, live and articulate the core value of our lives as religious—the *God-quest*—how can we invite others to the table?

Putting this entire conversation in its setting, we return to the first paragraphs of the article, the *open-hands* and *pure-desire-for-God* call of Francis and of Clare. One's call to religious life is first and only a call from God, a

The Cord, 56.4 (2006)

heart-to-heart talk, as it were, between God and oneself. Literature, brochures, websites, conversations, retreats-all are part of the discernment. When it comes right down to decision, however, each person must listen to his/her own heart and God's whisperings. Francis and Clare and the various founders and foundresses of the Third Order heard that call; each of us who lives the vowed life today heard that call personally. New generations will hear that call if we help them to listen to their own God-quest that will echo through the ages as a concrete expression of a lifelong love affair. This is the call to religious vocation: the call to Love.

Endnotes

Sandra M. Schneiders, IHM, Finding the Treasure: Locating Religious Life in a New Ecclesial and Cultural Context (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2000), 127.

²Joan Chittister, OSB, The Fire in These Ashes: A Spirituality of Contemporary Life (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1995), 45.

Schneiders, 129.

'James D. Davidson and Dean R. Hoge, "Catholics after the Scandal," Commonweal 131.20 (Nov. 19, 2004).

⁵Cathleen Kaveny, "Young Catholics," Commonweal 131.20 (Nov. 19, 2004).

See, for example, Jerry Adler, et al., "Special Report: Spirituality 2005," Newsweek (Sept. 5, 2005); Willard F. Jabusch, "Young and Conservative," America (Oct. 11, 1997); Sidney Callahan, "Nunsuch?: Reviving Religious Communities," Commonweal (Dec. 5, 1997); Rob Moll, "The New Monasticism," Christianity Today (Sept. 2005); R. Scott Appleby, "Righting the Ship," U.S. Catholic (Nov. 19, 2004).

*Colleen Carroll, The New Faithful: Why Young Adults are Embracing Christian Or-

thodoxy (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2002), 99.

*Patricia Wittberg, SC, "Deep Structure in Community Cultures: The Revival of Religious Orders in Roman Catholicism," Sociology of Religion 58.3 (1997): 245.

Led by the Lord, let the brothers and sisters begin a life of penance, conscious that all of us must be continuously and totally converted to the Lord. TOR Rule II.6

True Relationships: A Sacred Dwelling Place

Mary Elizabeth Imler, OSF

The earliest letter of Francis is the First Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance, commonly referred to as the Letter to the Faithful. This was given, as Brother Thomas of Celano describes, to those "many people, well-born and lowly, cleric or lay, driven by divine inspiration, [who] began to come to Saint Francis, for they desired to serve under his constant training and leadership" (1C 37). Francis responded and "to all he gave a norm of life," which now serves as the Introduction to both the Third Order Regular and Secular Rules. Many, like those in Clare and Francis's time, still seek this "way of salvation" (1C 37). In the beginning of the Exhortation, Francis names four particular relationships, i.e. children, spouses, brothers and mothers (1LF 7-8). Francis sees these as revealing the heart of the evangelical way of life: relationships. These seemingly common words were, however, the first inklings of a paradigm shift that became the Franciscan Movement. They compel us to explore a "holy newness" (1C 103) as the contemporary Franciscan vocation is born into the twenty-first century.

First, we must consider the relational terms themselves in their medieval context. Only then can the paradigm shift that Francis initiated become evident. Second, based on my own experience, I propose that there is a further, current shift going on, a shift for hearers who, even in these tumultuous times, express a deep hunger for true relationships. Upon contemplating these terms today (children, spouses, brothers/sisters, and mothers), one cannot but be struck by the feeling that God seems to be moving humanity to a new level of personal and cosmic relations. Now is a good time to look at newly available English translations of Franciscan sources, submitting these to such lenses as quantum physics, modern psychology and the shifts in theological thinking brought about by feminism, liberation movements and a post-modern worldview.

Just to situate the text in broad terms, Francis begins his Exhortation with the commandment of love that draws one into relationship (1LF 1), followed by the threefold penitential act of fasting (1LF 2), prayer (1LF 3) and almsgiving (1LF 4). This penitential tradition (conversion of life) is the root value of the Third Order, and Francis offers it as the source of fecundity. He assures us that it will "produce worthy fruits of penance" (1LF 7), that it is a sign of "true faith and penance" (TOR Rule 2). Francis considers these essential gospel acts the basis for joy and blessedness, "because the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them and make Its home and dwelling place among them" (1LF 7). He suggests that this is a blessed relatedness for "they are children of the heavenly Father Whose works they do, and they are spouses, brothers and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1LF 7). Quantum physics reveals that at the core of matter there is not a single entity but two quarks bonded together. In these modern times, it is found that the essence of matter is not aloneness, singleness or independence, but relationship, from which all else builds. We are being called to conversion to incarnate the fundamental idea that the universe is not simple matter but matter in relationship.

Children

The first relational term Francis uses is, "children of the Heavenly Father, Whose works they do." Francis identifies the audience to whom he addresses the Exhortation not by the guild that marks their trade or the towns where they live but simply by the term "children." To the common folk this would have conjured up innocence and blessing, but also mouths to feed, persons to care for, laborers for the landowners. Children were not considered fortunate in society unless they were born into a noble family. Francis suggests a shift in meaning that portrays for his hearers an image of children of the richest households. Using court language familiar to medieval ears, he portrays the heavenly Father as the Lord of lords. By calling everyone children, Francis equalizes rich and the poor, lord and laborer. They have a common Creator, a common Father, Abba (In. 1:12). Thus, he lifts up the poor, the minores, into a position of security, in which they can expect benevolence from a heavenly Father and the kind of abundance that was enjoyed only by the privileged majores, (Gal. 4:7).

To our contemporary ears, there is a subtle difference shifting us into an even deeper paradigm. We are children of the heavenly Father, not of our own doing, but because we are adopted through the costly life, death and resurrection of Jesus. All humanity is generously "transferred into the Kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom all have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:14).

No one race, family or religion has a rightful claim to the heavenly inheritance. Since we are all adopted children of the heavenly Father, there is no birth order, seniority or position of privilege. All are God's children—the veiled Muslim woman of Iraq as well as the President of the United States; all are included as family. Consider the Dominicans with a mission in Baghdad, who

wore a button saying: "Stop the bombing, we have 'Sisters' in Iraq!" If we really understood the depth of being related as children of God, all humanity could say of earth's human population: "Stop the bombing! Our family lives here." Francis recovers the original blessedness. There is neither the "other side" nor "our side"; there is only "inside," for all are children-family bonded in relationship by one Heavenly Creator God.

Spouse

The medieval idea of spouse would have conjured up thoughts of a fair maiden, a gallant knight or a lovely courtship as well as a dowry of chickens, an arranged marriage and even a sense of enslavement/ownership. Francis takes this in a surprising new direction: "We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined by the Holy Spirit to our Lord Jesus Christ" (1LF 8).

The nuptial imagery for a religious, as mentioned earlier, would have been familiar as the spouse/bride of Christ, but Francis does not stop there. He adds: "when the faithful soul is united by the Holy Spirit. . . ." Exploring this recently with contemporary novices opened up a whole new interpretation for me. Imaging Christ as a celibate male who is also divine barely inspired much more than a sense of being one of the "frozen chosen." Chastity, in the limited understanding of novices, merely evoked negative images-what not to do or be. But exploring the idea of "espoused by the Holy Spirit" added a nuance that inspired much more. This phrase brought forth a mystery of virginal fecundity that Francis opens up to every soul asking only for fidelity. It is the Holy Spirit who is the source of generativity where others languish. It is the Holy Spirit who hovers over chaos and brings order. It is the Holy Spirit who brings wisdom out of the quiet. This phrase inspires fidelity in the deepest part of the human being and calls us to a contemplative dimension that leads to fullness of life. Francis's insight calls the soul of the disciple to a faithful, chaste and fecund communion as the sign of a true spousal relationship.

In today's view of espousal, there is a greater sense of equal sharing in a fluid partnership as of a dance rather than a notion of dominance of one person over another. Our contemporary psychology speaks of mutuality in an adult partnership, giving proper consideration to the body, mind and soul of each person. Spousal relationships call for give and take. It is no longer enough to make relational perfection consist in fulfilling certain works or duties (2 Cor. 5:17). Significant relationships are meant to transform our lives into full communion, be it in Christ or into the Body of Christ. Our very being is made for communion, Trinitarian communion, i.e. husband/wife/Holy Spirit and religious/community/Holy Spirit. The mere fact of being a reliable cog in an efficient religious/marital machine will never make us blessed if we fail to find the Holy interiorly in the spiritual blessedness of the relationship (Mt. 9:14-

17). Those who simply work dutifully may lack the love necessary for a true spousal relationship. Love seeks not only to serve the Other/other, but also seeks to know, to commune in prayer, to participate fully in communion and to give concrete expression of the bond.

Brother

When Francis discovered the relationship of being brother, the Franciscan movement was afire in a sacred brotherhood among the friars. Francis referred to this as *fraternitas*, a Latin word that translates into English clumsily as "fraternity" or "brotherhood." In his *Exhortation*, he points to the origin of this relationship in Jesus as he writes: "We are brothers in Him"(1LF 9) (emphasis added). It is not that there is simply a brotherhood among all the friars. Because Jesus, as a human male, is a brother to each friar, they are brothers to one another. Clare never used a parallel collective feminine relational term, such as *sormitas*, i.e. in English "sorority," for it fails to honor the essential connective link through the incarnation of our brother Jesus. She simply refers to the "Sisters," because Jesus, as brother to each one, links them as sisters to one another also in *fraternitas*.²

Note also that Francis adds the familial reference to being children of the Creator God, "when we do the will of the Father who is in heaven." The medieval ear might have sensed inclusion in the family and been inspired to live responsibly a deep loyalty associated with being a sibling. The term may also have raised negative images of fierce jealousies and competitive rivalries, of sisters/brothers wanting to please parental figures as they vied for a desired patrimony.

This phrase would have sounded an echo from Matthew's gospel: "Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Mt. 12:50). This reveals Jesus' sense of inclusiveness. Francis takes this to a new level, being one of the first to articulate the implication that Jesus is the first born of all creation (Col. 1:15). He applies this same sense of relatedness in the Canticle of the Creatures. He looks to creation for examples of the faithful life well lived. Francis, Patron of Ecology, suggests a dramatic shift to include all of the cosmos in this love relationship of fraternitas and claims all earthlings of land, sea and sky as "sisters" and "brothers."

Francis opted out of the medieval rat race and cut right across the system of feudal privilege by creating in its place a brotherhood . . . where individuals could be themselves in their dignity and uniqueness and, at the same time, belong to something greater than themselves, which guarded their dignity and fostered and enhanced their uniqueness.³

Doyle gives dramatic concreteness of this relatedness in a plea to love and be loyal to water: "As a creature, water is our sister. And it is hardly normal to pour toxic acid into your sister!"

Surely as humans we have an intelligent role to play in creation. We are called to have dominion over the earth (Gen. 2). How differently we might govern if we considered how our sister Mother Earth, "sustains and guides us" (CtC) within the limitations and needs of all life on earth. It is becoming increasingly necessary to look beyond ourselves and see how best to do the will of God. There needs to be a shift from dominating the earth by raping and polluting her to caring for and tending the precious resources of which humanity is but one among others. Realizing we are only one in a sacred lineage of generations, we are beginning to live with a greater reverential attitude of mutual interdependency and to make wiser, longer, broader, and more thoughtful choices reflective of the will of our creator God, to truly live in global fraternitas.

The whole cosmos, in our contemporary thinking, is drawn into this sacred relationship in Christ. Much is being written to help us discover how we are called to walk gently upon the common land, our sister Mother Earth. We must honor Brother Sun and Sister Moon who offer us a sacred rhythm of Sabbath's and harvest's. We must befriend energy as a Brother, symbolized as beautiful fire, robust and playful. The human race is asked precisely to reflect fidelity to the will of God by the simple act of forgiveness, giving for all our brothers and sisters so that God will reconcile all things (Col. 1:20). Francis beckons us to "serve with great humility" (CtC). As brothers and sisters of Jesus we participate in a sacred exchange honoring the particular gift and grace of every creature of every race, gender, species and era. The Canticle of the Creatures in today's circumstance offers us a hopeful way to live in true relationship with our brothers and sisters in all creation.

Mother

The last relational term again presents some inclusive challenges as Francis tells us: "We are mothers when we carry Him in our heart and body through a divine love and a pure and sincere conscience..." (1LF 10). The term mother might at first suggest Mary, who carried Jesus in her body, and thus refer narrowly to an exclusive gender role. It may have been heard as an expected duty by half of the listeners and a painful burden by the other half. "Mother" may have conjured up a feeling of fondness for some and a sense of abandonment for others.

Francis, however, offers an image of generativity beyond physically giving birth. He calls the faithful to participate in the fullness of incarnation, suggesting that we "give birth to Him through a holy activity which must shine as an

example before others" (1LF 10). Francis calls us all to bear Him with love and give birth to Him through a holy life. We are called to become aware that we are potentially pregnant with the Word. The incarnation was not a one-time event. It is constantly renewed in every vocation if we have the understanding and courage to speak, like Mary, our *fiat*.

Though this still holds true today, we are opened to a wider interpretation, one that leads beyond Mary to the *Theotokos*, made in the image and likeness of our God. Hence, she is a reflection of the source of her being, Mother God. The liberation of the feminine dimension of God struggles with the limitations of language. Feminism is more than substituting a female, for example, in the patriarchal model. It is shifting from an either/or attitude to a both/and position, reverencing both masculine and feminine qualities, both hierarchical and horizontal. The role of mother has been adapted to cultural changes in our times. We respect a shared role in tending a household; we support a single father/mother raising his/her children; we defend a rightful place for persons with homosexual orientation. All call us to a broader interpretation of the once narrow role of "mother."

Both Francis and Clare offered some innovative expressions of being mother, especially in washing the feet and bodies of others. In these simple gestures is revealed the motherhood of God and a new way for us to exercise authority, a way of humility and service. Experiencing a poverty of leadership caught in the paradox and polarity of these times, we seek a paradigm of Gospel choices revealed by the loving mother force of God. We attempt to model the body of Christ not only as a pyramid of power but also as engaging in a network for empowerment.

The example that Clare and Francis offer us in foot-washing strongly influences the Franciscan sense of leadership. Like Jesus, we exercise leadership by both standing upright and kneeling down before others (Jn. 17). This model of leadership inspires others, regardless of gender, to give birth to Jesus. It is marked not only by seniority but also by service, not only by a title of position but also in a maternal and generative relationship.

Francis's life offers this model. He "mothered" the movement in his holy life, even after he relinquished his role as General Minister. In his day, religious founders and leaders traditionally served in positions of authority for a lifetime. Francis, however, modeled for us what one does after the time of such service. While he never relinquished his relationship with others as brother, he offered a model of what might be called "grand-mothering" the Franciscan movement.

If motherhood is considered as giving birth, then, as founder, Francis was a mother. But the role of mother is not only an event; it is an "event-ing," lasting for a lifetime. In our day, when life expectancy is so much longer, it is

more obvious that the role of mother changes as children develop through the stages of dependent, independent, interdependent and back again. The grandmother is often the keeper of generations, holding the legacy of giving birth to each generation. In this respect, Francis was mother to the first and grandmother to subsequent generations, mentoring and guiding the leaders and modeling for the followers.

He did not forget or diminish the responsibility of being in a role of authority but expanded it. His holy life offers the model of a mother and later a grandmother, enlightening leaders who are called to relinquish, through retirement or election, the role of authority, while not abandoning the responsibility of safeguarding the future. In his time, Francis returned in service to the simple role of an itinerant preacher. Francis led by following. He expressed a sense of confidence in new leaders to carry on and to mentor others in the skills of mutual dialogue.

He kept himself available and connected in the movement and came to be seen as a wise elder from whom one might ask advice. We see him gently, firmly, but freely offering an experienced perspective in his *Letter to a Minister*. These are a few examples from the life of Francis. They model for us fluid relationships in the mother role of giving birth by engaging in and disengaging from leadership.

Conclusion

Almost eighty years ago, Peter Lippert, SJ, wrote that the Franciscan movement holds a significant contribution to the next form of religious life. On the cusp of the new millennium, as we explore the fullness of the apostolic way of religious life and examine the plethora of writings about the importance of relationships, there is no doubt that the evangelical lifestyle offers great hope. Relationships are more than titles we give each other as religious or as earthlings. We must consciously and willfully choose the whom, the how and the why of our relationships. In all the Rules of the Franciscan Order, the identity of the sisters and brothers is characterized by observing the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Our lives must proclaim by concrete witness the good news by being rooted in true relationships—in creative conversion, redemptive intimacy and blessed generativity. Francis writes that, for those who persevere in these relationships, "the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them," and the Lord will make "His home and dwelling place with them" (1LF 6).

As the Exhortation's introduction continues, it reveals Francis's enthusiasm—one can only imagine "how glorious" all this is (1LF 11-13). How seriously Francis takes on the Christ-ed responsibility as he pours out Jesus' words. He expresses his own heartfelt desire for oneness (1LF 16-19) in the evangelical life of loving. But let us not be unduly romantic or abstract—we are not

merely to imagine the blessedness of relationships, but, like Francis, truly incarnate them in our own lives. Since love is the bond of any true relationship, it is the essence of the evangelical way of life, the "good news" we are to proclaim, using words only when necessary. We are called to "desire one thing alone, namely the Spirit of God at work within us" (LR 10:8).

This loving force of the Holy Spirit reveals a new vision that helps us see Gospel choices in forming relationships. It is especially hopeful for religious of the twenty-first century. The evangelical way of life as described in Francis's Earlier Exhortation to the Brother and Sisters of Penance offers not new rituals but opportunities to become new. It offers a helpful description of being love incarnate. It invites us to ministerial commitment, to a sacred dwelling place. But more than that, it invites us to a sacred relationship, for God dwells in every encounter of "two or more." This way of being opens us not simply to do what Jesus did, but to be as Jesus is, a sacred heart overflowing with love. Engaging in these true gospel relationships, we receive a blessing from God and become a blessing for others. Such is Gospel blessedness, to follow this "way of salvation." True relationships will help make the world a little closer to the vision of our Creator and, in creating a sacred dwelling place for God, help make God more visibly at home once again.

Endnotes

'All sources for the writings of Francis are from Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short (New York: New City Press, 1999, 2000, 2001).

²Interestingly, this word is, grammatically, a feminine noun in Latin, describing a masculine relationship. It is impossible to translate into English without losing the "Christ-ed" source and language bias, so I leave it untranslated until we can live into the incarnation of a new word.

³Eric Doyle, St. Francis and the Song of Brotherhood and Sisterhood (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1997), 17.

Doyle, 56.

See Abraham Joshua Heschel's seminal work, The Sabbath: It's Meaning for Modern Man or others such as Tilden Edward, Sabbath Time: Understanding and Practice for Contemporary Christians; Marva Dawn, Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting; Donna Schaper, Sabbath Sense: A Spiritual Antidote of the Overworked.

⁶Cf. Diane Bergant, "Sabbath-Keeping" or Carol Zinn, "Right Relationships with the Earth," papers presented at LCWR Assembly in 2005.

Peter Lippert, SJ, Stimmen der Zeit, quoted by William J. Short, OFM, The Franciscans (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1989) and Living our Future: Francis of Assisi and the Church Tomorrow (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1972).

⁸The Rule and Life of the Third Order Regular, 7:23, references John 8:18 saying, "Let them manifest their love in deeds."

An Aesthetic of Franciscan Formation

Kathryn King, FSP

The Character of Franciscan Ministry

Nine years ago, Michael Blastic published an article entitled "The Conversation of Franciscans: Ministry in Cosmic Context." He takes off from what he calls a "magisterial synthesis of the Franciscan world view" as described by Zachary Hayes. Blastic identifies the wisdom of the Franciscan tradition as originating in the religious experience of Francis and Clare and in the theological reflection on their experience by the doctors of the Order. This theological reflection stretched the Jesus of the Paschal Mystery to the "widest possible horizon" by saying that the whole of creation is structured Christologically. Because of this perspective, says Blastic, Franciscan ministry has a particular character. It is a ministry that serves the divine aim in creation, a ministry that serves the transformation and completion of the world as intended by God.

Franciscan Formation Ministry as Conversation

Formation ministry in the Franciscan tradition explicitly facilitates the transformation and the completion of the human person as servant to the greater cosmic transformation. Blastic uses the metaphor "conversation" to describe the Franciscan activity of making the connections between the ordinary daily experience of human activity and the Gospel.

In Franciscan formation, what is the conversation about? With whom does one converse? For what purpose? In our fragmented world, most people gain a sense of continuity and identity by telling stories. These stories reveal that the human person is composed of many "selves," which can be harmonized and woven into an identity. Narrating the stories of one's life can help to harmonize the fragments of the self, express identity and even allow for creating a newer, richer identity as one's experience is linked to the Christian and Franciscan story. In initial formation, mature adults enter into a transition

time, that is, a time of de-construction, of breaking apart, which allows more of the self to become available for integration and meaning. This time of de-construction surfaces fragments of the self that can be put into the service of identity re-formation as "brother" and "sister."

Anthony Paul Kerby, in his work, Narrative and the Self,² aligns himself with other narrative psychologists in the belief that self-narration is the defining act of the human person, an act that not only describes the self but evokes the actual emergence of the person in his or her reality. The selves that emerge through narrative are grounded and held in the body. There is a dynamic interrelation between mind, emotions, spirit and body. Moreover, women narrative psychologists, such as Susan Stanford and Joy Hooton, hold that women's autobiographical narratives differ from those of men in that women usually present the self-in-relation rather than the self-as-an-individual in isolation.

It would seem that, in the process of religious formation, the construction of a narrative through conversation(s) is a fundamental method of shaping and integrating fragmented experience into a "theological way of being." If we accept the premise that "formation" is "a theological way of being," then formation is descriptive of a way of living one's whole life! Hence, the construction of a life narrative through conversation(s) becomes a fundamental method of shaping and integrating fragmented experience into one's way of being. The articulation of personal experience is more than language. Conversation is embodied and relational insofar as one presents oneself as a distinct person to another. In the conversation relationship, one becomes "more" one's self. In conversation, the grounded person enters the experience of the other and returns enriched, challenged, deepened and changed without losing oneself. One is capable of leaving and returning to oneself. Conversation then becomes both the context and the expression of a narrative in the formation process.

Formative Direction

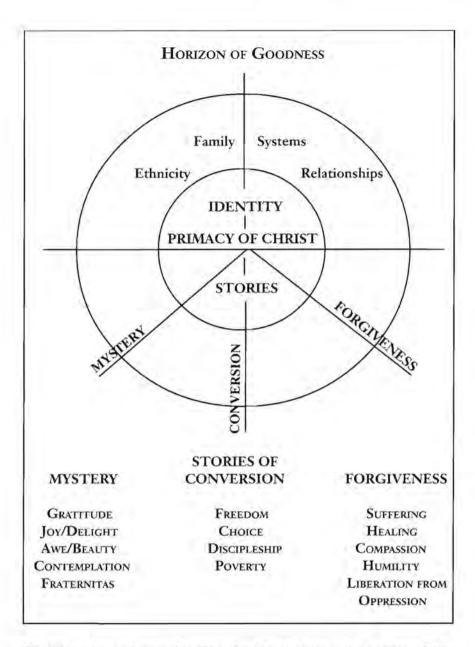
Formative relationships occur with and among persons who are already "on the way" and who acknowledge "formation" as a theological way of being. In the initial stages of formation, there is another distinct relationship between a trained mentor and one who is in the process of being initiated into the way of conversion for the purpose of public consecration of one's entire life to God. The specific focus of this article is on the conversation between the mentor and the seeker in the dynamic relationship known as "formative direction." The core of the conversation known as "formative direction" is conversion through integration. It is distinguishable from other similar conversations such as the spiritual direction relationship and the counseling or therapeutic relationship. In the former, the core is the religious experience or the God experience of the person coming for "direction." In the latter, the

core is psychological exploration in order to facilitate intra-personal or interpersonal relating. All three "conversational" relationships are distinguished from "study" insofar as the primary purpose of study is the assimilation of a specific body of knowledge. Certainly, a theological way of being includes an integration of all three aspects. However, "formative direction" involves a unique relationship of conversation in which the plots of one's life are re-interpreted and integrated into a new (read Franciscan) worldview leading to concrete choices that are reflective of a changed perspective, one of which may be a decision to commit one's whole self to Gospel living in a public way.

In initial formation, the primary narrator is the candidate. However, both the formator and the congregation members participate in the narrated conversations by becoming both a loving audience and interlocutors. By sharing her stories, a candidate reveals her/his sense of self, of God, of the world, of the complex of relationships, of prejudices, of Church. The congregation members and the mentor receive the stories and influence the candidate's conversation through questions, their own shared stories and their non-verbal responses, all of which reveal their own understandings of self, God, world, relationships and Church.

God's Work of Art

Franciscans possess a certain vision-that is, a positive view of the human person derived from the implications of the Incarnation, of God's Divine Desire and of a Christological worldview through which an optimistic understanding of the human person emerges. For the Franciscan theologian, John Duns Scotus, the human person is seen as the summit of divine creativity. Each human person has a natural affection for both happiness and justice. The particularity of each human person ("thisness") is an expression of beauty, a work of art. Freedom is central for a love relationship that expresses desire through rational choice. There is, in Scotus's view, a confidence in Divine Love. God's divine acceptance expresses God's liberality and graciousness. Beauty resides in the whole, in harmony. Ultimately, the storied life of the candidate will be shaped into a narrative of integrity and transparency, a narrative that expresses the value and dignity of the human person as a work of art, God's work of art. Hence, Scotus offers an aesthetic model for his vision of the world. In initial formation, story or narrative is the art form, crafted through conversations that both express the incredible beauty of each human person and joins him or her in the dance of communion that is simultaneously human life, Trinitarian life and Franciscan life. The elements of this dance can be imagined within the context of the following illustration:



The illustration indicates that God, the Divine Artist is the horizon of All Goodness, which flows into creation through Jesus Christ with Beauty, Harmony, Love. Every aspect of a person's life is penetrated with the Good. Goodness is woven through the "data" of experience waiting to be fully incorporated into one's life story through conversation.

The Language of Metaphor

The narratives that form the substance of formative conversations are not merely compilations of fact. They contain descriptions, interpretations and metaphors. Metaphors are figurative comparisons between two unlikely things resulting in an image in the mind's eye. Kathleen Forsythe³ argues that metaphor is the core of our conceptual system. She maintains that metaphor is a pervasive and organizing mental "adhesive" underlying the structure of thought. Metaphors hold energy, a power to create new meaning, new insights and new perceptions. They offer a "way" or "method" by which a person can discover and learn, risking the leap from the familiar to the unfamiliar, which can harmonize intelligence, emotion, and imagination.

Some say that language began as metaphor! Metaphor may offer a "language" for the inexpressible, may assist in making connections and may offer humor. Metaphor carries many levels of meaning and provides access to conscious meaning, unconscious material and symbolic meaning. In the conversational model for formation, the mentor listens and receives the story. From his/her interpretive framework, developed along the lines of a Franciscan worldview, the mentor responds. His/her response probes the themes and metaphors that are evident as well as those that are absent. By the mentor's response, the candidate is encouraged and challenged to relate the content of her/his own life narrative to the Gospel, the Franciscan sources and other human and religious study.

The "movement through metaphor" in the formation process is a transformational approach to formation. It links the left brain (analytical) with the right brain (imaginative). The candidate surfaces one or more metaphors through the narrative. It is here that the formator or mentor has a key role. She/he holds up the metaphor for confirmation and assists in relating it to the candidate's formative study and experience. Or the candidate may present a problem or conflict. Here the formator questions the content and challenges the candidate to transform it into a metaphor. Images sometimes appear intuitively in the candidate and these can be used. Using images to play out conflicts and problems can be less threatening than analytical or conceptual conversations especially when candidates move through two or three "directors" in the course of initial formation. Metaphor may also bring out the humor and or creativity latent in the issue. Metaphors enrich the life of the candidate and foster integration to the extent that they engage the Scripture, Franciscan sources, congregational charism, ministerial experience and other study. Conversations with the mentor that are open both to shared meaning and experience may yield a changed identity (perhaps for both).

Categories of Narrative

In initial formation, there are three necessary narratives to be told: Mystery of God, Conversion, Compassion. All three involve relationships that are "formative" for one's life and identity.

Encounters with the Mystery of God

The first set of stories concerns encounters with the Mystery of God-the Fountain Fullness, Overflowing Goodness, Extravagant Love. These stories are foundational insofar as their content and experiences point to a depth of grace that is necessary and sufficient to fund a call to put one's entire life at the service of the divine aim through a committed, publicly vowed, religious life over a lifetime. It is essential that these stories convey an interpersonal encounter with God as well as a sense of real relationship, that is, a sense of being loved and accepted by God in the uniqueness of one's own personhood (haecceitas).

Encounters with God can be mediated through nature, other persons (such as family and friends), or social organizations that are religious, economic or political. An experience of God that is, at the same time, an experience of the ineffable value and lovableness of oneself is derived from an understanding and acceptance that one's life is the gift of divine generosity. Narratives that disclose an individuated sense of being are related to the developmental level of the candidate. Nevertheless, in initial formation, a prospective candidate will necessarily identify the encounter with the Holy One in such a way that one's personal and unique life purpose and mission are clarified and strengthened.

These stories of encounters that individuate become the "touchstones" for continuing discernment throughout one's life. Stories of encounters with Mystery will evoke "Franciscan" attitudes such as gratitude, joy, delight, awe, compassion and wonder. Values such as beauty, contemplation, "fraternitas" (relationships of communion) ought to be discovered when one acknowledges God's activity in human life.

Conversion of Heart and Manner of Life

The second set of narratives critical to the formation of the Franciscan person concerns conversion of heart and manner of life. If one is to follow Christ in the Order of Penance, how has one experienced the movement of freedom to make a choice to become a disciple? How has the experience of conversion been one of self-emptying in order to follow Jesus Christ? In conversion stories, one attends to life-transformation through self-transforma-

tion. Narratives concerning freedom, choice, discipleship and poverty will be uncovered and discovered.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

A third set of narratives concerns forgiveness and growth in compassion. Here the stories of suffering and of liberation from oppression caused by economics, ethnicity, gender and age will offer insight in two ways. For some, forgiveness and reconciliation will mean claiming one's dignity and reverence for the self. This is especially true for some who are poor and marginalized and is often the experience of women. Some women form poor self-images because they have internalized inadequate and damaging theologies of sacrifice, suffering and redemption. It is possible that impoverished self-images are being carried in some fragments of the self, fragments that had been placed outside conscious awareness in one's previous professional and social life. In the process of de-construction referred to earlier, which takes place during initial formation, these fragments may appear. They need to be subjected to the healing process of transformation into Franciscan brotherhood or sisterhood.

For other persons, narratives of forgiveness and reconciliation may require a "letting go" of privilege, that is, of the fragments of the self that possessed power, wealth, or status, either in the family or in other social organizations. Such persons may need to let go of attitudes that disclose unconscious domination, control, exhibitionism and the like. Finally, "letting go" may include recognizing and owning one's complicity with systems of oppression that had been sources of security.

The Role of Formative Narratives in Vocational Discernment

In narrating conversion stories or stories of forgiveness and reconciliation, grace helps to loosen the ego's control. This can create confusion and vulnerability through which underlying conflicts and contradictions may be exposed. Narratives of encounter with the mystery of God, narratives of conversion and narratives of forgiveness and reconciliation contribute to vocational discernment. Relating these stories to the Gospel, to Franciscan sources and to the charism of the congregation, the candidate can reinterpret his or her values, attitudes and beliefs from a new perspective and determine those that are not congruent with a Franciscan theological and spiritual worldview. Such a reinterpretation can bring about a deepened understanding of the self, of conversion and of healing.

Through conversations that invite the disclosure of the narratives of one's life, the formation of the "Franciscan person" occurs. This human formation will precede the unique formation for vowed religious life! In other words, the

man or woman who considers the prospect of a publicly vowed life in the Franciscan family must possess a level of individuation that acknowledges the unique value of his or her person and, by implication, the extraordinary graciousness of God. Once this process is underway, a prospective candidate's intention to move into publicly vowed life in the Franciscan tradition can be explored in concert with the freedom required for such a choice. Narratives that surface the truthful desires of one's heart must eventually answer the questions: Can I live vowed religious life? Do I want to live this life from the worldview of the Franciscan charism? Do the congregation members and the mentors who accompany the candidates agree with this choice?

Presence, Poise and Praxis

Narrative is a universal form of human expression. The narrative conversation transcends both culture and ethnicity. Hence it has the potential for being a constructive strategy for intercultural formation. The conversation that crafts the work of art that is the new narrative of the candidate relies heavily on the art and skill of the formator in order to enter into a "center" that both attracts and harmonizes. In an address to the Franciscan Federation in August 2003, ⁴ Mary Beth Ingham, CSJ, posed a three-fold challenge to those who would be reconcilers. These challenges of presence, poise and praxis are also skills for formators or mentors who accompany others in the process of becoming Franciscan persons. The ability to realize "self-presence" and "other-presence" in a single simultaneous act both unifies and empowers both parties in the conversation. "Poise" on the other hand requires the ability and the skill to be open and waiting for the "inner voice" of intuitive wisdom to speak. It is an artful trusting of the movement of the Spirit in the present moment.

Ingham, in A Harmony of Goodness,⁵ grounds her understanding of "relationship" in the Trinity. The relationship between the formator and the candidate is based on mutuality, "the communion of shared life among persons," and is key to the crafting of the "work of art" that is a Franciscan identity. Goodness and beauty are hallmarks of Franciscan men or women whose dimensions of the self and of life are harmonized and integrated into a whole. There is a new proportion to the elements of their life stories. The order that emerges from the fragments affirms the loving hand of a Creator in a work of beauty that evokes delight. Such is the formation of the Franciscan person.

Conclusion

In summary, a Franciscan model of formation is relational. It is an art form-the creating of a narrative saturated with beauty, harmony and good-

ness. It is crafted in, with and through conversations marked by presence and poise. Franciscan formation is essentially the development of a Franciscan person who is free to live the Gospel in sisterhood or brotherhood. Only then do ecclesial roles become a consideration in the ongoing discernment of the Franciscan person.

Endnotes

'Michael Blastic, OFMConv., "The Conversation of Franciscans: Ministry in Cosmic Context," The Cord, 46.2 (Mar/Apr, 1996).

²Anthony Paul Kerby, Narrative and the Self (Bloomington: Indiana University

Press, 1981).

³Kathleen Forsythe, Cathedrals of the Mind (Unpublished paper delivered at the American Society of Cybernetics, 1986).

Mary Beth Ingham, CSJ, "Presence, Poise, and Praxis: The Three-fold Challenge for Reconcilers Today," The Cord, 51.6 (Nov/Dec., 2003), 303-314.

'Mary Beth Ingham, A Harmony of Goodness (Quincy: Franciscan Press, 1996).

Because God loves us, the brothers and sisters should love each other, for the Lord says, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you (cf. Jn 15:12). Let them manifest their love in deeds (Jn 8:18). Also whenever they meet each other, they should show that they are members of the same family. Let them make known their needs to one another. . . .

TOR Rule VII.23

About Our Contributors

Murray Bodo, OFM, a member of the St. John the Baptist province, is a well-known poet and teacher, the author of 24 books, including the international best-seller, Francis, the Journey and the Dream. His poems have appeared in many literary journals, including The Paris Review, The Western Humanities Review, and Mystics Quarterly. He is presently a visiting lecturer in the Franciscan Institute summer program, St. Bonaventure University. Since 1976 he has been a staff member of the Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs. Fr. Murray's latest book, forthcoming from St. Anthony Messenger Press in 2006, is A Sort of Bliss: Reading the Mystics.

Sister Joanne Brazinski is a Sister of Saint Francis of the Providence of God. She has her M.A. from St. Bonaventure University in Franciscan Studies. Her experiences include: teaching, formation ministry, leadership, and pastoral ministry in Brazil. She is presently on staff at the Franciscan Spirit and Life Center in Pittsburgh, PA and is involved with facilitation work and retreat ministry.

Mary Gurley is a Sister of St. Francis of Philadelphia, currently on sabbatical leave from St. Bonaventure University. In addition to articles written for *The Cord* and a number of other journals (*Human Development*; *Prayer*; *Weavings*), Mary has recently authored a book-length biography of Mother Francis Bachmann, founder of the Philadelphia congregation.

Sister Mary Elizabeth Imler is serving in her second term as General Community Leader for her religious congregation with a 125-year tradition, the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Frankfort, Illinois. She completed a Master's degree at the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, NY in the summer of 1999 of her election. With the help of her mentor, Sr. Margaret Carney, she completed her thesis which was printed in 2002: A Franciscan Solitude Experience and the Pilgrim's Journal. Passionate about the Third Order Regular tradition, she regularly gives presentations, retreats and facilitates every kind of Chapter as an instrument wrestling with the questions that will give new life to the tradition far beyond tomorrow.

Kathryn King, FSP, participated in the development of the Eastern Franciscan Common Novitiate and was a member of the five member Formation Team 1998-99. She was named Novice Minister in 1999 until 2004. She has been Provincial, Congregation Administrator and General Councilor of her congregation, the Franciscan Sisters of Peace. She was adjunct faculty at the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education, Fordham University for nine years where she taught the Practicum in Giving Spiritual Direction and more recently a Formation Seminar for those preparing for ministry in seminary or religious life formation. She is currently Pastoral Associate for spiritual direction, retreats, and adult faith formation at St. Ignatius Loyola Parish, New York City.



Decalogue of Assisi for Peace

1. We commit ourselves to proclaiming our firm conviction that violence and terrorism are incompatible with the authentic spirit of religion, and, as we condemn every recourse to violence and war in the name of God or of religion, we commit ourselves to doing everything possible to eliminate the root causes of terrorism.

2. We commit ourselves to educating people to mutual respect and esteem, in order to help bring about a peaceful and fraternal coexistence between people of

different ethnic groups, cultures and religions.

3. We commit ourselves to fostering the culture of dialogue, so that there will be an increase of understanding and mutual trust between individuals and among peoples, for these are the premise of authentic peace.

4. We commit ourselves to defending the right of everyone to live a decent life in accordance with their own cultural identity, and to form freely a family of his own.

5. We commit ourselves to frank and patient dialogue, refusing to consider our differences as an insurmountable barrier, but recognizing instead that to encounter the diversity of others can become an opportunity for greater reciprocal understanding.

6. We commit ourselves to forgiving one another for past and present errors and prejudices, and to supporting one another in a common effort both to overcome selfishness and arrogance, hatred and violence, and to learn from the past that

peace without justice is no true peace.

7. We commit ourselves to taking the side of the poor and the helpless, to speaking out for those who have no voice and to working effectively to change these situations, out of the conviction that no one can be happy alone.

8. We commit ourselves to taking up the cry of those who refuse to be resigned to violence and evil, and we desire to make every effort possible to offer the men and

women of our time real hope for justice and peace.

- 9. We commit ourselves to encouraging all efforts to promote friendship between peoples, for we are convinced that, in the absence of solidarity and understanding between peoples, technological progress exposes the world to a growing risk of destruction and death.
- 10. We commit ourselves to urging leaders of nations to make every effort to create and consolidate, on the national and international levels, a world of solidarity and peace based on justice. (February, 2002)

TAJATJA OHAIMAD HA?

PO Box 767 • Danville, CA 94526 (925) 837-9141 • www.sandamiano.org



Patricia Livingston, a recent contributor to The Ligourian, is a counselor, author, and nationally known speaker who has been giving workshops, retreats, and lectures around the U.S. for twenty-five years. She is known for her touching, story-telling style of illuminating the presence of Cod in every day life.

OCT 27 - OCT. 29, 2006 LIGHT FOR OUR LONGING A RETREAT FOR MEN AND WOMEN PATRICIA LIVINGSTON

In this retreat we will share light for our longing using theology, scripture, humor and deeply human stories. We will look together at the mysterious truth of the beatitudes: Blessed are we who hunger. We will reflect on the journey of longing where vulnerability is the doorway to Love.

\$195 / private room \$165 / shared room per person

SAN DAMIANO ALTALAT

Sail Damiano offers you the opportunity to step away from your busy lives. We invite you to come to this beautiful, tranquit setting for a private retreat to quiet your mind and enter into the stillness. It is a place where you can rest, pray or do whatever is needed to nourish and renew yourself. Call us for more information.

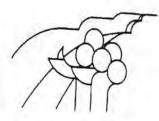
FRANCISCAN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

11

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION and DIRECTED RETREATS

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

For further information contact:



David Connolly, ofm Cap. Mt Alverno Retreat Centre 20704 Heart Lake Rd. Caledon, Ont. L0N 1C0, Canada Email: david_cap@hotmail.com

Theology and Spirituality with a Franciscan Vision





Come to Canterbury, pilgrim city in the Garden of England for the next stage in your journey. Easy access to London and the continent of Europe makes the Franciscan International Study Centre an ideal place to follow studies or take sabbatical time. Our students include friars studying for ministry, Franciscan friars and sisters from all over the world taking modules in Franciscan philosophy, theology, history and spirituality and in formation in religious life. FISC also provides a Course for Franciscan Formators on behalf of the General Curias of the Order of Friars Minor and the Order of Friars Minor Conventual

We offer

- BA in Theology
- Certificate in Franciscan Studies
- Certificate in Franciscan Formation
- Certificate in Franciscan Formation and Spiritual Direction
- MA in Theology (Franciscan Studies)
- PhD Supervision in Franciscan Studies and Theology
- Sabbatical Programme time for study, for reflection and relaxation you choose the proportions - in an international Franciscan amily

For more information contact

- BA and courses in Philosophy, Theology and Ministry Br Philippe Yates OFM email: philippe.yates@franciscans.ac.uk
- MA, Franciscan Studies and Sabbatical Programme Sr Margaret McGrath FMSJ email: margaret.mcgrath@franciscans.ac.uk

Giles Lane, Canterbury CT2 7NA tel +44 1227 769349 fax +44 01227 786648 www.franciscans.ac.uk

Junipero Serra Retreat

A Franciscan Renewal Center Malibu, California

Established in 1942 by the Franciscan Friars of California, Serra Retreat is nestled between the ocean and the mountains in serene Malibu, conveniently accessible from LAX and Burbank airports.

- · Private retreats
- · Married couples
- Recovery retreats
- . Days of Recollection
- Specialized retreats
- High school and college groups
- · Women's and men's weekends
- Conferences

With a maximum occupancy of 100 guests, Serra Retreat provides a chapel with a panoramic view, large and small conference rooms, a fully staffed dining room, and grounds for walking and silent reflection.

Fr. Warren Rouse, OFM
Director
Fr. Michael Doherty, OFM
Retreat Master
Sr. Susan Blomstad, OSF
Retreat Team



Serra Retreat A Franciscan Retreat Center Serra Retreat 3401 Serra Road Malibu, Ca 90265 Pb: 310-456-6631 (Reservations) Fax: 310-456-9417 globalretreats.com www.serraretreat.com

Franciscan Studies From Your Home

INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY FRANCISCAN LIFE

Guided, self-paced courses on the heritage of St. Francis of Assisi.

The Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life (ICFL) at Saint Francis University in Loretto, Pennsylvania, allows adult learners the opportunity to increase Franciscan knowledge and learn more about Catholic Franciscan values and their influence on contemporary society through distance education.

Credit and non-credit courses as well as limited scholarships are available.

To learn more about how you can enhance your Franciscan knowledge, contact us at: (814) 472-3219 • ICFL@francis.edu www.francis.edu



On the Franciscan Circuit Coming Events

- Franciscan Directed Retreat. July 17-24, 2006. With Georgene Wilson, OSF. At Portiuncola Center for Prayer, Frankfort, IL. For information, contact: 815-464-3880 or visit www.portforprayer.org.
- 5-Day Silent Contemplative Retreat: "Teach Us To Pray." July 23-28, 2006. With Fr. Rusty Shaughnessy at San Damiano Retreat Center in Danville, CA. For more information call Lorraine Steele at 925-837-9141 or visit our website: www.sandamiano.org.
- Wisdom's Whispers: Directed Retreat. August 20-26, 2006. With Mary Stuart, DW. At Portiuncola Center for Prayer, Frankfort, IL. For information, contact: 815-464-3880 or visit www.portforprayer.org.
- Franciscan Spirituality Retreat. September 29-October 1, 2006. With Sr. Ramona Miller, OSF at San Damiano Retreat Center in Danville, CA. For more information call Lorraine Steele at 925.837.9141 or visit our website: www.sandamiano.org.
- Spirituality Retreat for Men and Women: "Longing For Communion."

 October 28-30, 2006. With Patricia Livingston at San Damiano
 Retreat Center in Danville, CA. For more information call Lorraine
 Steele at 925.837.9141 or visit our website: www.sandamiano.org. See
 ad, p. 192.
- The 40 Day Franciscan Hermitage Retreat. November 4-December 14, 2006. At the Portiuncula Center For Prayer, Frankfort, IL. For information, contact: 815 464-3880 or visit www.portforprayer.org

Blessings and Best Wishes All the Days of Your Life, Margaret!

Abbreviations

irions or Brother Leo e of the Creatures e of Exhortation f Worchester Manu- f Thomas of Celano f Hugh of Digne Br. Anthony of Padua to the Clergy ion) er to the Clergy ion) er to the Custodians Letter to the Custodians Letter to the Faithful Letter to the Faithful Brother Leo i Minister the Entire Order the Rulers of the of the Praise of God pired by the Our	1C 2C 3C LCh Off LJS VL 1-3JT DCom TL IMP 2MP HTrb	The Life of Saint Francis by Thomas of Celano The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul The Treatise on the Miracles by Thomas of Celano The Legend for Use in the Choir The Divine Office of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer The Life of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer The Versified Life of St. Francis by Henri d'Avranches The Praises by Jacapone da Todi The Divine Comedy by Dante Aliegheri Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version The History of the Seven Tribu-
e of the Creatures e of Exhortation f Worchester Manu- f Thomas of Celano f Hugh of Digne Br. Anthony of Padua to the Clergy ion) er to the Clergy enter to the Custodians Letter to the Custodians Letter to the Faithful Letter to the Faithful Brother Leo i Minister the Entire Order the Rulers of the of the Praise of God	3C LCh Off LJS VL 1-3JT DCom TL IMP 2MP HTrb	The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul The Treatise on the Miracles by Thomas of Celano The Legend for Use in the Choir The Divine Office of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer The Life of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer The Versified Life of St. Francis by Henri d'Avranches The Praises by Jacapone da Todi The Divine Comedy by Dante Aliegheri Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version The History of the Seven Tribu-
e of the Creatures e of Exhortation f Worchester Manu- f Thomas of Celano f Hugh of Digne Br. Anthony of Padua to the Clergy ion) er to the Clergy enter to the Custodians Letter to the Custodians Letter to the Faithful Letter to the Faithful Brother Leo i Minister the Entire Order the Rulers of the of the Praise of God	3C LCh Off LJS VL 1-3JT DCom TL IMP 2MP HTrb	of a Soul The Treatise on the Miracles by Thomas of Celano The Legend for Use in the Choir The Divine Office of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer The Life of St.Francis by Julian of Speyer The Versified Life of St. Francis by Henri d'Avranches The Praises by Jacapone da Todi The Divine Comedy by Dante Aliegheri Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version The History of the Seven Tribu-
f Worchester Manu- f Thomas of Celano f Hugh of Digne Br. Anthony of Padua to the Clergy ion) er to the Clergy inter to the Custodians Letter to the Faithful Letter to the Faithful Brother Leo Minister the Entire Order the Rulers of the of the Praise of God	LCh Off LJS VL 1-3JT DCom TL 1MP 2MP	The Treatise on the Miracles by Thomas of Celano The Legend for Use in the Choir The Divine Office of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer The Life of St.Francis by Julian of Speyer The Versified Life of St. Francis by Henri d'Avranches The Praises by Jacapone da Todi The Divine Comedy by Dante Aliegheri Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version The History of the Seven Tribu-
f Worchester Manu- f Thomas of Celano f Hugh of Digne Br. Anthony of Padua to the Clergy ion) er to the Clergy inter to the Custodians Letter to the Faithful Letter to the Faithful Brother Leo Minister the Entire Order the Rulers of the of the Praise of God	LCh Off LJS VL 1-3JT DCom TL 1MP 2MP	Thomas of Celano The Legend for Use in the Choir The Divine Office of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer The Life of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer The Versified Life of St. Francis by Henri d'Avranches The Praises by Jacapone da Todi The Divine Comedy by Dante Aliegheri Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version The History of the Seven Tribu-
f Hugh of Digne Br. Anthony of Padua to the Clergy ion) er to the Clergy on) etter to the Custodians Letter to the Custodians Letter to the Faithful Letter to the Faithful Brother Leo i Minister the Entire Order the Rulers of the of the Praise of God	Off LJS VL 1-3JT DCom TL IMP 2MP HTrb	The Legend for Use in the Choir The Divine Office of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer The Life of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer The Versified Life of St. Francis by Henri d'Avranches The Praises by Jacapone da Todi The Divine Comedy by Dante Aliegheri Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version The History of the Seven Tribu-
f Hugh of Digne Br. Anthony of Padua to the Clergy ion) er to the Clergy on) etter to the Custodians Letter to the Custodians Letter to the Faithful Letter to the Faithful Brother Leo i Minister the Entire Order the Rulers of the of the Praise of God	Off LJS VL 1-3JT DCom TL IMP 2MP HTrb	The Divine Office of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer The Life of St.Francis by Julian of Speyer The Versified Life of St. Francis by Henri d'Avranches The Praises by Jacapone da Todi The Divine Comedy by Dante Aliegheri Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version The History of the Seven Tribu-
to the Clergy ion) er to the Clergy on) tter to the Custodians Letter to the Custo etter to the Faithful Letter to the Faithful Brother Leo Minister he Entire Order he Rulers of the	VL 1-3JT DCom TL 1MP 2MP	The Life of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer The Versified Life of St. Francis by Henri d'Avranches The Praises by Jacapone da Todi The Divine Comedy by Dante Aliegheri Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version The History of the Seven Tribu-
ion) er to the Clergy on) etter to the Custodians Letter to the Custo etter to the Faithful Letter to the Faithful Brother Leo Minister he Entire Order he Rulers of the of the Praise of God	VL 1-3JT DCom TL 1MP 2MP	of Speyer The Versified Life of St. Francis by Henri d'Avranches The Praises by Jacapone da Todi The Divine Comedy by Dante Aliegheri Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version The History of the Seven Tribu-
er to the Clergy on) etter to the Custodians Letter to the Custo etter to the Faithful Letter to the Faithful Brother Leo Minister he Entire Order he Rulers of the of the Praise of God	1-3JT DCom TL 1MP 2MP HTrb	The Versified Life of St. Francis by Henri d'Avranches The Praises by Jacapone da Todi The Divine Comedy by Dante Aliegheri Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version The History of the Seven Tribu-
enter to the Custodians Letter to the Custodians Letter to the Faithful Letter to the Faithful Brother Leo Minister he Entire Order he Rulers of the of the Praise of God	1-3JT DCom TL 1MP 2MP HTrb	by Henri d'Avranches The Praises by Jacapone da Todi The Divine Comedy by Dante Aliegheri Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version The History of the Seven Tribu-
etter to the Custodians Letter to the Custo etter to the Faithful Letter to the Faithful Brother Leo Minister he Entire Order he Rulers of the	DCom TL IMP 2MP HTrb	The Praises by Jacapone da Todi The Divine Comedy by Dante Aliegheri Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version The History of the Seven Tribu-
Letter to the Custo etter to the Faithful Letter to the Faithful Brother Leo i Minister he Entire Order he Rulers of the of the Praise of God	DCom TL IMP 2MP HTrb	The Divine Comedy by Dante Aliegheri Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version The History of the Seven Tribu-
etter to the Faithful Letter to the Faithful Brother Leo I Minister the Entire Order the Rulers of the	TL IMP 2MP HTrb	Aliegheri Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version The History of the Seven Tribu-
Letter to the Faithful Brother Leo Minister he Entire Order he Rulers of the of the Praise of God	IMP 2MP HTrb	The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version The History of the Seven Tribu-
Brother Leo Minister he Entire Order he Rulers of the of the Praise of God	2MP HTrb	Version The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version The History of the Seven Tribu-
Minister he Entire Order he Rulers of the of the Praise of God	HTrb	The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version The History of the Seven Tribu-
he Entire Order he Rulers of the of the Praise of God	HTrb	Version The History of the Seven Tribu-
he Rulers of the of the Praise of God	200	Version The History of the Seven Tribu-
he Rulers of the of the Praise of God	200	The History of the Seven Tribu-
	20.00	lations by Angelo of Clareno
	ScEx	The Sacred Exchange between
Director by the Car	in carry	St. Francis and Lady Poverty
posts of the same	AP	The Anonymous of Perugia
of God	L3C	The Legend of the Three Com-
of the Passion	250	panions
before the Crucifix	AC	The Assisi Compilation
Rule (Regula non	1-4Srm	The Sermons of Bonaventure
Kule (Regula noa	LMi	The Major Legend by Bonaven-
who (Daniela Indiata)	Livij	
ule (Regula bullata)		ture
lermitages	LMn	The Minor Legend by Bonaven-
of the Blessed Virgin	200	ture
17.5	BPr	The Book of Praises by Bernard of
	Vacan	Besse
ent	ABF	The Deeds of St. Francis and His
rfect Joy		Companions
	LFI	The Little Flowers of Saint Francis
	KnSF	The Knowing of Saint Francis
Saint Clave	ChrTE	The Chronicle of Thomas of Eccleston
to Agnes of Prague er to Agnes of Prague r to Agnes of Prague er to Agnes of Prague mentrude of Bruges	ChrJG	The Chronicle of Jordan of Giano
	of the Blessed Virgin of Virtues ent refect Joy aint Clare to Agnes of Prague er to Agnes of Prague er to Agnes of Prague	of the Blessed Virgin of Virtues ent feet Joy LFI KnSF ChrTE to Agnes of Prague er to Agnes of Prague