A WORD FROM BONAVENTURE

Whoever you are that wish to attain salvation through faith, hope, and love, you must submit yourself to three occupations: namely, to devout prayer, to an honest way of life, and to satisfactory confession, according to what [is written] in Micah: *I will show you, O human, what good is, and what God requires of you: Namely, to make judgment, by* confessing truthfully, "and *to love mercy*," dealing with everyone in a holy manner, "*and to walk solicitously with your God*,"[2] vigilantly persisting in your prayers.

St. Bonaventure, "On the Way of Life," in *Sermones de diversis.*

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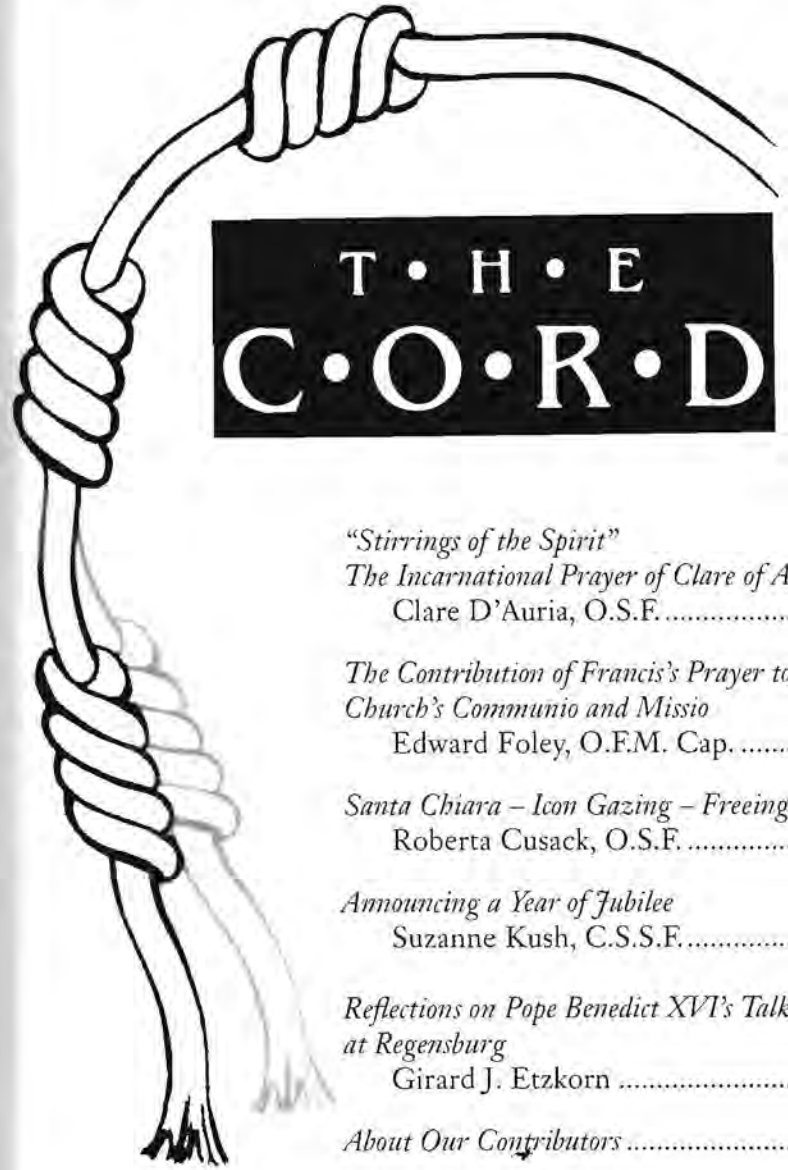

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1. MSS should be submitted on disk (or typed on 8 1/2 x 11 paper, one side only, double spaced).
2. The University of Chicago Manual of Style, 14th ed., is to be consulted on general questions of style.
3. Titles of books and periodicals should be italicized or, in typed manuscripts, underlined.
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4. References to Scripture sources or to basic Franciscan sources should not be footnoted, but entered within parenthesis immediately after the cited text, with period following the closed parenthesis. For example:

   (1Cor. 13:6). (2Cel 5:8). (RegNB 23:2). (4LAg 2:13).

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

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Foreword

The inevitable upheavals resulting from Sister Roberta's departure from Franciscan Institute Publications for the halls of Congregational Leadership have subsided somewhat. We are gradually taking up the daily tasks which were for a while overshadowed by the personal passages which have characterized the past two months. Now the planning begins to continue to serve our readers while filling in the gap left by the loss of Roberta's talent and perspective. I can tell you the Institute hallway at Friedsam is a little quieter these days without her hearty laughter!

We have, as usual, a jam-packed final issue of this year's *Cord*. The first two articles, one by Sister Clare D'Auria, O.S.F. and the other by Father Edward Foley, O.F.M. Cap., are adapted from the keynote addresses presented at the Franciscan Federation gathering in Rochester, New York in July. Given the conference theme of Franciscan prayer, a central image of water and a concentration on the heart of Clare of Assisi, these two offerings merit a reflective reading – and probably re-reading. We are also pleased to bring you the reflections of Sister Roberta Cusack, O.S.F. as she makes connections between the TOR Rule and way of living, and the sacred icons we meet as we travel our Franciscan paths. The brief explanation of the TOR Rule project by Sister Suzanne Kush, C.S.S.F. will alert all to the significance of the upcoming 25th anniversary celebration.

While the planning for the 2007 volume of *The Cord* is currently ongoing, you may get an inkling of change in the offing as you read the final offering in this issue: Girard J. Etzkorn's thoughts about the recent discussions concerning Pope Benedict XVI's comments – and in particular a quotation he cited – to the academic community at Regensburg. It's our hope that, amid the Monday morning quarterbacking and other talk around the office watercooler, we might occasionally engage in some dialogue that sheds a little light on our Franciscan Intellectual Tradition. We do, after all, have something to offer to today's world.

Although I have a backlog of details to become familiar with and to respond to, please don't hesitate to send me your comments and suggestions. You can reach me at 716-375-2160 or dmitchel@sbu.edu

While we are all praying for the needs of each day, let us not forget Sister Roberta (and all the other congregational/provincial leaders), those who are burdened by natural disasters (the phenomenal October snowfall in Buffalo and its environs springs to mind--not to mention the earthquake in Hawaii), and the world's urgent need for peace.

Daria R. Mitchell, OSF

The Cord, 56.6 (2006)

"Stirrings of the Spirit" The Incarnational Prayer of Clare of Assisi

Clare D'Auria, O.S.F.

As I began to think about what I would share with you today and prepared to attend the first planning meeting last October, I wondered what possible connection there would be between the theme of this conference with its central image of water and the prayer life of Clare of Assisi. However, as I began to pray with this image myself and reflect on the heart of Clare as I have come to know her over the years, the opening lines from a poem by Carmelite poet and mystic, Jessica Powers, came back to me and I knew I had both the connection I was looking for and the title for this presentation. In her poem, "To Live with the Spirit," Powers writes,

> To live with the Spirit of God is to be a listener,
> It is to keep the vigil of mystery,
> earthless and still.
> One leans to catch the stirrings of the Spirit,
> strange as the wind's will.[1]

In these five brief lines, the poet captures the soul of contemplative prayer and the heart of Clare of Assisi. Attentive to the "stirrings" of the Spirit of God as she hovers over the sometimes chaotic waters of all that is created, Clare looks and listens for the Word that will inevitably speak to her of the mystery of Incarnation: the mystery of the poverty of the God who took flesh and became fully human in Jesus Christ. And once she discovers the truth of this mystery on Palm Sunday, 1212, she commits her life to "keep ... vigil" at the foot of the cross of this "strange mystery": to "gaze, consider, contemplate" so that she might "imitate [her] Spouse."[2]

Incarnational Prayer: "The Poor Crucified" Christ

Last March, a segment on CBS' "60 Minutes" stirred something unmistakable in me on the evening I first watched it.[3] Since viewing it, I have

prayed with it many times, so much so that it has become a kind of allegory for me that illuminates the invitation and the demands, the call and the conversion which are inherent in one's choosing to be faithful to a contemplative way of life.

The interview featured a community of sea gypsies called the Moken. Among the least touched by modern civilization, they've lived for hundreds of years on the islands off the coast of Thailand and Burma. Although they live precisely where the devastating tsunami of 2004 hit the hardest, they suffered no casualties at all because as people who are born on the sea, live on the sea, and die on the sea, they know how to read the signs of the sea. And, as interviewer Bob Simon noted, "It was their intimacy with the sea that saved them."

On December 26, the day the tsunami hit, Saleh Kalathalay, a skilled spear-fisherman, noticed that a strange silence had come over the waters. Then, he told Simon, "The water receded very fast and one wave, one small wave, came and I knew – this is not ordinary." He began to run around warning others, but few believed him. So he brought the skeptics to the water's edge where they too saw the signs from the sea. Eventually everyone, the Moken and the tourists, listened to the warnings from the sea, climbed to higher ground and were saved. Their village, however, was completely destroyed. Later in the interview, Saleh was asked why he knew something was wrong, and the Burmese commercial fishermen, also at sea at the time the tsunami hit, did not. Saleh replied, "They were too busy collecting squid. They were not really looking at anything. They saw nothing, they looked at nothing. They don't know how to look. They were too busy collecting squid."

Clare of Assisi knew "how to look" and "how to read the signs" of her times written on the hillsides of Mount Subasio where the small and walled town of Assisi is nestled in the Umbrian Valley about halfway between the cities of Perugia and Foligno, ninety miles north of Rome. As she stood with her townspeople on the brink of the 13th century, Clare also stood apart from them because she knew how to "listen" to the "strange silence": to that paradoxical voice of God that rumbled quietly beneath the noise and clang (cf. 1Cor 13:1) of warring factions and clashing feudal classes fighting for their lives in a political and social system headed toward extinction.

Unlike those among the nobility who stood at the "edge" of the impending disaster but failed to see what was coming, and unlike those among the rising merchant class who were "too busy" taking advantage of such pervasive societal upheaval to either "look" or "listen," Clare knew how to pay attention to the "stirrings" made by the "one small wave" that was "the Poor Crucified" Christ (1LAg, 13) incarnated in the countless and unnoticed poor and marginalized who knocked at her family's door. And, most importantly,

because she knew "something was wrong," she "listened to the warnings" and, against all traditional, cultural, and conventional wisdom, she "climbed to higher ground and [was] saved." Again, paradoxically, as only God's designs could envision, Clare's climbing to "higher ground" set her on a journey of choosing not upward but downward nobility, a journey that would take an irrevocable turn on Palm Sunday, 1212, in the Cathedral of San Rufino. From that day forward, Clare would remain at the "water's edge" and "keep the vigil of mystery," always watching for the "one small wave."

"Keeping the vigil of mystery" is essential to human life, but especially to a life of prayer. For Franciscans, however, it is essential that we keep our prayer vigil in the presence of the mystery of Incarnation. In her book, *Franciscan Prayer*, Ilia Delio, O.S.F., clearly states: "The simplest way to describe Franciscan prayer is that it begins and ends with the Incarnation."[4] From my perspective, this kind of "incarnational prayer" is grounded in a contemplative way of life that sees and hears the cyclic pattern of flesh made Word and Word made flesh repeated over and over again in the ebb and flow of one's own life experience. Such a vision of life demands a disciplined and focused attentiveness to both the subtle and the seismic "stirrings" of the water: to both the formative, daily experiences, as well as to the unique and unrepeatable transformative events which happen over the course of one's life journey and indicate the unmistakable presence of the invisible God become visible in Jesus Christ.

Although we have no extant prayers from Clare as we have from Francis, that is, prayers consciously written as such, the formative experiences of her daily prayer life in San Damiano evidence her own incarnation of the ebb and flow of the Paschal Mystery. Her four *Letters to Agnes of Prague*,[5] along with the witness of her own sisters whose testimony is recorded in *The Acts of the Process of Canonization*, invite each of us to "gaze," "consider," and "contemplate" the heart of this woman where we, too, can touch the "stirrings of the Spirit" expressed in her unwavering, "passionate desire" for "the Poor Crucified." It is these letters and the text of her life that we want to "read," reflect upon, and pray with today so that, like Clare, we might "be strengthened in the holy service" which we have undertaken (1LAg, 13) and "direct [our] attention to what [we] should desire above all else: to have the Spirit of the Lord and Its holy activity, to pray always to Him with a pure heart" (RCl, 10:9).

Before Her Conversion: Clare's Preferential Option for the Poor

The formative experiences of her daily life, even before her conversion, attest to the truth that, from her earliest days, Clare knows how to "gaze" at the world in which she lives. It is this "world" that she brings before God in

prayer – this "flesh" of the "other" that she carries in her own heart. Ingrid Peterson, O.S.F., acknowledges that "The testimonies of the women who lived in the house of Favarone Offreduccio help to construct a picture of Clare as a young woman in the midst of Assisi's activity" and a "portrait" of the household as "an extended family of holy women."[6] In this primary sacred space with women of like vision, who "either lived together or came together frequently for common spiritual exercises,"[7] Clare finds support for the penitential way of life she has chosen.

Many of these women were later examined by the Church as part of the process of Clare's canonization. Witness after witness from among these women agree with Pacifica de Guelfuccio of Assisi, the first person to be interviewed and to narrate Clare's story: "while that holy woman [Clare] was in the world in her father's house ... she was considered by all those who knew her [to be a person] of great honesty and of very good life; and that she was intent upon and occupied with works of piety" (Proc 1.1).[8] However, it is only Pacifica who notes most exactly that, although "all the citizens held her [Clare] in great veneration," Clare herself had already narrowed her gaze: "Lady Clare very much loved the poor" (Proc 1.3).

We can only imagine what happens within Clare's own heart as, day after day, "she willingly visited the poor" (Proc 1.4) and prays with and shares those experiences within the "enclosure" of the Offreduccio household. What we do know is that this formative "gazing" on the "flesh" of those who are poor leads her to "consider" the Crucified Word that was calling and challenging her to incarnate a way of life markedly different from that of her contemporaries. To glimpse the mystery of God at work in the heart of Clare, I again turn to Jessica Powers whose poem, "The Master Beggar," offers us some insight into what happens with this kind of formative gazing and considering: flesh made Word becomes *the* Word made flesh and one truly sees the face of Jesus in the face of those who are poor.

Worse than the poorest mendicant alive,
the pencil man, the blind man with his breath
of music shaming all who do not give,
are You to me, Jesus of Nazareth.
Must You take up Your post on every block
of every street? Do I have no release?
Is there no room of earth that I can lock
to Your sad face, Your pitiful whisper "Please"?
I seek the counters of time's gleaming store
but make no purchases, for You are there.
How can I waste one coin while you implore
with tear-soiled cheeks and dark blood-matted hair?

And when I offer You in charity
pennies minted by love, still, still You stand
fixing Your sorrowful wide eyes on me.
Must all my purse be emptied in Your hand?
Jesus, my beggar; what would You have of me?
Father and mother? The lover I longed to know?
The child I would have cherished tenderly?
Even the blood that through my heart's valves flow?
I too would be a beggar. Long tormented,
I dream to grant You all and stand apart
with You on some bleak corner; tear-frequented,
and trouble mankind for its human heart.[9]

"Jesus, my beggar ... I too would be a beggar." True contemplation leads to imitation and, again, the flesh of Jesus becomes the committed Word of God incarnated in this woman who chose to be poor – as Jesus was poor and as those who are poor, were poor.

In order to give "flesh" to the Word which she hears in her own prayer, Clare, before she is eighteen years old, makes a radical break with her social class by selling her inheritance and giving the money to the poor.[10] By disposing of her inheritance in this way, she not only gives her assets to those who are poor, but she herself becomes poor. Clare Marie Ledoux elaborates on the significance of this choice as an irreversible turning point in the life of Clare:

> From then on, her opting for poverty set her up against the noble class of her lineage. From the time of her conversion, poverty became and would remain for Clare a way of life, the indispensable foundation for realizing her religious ideal. By her choice to live in poverty, like Francis, although in her own original way, Clare was challenging a society in which strength, power and money were masters and in which the church itself was the empire's rival power.[11]

Renouncing her inheritance, along with the private vow of virginity she had previously made,[12] solidifies Clare's undesirability as a prospective bride, thus protecting the inviolability of the decision she had made to receive her holy vocation. Ingrid Peterson, O.S.F., notes the practical wisdom Clare evidences in making such a conscious and counter-cultural choice:

> Clare claimed legal and social rights in choosing poverty, and the personal right to make decisions about her body in choosing the state of virginity. Seizing these individual rights, Clare was able to bring to her religious reception 'the gift of poverty and the vow of chaste virginity,' described as her dowry by Pope Innocent IV.[13]

Throughout her life, Clare will continue to display this kind of practical wisdom in dealing with both the political and ecclesial environments in which she finds herself. However, it is the wisdom of her heart, her "passionate desire" to imitate "the Poor Crucified," that impels her to "grant [Jesus] all and stand apart with [Him]." Indeed, she had "emptied" her entire "purse" into the "hand" of the "Master Beggar": "The lover [she] longed to know ... The child [she] would have cherished tenderly."

As we ourselves take a contemplative gaze at the process underneath the narrative of these events which occurred even before her "conversion," we see that the "stirrings" reveal a formative pattern of incarnational prayer – really, incarnational living – that will thread through the tapestry of Clare's life. She "gazes" on the "flesh" of her daily experience because she knows that all that is created has the potential to speak to her of God and that the human person who "groans" in concert with all of creation is the privileged place for God's self-revelation in Christ (cf. Rom 8:22). If, through prayer and reflection, she then "considers" her experiences, that is, she listens to them "in stereo"[14] and looks at them again in the light of the Gospels, that "flesh" becomes the "Word of God" that invites her into a contemplative experience with the "Word made flesh" in Jesus Christ. In that mysterious place within the human heart where lovers meet, she "contemplates" herself, both as she is and as she is transformed by the One who loves her. And in that mystic moment, so "desiring to imitate" the One she loves, she truly becomes, in her own flesh, the image of this Word of Love. This process, as we describe it happening in Clare, also happens in each of us if we truly desire, like her, to "be a beggar" too. Flesh made Word and Word made flesh: this is the movement and the mystery of incarnational prayer.

Clare's Conversion: Making the Passover with Christ

If this "pattern" of prayer is already discernible in Clare before her conversion, how, then, are we to understand the Palm Sunday event? Given the fact that Clare is leading a penitential way of life before meeting Francis, it seems more consistent to view her conversion, not so much as the radical shift of life orientation which liminal experiences provide, but rather as a radical shift in how Clare is to give expression to what she had already discerned as her call.[15] When Clare leaves her family home and her former way of expressing her call, she takes on the beginnings of a new form of life which will enable her to continue to express that same call at a deeper level.

Although Clare herself remembers this experience on Palm Sunday as the moment of her "conversion" and a critical turning point in her personal journey,[16] it must more importantly be viewed as the inevitable consequence of her "daily" fidelity to the kind of incarnational prayer we have already seen evidenced in her *before* her conversion. In fact, according to Margaret Carney, O.S.F., Clare's conversion is an experience in which she "summoned the primordial and graced energies of her entire human existence and focused them into a laser point of light and fortitude."[17]

What "stirrings of the Spirit" move Clare to such a "primordial and graced" place? What "mystery" compels this woman to journey with certainty into a completely unknown future, walking in "light and fortitude"? In reflecting on her own "conversion experience," one grounded in her own kind of incarnational prayer, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, Mary Oliver, offers us her own answer to these questions and may provide some insight into what may have been happening in the heart of Clare. "Listen" to her poem "The Journey," and "lean" with me to "catch the stirrings" in her heart, in Clare's heart and in your own.

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting
their bad advice –
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
"Mend my life!"
each voice cried.
But you didn't stop.
You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations,
though their melancholy
was terrible.
It was already late
enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.
But little by little,

as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,

and there was a new voice
which you slowly
recognized as your own,
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do –
determined to save
the only life you could save.[18]

Palm Sunday is this kind of "one day" for Clare, "the day [she finally knew what [she] had to do, and began, though the voices around [her] kept shouting their bad advice." In that moment when, according to the author of *The Legend of Saint Clare*, she "remained immobile in her place" (LCl, 7), all the days of faithful gazing come together with the unmistakable clarity that is contemplative certainty, and she "knew what [she] had to do, though the wind pried with its stiff fingers at the very foundations, though their melancholy was terrible."

As she continues to participate in the celebration of the liturgy and hears, as she has probably never heard before, the proclamation of the Passion, flesh again becomes Word for her, and she feels confirmed in the choice she had already considered: to let the Word become flesh in her by making her own passover in imitation of the Jesus whom she experiences as remaining poor and powerless in the face of his impending death. With the "light and fortitude" she receives in this mystic moment, Clare is convinced that the only response to the love of an all good God poured out in the kenosis of Jesus Christ is the extravagance of a love fully expressed only in a life of absolute poverty, that is, in the alabaster vessel of her very self, broken and poured out.

And so, although "it was already late enough, and a wild night, and the road full of fallen branches and stones," Clare "left [all other] voices behind" and, as *The Legend* continues, "she embarked upon her long desired flight." Her departure, described in the most powerful symbols of death and resurrection,

takes her on a journey away from her family home, by way of "that other door" which "she broke open with her own hands," to a place outside the walls of all that was familiar and through the darkness of the woods that finally leads her from Assisi to the Portiuncula and eventually to San Damiano.[19] In this place, Clare will live her remaining forty-two years in daily faithfulness to the gift of her vocation given to her by a faithful God.

She witnesses to this experience of mutual fidelity at the very beginning of her *Testament*:

> Among the other gifts that we have received and continue to receive from our magnanimous **Father of mercies** (2Cor 1:3), and for which we must express the deepest thanks to our glorious God, there is our vocation, which the more perfect and greater it is, the more are we indebted to Him (TestCl 2-3).

It is to her daily life of incarnational prayer that we will next turn our attention. As we read the text of her life and letters, we will journey with her in discovering that the "new voice" which she "slowly recognized as [her] own," was, indeed, becoming the voice of "the Poor Crucified" Christ who "kept [her] company as [she] strode deeper and deeper into the world."

Living in San Damiano: "The Fullness of the Incarnation"

As we now keep Clare "company" on her journey "deeper and deeper" into the world, I offer us a caution. Although we will walk this journey with Clare in a kind of "sequential" manner and will explore, in somewhat of a "logical" order, the daily experience of her gazing, considering, contemplating, and imitating, we need to remember that, as we know from our own experience, life events, especially those which involve developing relationships, do not happen in logical or sequential order. Rather, they spiral downward in ever narrowing and deepening circles through providentially directed happenings which occur simultaneously, spontaneously, surprisingly, and seldom safely. Almost never developing or progressing in the kind of clearly delineated stages which we sometimes use to mark the movements and turns in the spiritual journey,[20] they nevertheless transform us in such a way that there is no turning around or turning back – only turning forward and turning toward.

The irrevocable and irreversible place in which Clare finds herself after Palm Sunday, 1212 – the interior place in which she stands as she begins her life in San Damiano – is captured well, I believe, in a poem by David Whyte entitled "All the True Vows."

All the true vows
are secret vows
the ones we speak out loud
are the ones we break.

There is only one life
you can call your own
and a thousand others
you can call by any name you want.

Hold to the truth you make
every day with your own body,
don't turn your face away.

Hold to your own truth
at the center of the image
you were born with.

Those who do not understand
their destiny will never understand
the friends they have made
nor the work they have chosen

nor the one life that waits
beyond all the others.

By the lake in the wood
in the shadows
you can
whisper that truth
to the quiet reflection
you see in the water.

Whatever you hear from
the water, remember,

it wants to carry
the sound of its truth on your lips.

Remember,
in this place
no one can hear you

and out of the silence
you can make a promise
it will kill you to break,

that way you'll find
what is real and what is
not.

I know what I am saying.
Time almost forsook me
and I looked again.
Seeing my reflection
I broke a promise
and spoke

for the first time
after all these years

in my own voice,

before it was too late
to turn my face again.[21]

Throughout her life in San Damiano, Clare will "hold to the truth" – to the "true vows" to which she committed herself on Palm Sunday. She will "hold to [her] own truth at the center of the image [she was] born with" and, borne from the "silence" of her prayer, she will "carry the sound of its truth on [her] lips." And, every day, as she hears "the Poor Crucified" Christ "whisper that truth to the quiet reflection" she sees when she looks at herself in the eyes of Jesus, Clare will choose again to live that truth rooted in "a promise" that it would "kill [her] to break."

Again, it is Ilia Delio, O.S.F., who explains this formative and transformative interchange between how one lives and how one prays:

> ... contemplation is bound to transformation. We cannot help seeing – gazing – on the crucified God for long without being changed. And this change, this gazing on the God of self-giving love, must eventually impel us to love by way of self-gift. In this way, we realize the greatness of our vocation that is to bear Christ, to become a Christic person. Only in and through this "Christification" do we see the world as the sacrament of God, and all of creation as holy ground. Engagement with the other becomes an engagement with God. Contemplation is not directed toward heaven but toward the fullness of the Incarnation.[22]

It is to "the fullness of the Incarnation" that Clare directs her gaze during the forty-two years in which she lives in San Damiano. Unlike her contemporaries, that is, other enclosed communities of women whose monastic regulations proscribed restrictions around seeing and being seen,[23] Clare continues to direct her "gaze" – and that of her sisters – on the "flesh" of those who are poor. On any given day, the "poor" might appear on the other side of the parlor or choir grille as the face of a hungry beggar who comes to share in the meager portion of bread that the sisters could offer. After the death of Francis, the "poor" might look like a pilgrim journeying to visit the places already named "holy" in the popular imagination of those who knew or knew of the Poverello and his brothers. At other times, the "poor" might take the form of a friar returning from his mission in Africa with all the news of how the Gospel was being preached.

In whatever face appears in the frame of this grilled icon, Clare sees the face of "the Poor Crucified" Christ, the same face that she gazes upon when she prays before the icon of the crucifix that had spoken to Francis in the early days of his conversion. But, as Michael Blastic, O.F.M. Conv., so insightfully notes, Clare does not gaze only on Jesus: "The uniqueness of the San Damiano cross lies in the image of a Jesus who is not alone – he is surrounded by others."[24] So, too, Clare is surrounded by her sisters as together they gaze on "the fullness of the Incarnation" imaged, not only in this icon, but in the faces of one another. And, in this mutual exchange of loving reverence, they are formative and transformative for one another.

This Christ, who is Brother to each of them, continues throughout Clare's life to return her gaze, his eyes silently speaking the same words spoken to Francis: "Go and repair my house."[25] Thomas of Celano testifies to the efficacy of Clare's life and of her prayer in rebuilding, not only the Church and the world, but the Franciscan "order" itself: "The Lady Clare, a native of the city of Assisi, the most precious and strongest stone of the whole structure, stands as the foundation for all the other stones.... A noble structure of precious pearls arose above this woman" (1Cel 8.18).

So, day after day, flesh becomes Word and Word becomes flesh as Clare gazes upon the "face" of those who are poor and upon the face of "the Poor Crucified" Christ imaged in her sisters and in the icon that is always before her, and she is formed and transformed and rebuilds the Church in the process. Her life experience, then, is formative for her prayer and her prayer formative for her life. Of this intimate connection between the concerns of her world and her enclosed daily life and daily prayer, Marco Bartoli writes:

> She [Clare] transcended the limits of the hermitage [read enclosure] in two directions: from the inside toward the outside, by accepting that she was an example, a model, one who had something to say to the whole Church; and from the outside towards the inside, by the way in which she and her sisters welcomed whoever and whatever came from the outside, so that everything becomes their concern.[26]

One of Clare's concerns was the fledgling community begun by Agnes of Prague in 1234. Agnes, a princess of Bohemia, had been betrothed to Frederick II, Emperor of Germany but, like Clare, she had made a private vow of virginity and could not be coerced into marrying. When she writes *The First Letter to Agnes of Prague* sometime before June of that year, Clare is forty years old and has already lived twenty-two of them in San Damiano. However, because the letter is directed toward this woman who is, in some sense, just "beginning the public aspect of her conversion," it "recreates Clare's personal conviction at the early stage of her spiritual journey ... her own understanding of poverty as the starting point of her spiritual maturity. While there is much evidence in Clare's writings and life that she loved poverty and loved the poor, her desire to live without property is grounded in her imitation of Jesus."[27] In this letter, so focused on the necessity of poverty, Clare directs Agnes and each of us to "gaze" in the same direction:

> Be strengthened in the holy service of the Poor Crucified undertaken with a passionate desire, Who **endured** the suffering of the cross for us all.... O God-centered poverty, whom the Lord Jesus Christ ... came down to embrace before all else! (1LAg 13-14, 17)

Like the Moken fisherman we spoke of earlier, Clare knows how and where to look. And, who and what she sees looks back at her, and she is transformed in the process. However, everything and everyone that Clare sees also has its own voice which speaks to her with formative and transformative power. From the "outside" she hears the poor, the pilgrim, the friar, and, from the "inside," the voices of her sisters. So, like that same fisherman, she also needs to know how to listen and how to choose what to really "consider" from all that she hears. In the "strange silence" so essential to her enclosed life in San Damiano, Clare listens to each of these voices. However, like her gazing through the grille, Clare's listening to both the silence and the speaking is also framed: framed by her communal experience of Eucharist and of her praying with her sisters the Liturgy of the Hours which marks the passing of time each day, as well as the movement through the seasons each year.

Within the rhythm of this liturgical prayer, Clare listens day after day and year after year to the "Song of the Suffering Servant," sung in the music

of the Scriptural Word and played out in her own life and in the lives of her sisters. Over and over again, she hears the story of the same "Poor Crucified" Christ, upon whom she is gazing, recounted in the Gospels and proclaimed by the prophets and offered for her consideration and meditation. And, in chorus with her sisters, Clare lifts her own voice in the "psalms, hymns and inspired songs" (cf. Col 3:16) which were part of the Liturgy of the Hours of the medieval Church. The paschal experience of Jesus, central to all liturgical prayer, is the mystery within which she chooses to pattern her own life's rhythm and keeps faithful "vigil."

In *The Second Letter to Agnes of Prague*, written between 1234 and 1238, Clare speaks of the formative power of this kind of prayer through which one listens to and considers one's life within the context of this larger Word of God. It impacts, Clare tells Agnes and each of us, the very way in which we hear our lives happening at a more deeply, emotional level:

> *If you suffer with Him, you will reign with Him.*
> weeping with Him, you will rejoice with Him;
> *dying* on the cross of tribulation *with Him*,
> you will possess heavenly mansions with Him
> *among the splendor of the saints*
> and *in the Book of Life*, your *name* will be called glorious among the peoples (2LAg 21).

And, as Clare listens to this mystery, not only in the Scriptural Word, but also "considers" this mystery in the word which comes to her in the cries of those who are poor, in the voices of her sisters, and in the word spoken in the silence of her own heart, she hears the same message: no matter the source, the Word which she is always invited to "consider" is the Word made flesh in the person of Jesus Christ and how this Word calls her to be poor in imitation of him.

Always, always, it is Clare's "passionate desire" for "the Poor Crucified" which drives her and leads her. This is what her gazing leads her to see. This is what her listening leads her to consider and eventually understand: that, for love of her, Jesus freely takes upon himself the limits inherent in being flesh – the poverty intrinsic to being human. Once Clare brings the consideration of this truth to the point of conviction, nothing can deter her. This vision of poverty as having a privileged place because Jesus is "the Poor Crucified" One will determine how she sees not only herself, but the way of life she envisions for her sisters. Indeed, it is this vision that empowers her strong-willed, tenacious, and unyielding grip on the "Privilege of Poverty" granted to her by the Church. Finally, it is this vision that enables Clare to contemplate

in such a way that this Word becomes flesh in her, over and over again, and always more deeply and truly.

Her contemplating empowers her to see herself as she is, to see herself as a "we" with her sisters,[28] and to see herself and all others in and as the image of Christ. Her acceptance of the poverty of being human – of saying "yes" with one's life to the limits of being human and to the glory of loving without limits – unites her with Jesus in an intimate and inextricable way. So contemplation necessitates imitation, and imitation, transformation, and the Word again becomes flesh: Christ is imaged in Clare and Clare is constantly being re-imaged as herself and re-created as the image of Christ. "What is original to Clare is that transformation/imitation of Christ cannot take place apart from contemplation, and contemplation involves self-identity or acceptance of oneself in relation to God."[29]

Clare sees herself and, consequently, her sisters and every other person, inserted into the mystery of Christ and, through Christ, into the mystery of God, in a very real, ontological way. Her much reflected upon "mirror" image, obviously borne from her own prayer experience, invites us to contemplate continually both the mystery of being human and the mystery of God become human, the Word incarnate who is always and forever, "the Poor Crucified" Christ. In *The Third Letter to Agnes of Prague*, Clare offers Agnes spiritual direction, as it were, by focusing her contemplation:

> Place your mind before the mirror of eternity!
> Place your soul **in the brilliance of glory!**
> Place your heart **in the figure of the** divine **substance**
> and, through contemplation,
> **transform** your entire being **into the image**
> of the Godhead Itself (3LAg 12-13).

Although the imperatives of her injunction may sound daunting to us, Clare believes this call is for everyone: for those "outside" as well as for those "inside." She "provides a common path to contemplation because what she advocates is daily prayer before the cross – something every person can do ... [because] the cross provides the most honest reflection of ourselves."[30] To contemplate the suffering Christ is to look at the poverty of our own human condition and that of others and know that God understands because, in Jesus, God has been where we are. To contemplate Christ crucified is to look at ourselves and others and know that death does not have the last word because the Incarnate Word, risen in glory, speaks the Word of Life. Ledoux says very clearly:

> The mystery of poverty essentially is part of the mystery of salvation and the gospel. Poverty is evangelical in the strongest sense of the term. It is in and by it that we live the heart of the Good News. Christ's Resurrection is the revelation of the staggering fruitfulness of poverty. Christ the Lord is indeed the "poor Christ" of Nazareth, raised in glory because he lived poverty to the extreme limit of love. All human beings benefit from this rising, not just the oppressed and the hungry but also the richest among us.[31]

So, all of us are called to heed the advice Clare offers in *The Fourth Letter to Agnes of Prague* about the necessity of praying with "the Poor Crucified" Christ. In this letter, probably written just months before her death, we find Clare reiterating the imperatives of praying in the incarnational way we have spent this time together describing and reflecting upon: prayer in which flesh becomes Word so that *the Word* can again become flesh in you and in me. Look on the Crucified Christ now, and listen to Clare's words as we bring our time to a close:

> **Gaze** upon that mirror each day, O Queen and Spouse of Jesus Christ, and continually study your face in it.... Indeed, in that mirror, blessed poverty, holy humility, and inexpressible charity shine forth, as, with the grace of God, you will be able to contemplate them throughout the entire mirror.... **Look**, I say, at the border of this mirror, that is, the poverty of Him Who was placed in a manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes.... Then **reflect upon**, at the surface of the mirror, the holy humility, at least the blessed poverty, the untold labors and punishments that He endured for the redemption of the whole human race. Finally **contemplate**, in the depth of this same mirror, the ineffable charity that He chose to suffer on the tree of the Cross and to die there the most shameful kind of death (4LAg 15-26).

Like Clare, *gaze* on Jesus, and you will become like the One you see. Like Clare, *consider* Jesus and you will be transformed. Like Clare, *contemplate* Jesus and you will see yourself with new eyes as you look at him looking back at you with delight and with love. And finally, like Clare, *imitate* this Jesus of the Gospels, the Incarnate Word of God, and, follow his way of washing feet, nourishing others from your table, healing the sick and the sick of heart, preaching by your example, and living poverty stretched out to the limits of love.

Like Clare, the experiences of my daily life and, thus, of my daily prayer can be formative for me, that is, they can hover over my interior chaos as the "stirrings of the Spirit" of the living God creatively at work within me. As

truly my "flesh," these experiences can reveal and speak God's Word to me in such a powerful and creative way that they can, in the words of the old charismatic hymn, "melt me" and "mold me," indeed, recreate me into the image and likeness of *the Word* made Flesh: Jesus Christ. My prayer, then, is bound with my life in such an inextricably mutual way that it becomes what I have called incarnational prayer: flesh becomes Word and Word becomes flesh, in Christ and in me.

Who or what I *gaze* upon in my daily experience and in my daily prayer matters, then, because it is *formative* for me in this *incarnational* way. And depending on "who" the who is or "what" the what is, I may be formed in this incarnational way in the image and likeness of Jesus Christ, or in some other image and likeness. In either case, I am being formed and transformed, so, I need, like Clare, to choose wisely *who or what I look upon*. As we reflect on Clare's own gazing and on her exhortation to Agnes, we must ask ourselves: Who or what do I gaze upon in my daily experience? Who or what do I gaze upon when I come to prayer or to my prayer space? Do I see *those who are poor*? Do I *see* those who are poor? Do I see *my sisters and/or brothers* with whom I live? Do I *see* my sisters and brothers with whom I live?

I also need, like Clare, to choose wisely who or what I listen to, who or what I "consider" in my daily experience and in my daily prayer because, again, these are formative for me. As we reflect on Clare's own considering and on her exhortation to Agnes, we must ask ourselves: Who or what do I listen to and consider in my daily experience? Who or what do I listen to and consider when I come to prayer or to my prayer space? Do I really listen to the voices of others and take these voices to the silence of my own prayer? Is the Scriptural Word the focus of my listening and considering so that it becomes formative for me, or does my listening and considering focus elsewhere? What is the place of silence in my day? In my prayer?

What is the place of communal liturgical prayer in the rhythm of my day, my week, my year? How is it that I pray with my sisters or with my brothers in community? How is it that I pray with others? What is the focus of our listening and considering in these communal prayer experiences? How is this prayer incarnational, forming me in such a way that it deepens my desire to enflesh the paschal mystery of Jesus in my own life, that is, in poverty stretched out to the limits of love?

I also need to reflect on who or what I see when I look in the metaphorical "mirror" of myself. As we reflect on the intimate connection Clare sees between contemplation and imitation and on her exhortation to Agnes in this regard, we must ask ourselves: Do I see myself as I truly am – both flawed and graced? Do I see myself, not only as "the fairest one of all," but also as part of the human family, as one who is truly intrinsically poor and, therefore

one with and at home with those who are poor? Do I dare to see the image of "the Poor Crucified" One when I contemplate myself and experience myself as "beloved" by God, both as myself and as the image of the Christ? Does this vision impel me, like the One I contemplate, to imitate his choice for the downward mobility that led him to live poverty stretched to the extreme limits of love? How do I contemplate others in the light of this vision, especially my sisters and brothers in community? How does my imitation look like washing feet, nourishing others from my table, healing the sick and the sick of heart, and preaching by example – all in mutual exchange?

Conclusion: Climbing to Higher Ground

Unlike the commercial fisherman who had neither the eyes nor the ears of the Moken, see the "one small wave" and listen to the call to climb to "higher ground." It is from this vantage point that, like Jesus, like Clare, we will again be impelled by love to make the choice for downward mobility and the privilege of poverty. And, in the "strange silence" that we have come to understand as the paradoxical voice of God, we too will hear "The Song of the Waterfall" that the sojourner, Much-Afraid, hears on her passage to the "High Places" in Hannah Hurnard's classic allegory on the journey of the spiritual life.

Toward the mid-point of the story, the Shepherd leads Much-Afraid to the "Place of Anointing" where she will make the choice for downward mobility and begin the final phase of her journey to the "High Places." As they stand together "at the foot of the cliffs," they hear the "voice of a mighty waterfall ... whose rushing waters sprang from the snows in the High Places themselves.... As she listened, Much-Afraid realized that she was hearing the full majestic harmonies, the whole orchestra as it were ... thousands upon thousands of voices ... yet still the same song:

> From the heights we leap and go
> To the valleys down below,
> Always answering the call,
> To the lowest place of all.

When the Shepherd asks Much-Afraid, "What do you think of this fall of great waters in their abandonment of self-giving?" she replies, "I think they are beautiful and terrible beyond anything which I ever saw before." "Why terrible?" the Shepherd asks, already knowing the answer. "It is the leap which they have to make, the awful height from which they must cast themselves down to the depths beneath, there to be broken on the rocks. I can hardly bear to watch it." However, at the bidding of the Shepherd, Much-

Afraid looks more closely, and begins to see her experience with his eyes and to hear "The Song of the Waterfall" with his ears and so is able to make the rest of the journey. The Shepherd says:

> At first sight perhaps the leap does look terrible, but as you can see, the water itself finds no terror in it, no moment of hesitation or shrinking, only joy unspeakable, and full of glory, because it is the movement natural to it. Self-giving is its life. It has only one desire, to go down and down and give itself with no reserve or holding back of any kind.[32]

Let this be our prayer: to have this "only one desire." Like Jesus, like Clare, like Much-Afraid let us listen, in our living and in our praying, to the "stirrings of the Spirit" in "The Song of the Waterfall" that is the Paschal Mystery of "the Poor Crucified" Christ. Like Jesus, like Clare, like Much-Afraid let us beg for the grace to take the plunge, enflesh the Word, and fall with joy into the loving arms of God.

ENDNOTES

[1] *Selected Poetry of Jessica Powers*, Eds. Regina Siegfried, A.S.C., and Robert F. Morneau (Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward, 1989).

[2] 2LAg, 20. All citations from the early documents written by or about Clare of Assisi are taken from *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents*, Revised edition and trans. Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M. Cap. (New York: New City Press, 2006). Hereafter, all citations will be noted within the text.

[3] "Sea Gypsies See Signs In The Waves," *60 Minutes*, CBS Broadcasting, Inc., March 20, 2005.

[4] Ilia Delio, *Franciscan Prayer* (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2004), 181.

[5] See Clare Marie Ledoux, *Clare of Assisi: Her Spirituality Revealed in Her Letters*, Trans. Colette Joly Dees (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1996), 2.

[6] *Clare of Assisi: A Biographical Study* (Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 1993), 83.

[7] Ibid., 92.

[8] See also the testimonies of Benvenuta of Perugia (Proc 2.2), Filippa de Leonardo di Gislerio (Proc 3.2), Amata di Martino (Proc 4.2).

[9] *Selected Poetry of Jessica Powers*.

[10] Proc 2.22; 12.3; 13.10; 19.2.

[11] Ledoux, 10-11.

[12] Proc 2.2; 19.1.

[13] Peterson, 102.

[14] See Francis Dorff, O.P., *The Art of Passing Over: An Invitation to Living Creatively*, Integration Books (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1988). See especially Part I: On Listening and Hearing Creatively, 9-34.

[15] For an interesting study on the distinction between conversion stories presented by male authors as experiences of "liminality" and by female authors as experiences of "continuity," see Caroline Walker Bynum, "Women's Stories, Women's Symbols: A Critique of Victor Turner's Theory of Liminality," in *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 27-51.

[16] See *Testament*, 24-26.

[17] Margaret Carney, O.S.F., *The First Franciscan Woman: Clare of Assisi and Her Form of Life* (Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 1993), 132.

[18] *New and Selected Poems* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 114-15.

[19] See *The Legend of Saint Clare*, 10.

[20] "All neat organizations of the spiritual life are hindsight creations. After events, activities, and people have provoked our spirits to journey to another place, we look back and sort out the chaos into some form of orderly progression. We may even dare to talk about providence. But we should notice that providential interpretations are usually backward looks from a safe place. When events, activities, and people are actually happening, the spiritual life has the "feel" of an insight here, a quandary there, and a sense of being on the very edge of something everywhere ... in the spiritual life the mind is often the last to know." See John Shea, *Starlight: Beholding the Christmas Miracle All Year Long* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 14-15.

[21] *The House of Belonging* (Langley, Washington: Many Rivers Press, 2002).

[22] Delio, *Franciscan Prayer*, 138.

[23] See Marco Bartoli, *Clare of Assisi*, Trans. Sister Frances Teresa, O.S.C. (Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 1993), 76-97.

[24] From personal correspondence, February 23, 2006.

[25] LMj 2.1. All citations from the early documents written by or about Francis of Assisi are taken from *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, Eds. Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M. Cap., J.A. Wayne Hellmann, O.F.M. Conv., William J. Short, O.F.M. (New York: New City Press, 2000). Hereafter, all citations will be noted within the text.

[26] Bartoli, 87.

[27] Peterson, 164.

[28] See *Testament*, 2-3. In contrast, see Francis's The Testament, 1-3.

[29] Delio, 130.

[30] Ibid., 128.

[31] Ledoux, 55.

[32] Hannah Hurnard, *Hinds' Feet on High Places* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1975), 184-87.

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The Contribution of Francis's Prayer to the Church's *Communio* and *Missio*

Edward Foley, O.F.M. Cap.

Introduction

Franciscan prayer is neither a new nor overlooked topic, and one might wonder about the necessity or even value of another article addressing the matter. There are already both bountiful and helpful resources on the subject that laudably explore the fundamental characteristics and essentials of Franciscan prayer.[1] Central to the contributions of such works is their guidance in uncovering what it means for twenty-first century believers to pray as Franciscans. This is a critical issue for those of us who follow the Franciscan path of brother-sisterhood. Two ecclesial issues, however, prod us to a different approach.

First is the *obvium* that all Roman Catholics and further, all Christians, do not follow a Franciscan path. While this is not new information, it is nonetheless an important datum. Sometimes those of us wed to a particular Catholic-Christian religious charism are prodded by a basic extinct to export that charism to others, and initiate them into the spiritual journey we call Franciscan, or Ignatian or Salesian. Yet, the call to holiness for the baptized, freshly articulated in *Lumen Gentium* (e.g., n. 39), finds its central hermeneutic in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* that lifts up the church's public worship as the font of summit of holiness. Thus it is the church's liturgy, rather than some particular religious charism, that is to "[move] the faithful filled with 'the paschal sacraments' to be 'one in holiness'" (n. 10).

A parallel ecclesiological perspective is that Franciscans – like every other group of religious in the Church – are not called to live or minister or pray by themselves or for themselves, but with and for the church in service of the world. Francis himself was lauded as a *vir catholicus*,[2] and the women and men who bear his name must embrace a similarly "catholic" perspective on our charism. Thus, an important focus is not so much "how" do or should

Franciscans pray, as much as what is the contribution of Franciscan prayer to the Church's *communio*? As the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life has summarized, "Vatican II affirmed that religious life belongs 'undeniably' to the life and holiness of the church and placed religious life at the very heart of the church's mystery of communion and holiness."[3] Thus our own questions around Franciscan prayer need to be motivated by a fundamental concern that they contribute to the church's *communio* and be conceived within the context of that *communio*.

But out of what vision of church, out of which "communion ecclesiology" should we consider our contribution, for the term is certainly not univocal.[4] Some who espouse a vision of Church as a mystery of communion do so with a centripetal bias. This is apparent from the fact that some communion ecclesiologies seem to be lacking any "communion missiology." But the church was not called into being for its own sake, and is not sustained by the Spirit of Jesus Christ for self-preservation. Rather, as Vatican II clearly stated and Pope John Paul II reiterated, the "Church is missionary by its very nature."[5] Thus, in the words of Paul Lakeland:

> we must reiterate the symbiosis of communion and mission. While communion can be a cozy notion upon which to meditate, the validity of the particular expression of communion in the church is to be found in the quality of the same community's commitment to its mission. The praxis of communion is visible in the church's faithfulness to its mission; the praxis of mission is directly connected to the understanding of communion. If what we mean by "communion" is an inward-looking, self-congratulatory, and fearful huddling together against the forces of modernity ... then "mission" will mean little more than the periodic excoriation of the "outside" world. But if communion means a generous and loving association of free and faithful children of God, then the dynamic excess of love, without which it is not love at all, spills over into a mission to the whole human race, one marked by a generous sharing of the knowledge that God wills to save the world.[6]

This is a communion ecclesiology which clearly resonates with the nature of religious profession.[7] As made abundantly clear in the *Instrumentum Laboris* proceedings, and postsynodal exhortation from the 1994 special Synod on Consecrated Life, the call to mission is an essential part of every form of communal consecrated life.[8] My own Franciscan community, almost 16 years prior to that Synod espoused a similar view, noting that, "The Franciscan life-plan according to the gospel implies, at its root, a natural apostolic dimension without limits"; and, again "Fundamentally every Franciscan vocation is missionary."[9] Thus, it seems appropriate to consider the contribution of

Franciscan prayer not from an intra-Franciscan perspective, but rather from an ecclesial vantage point with a strong and coherent missionary trajectory that redounds not only to the benefit of the Christian Churches, but erupts in mission to the whole human family.[10]

While there are many ways one could proceed with this inquiry, we have chosen to mine the tradition here, particularly selected prayer practices of Francis of Assisi. It is hoped that by examining key worship patterns of Francis, with an eye toward discerning how they contributed to the building up of not only a fledgling community, but also the wider church, we might gain some insights about how Franciscan prayer today might analogously contribute to the Church's *communio* and *missio* in this new millennium. While we could examine Francis's prayer patterns according to their liturgical genres (e.g., Eucharist, Liturgy of the Hours, etc.), we will instead access this prized stratum of the Seraphic tradition through the prism of key characteristics that seem to permeate his vision of prayer for himself and his followers. The challenge here, is that since Francis was one of those charismatic figures who lived and thought and prayed outside the given frameworks of his or any day, it is important to respect the polyphonic nature of his charism. In an attempt to do that, we will propose three compound images that hopefully will capture something of the richness of his prayer spirituality.

Communal and Accessible

Francis lived in a period marked by the growing privatization of the Church's liturgy, increasingly shaped for execution by the ecclesially elite. The celebration of private Mass, a phenomenon already known in the Carolingian period,[11] was not the preferred form for Eucharist as it emerged in the eighth and ninth centuries and was often critiqued. The late ninth century *Interpolated Rule of Chrodegang* decrees that "no priest should presume to celebrate Mass alone, since we can find no authority for this practice."[12] In this spirit Peter Damian (d. 1072) noted that "this sacrifice of praise is offered by the whole faithful, not only men but also women."[13] By the early thirteenth century, however, private Mass had become normative, an important personal spiritual exercise for many clerics, and a font of virtually irreplaceable income for clerics. Similarly, the private recitation of the Divine Office was increasingly common, as demonstrated by the growing ease with which communal recitation of the Office was dispensed,[14] as well as the multiplication of breviaries in this period.[15]

In this wider ecclesial context, Francis's concern for prayer that was both communal and accessible is notable. This is not to suggest that Francis himself was not given to long periods of personal prayer, for it is reported that he spent significant portions of each day and night in prayer.[16] As noted

above, one cannot be reductionistic about Francis's spirituality in general, or prayer life in particular, so there are multiple prayer vectors discernible in his life and teachings, which are at least paradoxical. At the same time, one can detect clear trajectories or flows[17] in his vision for a common life that evoked a parallel vision for common prayer that was open to the humblest of God's creatures. One undoubted influence in Francis's own life shaping this vision was that he came to community life as a lay person, not a cleric. While he and his first followers were granted tonsure by Pope Innocent III, making them minor clerics,[18] and while Francis was ordained deacon sometime before 1223,[19] his own conversion and subsequent gathering of followers was much more in the style of a lay movement and retained those characteristics well into the second decade of the thirteenth century.

As a consequence, the prayer style of Francis and his early followers was not in service of some overriding institutional vision, turned in on itself in a spirit of self-preservation, tied to some established horarium, or in any way privatized or reserved for the *literati* or elite. On the contrary, in a full embrace of poverty and simplicity, Francis led his followers in prayer styles that required no books, no buildings, no liturgical artifacts and little learning. This is illustrated by various episodes in the life of Francis and his followers. For example, when Francis first began to attract followers and when the brothers asked Francis to pray "because ... they did not know the church's office," Celano reports that Francis instructed them to pray the *Pater noster*[20] and his favored acclamation "We adore you,"[21] a popular verse widely employed in the Offices of the day.[22] Such a prayer style was portable, open to both the literate and illiterate, lay and clerical followers, did not rely on any material resources, and was a shared euchological vernacular. Because there were no early Franciscan "texts" to pray nor Franciscan *ordo* to follow, Francis and his followers could happily join with others – clerics or monks or lay – in various forms of prayer including the Divine Office and the Eucharist.[23] This did not jeopardize his vision of prayer. Rather, drawing upon the prayer resources of

others could be understood as symbolic of the minority and itineracy which he embraced, and wished to bequeath to his brothers and sisters.

Even when things did change and the brothers acquired their own places,[24] were required to pray the breviary,[25] and Eucharist was clearly part of the daily horarium, Francis consistently seemed to value communal over individual prayer for the brothers. His Rule for Hermitages, for example, offers a contemplative image of shared life that is yet structured around the celebration of the Divine Office.[26] Clearly the hermitage image here is in service of fraternity. When it came to his own recitation of the Office, at the end of his life Francis – attempting to adjust to the growing canonical requirements for the clerical brothers in the recitation of the office – himself asks that he might always have a cleric brother with him to pray the office.[27] In so doing, Francis seems to emphasize that having a breviary[28] or even being sick did not excuse one from a prayer that was essentially communal.

As for the Eucharist, in A Letter to the Entire Order Francis directs the brothers "to celebrate only one Mass a day according to the rite of the Holy Church in those places where the brothers dwell. But if there is more than one priest there, let the other be content, for the love of charity, at hearing the celebration of the other priest."[29] While there is some disagreement about the interpretation of this passage, given Francis's concerns about poverty and humility, it seems credible to interpret the passage as a rejection of the commonplace practice of multiplying Masses with their accompanying stipends, and a valuing of the conventual over private Mass for the good of the fraternity. This was not a vision that always prevailed, and with the growing clericalization of the order came parallel currents that both emphasized private prayer, and required the cleric brothers to perform prayer in language and style that was no longer accessible to the unlettered. While concessions in this direction had already taken place in Francis's lifetime, they seemed to contradict the early vision that prayer among his followers was a shared, accessible event that contributed to the building up of the community.

The contemporary contribution here is at least twofold. From the viewpoint of *communio*, the prayer vision of Francis that is both communal and accessible has great resonance with the liturgical vision of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* of the Second Vatican Council which insisted that the reform rites of the church, "should be distinguished by a noble simplicity. They should be short, clear, and free from useless repetitions. They should be within the people's powers of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation" (n. 34). This vision is in service of the overriding goal of the liturgical reforms that "all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy, and ... in the restoration and promotion of the sacred

liturgy ... is the aim to be considered before all else" (n. 14). While Francis's vision for prayer was wider than what we would today consider under the rubric of "liturgy,"[30] his prayer praxis and spirituality nonetheless contributes to the *communio* of the contemporary church by anticipating and supporting key aspects of the liturgical vision embedded in the Second Vatican Council. In so doing, Francis's prayer vision implicitly critiques any approaches to prayer which would emphasize the arcane, gnostic, or personalistic.

Besides contributing to the *communio* of the Church, this vision also contributes to and supports the *missio* of the Church. In particular, a prayer vision that is accessible and communal is resonant and in solidarity with that of a multitude of Abrahamic believers – Jews, Christians and Muslims – whose prayer and ritual instincts gravitate more to the shared than the privatized in prayer. Whether the analogue is the minyan for the Amidah,[31] the call from the minaret of a mosque by the muezzin for one of the prescribed canonical prayers (salat),[32] the baptized gathered at Vespers or the Sunday eucharistic assembly, each ritual paradigm asserts the centrality of the community, and implicitly affirms the assembly as the ground of prayer. Such resonance is particularly important in those cultures whose inclinations are more sociocentric than egocentric. For Euro-Americans, steeped in an egocentric world view, ceding primacy to the communal nudges us to closer solidarity not only with our Jewish and Islamic sisters and brothers, but also with a growing number of Christians and Catholic Christians whose cultural prejudice is more towards "We are, therefore I am," rather than "I think, therefore I am."[33] Finally, such communal and accessible prayer instincts provide a potent critique to the flows of individualism and elitism that have become part of the globalizing trends of the twenty-first century.

Incarnational and Ecological

Our second compound image for considering the contribution of Francis's prayer to the church's *communio* and *missio* is rooted in the embodied and creational flow in his prayer and spirituality. Reminiscent of the language of Jesus, which was marked by vivid and realistic examples of fig trees, mustard seeds and lost coins,[34] Francis's prayer vocabulary was clearly rooted in this world. While Francis's own life was marked by many mystical experiences, and he was graced with the most intimate of contemplative experiences with the Holy One, his prayer language shows a marked preference for incarnational and ecological images. This prayer trajectory had much in continuity with certain cultural-liturgical trends of his era. Under the influence of what James Russell labels "Germanization,"[35] the Middle Ages witnessed the rise of a more magico-religious interpretation of Christianity and its rituals. One

result of such Germanization was increased focus on the objects and elements employed in worship.[36]

Various religious objects and liturgical elements were significant catalysts for Francis's own prayer. Multiple are the prayer stories of Francis before a crucifix. His own "Prayer before a Crucifix" was reportedly composed in praying before the Crucifix at S. Damiano.[37] When teaching the brothers to pray during the early years of the community, Celano reports that whenever they saw a cross "or the sign of a cross, whether on the ground, on a way, in the trees or roadside hedges" they would prostrate on the ground, and repeat the acclamation Francis had taught them, "We adore you, Lord Jesus Christ, in all your churches throughout the whole world and we bless You because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world."[38] Celano reports that they would do a similar thing whenever they would even glimpse a church from a distance.[39]

Francis's religious imagination, as revealed in his praying, displays another Germanizing tendency that corresponds to this incarnational-ecological motif, and that is what Russell dubs a dramatic-representational interpretation of scripture and liturgy.[40] Two prayer practices of Francis are particularly resonant with this tendency. The first is his Office of the Passion.[41] According to Gallant and Cirino, this Office was not composed by Francis as much as it evolved over many years, a series of disparate elements that gradually came together creating this "unique form of prayer."[42] Rooted in Francis's profound devotion to the whole of the paschal mystery whose center point was the cross,[43] and demonstrating his broad scriptural memory and special facility with the psalms, the office is divided into five parts: 1) Triduum and weekdays through the year, 2) the Easter season, 3) Sundays and principal feasts, 4) Advent, and 5) Christmas and Epiphany. The most complete section is the first in which, particularly resonant with the previously noted Germanizing tendencies, five of the hours broadly relate to particular episodes of Christ's passion, death and resurrection: 1) Compline, the prayer and arrest in Gethsemani; 2) Matins, the trial before the Sanhedrin; 3) Terce, the appearance before Pilate; 4) Sext, the agony and suffering; 5) None, the Crucifixion."[44] Prime appears as a morning interlude, celebrating the morning sun as a symbol of Resurrection, and Vespers as an acclamation of Christ's victory.[45] Together, these hours could be considered a kind of euchological tableau or dramatic allegory of Christ's passion, death and resurrection. In Francis's development of the crèche[46] he moves even further with a key moment in our salvation history, no longer content with allegorical presentation but instead progressing to fully formed representation.

While Francis's Office of the Passion and development of the crèche are considered here under the rubric of incarnational-ecological, one cannot

narrow the incarnational lens to the point that it appears as synonymous with the Christological. There has been much written about Francis's prayer as essentially Christological, yet there is a strong Trinitarian strand in Francis's prayers, in which the communion of the Father and the Son in the Spirit is repeatedly honored.[47] To assert, therefore, that Francis's prayer reveals an incarnational-ecological bias does not mean that it is in any way narrowly focused on Christ's own incarnation, but more broadly embraces the incarnational mystery of God's action in the world throughout the whole of salvation history – what Rahner calls the "liturgy of the world"[48] – that culminates in the living, dying and rising of the Son of God.

It is this broader sense of the incarnational that compels us to link it with the ecological, suggesting that the world is not simply a venue for God's self-revelation, but creation itself is such a self-revelation. The classic manifestation of this in Francis's prayer compositions is his "Canticle of the Creatures."[49] Inspired by the biblical model found in the *Benedicite* (Dan 3:52-90), Francis crafted a distinctive prayer in which brother and sisterhood resonates throughout all of creation. While there are philological debates about the exact meaning of this hymn, Pozzi believes that grammatical analysis reveals a prayer in which creation itself possesses an inherent ability to praise God.[50] It is not each isolated element of creation which lauds God, however, and God does not seem to be praised by the creatures we see and touch, but rather is praised "by the mutual harmony of the energies that make up our visible world. In modern terms we would speak of elementary particles, atoms, molecules, cells, and so forth. It is here that God's wisdom is supremely manifested; here is rooted the act of praise."[51] Similar are his "Praises to be said at all the Hours."[52] In this prayer a vast horizon of a cosmic choir unfolds as "Francis seems to envision himself as the voice of the cosmos, which praises the Creator and Redeemer on behalf of and together with all other creatures.[53]

While Francis's incarnational-ecological tendencies resonate with parallel currents in Medieval Christian Europe, there are two characteristics of his prayer and ritualization that demonstrate a clear separation from the trends of his time. The first is the predominance of praise rather than petition in his prayer, especially that prayer marked by what we have characterized as the incarnational-ecological. The opposite tendency characterized much of the individual and collective prayer forms of medieval Christianity. The threat of final judgment loomed large for medieval Christians, symbolized by its ubiquitous depiction on tympanums over church portals throughout Europe. Writing of late medieval Christianity, Eamon Duffy suggests that most Christians hoped for salvation, but thought that only saints went to heaven directly. Consequently it was purgatory rather than hell that became

the focus of Christian fear.[54] This fear revealed itself in many prayer patterns of the Middle Ages, marked by penitential psalms, *psalmi familiares*, Offices of the Dead, and especially Masses for the Dead. Francis's prayer language, however, does not dwell on the petitionary, but rather is marked by words like praise, honor, exalt, adore, bless and give thanks. Bonaventure aptly describes Francis as a "praiser and worshipper of God,"[55] whose unshakable confidence in divine providence moved him to praise rather than petition,[56] unlike many coreligionists of his day. A second divergence between Francis's incarnational-ecological approach and those of many other medieval Christians under the Germanizing influence is that Francis's respect for and even love of things of this world were never a substitute for an intimate relationship with God and ethical living. Thus, Francis never seemed persuaded by what Russell characterized as a magico-religious interpretation of prayer or worship.[57] On the contrary, his radical embrace of poverty disallowed any element to come between himself and the Holy One or disable him for offering due reverence to all of his sisters and brothers. Furthermore, it could be argued that it was this abiding commitment to poverty which fueled Francis's preference for praise over petition, as it is the former which "is the prayer par excellence that flows out of an experience of total poverty of self."[58]

As for the contributions of Francis's unique incarnational-ecological prayer approach to *communio* and *missio*, several come to mind. First is the rich resonance here with a church which defines itself sacramentally (*Lumen Gentium* 1), and fundamentally embraces the "sacramental principle." As Richard McBrien summarizes:

> "Catholicism has never hesitated to affirm the 'mysterious' dimension of all reality; the cosmos, nature, history, events, persons, objects, rituals, words. Everything is, in principle, capable of embodying and communicating the divine.... There is no finite instrument that God cannot put to use. On the other hand, we humans have nothing else apart from finite instruments to express our own response to God's self-communication."[59]

More recently David Tracy has argued theologically[60] and Andrew Greeley attempted to prove empirically[61] that Roman Catholics have a distinctive sacramental imagination. This is an imagination that believes that God continuously self-discloses through the created world, and thus renders worship both accepting of and inclined toward utilizing the things of creation and produced from creation (e.g., water, bread, wine, oil, candles, statues, etc.) at the heart of worship. Francis thus provides a traditional and accessible affirmation of this basic sacramental principle. His prayer instincts draw Roman Catholics through the incarnational-ecological principle back to

the heart of their faith while simultaneously grounding them in a real world populated by real people facing real ethical dilemmas. Catholic-Christianity is not a disembodied faith journey that beckons us to *fuga mundi*, but is sacramentally committed to a church in history, that must grapple with the ethical issues of the day.[62]

A second contribution of the incarnational and ecological in Francis's prayer to both *communio* and *missio* is the connection between these and major theological flows within Catholicism and Christianity as well as across the major world religions. Within Roman Catholicism, there is a growing awareness that those of us who embrace a sacramental principle need to attend to embodiment in our prayer.[63] Though it is not much acknowledged, the very Eucharist rite at the center of our worship is both embodied and fundamentally ecological.[64] And as Eucharist is the fount and summit of our communion and mission, the ecological cast of our worship reminds us that the incarnational-ecological, the embodied in humankind and creation is a basic ecclesiological issue.[65] Being a Church in the world means attending to the concrete and particular embodiment of the baptized in particular contexts. Thus issues of gender, physical ability and disability, sexuality, and other incarnational aspects of our lives lie at the very heart of what it means to be Church, and cannot be ignored or marginalized.

More broadly across Christianity, in 1990 the World Council of Churches moved the ecological agenda in a significant way by placing the theme "the integrity of creation" at the heart of their world convocation that year.[66] Their affirmation that creation is "beloved of God," mirrors Francis's invitation to engage in cosmic praise and thanksgiving. His incarnational-ecological prayer instincts not only resonate with currents operative among today's Christians, but are affirmed in the multitude of eco-theologies which Robert Schreiter considers one of the major theological flows of the twenty-first century across the world's major religions.[67]

At the same time, Francis's profound sense of poverty and total dependence on God provides a strong critique to church and world regarding the rampant flows of human exploitation and consumerism which increasing characterize our globalized economy. Neither the human body nor the biosphere we inhabit are to be manipulated for individual or corporate gain. Here the incarnational-ecological harmonizes with the previous compound image of communal-accessible, reminding us that engagement with the things of this world are for the sake of the common good. Thus Francis's incarnational-ecological vision, filtered through the lens of poverty, eschews profiteering and exploitation, critiques the petitionary "give me" mentality all too prevalent today and, instead, calls us to the most profound gratitude for God's unbounded goodness that encourages a spirituality of detached thanksgiving.

Passionate-Lyrical

Our third compound image for accessing the contribution of Francis's prayer to church and world highlights the heartfelt and the poetic. Francis is often remembered as an affective, lyrical and dramatic individual.[68] Celano's first description of Francis is rich in corroborating images, noting him to be "an object of admiration to all ... [who] endeavored to surpass others in his flamboyant display of vain accomplishments: wit, curiosity, practical jokes and foolish talk, songs, and soft and flowing garments."[69] The frequent caricature of Francis as a romantic is grounded in his well documented chivalrous reverie, first about noble acts that would bring him glory in this world, and ultimately about choosing as a bride a Lady called poverty[70] as befitting a herald in service of a new King.[71]

On the one hand, Francis's rich affectivity could be dismissed simply as a personality trait, born of a sensitive soul raised in the troubadour spirit of a privileged merchant class.[72] Closer examination, however, suggests that passion was not simply a random genetic inheritance but a mature choice, intimately wed to his incarnational instincts fired in the crucible of Lady Poverty. Religious commitment and prayer for Francis were marked by unrestrained abandon, which required both complete interior commitment and a consonant public enactment. Thus, Francis did not simply tell his father that he was willing to renounce all rights of inheritance, he publicly stripped himself bare and handed his clothes back to father.[73] When his superior wanted to sew fur into his habit because he was so cold and ill, Francis allowed it only if he sewed the fur on the outside as well.[74] When celebrating the feast of the Nativity, he would kiss images of the baby's limbs, stammer sweetly as a baby, and even though the feast would fall on a Friday and require abstinence, proclaimed that he wanted "even the walls to eat meat on that day, and if they cannot, at least on the outside they [should] be rubbed with grease!"[75] When he was concerned that he might be misleading the people for abstaining when he was actually eating meat in secret, he had himself stripped and dragged before the people with a rope tied around his neck in imitation of common criminals.[76] And as he progressed in the complete abandonment of self to Christ crucified, the drama eventually played itself out on his own body in stigmata.[77] It is not surprising that Celano describes Francis as "a man of great fervor."[78]

The paradox of such dramatic abandon is the way it so often expressed itself lyrically and joyfully. Passion for Francis did not translate into anything dour as though his only passion was for misery. Rather, his fundamental stance in gratitude and instinct for praise over petition, seemed to sustain him in joy. Prototypical is Celano's description of Francis before the Pope and cardinals,

"speaking with such fire of spirit that he could not contain himself for joy. As he brought forth the word from his mouth, he moved his feet as if dancing, not playfully but burning with the fire of divine love, not provoking laughter but moving them to tears of sorrow."[79] True and perfect joy for Francis, as was made clear to Brother Leo,[80] was not some fleeting feeling or spontaneous affect, but a spiritual stance and gospel resolve.

Francis was not only born in the age of troubadours, he adopted and purified the troubadour spirit. His limitless confidence in God and complete lack of self-consciousness transformed him into a unique minstrel. His passion for the God whom he continuously praised begot a self-effacing genre of hymnody. Some of these texts have come down to us, such as the "Praises to be said at all the Hours,"[81] the "Praises of God,"[82] and the "Canticle of the Creatures."[83] These exemplars do not, however, define or exhaust the lyricism of this mystic whom Celano recalls would "pick up a stick from the ground, and put it over his left arm while holding a bow bent with a string in his right hand, drawing it over the stick as if it were a [fiddle]"[84] as he sang about the Lord. Thus, the Assisi Compilation could note how the "sweet melody of the spirit bubbling up inside him would become on the outside a French tune."[85]

Francis's passion and lyricism were contagious. Notable in this regard is Celano's description of the canonization of Francis. Not only were the people filled with joy, but Celano describes the pope as one who "rejoiced and exulted, dancing with joy."[86] That others would participate in and continue his legacy of spiritual passion and perfect joy does not appear to be purely coincidence, for Francis is well remembered as one who intentionally instructed others in this legacy. Notable in this regard is the passage in the Mirror of Perfection in which he rebuked a brother who looked sad: "This sadness is a matter between you and God. Pray to Him, that by His mercy He may spare you and grant your soul the joy of salvation of which it was deprived by the guilt of sin. Try to be joyful always around me and others, because it is not fitting that a servant of God appear before his brothers or others with a sad and gloomy face."[87] Francis himself was not always capable of fulfilling this vision. Sometimes, for example, when contemplating the poverty of the blessed Virgin and her Son, he would groan "with sobs of pain, and bathed in tears ... [eat] his bread on the naked ground."[88] As a mystic with a rich affective life, Francis was both capable of and experienced in expressing the range of human emotions. At the same time, a trajectory of disciplined and sustained joy flowed through his life.

More broadly, it is useful to consider Francis as someone who, throughout the whole of his life, dramatically instructed and initiated others into his passion, joy and lyricism. Laura Smit considers this a form of "aesthetic pedagogy." She writes:

> [Francis is] concerned to illustrate a way of life, not with mnemonic devices, but with his entire being. He is a teacher in the sense that the Hebrew prophets were teachers, or that Socrates was a teacher, or that Gandhi was a teacher. His life is the lesson. The virtuous life which he wishes to communicate is the life of Christ. So he takes on the persona of Christ, as a role which he plays in the drama of his life. It is not accidental that his followers recognized Francis as "the Mirror of Perfection." His life is meant to be such a mirror. He is a performance artist for whom drama functions pedagogically.[89]

One dramatic example of this pedagogy for passion occurs in both his earlier and later Rules regarding the care of brothers for one another. Eschewing the disembodied or impassive, Francis instructs his brothers "Let each one confidently make known his need to the other, for if a mother loves and cares for her son according to the flesh, how much more diligently must someone love and care for his brother according to the Spirit."[90] Similarly did he induct his followers into his joy and lyricism.[91]

One of the abiding issues in Christian prayer is that of orthodoxy, and a concern that the prayer both express and create "right belief." While Francis's prayer was certainly orthodox from a doctrinal perspective, he seemed more concerned with orthopraxis, and the absolute continuity between the way he and his followers prayed and the way they lived. Our consideration of Francis's life and prayer as passionate and lyrical, however, further highlights how Francis was also concerned with orthopathy, or "right feeling." For Francis "right feeling" was a disciplined passion through which affect became virtue, and feeling was directed in service of a higher purpose. While intimately linked to the strong incarnational predisposition of his spirituality, this orthopathy is a yet distinctive aspect of his spiritual life and prayer. His affectivity and lyricism were disciplined through poverty so that they only and always served the ultimate goal of uniting him with the God who was both the font and the summit of these gifts.

The contribution of this passionate-lyrical aspect of Francis's spirituality and prayer to the Church's *communio* and *missio* is both rich and paradoxical. For example, Francis's dramatic and exuberant orthopathy provides a vivid example of what is imaged in the opening lines from Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts" (n. 1). To be a true follower of Christ is to be fashioned in the image of that Christ who is aptly understood as the compassion of God.[92] Authentic belief is a matter of one's whole self, including one's emotions. And

authentic worship is also participation with the whole self, including one's emotions.

At the same time, Francis's lyricism is disciplined and his passion has taken a vow of poverty. Thus, his orthopathy provides no pretext for a religion or religious expression whose roots go no deeper than impulsive sensitivities or sentimentality. The drama of Francis's praise was not anchored in a gift for theatricality, but in a commitment to the Most High God in gratitude for the salvific drama of the Cross. Thus while authentic Christian discipleship and worship engage the emotions, they neither begin nor end there. These require discipline and maturation, so that authentic love may grow.[93] Worship as entertainment finds no grounding in the spirituality and prayer of Francis.

In *communio* and *missio*, Francis's passionate lyricism is a gesture of hospitality to peoples and cultures who value the public expression of affect in religion and worship. Sometimes the worship forms of Western Christianity have lost touch with the lyrical and ecstatic nature of early Christian worship,[94] become overly cerebral and prosaic. The poetic and musical trajectories of Francis's prayer, however, remind us that we were a community born in song that was virtually incapable of public proclamation without lyricism.[95] There are many cultural groups within the contemporary Church whose penchant is for worship that is similarly lyrical and inspiring.[96] The evangelizing import of worship that integrates mind, heart, body and spirit is further underscored by the rapid growth of Pentecostal churches today, the fastest growing denomination in the twentieth century.[97]

Finally, Francis's aesthetic pedagogy in prayer and hymnody, canticles and poetry is a striking reminder that we honor a God who defines the very nature of beauty. But the beautiful as revealed in the God of Jesus Christ is both a different beauty and a beauty in difference.[98] As Francis hymns, this is a God that is both beauty and meekness, charity and humility, joy and justice.[99] To enter into the theater of this God's love, to join our voices to this song of the Lamb is to embrace a similar aesthetic whose criteria are meekness, charity, humility, joy and justice.[100]

Conclusion

The mystery of God in Francis the mystic, the mystery of Christ crucified in Francis the lover cannot be reduced to formulae or footnotes – nor can the reservoir of spirituality or the well of prayer we name Franciscan. Yet, through analogy and narrative, it is possible to grasp something of the key flows and movements in his prayer and spirituality. Similarly, it is possible to suggest certain prayer characteristics that are not well supported by the Francis legacy. Prayer in the spirit of Francis, for example, is not stolid,

monotonous, exclusive, self-serving, dour, hygienic, cerebral, gnostic, flat-footed or prosaic. On the contrary, it tends toward the impassioned, lyrical, inclusive, centrifugal, joyful, vulgar, embodied, fleet-footed and poetic. Further, it summons a church and evokes a God of passion, lyricism, joy, and poetry, neither of whom retreat from hands in the mud – whether that means creating human beings from the clay of the earth, or enabling human beings to recover their dignity by helping them till the land – and whose grace and prayer embrace this world in all of its brokenness as a source of grace. Francis's own gifts and graces, especially his discipline of poverty, liberated him to serve church and world with a breadth of vision unencumbered by the need to control or possess. May those of us who similarly wish to be *viri et mulieres catholici* drink deeply of his vision so that it may only redound to the good of church and world in authentic *communio* and *missio*.

Endnotes

[1] One recent example is that of Ilia Delio who characterizes Franciscan prayer as "Christ-centered, affective, contemplative, cosmic and evangelizing." *Franciscan Prayer* (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2004), p. 3 et passim.

[2] From the first antiphon of First Vespers of the Office of St. Francis, composed by Julian of Speyer and others, *Officium S. Francisci, Ad I Vesperas, Antiphonae* 1 (Enrico Menestò and Stefano Brufani, *Fontes Franciscani* (Assisi: Edizioni Porziuncola, 1995), 1101; English translation in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents* [hereafter FAED], ed. Regis Armstrong et al., 3 vols. (New York: New City Press, 1999-2001), I:327).

[3] *Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor* (1994) n. 2

[4] See, for example, the overview of various interpretations of communion ecclesiology provided by Dennis Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology: Vision and Versions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000).

[5] *Ad Gentes*, n. 2; *Redemptoris missio*, n. 5.

[6] Paul Lakeland, *The Liberation of the Laity: In Search of an Accountable Church* (New York-London: Continuum, 2002), 225-26.

[7] See, for example, *The Roman-Seraphic Ritual of Religious Profession*, n. 6, which emphasizes our consecration for mission in the world.

[8] See, for example, "Synodal Message," *Catholic International* 6:3 (1995), 137; also, *Vita Consecrata*, nn. 3-4 and *passim*.

[9] The Third Plenary Council of the Capuchin Order (Mattli, 1978) n. 10; p. 44 in *The Path of Renewal: The Documents of the Five Plenary Councils and the First Assembly of the Order of Capuchin Friars Minor*, ed. Regis Armstrong (n.pl.: n.d.).

[10] Lakeland, *The Liberation of the Laity*, 226.

[11] See Otto Nussbaum, *Kloster, Priestermönch und Privatmesse*, Theophaneia 14 (Bonn: P. Hanstein, 1961); also, Angelus Häussling, *Mönchskonvent und Eucharistiefeier*, Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen 58 (Münster/Westfalen: Aschendorf, 1973).

[12] *The Longer Rule*, n. 77 in Jerome Bertram, *The Chrodegang Rules* (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2005), 221 and 276.

[13] *Opusculum* XI, "Dominus Vobiscum," *Patrologia Latina* 145:237D.

[14] Pierre Salmon, *The Breviary through the Centuries*, trans. Sister David Mary (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1962), 14-15.

[15] Eric Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books from the Beginning to the Thirteenth Century*, trans. Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1993), 169-72.

[16] Octavian Schmucki, "Divine Praise and Meditation according to the Teaching and Example of St. Francis of Assisi," *Greyfriars Review* 4:1 (1990): 42.

[17] "Flow" is a term originally employed in sociology, anthropology and communication sciences, and more recently in theology, to denote commonly shared or circulating information or ideas that are clearly detectable yet difficult to define with any specificity. See Robert Schreiter, *The New Catholicism* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 1997), 15.

[18] See, for example AP 36 in Lorenzo Di Fonzo, "*L'Anonimo Perugino* Tra Le Fonti Francescane del Secolo XIII," *Miscellanea Franciscana* 72 [1972], 456; FAED II:51; L3S 52 in Théophile Desbonnets, "*Legenda Trium Sociorum*," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 67:128; FAED II:98; Bonaventure LM 3.10 in *S. Bonaventurae opera omnia*, ed. Collegii a S. Bonaventura [Quaracchi, 1889], 8:512; FAED II:549.

[19] Julian of Speyer, *The Life of Saint Francis* 54 (*Fontes Franciscani* 1075; FAED I:406); Bonaventure, LM 10:7 (*Bonaventurae opera omnia* 8:535; FAED II:610).

[20] The significance of this prayer for Francis is not only underscored by its importance in his own prayer and that of his followers, but also by his catechesis on this prayer which "is perhaps the only instance in which we find an example of how Francis responded to his brother's request to teach them how to pray." FAED I:158.

[21] 1Cel 45 (*Fontes Franciscani* 319; FAED I:222).

[22] For example, in the early 13th century Ordinary of St.-Denis, it is employed as a versicle at Matins on the Feast of the Finding of the Holy Nails; a versicle during Sunday processions to the cross; a versicle for Matins and Sext on the feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross; an antiphon and versicle for Matins, Responsory for Lauds, Responsory for the Procession to the cross, and versicle at Sext on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. See my *The First Ordinary of the Royal Abbey of St.-Denis*, 392, 442, 522, 523, 608, 609, 609, 609 and 610 respectively. Earlier it is found as an antiphon for the adoration of the cross on Good Friday in Benevento and other Italian centers. See David Hiley, *Western Plainchant* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 527.

[23] Stephen van Dijk and Joan Hazelden Walker, *The Origins of the Modern Roman Liturgy* (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1960),138 and 237.

[24] The brothers acquired the Portiuncula in the years following the first approval for the primitive rule in 1209 or 1210. See L3S 56 in Théophile Desbonnets, "*Legenda Trium Sociorum*: Edition Critique," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 67 [1974] 130; FAED II:100.

[25] A requirement embedded in the Rule of 1221 (RegNB 3.3 in Kajetan Esser, *Die Opuscula des Hl. Franziskus von Assisi*, 2nd ed., Spicilegium Bonaventurianum 13 (Grottaferrata: Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1989), 379; FAED I:65, but probably occurring in the middle of the previous decade.

[26] RegEr 3 (*Opuscula* 410; FAED I:61).

[27] Test 29 (*Opuscula* 442; FAED I:126).

[28] Francis seems to have acquired this breviary when the Rule of 1221 was approved. See, for example, Julio Micó "The Spirituality of St. Francis: 'To adore the Lord God' Francis's Prayer," *Greyfriars Review* 9:1 (1995): 25. An accessible description of this

breviary is found in Stephen J.P. van Dijk, "The Breviary of St. Francis," *Franciscan Studies* 9 (1949): 13-40.

[29] EpOrd 30 (*Opuscula* 261; FAED I:119).

[30] Since the promulgation of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (1963) liturgy includes all rites contained in officially published post-conciliar liturgical books, including: the sacraments, the liturgy of the hours, and various other officially approved rites such as viaticum and the commendation of the dying; rites of Christian burial; Rites for the dedication of a church, religious profession and consecration of virgins; and the contents of the revised Roman *Book of Blessings*. See Lawrence Madden, "Liturgy," *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, ed. Peter Fink (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990), 741.

[31] Shmuel Himelstein, "Minyan," *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*, eds. R.J. Zwi Werblowsky and Geoffrey Widoger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 468.

[32] Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Forgotten Aspects of Islamic Worship*, Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine 7 (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1998), 55.

[33] "Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say: 'I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am.' This is a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man." John S. Mbiti, *African religions and philosophy* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), 109. On the other hand, *Cogito ergo sum* (literally "I am thinking therefore I am") is a translation of René Descartes' original *Je pense, donc je suis* from his *Discourse on Method* (1637), and a dominant image of the "enlightened" Euro-American individual.

[34] Amos Wilder, *Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 89.

[35] James Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity: A Sociohistorical Approach to Religious Transformation* (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[36] Ibid., 191.

[37] OrCruc (*Opuscula* 354; FAED I:40).

[38] 1Cel 45 (*Fontes Franciscani*, 320; FAED I:222).

[39] Ibid.

[40] Russell, 6.

[41] The critical edition is found in Laurent Gallant, *Dominus regnavit a ligno. L'Officium Passionis de saint François d'Assise, édition critique et étude* (Institut Catholique de Paris: thèse, 1978).

[42] Laurent Gallant and André Cirino, *The Geste of the Great King: The Office of the Passion of Francis of Assisi* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2001), 194; also, see Dominique Gagnan, "Office de la Passion, prière quotidienne de Saint François d'Assise," *Antonianum* 55 (1980): 3-86.

[43] H. Felder, *Die Ideale des hl. Franziskus von Assisi* (Paderborn, 1951), 401-2, as cited in Esser, *Opuscula*, 322.

[44] Gallant and Cirino, *The Geste of the Great King*, 198; alternate interpretations are offered in FAED 1:140-7.

[45] Gallant and Cirino, *The Geste of the Great King*, 245 and 281 respectively.

[46] Julian of Speyer, *The Life of Saint Francis* 54 (*Fontes Franciscani* 1075; FAED 1:406); also, Bonaventure, LM 10:7 (*Bonaventurae opera omnia* 8:535; FAED II:610).

[47] "Much has been written about the so called Christocentrism of St. Francis. In light of the writings, such a term should be used with a certain caution. If the term is used in a broad sense to indicate the amount of space and special position given to Christ in the piety and life of the Poverello, no one can take exception to this. On the other hand, if it is maintained that in the writings direct references to Christ are more frequent than those to God the Father and to the Trinity, this runs contrary to the statistical evidence." Oktavian Schmucki, "Fundamental Characteristics of the Franciscan 'Form of Life.'" *Greyfriars Review* 5:3 (1991) 334; also, see Thaddée Matura, "'The Heart Turned Towards the Lord' – The contemplative Dimension of the Christian Life in the Writings of Francis," *Cord* 44 (1994), 7-8.

[48] Karl Rahner, "Considerations on the Active Role of the Person in the Sacramental Event," in *Theological Investigations XIV: Ecclesiology, Questions in the Church, The Church in the World*, trans. David Bourke (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 169; for a further exploration of this topic see Michael Skelley, *The Liturgy of the World: Karl Rahner's Theology of Worship* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991).

[49] CantSol (*Opuscula* 128-9; FAED I:113-4).

[50] Giovanni Pozzi, "Canticle of Brother Sun: From Grammar to Prayer," *Greyfriars Review* 4:1 (1990), 18.

[51] Ibid., p. 9.

[52] LaudHor (*Opuscula* 319-20; FAED I:161-62).

[53] Octavian Schmucki, "Divine Praise and Meditation according to the Teaching and Example of St. Francis of Assisi," *Greyfriars Review* 4:1 (1990): 60.

[54] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1992), 341.

[55] *Dei laudator et cultor*, LM 8:10 (*Bonaventurae opera omnia* 8:529; FAED II:594).

[56] Schmucki, "Fundamental Characteristics of the Franciscan 'Form of Life,'" 333.

[57] Russell, p. 189.

[58] John Grygus, "Poverty and Prayer: The Franciscan Way to God," *Cord* 39 (1989), 40.

[59] Richard McBrien, *Catholicism*, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1980), II:743.

[60] David Tracy, *Analogical Imagination* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), esp. 405-38.

[61] See, for example, Andrew Greeley, "Sacraments keep Catholics high on the church," *National Catholic Reporter* (12 April 1991) 11-13; idem, "Why do Catholics Stay in the church? Because of the Stories," *New York Times Magazine* (10 July 1994), 38-41; and, idem, *The Catholic Imagination* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2000).

[62] See Gustavo Gutierrez's discussion of the Church as a "Sacrament of History," in his *A Theology of Liberation*, trans. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1973), 255-85.

[63] See, for example, Susan Ross, "Body and Gender in Sacramental Theology," in her *Extravagant Affections* (New York, Continuum, 198), 97-136.

[64] See my "The Preparatory Rites: A Case Study in Liturgical Ecology," with Kathleen Hughes and Gil Ostdiek in *The Ecological Challenge: Ethical, Liturgical and Spiritual Responses*, eds. Richard Fragomeni and John Pawlikowski (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1994), 83-101.

[65] See, for example, Natalie Watson, et al., *Introducing Feminist Ecclesiology* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2002).

[66] World Council of Churches, *Now Is the Time: The Final Document and Other Texts from the World Convocation on Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation*, Seoul, Republic of Korea, 5–12 March 1990 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1990).

[67] Schreiter, *The New Catholicism*, 19.

[68] E.g., Edward Hays' *The Passionate Troubadour: A Medieval Novel about Francis of Assisi* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 2004).

[69] 1 Cel 2 (*Fontes Franciscani* 278; FAED I:183).

[70] 1 Cel 7 (*Fontes Franciscani* 283; FAED I:188).

[71] 1 Cel 16 (*Fontes Franciscani* 291; FAED I:194).

[72] See, for example, Linda Paterson, *The World of the Troubadours: Medieval Occitan Society, c.1100 - c.1300* (Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); also, Hans-Erich Keller, "Italian Troubadours," in *A Handbook of the Troubadours*, ed. F.R.P. Akehurst and Judith Davis (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 295-306.

[73] 1 Cel 15 (*Fontes Franciscani* 290; FAED I:193).

[74] SpecPerf 62 (*Fontes Franciscani* 1946-47; FAED III:307).

[75] 2 Cel 199 (*Fontes Franciscani* 617; FAED II:374). I am grateful to Br. William Hugo, OFM Cap. for this reference.

[76] LM 6.2 (*Bonaventurae opera omnia* 8:520; FAED II:570).

[77] LM 13.1-3 (*Bonaventurae opera omnia* 8:542-3; FAED II:630-33).

[78] 1 Cel 58 (*Fontes Franciscani* 333; FAED I:234).

[79] 1 Cel 73 (*Fontes Franciscani* 349; FAED I:245).

[80] VPLaet (*Opuscula* 461; FAED I:166-67).

[81] LaudHor (*Opuscula* 319-21; FAED I:161).

[82] LaudDei (*Opuscula* 142; FAED I:109).

[83] CantSol (*Opuscula* 128-9; FAED I:113-4).

[84] 2 Cel 127 (*Fontes Franciscani* 559; FAED II:331); although FAED II gives the English "viola" (Latin viella), that instrument did not exist at the time. "The fiddle was the most important bowed instrument in medieval court music, suitable for any kind of music and cultivated by both professionals and amateurs." Jerome and Elizabeth Roche, *A Dictionary of Early Music from the Troubadours to Monteverdi* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), s.v. "fiddle."

[85] CompA 38 (*Fontes Franciscani* 1511; FAED II:142).

[86] 1 Cel 121 (*Fontes Franciscani* 401; FAED I:291).

[87] SpecPerf 96 (*Fontes Franciscani* 2003-04; FAED III:342-43).

[88] 2 Cel 200 (*Fontes Franciscani* 617; FAED II:375).

[89] Laura Smit, "The Aesthetic Pedagogy of Francis of Assisi," http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Medi/MediSmit.htm (accessed 14.v.06).

[90] RegB 6.8 (*Opuscula* 369; FAED I:103), also RegNB 9.11 (*Opuscula* 386; FAED I:71).

[91] See notes 52 and 87 above.

[92] Karl Rahner, "The Theological Meaning of the Veneration of the Sacred Heart," *Theological Investigations VIII: Further Theology of the Spiritual Life 2*, trans. David Bourke (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), 228.

[93] Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, n. 4.

[94] See my "Concert, Theater or Liturgy: What Difference does it make?" *Sung Liturgy*, ed. Virgil Funk (Washington DC: The Pastoral Press, 1991), 77-93.

[95] See, for example Bernhard Lang's "Paul the Possessed and the Lord's Supper in Corinth," in his *Sacred Games: A History of Christian Worship* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1997), 372-83.

[96] See my *Foundations of Christian Music: The Music of Pre-Constantinian Christianity* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), 67-90.

[97] For example, such is commonly predicated of African-Americans. *See Plenty Good Room: The Spirit and Truth of African American Catholic Worship* from the Black Liturgy Subcommittee of the United States Catholic Conference (Washington DC, 1991) nn. 49, 82 and *passim*.

[98] See Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven* (Reading MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995).

[99] Alejandro García-Rivera, *The Community of the Beautiful: A Theological Aesthetics* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999), 39-61.

[100] LaudDei (*Opuscula* 142; FAED I:109).

Santa Chiara – Icon Gazing – Freeing the Fire!

Roberta Cusack, O.S.F.

Every tradition has its role models and in our Catholic tradition we are confronted, often confounded and challenged by those we call saints. These are the people we look to for their internal vision of Divine Goodness as they give us a glimpse of the heart of God in the center of their humanity and thereby focus eternity for us. Why? Because they've made it! They are already there dwelling in the full presence of God. And we believe the Holy Ones of God give us a taste of the possibilities of greatness in ourselves as they wait and pray for us to join them. They are icons of the Face of God, of hope and peace, of joy and truth – of the God who is relentlessly compassionate and just. They show us the Face of a God of Holy Madness, of the Foolishness of God; they show us the Poor and Disfigured Face of God, and also God's face of Radiant Joy and Glory, the God who has loved us into being.

We are reminded in Hebrews 12:1-4 that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses who actually watch after us and help us to move forward in our struggles so as to arrive at the fullness of the Reign of God. Those Holy Ones have already completed their course in this life and are ever encouraging us as we continue to run the course.

Icons likewise remind us of God's great plan of salvation for the universe. So when we observe an Eastern Christian bow before, kiss an icon, sign themselves, burn incense and light candles – this is all an indication of humility and respect to our God who acts through the subject or individual depicted in an icon.

St. Clare of Assisi certainly belongs to that "great cloud of witnesses" talked about in Hebrews 12:1-4. And she surely is a great woman of light as was foretold to her mother, Ortulana, during her pregnancy with Clare as is related in her legend. Ortulana visited a church, a frequent practice, and one day in prayer she was assured that she would have a safe delivery and that the girl child she was about to give birth to would be a light, a clear, radiant and bright light, to illumine the world. (LCl, 2.)

Ortulana journeyed as a medieval pilgrim to the famous shrines of St. Michael in Apulia, and perhaps to St. James of Compostella, Spain and the Holy Land and did her gazing on those very turbulent, demanding and risky journeys in the middle ages. So too Clare, like so many before and after her, grew into this gazing upon the Icons set before her in life. These icons ever raise up for us consciously or not, three core questions: Where did I come from? What am I doing here? Where am I going? I trust most Christians would answer that we come from God. Here we are expected to become icons of Christ Jesus, Images of that firstborn of all Creation, the Incarnate One. And we hopefully have our hearts set on going to God in the fullness of the Kingdom.

I've been leading PRAYING WITH ICONS RETREATS for the last few years. Some have been a week long, others a few days. And in the course of this process, I most clearly learned from Clare how I'm to best pray before the icons. She gives us the meaning of many of her simple yet profound statements in her letters to St. Agnes of Bohemia. Most Franciscans are familiar with Clare's instructions or steps to the interior life. In her 2nd letter to Agnes, likely written c1235, she encourages one of her neophyte Sisters, Agnes, over in Prague. Listen up to these words of wisdom from Clare in what was then still a rather new Order.

> Your Spouse, though *more beautiful than the children of men* (Ps 44:3) became, for your salvation, the lowest of men, was despised, struck, scourged untold times throughout His entire body, and then died amid the suffering of the Cross. O most noble Queen, gaze upon [Him], consider [Him], contemplate [Him], as you desire to imitate [Him]. (2LAg, 20)

As Regis Armstrong and Ignatius Brady state in their footnote to this passage:

> "These may well be considered steps of prayer: gazing upon (*intuere*) the poor crucified Christ, considering (*considera*), and contemplating (*contemplare*) Him. Throughout all of these expressions of prayer, the desire to imitate the poverty of Christ is present. This may be seen as a perfect expression of affective spirituality, which characterizes the Franciscan tradition."[1]

Having been in formation work for so long I often muse over how our newcomers, 21st century Franciscans, would take to this advice. I likewise ponder how I am taking to Clare's words of wisdom and instruction in my everyday life. I find Clare's advice, instruction and encouragement greatly resonating in my heart both as I "write" the icon images and as I gaze upon

them ... and hopefully bear them to the cloister of our world as I go forth as a living icon in action.

Expanding on this same vision of gazing, Clare in her 3rd and 4th letter to Agnes around c 1238 and 1253, and in her Testament 1247-1253, moves into the mirror theme which was quite a popular image among the monastics of the middle ages. Even St. Bonaventure used this image in his "The Soul's Journey Into God" in 1259 – who knows, perhaps echoing Clare's inspiration ... I like to substitute the word icon or image for mirror in these texts. "Place your mind before the mirror of eternity..." (3LAg. 12).

> Inasmuch as this vision is the splendor of eternal glory, the brilliance of eternal light and the mirror without blemish, look upon that mirror each day, O queen and spouse of Jesus Christ, and continually study your face within it, so that you may adorn yourself within and without with beautiful robes and cover yourself with the flowers and garments of all the virtues, as becomes the daughter and most chaste bride of the Most High King. Indeed, blessed poverty, holy humility, and ineffable charity are reflected in that mirror, as, with the grace of God, you can contemplate them throughout the entire mirror. Look at the parameters of this mirror ... the surface ... then the depth of this same mirror ... Therefore, that Mirror, suspended on the wood of the Cross, urged those who passed by to consider ... From this moment, then, O queen of our heavenly King, let yourself be inflamed more strongly with the fervor of charity! (4LAg, 14-27).

The mirror of Christ becomes a reflection in ourselves as we strive to Incarnate Him to the world by our simple Franciscan presence. If this is truly our call from God why all the frenzy and fanfare over what I or others think I ought to do. Francis in his first admonition tells us "we give birth to Him through our holy manner of working which should shine before all others as an example".

Francis and Clare definitely found the fire, the stunning brilliance, the pervading warmth of the Gospel which had passed from Jesus down to the Church of today, as imperfect as it frequently is at times. Clare was certainly a very passionate woman and expresses her desire to be transformed by the fire of Christ's love. This is clearly contained in her letters to Agnes, more so than in the other few writings we have from Clare. After all, she does belong to that Seraphic family, burning afire with God's love, and takes the lead as the first Franciscan woman with the foundation group of Franciscan troubadours of her time. And since the celebration of her big Birthday year, 1993-1994 which brought us a number of fine resources, with many still in process, most of us

have been touched by Clare's burning passion, and like her we too are trying to seize the moment of gift-grace.

We've witnessed the multitude of new ways in which our TOR family of Francis has been moved by that event. Clare certainly figured powerfully in the International thought process of the development of our new TOR Rule. She became so significant in the minds and hearts of some of us that there was initially great confusion in trying to work through the historical emphasis of various aspects of Francis's charism for each of the families of our tradition on an International level. And were we ever passionate about that!

Actually this is one of my great concerns presently as I gaze upon icons. I wonder about the passion each of us have for our "new" TOR Rule. I often ask myself whether my enthusiasm has continued to grow as it started off about 30 years ago. Or has it slacked since the birth of its revision in 1982? Perhaps it has never taken hold? Am I afire in desiring to live all that is implied in my commitment? In what way do my routine activities Incarnate Jesus and His Gospel message? Am I becoming what I GAZE upon and am I willing to be thereby transformed into a new one for Christ? What am I doing with the Franciscan vision? There is a Japanese Proverb which tells us "Vision without action is a daydream, and action without vision is a nightmare." (anon) Our Franciscan tradition has ever been fired by a passion for the Gospel. And this must ever give energy to whatever sparks our desires as Franciscans to burst into a Christ-like flame of light in the warmth of love as did our foundation people. Jesus has told us clearly "I am the light of the world and the one who follows me will have the light of life." (Jn 8:12) St. Clare in her gazing process reflected this light brilliantly and so might we when we draw close to the source of the fire. Sacred icons are a very effective means for this experience of mystical prayer.

In Clare's Testament we note:

> The Lord Himself not only has set us as an example and mirror for others, but also for our (own) sisters whom the Lord has called to our way of life, so that they in turn will be a mirror and example to those living in the world. Since, therefore, the Lord has called us to such great things, that those who are to be models and mirrors for others may behold themselves in us, we are truly bound to bless and praise the Lord and to be strengthened constantly in Him to do good. (TestCl, 6)

Clare encourages us to look, to gaze, into the mirror of Christ, to really see Him, and to continue GAZING and see ourselves becoming that Christ. Yes, The Ole Skin Horse and Rabbit got it right – "Being Real, isn't Easy! It does take a long time, being real might cause you to hurt and it might make

you cry!" This passionate fire consumes and transforms us, and it does cut us to the quick, it hurts! And don't we know it.

In all of this, freedom is a prerequisite, not as an option nor an easy gift to come by, but certainly it is God-given. Our contemporary culture frequently distorts the true meaning of the freedom by which God gives us the capacity to become our very best selves! Truly Ambassadors of Christ Jesus! Clare strikes me as a woman of great freedom who lets no one, or no thing stand in the way of her spirited convictions, thus capable of allowing herself to change and grow and thereby bring the world to a greater sense of unity in love. Likely this began with her family, the divided hearts of the people of Assisi and Perugia, the Church, the Friars, and especially in her own community of Sisters.

Clare doesn't stop with the Gazing, the Considering, nor the Contemplation, but rather tells us to move out to the world of action and bear that Christ Image. There's no easy formula for letting the others of our lives see the Christ in us. But the Spirit of Jesus is promised to teach us. Above all, Clare encourages us to let the others, especially the "lepers" of our lives, mirror the Christ to us. They might best serve us as powerful icon images of Christ! For me, this is most difficult.

I hope all Franciscans have some powerful "leper" icons in their life stories. I certainly do, and lots of them. These are God's gifts to us whenever we let these lepers mirror the Christ to us. I presently have a powerful image of a woman who stopped us one Sunday morning on South Grand, in St Louis at St. Pius V Parish after a wonderful Eucharistic celebration. She was coming toward a group of us using a walker. She wore a toothless grin and was obviously poor, but clean, a woman about my age. A ripe senior citizen! She called out to us "Would someone please be able to help me?" One Sister suggested she go to the rectory but I knew our Pastor was away. Since she was looking directly at me I asked her what she wanted. It was a simple case of having taken the bus all the way to a South side Walgreens for her medicines, only to be told that the co-pay had leapt up. I asked her how much she needed and then invited her to get in the car and we set off for the drug store. We are discouraged from giving to panhandlers in the neighborhood, but hers was a story which my intuitive heart could not doubt. Enroute she told me of her experience with material poverty, in that her daughter who recently died of cancer, needed so much medication and care, that she, the mother, lost all she had in the process. She headed straight to the drug counter at Walgreens.

I went about my bit of shopping and we met at the cashier's counter. She couldn't thank me enough, tried to give me change, and would not let me take her home. That woman's face has been a persistent icon before my mind's eye and in my heart for the past year. What Gospel action do we Incarnate?

Likely we are doing this so often we might not even be aware of the power we hold as Icons of Christ, nor the power of others as His icons to us. I've forgotten that woman's name but never the Icon face.

In the grand mystery of Triune love it's very important to Gaze upon Christ and process through the power we do hold to give and receive. Either way, gazing, considering, contemplating is definitely a Divine Calling in the process of becoming icons in action. In the spiritual discipline of fasting and praying as one "writes" the subject of the icons, we do so with reverence to embody the essence of the holy one's energy onto the material matter of wood with paint. The images are not worshipped, but venerated, giving due respect to the person they represent. The icon mystically carries within itself the Presence of the holy person depicted of that "great cloud" and is considered a sacred image. I believe that this is our goal, our mission and purpose that we are all called upon to focus and thus become afire by the image of the icon.

It is my deepest hope and prayer that all Christians will be spiritually enriched by the profound spiritual awakening icons provide as the earliest form of our liturgical art. These images are "written" according to the canons of iconography. They invite us into the mystery, especially by means of the inverse perspective, the flat 2-dimensional style, the position of any background props, the light coming from within, particularly from the eyes – those windows to the soul enabling the holy event of the divine embrace, nudging us to take off into the life of action. I pray that Clare's lesson plan might provide us the sensitivity to this sacred aspect of life, and the realization that there is much more available than this material world – there's eternity!

Clare and her Sisters had the San Damiano Crucifix to gaze upon as their most powerful visual icon. But God-given discipline was needed on the part of the Damianites in order to become that image. Granted, no doubt Clare and her Sisters had to struggle as do the rest of us with the great desire for Seraphic Poverty and total dependency on God. True, the speed and force, noise and business, the time and energy of their secular world was so far different from our own. Likely she enjoyed many freedoms we have lost – the silence, the beauty of the Umbrian Valley, the continual support group of her Sisters and some of the Friars, the simplicity of life without computers, TV, Radio, cell phones, boom boxes, high powered means of travel, even tractors in the fields ... Visiting many holy places today such as Assisi, Mt. LaVerna, in Italia, Switzerland, the Holy Land, Lebanon, Greece, Germany, France, England, Wales, Ireland, Belgium, Guadalupe, Mexico, Jamaica and wherever our travels take us, enables and increases our awareness with deeper meaning as we gaze in prayer, consider, and contemplate upon the mysteries of our faith as portrayed in the hand-written icon. All this in order to let ourselves be enriched via the exchange of borrowed energies to and fro of our electro-

magnetic fields on a universal scale. In this we become what we love as the prayer brings us into the likeness of our beloved Christ.

Every quality icon opens to us three dimensions:

Firstly, is the visible beauty of the image or sacred subject, which is a reminder of the unseen beauty of the Godself in infinite mystery.

Secondly, the holy one depicted became him or herself the mirror of Christ, since they grew into the living image of Jesus by following the Gospel.

Thirdly, it involves the one who looks at the icon. And this is the great challenge! For the icon calls the person who prays before it to take the Gospel seriously, allowing ourselves to be transformed, to become a living icon of Christ, as Clare did in her time and as she encourages us to do. We become like that which we like!

How it all happens is somewhat of a mystery, yet it comes into being by following the path mapped out for us by Christ Jesus, especially in death to selfishness and openness to others, thereby upheld by God's healing grace. But the most important element is undoubtedly prayer. Prayer is transforming. It means risk and abandoning ourselves to the guidance of God. It means entering the darkness of our faith. It means waiting in hope for the light of his presence. In the darkness of prayer each icon and the living icon of the one it depicts can be a light leading into the presence of the one who waits for us in love. Clare had it right "Gaze upon Christ, Consider Christ, Contemplate Christ", and thereby become an icon enabling us to go forth in imitation of Christ as images to others as well as to receive the icons of our everyday experiences. St. Clare indeed offers us a great witness for the process of "writing" and praying with icons, and in becoming icons for the Kingdom as well as receiving the icons, sometimes lepers, God sends us along the way.

And in the process Clare remains that new woman truly dazzling and ever fresh for Franciscans who are sincerely smitten with icons. Pope Alexander IV in the Bull of Canonization, 12 calls Clare a "lofty candlestick of holiness that burned brightly before the tabernacle of the Lord".

In a sense when "writing" or praying before a sacred icon we place ourselves beyond our human construct of time and into eternity. We try to follow this God-given desire through discipline to let go of time, space, and concepts of Western art. Eventually we might even forget about ourselves. Clare tells us all

> What a great and laudable exchange: To leave the things of time for those of eternity. To choose the things of heaven for the goods of the earth. To receive the hundredfold in place of the one. And to possess a blessed and eternal life. (2LAg, 30).

Through our gazing prayer we must move into the infinite dimensions of our soul, into that sense of eternity. It is there we discover the Temple aflame with the presence of the Living God, the Source of all that is Good, every Good, the only true Good! That is a laudable exchange! May the fire of the Gospel flame in our Franciscan hearts from time into eternity! Right now!

ENDNOTE

[1] Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M. Cap. and Ignatius C. Brady, O.F.M., *Francis and Clare The Complete Works*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 197.

Announcing a Year of Jubilee

Suzanne Kush, C.S.S.F.

The Franciscan Institute in conjunction with St. Bonaventure University announces a year of Jubilee celebrating the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Third Order Regular Rule. On March 8, 1982, the International Assembly of Franciscan Superiors General in Rome, Italy approved the Revised Third Order Rule. Reflective of this significant date, March 8, 2007 will mark the beginning of the year of celebration. The year of jubilee will conclude on March 8, 2008 with a Symposium at St. Bonaventure University consisting of lectures and the presentation of a newly published *Source Book on the History of the Third Order Rule*.

Margaret Carney, O.S.F., STD, President of St. Bonaventure University, and Jean François Godet-Calogeras, PhD., Associate Professor at the Franciscan Institute, served as members of the original International Work Group revising the Rule. As persons who can say "We were there" throughout the process of rewriting the Rule, they will guide our project through the culminating Symposium. Sharing the richness of their experience with participants at the Symposium will enable more of our Third Order Regular Family to appreciate the significance of this event and to share the spirit of the Rule and our way of life.

The International Work Group captured, in the revision of the Third Order Rule, the source and meaning of our lives as Third Order Regular Franciscans. The impact of the Rule on the Third Order members is not only in the words that it contains but also in the process implemented in writing the Rule. The International Work Group respected the relational quality of our lives as Franciscans by seeking and reflecting upon input from members of the Third Order throughout the world. In the years following the approval of the Rule by Pope John Paul II, dated December 8, 1982 these efforts continued through the International Franciscan Conference and national groups. In addition, Third Order Congregations engaged in workshops and retreats reflecting on the words and message of the Rule.

As a way of life, the Third Order Rule expresses the original Franciscan spirit and challenges us who embrace the Franciscan Call to reflect it in our daily lives. Since the approval of the Third Order Rule, monumental changes have occurred in the Order and in the world. In the past twenty-five years, our Franciscan Family is expanding in developing countries. National and international issues are calling us to respond in accord with evangelical values. The challenge for the year of Jubilee is to capture the spirit and excitement of the Work Group, remembering and preserving the story for future generations of Franciscans. As a living and spiritual document the Rule also provides guidance for a contemporary exegesis for our life and action in the 21st Century. It is anticipated that The Third Order Rule Project will respond to this call.

Highlighting this year of celebration the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University will offer the Course on the Rule and Life of the Third Order Regular. Taught by Jean François Godet-Calogeras, the course will be offered in the Spring and Summer 2007 Semesters.

The Twenty-fifth Anniversary Project has received the affirmation and support of the members of the Franciscan Federation Conference at the meeting held this past summer in Rochester, New York. A very special note of gratitude is expressed to Fr. Christian Ovaric, TOR Provincial and the Sacred Heart Province of Loretto, Pennsylvania for a generous grant that is making possible the *Source Book on the History of the Third Order Rule* and the collection of archival materials to establish a permanent TOR Collection for the Franciscan Institute in the Freidsam Library of St. Bonaventure University.

The Cord, 56.6 (2006)

Reflections on Pope Benedict XVI's Talk at Regensburg

Girard J. Etzkorn

While Pope Benedict's talk aroused a great deal of controversy partly, perhaps, due to misunderstanding, there were a lot of insights directed to a sound partnership between faith and reason. In a negative way, he pointed out that faith cannot be forced and is incompatible with violence, although it is curious that he did not repudiate the Inquisition or the trials of Joan of Arc and Galileo. In the best Christian tradition, faith is a free assent to what is not sensibly or rationally obvious. Benedict's appeal to a companionship between faith and reason is firmly rooted in the Anselmian tradition of faith seeking understanding. This stands as a repudiation of blind and non-thinking fundamentalism whether it be Christian, Islamic, or Jewish. The ability to think and reflect is not adversative to faith; if faith is a God-given gift, then so is the human mind.

It is his appraisal of the thought of Duns Scotus with which I would like to deal here. The following is a paragraph (in English translation) from the Pope's address:

> In all honesty, one must observe that in the late Middle Ages we find trends in theology which would sunder this synthesis between the Greek spirit and the Christian spirit. In contrast with the so-called intellectualism of Augustine and Thomas, there arose with Duns Scotus a voluntarism which ultimately led to the claim that we can only know God's *voluntas ordinata*. Beyond this is the realm of God's freedom, in virtue of which he could have done the opposite of everything he has actually done. This gives rise to positions which clearly approach those of Ibn Hazn and might even lead to the image of a capricious God, who is not even bound to truth and goodness. God's transcendence and otherness are so exalted that our reason, our sense of the true and good, are no longer an authentic mirror of God whose deepest possibilities remain eternally unattainable and hidden behind his actual decisions.

The above passage is not an accurate appraisal of the thought of Duns Scotus. In all probability, it stems from the philosophical and theological manuals of the late 19th and early 20th century whose authors had no access to the critical editions of Scotus's writings. All too often their agenda included a defense of the ideas of Thomas Aquinas by constructing 'straw men' as his opponents. During his tenure as professor of theology at the University of Bonn, Dr. Ratzinger could have had access to the basic texts of Scotus, thanks in large part to the editions of the Scotist Commission in Rome and the contributions of Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M. who spent his life retrieving the writings of Duns Scotus and translating them into English.

Scotus, with Bonaventure and Ockham, knew that Hellenism needed correction by those who hold the tenets of the Christian faith. According to Socrates, if we know clearly what is right, we will do what is right. For Aristotle, the world was necessary and eternal, always was and always will be. His God was aloof from the contingencies of human behavior with which he could not be 'contaminated'. For Aristotle, divine providence and miraculous intervention were a priori impossible.

The Fathers of the Church and the great medieval theologians repudiated this necessitarianism. God's creation, incarnation, and redemption were gifts of goodness freely bestowed; God cannot be constrained by creatures. God made whatever may be construed as rational in the universe; the basis for rationality is God-made. It is not as if 'this is reasonable, therefore God must make it'. It should be noted that the Franciscan predecessors and followers of Scotus asserted that God could do nothing disorderly and therein lies the foundation for rationality. Likewise, the universe is good because God has created it and not the contrary: 'the universe is good; therefore God must create it'. There were theologians, of course, who indulged in 'counter-factual and hypothetical theology', by indicating, for example, that this is not the only possible world, *pace* Aristotle, nor the best of all worlds, *pace* Leibniz. Yes, God could have done and could do 'otherwise' except create a contradiction. However, that God could do otherwise does not lead to divine capriciousness as Benedict claims. The foundation for our reason is what God did do, not what He could have done.

In the human realm, Scotus's so-called voluntarism is not anti-intellectual but co-intellectual. One of God's greatest gifts is man's free will, and it must be a very precious gift or it would have been taken away long ago, given all the abusive misuse of this gift. In Scotus's view, the human will is superior to the human intellect, which operates necessarily, not being able to dissent from the true or assent to the false. However, the will can direct or divert the intellect.

It is the will that determines what is to be examined or reflected upon. The will is the ultimate basis of morality: we are not morally good because we know what is right, but because we act rightly and do what is right. Even Aristotle knew that we are not praised or blamed for what is 'necessary' in us but for the choices we freely make. The gauge of moral goodness, according to Scotus (and Ockham), is right reason, and right reason must go by what God has done, that is, creation as we seek to understand it, and not what God might have done. "Moral goodness is formally something inherent in a human act, namely, its suitability or conformity to what right reason dictates." (Allan B. Wolter, *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*; Catholic Univ. Press 1986, p. 20) There is no capricious God in either Scotus or Ockham, as is clear to an unbiased reading of their writings. In his efforts to clarify the role of the intellect and will in making moral decisions, Scotus makes careful distinctions through lengthy analyses which require equally careful reading and are not subject to facile summarization; he has been called the 'Subtle Doctor' with good reason.

It is unfortunate that Pope Benedict, it would seem, has simply reiterated a distorted view of Scotus's thought perpetuated by certain manuals of philosophy and theology and certain historians who, too often motivated by the desire to defend Thomas Aquinas, have made a caricature of Scotus's thought without troubling themselves with going back to the texts.

About Our Contributors

Roberta Cusack, O.S.F. is a member of the Franciscan Sisters of Jesus. Currently residing in St. Louis, Sister has a Masters degree in Art from the University of Dallas, TX. She has been a Franciscan Sister since 1950.

Clare D'Auria, O.S.F. is a Sister of St. Francis of Philadephia, Aston, PA, and is currently serving as a member of her congregational leadership team. She is a certified spiritual director and holds an M.A. in Theological Studies from the Washington Theological Union. Clare has served in retreat ministry, offering directed and conference retreats as well as numerous workshops in Franciscan spirituality throughout the United States.

Girard J. Etzkorn is a well-known Franciscan scholar having been project director of the Scotus-Wodeham edition and general editor of Scotus's Philosophical Works at the Franciscan Institute. He is retired and living in Tennessee.

Edward Foley, O.F.M. Cap. is Professor of Liturgy and Music and the founding Director of the Ecumenical D.Min. Program at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. A member of the province of St. Joseph of the Capuchin Order since 1966, he was ordained in 1975. A specialist in worship and the arts, Edward Foley identifies himself as a practical theologian.

Suzanne Kush, C.S.S.F., is a recent graduate of the School of Franciscan Studies at the Franciscan Institute. A Felician from Buffalo, Sr. Suzanne is working on the TOR Rule Anniversary project at St. Bonaventure University.

Franciscan Life Center
2006-07 PROGRAMS

Energy, Spirit, Peace... THE FRANCISCAN WAY.

Advent Day of Reflection
Saturday, December 2, 2006, (9 a.m. – 3 p.m.)
Presenter: Elise Saggau, OSF

Theme: Becoming Who We Are: The Meaning of Advent in our Lives. God has come into our life; God is coming into our life; God will come into our life. Positioned in time, we discern where we are in our spiritual journey into God and recommit ourselves to our heart's desire. This day will incorporate reflection talks, personal and communal prayer, group sharing, a Eucharistic celebration and lunch.

Retreat: Peace Prayer of St. Francis: Lord, Make me an Instrument of Peace
Thursday, February 8 (7 p.m.) – Wednesday, February 14 (12 noon), 2007
Director: Charles Faso, OFM.

The "Peace Prayer of St. Francis" will be the focus of this retreat. Like St. Francis, we too can find the confidence and courage to offer ourselves to God's use as instruments of Peace! During the retreat we will listen to Francis' words and life to teach us how to sow love, pardon, faith, hope, light, and joy. Living such a life of consoling, understanding and loving others, we will be ready to be born into eternal life.

Retreat: Rules are Made to be Lived not Broken
Friday, July 20 (7 p.m.) - Thursday, July 26 (12 noon), 2007
Director: Mary Elizabeth Imler, OSF

Celebrate the 25th anniversary of our Third Order Regular Rule and Life. We will explore the text from beginning to end, review what it means to Franciscan penitents and hear the stories of how it came to be. Together, we will recommit to our evangelical life. We are trustees of our charism - responsible bearers of the good news. May we live the Gospel of Jesus so that "through Him, with Him and in Him" our lives may sing a song of praise!

FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF LITTLE FALLS, MINNESOTA

For more information
on these or other programs, or to register, contact:
Franciscan Life Center
116 8th Avenue SE, Little Falls, MN 56345
320-632-0668 • franciscanlife@fslf.org • www.fslf.org

God's Extravagant Love:
Reclaiming the Franciscan Theological Tradition

Program sponsored by
The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia — Aston, PA

In the context of prayer, presentation, exchange, we will consider the topics of the primacy of Christ/of love; creation and humility of God; dignity of the human person.

We approach them from the Franciscan perspective within our rich Christian heritage. Much has been said about the Franciscan Theological tradition offering a message of healing and hope. Its revitalization speaks to the deepest concerns of life on our planet today.

YOU ARE MOST WELCOME!

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

FRIDAY
6:30 –8:30 pm • Registration and Historical Overview, *"Already in our hearts"*

SATURDAY
9:00 am • Love and the Primacy of Christ
1:20 pm • Creation and Humility of God
4:15 pm • Liturgy
Evening • Open space to explore resources

SUNDAY
9:30 am • Dignity of Human Person
11:00 – 11:50 am • Pastoral Applications
12:00 – 1:00 pm • *"When, if not now; Who if not us"*
1:00 pm • Departure

ASTON, PA
Franciscan Spiritual Center
February 16-18, 2007
May 11-13, 2007
September 14-16, 2007
September 28-30, 2007

RINGWOOD, NEW JERSEY
Franciscan Spiritual Center
October 12-14, 2007
November 9-11, 2007

HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON, NEW YORK
Franciscan Center Retreat House
April 13-15, 2007

MILWAUKIE, OREGON
Griffin Center
April 27-29, 2007
June 8-10, 2007

WHITEHALL (PITTSBURGH) PENNSYLVANIA
Franciscan Spirit and Life Center
April 27-29, 2007

MILLVALE (PITTSBURGH) PENNSYLVANIA
Sisters of St. Francis, Motherhouse
November 2-4, 2007

SKANEATELES, NEW YORK
Stella Maris Retreat Center
June 15-17, 2007

DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA
Avila Retreat Center
March 30 - April 1, 2007

SPOKANE, WASHINGTON
St. Joseph Family Center
July 6-8, 2007

DUBLIN, IRELAND
Emmaus Retreat & Conference Center
December 7-9, 2007

PROGRAM COST
$225 Inclusive of registration, housing and resources
$150 Commuter
(NB Program includes Friday and Saturday evening sessions)
Brochure available Sept 2006

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Fax: 217-228-5672
Website: franciscanpress.com

Franciscan Theology of the Environment: An Introductory Reader

Dawn M. Nothwehr, OSF

This book is a collection of essays by outstanding scholars of the present time. Its principal concern is to bring to the awareness of a wide reading public the riches of a particular form of the Christian theological tradition and its implications for the environmental concerns that plague us at the present time." -Zachary Hayes, OFM Professor of Theology, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago

ISBN 1007-4 (hardcover) 255 p. **$24.95**

Paradise Restored: A Commentary on Francis' 'Salutation of the Virtues'

J. Hoeberichts

This book is a study of St. Francis of Assisi's Salutation of the Virtues, a short and often neglected work which offers a summary of his views regarding the virtues and an insight into his social ethics.

ISBN 1008-2 (paper) 276 p. **$24.95**

The Christ of Velàzquez

Miguel de Unamuno
Jaime Vidal, Ph.D., trans.

A classic of 20th century spirituality and a classic of Spanish literature, *The Christ of Velázquez* is a poetic meditation on Velàzquez's painting of Christ Crucified by an outstanding figure of 20th century existentialist philosophy.

ISBN 0992-0 (hardcover) 112 p. **Reduced: $14.95**

Pilgrim: A Spirituality of Travel

Leonard J. Biallas

Biallas introduces us to travel pilgrims, thereby providing an excellent resource for those of us who wish to "get more" out of our travels. He shows how we can energize our lives and enhance our spiritual commitments through our travels to other cultures and religous traditions.

ISBN 1001-5 (paper) 255 p. **Reduced: $12.00**

Paradox of Poverty (Francis of Assisi and John of the Cross

Lyn M. Scheuring

"Poverty" is a controversial topic. As a social reality it is always an evil. But paradoxically, Jesus, the Son of God, entered our lives by becoming human, and chose to be born in poverty. This has challenged Christians in every age to embrace poverty because of Christ's own choice of it. "Chosen" poverty then becomes a virtue, a way to intimacy with Christ, a way from emptiness to fullness. Francis of Assisi followed the Poor Christ in literal deprivation. John of the Cross followed the Poor Christ in mystcial self-emptying. This book compares and contrasts their two ways of following that road of chosen Poverty which leads to a fulfillment unreachable to those who seek happiness in material things.

ISBN 0994-7 (paper) 161 p. **$18.95**

Ecology and Religion: Scientists Speak

John E. Carroll & Keith Warner, OFM, editors

This is the first volume in which religious scientists of various faiths articulate their understanding of the relationship between religion and ecology, both from the perspective of their significant academic credentials in environmental science and their religious practice.

ISBN 0986-6 255 p. (paper) **Reduced: $17.50**

Journey and Place

An Atlas of St. Francis

Keith D. Warner, OFM & John E. Isom

Have you ever wondered just where Saint Francis lived, preached, and prayed? This book is designed to provide helpful background for interpreting his life and times. It features 11 full color and 5 b/w maps of Europe, the Italian Peninsula, the Spoleto Valley, and Assisi. A set of classic photos of the countryside around his home town offers the reader a vision of the landscape encountered by the Poor Man of Assisi himself.

ISBN 1004-X (paper) 58 p. **$14.95**

A Call to Piety: St. Bonaventure's Collations on the Six Days

C. Colt Anderson

The first new interpretation of Bonaventure's final series of sermons since Joseph Ratzinger's provocative study of Bonaventure's theology of history, published in 1957. Anderson argues that Bonaventure presents the contemporary church with both a model of reform and a method for reconciling dissent.

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edited by Mary Heather MacKinnon, SSND, Moni McIntyre, and Mary Ellen Sheehan, IHM

Essays dedicated to Margaret Brennan, IHM, Professor Emerita at Regis College, Toronto. Contributors include Gregory Baum, Thomas Berry, CP, Joan Chittister, OSB, Roger Haight, SJ, and Sandra Schneiders, IHM.

ISBN 0990-4 (paper) 389 p. **$24.00**

Gethsemani Homilies

Matthew Kelly, OCSO

A collection of homilies by Fr. Matthew, who was Thomas Merton's confessor, at the community mass at Gethsemani or at other occasions such as funerals of monks or their relatives, as well as talks given to retreatants and guests of the monastery.

ISBN 0998-X (paper) 193 p. **$12.95**

World Religions in the History of Salvation

Mariasusai Dhavamony, SJ

In a world that is becoming more and more interdependent, we are challenged to ask: How are we related to other cultures? To other religions? We must expand our theological and spiritual horizons to encompass the entire human community.

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Conrad W. Baars, M.D.

The miracle of affirmation and its relation to health and happiness.

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(paper) 160 p. **$6.00**

Beyond Ethics to Justice through Levinas and Derrida (The Legacy of Levinas)

Robert J. S. Manning

Prof. Manning puts the recent writings of Jacques Derrida into dialogue with the thought of Emannuel Levinas in order to get at the question: How do we move from a theoretical ethical discourse to a practical notion of justice? This book will be of interest to students and scholars in the fields of philosophy and theology.

ISBN 0996-3 (hardcover) 193 p. **Reduced: $11.40**

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Articles by Author

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Poems

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On the Franciscan Circuit
Coming Events 2007

Scriptures, Saints, and Songs.
December 8-10, 2006.
With James DiLiuzio, CSP. At the Franciscan Renewal Center, Scottsdale, AZ.

St. Bonaventure's Journey of the Human Person into God
April 10-18, 2007
André Cirino, OFM and Josef Raischl, SFO
At the Franciscan Renewal Center, Scottsdale, AZ.

The 40 Day Franciscan Hermitage Retreat
February 17-March 9, 2007.
At the Portiuncula Center for Prayer, Frankfort, IL. For information, contact: 815.464.3880 or visit www.portforprayer.org

"A Franciscan Day of Prayer ... Mysticism with Open Eyes"
Wednesday, April 11, 2007; 10:30am - 4:30pm
Faciliator: Sister Loretta Denfeld, osf.

Franciscan Scripture Retreat (time/theme negotiable)
Facilitated by Joyce Brandl, OSF
A private retreat (one to eight days) based on favorite stories from Franciscan Early Documents with related Scriptures.
Select from various themes: Nature; Conversion; Minority/Simplicity; Poverty; Prayer; Obedience; Fraternity/Community; Mission.

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Abbreviations

Writings of Saint Francis

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

Writings of Saint Clare

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

Franciscan Sources

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