

## A WORD FROM JOHN DUNS SCOTUS

Justice can be understood to be either infused (which is called gratuitous or grace), or acquired (which is called moral), or innate (which is the will's liberty itself). ... by distinguishing from the nature of the thing the two primary characteristics of this two-fold affection (one inclining the will above all to the advantageous, the other moderating it, as it were, lest the will in eliciting an act should have to follow its inclination) ... It is clear, then, from this that a free will is not bound in every way to seek happiness ... Rather it is bound, in eliciting its act, to moderate the appetite qua intellective, which means to moderate the affection for the advantageous, namely, lest it will immoderately.

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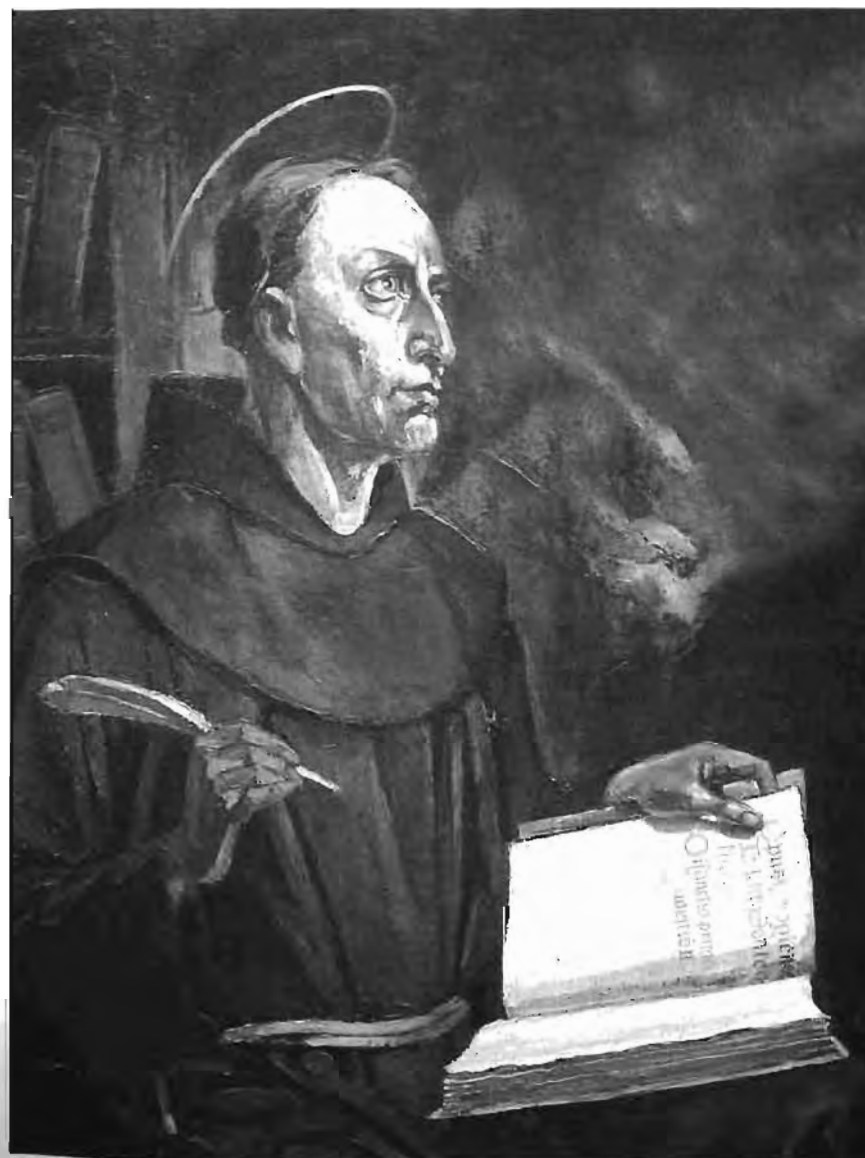
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• A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW •

*THE CORD*  
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4. References should be footnoted except Scripture sources or basic Franciscan sources. Scripture and Franciscan source references should be identified within parentheses immediately after the cited text, with period following the closed parenthesis. For example:

(1Cor. 13:6). (2C 5:8). (ER 23:2). (4LAg 2:13).

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FOREWORD

*Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs. (CtC 9)*

Much has been written about these words, and their meaning plumbed with great expertise and devotion. I invite our readers to rejoice in the beauty and bounty of this season while they peruse this issue. In western New York the season of "sitting outdoors" is short and consequently all the more appreciated.

This issue continues a focus on John Duns Scotus as St. Bonaventure University and the Franciscan Institute is the site of the first of four Congresses on Scotus. October 18-21, 2007 will find scholars from around the world gathered here to consider the *Opera Philosophica* of Scotus. His theological, metaphysical and ethical works, as well as their implications for the future will be the subject of other congresses to be held in Oxford, England, Bonn and Cologne, Germany, and Strasbourg, France respectively.

Next we move to Francis of Assisi, looking at the meaning of the Tau, and his Office of the Passion. The poetry of Seamus Mulholland leads us to new views of places associated with Francis. A new interpretation of the Letter to Brother Leo comes from the students in Jacques Dalarun's course on Pre-Franciscan Religious Movements. Finally, an invitation to the women of the family to study the charism for those elements which can bring life to today's Franciscan communities.

The fourth and final issue for this year – due out in November – is a special edition to recognize the 25th Anniversary of the Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis. The year-long celebration culminates in a Festival scheduled for April 18-19, 2008. St. Bonaventure University and the Franciscan Institute will host Festival participants in a series of lectures and the presentation of a *Source Book on the History of the Third Order Rule*. Mark your calendars and come join the celebration!

*Daria R. Mitchell, OSA*

**LIGHT AND LOVE: ROBERT GROSSETESTE  
AND JOHN DUNS SCOTUS  
ON THE HOW AND WHY OF CREATION**

**Daniel P. Horan, O.F.M.**

**WHO, HOW AND WHY?**

Medieval Paris and Oxford, as most students of Franciscan history know, are considered the centers of the nascent Franciscan intellectual tradition. Thinkers like Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure are among the best known from Paris, while John Duns Scotus and William of Ockham are the most remembered from Oxford. As was the contemporary practice, each of these thinkers engaged in a scholastic form of intellectual inquiry that often covered a number of subjects related to philosophy, theology and natural science. Frequently these subjects blended together to form a synthesis that reflected a thinker's view of the world that was not as categorized and easily distinguishable as our more specialized form of scholarship is today. This was often the case when a medieval thinker, including those within the Franciscan movement, explored the theme of creation. The practice of commenting on God's act of creation – known as *Hexaemeron*, after the Genesis account of the six days of creation – was a common academic exercise that can be found among the major works of many scholastics alongside their commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard.<sup>1</sup> Those who did not explicitly address the topic with some

<sup>1</sup> See Philipp W. Rosemann, *Peter Lombard* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), for more on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard and the impact of that work on the theological formation of medieval university masters.

form of *Hexaemeron* often broached the subject tangentially by reflecting on the act of creation and the proceeding theological implications at some point in their work.

While the popular Franciscan figures mentioned above contributed immensely to the rich Franciscan intellectual tradition, helping to plant a firm foundation for the scholars that followed, some lesser-known thinkers also have influenced that tradition. John of La Rochelle and Odo Rigaud of Paris and John Pecham and Matthew of Aquasparta from Oxford made significant contributions in the early years of the Franciscans at the universities, ghostwriting parts of major works, such as Alexander of Hale's acclaimed *Summa fratris Alexandri*, and developing commentaries on scripture while lecturing for their brother friars.<sup>2</sup> Their impact on the intellectual development of the early Franciscan movement has yet to be fully studied and appreciated. Another under-recognized figure is Robert Grosseteste. A scholar of the first degree, Grosseteste was the first lecturer of the friars in England, although never a professed friar himself. A prolific intellectual who wrote on varied topics in philosophy, theology and science, Grosseteste helped to form what would later become the second center of the Franciscan intellectual tradition – the Franciscan school at Oxford. Among the wide-ranging themes of his writing, Grosseteste developed a cosmogony that fits well into the theological and philosophical paradigms of creation within the Franciscan movement. What is additionally striking about Grosseteste's cosmogony is the highly scientific and mathematical form it takes, especially considering it was authored in the early Thirteenth Century, making it extraordinarily original.

The method with which Grosseteste engages the topic of creation, highly scientific while deeply theological, provides a framework for answering the simple question of "how" creation came into existence. Presupposing God as the initiator and author of the creative act, Grosseteste methodically outlines

<sup>2</sup> See *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, eds. Jorge J.E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), for more on the theological contributions and biographical details of John of La Rochelle, John Pecham and Matthew of Aquasparta.

a series of processes that begins with the first corporeal form – Light (*lux*)<sup>3</sup> – and ends with the created world, as understood in the Thirteenth Century. What is clearly absent from his treatise on the "how" of creation – *De Luce* (On Light) – is an answer to the question "why." While he does preliminarily address this issue of "why" in his *Hexaemeron* (On the Six Days of Creation), a fellow Oxford thinker and heir to the intellectual tradition left by Grosseteste writes more extensively on the subject of the "why" of creation. This thinker is none other than John Duns Scotus whose work has inspired so many over the centuries and whose philosophical and theological innovations had a major impact on the shaping of the growing Franciscan school at Oxford.

While this paper is in no way intended to draw exhaustive connections between the work of these two great thinkers, the harmonious pairing of these two figures is not only possible, but it leads to a unique view of creation. This Franciscan view of creation is as relevant today as it was centuries ago. The implications for our modern world torn by ecological injustices are many. Together, a relatively unknown but prolific scholar and one of the most famous Oxford thinkers provide a distinctively Franciscan perspective on creation that suggests answers to the timeless questions of "How" and "Why." Contributing each in his own way, both thinkers provide the response: light and love.

#### ILLUMINATING *DE LUCE*'S IMPORTANCE

The question is simple, but the answer is nuanced. How did all of what we experience of the created world come into existence? This is a question that has prompted the development of creation myths found in every human community on Earth. For thousands of years the quest to answer one of the most basic questions of existence has led

<sup>3</sup> C.G. Wallis makes the point to distinguish that the Latin word for light that is used is *lux* in his translation "On Light" found in *Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed., eds. Arthur Hyman and James J. Walsh, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1973), 474.

to inquiry by means of imagination, theology and science. Faced with this task in the early Thirteenth Century, Robert Grosseteste begins his work by systematically addressing this problem.

Grosseteste was invited by Agnellus of Pisa, sometime between 1229 and early 1230, to become the first lecturer of theology to the newly arrived Franciscan brothers in England.<sup>4</sup> Much of Grosseteste's history prior to this invitation, including the exact date of his birth, is debated or altogether unknown.<sup>5</sup> Most scholars assert that he was born between 1168 and 1170 to a poor family,<sup>6</sup> and studied the Arts in Oxford and possibly Paris likely before 1186.<sup>7</sup> He became the first lector of theology to the Franciscans in England holding that position until March 27, 1235 when he was elevated to the position of Bishop of Lincoln.<sup>8</sup> Around the time he was with the friars, Grosseteste developed a rather extensive body of written work on a number of topics, crossing many disciplines. One of his major works written during this time was a treatise titled *De Luce* (On Light).

*De Luce* begins with God's creation of a single point of light from which, through expansion and extension, the entire physical order came into existence.<sup>9</sup> It is this light created by God, which comes from nothing preexisting, that is the center of Grosseteste's cosmogony. He posits that there could

<sup>4</sup> James McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 21.

<sup>5</sup> See McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, 19-30, for more information regarding the issues surrounding the ambiguity of the early life of Robert Grosseteste.

<sup>6</sup> For more information regarding the divergence of theories that support the placement of Grosseteste's birth at a particular date before or after 1168, see McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, xi; R.W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste: The Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 64; and McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 4-5. It would seem appropriate to assert that, given the information at hand, McEvoy's position regarding the likelihood of Grosseteste's birth before 1170 to be most sound.

<sup>7</sup> There is written evidence of Grosseteste's presence as a young master signing a charter as a witness sometime between 1186 and 1190, as shown in McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, 21.

<sup>8</sup> McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, 29.

<sup>9</sup> McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, 88.

be no other form of matter that so perfectly self-replicates, expanding by self-propagation in all directions while at the same time remaining one and simple.<sup>10</sup> To initiate the process of creation from that single point of primordial light, Grosseteste uses the image of an ever-expanding sphere of light that will diffuse in every direction instantaneously so long as no opaque matter stands in the way. Early in *De Luce* Grosseteste reflects on why light must be the first corporeal form in creation and concludes that because of its characteristics and ability to self-propagate, light must either be the first bodily form or the agent through which creation came into being.<sup>11</sup> But how can light, which is utterly simple and without dimension, create something – let alone everything – contained in three dimensions? To address this concern, Grosseteste relies on the mathematical model of infinity.<sup>12</sup>

Understanding light to replicate infinitely in all directions in an instant, Grosseteste asserts that the expanding sphere of light would eventually double back on itself, becoming increasingly denser. The light expands and retracts between the outermost points of the sphere and the center point of originating light. A simplistic analogy may be drawn to the act of churning butter. As cream is churned in on itself through the process of forced expansion and retraction and becomes thickened into butter, so too light "churns" itself into a denser matter establishing tri-dimensionality. Borrowing from Aristotle's *De Coelo et Mundo*, Grosseteste notes that if something simple is plurified<sup>13</sup> an infinite number of times, it necessarily results in a finite product.<sup>14</sup> This finite product is the created world.

The majority of the remaining portion of his treatise is a complicated explication of his mathematical premises that

<sup>10</sup> McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, 88.

<sup>11</sup> Grosseteste, "On Light," trans. Wallis, 475.

<sup>12</sup> Grosseteste, "On Light," trans. Wallis, 475.

<sup>13</sup> Wallis repeatedly uses the term *Plurification* in reference to the multiplication of light in his translation of "On Light" found in *Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed., 475.

<sup>14</sup> Grosseteste, "On Light," trans. Wallis, 475.

support light being the first bodily form and the primary agent through which God created the world. Grosseteste closes his work with a detailed look at the created world, as he understood its makeup. Drawing on his medieval understanding of the created world that consisted of several spheres – both celestial and terrestrial in nature – he explains that God's choice to use light is the intelligent work of God, creating the perfect number of spheres, ten types in all.<sup>15</sup> Grosseteste, capping his explanation of creation, explains that, "Wherefore every whole and perfect thing is a ten."<sup>16</sup> He concludes the work analyzing the numerals that he has identified as observable in creation and through which creation is held in balance: one, two, three and four. Mathematical to the end, Grosseteste poetically concludes his treatise with a final look at the above four numerals, "Wherefore only those five concordant ratios exist in musical measures, in dances, and in rhythmic times."<sup>17</sup>

Grosseteste is clearly influenced by scripture with its frequent use of light in image and metaphor.<sup>18</sup> One may easily see the significance scripture had in the formation of his intellectual works. Although the mathematical rigor and precision of *De Luce* may be first noticeable, its foundation rests in Grosseteste's understanding of God's revelation to humanity through scripture. In a time when the scholastic method of study was gaining prominence in the universities, John Moorman notes the impact that Grosseteste's insistent use of scripture in teaching had on his students.

<sup>15</sup> Grosseteste, "On Light," trans. Wallis, 478-80.

<sup>16</sup> Grosseteste, "On Light," trans. Wallis, 480.

<sup>17</sup> Grosseteste, "On Light," trans. Wallis, 480.

<sup>18</sup> Grosseteste was certainly well versed in scripture and borrows from the first chapter of Genesis: "Then God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light" (Gen 1:3). It is likely he was also influenced by Paul who later makes reference to the light of Genesis when addressing revelation to the church in Corinth: "For God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to bring to light the knowledge of the glory of God on the face of Christ" (2 Cor 4:6). For more on Grosseteste's use of the Genesis reference to light see, C.F.J. Martin, *Robert Grosseteste: On the Six Days of Creation, a Translation of the Hexaemeron* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); and McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, 89.

Grosseteste, who was already a mature scholar when he began his work for the friars, set the tone which Oxford scholars, both friars and seculars were to follow for many years. The special characteristics of his teaching were, first, his emphasis upon, and use of, the Bible, and 'the irrefragable authority of Scripture,' rather than the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, as the textbook of all study.<sup>19</sup>

The importance of scripture as a classroom text, when other scholars preferred the new scholastic text of Lombard, highlights the explicit impact that the Bible had on Grosseteste's world view. McEvoy suggests that *De Luce* be read today as a speculative interpretation of the Genesis account of creation. He also makes note of Grosseteste's use of biblically based language throughout his treatise, citing the Oxford thinker's use of "the firmament" as a deliberate attempt to emphasize that this is a theory of God's creation and not some alternate explanation of the created world.<sup>20</sup> For Grosseteste, God is present in and throughout the entire creative act. Fusing theology with scientific inquiry, he set a precedent at the Oxford school that had lasting impact on the Franciscan scholars to follow.

In a lecture given in 1916 on English Franciscan history, A.G. Little praises Grosseteste for the precedents he established at the school and credits him with setting the standard of scholarship that elevated the young Franciscan school to such prestige. Of great importance to Little is the work of Grosseteste in linguistics, particularly his fluency in Hebrew and Greek. This skill allowed Grosseteste, with a Christian lens, to introduce ancient philosophers and commentators into the Oxford classroom.<sup>21</sup> Again, it is Grosseteste who sets the stage for future scholars by broadening the material accessible to his students. "Robert Grosseteste, who set the

<sup>19</sup> John Moorman, *A History of The Franciscan Order: From its Origins to the Year 1517* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1988), 242-43.

<sup>20</sup> McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, 89.

<sup>21</sup> A.G. Little, *Studies in English Franciscan History* (Oxford: Manchester University Press, 1917), 193-221.



standard for Franciscan study ... realized more and more the need for studying the books of the Bible in the languages in which they were written, for which purpose he made himself acquainted with both Greek and Hebrew."<sup>22</sup>

It is clear that Grosseteste had a particular fondness for the friars<sup>23</sup> and an often under-appreciated role in the foundation of the Franciscan intellectual tradition. As Moorman records, "Grosseteste had left Oxford by the time of Alexander of Hales's entry into the Franciscan Order, so that he must rank as among the first to lay the foundation of a Franciscan school."<sup>24</sup> Included among his foundational contributions can be the synthesizing of science with theology while remaining rooted in scripture. His pupils, such as Roger Bacon and those who followed, would later go on to excel in this type of scholarship. It is for this reason that Grosseteste's inquiry into the created world is so central in the early Franciscan intellectual movement. When facing the question of the "how" of creation, it is with scripture that he starts, and it is with God he remains. By isolating the first corporeal body as primordial light, Grosseteste developed an influential cosmogony that has had lasting import.

### CREATION AS GOD'S FREE GIFT OF LOVE

About seventy years after Robert Grosseteste, John Duns Scotus, perhaps best known for his work on developing the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and asserting the necessity of the Incarnation, also grappled with questions regarding creation. As Grosseteste sought to articulate his understanding of how creation came to be, Scotus looked

<sup>22</sup> Moorman, *A History of The Franciscan Order*, 394.

<sup>23</sup> Moorman notes that "Grosseteste had already seen something of the Preaching Friars (Dominicans), but it was the Franciscans who won his warmest approval, an approval which grew into an affection which at one time very nearly persuaded him to take the habit himself." (Moorman, *A History of The Franciscan Order*, 92). Additionally, Robert Grosseteste is known to have bequeathed all his books to the friars in England in 1253. (184-85).

<sup>24</sup> Moorman, *A History of The Franciscan Order*, 243.

to his study of theology and his Franciscan tradition to help elucidate the "why" of creation.

Scotus studied and taught at the Franciscan school at Oxford, a beneficiary of Grosseteste's establishment of the program there. Like Grosseteste, what remains recorded of Scotus's early history leaves many questions unanswered. It is believed that he was born in Duns, Scotland around 1266<sup>25</sup> and died on November 8, 1308 in Cologne, Germany. Scholars assert that Scotus studied in Paris after entering the Franciscan Order and doing preliminary studies in Oxford, followed by some lecturing at the university. This assignment to study in Paris indicates the caliber of thinker that Scotus was since the Minister General of the Order would appoint a select number of men to do advanced studies there. After his time in Paris, the Order would again ask him to move, this time to Cologne where he would oversee the theological studies of the Franciscan students. Scotus died three years later at the age of 42.

Although still young (by today's standards) at the time of his death, Scotus left behind a significant number of written works, all at various stages of completion that has contributed to the difficulties one encounters when studying his work. Like Grosseteste, other preceding thinkers and his colleagues, Scotus wrote and lectured on a great many subjects in philosophy and theology. However, creation for Scotus might be seen as the linchpin that connects his various works. Asserting the inherent dignity of all creation, Scotus develops his thought on creation through the lens of contingency of the world and the freedom of God.<sup>26</sup> Ilia Delio summarizes Scotus's approach to creation, "For Scotus, *why* creation comes about is more important than *how* creation comes about.... Creation is simply the work of an infinitely

<sup>25</sup> For more on the dating of Scotus's birth and early history, see Mary Beth Ingham, *Scotus for Dunces: An Introduction to the Subtle Doctor* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2003), 13-23.

<sup>26</sup> Ilia Delio, *A Franciscan View of Creation: Learning to Live in a Sacramental World*, Vol. 2, The Franciscan Heritage Series (CFIT/ESC-OFM) (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2003), 33.

loving creator.”<sup>27</sup> With the precursory and foundational work of Oxford thinkers of the Franciscan school, like Grosseteste, who systematically outlined the “how” of creation, Scotus picked up the issue of “why.”

To understand the starting point for a thinker such as Scotus, one must view his Franciscan experience as primarily hermeneutic. The spirituality that defined his religious community, and therefore his own experience, is deeply rooted in the belief of Francis of Assisi that all creation is good, created by a loving God. For Scotus, God’s love is the reason *par excellence* for creation. This foundational position is the springboard for his doctrine of the contingency of the world. Scotus believed that nothing that was created existed out of necessity. Nothing had to be. Rather, everything that is, has been or will be is brought into intentional existence through God’s divine freedom. To suggest that the world and all it contains *must* have been created diminishes God’s freedom and detracts from the loving act of self-gift that God has so willingly granted. To believe that God’s creating act is freely done says more about the Creator than it does about creation. Mary Beth Ingham describes Scotus’s perspective as, “God is the artist and creation the work of art.”<sup>28</sup> No more than an artist *has* to create a work of art does God *have* to create the world. This necessarily leads to the position of God’s divine freedom.

If the world and all of creation are contingent, then it must have been a deliberate choice for God to create. For Scotus this is a metaphysical issue. It directs one to consider what it means for God to be God. Scotus philosophically deduces that absolutely nothing can interfere with God’s ability to act freely. Every choice of God, because of its rational and free character, does not impede, limit or narrow other possibilities vis-à-vis God’s divine freedom.<sup>29</sup> In other words, the fact that something exists – that you or I exist – does not limit or narrow the possibility for it to have been any other way or interfere with any other choice of God. This position has

<sup>27</sup> Delio, *A Franciscan View of Creation*, 33.

<sup>28</sup> Ingham, *Scotus for Dunces*, 38.

<sup>29</sup> Ingham, *Scotus for Dunces*, 51.

extraordinary consequence in the area of creation’s inherent dignity. Everything that is created is a reflection of a particular decisive act of God to bring that aspect of the created world into existence. Since God has particularly chosen to create a given thing implies that thing’s intrinsic value.

Scotus addresses the particular dignity of creation in his doctrine of *Haecceitas*, or “thisness.”<sup>30</sup> While the term is at first intimidating, it is a rather simple principle. Scotus, with an appreciation for the inherent dignity of every created thing because it was individually chosen to be created by God, wished to express what makes each part of creation one thing and not another. Prior philosophical language simply stated that “this” is “not-that.”<sup>31</sup> Scotus’s perspective focused simply on the “this,” establishing a positive term as opposed to a negative qualifier that defined items of creation in opposition to each other. Neither Platonic nor Aristotelian in origin, Scotus’s doctrine of *Haecceitas* is incredibly relational. Focusing on the very individuality of created beings necessarily reflects the Creator that brought the individual creation into existence. Since this individuating character of each created being is a mystery known to God alone – for it is neither measurable nor empirical – *Haecceitas* refers to the ultimate reality of any being.<sup>32</sup> Summarizing the distinction in thought between Scotus and Aquinas, Ingham states:

According to Scotus, the created order is not best understood as a transparent medium through which divine light shines (as Aquinas taught), but is itself endowed with an inner light that shines forth from within. The difference between these two great scholastics can be compared to the difference between a window (Aquinas) and a lamp (Scotus). Both give

<sup>30</sup> “Haecceitas – From *haec* (literally *this*); the individuating principle of each being; the ultimate reality of the being.” From the glossary of Ingham, *Scotus for Dunces*, 228.

<sup>31</sup> Ingham, *Scotus for Dunces*, 52.

<sup>32</sup> Ingham, *Scotus for Dunces*, 54.



light, but the source of light for Scotus has already been given to the being by the creator.<sup>33</sup>

Scotus's vision draws on the metaphor of light, perhaps inspired by the thought of his predecessor Grosseteste, and reflects his strong position of both the sacredness of each person as individually and uniquely chosen, created and loved by God, while also acknowledging the very presence of God in all creation. Since all creation is a gift from God, God's love must be the source of that gift. Echoing John's Gospel, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life" (Jn 3:16), Scotus develops the doctrine of the necessity of the Incarnation, strengthening his position of God's free and loving choice to create. Scotus asserts that the Incarnation was always part of the overall plan of creation, not the result of human sin, as Anselm and others had speculated. As Delio puts it, "Creation was only a prelude to a much fuller manifestation of divine goodness, namely, the Incarnation."<sup>34</sup> As stated above, no choice resulting from God's divine freedom can limit or narrow any other choice, including human sin, as some believed was the reason for the Incarnation. For Scotus, the Incarnation was simply the quintessential expression of God's over-flowing love.

A gift is not a gift if its giving is forced. God's creation is a gift and therefore a freely chosen one, given like any other gift out of love. Scotus answers the question of the "why" of creation with the simple response: love. Proving that all that is created is not necessary, and that God is absolutely free to choose as God desires, Scotus makes clear the Love that is the source of all creation, exemplified by the Incarnation.

<sup>33</sup> Ingham, *Scotus for Dunces*, 54-55.

<sup>34</sup> Delio, *A Franciscan View of Creation*, 34.

## SYNTHESIZING A FRANCISCAN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS OF CREATION

Distilled to their most basic form, the Franciscan answers to the questions of "how" and "why" creation came to be and was created are light and love. Robert Grosseteste, being deeply rooted in scripture, sought to propose a way of viewing how God might have created the world. John Duns Scotus, awed by the beauty and goodness of creation, sought to elucidate the reason for anything's existence. Together these two great Oxford Franciscan thinkers provide the world with a synthesis that calls us to recognize the inherent dignity, beauty, goodness and presence of God in creation.

While proof of the direct influence of Grosseteste's treatise on light on Scotus may never be known with complete certitude, it is safe to assume that the "Subtle Doctor" was at least exposed to and familiar with the work. The significance of the biblical use of light featured in the work of both thinkers is evident when addressing their respective questions on creation. The work of Grosseteste and Scotus offers us light and love as the lenses through which we can view our created world. Establishing a paradigm based on the themes articulated by these Oxford Franciscans prompts the recalling of our relational nature and reminds us of the intrinsic dignity of all of creation. Like Francis in his *Canticle of the Creatures*<sup>35</sup> we are brought to awareness of the fraternal nature of our existence among and with the rest of the created world. As we strive to love our neighbors, the call to recognize the interconnectedness of creation challenges us to look beyond the human family to the entire created world.

In an age when we are faced with questions about our stewardship of our world, when we are challenged by global warming, air and water pollution, war, consumerism, over-population, deforestation, and other areas of concern,

<sup>35</sup> Francis of Assisi, "The Canticle of The Creatures" in *Francis of Assisi: The Early Documents*, Vol. 1, eds. R. Armstrong, A.J. Wayne Hellmann and W. Short (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1999), 113.

we can look to the message of the Franciscan scholastics from Oxford for grounding. Their message is a holistic, foundational view of creation upon which we can build a more sustainable vision of the future. The work of Grosseteste, far removed from the complexities and advances of modern scientific theory, continues to provide an allegory for our understanding of the relational nature of our existence among all creation. Reflecting on the metaphoric use of light as the primordial corporeal form through which all things come into existence, we hold a keepsake of our interconnectedness and interdependence on the rest of creation. Holding firm to that realization we can look to Scotus to provide additional meaning to that view. With our interconnectedness and interdependence comes the truth that, along with the rest of the created world, we are individually chosen, created and loved by God. Scotus explains that while we may come from a single source, each person and creation has an inherent dignity and value that exceeds our understanding to remain a mystery known to God alone. Looking through the lenses of light and love to better appreciate the created world and the creation act, it is marvelous to consider God's over-flowing love and divine freedom that is at the core of creation.

Our existence in the modern world demands an acute awareness of the choices we make regarding our relationship with creation. Writing on the humility of God found in the work of Francis and Bonaventure, Delio notes that the Gospel life today requires our entering into a world of global consciousness and community.<sup>36</sup> Following Jesus Christ in an age of increased globalization changes the way we live in the world and subsequently the way we relate to creation. Drawing on the rich Franciscan view of creation found in the work of Robert Grosseteste and John Duns Scotus, we are aided in the deepening of our relationship with Jesus Christ and can therefore enter more deeply into our relationship with the created world. Francis's experience of relationship

<sup>36</sup> Ilia Delio, "Evangelical Life Today: Living In The Ecological Christ" in *Vita Evangelica: Essays in Honor of Margaret Carney, O.S.F., Franciscan Studies*, Vol. 64 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2006), 477.

was not limited to human beings but extended to even the tiniest elements of creation. "As his life deepened in the life of Christ, he came to recognize that the meaning of Christ extended beyond human persons to include non-human creation."<sup>37</sup> Inspired by the light and love of God evident in the existence of the world around us, we are moved to embrace the call to be just stewards of creation.

Former Vice-President Al Gore, in his acclaimed documentary on global warming, *An Inconvenient Truth*, mentions that global warming and other critical issues affecting our planet are not just political or social matters, but are ethical and moral responsibilities that impact everyone.<sup>38</sup> As Franciscan men and women this is not something new to us. With a tradition spanning eight centuries of viewing creation fraternally, we are entrusted with a message for the world that simply states that when creation is neglected or abused an injustice of considerable proportion is committed. Not only is such neglect or abuse a violation of the intrinsic dignity of all created things, but a turning away from the light of God that shines forth from creation, expressing God's love. To live a Franciscan life rooted in the Gospel is a way of living in the world.<sup>39</sup> It is a way of living that values and protects the dignity of creation with respect to our fraternal relationship. It is love for a gift that is freely given. And it is an assurance of our commitment to pass on the gift to future generations so that they too may experience the light and love of God.

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<sup>37</sup> Delio, "Evangelical Life Today," 489.

<sup>38</sup> *An Inconvenient Truth*, DVD, directed by Davis Guggenheim (Paramount Home Video, 2006).

<sup>39</sup> Delio, "Evangelical Life Today," 503.

**DUNS SCOTUS'S PRIMACY OF CHRIST  
AND *HAECCEITAS* AS BASES  
FOR A FRANCISCAN ENVIRONMENTAL THEOLOGY**

**Seamus Mulholland, O.F.M.**

Today, issues surrounding environment and ecology are quite “sexy,” indeed “all the rage.” Some cynics even suggest they are today’s “liberal-minded accessory.” We need not delve too deeply into the motivations behind these types of comments but what is certain is that the world as we know it is changing. Not changing simply in the sense that from its birth to its eventual death it, like all living things, is born, grows, matures and will die. It is changing at its very heart, in its very constitutive elemental primalism. Global warming has replaced the hole in the ozone layer as *the* great threat to the existence of the world as we know it. Nations ponder, reflect and consider what to do about it. Green activists urge us to more radical action, neo-liberal capitalists dismiss the idea of reducing carbon emissions since it will affect “business” and therefore profits. Left leaning activists [there are still a few of us remaining!] want to see more “community” action. Wherever we stand on this central and crucial issue we will stand with our own agenda and our own critical analysis of “blame” for the problem and solutions to it.

At first glance it may not seem as if a thirteenth century metaphysician has much to offer us in relation to the formulation of a Franciscan approach to environmental theology. After all, Scotus was a distinctly complex and complicated philosophical and theological thinker. What could the thirteenth century medieval metaphysician Scotus say about twenty-first century approaches to care

for the earth? Well, at the obvious level, nothing. But there are two tenets of Scotus’s thought which, while apparently different (one theological, the other metaphysical), can assist the Franciscan movement in providing a solid theological and philosophical base for its formulation of a distinctly Franciscan environmental theology. These two tenets are the Primacy of Christ and *Haecceitas* (“thisness”).

The Scotus doctrine of the so-called “Primacy of Christ” situates Christ at the center of creation, predestined to grace and glory before the Fall of humankind is provisioned by God. Scotus arrives at this position through the assertion that God predestines Christ to grace and glory in respect to His will to be loved perfectly by a creature outside himself who can love Him with the same love with which He loves Himself. This creature is Christ. It may be worth pointing out here that perhaps we should stop using the title “Christ” when speaking of Scotus and the Primacy. It has too many connotations of the emphasis on divinity, whereas in the Scotus conception what is predestined is the human nature of Jesus with which the Word unites itself fully. It is this human nature of Jesus which has the primacy over and in all other creatures.

The term generally used to speak of this process is “contingency.” Contingency means that whatever exists other than God is not necessary. So: it is not necessary that the human nature of Jesus exist. It does so through the free willed decree of God since all contingent acts and willing outside the Godhead are themselves contingent. Creation, since it is not necessary, is also a contingent. The human nature of Jesus has primacy among all other things created, so perhaps, “Absolute Primacy” is an incorrect term and we should just speak of the “Primacy of the human nature of Jesus in creation,” or the “primacy of the human nature of Jesus among other contingent realities” (since whatever is contingent cannot be absolute).

This human nature holds the primacy among other contingents in relation to its perfection and as “first-born” among all other created realities. This is true when it is considered that “first” is a relative term and implies another

outside or beside the first. "First" when applied to the primacy of the human nature of Jesus in creation is strictly in respect to that nature among all others. This primacy in creation is not dependent on, nor is it occasioned by what Jesus would do historically. The primacy is, above all, a primacy of contingent being in, and of love and grace, among other contingent beings. So, it is through the free will of God that the creature Jesus exists as the perfect lover of the Trinity outside itself. I shall return to this.

The second tenet of Scotus's thought is a philosophical notion, his famous concept of *haecceitas*, (hey chay it tas) usually translated as "thisness." On first approach this can seem a daunting complexity, Scotus at his most subtle and obfuscatory best. Some regard it as Scotus being a philosophical pedant; or that he is engaging in self-indulgent philosophical word play. Nothing could be further from the truth. Scotus's *haecceitas* has profound theological, as well as philosophical, importance and significance, and much to teach us today about the uniqueness of the individual created thing. *Haecceitas*, put simply, means that whatever exists contingently has a "thisness" about it: a unique, unrepeatable, and ultimately indefinable "ness" that is the real possession of that thing as that thing individually, within all classes and types of common nature. Already it is starting to sound complicated. Let me try and explain; *haecceitas* is the reality of a contingent thing as individual even within a species or genus of that thing.

So, for example: Seamus is an animal, so he has "animality." Seamus is a human person so he has "humanity" and personhood, (species –Homo Sapiens), but Seamus is also a man (genus –Male). So Seamus is an animal, of the species Homo Sapiens in the genus of Male. Scotus belongs to the species Homo Sapiens, in the genus of Male. We both share fundamentals of substance, animality, species and class, but both Seamus and Scotus possess a defining quality at the substantial level which is possessed by each individual substance and not another which makes Seamus and Scotus uniquely what they are as individual "substances." Male human persons, a "Seamus-ness" or "Scotus-ness" whereby

Seamus is not Scotus and Scotus is not Seamus even though they are of common nature but uniquely and unrepeatably and individually Seamus or Scotus – their "thisness."

Seamus is *this* Male Homo Sapiens and not *that*. If we then turn back to the primacy then we can speak about the uniqueness of the human nature of Jesus as an unique individual contingent among all other contingent things. It is *this* human nature which holds the primacy in creation and not *that* human nature. Or, if we wish to give it a more spiritual tone: God reveals the fullness of Himself in *this* person Jesus and not *that* person, or Jesus is *this* human person and not *any* human person. So it is possible to unite Scotus's theological and philosophical thought into one reflection. How then can this unity of the primacy of the *haecceitas* of the human nature of Jesus in creation provide the basis for a Franciscan environmental theology?

The primacy teaches that whatever exists does so because there is the human nature of Jesus which is prior in both grace and predestination to glory than all other created natures. Creation was made for the human nature of Jesus united to the Word and not the other way round. Thus the primacy is a creational primacy and given this primacy all that exists does so in relation to it. Creation therefore has a sovereignty with the union of the Word with the human nature of Jesus at its head, and it has an existence, which, while as contingent as the human nature of Jesus, is nevertheless in fraternal relation to him so that the human nature of Jesus is "first among the many brethren" of other created natures.

Creation and its rights are, therefore, determined by their relation to that which is prior in grace and nature, the created nature of Jesus, which as its model, determines all other created realities. The human nature of Jesus in creation, since it is contingent, has this primacy as pure gift from God, and since all other created realities are in relation to this gift, their rights are also gift. They are not granted by other contingents (even the human nature of Jesus in creation) and that includes Humanity. Thus, men or women, cannot determine what the rights of creation should be – they simply are as created realities existing in relation to the perfection

of created nature which is that of Jesus. Men and women because they are "sentient" are not the lords of creation, but, in fact, its servant charged by God to tend it, honor it and guard it.

In the union of uncreated nature with the created nature of Jesus, necessity and contingency co-exist without detriment to the other, each existing in perfect relation to the other so that neither pre-existent Word or created human nature is destroyed or changed by this union. In the Incarnation, therefore, all other created realities are brought to their "apex," their single, defining moment of existence which is the "Jesus point" whereby pre-existence and existence are together as one person who lives out a life in history. Creation exists because there is a perfect nature which is its model, or to use a Bonaventurian term, its exemplar. All creation, regardless of whether it is animal, vegetable or mineral, even down to the smallest fragment of the constituent "stuff of life" – DNA – is because there is a provision of necessity and contingency existing as one in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

This Jesus of Nazareth is unique, unrepeatable being who has his own "thisness" and "Jesus-ness" which does not derive specifically from the union of the pre-existent Word with the human creature that is Jesus of Nazareth, but which derives rather from the fact that Jesus of Nazareth is Jesus of Nazareth and not because he is the Word Incarnate. God could have, if God so wished, carried out creative, redemptive purposes in another way, but what God could have done is not relevant, it is what God *has* done in the person of Jesus that is available to us. The Jesus moment is therefore the God-creation moment in a unique, unrepeatable, individuated way. The "thisness" of Jesus is unique to him, mine is to me and creation's is to it. Thus whatever exists co-relationally exists uniquely and individually with its own unrepeatable, individuated "thisness." Hence, the rights of creation are unique and individuated and not determined by men and women but rather by the fact of their own existence.

Since other created realities stand in co-existent and co-relation to the primacy of the human nature of Jesus in creation, all other created realities constitute the "body

of Christ" as much as the "mystical body," so that any persecution of the "cosmic body of Christ" is as much a persecution as those perpetrated on the "mystical body" which is the Church. This stands true because Christ is "head of the body, which is the Church." In which case, if the "headship" or primacy is applied to the cosmic body, then the entirety of the created cosmos is the body of Christ. The Church is the spirit of Jesus alive in all things. If this is true, then by applying the Franciscan concept of the primacy and *haecceitas* to this presence of Jesus we can arrive at the following conclusion.

Christ is present to each and every person coming into the world and enlightens them. This presence does not depend on a credal confession of Jesus' lordship. It is neither subjective to confession nor objective to the fact of Jesus' lordship. It is a truth which stands alone. Scripture attests to this primacy e.g. "He is the first born of all creation." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ... he chose us in him before the foundation of the world...." "Christ is the head of the body, the Church," etc. Since the Church is the spirit of Jesus alive in people, then all those to whom Christ is present and enlightens constitute the Church. The risen and glorified Jesus is present in creation as beginning, middle and end point. That is, the Jesus-moment is the reference point to all time and history. The Risen One, therefore, enlightens creation in his presence, the whole of creation is therefore the Church, the locus of the Risen and glorified historical Jesus.

Given this, the Scotist doctrine of the primacy and *haecceitas* are not doctrines which are little more than historical curiosities in the history of theology or metaphysics. They are vibrant, vital, important bases on which the Franciscan movement can formulate an approach to environmental theology and ethics on a solid theological, Christological and philosophical base rather than on naïve, romantic, idealistic notions of St. Francis "loving animals and all creation." This is not to say that Francis is to be taken out of the equation. Quite the opposite, his place and role is crucial. But romanticism is not a solid base on

which to ground a contemporary Franciscan theology of environmental care. The primacy of the human nature of Jesus and the *haecceitas* of this nature, and all other created natures, guarantees their right to be that which they are. So that whaling, the hunting of the tiger, the destruction of the rainforests, the mining of the earth to dust, etc., attack the body of Christ in the sense of martyrdom.

Thus, a Franciscan approach to environmental theology is grounded on firm theological-philosophical and Franciscan bases, and needs further development through the study of political theory,

economics, anthropology, environmental ethics, ecology, and socio-cultural studies. Failure to do this means failure to accept redemption because the created nature of Jesus is not left behind at the Resurrection but is glorified in its transcendence of historical and existential limitations and is now at the heart of the Godhead. The Scotist doctrine of the primacy of the human nature of Jesus and the doctrine of *haecceitas*

have much to teach the world – if only we can translate it and make it relevant and meaningful not just for Franciscans but for all those who seek the divine with a sincere heart.



## CONNECTING THE VERNACULAR THEOLOGY OF FRANCIS OF ASSISI WITH JOHN DUNS SCOTUS'S CAUSAL CONTINGENCY

Robert Mayer

### INTRODUCTION

For Francis of Assisi God was not only good, but was the source of all that is good. This spiritual intuition was so important to the early fraternity that a prayer acknowledging God as the source of all that was good was placed into the *Regula non Bullata*, chapter 17, verses 17-19.<sup>1</sup> In this prayer, Francis gave thanks and praise to the God who has given so much to the human fraternity through the gift of creation itself. Throughout Francis's life, this theme will occur in a number of different prayers and other writings. Even when Francis is no longer able to enjoy fully the gift of God's creation because of disease, he is still able to find the generosity of God's will in it. In the *Canticle of the Creatures*, Francis began, "Most High, all powerful, good Lord, Yours are the praises, the glory and the honor and all the blessing, to You alone ..." a sign that though "Brother Sun" was the source of great pain for him, it was still deserving of God-oriented praise because of its ultimate source.

This important spiritual insight is the seed for a much more developed theological stance concerning God's freedom of action, the contingent nature of creation and the goodness

<sup>1</sup> All quotations and citations of Francis's writings and related hagiography come from *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, volume 1, *The Saint* and volume 2, *The Founder*. Ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, William Short (New York City: New City Press, 1999 and 2000). Hereafter, *FA:ED*.



of God in the works of John Duns Scotus. This is not to deny that other theologians also believed that God was good or that creation was a special gift to humanity. It would hardly be fair to the Christian tradition to make such a claim of exclusivity. Yet, there is something unique to the Scotist formulation of these beliefs and the theological consequences of this formulation. This paper intends to examine both Francis and Scotus, using their common bond as *fratres minores* as an important source for their theological and spiritual insights. It is the basic assumption of this approach that, though Francis was not a scholastic theologian and Scotus was one of the most profound schoolmen of his time, there is a fundamental connection between the two because of the life values each held to some degree. Therefore, an examination of the theological writings of these two men may yield some insights that would not have been so apparent had an examination of them separately occurred. This process is not meant to argue that there is an exclusive link between Francis and Scotus; other scholars have ably demonstrated the thematic connections in the thought of Francis and other Franciscan theologians.<sup>2</sup> This approach is merely advocating the idea that Francis's thought and writings can be used as a valid and hopefully important hermeneutical lens when reading Scotus.

#### IS IT APPROPRIATE TO REFER TO ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI AS A THEOLOGIAN?

In the Introduction reference was made several times to Francis's theology. This in turn begs the question whether Francis was indeed a theologian. Dominic Monti has offered an answer to this question and asserts that it is indeed appropriate to refer to Francis as a theologian.<sup>3</sup> At first glance,

<sup>2</sup> A cursory examination of the work of Ilia Delio on St. Bonaventure or David Flood on Peter of John Olivi will ably show how they have connected these Franciscan theologians to the spirit of Francis of Assisi.

<sup>3</sup> Dominic Monti, "Francis as Vernacular Theologian: A Link to the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition," in *The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition*:

Monti's conclusion may seem counterintuitive though it is ultimately a sound one and is the premise that this paper will base itself on.

In response to the first difficulty presented, it would seem that one should not allow Francis's own humility to compromise the value of his contribution. Certainly, by 1220, it would seem that the Franciscan movement was recruiting a number of men who were more formally educated than the members of the community were in 1209.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Francis's own self-identification as "simple and unlettered," would only seem appropriate in relation to the new members who were coming to the Franciscan Order. It is evident that Francis had some ability to read and write and that he was familiar with some scripture, though to what extent is difficult to say. It is therefore inaccurate to portray Francis as incapable of creating and articulating a language of his relationship with God and hence to leave him labeled as just "simple and unlettered" does not do justice to the nuanced and complex world that Francis lived in.

Once it is established that Francis was at least capable of engaging himself and his followers in an intellectual investigation of how God was to be made manifest in their lives, it is appropriate to address the second question, namely, whether or not what Francis was writing could be considered "theology." Though the thirteenth century can rightly be seen as the high point of medieval scholastic thinking, it was also the apex of a religious movement that focused on the democratization of the religious experience.<sup>5</sup> This movement started almost a century before Francis of Assisi was born. During that time, various groups of lay people began to engage in "religious life projects," creating new forms of

*Washington Theological Union Symposium Papers 2001*, ed. Elise Saggau, OSF (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publication, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> In Thomas of Celano's *Vita Prima* he relays his own joining of the Order along with several other "honorable men." These new members are often thought to be amongst the new class of educated "clerics" who joined the movement. This is presumed to have been around 1217.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, English Edition Trans. Steve Rowan (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995).

communal and semi-communal religious groups. These communities would create their own theological language, their own praxis and what is anachronistically referred to as their own spirituality. Bernard McGinn identified the fruits of these endeavors as a "vernacular theology."<sup>6</sup>

Vernacular theology provides the framework around which one can build the theology of Francis of Assisi. Using the criteria of this categorization one can confidently call Francis a thirteenth-century theologian without compromising the integrity and contribution of scholastic theology. This paper is proposing that Francis's vernacular theology had an Aristotelian "flavor" to it. This does not mean that Francis knew and incorporated the writings of Aristotle into his writings. As mentioned above, that would be beyond Francis and his resources. Yet, there is a certain way of viewing the world, a seemingly inductive method, whereby Francis comes to know God, that is reminiscent of Aristotle's own approach to knowing the world. This is not to say that Francis is exclusively an Aristotelian in his thinking, for there are also elements of deductive and Platonic thinking as well. It is the contention of this analysis though that the inductive thinking is the more prevalent and that this is one of the reasons why there is a high degree of compatibility between Scotus's and Francis's own thinking.

#### **DID FRANCIS'S VERNACULAR THEOLOGY HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE SCHOLASTIC THEOLOGY OF SCOTUS?**

Very little is known of the life of John Duns Scotus and, unfortunately, the collection of works that are attributed to him do not reflect the entirety of his life's work. It is therefore difficult to gauge how much of a direct influence, if any, Francis's vernacular theology had on Scotus. Furthermore, in the writings of Scotus to be examined for this paper there is not a single explicit mention of Francis or his spiritual

insights. In this, Scotus differs from other Franciscan theologians, like Bonaventure or Peter of John Olivi, who used Francis as an important element in some of their theological writing.

This lack of explicit mention of Francis in Scotus's writings may seem to present a difficulty. Yet, as opposed to direct references to Francis of Assisi in the works of Scotus, an influence is present in a perceived common theological perspective or worldview. The connection to be explored therefore is not a textual one, but one based on the common life of being a *fratres minores*, which in turn consists of a particular approach to the world and creation.

It is impossible to say how Scotus was exposed to the writings and thought of Francis. It is known from Thomas of Eccleston that the first Franciscans to arrive in England came in 1224, a little over two years before his death.<sup>7</sup> It is therefore likely that a copy of the *Regula Bullata* had been brought with them, as well as copies of other circular epistles that had been sent from Francis to the Order and its ministers. In addition to these texts, Scotus was probably aware of Francis's *Testament*. Other texts that Scotus must have been aware of were the two legends composed by Bonaventure on the life of Francis. Essentially then, one could say with some confidence that Scotus was aware of the *Regula Bullata*, the *Testament*, the *Legenda Maior* and the *Legenda Minor*. Asserting that Scotus knew anything else about the founder is speculation, but such speculation is not completely baseless. For example, it would not be too far fetched to suppose that he was aware of Eccleston's chronicle and therefore knew of some of the biographical information on Francis contained in it. One also needs only recall that the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth centuries were a period of crisis in the Franciscan Order

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Eccleston, *The Coming of the Friars Minor to England*, trans. E. Gurney Slater in *Coming of the Friars Minor to England and Germany* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1926; Reprinted by Kessinger Publishing).

<sup>6</sup> Bernard McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism*, Vol. 3 (New York: Crossroads Press, 1998), 58.

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<sup>6</sup> Bernard McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism*, Vol. 3 (New York: Crossroads Press, 1998), 58.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Eccleston, *The Coming of the Friars Minor to England*, trans. E. Gurney Slater in *Coming of the Friars Minor to England and Germany* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1926; Reprinted by Kessinger Publishing).

surrounding the issue of poverty.<sup>8</sup> It is therefore hard not to assume that Scotus would have been aware of at least some of the issues being debated and the surrounding polemical material being exchanged in regards to the poverty of Francis. Texts of this nature may have included the *Legenda Vetus* and collections of sayings attributed to Conrad of Offida and Francis of Assisi.<sup>9</sup>

While it cannot be known how many or if any of these texts were known to Scotus, there is enough supporting evidence to assume that Scotus was at least aware of an overall Franciscan approach to creation, the human place within that creation and how it all relates to God. This approach, already discussed in the Introduction, places the person in the paradoxical position within creation as being both privileged and humbled. Privileged because one is aware of the scope of God's gift and can see God working through creation; humbled because of the immensity of God's love and one's inability to effect the same type of power that God does. This overall sense will have an even greater resonance with Scotus because of his Aristotelian outlook on creation and God. For Scotus, the person is made to know God and creation naturally (as opposed to supernaturally). While in this life the person can come to know God through creation and in the next life the person will have an immediate and intimate knowledge of God that fulfills the person's natural abilities. Therefore, the similarity in approaches to the person, creation and God that will appear in both Scotus and Francis leave open the possibility that the material concerning Francis may have played a significant role in the development of Scotus's theological thinking. Making those connections even more explicit and highlighting the similarities may create an

<sup>8</sup> For a fuller explanation of the poverty controversy and its impact on the friars at the Universities see, Malcolm Lambert's *Franciscan Poverty*, Revised and Expanded edition, (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1998).

<sup>9</sup> For a fuller explanation on the nature of these texts as well as English translations of them see *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, The Prophet*, Vol. III, eds. William Short, Regis Armstrong and J.A. Wayne Hellmann (New York: New City Press, 2001), 109-40.

appreciation that Scotus's scholastic theology is enriched by its connection to Francis's vernacular theology.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN UNDERSTANDING THE PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY OF JOHN DUNS SCOTUS

While specifically focussing on the elements of Scotus's thought that are concerned with his idea of causal contingency, it is necessary to acknowledge two principles that are essential to an understanding of Scotistic thought. The first deals with the epistemology and the second relates to the ontology of Scotus. While a thorough examination of these principles is not possible here, it is hoped that this cursory examination will provide some greater understanding when causal contingency is introduced.

In James Ross and Todd Bates's article on Scotus's view of natural theology, they make the claim that for every one scriptural citation there are approximately ten citations of Aristotle.<sup>10</sup> This seems to indicate that Scotus's theology is grounded heavily in natural reason and the human person's ability to understand God and the world around them. Underlying this epistemological concept in Scotus is his belief in a univocal concept of being. This approach is defined by Scotus in *Ordinatio* I distinction 3, "I call that concept univocal that has sufficient unity in itself that to affirm and deny it of the same subject suffices as a contradiction." This univocal concept will permit Scotus to assert in a positive manner things about both God and creation. Without this ability, Scotus cannot work from contingent to necessary beings in his theology.

A second key concept is Scotus's hierarchy of being. It is important to differentiate between Scotus's concept of being and the beings themselves. Scotus, in his *De Primo Principe*, establishes two orders of being, the first is necessary and the

<sup>10</sup> James F. Ross, and Todd Bates, "Duns Scotus on Natural Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. Thomas Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 193-237, 200.

second is contingent.<sup>11</sup> Briefly, Scotus differentiates between the ontological characteristics of necessary and contingent beings. The basis for such a differentiation is on the order of eminence. Eminence in this sense should not be understood in its Neo-Platonic sense, but is instead related to *potens*, or the power of the being in question. Scotus's theology of God's absolute power is instrumental in understanding this difference.

Absolute power belongs only to God and is related to God's absolute freedom. Though "absolute" can mean without boundary or limitation, Scotus takes a more conditioned view of the term. In *Ordinatio* I, Distinction 44, he wrote, "For God can do anything that is not self contradictory or act in any way that does not include a contradiction."<sup>12</sup> For Scotus, even though God has absolute freedom in regards to the created universe, God cannot do anything that would entail a contradiction to God. For example, God cannot order a creature to hate God, in Scotus's metaphysical scheme God is infinite goodness and it would therefore be contradictory to order a creature to hate God because it is natural to the creature to love what is good and therefore natural to the creature to love what is most good of all. God's absolute power is therefore not the ability to do anything, it is solely the ability to do anything beyond God's ordained power and does not include a contradiction.

### CAUSAL CONTINGENCY AND THE GOODNESS OF GOD

How does one know that a good and loving God is responsible for the universe? In Aristotle's thought system it did not seem necessary to assert that the world had been

<sup>11</sup> Scotus's division of being is broken into two conclusions in the *De Primo Principe*, a translation by Allan B. Wolter is available through Franciscan Institute Publications. Richard Cross wrote an extensive commentary on the work in 2005, see *Duns Scotus on God*.

<sup>12</sup> Calvin Normore, "Duns Scotus's Modal Theory," in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. Thomas Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 148.

created at all, in fact one could maintain that the Earth had and will exist for eternity. Scotus, along with others, explicitly refuted this idea and instead asserted that the world had to have a beginning. For a number of theologians this was primarily evident through divine revelation or scripture. Bonaventure denied Thomas of Aquinas's position of the philosophical possibility of an eternal earth partly on the basis of what scripture had revealed.<sup>13</sup> Scotus though is going to take a different approach, relying on a philosophical explanation rather than a scriptural one.

The first element is that no effect is its own cause.<sup>14</sup> It is important to take note of the words, "effect" and "cause." The distinction between the two will be important at a later point. According to Scotus the earth is an effect, one of many effects that one can observe. Because the earth is an effect, it must have been caused by something. This begs the question though, how does Scotus know that it is an effect. One will recall earlier that a distinction was made in the eminence of beings, and that one of the defining characteristics in this differentiation was in the difference in power. It is true that the earth has some form of causal power, natural phenomena provide numerous examples of that power. Yet, it is also true that the causal power of the earth is limited and in fact needs the cooperation of other powers to produce a number of effects. This lack of absolute power therefore makes it clear in Scotus's ontology that the earth itself does not qualify as one of the beings in the highest level of the ontological hierarchy. Therefore, the earth must be some form of effect, an effect with causal powers, but an effect nonetheless.<sup>15</sup>

Once it has been established that the earth is some sort of effect the cause of the earth can be sought. Scotus believes that all effects must come from some first principle; he denies

<sup>13</sup> Anthony Kenny, *A New History of Western Philosophy: Medieval Philosophy*, Volume 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 60-63.

<sup>14</sup> *De Primo Principio*, Chapter II, Conclusion 4, trans. Evan Roche, Franciscan Institute Publications Philosophy Series, Number 5, eds. Philotheus Boehner and Allan B. Wolter (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1949), 15. Hereafter *De Primo*.

<sup>15</sup> *De Primo*, 15.

the possibility of an infinite chain of causes. An infinite chain of causes in Scotus is unsatisfactory because there is no way of signifying when the infinite chain could begin. This "beginning" cause does not necessarily have to be temporal, because Scotus would affirm non-temporal moments;<sup>16</sup> instead, this beginning is metaphysical and ontological. It is easy to conflate Scotus's first principle with God, but he is careful to distinguish between the two. Basically, the first principle is a philosophical necessity, it is needed to begin the chain of events that eventually leads to the existence of the present moment. For Scotus it is possible for the person to know something positively about the first cause. Such an investigation is possible through an examination of the natural world. There are two important premises at work in this idea. The first is that the human person has a natural ability to know something of creation and the second is that this ability is from the first principle.

For Scotus, there are two ways of knowing, through abstraction and through intuition.<sup>17</sup> Both ways of knowing are natural to the human person (meaning that the human person has the natural capacity to exercise each) though that potential is not always actualized. The person comes to know creation and therefore the first cause through abstraction, the person comes to know God through intuition. God, for Scotus, while being the first principle is something more as well. What that something more is will be addressed when the will of God is examined.

The second premise is that the first cause desires to be known by the creation. Scotus lays out a theory of causality based on Aristotle's formulation of the four causes. These are the efficient, the final, the material and the formal. The final

<sup>16</sup> Scotus used non-temporal moments to talk about the procession of persons in the Trinity, while the Father is first, the Son is second and the Spirit is third, Scotus advocated an understanding of these outside of time.

<sup>17</sup> *Quodlibetal Question 6*, 6.17-6.20 found in Mary Beth Ingham's *Scotus for Dunces: An Introduction to the Subtle Doctor* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2003). (Appendix 1 Reading 5), 169-71.

cause is of primary concern because it is the key to Scotus's teleological worldview. The first principle contains these four causes in total perfection and therefore the final cause of the first principle is the final goal for all of creation. For Scotus the final goal of all creation is intimate union with God and so in order to effect that goal God ensures that the human person is aware of the first principle by creating a knowledge directed creation and knowledge oriented creature. This creates a mutuality between God and creation, the more that can be learned about one increases human knowledge about the other. The metaphysical principle behind Scotus's mutuality is his univocal concept of being. This principle ensures that the human person can have a true (though limited) knowledge of the world's and God's attributes. Without the element of truth to this knowledge, human knowing is open to some form of skepticism that ultimately defeats the human participation in the teleological goal of all creation.

Francis of Assisi presents a similar view of creation in his *Canticle of the Creatures*.<sup>18</sup> This song of praise is connected to Scotus's view of causal contingency in two ways. First, Francis tacitly acknowledges what Scotus would consider to be the principle of mutuality though without ever explicitly stating so. Instead, he does this by means of his formulation of the verses; "Praised be you, My Lord, through..."<sup>19</sup> By means of this formulation, Francis seems to be emphasizing a connection between the one praising (i.e. the person), the creation (the means through which praise is effected) and the One to be praised (i.e. God). The connections are multi-phasic, operative on a number of different levels. Therefore, it is impossible to identify a one to one connection between

<sup>18</sup> *FA:ED Volume 1, The Saint*, 113-14.

<sup>19</sup> The word translated as "through" is the Latin *per*, which is a difficult word to translate and could also be translated as "by." The English translation in the *FA:ED Volume 1: The Saint* uses "through." There are eight stanzas which begin with the phrase, "Praised be you, My Lord..." and seven of them have "through" follow it in the formulation, one, the first opens, "with all Your creatures, especially Brother Sun." It is interesting that the Sun is the only aspect of creation that Francis so closely identifies with God.



Scotus's idea of mutuality and Francis's; yet, on the level of procession from the person to knowledge of the creator through the creation there is a clear connection. This is especially clear in the case of the Sun, who is most likened to God. Francis seems to be delving deeper than simple analogy with his identification of the Sun's light with God's illumination. It could be supposed that Francis is intuitively recognizing some sort of common concept between God and the created world, one might suppose a primordial form of Scotus's univocal concept of being. This primitive notion of a univocal concept of being is the second point of connection with Scotus's view of causal contingency in the *Canticle*.

### CAUSAL CONTINGENCY AND GOD'S WILL

The second element to be examined is the relationship between a contingent creation and God's will. Could God be God, if there was no creation? For Scotus the answer is "yes," because nothing in the external world (even the lack of an external world) could affect God.<sup>20</sup> This is because God is ultimately on a different ontological plane than anything outside of God. In a sense, there is a separate essential dynamism that belongs to God's essence alone, one that is sufficient to God and God's goodness. While it may seem intuitive to believe that the creative act was an act of free choice on God's part there was a different, though Franciscan approach, that posited much less emphasis on God's free will in the act of creation. Bonaventure's formulation of the relationship between God and creation sees the fecundity of love within the inner life of the Trinity as being intricately connected to the act of God's creative power.<sup>21</sup> This view ultimately leads to a different conceptual understanding of God's will than Scotus's, as well as a different view of creation. Scotus does not deny the role of love in God's creation, he

<sup>20</sup> *De Primo Chapter 3 Conclusion 2*.

<sup>21</sup> For more on Bonaventure and God's creative power see Ilia Delio's *Simply Bonaventure* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2001).

instead roots the act of love in an attribute of God, namely the divine will and not in the essence of God as Bonaventure does.

As stated above, God possesses a will that is formally different from God's intellect.<sup>22</sup> For Scotus the will plays two important roles in this discussion concerning contingent causality. First, the will is the determinative power in that nothing occurs without God willing it. For Scotus this creates an intimate bond between God's will, God's power and God's intellect. There are two divine principles always guiding God's will. The first is the aforementioned final cause and the second is the principle of God's own self love, which is perfect. All of God's actions are guided by these two principles.

It might seem that according to these two principles creation is not necessary and might even be a sort of bother to the Divine Essence; for creation is not needed for complete union with God (as the Trinity is a sufficient communion) and cannot add or subtract to the perfect self love of the Divine Essence. While creation is certainly not a bother to God, it is undoubtedly gratuitous to the Divine. It is this feature that requires further examination.

Scotus's conception of the will is unique amongst scholastic thinkers because it gives the actor the ability to choose between three different options (as opposed to the more traditional two options), these are: 1) the ability to choose to do "a", 2) the ability to choose to do not "a" and 3) the ability to choose not to choose between options 1 and 2.<sup>23</sup> It is the third option that seems to be unique to Scotus.

<sup>22</sup> The formal difference in Scotus is one of his unique contributions to the study of metaphysics. It allows for one to speak of an attribute like intellect or will without positing that the attribute itself is its own subsistent object. So while Scotus speaks of the divine will, he is not attempting to say that the will exists outside of the divine essence. This can be especially confusing when Scotus refers to the formal causal power of God, but such a discussion is outside of the scope of this paper.

<sup>23</sup> *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, Volume II, Books 6-9, trans. Girard Etzkorn and Allan B. Wolter, Franciscan Institute Publications Text Series Number 19 (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1998), Chapter 9, question 15.

How this definition of the operation of the will plays into creation becomes quite clear. God was not choosing between creating and not-creating – a choice that might depict God in a arbitrary light – but instead was choosing between creating, not-creating and not choosing between creating and not-creating. In this sense, God could have chosen the third option and thereby opt to exist not without creation but also not with a creation. While this may seem to make God seem “neurotic,” it also allows Scotus to preserve the total freedom of God without imaging a God that would arbitrarily decide against the act of creating. In light of this conception of the will it is understandable why Scotus considered the creative act of God as gratuitous. God could simply have chosen to do nothing but instead God chose to do something. In choosing to create God’s action is gratuitous and ultimately unrepayable by that creation.

In discussing God’s will it is also important to note that while this will is determined by God’s own self love and the principle of final causality, neither of these two things are separate, either formally or really, from the Divine Essence. As stated above, Scotus is ultimately concerned with preserving God’s freedom, not the freedom of God’s will. While this may seem like an overly-subtle difference (especially in light of the fact that according to Scotus the Divine will is only formally different from the Divine Essence) failing to make such a distinction may lead to a voluntarist conception of God that Scotus is not advocating.

Francis of Assisi’s writings seem to strongly identify with the idea of God as gratuitous in the act of creator. It would seem that Francis’s own life, both before and after his conversion disposed him to view God in such a way. Both lives by Celano tell the reader that Francis was lavish and charitable, acting so as to imitate the nobility of society and courtly literature. One sign of nobility in the popular courtly literature of the time was their overly-generous attitude towards the company they kept. As one can see, the depiction of a beneficent, gratuitous God who bestows gifts upon those who love and serve Him would be an image that

Francis could have readily identified with and kept with him as he formulated his life.

One of the most obvious manifestations of this image in the writings of Francis is in *The Praises of God* where Francis actually refers to God twice as a King (v. 2).<sup>24</sup> Throughout this text, Francis refers to God as not only the source of all charity, but charity itself, not only as good, but goodness itself. The various praises evoke both the beauty and the majesty of God, referring to God as a protector and defender, as well as love and meekness. The mixing of metaphors and identifications stems from the ever-presence of God in anything worth achieving. In a sense, God is the final goal for which every person strives. For Francis, God is not only the King that commissions the knight errant, but is the squire that supports the knight in his quest and is the goal of the quest as well. Such an understanding illustrates how, in Scotistic thought, gratuity and finality are linked.

A gratuitous God is like a gratuitous King, one that deserves the love and loyalty of Francis for all that has been given to him. Francis’s gratitude manifests itself in an attitude of disappropriation, since nothing is Francis’s nothing can be claimed by Francis. It would then seem that the theological roots of Francis’s poverty stem from his belief in a contingent world that God could have freely chosen not to create. Because God did choose to create though, that action requires a response from Francis, a response rooted in a keen desire to publicly acknowledge his poverty and live in conformity with it.

### CAUSAL CONTINGENCY AND GOD’S INTELLECT

There are two views of a changing creation that one can take (i.e. a creation that is not a-historical and reflects the fact that change has occurred over time). One is that it is teleological and therefore goal oriented and the other is that it is evolutionary, where there is no set goal and the change is a

<sup>24</sup> *FA:ED* Volume 1, 108-10.

response to the external pressures that nature applies. While both acknowledge that change is a fundamental element of the world that God has created, the reason for those changes are completely different. Scotus has a clear preference for the teleological model. He seems to have believed that creation has been placed on a certain trajectory since the moment of God's first creative act and was moving towards it in time. While a teleological outlook is perfectly consistent with a Divine Creator that willed creation into existence, this model presents a challenge to one of the defining characteristics of that creation, namely contingency. If everything is moving in a predetermined way, toward a predetermined goal is there any freedom for that creation? With Scotus's emphasis on the will, both divine and created, as well as his belief that the only necessary thing that exists is God, then a teleological creation that is free may seem to be a paradox both to the nature of that creation and God's knowledge. Because of this belief, Scotus has to reconcile causal contingency with the omniscience of God.

The problem is this, if there is some element of contingency and freedom in creation how is God properly omniscient and any aspect of creation "not necessary?" "Properly omniscient" in this sense is meant to signify that God's knowledge of past, present and future actions is complete. This definition in combination with a teleological worldview tends to imply that there is no real freedom and therefore nothing is contingent but only necessary. If this is true then can Scotus actually believe in a causally contingent world? Scotus's solution to this difficulty is remarkable. He asserts that God's knowledge of creation and the actors in it comes from the Divine will and not Divine knowledge.<sup>25</sup> In proposing this solution Scotus is also establishing a paradigm in which God operates along two different wills, this distinction in wills shall be made clearer as the resolution is further explicated.

<sup>25</sup> *Duns Scotus on Divine Love: Texts and Commentary on Goodness and Freedom, God and Humans*, eds. A. Vos, H. Veldhuis, E. Decker, N.W. Den Bok and A.J. Beck (Utrecht College: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003). *Ordinatio* I 47, 178-91.

The Divine Will is operative in two different ways for Scotus: there is the will that is associated with the final causality of God and there is the will in which God acts cooperatively in all manner of human action.<sup>26</sup> For Scotus it is through the latter that God comes to know a contingent creation while still preserving human and divine freedom. Essentially, Scotus believes that the actions of each person are produced by the human will and by the divine will which acts in cooperative manner in order to institute the action. Because it is necessary for God to act in cooperation with all human action through the Divine will, God is omniscient. In one sense, it is God's action and not God's intellect that is key to God's knowledge.

This of course leads to some serious questions about the role of grace and the freedom of human action. But it is important to note that Scotus did not deny the role of grace and though he was charged by later commentators as a Pelagian he did not adhere to Pelagius's theory of the relation between human and divine action and was never censured for it in his own lifetime.

As stated above, in addition to the cooperative will of God there is God's will predicated of God's role as final cause. Scotus saw a connection between these two wills. While God would never will a person to sin, God, in order to preserve the dignity of freedom, acts in a cooperative way with the will of the person who is sinning. This in no way effects God's final goal of salvation for the world and the Christian people.<sup>27</sup> It is the final goal of creation that provides meaning for the rest of God's actions. Because God's will for creation has been predetermined by God through final causality, nothing can impede creation from becoming that, not even sin or sinful human actions. Therefore, God can allow (and must allow,

<sup>26</sup> *Duns Scotus on Divine Love, Ordinatio* I 46, 166-76.

<sup>27</sup> Scotus, like many of his contemporaries, did not believe in guaranteed universal salvation and therefore felt that Christians were the primary recipients of God's saving action. This does not contradict Scotus's belief in God's ability to save people of other faiths, for God has the ability to do anything. Rather this attitude is reflective of the belief that the normative path to salvation was the Christian religion.

because God has woven contingency and consequently freedom into the ontological fiber of creation) humans to act in a way contrary to the final will of God without impinging on the Divine prerogative.

Francis seems to have been keenly aware of human freedom and the choices people have the ability to make concerning their own salvation. This is most evident in the longer *Letter to the Faithful*. In this text, Francis categorizes people into two different groups, those who do penance and those who do not. While the ability to do penance is a grace from God, those who choose not to do penance are making a choice of their own free will and are not being condemned to that state by God. The will plays an important part in this text and makes two substantial appearances. The first is found in vs. 10-12. These are significant because they outline the idea that Jesus, like us, had the ability to make a choice about the death he was destined to undergo. In addition, having this choice was a source of pain for him. Francis emphasizes the agony in the garden as a sign of the struggle Jesus faced to do the will of the Father. Francis explicates Jesus' resolution by depicting it in the light of a conformity between the will of the Father and the will of the Son, "He placed his will in the will of His Father."<sup>28</sup>

The act itself is salvific in two senses, first because it redeems fallen humanity from sin and second because it provides an example for humans to follow. The example to follow is the option to exercise human will in such a way that it conforms to the will of God. When one exercises one's will in this way there are consequences. According to Francis, the person becomes the "brothers,"<sup>29</sup> of the Lord when the will of the Father is done by them. Francis certainly does not mean the person is equal with Christ, but is instead using familial language in order to stress the qualities of being a child of God the Father. A child, in this context, is one whose will is subsumed by that of the loving parent and in turn is able

<sup>28</sup> *Later Admonition and Exhortation*, v. 10, *FA:ED* 1, 46.

<sup>29</sup> *Later Admonition and Exhortation*, v. 52, 48.

to exercise the greatest possible freedom to love neighbor as well as enemy and perform acts of penance.

Obviously, Francis has not articulated a theology of the divine and human will as sophisticated as Scotus's. The fact that there are two wills, a divine one belonging to the Father that points creation toward the Kingdom, and an individual will that allows us to make choices are both key elements of Scotus's own formulation of the relationship between the Divine Plan and human freedom.

### IS SCOTUS A VOLUNTARIST?

It would seem that this is a valid question to ask after an analysis of the role Scotus placed on the Divine Will. It would seem that this model presents God in a rather arbitrary light, almost as if the decision to create and to interact with that creation is a whim. While Scotus's student, William of Ockham, will devise a theological system where God is free of restraint, Scotus does not take that approach. Instead, Scotus will construct a theology of natural law that in fact applies more to God than to creation.

Scotus's natural law theology is rooted in the first three of the Ten Commandments. While traditionally those three have been associated with how the person is to relate to God, Scotus interprets them as equally applying to the Divine itself. God must love God because God is eminently good (and therefore something deserving of the highest love) and eminently knowledgeable (and therefore capable of recognizing what is eminently good).<sup>30</sup> These three commandments, all focusing on the primary command to love God, become the foundation for the other seven commandments, as well as the ordered nature of the entire universe. Even God's absolute power is incapable of commanding anything (including the Divine self) to actively disobey these commandments. This is because such a command would contradict the very nature of the Divine itself, something even God's absolute power is

<sup>30</sup> *Lectura* 1, 17, *Duns Scotus on Divine Love*, 90-108.

incapable of doing. Though theoretically one could passively disobey the first three commandments by willing actions against the other seven commandments, those violations could never come from an active action of the will to hate what is most eminently good.

This abrogation of God's absolute power is an important distinction for Scotus and prevents the critic from formulating a voluntarist notion of Scotus's theology. This theory of natural law is far different from others' notions that relegate this concept to a consequence of the ordained nature of the universe. Scotus's concern with God's ontological simplicity and therefore God's consistency in action seems to have been the primary motivator for his formulation of natural law. To that end Scotus formulated a theology of natural law that allowed God to remain perfectly consistent (and therefore ontologically simple) while still allowing God the freedom to abrogate dietary restrictions or command the Jewish people to loot the Egyptians as they left bondage while later commanding them not to steal. Rather than posit a God who simply changed direction during the course of salvation history, Scotus found a more elegant and theologically sound explanation in removing these moral commands from the realm of natural law.

This choice to root natural law in love may also be an intentionally Franciscan choice. It would seem that Scotus's intuition follows Francis's own insight that *caritas* is the guide and rule for following in the footsteps of Jesus. Throughout the *Regula non bullata* and the *Admonitions* Francis reduces all precepts to the life and their exceptions, to charity and love. Any rule must take into account the necessity of the moment and conform to the needs of the community members in their striving to live the spirit of the rule and not just the letter.<sup>31</sup> Francis's desire to live this ethos also appears in the hagiography surrounding Francis, most notably in *The Assisi*

<sup>31</sup> This Pauline citation (from 2 Cor. 3:6) will appear only once in Francis's corpus of writings, *Admonition* 7. Yet, the theme appears in *RNB*, chapters 9 and 10. Unfortunately, a thorough study of Pauline influence in the writings of Francis has not been done and is something worth pursuing.

*Compilation*, chapter fifty, where Francis eats with a brother who was incapable of maintaining the same rigors of fasting as the others.<sup>32</sup> As one can see, the most important element of following the Rule for Francis was that it was rooted in an attitude of charity amongst those who also chose to follow it.

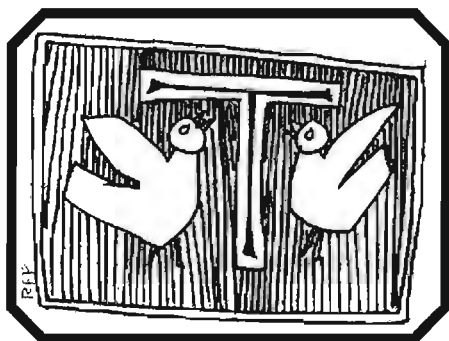
## CONCLUSION

John Duns Scotus was a schoolman, a theologian and a subtle thinker whose impact is still felt today. Francis of Assisi is one of the most universally recognized Christian figures and has been seen as a forerunner to the Italian renaissance, the patron of the environmental movement and an especially appealing Roman Catholic figure to the rest of the Christian community. These two figures shared a connection beyond affiliation to the same canonical religious order. It was a similar outlook and optimism about the human person's relation to God and the role of the creator to the created world. While each worked out this insight within the context of his own time and place in society, the underlying ethos remained remarkably consistent.

As interest in the theological work of John Duns Scotus continues to grow, understanding his Franciscan roots and the Franciscan sources he may have been exposed to will become more prominent. Already, scholars like Mary Beth Ingham have argued that a more thorough understanding of Scotus's Franciscan charism is important to the future of this field of study. This paper examined just one topic of interest, Scotus's concept of causal contingency, yet there are a number of other topics Scotus wrote on that can be examined in order to determine the degree of thematic commonality with Francis of Assisi's own writings. While most of the work done by scholars has been to find some new insights into Scotus's thinking by examining Franciscan sources, there is also the possibility that scholars of Francis's own vernacular

<sup>32</sup> This also appears in 2 *Cel* chapter 15.

theology may gain new paradigms for understanding Francis by examining Scotus. Obviously, there can be causal relationship from Scotus to Francis, but the possibility for new ways of expressing Francis's spiritual insights can also be gained. Hopefully, this work will continue, to the benefit of both Scotus and Francis scholars.



**THE TAU:  
THE MEANING OF THE CROSS  
FOR FRANCIS OF ASSISI**

**Michael F. Cusato, O.F.M.**

**A SIGNATURE – WHAT'S IN A NAME?**

One of the most important forms of authentication used in legal, commercial as well as religious documents is a person's own signature. Hand-written signatures are honored as solemn testimonies virtually equivalent to the person him/herself, an expression of the person transferred, as it were, to a piece of paper and accepted in the place of that person. The reason for this virtual equivalence is that a person's handwriting – or more specifically, a person's signature – is considered to be unique to that person, expressive of the substance of the person. Indeed, according to handwriting analysts, signatures can tell us quite a bit about their authors: their confidence or lack of confidence; their outlook on the world, be it positive or negative; their introversion or extroversion, and so on. Signatures, in short, are external signposts of the inner person, windows onto the unique inner world of the individual. Sometimes we also find that signatures are embellished with additional symbols (like a smiley face or heart) to give emphasis or coloration to one's message, to tie the message more directly to the person. And in even rarer instances, just the symbol itself – without the signature – can come to represent the person, evoking the very essence and substance of the person.

In spite of the number and variety of writings Francis of Assisi left to posterity, we have, in fact, only one example



of Francis's writing his own name.<sup>1</sup> We do have a few other autographs, that is, things we know were written by his own hand (like the famous *chartula* or the aforesaid *Letter to Brother Leo*); but no signature *per se*. However, Thomas of Celano, the first official hagiographer of the Franciscan Order, writing about the importance of the cross in the life of Francis, tells us the following in his *Treatise on the Miracles*:

It was his [Francis's] custom, established by a holy decree also for his first sons, that wherever they saw the likeness of the cross they would give it honor and due reverence. [But] He favored the sign of the Tau over all others. *With it alone he signed letters he sent, and painted it on the walls of cells everywhere.*<sup>2</sup>

Francis, in other words, used the sign of the Tau – that is, the Greek letter “T” that looked very much like a cross with a slightly bowed crossbar – both as his own *personal signature* (without his name) and also, in places where he stayed, as an *external representation* of something deeply personal and fundamental to the very core of his life. The questions raised by this preference of Francis are: *where* did Francis get the idea of using the Tau; *why* did he choose this particular symbol to represent the substance of his inner life; *what* did the Tau mean to Francis; and, therefore, *what* might it mean to those of us who call ourselves Franciscan?

#### THE FOURTH LATERAN COUNCIL (1215) AND THE TAU

Even though historians can find scattered traces of the use of the symbol of the Tau prior to the time of Francis, it is Innocent III – the pope contemporaneous to the beginnings of the Franciscan movement – who was primarily responsible for bringing the image of the Tau squarely into the symbolic

<sup>1</sup> In the opening line of his *Letter to Brother Leo*, Francis writes his own name (*Francissco*) but there is no formal signature at the end of the letter.

<sup>2</sup> 3 Cel 3.

universe of medieval Christianity.<sup>3</sup> And he did this at one particular moment in history: the opening of the Fourth Lateran Council in November 1215.

Lateran IV, the council called by Innocent III, was the most massive gathering of ecclesiastics, religious and laity assembled in the Middle Ages. And it is today regarded by historians as one of the most pastoral councils in the history of the Church. In the lead-up to the council, the pope announced that the assembly would have three primary aims.<sup>4</sup> The first – and most important – aim was to launch a new crusade, the Fifth Crusade, whose purpose would be to retake the Holy Land once again from the Muslims.<sup>5</sup> This call occurred against a backdrop of the troubled history of Muslim-Christian relations in the High Middle Ages.<sup>6</sup> Having recaptured the Holy Places from the Muslims in 1099 in the First Crusade, the Christian crusaders then lost them to the great Muslim warrior, Saladin, in 1187. The Third Crusade launched in 1189 to retake Jerusalem – the so-called crusade of the Three Kings, Frederick Barbarossa from Germany, Philippe II Augustus of France and Richard I the Lionheart of England – ended in total failure, netting virtually nothing. The Fourth Crusade, which was to be a maritime crusade, began inauspiciously: only half of the anticipated crusaders showed up in the port of Venice for the campaign, immediately thrusting its shipbuilders into severe debt. Then, when it finally did push off from Venice in 1204, the venture was detoured from its destination not once but twice. First to Yugoslavia purely for reasons of plunder (to

<sup>3</sup> See the little volume of Damien Vorreux, *A Franciscan Symbol: The Tau, History, Theology and Iconography*, transl. M. Archer and P. Lachance (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1979).

<sup>4</sup> The papal bull calling the council with its primary aim of the crusade is *Quia maior*, PL 218, p. 817-22; an English translation can be found in L. and J. Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: Idea and Reality, 1095-1274* (London: 1981), 118-24.

<sup>5</sup> For an overview of the Fifth Crusade, see James Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade, 1213-1221* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986).

<sup>6</sup> For general overview of this matter from a Franciscan perspective see J. Hoeberichts, *Francis and Islam* (Quincy: Franciscan Press, 1977), 3-42.

recuperate the lost revenues of the Venetians); and then to Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, where the crusaders, who ostensibly went to reverse a coup d'état, overthrew and ejected its Christian rulers and then seized the lands for themselves, establishing there the Latin Empire of Constantinople. In other words, by 1215, the crusading ideal – if one can even speak in such lofty terms – had been largely discredited. Innocent III now aimed to rehabilitate it by rallying all of Christendom to join together in a successful campaign to retake Jerusalem once and for all. This was the major thrust of the council.

The second and third aims of the council can be summarized quite succinctly: to root out heresy within the Church (most notably the heresy of the Cathari in southern France) and to reform the Church itself by reviving the faith and holiness of its members. In the grand scheme of the council, however, the success of the first aim would depend on the success of second and third aims; for only a renewed and purified Christendom would be able to carry forward with the blessing of God a successful recapturing of the Holy Places.

Innocent announced these three aims in an historic opening sermon on November 11, based on the text of Luke 22:15 in which Jesus tells his disciples: *"I have greatly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."* The pontiff then goes on to talk about the three aims of the council as a kind of "triple Passover." First, the council would announce a physical Passover by launching a physical passing-over of the Mediterranean from the West to Jerusalem in the East in a new crusade. Second, it would announce a spiritual Passover by urging the conversion of the individual from sin to holiness. And third, it would announce a sacramental Passover by reestablishing the centrality of the Eucharist in Christian worship – the Passover of the Lord – in the passing-over of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. Hence, three Passovers: a physical passing-over in the crusade; a sacramental passing-over in the Eucharist;

and a spiritual passing-over in the conversion to holiness of all good Christian men and women.

Having announced the three great aims of the council, Innocent then proceeded to give the whole conciliar program a symbol – a logo, as it were – that would sum up and convey the meaning of these three great thrusts. The symbol that he chose to stand for all three conciliar aims was the Greek letter Tau. The question is: why did the Roman pontiff choose a Greek letter to be the symbol of the whole conciliar program? Innocent III drew this symbol from chapter 9 of the book of the Prophet Ezekiel. In that passage, destroying angels are being summoned by God to wreak destruction upon the city of Jerusalem. Then, a man dressed in linen is instructed by God:

Pass through the city [of Jerusalem] and mark an X on the foreheads of those who moan and groan over all the abominations that are practiced within it ... [And then the destroying angels are warned]: do not touch any of those marked with the X.

This "X" is the Hebrew letter "Tau." And the Hebrew Tau that looks like an "X" is simply a mark intended to convey something like "X marks the spot." Thus, in Ezekiel, the mark of the X – the mark of the Tau – is the mark placed upon the foreheads of those who by their lives have separated themselves from the sinful ways of the world and who, by this very fact, will find themselves pleasing in the sight of God and spared from his wrath.

Now: when the Hebrew Bible comes to be translated into Greek, the Hebrew letter Tau, shaped like an "X" is rendered by the Greek letter Tau which is shaped more like a "T." This is the sign placed on the foreheads of the elect in the Book of Revelation.<sup>7</sup> And in a Christian context, the Tau thus becomes transposed into the symbol of the cross – the cross

<sup>7</sup> The symbol of the Tau on the foreheads of the elect in Revelation is, of course, a reworking of the symbol from the Book of the prophet Ezekiel.

of Christ: the central symbol of Christian life and the sign of salvation.

But how will Innocent III use the image of the Tau cross as the symbol of the three aims of the council?

First, the Tau cross – the cross of Christ – will be the mark placed upon the clothing of the crusaders who go off to Jerusalem. Already in 1204, Innocent had referred to the crusaders in Latin as the *crucesignati*, literally, those “signed with the cross” – the cross of Christ. Now, eleven years later, in 1215, Innocent explicitly identifies the Tau cross with the cross of Christ. For, just like Jesus in the Gospels turns and goes to Jerusalem to embrace his cross, now those who pass over to Jerusalem will go marked with the cross and, Innocent claims, protected by the cross. For even if death be their lot, they, like Christ, will pass-over from death to life eternal. For the cross is the sign of salvation. The Tau, in short, is the sign of the Christian crusade.

Second, the Tau cross – or the cross in the form of the Tau – also becomes the sign of the Eucharist: the sacrament that was repudiated by the Cathari heretics. How does Innocent associate Tau with Eucharist? Not only did the opening page of the canon of the Mass as it appeared in the altar books of the Middle Ages present to the celebrant a gigantic illuminated “T” for the first words of the canon “*Te igitur*”; more importantly, the Eucharist is itself the Passover of the Lord, the passing-over of the Lord, from life into death and death into life, consummated upon the cross of Calvary. And those who receive it likewise have the possibility of receiving salvation. The Tau is thus also the sign of the Eucharist – the new and eternal Passover.

And third and most importantly for our purposes, the Tau also becomes the sign of the conversion of life – the spiritual Passover – to which every Christian is called in baptism. These are those men and women who choose to distance themselves, as it says in Ezekiel, from the abominations that are practiced within the earthly city. These are the righteous, the elect, the chosen, the saved. It is the sign of those who

have rejected worldly ways and who now live in holiness and integrity.

So to recap: the Tau is the sign of the crusade, the sign of the Eucharist and the sign of conversion.

#### LATERAN IV, THE TAU AND FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Given the rich, multi-layered associations given to the Tau cross by Innocent III at Lateran IV, what does this have to do with Francis – and with us?

In all probability, as the leader of a fledgling religious movement in the Church, Francis would have been present – at least for some time – at the Fourth Lateran Council in Rome. Beyond that, we have very little information about what he may or may not have done during the sessions of the council or even whether he attended any of them. What seems certain, however, is that, because he was there at some point and was exposed to the grand themes of the council, he took them to heart and sought to implement over the next ten years of his life much of the spirit of the Council.<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, it is virtually certain that Francis’s personal appropriation of the symbol of the Tau – to the point where it functioned as his personal signature – is directly related to the prominence given it by Innocent III at Lateran IV. In other words, the use of the Tau is not original to Francis; but neither is his understanding and use of the Tau exactly identical to that of the council’s. Put another way: while there are convergences between Francis and the council’s understanding of the Tau symbol, there is also a notable divergence which, when examined, will help us to understand what the Tau meant to Francis and what it did not – indeed, what it *could* not – mean to him.

Let’s start with the convergences. The most obvious resonance between the spirituality of Francis of Assisi and the conciliar program is surely on the matter of the spiritual

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Franco Cardini, “Il concilio lateranense IV e la ‘fraternitas’ francescana,” *Studi francescani* 78 (1981): 239-50.

Passover, that is, the conversion of the individual from a life of sin to a life of holiness. For Francis, the Tau is first and foremost the sign of personal conversion; the sign of a conscious choice to live a new way of life consistent with and in keeping with the life of Jesus as presented to us in the Gospels.

This fundamental conviction is rooted, of course, in the experience of his encounter among the lepers: the seminal experience of his *own* conversion. In that landmark encounter, Francis – as has been stated elsewhere<sup>9</sup> – discovered for the first time in his life, through the mysterious workings of grace, that all men and women without exception, even the seemingly most vile and repulsive among us, are brothers and sisters one to another, come from the hand – each one of us – of the same Creator God. *This* is the fundamental insight of Francis's life: his discovery of the universal fraternity of all creation, whereby Francis came to recognize the fundamental sacredness and inviolable dignity of the human person – of every human creature – simply because each one of us has been made by God and loved by God. This belief in the universal fraternity of all creatures – human beings pre-eminently, and then extending outward into the created cosmos itself – is the cardinal grounding of Francis's life and it is the motivation explaining every major action in his life thereafter. Moreover, everything – every action, attitude or behavior – that ruptures the bonds of this sacred fraternity of creatures between us is what Francis means by “sin.” And to understand what he means by “sin” is to understand what he means when he says, in his *Testament*, that he then began to “do penance.” The doing of penance to undo the consequences of their sin, in the Franciscan family,

<sup>9</sup> Most accessibly: M. Cusato, “Hermitage or Marketplace: The Search for an Authentic Franciscan locus in the World,” *True Followers of Justice: Identity, Insertion and Itinerancy among the Early Franciscans*. Spirit and Life, 10 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2000), 1-30, esp. 10-13; and, idem, “The Renunciation of Power as a Foundational Theme in Early Franciscan History,” *The Propagation of Power in the Medieval West*, eds. Martin Gosman, Arjo Vanderjagt and Jan Veenstra. Mediaevalia Groningana, 23 (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1997), 265-86, esp. 274-75.

is quite simply the distancing of oneself from everything that threatens to break the bonds uniting this human fraternity, setting human beings over each other and against each other. This is the specific coloration of the minorite notion of conversion.<sup>10</sup>

And conversion to this specific way of life, this manner of fraternal living, came to be symbolized for Francis in the sign of the Tau: the cross of the Christ of the gospels. The cross is, for Francis, the sign of salvation and healing of the human fraternity: not merely in the sense of something rewarded to us in the afterlife but rather and more significantly the healing of human existence – the healing of human relationships – by concrete, life-affirming actions, done by us, for each other, in the here and now. The cross thus exemplifies for Francis the fundamental values of love, mercy, forgiveness and peace which Jesus himself lived on this earth in definitively showing us the right way to live as intended by God. His was a life of values which fostered – not denigrated or destroyed – the innate dignity of the human person and the bonds of respect between human beings. This way of life – this life of penance – brings to life the Kingdom of God here on earth. And yet, paradoxically, this same way of life and values is what led Jesus to his death. And yet, even in that moment, he opened his arms on the cross, refusing to reply to the violence done to him with a reciprocal act of violence, and by that very act of love was vindicated by God and, again paradoxically, brought life through his death.

The Tau, in other words, is not just the sign of conversion; it is the sign of the life of penance, the penitential lifestyle, and those “actions that produce fruits worthy of penance”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Cf. M. Cusato, “To Do Penance / *Facere Poenitentiam*,” *The Cord* Vol. 57, no. 1 (2007): 3-24.

<sup>11</sup> The phrase is used by Francis several times in his writings, emphasizing that the inner attitude of conversion must express itself outwardly in concrete actions restorative of the human family. Cf. the longer version of the so-called *Letter to the Faithful*, v/ 25 and *RNB* 21. v.3.

that flow from concrete human decisions not to harm by any form of violence any creature who is a brother or sister.

One can now understand why Francis will affix the Tau as his personal signature at the conclusion of his letters. The Tau encapsulated as it were the very substance of his life: his renewed life in Christ. And when he wrote, he used the Tau to serve as a reminder to his brothers of the very life *they* had chosen – the life of penance – in becoming *fratres minores* (Friars Minor). Hence, the Tau was a sign to himself and a sign to his brothers of what they had vowed to live. But it was also a call to others *beyond* the Order – religious, clergy, lay men and women – to likewise enter upon this life of penance as the specific coloration of the Christian life implicit in their baptism. And finally, this call to penitential existence – of respect for the human fraternity of creatures – was also a call to those *even beyond the Christian faith* – Muslims, for example – to live a similar kind of life, respectful of the sacrality of the human fraternity. One can, therefore, understand why Francis would mark the walls of the places where he stayed: not as a kind of talisman to ward off evil but as a constant reminder of the life he had chosen to live which, if lived with integrity, would bring healing to the human community. In short, the Tau cross was the sign of the evangelical life – the cross-in-action – lived in the now.

Moving briefly onto a second aim of the council – the sacramental Passover, that is the revival of belief in the centrality of Eucharist to Christian life – one can quickly say two things. First, it should be obvious that in the later writings of Francis – that is to say, after his return from the Holy Land in September 1220 and during the six years that remained to him – the founder frequently lifted up the theme of the mystery of the Incarnation in the Eucharist and most particularly the care and respect all should show towards the sacrament and its associated sacramentals. Although he does not seem to have ever used the symbol of the Tau explicitly in reference to the Eucharist as did the council, it is obvious that Francis was surely deeply affected by the

council's placing of the Eucharistic mystery at the center of Christian worship.

However, it is when we come to examine the first aim of the council – the calling of the Fifth Crusade – that we notice a point of stark divergence from the conciliar program and its crusading ideology. It is indeed striking that not only does Francis *never* speak about the crusade in a single one of his writings but that he never – *not once* – adopts the council's association of the Tau cross with the crusading movement. This is compelling evidence – evidence of a conscious and deliberate attempt of Francis not to associate the cross of Christ with the crusades, contrary to the council and contrary to over a hundred years of the Church doing just that. Indeed, the word itself – “crusade” – comes from the Latin word for the cross (*crux, crucis*) and, as was said earlier, Innocent III was fond of calling the crusaders *crucesignati* – those signed with the cross. And yet Francis would not associate himself with this typology.

Why not? It is, of course, impossible to enter here into an extensive examination of Francis's opposition to the Fifth Crusade in 1219: when he and his companion, Illuminato, went into the camp of the crusaders outside the city of Damietta in Egypt and attempted to put a halt to the assault being planned by the crusading army, only to find themselves mocked and brushed aside by the crusaders.<sup>12</sup> But Francis's vision was much larger than this one crusade; he was against *all* such crusading efforts.<sup>13</sup> Why? Suffice it to say here: human warfare – indeed, all forms of violence – is a testimony to human failure, to our inability (or lack of will) to find creative life-enhancing solutions to difficult, sometimes intractable human problems. War is an assault on human creaturehood; the shedding of blood, a violation of the sacredness of the bonds of the human fraternity created

<sup>12</sup> The primary account of this episode is 2 Celano 30.

<sup>13</sup> I addressed this topic at the Seventh National Franciscan Forum in Colorado Springs (8-10 June, 2007) which had as its theme: “Daring to Embrace the Other: Franciscans and Muslims in Dialogue.” This paper – and a companion piece – is to be published in the series of Franciscan Institute Publications, *Spirit and Life, Volume XII* (forthcoming, 2008).

and desired by God. It is, in short, the exemplification of evil and the personification of sin itself – the sin of human persons. Even when sanctioned by centuries of tradition and pronouncements in its favor by the Church, war and violence, according to Francis, is a catastrophic testimony of the human failure to live as God intends us to live. It is the antithesis of the life of penance and it is the precise opposite of the meaning of the life-giving cross. For Francis, the Tau was the pre-eminent sign of the non-violent Jesus whose way of life was the only way to bring about healing in the human fraternity.

Therefore, it should not now surprise us that Francis would studiously refuse to associate the Tau – the cross of healing – with the campaigns of war, no matter how highly touted by the Churchmen of his day, including the pope and the council. On this they differed: sharply, quietly but profoundly. It is perhaps no wonder then that Francis's radical vision was quickly and conveniently pushed into the background – not just by the Church but by the friars themselves. The vision was just too difficult to sustain in the face of the larger forces of history. And yet the story of Francis and the Tau does not end here; there is one final chapter to tell.

#### **AN EPILOGUE: FRANCIS, LA VERNA AND THE TAU**

When Francis returned from the Holy Land in mid-1220, he was actually quite ill.<sup>14</sup> After his resignation as minister of all the friars during the emergency chapter which he called in September of that year, he moved progressively further into the background of events happening in the Order which he had founded. And yet he continued to attempt to have an influence upon his friars through a series of letters and prayers which he wrote – and signed with the Tau – with

<sup>14</sup> He had contracted malaria, suffered from a debilitating eye ailment and suffering the effects of a form of leprosy.

the help of friar-secretaries and through his work on the definitive Rule.

By late summer of 1224, his health had deteriorated considerably. And yet, at that time, we see him making an arduous journey with a few faithful companions to the mountain known as La Verna in the hills of eastern Tuscany. As is well known, it is here that Francis received the gift of the stigmata “on or around the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross” in September 1224.<sup>15</sup> After having received what appeared to be the nail marks of Christ in his own flesh as a result of his profound meditation upon the cross of Christ, we are told by Brother Leo that Francis composed the *Praises of God* as a prayer of thanksgiving for this astonishing gift. He then turned the tiny piece of parchment over – what has come to be called the *chartula* of St. Francis – and then wrote out the blessing of Aaron (from Numbers 21), adding what looks like a recumbent head *with a cross in the form of a Tau* emerging from the mouth of this figure, all surrounded by a kind of border, with some oddly placed words underneath and through the Tau cross.

In a recently formulated hypothesis – in the context of a much larger article on the stigmata<sup>16</sup> – I have proposed that the enigmatic head sketched near the bottom of the backside of this *chartula* is actually a representation done by Francis of the Sultan al-Kamil whom he had met and conversed with in Damietta during a suspension of hostilities between the two armies in September 1219. The question is: why would the head of the Sultan be on the backside of what most commentators call the *Blessing to Brother Leo*? The long answer, requiring more demonstration, is that maybe this *chartula* of Francis was not really intended as a blessing for Leo at all. Maybe it was intended for something or someone

<sup>15</sup> The expression is the one used by Bonaventure (LM XIII, 3).

<sup>16</sup> M. Cusato, “Of Snakes and Angels: The Mystical Experience behind the Stigmatization Narrative of 1 Celano,” *The Stigmata of Francis of Assisi: New Studies, New Perspectives* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2006), 29-74.



else.<sup>17</sup> But the short answer is this: namely the reason for going to pray on La Verna was, I believe, prompted by the news that a new crusading venture was being organized – this time with the help of the mighty German Emperor, Frederick II – whose aim was to crush al-Kamil's forces once and for all in Egypt. Francis, I believe, went to La Verna with a group of companions – including Illuminato, the friar who had accompanied him into the tent of the Sultan – profoundly saddened and discouraged that, once again, blood was going to be shed between two peoples and covered over with a veneer of religious justification.

On this mountain, Francis and his friars entered into a "Lent of St. Michael" – the Defender in Battle – on behalf of those who would soon find themselves in harm's way, including Malik al-Kamil. In the course of this prayer, Francis, intensely meditating on the mystery of the cross "on or around the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross," received the stigmata, the marks of the cross literally exploding out of him and onto his own flesh. Dazed by this experience yet grateful for this strange gift, Francis wrote the *Praises of God*: a simple prayer which is in fact remarkably reminiscent of the *99 Beautiful Names of Allah*. In other words, Francis at this moment was praying in an Islamic mode precisely because the fate of the Sultan and his brothers were weighing so heavily on his heart. Then he turns the parchment over and writes a prayer of protection – not for Leo (not just yet) – but for the Sultan, praying: "May the Lord bless and guard you ..." Finally, he draws a figure of the head of the sultan near the bottom of the page and traces a *Tau cross coming out of the mouth of this figure*. The question is why; what does this mean?

Some scholars, believing the figure to be the head of Brother Leo, prefer to interpret the Tau as a prayer of protection for Leo (who was, it is true, often beset by temptations). But the cross of Christ does not promise protection from harm; rather, it is the sign of the evangelical life lived in this world

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, and reiterated in my article: "From Damiette to La Verna: The Impact upon Francis of His Experience in Egypt" in the *Spirit and Life* volume (see above, n. 11).

which promises life *even through death*. Moreover, the Tau on the *chartula* is not placed on the forehead of the figure but is actually emerging from its mouth. My hypothesis is that Francis, fearful for the fate of his brother al-Kamil, is praying, desperately, for him: that he confess the cross of Christ before it was too late lest he, in death, be lost for all eternity to perdition, not having acknowledged Christ. If true, this is a deeply poignant prayer for the Sultan.

But there is more: if, in fact, the Tau encapsulates within itself the concrete values of the life of penance which Francis had embraced and which became the content of his preaching wherever he went, including among the Muslims, then the Tau placed upon the lips of the Sultan would also mean that Francis was praying that he, too, like him and like Christ, would hold fast to the way of non-violence *even in this moment of violence being done to him* and thereby preserve the human community from further bloodshed and destruction. For even in death, the cross teaches us, life and salvation will yet come. For only "in this sign – the cross as a sign of peace and not of warfare – will you conquer."<sup>18</sup>

The Tau is thus far more than a nice wooden symbol that hangs around the necks of good and well-meaning Franciscans. It is, rather, the most profound sign of the life of penance which we all profess with its pledge of non-violent living for the sake of the healing of the human family.

<sup>18</sup> I turn on its head the famous words which, according to Lactantius, were "heard" in 313 by Constantine, the pagan military commander, at the Milvian Bridge outside Rome which prompted him to trace the cross of Christ (*labarum*) on the shields of his soldiers as they advanced – victoriously – to defeat the ruling augustus, Maxentius.

**THE OFFICE OF THE PASSION**  
**BY FRANCIS OF ASSISI**

**Ruth Evans, O.S.C.**

**INTRODUCTION**

At first sight *the Office of the Passion* written by Francis of Assisi appears to offer little prospect of a fresh perspective on the suffering, death and Resurrection of Jesus. The only freedom that the composer of the office has permitted himself is a freedom of arrangement. Psalm verses are plucked from their original context in the Vulgate Psalter and introduced into a new sequence. Occasionally the composer selects two fragments from verses that have no link in the book of psalms and combines them to create his own original verse. Sometimes he clarifies his intention by adding snatches of New Testament scripture to his collage. Occasionally he alters or adds a word for his own reasons.

Such a severe constraint in artistic form appears unpromising. It is also a strikingly unassuming choice. Even if we did not know that the composer was Francis of Assisi, we might infer that he had little interest in a literary form which would draw attention to his own artistic achievement. Strictly speaking, the words he is using are not his own.

But it is not so simple. The phrases which Francis borrows become the instrument of his thought through the skill of his application. They become the vehicle which communicates his profound understanding of Christ's Passion and Resurrection. His little office is not the well-intentioned but inexpressive string of well-worn phrases that might have been predicted, but a composition marked

throughout by the coherence and integrity of the composer's thought. Francis shows himself to be remarkably adept at selecting psalm verses which cast light on particular details of Jesus' journey towards death and resurrection. The result is that the re-assembled psalm verses cohere into an original narrative. They reflect and penetrate their new context. They say something in unison which they did not say apart.

There is in fact a poignant parallel between the constraint of the literary form and the subject matter of those psalms that focus on Christ's Passion. They portray the state of mind of a man who must suffer, say farewell to life and die within the constraint of other people's choices.

In his office, Francis succeeds in creating a convincing portrait of the inner world of Jesus as he struggles through his Passion. The style is so unassuming it is easy not to notice what an achievement this is. Writers on the Passion notably try and fail to portray what it was that Jesus actually suffered in his inmost being. Sometimes they give graphic descriptions of physical torture, without offering an in-depth portrait of the person who is suffering. Or they attempt to describe what Jesus thought and felt during his Passion without, however, necessarily ringing true. By contrast, there is an authenticity about the terse sequence of verses that Francis chooses and the sequence of thought and feeling which they express. The series of scenes through which Jesus passes creates an almost cinematic effect. The pictures that are unreeling, however, are not primarily the external realities of capture, torture and crucifixion. What Francis reveals is the traumatized inner world of the victim as he absorbs blow after blow and struggles for the resources to carry on. The office is not obviously emotive, the style is austere. It inspires compassion for Jesus, not by manipulating our emotions, but by its insight and truth. Rather than concentrating on Jesus' physical torment, although this is not ignored, it illuminates with startling beauty and authenticity the less obvious and less easily expressed interior suffering of the Son of God. It illuminates the scarcely imaginable toll that his suffering and death took on his inmost being.

The perspective of the office as a whole is profoundly eschatological. The victorious outcome of what Jesus is accomplishing is not in question. At the same time, the human experience of Jesus as he confronts evil is never less than vivid and immediate. There is a near-perfect balance between awareness of Jesus' human agony and awareness of his ultimate triumph.

The psalms considered here are the first seven in the sequence. The first six describe Jesus' Passion and death. The seventh is a psalm of exultation in the Resurrection. Francis sets the scene for his narrative in psalm one, the psalm about Gethsemane.

#### PSALM ONE

*O God, I have told you of my life;  
you have placed my tears in your sight.<sup>1</sup>*

The aspect of place, where Jesus is positioned, is an important concept in Francis's office. As outcast and condemned criminal, Jesus will be placed at the choice of his tormentors. As Son of God, he is placed in the Father's sight and is destined to be placed in glory. Throughout the narrative of suffering, he is certain of that glory. This creates a dialectic between the tragic outcome of Jesus' earthly experience and the eschatological outcome that is assured by God. In verse one, the text opens with an indication that the choice of the Father for the Son will determine the outcome. Nonetheless, there is a tension, a crisis. This is due to the fact that Jesus is not offered an escape. He must encounter the evil that opposes him.

Jesus is aware that he has accounted for his life to God. The first verb of the psalm is *annuntiavi*, I have made known, I have proclaimed, I have given an account. For this reason he remains poised, even as he contemplates what lies ahead. Thus the context within which Francis sets his narrative of

pain and glory is the relationship between the Father and the Son, the dialogue between them. The Son refers his life to the Father. The Father sees the tears of the Son.

In the next four verses of the psalm, Jesus reviews his predicament.

*All my enemies plotted evil things against me; they  
conspired together.*

*They repaid me evil for good and hatred for my love.*

*Instead of loving me, they slandered me, but I continued  
to pray.*

*My holy Father, King of heaven and earth, do not leave  
me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.*

This glimpse into a history of suffering and supplication to the Father gives the opening of the narrative depth. Traditionally, the crisis in Gethsemane is suggested by Jesus' representation to himself of what he has to undergo. Francis adds a note of psychological realism by reminding us that Jesus' dread of what he must face is intensified by what he has already experienced in the way of ingratitude and betrayal. The opening verse inserts the reader into a continuum of suffering. The man, Jesus, is shown in his historical context, as suffering within time. The past has taken its toll upon his resources. He struggles within the present. He assesses the future in the light of the past and shrinks from further suffering.

Evil has created a paradoxical situation in which good is repaid with evil and love with hatred. There are many paradoxes like this in the *Office of the Passion*. By depicting the deliberate frustration and abuse of Christ's love, Francis shows the psychological crucifixion that precedes and accompanies his physical crucifixion. His interior response is to turn to the Father in an act of trust.

Events develop between the first four verses of the psalm and the second four. The first quatrain expresses the hero's awareness of the evil forces accumulating against him. In verse five, the evil that is dreaded appears. Francis appreciates the reality of evil, its objective power. He introduces a note of intimacy into the desolate scene by adding Jesus' private

<sup>1</sup> The translation is taken from Dominique Gagnan's translation in his article "The Office of the Passion," *Greyfriars Review*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1993.

name for God, taken from the Gethsemane scene in St. Matthew's Gospel, *Pater mi* and from St. John's Gospel 17:11 *Pater sancte* to the verse that he borrows from psalm 21. In this way Francis alters the appeal to God into something more personal and profound. He also adds the phrase, *rex caeli et terrae* (king of heaven and earth) emphasizing the sovereignty of God at the scene of his Son's abandonment.<sup>2</sup> Strangely, almost disconcertingly, at the moment of imminent arrest there is a glimpse of triumph. Jesus receives an assurance of the Father's immediate care.

*Let my enemies be turned back, on whatever day I shall  
call upon you, for now I know that you are my God.*

Francis may well have been thinking of the arrest scene in St. John when Jesus' enemies momentarily fall down. This sudden shift in perspective is characteristic of the multi-dimensional nature of Francis's narrative. There is a balance that is never lost between his awareness of Jesus' distress and his awareness of Jesus' security in the Father's love. But the triumph that is glimpsed is not for this world. In verses seven and eight he proceeds to show Jesus' suffering as he enters the distorting world of his captors' choices.

*My friends and my neighbours have drawn near  
against me and have come to a stop; those who were  
close to me have stayed far away.  
You have driven my acquaintances far from me; they  
have made me an abomination to them; I have been  
betrayed and I have not fled.*

At the opening of the psalm, evil oppresses the hero's consciousness. At the point of arrest it claims power over his body. We see the test to the protagonist's faith in the Father who has placed his tears in his sight, now that he cannot occupy any physical space except the one chosen by his captors. Francis uses the same verb *ponere* (to place) in verse eight to express Jesus' position of captivity as he did to express the position of his tears before God in verse one,

<sup>2</sup> The original psalm verse states merely: *Do not leave me for trouble is near and there is no one to help.*

*posuerunt me abominationem sibi*. Literally, *they have placed me as an abomination to them*. There is an implicit contrast between the environment of recognition chosen for Jesus by his Father and the environment chosen by his enemies. As Son of God, he is eternally secure. As a man, his fate is circumscribed by the choices of other men.

Jesus within the psalm is shown as very human in his need to cling to and remind himself of the fact that he is present to the Father. As Son of God, he has enjoyed intimacy with the Father of all eternity. On the lips of the man Jesus in Gethsemane, the need for this intimacy becomes a plea for reassurance in the face of his abandonment. Through repetition, the psalm emphasizes the isolation of Jesus as he is distanced from human contact. In the last two verses Christ appeals to God to attend to him.

*Holy Father, do not take away your help from me; my  
God, come to my aid.*

*Come to my help Lord, God of my salvation.*

In verse nine Francis unites two pleas from different psalm verses to reinforce the intensity of the appeal. The appeal has a human urgency. The verb *respicere* used in the second half of verse nine, *Deus meus ad auxilium meum respice* means to look back upon, to take notice of, to have regard for, to succour. The earnestness of Jesus' appeal for the solicitude of God poignantly suggests how far he is from the solicitude of men. In verse ten Jesus asks God to *intende* to his appeals, literally to strain towards him.

## PSALM TWO

Psalm two describes Christ's condemnation to death before the Sanhedrin. It opens with exactly the same phrase with which psalm one closes, *Domine Deus salutis meae*. This repetition of a phrase before and after an intervening lapse of time skillfully indicates an interim of pain. The repetition of Jesus' appeal hints at the strain upon his powers of

endurance. Time has passed and yet evidently there has been no alleviation of his suffering.

*Lord, God of my salvation, day and night I have called to you.*

*Let my prayer enter into your sight, incline your ear to my prayer.*

*Look at my soul and free it; because of my enemies, rescue me.*

In verse two, God is invoked using the physical images of sight and hearing. The theme of place recurs. The words *enter* and *sight*, imply that the Father's presence is a place into which the suffering man's prayers can penetrate. From his place of abandonment, Jesus thinks about a place of communion with the Father. In the face of not having anywhere he can live, he needs to represent to himself a place where he is received. The Son humbly asks the Father for the solicitude that has always been his.

In verses four and five, Mary, his mother, is introduced as a place of original reassurance. With her are identified Jesus' memories of security and belonging upon the earth. She is the place where he was originally safe.

*For you are the one who drew me out of the womb, my hope from my mother's breasts; I am cast upon you from the womb.*

*From my mother's womb you are my God, do not leave me.*

God is invoked as the one who gave his blessing to this first place of reassurance. The tangible nature of God's involvement with the critical moments of childbirth is suggested by the verbs in verse four, reminding us that Jesus' ultimate guarantee of security is with his Father.

*Quoniam tu es, qui abstraxisti me de ventre, spes mea ab uberibus matris meae, in te proiectus sum ex utero.*

The energetic verb *abstraxisti*, to drag away from or separate, casts God in the role of midwife, as does *proiectus sum* (projected into), which presents God as the one who

catches the baby as he emerges from his mother's womb. Jesus recalls images that anchor him in the world of his established values, a world in which God is an active participator. Jesus, the uprooted man, about to be condemned to death and destined for a cross which will separate him from the earth returns to memories of belonging to his mother, of rootedness within the created world.

Like other men who are about to die, Jesus feels the need to review his end in the light of his beginning. At times of danger and distress people sometimes assume a fetal position. Jesus recalls the safety of his mother's womb at the moment when he is about to be condemned as *free among the dead*.

*You know my disgrace and my confusion and my fear.*

*All those who torment me are in your sight; my heart expected abuse and misery.*

*And I looked for someone to grieve together with me and there was no one; for someone to console me and I found no one.*

*O God, the wicked have risen against me and the assembly of the mighty has sought my life; they have not placed you in their sight.*

*I am numbered among those who go down into the pit; I have become as someone without help, free among the dead.*

The psalm offers different perspectives for our contemplation. The theme of the sight of God, which has already occurred twice within the office, recurs in verse seven. God sees all those who afflict the prisoner. By contrast, we see in verse nine that the enemies have not placed God in their sight. This refusal to enter into relationship with God and its cost is seen through the suffering perspective of the Son who is also aware that the Father sees him.

Verse eight describes how the condemned man looks for someone who will turn to him in his need and no one does. At the end of verse five, shrinking from the isolation that greets him, Jesus implores God *ne discesseris a me* (do not leave

me). His deep need for help is greeted with a cruel silence. In verse ten he finds himself alone, *inter mortuos liber*. This phrase, *free among the dead*, is a horrible parody of the freedom that is needed, the freedom to live and communicate with others. It contrasts also with the security of the baby, lovingly drawn from the mother's womb and placed upon her breasts. As a child, Jesus, like other children, was dependent on his parents for the conditions that permit growth. Francis does not here describe Christ's status as a condemned man primarily in terms of the violent death assigned to him. He emphasizes Christ's emotional agony. The death sentence is described as ostracization.<sup>3</sup>

The reference to the baby reminds us that this sentence is the culmination of a life history. One of the themes of the little office up to this point has been the loss of liberty. The condemned man is "free" in the sense that no one takes responsibility for him or cares about the outcome of his life. Verse eight expresses the longing for a comforter who never comes. Through the arrangement of his verses, Francis associates the pain of this longing with the sentencing to death.

Verse nine points to the fact that the scene which Francis is describing is the trial before the Sanhedrin. The word used for assembly is *synagoga* (synagogue).

At the moment when the death sentence is passed, the moment where even the notion of justice seems on the point of collapse, Jesus turns to his Father and in a movement of love affirms his faith.

*You are my most Holy Father, my King and my God.  
Come to my aid Lord God of my salvation.*

The words of verse eleven are not, as we might expect, words of entreaty. They are a statement about what is his.

<sup>3</sup> In his deep awareness of the suffering of abandoned people, Francis must have drawn on his contact with outcasts and his own chosen status as an outcast. Like Jesus at this moment, the lepers in Francis's society were marginalized and consigned to a living death. In his *Testament* Francis says that the decisive moment in his conversion was the moment when God inspired him to show mercy to lepers. He links the incident to his departure from the world.

In the face of losing everything Jesus makes a three-fold affirmation.

*Tu es sanctissimus pater meus, Rex meus et Deus meus.*

Francis intensifies the verse by adding the phrase, *Tu es sanctissimus pater meus*, to the verse fragment that he borrows from Psalm 43. In the face of the horror of what evil can do, the relationship between Son and Father retains its integrity. Stripped of his social identity, Jesus retains his identity within his relationship to the Father. Thus in the depths of suffering the Son and the Father meet. We are left marvelling at the magnitude of love between them that allows a salvific act at such cost.

Finally, taking up all that has been suffered into patient entreaty, Jesus implores God for assistance. The fact that the psalm ends exactly where it started, with the phrase *Domine Deus salutis meae*, emphasizes the theme of patience in the face of relentless suffering. It is the same verse that ended the first psalm.

### PSALM THREE

In the third psalm of the sequence there is a change of perspective. It is described in Laurent Gallant and André Cirino's edition of the office as *A Morning Interlude*, a title that pinpoints the way that the psalm steps back from the narrative sequence of psalms one and two.

It would be too strong to say that psalm three breaks away from the sequence of pain that has been established. The pain and sense of oppression are still there but there is a shift of perspective. Psalm three shows the protagonist already rejoicing in the certainty of victory, even as he watches the trap that ensnares him move to its conclusion.

Francis makes use of different perspectives within his office to illustrate the depth and multi-faceted nature of the Passion narrative. He constructs psalms with different emphases to demonstrate truths that are not in conflict but



*The Cord*, 57.3 (2007)

which are difficult to express simultaneously. Interestingly, the psalm cost Francis less creative effort than the other psalms in the sequence considered here. Apart from his decision to include verse 18 from Psalm 17 as a substitute for a verse and a half in the original psalm, the entire psalm is taken from Psalm 56. Even though the psalm is not Francis's own composition, it can nonetheless be considered as chosen by Francis to express an aspect of Christ's redemptive death. The relaxation of creative effort corresponds with a moment of reduced tension within the darkening story. The psalm pauses within the narrative sequence of psalms one, two, four, five and six. Perhaps it refers to a moment of solitude granted to Jesus during his ordeal. Like a darkened stage suddenly filled with light, we are presented with truths which have always been there but which are suddenly illuminated before our eyes.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for my  
soul trusts in you.  
And in the shadow of your wings I will hope until  
wickedness passes by.  
I will cry to my most Holy Father, the Most High God,  
who has done good to me.  
He has sent from heaven and delivered me; He has  
disgraced those who trampled upon me.  
God has sent His mercy and His truth; He has snatched  
my life from the strongest of my enemies and from those  
who hated me, for they were too powerful for me.  
They prepared a trap for my feet and bowed down my  
soul.  
They dug a pit before my face and fell into it  
themselves.  
My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready; I will sing  
and chant a psalm.  
Arise, my glory, arise psalter and harp, I will arise at  
dawn.  
I will proclaim you among the peoples, O Lord, I will  
chant a psalm to you among the nations.  
Because your mercy is exalted even to the skies, and*

*your truth even to the clouds.*

*Be exalted above the heavens, O God, and may your  
glory be over all the earth.*

The use of tense within the psalm is interesting in that victory is presented as something anticipated in verses one to three and as something already accomplished in verses four to eight. This fits well with Francis's dual perspective, his insight into both the immediacy and the purpose of Christ's suffering. The certainty of victory does not diminish the need for trust in the face of what evil has the power to do. Evil is seen as powerful, yet transitory and ultimately self-deluding, as verse seven makes clear. The transitory power of evil exacts acts of faith from Jesus as he struggles to endure. The result is a hymn of confidence proclaimed even as he experiences his own defenselessness. In this way his defenselessness becomes a choice to remain open to his Father.

The interlude created by psalm three provides a space for the narrator to establish what has already been introduced, the supremacy of the relationship between the Father and the Son. As in psalms one and two, Francis adds a personal name for God to the divine names in the original psalm. Jesus calls God *sanctissimum patrem meum* in verse three. The Son's vulnerability in the hands of his tormentors becomes the access point of the love of the Father. To accept this requires faith and psalm three is a psalm about faith, faith that is confident, proclaimed, even defiant. There is a powerful contrast between the descending, oppressive images which characterize the enemies' schemes in verses six and seven and the upward, soaring images of the Son's liberation in the Father, in verses nine and eleven. The experience of destitution leads to more than rescue. It leads to an appetite for God that anticipates fullness of life. *Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum* (My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready).

As I have mentioned, Francis makes a substantial alteration within verse five, the only place where he introduces material from another psalm. The section taken from Psalm 17 emphasizes the strength and power of the enemy and

Jesus' vulnerability in their hands. In this way the inserted section casts light upon Jesus' utter dependence on his Father.

*Misit Deus misericordiam suam et veritatem suam,  
animam meam eripuit (Ps 56, 4-5) de inimicis meis  
fortissimis et ab his, qui oderunt me, quoniam confortati  
sunt super me. (Ps 17,18)*

#### PSALM FOUR

In psalm four, again the perspective changes. In psalm three the anticipation of ultimate victory illuminates and transfigures pain. Psalm four voices the perspective of someone who is confronting pain without any immediate, foreseeable prospect of release. The assured victory of psalm three is not experienced.

The psalm belongs to the hour of Terce, the hour traditionally associated with Christ's condemnation before Pilate. The psalm shows Jesus entering more deeply into the experience of humiliation and abuse. Continuing pain is portrayed without the relief of an eschatological perspective. No meaning for the pain is offered. Unlike the other five psalms in Francis's Passion sequence, psalm four makes no reference to God in the centre of the psalm.

*Have mercy on me, O God, for people have trampled  
me underfoot; all day long they have afflicted me and  
pressed their attack against me.  
All day long my enemies trampled upon me, for there  
were many waging war against me.  
All my enemies plotted evil things against me; they  
prepared lies against me.  
Those who guarded my life conspired together.  
They went outside and spoke about it.  
All those who saw me scoffed at me; they spoke with  
their lips and wagged their heads.  
I am a worm and no man, the scorn of all and the  
outcast of the people.*

*I have been made despicable to my neighbours  
far beyond all my enemies, an object of fear to my  
acquaintances.*

*Holy Father, do not take away your help from me but  
look to my defence.*

*Come to my aid Lord, God of my salvation.*

The psalm opens with the same words as psalm three, *Miserere mei, Deus*. There is a repetition of the phrase *tota die*, (all day long) in the first two verses, emphasizing the imprint of continuous suffering upon Jesus. The word for trample underfoot, *conculcare*, is also repeated with its connotations of devastation. The verb can mean to lay waste, to be treated with contempt.

The absence of a reference to God between the first and final verses exposes the reader to a dark catalogue of pain. Within this abyss the torturers assume power. The absence of comfort is consistent with Francis's realism. The torturers go unchallenged. They have prolonged power over their victim.

The psalm shows an awareness of the relationship between inward intent and external result, an awareness that is characteristic of Francis. Evil inwardly conceived has an external consequence. Suffering imposed on the victim from without has to be internalised and dealt with at enormous cost.

The psalm captures the loneliness of Jesus as he silently witnesses the energy and intrigue generated by his enemies' plan to have him killed. Verses three to six evoke the sense of confusion and conspiracy. The only contact that people make with him is abusive, *Omnes videntes me deriserunt me*, (All those who saw me scoffed at me).

In verse seven Francis records the victim's lonely self-perception. The crown of thorns that he is wearing and marks upon his body are left to our imagination. The statement that Jesus makes about himself in this verse shows that he is profoundly wounded by their hate. He feels himself to be what they have made him, an object of abuse. In Francis's office, the suffering of Jesus is seen through his own eyes. He knows what is being done to him and how he appears

to others. Although Francis's approach is understated, he is able to represent the relationship of Jesus with his own suffering in depth. What has happened is utterly unjust, and, in one sense, meaningless. Nonetheless, it belongs to Jesus' experience of his own life. He no longer feels like a human being. Francis does not describe, only implies, the physical horror of torture. Instead, he focuses on the effects of abuse at the level of Jesus' self-awareness. In this way, he draws attention to what it means to Jesus to be made an outcast.

The magnitude of love, which underlies this suffering, is implicit in the Son's entreaty to the Father at the beginning and closure of the psalm. The entreaty reminds us of the trust between them, the Son's fidelity to the Father. Psalms one, two and four end with the same verse. This refrain indicates Jesus' ever-deepening cooperation with and abandonment to his father. Increasingly, this relationship bears the entire weight of the Son's hope.

## PSALM FIVE

Psalm five is ascribed to Jesus on the cross. The first six verses of the psalm are taken from Psalm 141, the psalm that Francis himself recited as he was dying.<sup>4</sup>

There is a desperation and sense of crisis about the psalm consistent with the trauma of being nailed to the cross and positioned there to die. Throughout the previous four psalms, evil has gained power. Now an intensity about the review which the hero makes of his life suggests the perspective of someone who is dying. An accumulation of verses depicting confusion and betrayal reflect the momentum of what is happening. In verse six, the words, *Periit fuga a me* (Escape has failed me) suggest a place of no return, a finality. What is being done to him has reached a point where the effects are irreversible. The psalm has the tone of an enquiry which Jesus makes into his fate. Verse after verse addresses the mystery of the response

which his enemies have made to him. The repeated thrust of enquiry confronting impenetrable darkness appropriately creates the atmosphere of approaching death.

*I cried to the Lord with all my voice, with all my voice I begged the Lord.*

*I pour out my prayer in the sight of God and I tell the Lord of all my trouble.*

*When my spirit failed me, you knew my ways.*

The psalm begins with a sense of images of expenditure. The cries of the speaker in verse one suggest the cries of Jesus as he is nailed to the cross. In verse two, the verb *effundo* (I pour out) also evokes the scene of execution, suggesting both the depth of Jesus' self-giving at this hour and the loss of vital fluids from his body. Francis focuses on Jesus' inward struggle, which is directed, as always, towards the Father. Verse three again takes up the theme of the strain upon Jesus' resources, *In deficiendo ex me spiritum meum*. Francis's description of Jesus' inner state is always consonant with the suffering inflicted upon him.

These desperate images set the scene. Francis goes on to explore Jesus' state of mind. What is happening within him as he dies? The psalm voices the human need of Jesus to know, to understand what is happening. But the senselessness of his experiences throws this need back upon itself. The psalm voices the need of Jesus to be known, also frustrated.

*On this way on which I walked, the proud hid a trap for me.*

*I looked to my right and I sought, and there was no one who knew me.*

*I had no means of escape and there is no one who cares about my life.*

Verse six takes up the theme of isolation. The verses capture the loneliness of Jesus as he hangs upon the cross. Verse four hints that he is no longer able to walk. Verse five states that he is able to move his head in a search for companionship. But the man at whom he looks, crucified

<sup>4</sup> Thomas of Celano, "The Life of St. Francis," *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, Vol. 1 (New York: New City Press, 1999), 277.

next to him, also rejects him. Verse six makes clear that there is no way out of this position and within it no compassion.

*I have borne insults because of you; dishonour has covered my face.*

*I have become an outcast to my brothers, and a stranger to the children of my mother.*

*Holy Father, zeal for your house has consumed me; and the taunts of those who blasphemed you have fallen upon me.*

Jesus' sense of estrangement is all the more painful because it is estrangement from those with whom he ought to be secure. The psalm evokes the raw, sensitive perception of a man tortured in every need for reassurance and recognition. What Jesus has done and tried to do with his life are tested against the outcome. Francis never suggests that the result is a collapse into the despair of self-doubt. He does, however, indicate that Jesus experiences an agonizing sense of futility. The psalm focuses on the emotional pain rather than the physical horror as Jesus' needs for support and compassion at the hour of his death are not met. Verse after verse voices the paradox of his fate, graphically illustrating how the dying man's instinctive need for meaning in his relationship with others is confounded.

*They rejoiced and united together against me; many scourges were heaped upon me and I knew not why. More numerous than the hairs of my head are those who hated me without cause.*

*My enemies, who persecuted me unjustly, have been strengthened; then I repaid what I did not steal.*

*Wicked witnesses, rising up, asked me things I did not know.*

*They repaid me evil for good and they slandered me because I pursued goodness.*

Each statement and the question implicit behind it express Jesus' dying need to find coherence in the narrative of his own life. The divine integrity of his mission as Son of God does not spare him this human hunger for response, for

a story that makes sense. By allowing the Son to give voice to the paradox of his rejection at the hour of crucifixion, Francis draws attention to the deep hurt.

However, the psalm is more than a portrait of mental anguish. Jesus, the one who has not been known by men, looks to God as the one who knows him. In verse three he recalls, *tu cognovisti semitas meas* (you knew my ways). The theme of his relationship with his Father returns in verses seven and nine as a place of trust and faith. The search for meaning and coherence finds its answer close to the centre of the psalm in verse seven, the number denoting perfection. The meaning of Jesus' life rests in his relationship to the Father. *Quoniam propter te sustinui opprobrium* (I have borne insults because of you). In other words, the reason for all this is love. Again, in verse nine a meaning behind the horror is revealed in the Son's love for the Father. Francis adds Jesus' name for God to strengthen the sense of intimacy, *Pater sancta*.

The psalm points to the mystery of the divine relationship that illuminates the sufferings of Jesus. Francis never, however, romanticizes those sufferings. Jesus is being hurt by men on account of that which is rightly his. Verse twelve recounts that he has been made to pay for that which he did not steal, his identity as Son of God. The naked anguish of the psalm suggests the physical demands upon Jesus' limbs and body as he hangs upon the cross, but it does so indirectly. The direct portrait is of the inward struggle of a tormented man. The last two verses are an affirmation of confidence in the Father and repeated entreaty. They are the same couplet which concluded psalm two, the psalm of the first sentencing to death.

*You are my most holy Father, my King and my God.*

*Come to my help, Lord, God of my salvation.*

The God who has not saved him continues to be *Domine Deus salutis meae*.

## PSALM SIX

Psalm six consists of two parts, the first of which is longer than the second. The first ten verses describe Jesus' death, the final six his entrance into glory. There is a stark contrast between the two parts of the psalm. And yet, the fact that through his state of suffering Jesus enters into a state of glory indicates that a relationship between them does exist. This is highlighted by the way that images and preoccupations, which feature in part one reappear, transfigured, in the second part. The death of Jesus is portrayed as brutal. There is no reference to God in the first ten verses at all. This absence is the way Francis chooses to depict the dereliction which prompted Jesus' cry on the cross, *Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani?*<sup>5</sup>

*O all you who pass along the way, look and see if there  
is any sorrow like my sorrow.  
For many dogs surrounded me, a pack of evildoers  
closed in on me.  
They looked and stared at me; they divided my garments  
among them and they cast lots for my tunic.  
They pierced my hands and my feet, they numbered  
all my bones.  
They opened their mouth against me, like a raging and  
roaring lion.  
I have been poured out like water and all my bones  
have been scattered.  
My heart has become like melting wax in the midst of  
my bosom.  
My strength has dried up like baked clay, and my  
tongue has stuck to the roof of my mouth.  
And they gave me gall as my food and, in my thirst,  
they gave me vinegar to drink.  
And they led me into the dust of death and added to  
the pain of my wounds.*

Psalm six is the only psalm in the Passion sequence which does not make an appeal to God in the opening verse. Each initial verse in the preceding psalm is a communication with God whose intimacy compensates, to some extent, for Jesus' rejection at the hands of men. Verse one, which is taken from the first Lamentation, substitutes the usual appeal to God with an appeal to the passers-by.

*O vos omnes, qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte,  
si est dolor sicut dolor meus.*

But we are told in the next two verses that the passers-by are in fact surrounding him and gloating over him. The fact that the speaker does not revert to his intimacy with the Father indicates Jesus' sense that God is absent. His appeal for the compassion of his mockers is the appeal of a man who craves for the humanity of those who kill him.

Verses two to eight come from Psalm 21, a psalm traditionally understood to be representing Jesus' suffering on the cross. But Francis alters the arrangement of the verses that he selects, giving precedence to images which express his priorities. For example, Francis brings part of the original verse 17 forward, making it into his verse two. The choice gives an importance to the onlookers who are watching Jesus die. Francis emphasizes the dynamic between the dying man and his audience. The onlookers loom large in the psalm, coming into sharp focus at the very time when God seems totally withdrawn. The speaker is intensely aware of the reactions of passers-by, suggesting the heightened susceptibility of the man upon the cross. Grotesque animal images suggest the nightmarish intrusion of the onlookers' presence upon the victim, the way their words and faces invade his tortured senses. In verse two we are told they have surrounded him like dogs.

In verse three he is stared at and inspected. They cast lots for his clothing. Francis places this description of Christ's degradation before the verse that describes the nailing, even though in Psalm 21 it is the other way round. In other words,

<sup>5</sup> Mk. 15:34

he is careful to suggest the emotional pain of the crucifixion before the description of physical brutality.

Verse one emphasizes the desire of the crucified man to be authentically perceived. He asks the passers-by to *attendite et videte*. We are reminded of the craving to be truly known that he voiced in psalm five. The verb *attendere* carries the sense of to attend to, to take heed, to give attention, to listen. The verb *videre* carries the sense to see, to look at, to observe, to be aware, to know, to consider, to perceive, to understand, to discern, to take heed. But in verse three we see that Jesus is inspected, exposed and humiliated. Verses four, six, seven and eight describe his torture. His hands and feet are pierced. He is poured out like water. His bones are dispersed. Verses eight and nine describe his desperate thirst. Verse nine, taken from Psalm 68, evokes the cry of Jesus on the cross, *I am thirsty*.<sup>6</sup>

He is given vinegar. Every response to him that is described is debased. Francis's office repeatedly draws attention to the abyss between what is needed and what is given. Finally, they lead him into death. Francis has constructed verse ten, the verse which describes Jesus' death, carefully taking phrases from two separate psalm verses. The first is from Psalm 21:16, which in the Vulgate reads, *et in pulverem mortis deduxisti me* (and you led me into the dust of death). Francis alters the phrase so that it reads, *Et in pulverem mortis deduxerunt me*, (and they led me into the dust of death). The alteration is significant. The phrase as it stands in the book of psalms voices the speaker's submission to the will of God. Francis makes the phrase more brutal, emphasizing the finality of the executioners' decision. They choose to terminate the life of Jesus and he obeys them. While the theme of obedience to God is not lost, since Francis has stressed it throughout, the alteration emphasizes how terrible the acquiescence that God asks of him in fact is.

The second part of verse ten comes from Psalm 68:27 *et super dolorem vulnerum meorum addiderunt* (and they have added to the pain of my wounds). These are the words that

Francis puts on Jesus' lips as he dies. There is no reference to God here and no victory. There is only an awareness of intensifying cruelty and pain. They read like the expenditure of a last unanswered sigh.

The last six verses of the psalm describe what happens to Jesus after he has died.

*I have slept and I have risen and my most holy Father has received me with glory.*

*Holy Father, you have held my right hand and you have led me according to your will and have taken me up with glory.*

*For what is there in heaven for me and what did I want from you on earth?*

*See, see that I am God, says the Lord; I shall be exalted among the nations and exalted on the earth.*

*Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who has redeemed the souls of his servants with his very own most holy Blood and who will not abandon all who hope in him.*

*And we know that he is coming, that he will come to judge justice.*

Sleep is the first image Francis uses to describe Jesus' resurrected life, the gentleness of which contrasts with the tension of his final hours. The first ten verses of the psalm are full of images of tormented awareness. Having appealed consistently to God for rescue in the first five psalms, in psalm six Jesus no longer does. It is as if pain has overwhelmed finally even the energy for appeal. Suffering comes to an end at verse ten. The image of sleep in verse eleven suggests the peaceful abandonment of self into the embrace of God. We learn that after sleep he has arisen and his father has received him with glory. In verse twelve, contrasting with verse four where his hands are pierced, the Father leads him by the hand. In verse ten he is led into the dust of death. In verse twelve the Father leads him into glory, *in voluntate tua deduxisti me et cum gloria assumpsisti*. Again, the efficacy of Francis's alteration of *deduxisti* to *deduxerunt* in verse ten becomes apparent. As a result of the alteration, there

<sup>6</sup> Jn 19.28



is now a contrast between Jesus' treatment by men and his treatment by his Father. Verse thirteen points to completion, the fulfilment of the hope that Jesus has in God. The hope is personal, a fulfilment of intimate love.

The psalm culminates in verse fourteen with a declaration of Jesus' Godhead.

*Videte, videte, quoniam ego sum Deus, dicit Dominus, exaltabor in gentibus et exaltabor in terra.*

The original psalm verse, taken from Psalm 45 reads, *Vacate et videte* (be still and see). It is Francis who creates the emphasis of the repeated *videte*, which is more powerful for his purposes. This emphatic invitation to look at Jesus in glory contrasts movingly with the invitation in verse one to look at him upon the cross. The proclaimed identity, which earlier scenes of degradation would appear to have discredited, has been mysteriously affirmed. Verse fourteen suggests that the full joy of his Godhead becomes present to Jesus after his Resurrection. This contrasts with the way the power of evil has been forced upon him.

Verse fifteen is about redemption. Francis alters the verse that he borrows from Psalm 43 to give it a Christological emphasis. It is *with his very own most holy Blood* that we have been redeemed. The words *de proprio sanctissimo sanguine suo* are Francis's own addition.

The final verse is about justice. Throughout the office, a crying need for justice has been manifested bleakly in its absence. Jesus has been portrayed struggling to bring his mission to completion, without receiving a response. His interior anguish is transformed into an act of supreme self-giving on behalf of others. Now Francis adds a cathartic declaration that there will be justice. There will be a scenario where the 'justice' under which Jesus suffered will itself be judged. Francis prefaces the verse with *Et scimus*, his own addition to verse thirteen of Psalm 95, *and we know*. The addition is personal, suddenly casting light on Francis and his silent audience. It creates a space for the audience whose sympathy and identification with Jesus has not been voiced. It reminds us that we are called to respond to the events we

have witnessed with hope and faith. According to the original psalm verse, God is coming to *iudicare terram* (judge the earth). Francis changes the object of the verb, making it more specific for his narrative. In Francis's office, God is to judge justice itself, *iustitiam iudicare*, the social, legal constructs by which human beings justify what they do to Christ and one another.

## PSALM SEVEN

The last in the series of psalms considered here is about the triumph, the omnipotence of God. It has a depth, which underlies its apparent simplicity. The psalm derives its beauty from a paradox. We have witnessed the struggle of a powerless and hunted man whose achievement was not to conquer his enemies' malice but to submit to it. It is this achievement that the psalm celebrates. While the psalm exults in God's power over all creation, we recall that the office has not shown this power manifested in a conventional display of majesty, but in a crucifixion.

*All you nations clap your hands, shout to God with cries of gladness.*

*For the Lord, the Most High, the Awesome, is the Great King over all the earth.*

*For the Most Holy Father of heaven, our King before all ages, sent His Beloved Son from on high and has brought about salvation in the middle of the earth.*

*Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice, let the sea and all that fills it be moved, let the fields and all that is in them be joyful.*

*Sing a new song to him; sing to the Lord all the earth. Because the Lord is great and highly to be praised, awesome beyond all gods.*

*Give to the Lord, you families of nations, give to the Lord glory and honour; give to the Lord the glory due His name.*

*Take up your bodies and carry His holy cross and*

*follow His most holy commands to the very end.  
Let the whole earth tremble before His face; say among  
the nations that the Lord has ruled from a tree.*

Verse one is a call to applause. We are invited to rejoice in what God has done. All humanity is included. Francis's love and feeling for Jesus, which have run as an undercurrent through the office, emerge in this tribute. Again the effect of the verse is cathartic, creating a space for the compassion and wonder of the onlooker.

Verse two announces that God is king over all the earth. The declaration derives its power and poignancy from the spectacle of Christ's powerlessness. It is this supremacy which claims our homage. Francis alters verse three from the Psalter in order to have it refer directly to the saving work accomplished between the Father and the Son. He adds the words *For the Most Holy Father of heaven... sent His Beloved Son from on high* to the verse that he borrows from Psalm 73. This is the relationship that underpins the entire office. It emphasizes that the initiative for salvation was always with the Father. Immediately we are shown that the implications of the salvation accomplished by the Son are universal. The heavens, earth, sea and fields are all invited to rejoice in what has been accomplished. Verse five stresses the originality of what God has done. The three-fold acclamation of verse seven creates a movement of praise. This emphatic praise is the reverse of the humiliation that has been heaped on Jesus. Formerly he was tortured on account of whom he was. Now the psalm renders him *the glory due His name*.

Verse eight is carefully constructed, suggesting that it is important. Unusually, within the office it is based entirely on New Testament sources, Luke 14:27 and 1 Peter 2:21. The verse invites us to take up the cross of Christ and to be faithful until the end. The invitation of the psalm to enter into joy, therefore, contains this note of sobriety. We have seen the depths from which Christ's triumph has been wrested. Verse eight bravely invites us to follow where Christ has led. It is a call to courage.

Verse nine draws attention to the paradox that summarizes the entire office. The phrase *a ligno* (from a tree) was an addition to the Vulgate text made by the early church with which Francis would have been acquainted. The phrase points to a drama of kingship made manifest within powerlessness, humiliation and execution. *Dominus regnavit a ligno* (the Lord has ruled from a tree). It is the inward drama of this truth which Francis's office so heartbreakingly illuminates.

## CONCLUSION

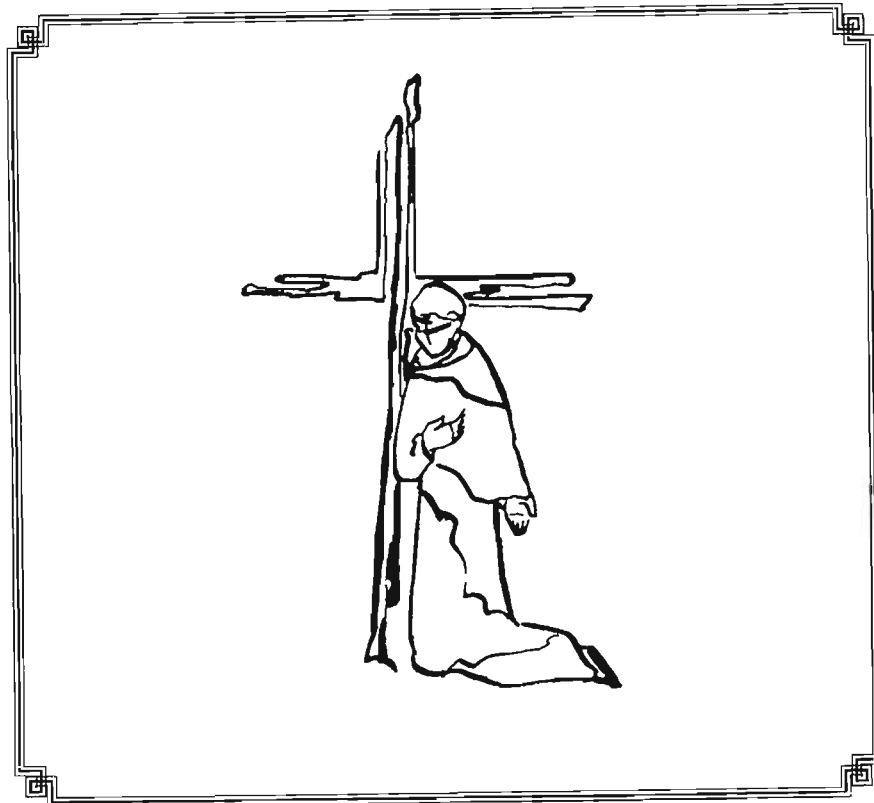
To conclude, the first seven psalms in Francis's Office of the Passion depict the Passion of Christ in a haunting and original way. They offer us Christ's own perspective on his Passion, as it is occurring. I have shown how Francis achieves this by working creatively with psalm verses and verse fragments. The reader has to make an effort to understand Francis's choices and suggestions and in so doing be drawn into an imaginative engagement with the Passion of Jesus. In a subtle, yet authentic way the reader is drawn into intimacy with Jesus, a state of empathy with him.

The psalms combine psychological realism with an eschatological perspective. In the Gethsemane psalm, the first of the series, Jesus struggles with the oppression created by his imminent arrest. However, the first verse of the psalm establishes that everything is known to the Father who has placed his Son's tears in his sight. Even at the moment of arrest there is a reminder that God is present and all-powerful.

As Jesus undergoes his trial by the Sanhedrin, he suffers appalling loneliness and is sentenced to death. Nonetheless, he affirms God as his King and Father. The third psalm in the series steps back from the harrowing sequence of events to contemplate the certainty of final victory. In psalm four the experience of abuse intensifies and in psalm five Jesus is nailed to the cross. He continues to struggle with the contradiction of his fate, appealing to God for help.

In psalm six, the suffering of Jesus culminates in a terrible abandonment. Francis uses a verse combining two verse fragments to describe the dereliction of Jesus' death. However, the psalm does not end here emphasizing that Jesus' death is a passage. The final verses of the same psalm describe his entry into glory and fulfilment. The seventh psalm celebrates his triumph and applauds what he has accomplished on our behalf. Suffering and glory are shown to be two aspects of the same reality. The suffering Son bears witness to the truth of the Father. The Father sees the suffering of his Son and responds by glorifying him.

Through his inspired use of reassembled psalm verses, Francis offers a unique insight into the mind of Jesus as he suffers. That this should have been achieved within this restricted format is remarkable and testifies both to the sensitivity of Francis's response to Jesus and to the prophetic wealth of the psalm verses on which he draws.



## FRANCIS'S AUTOGRAPH TO BROTHER LEO: A NEW READING

Jacques Dalarun  
Courtney Hull, Edgar Magana, Robert Mayer,  
Geoffrey Omondi-Muga and Juliane Ostergaard

We have two preserved autographs written by Francis of Assisi: one of them (5.26 × 3.90 inches), kept at the Sacro Convento of Assisi, bears the *Laudes Dei altissimi* transcribed by Brother Leo and, on the verso, the autograph blessing of Francis to the same Brother Leo.<sup>1</sup> The other (5.07 × 2.34 inches) is kept in the cathedral of Spoleto and bears the short letter of nineteen lines addressed by Francis to Brother Leo. Considered as relics, these autographs are indeed exceptionally precious documents, given that they are testimonies not only on Francis, but from Francis, transmitted to us without any intermediary. In this short paper, we are going to focus only on the second one.

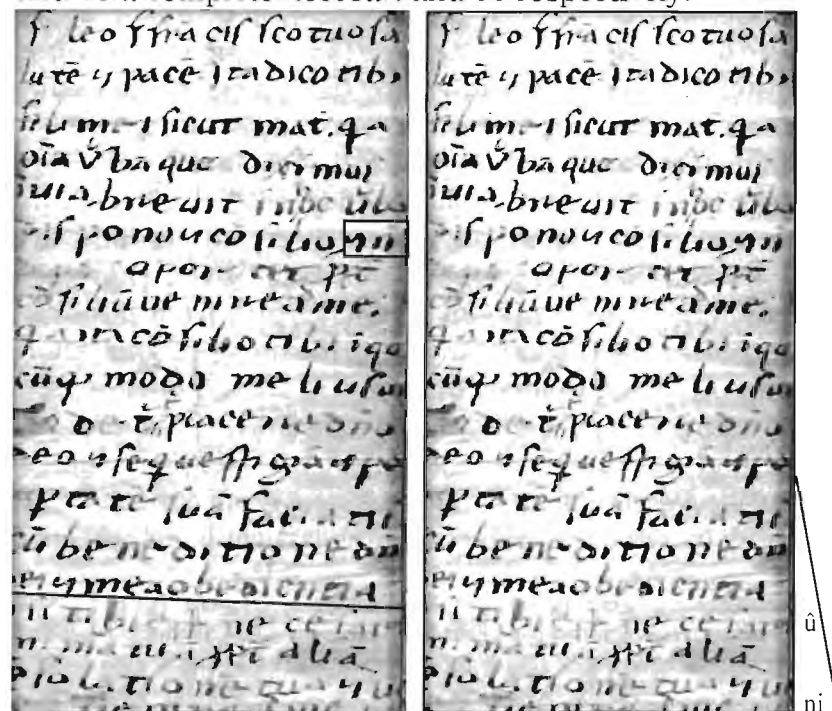
The autograph preciousy preserved in the cathedral of Spoleto has recently been the object of attentive studies. First, Attilio Bartoli Langeli offered a new reading of the text, a reading in which two points are especially important.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M.F. Cusato, "Of Snakes and Angels," in J. Dalarun, M.F. Cusato and C. Salvati, *The Stigmata of Francis of Assisi: New Studies, New Perspectives*, (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2006), 54.

<sup>2</sup> A. Bartoli Langeli, "Gli scritti da Francesco. L'autografia di un *illittratus*," in *Frate Francesco d'Assisi. Atti del XXI Convegno internazionale, Assisi, 14-16 ottobre 1993*, (Spoleto, 1994), 103-58; A. Bartoli Langeli, *Gli autografi di frate Francesco e di frate Leone*, Corpus christianorum. Autographa Medii Aevi, 5 (Turnhout, 2000), 42-56; A. Bartoli Langeli, "La lettera di Spoleto," in *Francesco d'Assisi. Scritti. Testo latino e traduzione italiana*, ed. A. Cabassi, (Padova, 2002), 115-24; A. Bartoli Langeli, "Ancora sugli autografi di frate Francesco," in *Verba Domini mei. Gli "Opuscula"*

Where editors and scholars commonly read *et si oportet*, Attilio Bartoli Langeli read undoubtedly *et non oportet*: "it's not mandatory, Leo, to come to me." Then, the Italian scholar discovered that the four last lines of the letter were added by Francis in a second stage. After telling Leo that he did not have to come back to see him, Francis added: "but if you need, come on!"

Completing Bartoli Langeli's deciphering, Father Carlo Paolazzi proposed a new hypothesis to resolve the only two words which had not yet had an understandable form and meaning in the transcription: *necesari* and *ve*.<sup>3</sup> Carlo Paolazzi imagined that a very thin slice of the parchment was cut off on the low right side; this is why he suggested *necesarium* and *veni* complete *necesari* and *ve* respectively.



di Francesco d'Assisi a 25 anni dalla edizione di Kajetan Esser, ofm. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Roma, 10-12 aprile 2002, Medioevo 6, ed. A. Cacciotti, (Roma, 2003), 89-95.

<sup>3</sup> C. Paolazzi, "Per gli autografi di frate Francesco. Dubbi, verifiche e riconferme," in *Archivum franciscanum historicum*, 93, 2000, 3-28; C. Paolazzi, *Studi sugli "Scritti" di frate Francesco*, Spicilegium bonaventurianum 35 (Grottaferrata, 2006), 101-26.

Relying on these indisputable contributions to the research, Jacques Dalarun just offered a new interpretation of Francis's autograph.<sup>4</sup> According to him, the key words of the text are *sicut mater*. If one translates them "like a mother," "as a mother", "as a mother to her child," or "as a mother would,"<sup>5</sup> it may distort Francis's meaning and leave the reader wondering why a tender mother tells her dear son not to come to see her in the harsh words that appear later in the text. So Dalarun suggested *sicut mater* be translated "as mother,"<sup>6</sup> which eventually, for greater clarity, we slightly changed into "as the mother." Francis does not speak to Leo "as a mother would," but "as the mother he is," which means, in Francis's anthropology, "as your superior." He related mother to superior because he could not consider himself as Leo's superior in the more traditional sense, that is, the abbot or the father of his brothers. Thus he was their minister, their servant, their mother.<sup>7</sup>

According to this new reading, the first part of the letter would be a very institutional message: "I am going to summarize what we have already said and write to you exactly what you have to do; so you will not have to come and see me." Here, Francis plays the role of legislator of the community; but, in a second stage, he could not send Leo so formal a message and he added: "if you need it for the consolation of your soul, come on!" One can perceive

<sup>4</sup> J. Dalarun, "Sicut mater. Une relecture du billet de François d'Assise à frère Léon," in *Le Moyen Âge* 113, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Indeed, this is the case in the differing English translations that we could consult: *St. Francis of Assisi Writings and Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis of Assisi*, trans. R. Brown, B. Fahy, P. Herman, P. Oligny, N. de Robeck and L. Sherley-Price, ed. M. A. Habig, (Chicago, 1975), 118; *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, trans. R. J. Armstrong and I.C. Brady, The Classics of Western Spirituality Series, (New York, 1982), 47; *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, Vol. 1 The Saint*, ed. R.J. Armstrong, J.A.W. Hellmann and W. Short, (New York: New City Press, 1999), 122-23.

<sup>6</sup> *Sicut* can effectively assume these two values in Francis's writings: "like" or "as" in English, "come" and "da" in Italian, "comme" and "en tant que" in French, "wie" and "als" in German.

<sup>7</sup> J. Dalarun, *Francis of Assisi and the Feminine*, (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2006).

Francis's reversal as a psychological contradiction, a kind of remorse. But it is likely more convenient to see in this double movement what Michel Foucault called "the paradox of the shepherd:"<sup>8</sup> never hesitate to leave ninety-nine sheep to save only the lost one.<sup>9</sup>

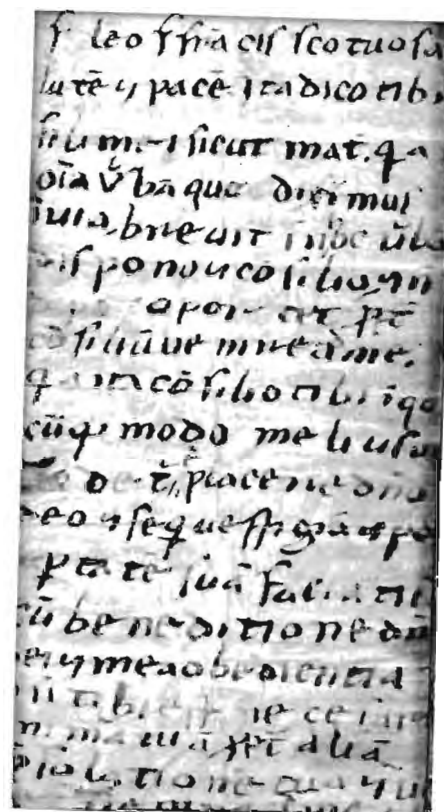
During the Summer Session of the Franciscan Institute held at St. Bonaventure University in June and July 2007, we collectively translated this short letter from Latin to English and we are glad to offer the result of our common work. The readers will discover, successively, the reproduction of the autograph that Mons. Giampiero Ceccarelli of the archdiocese of Spoleto and Norcia kindly addressed to us with a facing Latin transcription of it. In this transcription, the corrections introduced by Brother Leo to improve the very poor Latin of Francis are indicated in bold and the abbreviations, systematically resolved, in italics. The reading of some of the words is based on the decipherings of Attilio Bartoli Langeli and Father Carlo Paolazzi. Some notes will make clear the self corrections that Francis introduced in his text. The modern punctuation (and consequently the capital letters) follows Dalarun's new Latin edition.

Eventually, one can find this Latin transcription facing our new English translation. We did not try to ameliorate Francis's Latin style, but wanted to preserve the roughness of his expression. As much as it was possible, without producing an incorrect English text, we have kept the structure of the Latin sentences and the Latin order of the words. When Francis's sentence contained repetitions, we preserved them in English: "and I counsel ... for a counsel, since I counsel," rather than "and I counsel ... for an advice, since I counsel," "comes back to me ... come," rather than "returns to me ... come." Each time that the English vocabulary offers the choice between two synonymous terms –a word with Germanic roots or another one with Latin roots– we adopted the latter in order to remain closer to the Latin etymology and

<sup>8</sup> M. Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire, population. Cours au Collège de France (1977-1978)*, ed. F. Ewald, A. Fontana and M. Senellart, (Paris, 2004), 133.

<sup>9</sup> Mt 12:11-12; Mt 18:12-14; Lk 15:4-7.

musicality: "necessary" rather than "needy" for *necesarium*; "benediction" rather than "blessing" for *beneditio*. Some notes explain the pertinent lexical difficulties.



F. Leo f. Francissco tuo<sup>10</sup>, salutem et pacem. Ita dico tibi, fili mei, sicut mater, quia omnia verba que diximus<sup>11</sup> in via breviter in hoc verbo dispono; et consilio: et non<sup>12</sup> oportet propter consilium venire ad me, quia ita consilio tibi: in quocumque modo melius videtur tibi<sup>14</sup> placere Domino Deo et sequi vestigia et paupertatem<sup>15</sup> suam, faciat, cum benedictione Domini Dei et mea obedientia! Et si tibi est necesarium animam tuam, propter aliam consolationem tuam et vis, revenire<sup>16</sup> ad me, veni!

<sup>10</sup> Francis starts to write without respecting the Latin declension: he should have written *Fratri Leoni* (dative) *frater Franciscus tuus* (nominative), but *Leo*, *Francissco* and *tuo* sounded more familiar to his Italian ears.

<sup>11</sup> First Francis wrote *disimus* before Leo's correction.

<sup>12</sup> Before *oportet*, Francis started to write *dopo* and then cancelled it.

<sup>13</sup> Before *detur*, Francis started to write *so* and then cancelled it.

<sup>14</sup> The pronoun *tibi* was added above the line.

<sup>15</sup> According to Attilio Bartoli Langeli, the word *paupertatem* would have been written by Francis himself as a correction on the previous *voluptatem* that he first wrote for *voluntatem*.

<sup>16</sup> According to Attilio Bartoli Langeli, the *v* of *revenire* could have transformed and integrated the *T* that Francis inscribed at the bottom of the page in the first stage of his writing. This "T" was a kind of signature used by Francis, which meant *Tau*, a Christian symbol.

F. Leo

f. Francisco tuo,  
salutem et pacem.

Ita dico tibi, fili  
mei, sicut mater,  
quia omnia verba  
que diximus in via  
breviter in hoc verbo  
dispono; et consilio:  
et non oportet  
propter consilium  
venire ad me, quia  
ita consilio tibi: in  
quocumque modo  
melius videtur tibi  
placere Domino Deo  
et sequi vestigia  
et paupertatem  
suam, faciatis,  
cum benedictione  
Domini Dei et mea  
obedientia!

Et si tibi est  
necesarium animam  
tuam, propter aliam  
consolationem tuam  
et vis, revenire ad  
me, veni!

To Brother Leo  
your Brother Francis,  
greetings<sup>17</sup> and peace.

So I tell you, my  
son, as the mother,  
that all the words  
which we said on the  
road, briefly in this  
letter<sup>18</sup> I set them;<sup>19</sup>  
and I counsel: and<sup>20</sup>  
it's not mandatory  
to come to me for  
a counsel, since I  
counsel you so:<sup>21</sup>  
in any way it looks  
better to you to please  
Lord God and follow  
His footprints and  
poverty, do it,<sup>22</sup> with  
the benediction and  
obedience of Lord God  
and mine<sup>23</sup>!

And if it is  
necessary for you that  
your soul comes back  
to me<sup>24</sup> for another  
consolation of yours<sup>25</sup>  
and you want, come!

<sup>17</sup> In Latin, *salus* means at the same time greeting, health and salvation. Francis obviously wishes all that to Leo with only his *salutem*.

<sup>18</sup> The first occurrence of *verbum* as the plural (*verba*) designates the oral words that Francis and Leo exchanged. The second one as the singular (*verbo*) designates the present writing of Francis: the letter which he sends to Leo. Only in French could we have translated "les mots ... ce mot."

<sup>19</sup> *Disponere* in Latin not only has the common meaning of "to set," but also the juridical meaning of "to take a disposition."

<sup>20</sup> It could sound really odd that Francis's advice starts with "and." But one must remember that, in the humble style of the Poverello, most of his sentences start with "and." Less than a coordinating conjunction, the abbreviation of *et* was above all the graphic mark of a break between two sentences.

<sup>21</sup> The repetition of "counsel" in English (verb, name and verb again) respects the triple occurrence of *consilio* or *consilium* in the Latin. The rough effect is as strong in Latin as in English. In Latin, a *consilium* is more than an advice: it can be a juridical term to express a decision.

<sup>22</sup> Because English does not distinguish the second persons of the singular and plural ("you"), it does not consent to translate one of the most puzzling points of this sentence: at its beginning ("it looks better to you"), "you" is a singular pronoun (*tibi* in Latin) and seems to designate Brother Leo; at the end, the implicit subject of "do it" is a plural one (*faciatis*). *Tibi* is clearly an addition in the autograph; but was it added by Francis or by Leo? According to G. Ammannati, "La lettera autografa di Francesco d'Assisi a frate Leone," in *Il linguaggio della biblioteca. Scritti in onore di Diego Maltese*, ed. M. Guerrini, Toscana Beni librari, 4 (Florence, 1994), 86, and F. Accrocca, "Le durezze di fratello Francesco. L'Epistola ad fratrem Leonem," in *Vita Minorum*, 3, 1997, p. 253-54, it would have been an addition of Leo, willing to confer to himself an undue authority upon the Order. If we prefer to admit, with Attilio Bartoli Langeli and Carlo Paolazzi, that *tibi* was actually added by Francis, what may be the significance of such a sentence? Does it mean that all the brothers must behave according to Leo's judgment? Or does *tibi* mean here not only "you Leo", but in fact that each brother is responsible for his own choices and acts, with the only—but so involving—duty to please God (i.e. to follow Christ's example, i.e. to assume His poverty)? In Paolazzi's opinion, this responsibility was only attributed to the first companions, while, in our opinion, it can be extended to all the brothers, or rather to each brother.

<sup>23</sup> After having checked the uses of *benedictio* and *obedientia* in Francis's writings, we think that the genitive *Domini Dei* and the possessive pronoun *mea* are both related with *benedictione* and *obedientia*. Here, in Attilio Bartoli Langeli's opinion, ended the first stage of the writing. The fact that the last word of this harsh message is *obedientia*—and in light of the previous uses of *dispono*, *consilio*, *oportet*, *consilium*, *consilio*, *faciatis*—reinforces the hypothesis that this first draft sounds more institutional and juridical than affectionate.

<sup>24</sup> To make the accusative *animam meam* the subject of the infinitive *revenire* is a suggestion of Father Carlo Paolazzi that we willingly follow.

<sup>25</sup> If Leo is now allowed to come, it is no more for a "counsel" (*consilium*), but for a "consolation" (*consolatio*). According to Dalarun's hermeneutics, Francis expresses here a complementary opposition between an institutional and a spiritual approach. The French scholar perceives a parallel between the couple *consilium* / *consolatio* and the couple *consilium* / *auxilium* ("counsel" / "help") which summarizes the main reciprocal duty between a lord and his vassal.



## FRANCISCAN WOMEN

**David Flood, O.F.M.**

The first Franciscans, around Francis of Assisi, turned the new freedoms of urban life into a distinctive way of working among others and of confessing their faith. They worked, either at one of the trades or in the fields or in service to the needy. As for living conditions, they made do with very simple quarters. Or they found room there where they labored. They established themselves surely enough as to distinguish clearly between the times among themselves and their forays among others. In Chapter Fourteen of the Early Rule, their practice of wishing others peace and exchanging hospitality is sketched out for us. Attentive to others where they worked and committed to peace beyond those contexts, the brothers readily shared their beliefs and hopes with others. As a consequence they won themselves a wide audience in central Italy. Women heard their own message of a new freedom in the brothers' words and soon became a strong dimension of the Franciscan movement.

We can propose several elements in the Franciscan message that had a special appeal for women. The brothers' words were not gendered. They understood their labor as part of the common effort to see to life's needs. Consequently as the servants of those whom they encountered, "subject to all," they invited a specifically female response from women, whether they were able to handle it or not. Then, in a surprising way, for as lesser brothers they had nothing, they promised a new abundance. It had to do with the goodness of the world and the animation of the Spirit, making all new.

Women readily modulated attention to others in a nurturing world into a definitely women's view of Franciscan life.

When James of Vitry encountered Franciscans in central Italy in the summer of 1216, he described, in his October letter to friends in Flanders, a development of sisters minor similar to that of brothers minor. He also mentioned the difficulty they had with church voices, clerical and popular, that insisted on ascribing to the women identities they forcefully rejected.

There are reasons why the implicit invitation to women in the Franciscan message, embraced by women, did not change their condition save in marginal ways (marginal in the sense that it gave them a new sense of themselves, without finding its correspondence in the social organization of the world). The reasons are twofold. First of all, the church did not change its practices with religious women. Even though the Beguines achieved a social place and did make a difference in the lives of many women, real religious women, in the eyes of the church, continued to lead a cloistered life in monasteries supported by wealthy families and by church favor. Second of all, Francis and his brothers did not see and act upon the implications of their proposals for women. Men of their age, Francis included, they accepted, in church and society, the natural subordination of women to men. In Chapter Twelve of the Early Rule, Francis and his brothers encouraged women to take their counsel seriously. They were not ready, however, to make common cause with them against the restrictions imposed by society on women. They were not ready to work with women, justifying a Christian freedom similar to the one they personally enjoyed. Beguines meant no danger to the social order as would women inspired by the Franciscan sense of social justice. In short, women did not shake themselves loose from male definitions of their condition. They continued living in a patriarchal world. The brothers were not true to their own principles.

When we do early Franciscan history, we come across references to women in the Franciscan movement. Some are women of the working population, about whom we know little. In the Message, Francis describes how the men and women

of the working population, alongside the brothers, become instruments of the Spirit of the Lord, making all new. Their social condition depended on their place in the family. Women at that time readily slipped into the roles of their husbands, especially as widows, if they had the character to seize the opportunity. As did their husbands, they would benefit from the social relations that belonged to the Franciscan way. It might well have happened, and I suppose it did, yet we have no data that allows us to play out their realization of a Franciscan life as working women. Others are women of religious communities, and first of all Clare of Assisi and her sisters. Historians have tried to play up the role of Clare and her sisters in a way that would, today, speak to women's public sense of themselves. As an historian, I cannot say they make their case; often they force a more positive view than the sources allow.

We have, in the sources for early Franciscan history and the Early Rule in particular, a description of impersonal processes that construct the early Franciscan. For example, in Early Rule V 1-8, the individual brother is given to understand that he shares in the common responsibility of keeping the movement on its spiritual course. Two of the Admonitions tell him to speak up in support of the common effort. Consequently he is free to speak about the work he does, especially if he knows a trade. He takes part in determining the economics of the brotherhood. He does not let social pressure deter him from his Franciscan ways. All of these processes result in an individual Franciscan who supports the movement. Among Franciscans today, women as well as men see to their education in these ways. In the time of Clare and her sisters, that process began – for James of Vitry was speaking about them in his letter of 1216 – but the development was definitely cut short.

In her book *The Theology of Work* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), P. Ranft finds in Clare's writings "one of the clearest echos of Damian's social theology and thus the basis of mendicant work theology" (170). As for Francis he does have a theology of work, but a leaner one than Clare's (173). Moreover Clare "accepted enclosure despite her original

desire to found a mendicant order similar in form to Francis' order for men" (171). This is an excellent example of doing one's best to play up the history of women to fit the present sensibilities of women. (Ranft even proposes that Clare used simple language, 170! Clare used a symbolic language, the contrived language of feminine spirituality of that age, rather than the speech exemplified by the Early Rule and the Admonitions.) The Franciscan idea of work arose out of the dynamics of a movement, to which both Francis and Clare belonged. The movement is the context for their individual histories. When Clare and her sisters were enclosed, they were made to abide by the patriarchal order of the day. That removed them from the processes discernible in the Early Rule and the Admonitions central to a Franciscan's education. If we consider the rule Cardinal Hugolino tried to impose on them in 1219, we see that they were not even supposed to talk to one another, whereas the Franciscan movement thrived from open communication. The sisters had no choice re: enclosure; Clare had to bend to Hugolino's dictate; and their brothers, as far as we know, did not speak up for their role in the Franciscan movement.

Instead of trying to find examples of Franciscan women in the thirteenth century that speak to women today, I propose (as their useless servant) that today's women in the Franciscan movement work out the implication of those emphases in early Franciscan history that speak to them. (And one of them, I trust, will hardly be Clare's acceptance of enclosure as laid on San Damiano by Cardinal Hugolino.) Then they can rightfully claim their part of today's Franciscan understandings. In that way they do Clare and her sisters honor. They claim today the Franciscan freedom denied those women in the early thirteenth century.

## COLLESTRADA

I did not long for the tunes of glory  
When I stood on the battlefield  
In mud and sweat and tears and blood  
And saw the brute reality all gory

Round my feet and when I shielded  
My eyes against the terrible sight  
Of many slaughtered with whom I sang  
And laughed and thought the world

To be at our feet. As knells rang  
And our standards unfurled  
In the hands of our captors  
The dreamy tales that once enraptured

Me with great delight  
And stirred me on to ride and fight  
Seemed moments long, long lost.  
Such dreams now too high a cost

And young Assisian nights  
Unreal in reality's bitter light

Seamus Mulholland



## DAMIANO

*Did I hear a voice or just imagine  
That in my vacant pensiveness  
Words formed from the face  
That charged me with the task*

*To place this stone upon that stone  
And rebuild and restore that place  
But never think or dare to ask  
If this was mine and mine alone*

*To undertake in one embrace  
Of wild responsiveness?*

*Did I hear a voice and then rejoice  
That at last my way was clear  
To face with courage my fear  
That perhaps this path was not mine*

*To walk or kneel or lie  
Upon? That image of death  
In such striking colours  
Of one good man's dolours  
To freely live and freely die*

*Turned a heavy saddened eye  
And spoke in whispered breath  
To humbly ask for this one task  
And I, not knowing dream or reality  
Said nothing in silent reply.*



Seamus Mulholland

## Portiuncula

I knew the place  
As full of grace  
As she for whom  
It was named  
And not ashamed  
To spend my years  
At the beginning  
There and my tears  
At the end  
Things come full  
Circle in the gloom  
Of an early October  
Evening and I barely  
Breathing now face  
The impending tomb  
Dark slowly dims  
me and wet cold  
Stone beneath  
My body all worn  
Out with death  
Is the proper bed  
For one like another  
Who had nowhere  
To lay his head



And I think I hear  
Other sounds near  
Of prayers winging  
Their way upward  
Ah yes, their time  
To sing has come  
And my time gone  
And this time I shall  
Not silence them  
For this is their best of songs

**Seamus Mulholland**

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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## BOOK REVIEW

***Writings on the Spiritual Life. Introduction and Notes by F. Edward Coughlin, O.F.M. Volume X, Works of St. Bonaventure, edited by Robert J. Karris. New York: Franciscan Institute, 2006. pp. vii – 434. \$40.00***

The vibrant intellectual spirit of the Middle Ages gave rise to two great lights in the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure of Bagnoregio. Whereas Thomas became virtually a household name through official recognition of his theology by the Church, Bonaventure lived in obscurity, recognized only by a few pedantic medievalists. The late twentieth century, however, witnessed a recovery of Bonaventure primarily through the English translation of and commentary on his writings. Over the last thirty years students have taken up the work of the Seraphic Doctor with enthusiasm, especially because his affective theology speaks to the heart of the contemporary world in its search for meaning and purpose.

The present volume of writings, annotated by Brother Ed Coughlin, contributes to the ongoing Bonaventurian revival. It is the tenth volume in the Bonaventure Texts in Translation Series published by the Franciscan Institute. Although most of the texts in this volume have been translated elsewhere, Coughlin specifically incorporates texts that “invite the reader to make the spiritual journey into the wisdom that comes through true experience as envisioned by the Seraphic Doctor” (p. 2). In the introduction he writes: “Despite the diversity of these works, the variety of forms they take, and the different audiences to which they were first addressed—friars, sisters, laity—the Seraphic Doctor seems always to be urging everyone to believe, to understand, to contemplate,

and to become enflamed with the love of the triune God” (p. 2). Reviewer Michael Blastic notes that Coughlin “offers an introductory essay that presents a detailed yet synthetic overview of Bonaventure’s spiritual theology, with a specific view on the journey of the heart into wisdom.” And he does so in such a way that is readily clear and cogent.

The translation of the four principal texts by Girard Etzkorn, *The Threefold Way*, *On the Perfection of Life addressed to the Sisters*, *On Governing the Soul* and the *Soliloquium*, present Bonaventure’s views on the human person and the search for wisdom through the stages of purgation, illumination and union with God. Four supplemental texts support the Seraphic Doctor’s search for the wisdom in the journey to God. The translations follow Ewert Cousins’ use of sense lines which renders Bonaventure’s complex Latin easier to grasp in its nuanced and poetic expressions. The *Soliloquium* in particular is one of the best English translations currently available and reflects the depth of Bonaventure’s spiritual insight.

Coughlin has made a significant contribution to the renewal of the Franciscan Intellectual tradition with this volume. He has made accessible some of Bonaventure’s key spiritual works, enabling ongoing study and scholarship in the English speaking world. This volume is helpful to the student of Franciscan theology as well as to the non-academic seeker of wisdom. Just as Bonaventure wrote for a variety of audiences, so too, this volume of his spiritual writings will appeal to a variety of readers. Wisdom is the highest level of knowledge for Bonaventure and Coughlin has helped disclose its beauty.

Ilia Delio, O.S.F.  
*Washington Theological Union*

## MEDIA REVIEW

***The Virtual Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi: An Interactive, Explorable Environment with Integrated Text (CD-ROM and Text). St Louis: Institute of Digital Theology, Saint Louis University, 2006. ISBN 0-9791418-0-X. \$49.95 + postage, S & H.***

Long-awaited, *The Virtual Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi* is now available. This digital resource uniquely presents one of the world's most celebrated places of Christian worship in Europe decorated by some of the greatest medieval artists of their time, including Cimabue, Giotto, and artists from Roman, German and French workshops. More than a mere series of photographs, the CD provides views of the upper church's interior that are not available to the gravity-bound pilgrim or tourist. Most of the interior furniture has been removed in this display. The viewer can easily glide forward or backward, fly from floor to vaulted ceiling, spin for a 360° panorama, or take a vertiginous look from the top of a column toward the floor. The focus can be a decorative motif along an arch, a particular scene, or an entire vault. These wider views show enough to clarify relationships among the images, and zooming in or out can reveal others. The highest resolution images are of the lowest register, the Francis cycle, best preserved despite earthquake damage and other vicissitudes over the centuries. Above this are two registers of scenes from the Old and New Testaments, often interrelated among themselves and the Francis scenes. Screen shots can be saved for future reference.

A *User's Guide* provides clearly-stated information: complete instructions on installing the program and navigating through the basilica, the controls and keyboard

commands, and how to access the text associated with the images. This latter feature is most useful; by toggling from the image one can reveal an overlay of associated text from the Bible, from the early lives of St. Francis or other sources. The preface by J.A. Wayne Hellmann, O.F.M. Conv., describes the project's origin as a class assignment which developed along dissertation-like proportions. A general introduction provides a detailed overview of the upper church, including historical context, chronology and a research bibliography. The description of the counter-façade, with its four frescoes ("The Miracle of the Spring," the "Ascension," "Pentecost," and "Francis Preaching to the Birds") in chiastic arrangement is most intriguing, as it segues from Old Testament to New: "In effect, the chiasm merges Heaven and Earth as it connects the rest of the narratives in the nave." Three appendices give helpful schemas of the artwork for the nave, the transept and the apse. One might want to print these for handy reference, instead of flipping from screen to screen.

This digital resource is useful for individual as well as class use. *The Virtual Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi* will interest students of art, history, theology and medieval and Franciscan studies. At Franciscan schools it can enhance various programs for orientation or information. Of course, since it is part of their heritage, Franciscans can utilize it in other ways, for formation or meditation on individual scenes. Pilgrims to Assisi will find it both useful preparation and wonderful memories.

Scenes of the lower church and the tomb of St. Francis, however, are not included; and a major drawback is the lack of compatibility with Intel 8-x open-board graphics chip sets. Nonetheless, one looks forward to the next productions of the Institute of Digital Theology.

Minimum specifications for *The Virtual Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi* are: Windows 2000, XP, DirectX 9.0, Pentium 4, 1 GHz, 512 MB RAM, 64 MB Video card, 500 MB Free Space, Sound Card, 4x/1x CD/DVD Speed. The CD will work more smoothly with the recommended: Pentium 4, 2 GHz, 1 GB RAM, 128 Video Card and 32x/2x CD/DVD Speed.



*The Virtual Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi* is available at <http://digitaltheology.org>. It is also listed at Amazon.com, where it has two five-star reviews.

Felicity Dorsett, O.S.F.  
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**SCHOOL OF FRANCISCAN STUDIES  
PROJECTED SUMMER SCHEDULE 2008**

SFS Credits      Course Title

**WEEKS 1-5: JUNE 23th -JULY 25th**

508	3	Franciscan Movement I
519	3	Companions and Disciples
560	3	Introduction to Franciscan & Medieval Studies
546	3	Foundations of Franciscan Theology
505	0	Integration Seminar
597	0	Comprehensive Exams

**WEEKS 3-5: JULY 7th - JULY 25th**

525	3	Writings of Francis and Clare
539	3	Formation in the Franciscan Tradition
564-03		Special Topics: Beguines and Bizzoché
558	3	Readings in Franciscan Theology: Ockham
565	3	Franciscan Painting I

**ONE WEEK COURSES**

564-01	1	Reading Bonaventure's Commentary on Luke
564-02	1	Franciscans in the Contemporary American Church

**GENERAL ORIENTATION COURSES**

520	2	Francis: Life and Charism
501	3	Survey of Franciscan History

**June 23-July 25, 2008**

Days/Time	Instructor	Pre-Requisite
MWF 8:30-11:15 am	Michael Cusato, OFM	SFS507
MWF 8:30-11:15 am	Michael Blastic, OFM	SFS518
T,W,Th:T,Th 8:30-11:15 am	Margaret Klotz, OSF	
Wed 6:45-9:30 pm		
M,W,F 1:00-3:45 pm	Fr. Frank Lane	

**WEEKS 3-5: JULY 7th - JULY 25th**

M-F 1:00-3:45 pm	Jean François Godet-Calogeras	
M-F 1:00-3:45 pm	Edward Coughlin, OFM	
TBA	Alison More	
M-F 8:30-11:15 am	Tom McKenna	SFS 546
M-F 8:30-11:15 am	Xavier Seubert, OFM	

**ONE WEEK COURSES**

June 23-27 8:30-11:15 am	Robert Karris, OFM
June 30-July 4 8:30-11:15 am	Meg Guider, OSF

**GENERAL ORIENTATION COURSES**

M-F 8:30-11:15 am June 23-July 4	Mary Meany
M-F 8:30-11:15 am July 7-25	Dominic Monti, OFM

## On the Franciscan Circuit

### "The Path of Nonviolence"

– a presentation by Fr. John Dear, S.J.  
 Sunday, October 7, 2007, 1:00-4:00 PM.  
 Sponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis of Clinton.  
 Program will be held at Vista Grande, 2141 16th Street  
 N.W., Clinton.  
 For details see [www.clintonfranciscans.com](http://www.clintonfranciscans.com)  
 or call (563) 242-7611. No registration fee.

### "Love's Promises – the Foundation of our Hope"

– with Fr. Emery Tang, O.F.M.  
 October 5-7, 2007  
 San Damiano Retreat Center in Danville, CA.  
 See ad on page 352.

### "Awaken to the Sacred"

– with Sr. Gabrielle Ühlein, O.S.F.  
 January 11-13, 2008  
 San Damiano Retreat Center in Danville, CA.  
 For information call 925-837-9141  
 or go to [www.sandamiano.org](http://www.sandamiano.org)

### Reclaiming the Franciscan Theological Tradition

Sponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

September 14-16, 2007 Franciscan Spiritual Center Aston, PA  
 September 28-30, 2007 Aston, PA  
 October 12-14, 2007 Franciscan Spiritual Center Ringwood, NJ  
 November 2-4, 2007 Motherhouse Millvale, PA  
 November 9-11, 2007 Franciscan Spiritual Center Ringwood, NJ  
 See ad on page 354.

## Abbreviations

### Writings of Saint Francis

Adm	The Adinonitions	1C
BIL	A Blessing for Brother Leo	2C
Ctc	The Canticle of the Creatures	3C
CtExh	The Canticle of Exhortation	LCh
1Frg	Fragments of Worchester Manuscript	Off
2Frg	Fragments of Thomas of Celano	LJS
3Frg	Fragments of Hugh of Digne	VL
LtAnt	A Letter to Br. Anthony of Padua	1-3JT
1LtCl	First Letter to the Clergy (Earlier Edition)	DCom
2LtCl	Second Letter to the Clergy (Later Edition)	TL
1LtCus	The First Letter to the Custodians	1MP
2LtCus	The Second Letter to the Custodians	2MP
1LtF	The First Letter to the Faithful	HTrb
2LtF	The Second Letter to the Faithful	ScEx
LtL	A Letter to Brother Leo	AP
LtMin	A Letter to a Minister	L3C
LtOrd	A Letter to the Entire Order	AC
LtR	A Letter to the Rulers of the People	1-4Srm
ExhP	Exhortation of the Praise of God	LMj
PrOF	A Prayer Inspired by the Our Father	LMn
PrsG	The Praises of God	BPr
OffP	The Office of the Passion	ABF
PrCr	The Prayer before the Crucifix	LFI
ER	The Earlier Rule ( <i>Regula non bullata</i> )	KnSF
LR	The Later Rule ( <i>Regula bullata</i> )	ChrTE
RH	A Rule for Hermitages	ChrJG
SalBVM	A Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	
SalV	A Salutation of Virtues	
Test	The Testament	
TPJ	True and Perfect Joy	

### Franciscan Sources

1C	The Life of Saint Francis by Thomas of Celano
2C	The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul
3C	The Treatise on the Miracles by Thomas of Celano
LCh	The Legend for Use in the Choir
Off	The Divine Office of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer
LJS	The Life of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer
VL	The Versified Life of St. Francis by Henri d'Avranches
1-3JT	The Praises by Jacopone da Todi
DCom	The Divine Comedy by Dante 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
LFI	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

### Writings of Saint Clare

ILAg	First Letter to Agnes of Prague
2LAg	Second Letter to Agnes of Prague
3LAg	Third Letter to Agnes of Prague
4LAg	Fourth Letter to Agnes of Prague
LEr	Letter to Ermentrude of Bruges
RCI	Rule of Clare
TestCl	Testament of Clare
BCI	Blessing of Clare