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## FOREWORD

Those of you who have visited the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure can conjure a mental image of what it's like in the winter. My office is in the lower level of the Friedsam Memorial Library, next to the office of the Director of the Library and two doors down from the office of one of the foremost biblical scholars, Fr. Robert J. Karis. Bob signs his emails "Bob from his two windows and twelve bars looking out on the Enchanted Mountains," or some variation of that theme depending on weather conditions, season, or current project. Today, were I to adopt his style I would have to say "Daria from my two mud-spattered windows and twelve bars looking out at the gray skies of the Enchanted Mountains." The library roof has been shedding large chunks of snow cover which, upon splashdown, cause the soggy path to decorate my window in a Rorschach style star-chart. I'm trusting the early thaw is an indication that Punxsutawney Phil got it right this year.

You will notice a potpourri quality about this issue. Some articles came in too late to make it into the last issue of 2012, so I moved them to this issue. You will also see one brand new (to the pages of *The Cord*) author among the familiar names who are sharing their insights with us. The art on the cover is from a postcard featuring the photography of Stella deVenuta, O.S.F. of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi in Milwaukee.

I hope you will take some time to look at the tip sheets at the back of this issue. These tip sheets have much more information about the individual titles than the traditional ads contained which is the reason why I have adapted them for *The Cord*. As Lent begins, keep in mind that the spirit needs to be nourished with spiritual reading, as well as by one's personal penitential practices. The offerings in the back of this issue areprinted for your convenience and for your Lenten nourishment.

*Daria R. Mitchell, O.S.F.*

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***“I HAVE DONE WHAT IS MINE;  
MAY CHRIST TEACH YOU WHAT IS YOURS.”  
FRANCIS OF ASSISI (2 CEL: 214)***

**TERESINE GLASER, O.S.F.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Tradition tells us that it was in a small run-down church below Assisi that Francis heard Christ direct him to “rebuild my house.” Throughout his life Francis remained obedient to this mandate, conforming his life to that of Jesus Christ as disclosed to him through the Holy Spirit in the texts of the gospels and the teaching of the Church. In this paper I explore ways in which Franciscans are attempting to understand their relationship with the Church in light of the Second Vatican Council and the responsibilities which flow from this.

## **FORMATION OF A VOCATION**

Francis was born in late 1181 or early 1182 to Pietro Bernardone and his wife, Lady Pica, a wealthy bourgeois couple living in Assisi. Baptized John Peter, he became known as Francesco because of Pietro’s preference for this name. His was a carefree childhood and an adventuresome adolescence. The career of his dreams was to be a knight. Taken prisoner in an intercity war between Assisi and Perugia, spending a year in a dank and dark prison in Perugia, and another year recovering from illness related to his imprisonment interrupted, but did not change, his dream of knighthood. In 1204, while travel-

ing to Apulia with the intention of joining a crusade as a member of Walter Brienne's army, his journey was interrupted in Spoleto by a strange dream during which he understood he was to return to Assisi.

Details of Francis's life during the next few years are sparse. Various sources recount an incident, in 1205, in the little church of San Damiano located below Assisi, during which Francis heard a voice which seemed to be coming from the large Syro-Byzantine crucifix suspended above the altar telling him, "Francis, go rebuild my house; as you can see, it is all being destroyed."<sup>1</sup> Sometime after this, Francis experienced an encounter with lepers. He describes this as follows:

The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, thus to begin doing penance in this way: for when I was in sin, it seemed too bitter for me to see lepers. And the Lord himself led me among them and I showed mercy to them. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body. And afterwards I delayed a little and left the world.<sup>2</sup>

The imprint this experience left on Francis's life can be attested to by the fact that, shortly before his death, as he was writing a review of his life, Francis began with this incident.

The crucial event which set Francis on his vocation's journey took place at the little church of Mary of the Angels, also below Assisi. Here, reportedly on the feast of St.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas of Celano, *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*, in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 2, *The Founder*, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short (New York: New City Press, 2000), 249. Hereafter this volume will be referred to as *FA:ED* 2 followed by page numbers.

<sup>2</sup> Francis of Assisi, *Testament* 1-3, in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 1, *The Saint*, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short (New York: New City Press, 1999), 124. Hereafter this volume will be referred to as *FA:ED* 1 followed by page numbers.

Matthias on February 28, 1208, Francis heard the gospel passage that ended his three to four years of searching for God's direction for his life. "Provide yourselves with neither gold nor silver nor copper in your belts; no traveling bag, no change of shirt, no sandals, no walking staff" (Matt 10: 9-10). Bonaventure records Francis's response:

'This is what I want; this is what I desire with all my heart.' Immediately, he took off the shoes from his feet, put down his staff, denounced his wallet and money, and, satisfied with one tunic, threw away his leather belt and put on a piece of rope for a belt. He directed all his heart's desire to carry out what he had heard and to conform in every way to the rule of right living given to the apostles.<sup>3</sup>

Francis left Mary of the Angels on that late February morning firm in his vocation to live according to the Holy Gospel and trusting that God would faithfully disclose to him how he should do this. Less than two months later he was joined by Bernard of Quintavalle, Peter Catanii, and Giles of Assisi.

## **FORMATION OF A FRATERNITY**

In his *Testament* Francis writes,

And after the Lord gave me some brothers, no one showed me what I had to do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel.<sup>4</sup>

The brothers lived in whatever shelters were available to them, worked and/or begged for their food and shared their experience of the Gospel with whoever chose to lis-

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<sup>3</sup> Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, *The Major Legend of Saint Francis* 3:1, in *FA:ED*, 2, 542. See also 1C 22 in *FA:ED* 1, 201-02.

<sup>4</sup> Francis of Assisi, *Testament* 14, in *FA:ED* 1, 125.

ten to their message. Several sources record that in 1209, their number having reached twelve, the brothers walked together to Rome to request approval of their simple way of life from Pope Innocent III. In his *Testament* Francis writes, “And I had this [way of life] written down simply and in a few words and the Lord Pope confirmed it for me.”<sup>5</sup> According to the chronology provided in *Birth of a Movement* the brothers, in various groupings, completed three “missions” prior to approaching Pope Innocent.<sup>6</sup> One can suggest that the impetus for seeking papal approval for their way of life at this juncture arose from observing the form their life was taking, as well as from the fact that Francis and/or others in the fraternity became aware that some groups similar to theirs had been declared heretical.

Sources do not record specific interaction between Francis and the Church between 1209 and 1215, the opening of the Fourth Lateran Council. During this time the brothers lived for a few weeks in Orte, about half-way between Rome and Assisi, before moving on to Rivo Torto below Assisi. Finally they settled in a marshland surrounding Mary of the Angels, a short distance from Rivo Torto, which they called their “little portion” or *portiuncula*. Here Francis received Clare into the Gospel fraternity and eventually established her and her sisters at San Damiano.

Several questions surface regarding Francis’s actions in these matters. In general, how did Francis understand his position, as the founder of the group, in relationship with the Church? To what extent was Bishop Guido, Assisi’s bishop, involved in decisions Francis was making, especially those related to receiving Clare into the fraternity? Was she received simply as a penitent, as were the brothers, or as a woman establishing a feminine branch of the fraternity, included canonically within the *Primitive*

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<sup>5</sup> Francis of Assisi, *Testament* 15, *FA:ED* 1, 125.

<sup>6</sup> David Flood and Thaddée Matura, *The Birth of a Movement: A Study of the First Rule of St. Francis*, trans. Paul Schwartz and Paul Lachance (Chicago: Francis Herald Press, 1975), xviii.



*Rule* approved by Pope Innocent in 1209? Does receiving Clare into the fraternity suggest that from the beginning Francis anticipated that the movement would be gender-inclusive—and if so, how does this stand in relationship to the Church? I raise these questions here, not because it is my intention to attempt to answer them within the limits of this brief paper, but rather because probing them helps one search out the relationship between Francis and the Church during the early years of the fraternity.

### **REBUILDING THE CHURCH AS DIRECTED BY THE GOSPEL**

An avenue one might use to gain insights into the relationship between Francis and the Church is to consider what it was that drove the intensity of this relationship despite situations which suggest deep differences between Francis's approach to some issues related to the fraternity and those of the hierarchy. One might consider, for example, the efforts of Cardinal Hugolino, after he was appointed protector of the fraternity, to convince Francis to consider adopting structures for the brotherhood similar to those of one of the established orders, e.g. the Benedictines or Augustinians. Franciscan scholars David Flood and Thaddée Matura invite their readers to study the formation of Francis's attitudes toward the Church with the following words:

For the person who believes that reference to the past, and especially to the archetypal experience of the origins, is important for living the present in continuity with imaginative creativity and who, moreover, reckons that the rule prior to 1223 is an important and strong expression of this experience, it is normal to welcome its message and to respond to its call.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Flood and Matura, 123. Chapter and verse citations used in this text vary slightly from the usual format used in the United States.

Citing the *Earlier Rule* 23:23, Flood and Matura conclude that Francis, acting on certitude born from deep humility, firmly believed that he was “invested with an essential message for all men and women ‘who are and who will be.’”<sup>8</sup> They suggest further that those who search for the core of Francis’s magnetism often conclude that his attractiveness flows from “his evangelism, his poverty, his radicalism.”<sup>9</sup> Flood and Matura, however, probe beneath these more commonly identified attributes of Francis and determine that it is Francis’s radical faith in the Trinitarian God and the myriad ways he experiences and expresses this God—Creator, Word, Sanctifier—lying at the heart of his life and behavior that invites people to take him seriously. Referring particularly to chapters 17, 22 and 23 of the *Earlier Rule*, Flood and Matura state: “These texts speak to us explicitly of the lived relationship established between the brothers and the mystery of God manifested by the Spirit of Jesus.”<sup>10</sup> They encourage their readers to study prayerfully the wording of these chapters in order to experience vicariously Francis’s faith in the God who cannot be named in human language and whom Francis experienced in the depths of his heart.

Francis once enjoyed the alluring “goods” of his day: doting parents, dashing attire, admiring friends, travel and freedom, to name a few. Now, with the capacity for enjoyment he developed from these experiences, he *experiences* God as his *unlimited Good*. In an almost breathless manner, Flood and Matura describe Francis’s experience of God.

He alone is good, all good is his wherever it is found (chap 17, 17-19); he is “the full good, all good, every good, the true and supreme good, he who alone is good” (chap. 23, 28). This nearly tire-

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Likewise, capitalization of various words may also differ. In these situations, I have quoted directly from the text.

<sup>8</sup> Flood and Matura, 123.

<sup>9</sup> Flood and Matura, 123.

<sup>10</sup> Flood and Matura, 125.

some variation on the word “*bonum*” points out ... what place this aspect of the divine mystery held in the experience of Francis.... Here is a man for whom God is not a word, but a fire which burns.... The only worthwhile thing, for him who has been “turned around” by a gospel conversion, is to keep himself before God (chap. 22, 9), to discover how to live with and for him (chap. 22,23). Here is the ultimate preoccupation over which nothing should or can prevail (II R. chap. 10.9). The presence of Jesus becomes living and ceases to be solely a moral reference (chap. 22, 29-38). And thus the Spirit, the Paraclete, is able to rejoice and sing “alleluia” (chap 23, 10-11) in the heart of the believer which has become the dwelling-place of the living God (chap. 22, 24); with him, with the men and women of the past, the present, and the future, with the reconciled and saved universe, he can proclaim the eucharist, the thanksgiving, of redeemed humankind. Haven’t we reached the most central point of Francis’s experience, through which the rest is explained and justified, and on which his success and Christian influence is based?<sup>11</sup>

Careful study of this lengthy passage helps clarify the authors’ thesis regarding the centrality of faith in the Trinitarian God which permeated Francis’s very being and directed his understanding of the mission God entrusted to him. They caution their readers that, should they fail to comprehend the living, breathing relationship that Francis and some of his early companions experienced with God, their radical evangelism and radical poverty could appear to be sheer “literalism suspended in space.... Everything in the Franciscan charism hangs on the experience of God and Christ.”<sup>12</sup> In Christ, Francis experienced the Trinitarian God.

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<sup>11</sup> Flood and Matura, 126-27.

<sup>12</sup> Flood and Matura, 128.

In order to grasp the intensity of Francis's relationship with the Church, one needs to understand that, for Francis, Christ and the Church were inseparable. For Francis to minimize or sever his relationship with the Church would be to sever his relationship with Christ and therefore with the Triune God. For Francis, this was impossible. Flood and Matura state:

For [Francis] there was an indestructible bond between the ministry, the word of the gospel and the sacraments, especially that which encompassed them all, the Body and Blood of Christ. At bottom, his Christian intuition led him to see that the central adventure of his life, the experience of God and of Christ, could not be authentically lived apart from the gospel and the sacraments.... This vision gave him his love for communion, his respect for essential structures, and without making him blind to abuses and deformities, his unwillingness to pronounce harsh and irreversible judgments on the Church.<sup>13</sup>

This concentration of his loyalty to Christ's presence in the Church gave Francis's mission a different center than that of apostolic movements of his day.

What was unique about Francis's ministry that gave it a longevity that apostolic movements of his day lacked? Roch Niemier, refers to the work of Duane Lapsanski, to illustrate this. Lapsanski states:

For some unexplainable reason, the various lay movements of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries completely lost sight of the following of Christ and once again gave their full allegiance to the following of the apostles ...

With the coming of St. Francis and his followers, however, this "apostolic" element receded

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<sup>13</sup> Flood and Matura, 131.

completely into the background and was replaced by a renewed emphasis on the following of *Christ*. Though many elements in the life of the Friars Minor closely resembled that of earlier movements, their motivation and inspiration for living this kind of life were significantly different. Whereas the life of the apostles and the example of the early Church were the primary goals of most religious groups of these centuries, it was clearly the following of Christ himself which inspired the Friars Minor ...

By following directly in the footsteps of Christ they were not interested in restoring the early Church but rather in reforming their contemporary Church.<sup>14</sup>

While one might take issue with Lapsanski's use of some general statements, e.g. "for some unexplainable reason ..." and "completely lost sight of the following of Christ," his insights lend support to the thesis Flood and Matura develop regarding the centrality of Christ, Incarnate Word of the Trinitarian God, in Francis's life and mission.<sup>15</sup>

While Francis's loyalty to the Church is beyond doubt, Francis, as mentioned earlier in this paper, did not always agree with its leadership. What Francis was convinced Christ was calling him to do and what Cardinal Hugolino wanted the friars to do for the Church were, at times, almost diametrically opposed to each other. For example, Francis believed that the friars were called to live simply in the world, that is, in the midst of the people as opposed to withdrawing from the people into a monastic enclave. Friars were to earn their livelihood by manual labor and, when necessary, by begging. In addition, friars

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<sup>14</sup> Duane Lapsanski, *The First Franciscans and the Gospel*, (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1976), 56 as quoted by Roch Niemier, *In the Footsteps of Francis and Clare* (Cincinnati, Ohio: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2006), 79.

<sup>15</sup> In all fairness it is also important to note that Lapsanski was writing in 1976, forty years prior to his statement being included by Niemier in his text.

were to shun privilege of every kind at all cost. However, in light of the reform measures called for by the Fourth Lateran Council, many prelates of the Church, trusting the implicit loyalty of Francis and his friars, were determined to utilize the friars according to their own plans for the task of reform. This required education for the friars, with all the status and privilege connected with it.

The differences between Francis's expectations and those of the Church clashed during a general Chapter in the early 1220s. Francis had recently returned from Egypt and the Holy Land. He was appalled by some changes he observed among the friars that had occurred during his long absence. Some friars sought the assistance of Cardinal Hugolino to encourage Francis to adopt organization in the Order similar to that of established Orders. The Cardinal asked Francis to consider the brothers' request. Eloi Leclerc describes the scene:

Francis listened to the observations that the Cardinal made to him in that sense; then, taking the latter by the hand he led him before the assembled members of the chapter, and there facing them all he declared in a loud voice: "My brothers, my brothers, God called me to walk in the way of humility and showed me the way of simplicity. I do not want to hear any mention of the rule of St. Augustine, of St. Bernard, or of St. Benedict. The Lord has told me that he wanted to make a new fool of me in the world, and God does not want to lead us by any other knowledge than that" (*Legend of Perugia*, 114). It was impossible to be any clearer, any firmer.... He had spoken while clinging to the latter's hand; he was resolved not to let go of that hand, no matter what happened. He maintained full trust in the Church, but at the same time he was resolved to remain faithful to his own primary vocation; and he wanted them all to know it.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Eloi Leclerc, *Francis of Assisi: Return to the Gospel* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983), 101-02.

Passages such as the foregoing suggest the internal turmoil Francis experienced as he attempted to balance his loyalty to the Church with faithfulness to the mission he believed God had entrusted to him.

Following this Chapter, Francis withdrew into a painful solitude with a few of his close companions. Leclerc attempts to capture in a few brief words what may well have been Francis's state of soul at this point. He states: "After making his position clear, Francis was overcome with exhaustion. Seriously ill, nearly blind, and challenged by his own brothers, Francis felt himself overwhelmed by dejection ..." <sup>17</sup> Leclerc then quotes a passage from Thomas of Celano's *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul* (157): "They transfix me with a sharp sword and plunge it through my bowels ..." <sup>18</sup> This is a picture of Francis that may be lost in a superficial reading of his life.

In contrast with the turmoil Francis sometimes experienced in his relationship with the Church, contemporary papal documents provide evidence of the esteem with which Francis and the friars were held by Pope Honorius III. In the papal bull, *Cum dilecti*, 1219, Honorius introduced the friars to "the archbishops and bishops; and to our beloved sons, the abbots, deans, archdeacons, and other prelates of churches." <sup>19</sup> He describes the Lesser Brothers:

Our beloved sons, Brother Francis and his companions of the life and religion of the Lesser Brothers have rejected the vanities of this world and have chosen a way of life deservedly approved by the Roman Church; after the example of the Apostles they go throughout different regions sowing the seed of the word of God.

We therefore beseech and exhort all of you in the Lord, and by these apostolic letters command

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<sup>17</sup> Leclerc, 102.

<sup>18</sup> Francis of Assisi quoted by Thomas of Celano in Leclerc, 102.

<sup>19</sup> Honorius III, "*Cum delecti*," in *FA:ED* 1, 558.

you, when members of the aforesaid brothers present themselves to you bearing these letters, to receive them as [true] Catholic faithful, showing yourselves favorable and kind to them out of reverence for God and us.<sup>20</sup>

Honorius reiterated his message in a second letter, *Pro dilectis* in 1220.<sup>21</sup> But Honorius also kept a watchful eye on the young fraternity. In *Cum secundum*, 1220, Honorius advised that some structures be incorporated into the friars' lifestyle, e.g. a preparation to precede profession. The letter reads, "... by authority of these present letters, we forbid you to admit to profession in your Order anyone who has not first completed a year of probation."<sup>22</sup> Francis inserted this directive into Chapter Two of the *Earlier Rule*.<sup>23</sup> These papal letters, along with others included in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, give evidence of an ongoing relationship between Francis and the leadership in the Church, especially as the fraternity grew in number and increased involvement in pastoral ministry in local churches.

Worn out by illness and the complex responsibilities of his growing Order which now numbered in the thousands and reached far beyond Italy, Francis resigned as minister general of the Order in 1220 and designated Peter Catanii as his successor while he retained his role as spiritual leader of the Order. In his few remaining years he continued to preach through his writing, was sealed with the stigmata and wrote his swansong, the *Canticle of Creatures*. Shortly before his death in 1226, Francis exhorted all his brothers then and those to come: "I have done what is mine; may Christ teach you what is yours."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Honorius III, "*Cum delecti*," in *FA:ED* 1, 558.

<sup>21</sup> Honorius III, "*Pro delectis*," in *FA:ED* 1, 559-60.

<sup>22</sup> Honorius III, "*Cum secundum*," in *FA:ED* 1, 561.

<sup>23</sup> Francis of Assisi, *Earlier Rule* 2:9, in *FA:ED* 1, 65. The editors note that including this papal directive in the *Rule* "helped the Lesser Brothers gain recognition as a true religious Order." *FA:ED* 1, 561.

<sup>24</sup> Francis of Assisi in Thomas of Celano, *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul* (2:214) in *FA:ED* 2, 386.



In the light of this exhortation, it is helpful to recall Duane Lapsanski's comment quoted earlier in this paper. "By following directly in the footsteps of Christ they [Francis and his brothers] were not interested in restoring the *early* Church but rather in reforming their *contemporary* Church."<sup>25</sup>

## REBUILDING THE CHURCH IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

In keeping with the legacy bequeathed them, Franciscans of the twenty-first century bear the responsibility of reforming their contemporary church. Colt Anderson reminds Franciscans that Francis approached reform of the Church in his day, "by means of holding total renunciation and total engagement in a state of dynamic tension.... His model was Christ, who profoundly emptied himself in an act of perfect engagement."<sup>26</sup> Franciscan participation in reforming the Church today, in order to be authentic and effective, must be grounded in this same reality.

The Second Vatican Council, 1962-1965, called members of religious orders to study their original documents and the lives of their founders and foundresses in order to identify the particular contributions their respective orders or congregations were making to the church at the time the original rules were canonically approved.<sup>27</sup> They were called to renew their original charisms in the context of the needs of the Church of the twentieth century. Joseph Chinnici reminds Franciscans that the critical Latin editions of the writings of Francis and Clare were published only after 1965 and the *English Omnibus of Sources for the Life of St. Francis* was first published in

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<sup>25</sup> Lapsanski, 56.

<sup>26</sup> C. Colt Anderson, "Franciscan Reform of the Church," in "Go Rebuild My House" *Franciscans and the Church Today: Washington Theological Union Symposium Papers 2004*, ed. Elise Saggau (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2004), 45-46.

<sup>27</sup> "Perfectae Caritas" 2, in *Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbot (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), 468.

1972, followed by *Francis and Clare: the Complete Works* in 1982.<sup>28</sup> Margaret Carney states:

When Franciscans are required to “return to their sources,” their origins, the task is always two-fold. All Franciscans share a common ancestry of rule and tradition that stretches back to mid-thirteenth century Italy and the inimitable personages of Francis and Clare of Assisi.<sup>29</sup>

Attention to the ways eight centuries of history reshaped the Franciscan family multiple times is essential to forming an accurate understanding of Franciscan life today.

Particularly helpful to students of Franciscan history is the careful overview Carney gives of developments in Franciscan organizational history from its origins to the development during the past twenty years of a “vital discussion of a new methodology to link the medieval wisdom of our founders to the modern questions that face us and that rise from within our cultural matrix. The name this conversational project goes by is ‘Franciscan Evangelical Life.’”<sup>30</sup> After carefully clarifying what it is not, Carney speaks to what it is. “We are making the bold—and for many, confusing—claim that Franciscans belong neither to the ‘monastic’ nor the ‘apostolic’ forms of religious life that dominate ecclesiastical documents and discussion.”<sup>31</sup> Carney’s comments were precipitated, at least in part, by the Synod of Bishops on Consecrated Life in the Church and the “Response” of the Franciscan Third Order Regular to the bishops.<sup>32</sup> When describing

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<sup>28</sup> Joseph Chinnici, “The Prophetic Heart: The Evangelical Form of Religious Life in the Contemporary United States,” *The Cord* 44:11 (November, 1994): 292-306.

<sup>29</sup> Margaret Carney, “Naming the Earthquake: Franciscans and the Evangelical Life,” *The Cord* 56:2 (March-April, 2006), 77.

<sup>30</sup> Carney, “Naming the Earthquake,” 86.

<sup>31</sup> Carney, “Naming the Earthquake,” 87.

<sup>32</sup> “Response to the *Lineamenta* in Light of the 1994 Synod of Bishops on Consecrated Life in the Church,” *The Cord* 44:11 (November,

the elements of the Franciscan charism, the document states in part:

The essence of our life is our relationship with Jesus Christ. Our charism gifts the Church in the world, with a radically simple gospel call where we are *all sisters and brothers*. Reverencing the Spirit's action and embracing continuous conversion, Franciscans live in mutual obedience to one another and affirm the role of minister as servant among them. This is the prophetic stance which Franciscans choose to make for the church and the world.<sup>33</sup>

This "Response" of the Third Order Regular became a type of seminal document referred to in subsequent articles describing Franciscan life as an evangelical life distinguished from monastic and/or apostolic forms of religious life.

Carney stated that Chinnici's article, "The Prophetic Heart," cited above, "became the centerpiece of [a] small body of literature"<sup>34</sup> directed toward exploring the meaning of the term "evangelical" to describe religious life as it is lived by Franciscans. In this article, Chinnici remarked that the categories for religious life used by the Council ...

just did not fit our [Franciscan] family. We seemed to share in all four forms. The lived experience and value of being "brothers and sisters" in community did not sit well with the purists of the apostolic form; "our cloister is the world" (SC 63) hardly resonated with traditionally contemplative religious; itinerancy scratched uneasily inside the monastic

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1994): 289-91. Since this document refers to the "coming Synod of Bishops on Consecrated Life in the Church" and speaks of it as "an opportunity to continue the dialogue with our Church authority," it appears this "Response" was formally submitted prior to the convening of the synod. (290).

<sup>33</sup> "Response to the Lineamenta," 289-90.

<sup>34</sup> Carney, "Naming the Earthquake," 94 n. 16.

garment; the existence of an approved religious rule predated any twentieth-century form of secular institute. When the contours of another option, the “evangelical life” were first outlined, the feeling emerged in many quarters, “this fits,” “this is who we are.”<sup>35</sup>

Chinnici states that the “reassuring experience” of having discovered a sense of “right fit” was somewhat eclipsed “by the bewildering recognition that the ‘evangelical life’ was not described in the *Code of Canon Law*, nor in traditional treatises on religious life.”<sup>36</sup> Additional substantiated clarification was necessary in order to gain canonical recognition of the description of Franciscan life as evangelical rather than primarily monastic or apostolic.

Both Carney and Chinnici recognize that all religious orders follow the Gospel; however, supporting the specific use of the term “evangelical” by Franciscans, Chinnici states: “the term ‘evangelical’ referred to the phrase uniquely placed at the beginning of all three rules (Francis, Clare, and the Third Order Regular): *vivere secundum formam s. Evangelii*.”<sup>37</sup> Chinnici articulates the distinguishing characteristics of the “evangelical option” as follows:

a focus on Christ as the head of all creation, the presence of God’s glory in human flesh, the goodness of all that exists, witness by word and example, the reality of being brothers and sisters with its consequences for governance and the structures of community, the existence within a congregation of a multiplicity of works based on the talents of

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<sup>35</sup> Chinnici, 293. SC cited in this quotation refers to *Sacred Exchange* found in *FA:ED* 1, 529-54.

<sup>36</sup> Chinnici, 293-94.

<sup>37</sup> Chinnici, 297.

each person, and the anthropological foundations of prayer.<sup>38</sup>

Chinnici believed that, in response to the Council's directive to reconnect with their founding charism, Franciscans were committed to "the recovery of a Franciscan specificity which had its own Scriptural, theological, and ecclesiological warrants."<sup>39</sup>

His research informed him that the term "evangelical" was best suited for this task. Pressed to *define* this term, Chinnici stated:

The evangelical religious life means witness—witness as a Roman Catholic to the good Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It means taking seriously and publicly naming the fact that God who encompasses all things, is the personal heart of the evangelical life and the goal of our desires. It means talking about this search for God, a community of Three in One, whose Word became flesh in the womb of a woman, and giving it a social language which communicates to people WHO OUR GOD IS AND WHO WE ARE. It means making visible in the midst of struggle a poetics of love.<sup>40</sup>

In 2005, when Carney was preparing a presentation on the evangelical life for the Religious Formation Conference in the United States, she developed many of the themes articulated by Chinnici a decade earlier, demonstrating ongoing conversation and clarification regarding the use of the term "evangelical" to describe the Franciscan form of life. Carney stated:

As Franciscans begin to literally recover and rehabilitate an alternative theological/pastoral tra-

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<sup>38</sup> Chinnici, 297.

<sup>39</sup> Chinnici, 297.

<sup>40</sup> Chinnici, 297-98.

dition we find ourselves walking a new landscape. It includes:

- A vision of a Trinitarian God—not centered on the Father/Patriarch as dominant figure—but God understood as a “Fountain-fullness” of pure Goodness poured out in the act of Creation.
- A vision of the Incarnation whose primary cause is the very love of the creature/s and the will of their ultimate good, not the necessity of saving them from the folly of their sin. Christ comes then, in the words of the Christmas carol as “Love, the Guest” in the world created for his delight. He does not come only as one bound to undertake the onerous task of appeasement of the Patriarch’s anger.
- A vision of the cosmos as inter-related, with all creation springing from the same Source and destined to return to it. Thus our ecological concerns are grounded in a profound [sic.] theological conviction about the nature and destiny of all beings.
- A vision of the human family as destined to fulfillment in relationships of brotherhood/ sisterhood by the formation of the “commune”—the communion of hearts and hopes and horizons is itself our mission. The intersection of the lived experience of fraternitas-sororitas [sic] with our mission in and for the world is the axis of Franciscan existence.<sup>41</sup>

Carney does not suggest that Franciscans have fully integrated these characteristics into their lives, nor successfully implemented them in their ministry to the people of God. In fact, she admits having come “to realize how very demanding the transition from a traditional mo-

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<sup>41</sup> Carney, 87-88.

nastic-apostolic life-style [sic] is to the brave new world of a Franciscan evangelical lifestyle and spirituality. I am gradually resigning myself to the possibility that its full blossoming will not occur for several more generations.”<sup>42</sup> As one reflects upon Carney’s insights, one hears again the echo of Francis’s exhortation: “I have done what is mine, may Christ teach you what is yours.”

Carney and Chinnici articulate the challenge that lies before Franciscans if they are to take seriously their identity as persons who have assumed the responsibility, by virtue of their public profession, to live the evangelical life as stated in their respective Rules in the midst of the contemporary Church and world. Achieving this requires *facere poenitentiam*—to do penance. Francis introduced his *Testament* with the stark words, “The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, thus to begin doing penance in this way: for when I was in sin, it seemed too bitter for me to see lepers (*Test* 1).”<sup>43</sup>

Michael Cusato, in a profoundly moving article, contends that when Francis uses the words sin, penance and conversion in his writings, he uses them as verbs, not nouns.<sup>44</sup> Sin, for Francis, is ...

everything that ruptures [the] universal fraternity of all creatures.... Sin for him is not really about private and personal foibles. Rather, it is primarily about all those attitudes, behaviors and actions that threaten to fracture the human fraternity, by setting oneself over or against another, dividing the human family and frustrating the designs of God for their intended purposes. It is, in other words, all those things which blind us to this divinely-inspired reality.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Carney, 89.

<sup>43</sup> *Testament*, FA:ED 1, 124.

<sup>44</sup> Michael Cusato, “To Do Penance / *Facere poenitentiam*,” *The Cord* 57:1 (February-March, 2007): 8.

<sup>45</sup> Cusato, “To Do Penance,” 12.

Conversion, for Francis, was embarking “upon a wholly new way of seeing reality—a new way of seeing himself, others, the world and God himself—which would henceforth manifest itself in a different set of attitudes, values and behaviors as a result.”<sup>46</sup> His new understanding of sin and conversion led Francis to a new understanding of penance. According to Cusato, Francis did not interpret penance as simply a prayer that a priest may ask one to say as part of receiving the Sacrament of Penance. Rather, Cusato says that ...

penance [for Francis] was to be understood as the conversion process itself which extended from the moment of the awareness of one’s sin into the sacramental moment and then beyond it into the flow of one’s daily life thereafter. In short, to do penance, for Francis, was quite simply a renewed way of life, or, in his term, a *forma vitae* that was meant to be the way that one lived the entirety of one’s life. Penance was and is one’s way of life in Christ.<sup>47</sup>

In the second sentence of his *Testament*, Francis writes, “And the Lord Himself led me among them [lepers] and I showed mercy to them. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body” (*Test* 2).<sup>48</sup> In the act of allowing God to lead him, Francis experienced profound transformation of attitude.

Cusato emphasizes:

what is critical for us to grasp is that in this moment Francis encountered, perhaps for the very first time in his life, truly suffering human beings: men and women, not unlike himself, whom the Assisi of his youth had taught him were of no

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<sup>46</sup> Cusato, “To Do Penance,” 9.

<sup>47</sup> Cusato, “To Do Penance,” 8-9.

<sup>48</sup> *Testament*, 124.



account, people to be avoided, shunned and despised. [With the lepers] Francis encountered what really mattered: Christ. [The leper was] the privileged and sacred place where the human reality created by God was to be encountered first and foremost—because always dismissed and therefore missed.

In that encounter ... Francis came to the cardinal insight of his life: namely, that all men and women without exception are creatures created by the same Creator God; that all men and women without exception have been endowed with the same grace of salvation offered to all; that all men and women without exception have been endowed with the same inestimable dignity and worth; and that all men and women without exception are *fraters et sorores*—brothers and sisters—one to another sprung from the hand of the same life-giving God.... This is the natural condition of human beings on this earth; this is how God intends that we live with and for each other.<sup>49</sup>

This encounter with lepers was the grace gestating within the heart of Francis during the time of his searching for his vocation. Chronologies disagree as to the timing of this conversional event in Francis's life, but it is likely that it occurred prior to February 28, 1208, when he heard the passage from Matthew's Gospel read in the little church of Mary of the Angels—the message that clarified his vocation. The truth that the encounter with lepers burned into Francis's soul is what Cusato has called "the fraternity of all creatures."<sup>50</sup> Living this truth in the fractured Church and the fractured world of the twenty-first century can be achieved only through the daily conversion of *facere poenitentiam*.

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<sup>49</sup> Cusato, 10-11.

<sup>50</sup> Cusato, 11.

## CONCLUSION

One can contend that penitential living of “the fraternity of all creatures” becomes the preaching of the gospel that Francis insisted was inherent in the brothers’ simple *forma vitae*—what their spiritual descendents would come to name the Franciscan Evangelical Life. Cusato calls Franciscans’ attention to a passage in *Anonymous of Perugia* 19.

Those who saw them were amazed.... They seemed to differ from all others by their habit and lifestyle, like wild men. When they entered a city, town or a home, they would announce peace. Whenever they saw men or women on the streets or in the piazzas, they would encourage them to fear and love the Creator of heaven and earth, to remember his commandments that they had forgotten, and to strive to fulfill them. Some people willingly and joyfully listened to the brothers; others, however, jeered at them. Many people repeatedly questioned them.... Some asked them: “Where do you come from?” While others asked: “To which Order do you belong?” They answered simply: “We are penitents and were born in Assisi.”<sup>51</sup>

As we struggle to understand and live our Franciscan evangelical calling today, it is our sacred privilege and responsibility to proclaim: ‘We are penitents and were born in Assisi.’ May Christ teach us what is ours.

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<sup>51</sup> Cusato, 3.

**“HOLD BACK NOTHING OF YOURSELVES FOR YOURSELVES ...”**  
***TRANSITUS ADDRESS 2012***

**JOSHUA BENSON, PH.D.**

**INTRODUCTION**

I gave this address at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in Washington, DC as part of the liturgical celebration of Francis’s *Transitus* on October 3, 2012. Some were edified by it and wished to have a copy. Thus, I have offered it for publication here, unchanged except for the addition of some footnotes. I hope it will edify others, and God willing, that I am able to develop the theme of the address at greater length in future publications.

**TEXT**

“Hold back nothing of yourselves for yourselves, that He Who offers Himself totally to you may receive you totally!” (LtOrd 29). This is how Francis exhorts his brothers to receive Christ in the Eucharist in his *Letter to the Entire Order*. He asks them not so much to prepare to receive, but to prepare to be received. He asks them to imitate the Eucharistic Lord they receive by offering themselves totally, so that the one who offers may become like the one who is offered; so that their consumption of the mystery may unite them to the consuming mystery. Tonight, as we gaze with the first brothers and the people of Assisi upon the body of Francis, stretched out on the ground in death, we see a body that has been marked

by the signs of this very kind of Eucharistic reception. I know this is not a familiar way to think of Francis's body and the marks of the stigmata the crowd saw upon it; and I know it is capable of misunderstanding. We normally (and rightly) think of the stigmata as directly associating Francis with the crucified Christ, not with Christ in the Eucharist. Thomas of Celano, the author of the first life of Francis, thus describes Francis's death:

It seemed he had just been taken down from the cross, his hands and feet pierced by nails and his right side wounded by a lance (1C 112).

The crowd around his body, however, quickly noticed the marks taking on a new quality and so Celano continues:

They looked at his skin which was black before but now shining white in its beauty, promising the rewards of blessed resurrection ... all the people saw him glowing with remarkable beauty and his flesh became even whiter than before (1C 112).

Thomas would add, "These signs of martyrdom did not provoke horror"; they were rather, "a sacrament to be remembered" (1C 113, 114).

I wish to suggest for our reflection tonight that what made Francis's body "a sacrament to be remembered" was not some abstract imitation of Christ in his passion; rather I want to suggest the stigmata are the marks of Francis's Eucharistic transformation (which cannot be divorced from Christ's passion), a transformation in which we share. I do not mean that Francis is somehow transubstantiated into Christ, and that all of us secretly bear the stigmata. I mean that Francis's attention to the total Eucharistic mystery transformed his body into the likeness of the body he consumed, into the likeness of the body into which he (and we ourselves) are incorporated.

We can begin approaching this Eucharistic frame for the stigmata if we look at the document known as the *Testament*. This brief text is in many ways a litany of bodies: it is framed by the body of the leper and the body of the order – the body with which his conversion began and the bodies with whom he spent it; within the frame lie the bodies that had come to shape Francis, and central among them is the body and blood of the Lord.

Let us begin where Francis does: with the body of the leper. Francis's life of penance began among those for whom the stigma of their bodies had made them socially outcast and even ecclesially neglected. As he lived with and served them, what had formerly been "bitter," he tells us in the *Testament*, "was turned into sweetness of soul and body" (Test 3). Serving lepers allowed Francis to taste the sweetness of the Lord in a new way; we may even say, serving the lepers opened his senses to the fact that the Lord was here to be tasted.

The second body of the *Testament* is the body of the Church – its actual physical space – not an abstract reality. The mention of this body confirms that for Francis the experience of God is rooted in places and bodies, and the place that grounds his experience of the mystery of redemption is the physical space of the Church. I would suggest that there is very little discrepancy in time between these two transformations for Francis: that is – when Francis describes the Lord giving him penance among the lepers, I believe he means us to understand that he also gave him new understanding of the Church. These two transforming attitudes are his as he "delayed a little and then left the '*saeculum*'" – the age – what we normally translate as 'the world.'

The third body of the *Testament* is the body of the Priest. This body is critical to Francis because only through the Priest (in connection with the Church itself) does the *Testament's* fourth body then come into view: the body and blood of the Lord in the Eucharist. The *Testament* suggests that it is the Lord himself who grants Francis his posture of reverence towards Priests; and

Francis aims to return this gift of reverence by obedience to them, because without them (he tell us) he can “see nothing bodily of the most high Son of God in this age” (Test 10).

The *Testament* immediately places a fifth body beside the Eucharist – the body of the Word of God, the Scriptures, which Francis indicates he wishes to have kept in becoming places. The Scriptures are worthy of reverence in their own right, but their connection to the Eucharist in Francis’s other writings makes clear that the Eucharist and the Scriptures are intertwined for him: for the power of the Word effects the body of Christ through the priest.

The *Testament* next singles out theologians as those who minister the words of Scripture. Francis therefore understands priests and theologians as those who have received words and realities from the Lord that they must minister to others, not appropriate for themselves. Francis also indicates that he wishes to be subject to priests and theologians as a means of returning to God the gifts he has received at their hands.

Now the *Testament* moves to the body of the brotherhood, a body begotten through Francis by Christ and the Scriptures. He tells us:

And after the Lord gave me some brothers, no one showed me what I had to do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel (Test 14).

He has this pattern confirmed for him by the body of the Church in the person of the Pope.

At this point let us reflect briefly on the place of the Eucharist within the *Testament*. Francis’s conversion does not emerge from Eucharist or Eucharistic devotion: that belongs to what Christ effected in him while he served the Lepers. What sustains his conversion, however, belongs to bodies of the Church: the physical space of the Church, the priest, the Eucharist, the Scriptures, and theologians – a confluence of bodies, united around

the Eucharist, that flow around and shape Francis in his openness to them. He thus remains open when the Lord gives him brothers. He does not construct what he should do, but remains obedient to the power of the Spirit he has come to know and allows the Lord to reveal the gospel life of the Order: a gospel life which will be marked by Eucharist and Service.

The importance of the *Testament* for us is that it helps frame the importance of the Eucharist for Francis: it *became* central to his thought and action, but he did not simply begin this way. He learns, slowly, how to live a life held in captivity to the Eucharistic mystery. Francis's work, the *Admonitions* helps us see this more clearly and we may look at this text briefly for what light it sheds on the litany of bodies in the *Testament* – and ultimately on the body of Francis lying before us on this night.

Significantly, the *Admonitions* immediately begin with the body and blood of Christ.<sup>1</sup> *Admonition* 1 focuses its discussion of the Eucharist with an initial problem framed in the words of Scripture: the Father *dwells in inaccessible light* (I Tim 6:16) and *God is Spirit* (John 4:24). Our bodies want to see through bodily sight; our minds want to confirm what we see by bodily sight; but we can only look upon God by the Spirit. Thus, *Admonition* 1 reasons, just as Jesus can only be proclaimed Son of God by the sight the Spirit gives, so too the Sacrifice of bread and wine upon the altar can only be recognized as the true Body and Blood of Christ by the Spirit. Francis therefore intimately relates what it *was* to confess Christ Lord in the days of his flesh, with what it is *now* to confess the presence of Christ's body on the altar. Christian life always demands confession and the Spirit alone has always enabled this confession. Indeed, it is this same Spir-

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<sup>1</sup> On the textual problems of the first admonition and its crucial function within the text as a whole, see Michael W. Blastis and Jay M. Hammond, "Admonitions," in *The Writings of Francis: Rules, Testament and Admonitions*, Studies in Early Franciscan Sources, vol. 2, ed. Michael W. Blastis O.F.M., Jay M. Hammond, and J.A. Wayne Hellmann O.F.M. Conv. (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2011), 253-327.

it, *Admonition* 1 relates, that actually receives the Body and Blood of the Lord in us. Confession *and* reception of the Eucharistic mystery are therefore the Spirit's work.

Our humble place in what God does in us in the Eucharist is matched, according to *Admonition* 1, by God's *Eucharistic* humility.

Behold each day he humbles himself as when he came from the royal throne into the Virgin's womb; each day he himself comes to us, appearing humbly; each day he comes down from the bosom of the Father upon the altar in the hands of a priest (Adm 1, 16-18).

God's stupendous humility in the Eucharist – the gracious presence of he who dwells in inaccessible light – invites us to return the gift with our own humble faith – a faith begotten of the Spirit. The Christian God, the God of humility, is a Eucharistic Lord. Francis wishes to live this Eucharistic confession – live the humility of the God he meets in the Eucharist.

As the *Admonitions* unfold, Francis therefore attempts to show the brothers how to live as a community rooted in the Eucharist, how to live as Church. Thus, *Admonition* 3 describes perfect obedience, which culminates in the brother who will – like Christ – lay down his life for others. This brother, in laying down his body, is like Christ on the Cross but even more like Christ in the Eucharist, who offers his body daily. In *Admonition* 4, the brothers are warned to regard positions of power and authority like the position of foot washing. The image places authority within the Order under the aegis of Christ who washes the feet of the Apostles – which, as linked to the Last Supper – is a Eucharistic posture.

The text of the *Admonitions* continues, in different ways, to tease out the implications the Eucharist has upon life within the brotherhood, indeed upon life as a



Christian.<sup>2</sup> But the phrase with which we began this reflection summarizes this view of Christian life best:

Hold back nothing of yourselves for yourselves,  
that he who offers himself totally to you may receive you totally! (LtOrd 29).

The brotherhood lives this Eucharistic posture: it is the community that has renounced all that is their own. In the Eucharist they are called to the source of what sustains them to live without anything of their own – to the Eucharistic Lord, who held back nothing of himself, but emptied himself for all – once upon the cross and daily upon the altar.

Francis's other writings also address this Eucharistic approach to Christian life. In brief: they display a life rooted in attention to the totality of the Eucharist, that is, first to the entire context of the Eucharist from Last Supper to Resurrection; and second to the total Eucharistic Liturgy extended into the Liturgy of the Hours and related devotions. Francis's attention to the total Eucharistic mystery is fecund for him not merely because it is a privileged locus of Christian belief thanks to the intersection of many themes; nor is the Eucharist some classroom, where through reflection Francis discovers models for Christian action, for justice – as if doing justice simply required more human reflection upon particular data. Rather, Francis shows us that Christian justice requires worship: for only through our humble presence before the God of Humility and through our humble reception of him in the Eucharist can he begin to transform us – not through abstract knowledge and imitation – but through the conformation of our total self to him. Thus, in the reception of Eucharist as seen by Francis, not merely our souls, but our very bodies, begin to be conformed – not to the Spirit of the Age – but to the Spirit who gives us sight and voice to confess and receive the mystery. God then

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<sup>2</sup> Here see Jay M. Hammond's analysis of the *Admonitions* in the aforementioned essay.

does his kind of justice by witnessing through us against the *age*, the *saeculum* with his primary and shocking witness – the crucified Lord of glory – he whom we encounter daily under the humble sign of bread and wine. This is the mystery, hidden from the ages, which transforms the Christian body and the Christian mind held in captivity to this mystery – into witness. It is this mystery that transformed the earliest martyrs, who understood their martyrdom, as in Polycarp and Ignatius, in Eucharistic terms. This is the mystery of which Augustine could say that when we are not conformed to the spirit of the age, but reformed – “we ourselves *are* that whole *Eucharistic* sacrifice.”<sup>3</sup> So too Paul could tell us in the crescendo of Romans, “to offer *our* bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, *our* spiritual worship (Rom 12:1).”<sup>4</sup>

Let us now gaze back with the first brothers, with the people of Assisi, at the body of Francis stretched out before us. Let us hear in our ears, like them, the words of the Holy Thursday liturgies that he had recited and called for just moments ago.<sup>5</sup> Let us taste, with them, the bread on our tongues that he broke with his brothers just before he died (2C 217). Let us now look, not with our bodily sight, but with the sight the Spirit enables. Look: the mystery he consumed, consumed him. Look in astonishment at his martyred body – his body that gives witness to our transformation in Christ. Francis’s body is a true body, a Christian body, a body whose marks we share as the mystical body of Christ. This mystical body is the Lord’s true body – who feeds us with his own body

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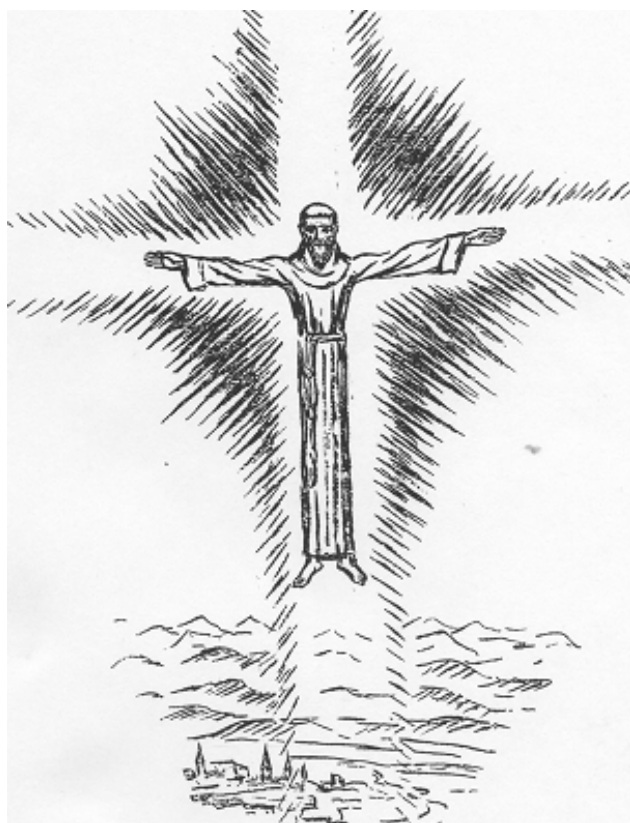
<sup>3</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God*, X.6, trans. Marcus Dodds (New York: Random House, 1993), 309-10.

<sup>4</sup> On the constellation here of the martyrs, Augustine and Romans, see Jeremy Driscoll, O.S.B., “Worship in the Spirit of Logos: Romans 12:1-2 and the Source and Summit of Christian Life,” *Letter and Spirit* 5 (2009): 77-101.

<sup>5</sup> Francis calls for John 13 and later cries out in the words of Psalm 142 (141 in the Vulgate). The text of John was (and still is) read on Holy Thursday; Psalm 142(141) was said during the third nocturn, if we can safely utilize Haymo of Faversham’s Ordinals. See *Sources of the Modern Roman Liturgy*, ed. S.J.P. Van Dijk, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1963), in vol. 2, 84 and 238.

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– the body that came to shape Francis’s thought and action. Let us set aside for a moment our vision of his stigmatized body – transformed by some *imitatio Christi* we cannot grasp. We recognize this body; we see it daily; it is the body into which we are being made, if we but open ourselves to it. Look upon this sacrament worth remembering; this martyrdom that does not invoke horror; this body marked by its transformation. Look with me upon Francis’s Eucharist-ed flesh.



**FRANCIS OF ASSISI,  
A MAN OF PEACE SHAPED BY THE LITURGY**

**PIETRO MESSA, O.F.M.**

In a certain sense Francis of Assisi has had an enviable destiny compared to other saints: declared in 1992 by *Time Magazine* one of the most representative figures of the second millennium, studied by university research centers, secular and otherwise, countless scholarly and popular publications on his life, various films devoted to him, recognized as their ideal by people of different cultures and religions. Added to all this, the choice of Assisi, the city of Saint Francis, by John Paul II for the historic day, October 27, 1986, that saw the beginning of what is known as the “spirit of Assisi,” the inter-religious movement of prayer for peace. The Pontiff returned there again on January 9-10, 1993 and, despite many reservations, on January 24, 2002, after the acts of terrorism on September 11, 2001.

Thus the name of Saint Francis – even though his feastday, October 4, has not become a national holiday in Italy – is synonymous with inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue. Nevertheless we all know that the boundary between success and over-inflation is very narrow, and this is true for the saint of Assisi as well.

Franciscan scholars have studied the sources of Francis’s Christian experience, while others continue to try to perfect our knowledge of them so as to uncover the saint’s real features, setting aside all hagiographical imagery or ideological manipulation. As a result, his cultural and spiritual formation is better known and the various stra-

ta recognized: the culture of the merchant's son, a chivalrous ideology that led him to wear the garb of the knights, the influence of court culture that remained even after his conversion, the Gospel element and even the echoes of the lives of the ancient Fathers of the desert.<sup>1</sup> Given these countless studies, the beginnings of which can be seen in Paul Sabatier, it might now seem that there is no more to know about Friar Francis of Assisi, the son of the merchant Pietro di Bernardone. Of course, as is the case with everybody, even the life of Francis of Assisi will always in some sense remain a mystery. Acknowledging this fact doesn't discourage further study and reflection. Consequently the important, not to say fundamental, role of the liturgy in the life of Francis is now being recognized.

## **1. A PERIOD OF LITURGICAL REFORM**

The time in which Francis lived was characterized by great cultural change and transformation: the development of the communes, the birth of the universities, the incentive to commercial exchange, the rise of new religious movements, some ending in heresy but many in greater religious fervor among the laity. Scholars take these aspects into consideration when they describe the historical framework of the life of Francis of Assisi. Nevertheless the fact that those years contained one of the crucial moments in the history of the liturgy remains almost totally neglected.

Many textbooks on the history of the liturgy record Innocent III's reform of the liturgy of the Roman Curia, the results of which spread everywhere precisely through the Friars Minor. Even today elements of Innocent's reform are found in the Latin liturgy of Roman rite.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Dalarun, *Francesco: un passaggio. Donna e donne negli scritti e nelle leggende di Francesco d'Assisi*, postfazione di G. Miccoli (Roma, 1994); English translation *Francis of Assisi and the Feminine* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2007).

In the early thirteenth century there were four types of liturgy in use in Rome: that of the Roman Curia, housed in the Palace of the Lateran, that of the nearby Basilica of Saint John, that of the Basilica of Saint Peter and that known as dell'Urbe, i.e. of the city of Rome. In his program of reform, the subject of the Lateran Council IV in 1215, Innocent III included the liturgy. Revision of the breviary was one of the more prominent outcomes of the reform of the liturgy. By consolidating texts that were formerly scattered in different books into one resource, Innocent III provided a manageable tool for praying the hours, especially for those who were often on journeys. The new breviary, precisely because of its improved convenience, was soon adopted by some dioceses, among them that of Assisi. In this way Francis and his brothers had access to a liturgical book that met their needs as wayfarers who lived as "strangers and pilgrims."<sup>2</sup> So the Friars Minor adopted liturgical prayer and specifically that of the Roman Curia.

## **2. NOT SIMPLY A QUESTION OF PRAYER**

Adopting this or that liturgical book was not a matter of indifference. In his time, Pope Gregory VII, looked on liturgical disparity with fear because he recognized that disparity could be a source not only jurisdictional inequities but also of doctrinal error. Those who adopted the breviary of the Roman Curia reformed by Innocent III accepted a whole new tradition. Based on the arrangement of various feasts, the choice of lessons, the biblical passages used as antiphons, verses and responses, the selection of readings from both patristic sources and the old martyrologies, the new breviary was the result of the ecclesial thinking and experience, above all monastic, of

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<sup>2</sup> P. Messa, *Un testimone dell'evoluzione liturgica della fraternitas francescana primitiva: il Breviarium sancti Francisci*, in *Revirescunt Chartae, codices documenta textus: miscellanea in honorem fr. Caesaris Cenci, O.F.M.*, ed. A. Cacciotti-P. Sella, vol. I (Roma, 2002), 5-141.

the preceding millennium. Thus, in adopting the breviary Francis and his brothers used a form of liturgical prayer that had preceded them, handed down through the centuries. That did not mean that they felt or acted as if they were captives of that tradition. In fact, as a source remarks, Francis didn't fail to affirm his own particularity by adapting some earlier models.

However, in accepting the prayer of the breviary, they joined the spiritual and theological tradition that had ripened throughout the centuries in the Church, as can be seen from a reading of the writings of Francis, in which liturgical echoes are countless. Such echoes, technically known as cases of "intertextuality and interdiscursiveness" – that is true and proper quotations or simple conceptual references – often are a transmission of texts interiorized by the saint. This may seem surprising, especially given a certain historiography that has presented Francis of Assisi as the Saint of the Gospel – almost a sort of precursor of the Protestant reform. The fact that echoes of the Bible, and hence the Gospel mediated by the liturgy, can be found in his writings makes them even richer in consequence.

This, naturally, leads to a revision of certain descriptions of the spiritual experience of Francis that present him as a man who had an immediate relation, without mediation, with the Scriptures. Instead what deeper study brings out is that he knew the Scriptures by way of the liturgy. And the liturgy is itself an explanation of the Scriptures, i.e. an exegesis. The simple selection and use of a certain lesson on one feast rather than another already speaks of a level of interpretation and, hence, comprehension of that particular passage. So the reading of chapter 11 of Isaiah which speaks about the shoot that sprouts from the tree of Jesse when used in the Common of the Virgin Mary is given a Marian perspective. This interpretation is notably increased if in the place of *virga*, i.e. "shoot" – as it should be – there is *virgo*, i.e. "Virgin," as found in the breviary that belonged to Saint Francis of Assisi: "The Virgin shall sprout from the tree of Jesse, a

shoot shall bud from its roots, on it the spirit of the Lord shall rest.”<sup>3</sup>

### **3. THE TESTIMONY OF THE *BREVIARIUM SANCTI FRANCISCI***

The importance of the liturgy in the *vita* of the lesser brothers and in the life of Francis of Assisi is apparent not only in the Rule of the Friars Minor confirmed by Pope Honorius III in 1223 but above all by a breviary kept among the relics of the protomonastery of Santa Chiara at the basilica of that name in Assisi. As attested to in an autograph of Friar Leone, who was one of the companions and witnesses of the Saint, this breviary was used by Francis himself:

Blessed Francis acquired this breviary for his companions Brother Angelo and Brother Leone, and when he was well, he wished always to say the office, as it is stated in the Rule. At the time when he was sick and not able to recite it, he wished to listen to it. And he continued to do this for as long as he lived.<sup>4</sup>

The relic, known as *Breviarium sancti Francisci*, consists basically of a breviary, the psalter and the Gospel; the first part is most substantial and consists of the breviary of the Roman Curia reformed by Innocent III. The antiquity of the text, which makes it a privileged witness of that reform and hence of the history of liturgical books in general, is confirmed by the presence, above all in the Marian feasts or of saints linked to the pontifical office, such as Peter, Paul and Gregory the Great, of readings

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<sup>3</sup> P. Messa, *L'Officium mortuorum e l'Officium beate Marie virginis nel Breviarium sancti Francisci*, in *Franciscana. Bollettino della Società internazionale di studi francescani*, 4 (2002), 111-49.

<sup>4</sup> Frate Leone d'Assisi, *Nota al Breviario di san Francesco*, in *Fonti Francescane*, a cura di E. Caroli (Padova, 2004), 2696; English translation in *FA:ED* 2, 773.



drawn from the sermons of Innocent III himself; after his death in 1216 these readings were to be made optional by his successor, Pope Honorius III, and immediately disappeared from the breviary.<sup>5</sup> In fact the Breviary of Saint Francis is the only true and proper breviary to contain these readings in full. This breviary was used by Francis and certainly helped him to form the theological culture, elementary as it was, that enabled him to express his spirituality and his thought in some writings, three of which are still today in our possession.<sup>6</sup>

The role played by the liturgy in the cultural and spiritual formation of Francis should be taken into account when seeking to understand the message of the saint of Assisi. Thus the content of this breviary must be kept in mind whenever one wants to go delve into his thought. The role of the Virgin Mary in his thinking will be more intelligible if his writings are read in light of the Office of the Blessed Virgin and of the four Marian feasts contained in the breviary, that is the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, February 2; the Annunciation, March 25; the Assumption with its octave, August 15-22; and the Birth of Mary, September 8. Even if the first two feasts, the Presentation in the Temple and the Annunciation, celebrate two mysteries in the life of Jesus Christ, they had taken on a strong Marian connotation, so much so that the former is called in the *Breviarium* the feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary.<sup>7</sup>

The importance of the *Breviarium sancti Francisci* was recognized and attested to by Friar Leone himself who gave it the Abbess Benedetta of the Santa Chiara convent in Assisi to preserve as a privileged witness of the sanctity

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<sup>5</sup> P. Messa, *I sermoni di Innocenzo III nel Breviarium sancti Francisci*, in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 95 (2002), 249-65.

<sup>6</sup> P. Messa, *Le fonti patristiche negli scritti di Francesco di Assisi*, prefazione di G. Miccoli (Assisi, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> P. Messa, *Le feste mariane nel Breviarium sancti Francisci*, in *La "Scuola Francescana" e l'Immacolata Concezione*, Atti del Congresso Mariologico Franciscano in occasione del 150° anniversario della proclamazione dogmatica (S. Maria degli Angeli - Assisi, 4-8 dicembre 2003), a cura di S. Cecchin (Città del Vaticano, 2005), 55-85.

of Francis. However, before handing it over, he marked in the calendar different anniversary days of the dead, among them those of Innocent III and Gregory IX. After still more years during which it was used as a liturgical book, the breviary of the Saint was definitively set among the relics of the convent, where it can still be admired today. Precisely because of its importance, its binding was decorated in the seventeenth century with two silver ornaments portraying Saint Francis and Saint Clare.

#### **4. FRANCIS AND THE CHURCH**

One of the matters most debated in Franciscan historiography is Francis's relationship with the Church. There are those who see Francis as a kind of revolutionary and those who instead – being unable to contradict the sources – have sought the reason for his obedience to the hierarchy in his choosing to live as a Minor. In either interpretation, his attitude is seen in a way that we can describe as detached, extrinsic. The consideration of the importance of the liturgy in the life of Francis can help us grasp his relation with the Church better. Francis lived belonging, not in a passive way, to a history that preceded him and that had expressed itself through determined liturgical formulas. Prayer and the contemplation of texts expressing the life and holiness of the Church through the centuries became for Francis the place of communion with the history of salvation. For that very reason he was very firm against those who didn't want to recite the Office, as seen in what he wrote in his *Testament*:

And although I may be simple and infirm, I nevertheless want to have a cleric always with me who will celebrate the office for me as it is prescribed in the Rule.

And let all the brothers be bound to obey their guardians and to recite the Office according to the Rule. And if some might have been found who are

not reciting the Office according to the Rule and want to change it in some way, or who are not Catholics, let all the brothers, wherever they may have found one of them, be bound through obedience to bring him before the custodian of that place nearest to where they found him. And let the custodian be strictly bound through obedience to keep him securely day and night as a man in chains, so that he cannot be taken from his hands until he can personally deliver him into the hands of his minister. And let the minister be bound through obedience to send him with such brothers who would guard him as a prisoner until they deliver him to the Lord of Ostia, who is the Lord, the Protector and the Corrector of this fraternity.<sup>8</sup>

This sequence that ends with reference to the “lord of Ostia,” that is to the so-called cardinal protector of the Order of Minors, has been considered one of the exhortations of Francis much in conflict with a certain peaceable image of him; and this toughness is for those who don’t recite the breviary. That is due to the fact that that determined prayer, and hence also its rejection, was directly correlated to the orthodoxy or lack thereof of the person and of the community.

We can see the axiom *lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi* as lived by Francis and also considered by him, even if not explicitly, as one of the reference points of his Christian experience. The mode in which Francis prayed, and which he wanted to be the prayer of the lesser brothers also, i.e. the recital of the breviary, is an expression of his faith, that of the Church represented by the pontiff, which was expressed in his lived experience. Hence, if one wants to fully understand the lived life of the saint of Assisi and of his preaching of peace – with the meaning that has assumed over history and above all thanks to the pontificate of John Paul II – his faith expressed

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<sup>8</sup> Francesco d’Assisi, *Testamento*, 29-33, in *Fonti Francescane*, 125-26; English translation in *FA:ED* 1, 126-27.

through prayer, above all liturgical, and the recital of the breviary, cannot be neglected.



**GET A LIFE!**  
**THE FRANCISCAN TRADITION**  
**AND THE EDUCATION OF A LIFETIME**

**RUSSEL MURRAY, O.F.M.**

I shall never forget my parents' reaction when I announced my intention to quit business school in order to study, of all things, philosophy. *Philosophy*? Had I wanted to be a history major, they would have understood. History had been my first love, after all, and high schools needed history teachers. At least I would be able to make a living. "But *philosophy*," my father asked? "What are going to do with a degree in *that*?" My friends were a bit more blunt: "Oh, for God's sake, Russ, get a life!" How ironic, that was precisely what I was planning to do.

As I look back on that decision I am amazed at the powerful, indeed determinative influence it had upon the course of my life. I would go so far as to call it an instance of "illuminating grace." I knew I was on the right path. History may have been my first love, but philosophy spoke to my heart. At the doorstep of adulthood, it challenged me to journey beyond the boundaries of my textbooks and delve ever deeper into life's basic questions: who am I; why am I here; what significance might my life have for the lives of other men and women? Inexorably, the education I chose so many years ago enabled me to get a life – get the life my heart desired; the life I now live, and love.

What is this life? In all sincerity I can tell you that it is not the life of a Doctor of Theology, nor is it the life of the Director of Siena's Franciscan Center for Service and Advocacy, though both these "lives" are indeed beauti-

ful. Instead, I am speaking about *the* life that, I hope and pray, gives meaning to everything I do. In a word, the life I got was the life of a Franciscan, and it is the power inherent in this Franciscan way of living – of getting a life – that I want to discuss today. For I firmly believe that it is the power inherent to the Franciscan Tradition that enables all of us here at Siena – students and faculty, staff and administrators – to offer and embrace the education of a lifetime.

Now, how am I going to do this? Three steps: first, I shall examine the education that St. Francis received – indeed, the education St. Francis *chose* – in order to get the life his heart desired. Second, I shall indicate the significance of Francis’s education for the education we offer here at Siena – the education of a lifetime, in the Franciscan Tradition.<sup>1</sup> Finally, I shall conclude with a brief reflection on the transforming power of love.

## **THE EDUCATION OF ST. FRANCIS**

Francis’s education began like that of every boy in Assisi, his hometown. His father, Peter, was a wealthy businessman; his mother Pica, a pious stay-at-home mom. Every morning they packed Francis off to the local parish, where he learned enough Latin to read his father’s ledger and enough arithmetic to balance the books. As a teenager he turned his ambitions toward becoming a knight, of clothing himself in glory and honor, and of marrying one of the lovely ladies he was working hard every weekend to impress. All this was part and parcel of the education every young man received in Assisi. In the parish school, on the military parade ground, in the taverns and town squares that were his second home, Francis received all the education he needed to get ahead in life.

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase “the education of a lifetime,” was recently selected as the new tagline for the College, and was unveiled as part of the College’s capital campaign, *Living Our Tradition*. It was for these reasons that I chose to incorporate it into this lecture.

All this changed, though, on the day he enrolled in a new “school,” on the day he met a leper in the fields of Assisi and began to learn what life is really all about.

Where are our freshmen?<sup>2</sup> Perhaps you remember this story from Orientation, when Jane Doe, all hunched over and clomping her walking staff like the leper on the road to Assisi, surprised a young Francis, who looked a lot like another student, John Doe. (I promised never to reveal the names of the students who played Francis’s horse, so please do not ask who they were.) In the short *Testament* he wrote toward the end of his life, Francis tells us about what happened next – when the course of his life changed forever: When I was a young man, proud and ambitious, “it was a bitter thing for me to see lepers.” Poor and suffering, they were the opposite of everything I wanted to be – of everything I was told I should be. “But the Lord [God] himself led me among them, and I [learned] mercy [among] them.”<sup>3</sup> Afterwards I lingered a little while, and then left the world.<sup>4</sup>

This was a school like no other, and in it Francis received an education like no other. Among the lepers’ suffering and poverty, Francis tells us, God taught him what it meant to be a merciful person, to be compassionate and loving to all people, just like Jesus, who, Francis believed, is forever God’s living Word of mercy, compassion, and love for the world. Among the lepers Francis learned

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<sup>2</sup> Prior to delivering my lecture, I was informed that the majority of the students present would probably be freshmen, as many of their professors, especially those teaching their First Year Seminar, usually required their attendance.

<sup>3</sup> The accepted translation of this passage reads: “... and I showed mercy (*feci misericordiam*) to them (FA:ED 1, 124).” I chose to alter this translation in order to make explicit the process of conversion that Francis underwent among these lepers, i.e., his coming to learn among them what it means to show mercy [see “The Testament” in *Studies in Early Franciscan Sources*, Vol. 2, *The Writings of Francis of Assisi: Rules, Testament, and Admonition*, Michael Blastich, Jay Hammond, and J.A. Wayne Hellmann, ed. (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2011), 244]. In this sense, although I did alter the translation of the text, I nevertheless believe that I have remained faithful to the text’s meaning.

<sup>4</sup> See *Testament* in FA:ED 1, 124.

how to forget the false “self” that his empty pride and ego-ambitions told him he should be (and that everyone in Assisi told him he should be, as well), and to discover the true “self” God had created him to be, and that in his heart he knew himself to be: he was God’s beloved child, whose life was a gift to all his sisters and brothers. In the lepers’ school of mercy, Francis slowly changed as a person. He changed from someone who sought to *get ahead* of other people’s lives into someone who strove to build a life – to *get* a life – with them. In a word, Francis’s education among the lepers transformed him. It transformed his heart, opening it to the suffering of other men and women. It transformed his spirit; he began to allow God to lead him to places he never imagined he could go – never mind wanted to go. Francis’s education also transformed his mind; it took everything he had ever learned and gave it new meaning and new purpose for a new way of life.

In his famous *Letter to the Romans*, St. Paul the Apostle wrote that all things work for good for those who love God, and who are called according to God’s purpose.<sup>5</sup> This was a truth that Francis now experienced in his own life. God wasted nothing in Francis’s life. Everything Francis had ever learned, be it in the parish school, on the parade ground, even in the taverns of Assisi now helped him to become the brother God had created him to be for all people. In the halting Latin of his childhood, Francis told people about the life he had learned among the lepers, in letters that survive to this day. With a knight’s sense of honor and devotion, Francis lived this life of radical brotherhood, even when his family disowned him and his friends abandoned him. And when Francis saw people buckle under the burden of poverty and suffering – the poverty of feeling themselves worthless and the suffering that comes from being treated as a non-person by people in power – Francis sang to them of the beauty of life, and of the inviolable dignity that was theirs as God’s

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<sup>5</sup> Romans 8:28.



children. And people listened, and they believed. They believed Francis not because he had a way with words, but because he was “real” – because they could see the truth of his words in the kind of person he had become: someone filled with mercy, compassion, and love for them as his sisters and his brothers.

Yes, Francis’s life among the lepers was a school like no other, and in it, Francis received an education – indeed, chose and embraced an education – like no other. It was an education that spoke to his heart. It was an education that transformed him as a person. It was an education that taught him, not how to get ahead in life, but how to get a life – how to live in a world more profound and more beautiful than he had ever imagined; how to be a beloved brother to everyone he touched with his life. It is little wonder, then, that, a few years later, Francis was so concerned for his brother-friars who wanted to go to college (so to speak). He admonished them to make their time in the classroom into something special, to see it as part of a much greater whole. They must use it as a gift to help them become better brothers, brothers whose lives would be a living invitation for all people to recognize and rejoice in their own dignity as God’s beloved children. In a short admonition to them, Francis wrote:

The Apostle [Paul] says: The letter kills, but the spirit gives life. Those people are put to death by the letter who only wish to know the words alone, that they might be esteemed wiser than others and be able to acquire great riches to give their relatives and friends. And those religious are put to death by the letter who are not willing to follow the spirit of the divine letter [i.e., the Bible] but, instead, wish only to know the words and to interpret them for others. And those people are brought to life by the spirit of the divine letter who do not attribute every letter they know, or wish to know, to the body [i.e., to themselves] but, by word and

example, return them to the Most High Lord God to Whom every good belongs.<sup>6</sup>

The Most High Lord God, who calls us to offer every good we have, especially the good of our own persons, as a gift for the good of one another.

The education Francis of Assisi received – that he chose and made his own – was quite the education. It spoke not to his ego, but to his heart. It formed not merely his mind, but his soul, as well. In a word, Francis’s education embraced and transformed his whole life, not to mention the lives of everyone he encountered. It is precisely this kind of transformation that we Franciscans have spent the last eight hundred years sharing with everyone we encounter, including the young men and women who choose to attend one of our schools. It was this Tradition that inspired the founding of Siena College seventy-four years ago, and it is this Tradition of transforming people’s lives – teaching them to *get a life* – that still inspires Siena to offer its students the education of a lifetime.

## **THE FRANCISCAN TRADITION AND THE EDUCATION OF A LIFETIME**

### *A. THE FRANCISCAN TRADITION*

Arguably the most important friar in the history of the Franciscan Order – second only to St. Francis – was the university professor and mystic St. Bonaventure. In a treatise entitled *On the Gift of the Knowledge*, Bonaventure offered an approach to education that would be foundational for the Franciscan Tradition. It echoed the insights of Francis himself, and flowed from the lessons Francis had learned among the lepers of Assisi, i.e., the life of radical brother-/sisterhood as God’s beloved child. Bonaventure wrote:

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<sup>6</sup> *Admonition VII: Let Good Action Follow Knowledge* in *FA:ED* 1, 132.

There are some who wish to know [something] simply that they may know [it], and this is shameful curiosity. There are some who wish to know [something] so that they may be known, and this is shameful vanity. There are some who wish to know [something] so they might sell their knowledge for money or honors, and this is shameful commerce. There are those who wish to know [something] so that they may build up others, and this is charity [from the Latin word *caritas*, meaning “love”]. And there are those who wish to know [something] so that they themselves may be built up, and this is prudence.<sup>7</sup>

‘Knowledge [for the sake of one’s own ego-ambitions] puffs up, but charity builds up.’ Therefore, one must join charity with knowledge so that a person might have both knowledge and charity at the same time. In this way the statement of the Apostle [Paul] might be fulfilled: ‘Rooted and grounded in love, may you come to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and the width, the height and the depth; and to know the super-eminent brilliance of the knowledge of Christ.’ This is the sort of knowledge that is the gift of the Holy Spirit.<sup>8</sup>

Before I go further, permit me a word on the obvious: the foundation of Bonaventure’s – indeed, the Franciscan Tradition’s – approach to education is Christian. No doubt, Christianity is the root of the Franciscan Tradition. Faith in Jesus as the Son of God – as God’s living Word of mercy, compassion, and love for all people – permeates Franciscan life, and guides our work as educators. That said, we Franciscans believe that all people can benefit

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<sup>7</sup> Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, “Knowledge,” in *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Zachary Hayes, WSB XIV (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2008), 103.

<sup>8</sup> Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, “Knowledge,” in *Collations on the Seven Gifts*, WSB XIV, 103-04.

from the education we offer, because a Franciscan education embraces every facet of the oh-so-human life Jesus himself embraced, and it invites all students to consider the difference their lives will make for the women and men – the sisters and brothers – with whom they share this world. This said, let us return to Bonaventure’s understanding of education as a marriage of knowledge and love.

“Knowledge puffs up, but charity [i.e., *love*] builds up.” At first glance, one would be forgiven if one believed that Bonaventure was about to pit charity over and against knowledge. As we heard, that was not Bonaventure’s intention at all. Rather, Bonaventure, like Francis before him, was voicing his concern that students use the God-given *gift* of knowledge wisely. The knowledge we receive through our study is not a jumble of facts and figures with which to satisfy our curiosity. (We can watch *Jeopardy* for that, and save \$29,000.00.) Much less is knowledge a means to puff ourselves up, or a tool with which to push people aside and *get ahead in life*. Like Francis, Bonaventure reminds us that life is a gift from God, and every other gift we receive from God is given to “build up” this one, precious gift. When we keep this big picture in mind, then our knowledge comes into its own. It becomes a gift to transform our lives. It helps us become the beloved children God created and calls us to be, and it enables us to build up the women and men our lives touch. In a word, knowledge, rightly understood and wisely used, enables us to *get a life* by introducing us to a world much bigger and far more beautiful than we could ever imagine on our own, a world filled with gift of sisters and brothers we have just begun to meet.

“This is the sort of knowledge that is the gift of the Holy Spirit,” Bonaventure tells us. It is in this spirit that the Franciscan Tradition treasures the gift of knowledge. And it is in this spirit that we Franciscans have founded trade school and high schools, colleges and universities: to teach people not how to *get ahead in life*, as if life were a competition where the winners take all, but how to *get*

*a life* – the life worthy of the son and daughter of God that each and every one of us is. This is the education of a lifetime that Francis received, and that the Franciscan Tradition has always striven to pass on, eight hundred years and counting. And this is the education of a lifetime that we strive to offer here at Siena College, seventy-four years and counting.

*B. THE EDUCATION OF A LIFETIME*

As you know, I am new to Siena College. Just like you, I arrived here in September. New as I am to Siena College, though, Siena College is not new to me. Through my brother friars who live and serve here, as well as by occasional visits to campus, I have come to know Siena as a school steeped in our Franciscan Tradition and committed to living this Tradition in ever fuller and deeper ways. It is this commitment to education in the Franciscan Tradition that brought me here, and, in the time remaining to us, that I want to explore with you. I shall do so by means of Siena's abbreviated *Mission Statement*: "Siena College is a learning community advancing the ideas of a liberal education, rooted in its identity as a Franciscan-Catholic institution."

If there is one word I am sure you picked up on throughout my lecture, it is this: brotherhood – or brother-/sisterhood, to speak more inclusively. To be a brother was essential to St. Francis's self-identity. It was how Francis understood himself, in his relationship to the God he loved, to the people he served, and to the brother friars with whom he shared his life. Brother-/sisterhood lies at the heart of the word "friar," which comes from the Latin *frater*, which means "brother," and it is this spirit of brother-/sisterhood that lies at the heart of Siena's self-identity as a *learning community*.

It is our fundamental belief that the education of a lifetime is not something that you can get on your own. Yes, you can fill your head with innumerable facts and figures, take a test, compose a thesis, and earn a diploma

all on your own. People have been doing it for centuries, and there is no reason to believe that this trend will ever end, not when online schools run ads like “go to college in your pj’s.” Yet to receive the kind of education that introduces you to a world beyond your wildest dreams, that opens your eyes to see your life as a precious gift, a gift whose meaning and purpose you will discover in the relationships you form and the life you share with others, this kind of education is not something you get on your own. It takes a community. It takes a community that cares about you. It takes people who see you as their sister, their brother, and who commit themselves to build with you a life that is worthy of the dignity that is your birthright: the dignity that belongs to you and all people as children of God. When you see yourself and your life in this light, you will take your tests, write your theses, and (I pray) hold your diplomas in a new light, as well. They will remind you of the life you are building because of the education you have chosen, and they will remind you of the gift you are becoming for the people with whom you will share your life.

Now, what about the particulars of the education we as a learning community are committed to: *an education in the liberal arts*? Calculus and Classical Languages, Philosophy and French, Mathematics and Marketing: you will find these courses in every college catalogue the world over. What is so special about the way we see them at Siena? It is this: we see them as representing, not a collection of facts and figures to be memorized and mastered on your way to graduation, but as the truly holy “stuff” you need to build up a fully *human* life.

I know, this goes against the grain of much of the “pop culture” that today passes itself off as “common wisdom.” “America is falling behind the rest of the world,” so the logic begins. “We were once leaders in science and technology, in medicine and engineering.” All true. “We need to get back to basics: more money for math and hard sciences!” Are there any mathematicians here who would disagree with that? How about this: “Cut spending for lit-

erature and the arts, less money for Melville and Mozart and more resources to help students succeed in the marketplace – *to get ahead in life!*” Any takers on the faculty? Such “wisdom” is foolishness to Franciscan ears. Why? Because it ignores this fundamental point: students are *people*, not cogs in a wheel that can be swapped out, retooled, and dropped back into the machine of the marketplace whenever the economy’s wind changes direction. Students are first and foremost people. They are children of God, and the education they receive must reflect this, their fundamental dignity as human beings. For us here at Siena, the education best suited to this dignity is that of the liberal arts.

A liberal arts education embraces all the “stuff” of life. It does not ignore the benefits of math and science, but balances them with the benefits that come from distinguishing the symphonies of Mozart from those of Mahler and debating the meaning of life with the likes of Socrates and Shelly. Let us not forget, as well, the good that comes from competing on the court, serving in a soup kitchen, and simply sitting in the bleachers to watch a ballgame with the one-time-strangers you now call friends. This is the benefit of knowing, not merely in your head, but in your heart and soul, as well, that life is truly beautiful, and pregnant with passions and possibilities that can be discovered only when we risk taking the time to explore all the “stuff” of life – the “stuff” we Franciscans believe was made holy when God spoke God’s Word of love to us in the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. For someone dedicated to education in the Franciscan Tradition, this is the kind of education we strive to offer students, inside the classroom and out: an education for building up life – your life, as God’s beloved son or daughter.

Yes, we at Siena constitute a learning community committed to the ideals of a liberal arts education. As for the root of this commitment, it is *our Franciscan-Catholic Tradition*. By now I hope that the Franciscan aspect of this Tradition is clear to you. As for its Catholic aspect, allow me a word or two. I shall begin with a bit of history.

Forty-nine years ago, more than two thousand bishops of the Catholic Church gathered in Rome for a solemn meeting, or “Council.” Their task was profound: to see the Church anew in the light of Christ, and to renew Christ’s Church in the light of the signs of the times. As this Council (appropriately called the Second Vatican Council, since it was the second Council held at the Vatican) drew to a close, the bishops desired to speak a word to the world – a word of joy and hope to all women and men of good will. So, in a document bearing the title *Joy and Hope* they declared the following (§1):

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of people. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every person. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with humankind and its history by the deepest of bonds.<sup>9</sup>

I know that these words are easier for me to say than for some of you to believe – especially you who are students. The scandals that have engulfed the Catholic Church have consumed the better part of your young lifetimes. Easier to stop at “Franciscan,” and skip to my conclusion! Easier, yes, but dishonest and, what is more, disrespectful. For Siena *not* to state clearly that its Franciscan Tradition is rooted in the faith professed by the Catholic Church would be to deny the wider community we belong to as Franciscans. It would ignore the faith that calls us to the life we lead and the service we offer. What is more,

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott, S.J., *Gaudium et Spes* (New York: Guild Press, 1966), 199-200.



it would hide from you the kind of transformation that we, who are members of the Catholic Church, are undergoing, and that we invite you, in your own way here at Siena, to make your own. This is the transformation that happens when we listen to the lessons life teaches us – especially life’s painful lessons – and recommit ourselves to becoming the people God has made us and calls us to be: God’s beloved children, sisters and brothers to one another and to all humankind.

Please, trust my brother friars and me, together with the many other members of the Siena Family, when we say that this transformation, painful as it may sometimes be, leads to true joy and lasting hope. This is why we at Siena make it part and parcel of the education of a lifetime that we offer you, who have chosen to be part of a learning community that sees as its classroom the “stuff” of human life.

## CONCLUSION

Way back in my introduction to this lecture, I spoke about my decision to study philosophy. Unlike my courses in economics, those in philosophy spoke not only to my head, they spoke to my heart as well. They invited me – challenged me, really – to jump feet-first into the great questions of life, not because this leap of faith would land me a good job, get a leg up on my classmates and get ahead in life. Rather, the courses I chose and people I met along the way, people as diverse Plato and Pascal, Augustine and Aquinas, Kant and Kierkegaard, Professors Gerald McCool, S.J. and Merold Westphal, challenged me to *get a life*. Thankfully, life – *my* life – has not been the same since.

Of course, there is much ground to cover if one is to journey from a stirred heart to a changed life. Indeed, I am still journeying. This ground is the flesh and blood reality of life itself, and the education we receive – indeed, the education we choose – makes all the difference to the

way in which we cover that ground. It shapes the way we see the experiences that have shaped the people we have become. It influences our appreciation of the people who shape the lives we now live. And, to a profound extent, the education we choose determines the hopes and dreams we hold dear for our futures. It is for these reasons that the education of a lifetime we offer here at Siena College is an education that encompasses and embraces every facet of life: so that it may truly equip you to make the journey of a lifetime.

A Franciscan education does not seek to fill our heads with facts and figures, professional expertise and marketable skills. A Franciscan education strives to form the persons you and I are, both inside and outside the classroom. It strives to offer us an experience so profound, so rich that it transforms us into people who, like St. Francis, are always led by a God whose desire for us is always life: the fullness of life as God's beloved children, brothers and sisters engaged in the work of building up a life – *of getting a life* – with one another. "I have come that you might have life," Jesus said, "and have it to the full."<sup>10</sup> This is the life St. Francis got, studying among Assisi's lepers. During the course of your study here at Siena College – in the classroom, on the court, serving the members of our community – may you get the fullness of just such a life, as well.

#### **CODA: ON THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF LOVE**

Before concluding this Lecture and receiving your questions, I want to offer a final, brief word. I do not offer it by way of a second conclusion to my lecture; one conclusion is enough. Rather, as the musicians among you might say, I offer it as a coda on the transforming power of love.

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<sup>10</sup> John 10:10.

Two years before he opened his arms to receive Sister Death, St. Francis and a few of his closest friar-friends climbed the towering mountain called La Verna. It had been Francis's desire to make a retreat there, for some time, and now, as the great feast of the Triumph of the Cross drew near, the time had finally come – in more ways than one.

Ever since Francis had embraced that leper on the road home to Assisi, he knew in his heart that the end of life's journey was the joy of life eternal with God, in the company of all his sisters and brothers, and that the path laid out for him to make that journey was the footsteps of Jesus Christ. And so Francis imitated Jesus. Francis made his own the mind and heart of Jesus as revealed to him in the Gospels. He offered food to the hungry and water to the thirsty; he clothed the naked with his own clothing and nursed the sick with his own hands; strangers found in him a welcome friend and those whom society had abandoned, a brother to believe in them. In short, Francis announced the Good News of God's Love to all he met, just like Jesus. And now, as he was nearing his life's end, his great desire to know in his own heart the love Jesus felt when Jesus offered his life on the cross. We Franciscans believe that Francis got his heart's desire, so much so that the very wounds of Jesus Crucified appeared on his own hands and feet and side. Jesus' love became Francis's love, and this love carried Francis into eternal life.

Perhaps you believe this as well. Maybe you do not. It is no matter. The point of this story and the point I wish to make is this: be attentive to your heart's desire. In the end, you become what you give your heart to; you become what you love.

So, during your days here at Siena, be attentive to what you give your heart; be discerning about what you love. Note what stirs your heart. See whether it brings you, not a momentary "happy ha ha," but the true and lasting joy that nourishes your life, and that builds up the lives of the women and men around you – sisters and

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brothers no less treasured in the heart of God than you are. Perhaps people will commend you for your passion. Be prepared, though, they might tell you, “You’re nuts! Get a life!” Do not worry. If it is truly life you desire, then *life* is precisely what you will get.



**FRANCISCANS: WHETHER WE ARE ORDAINED OR LAY,  
WE ARE ALL BROTHERS!**

**BRIAN JORDAN, O.F.M.**

**INTRODUCTION**

In my first week as the new chaplain at St. Francis College in Brooklyn in September 2012, a freshman Latina student approached me in front and remarked with an admirable smile, “Hey brother, I like your hoodie!” Little did I realize that this remark was a key sign of my initiation into a new ministry and what it truly means to be a Franciscan.

She meant to be funny in referring to my capuche as a “hoodie” recalling the hoodie worn by Trayon Martin, the young man tragically killed in a still controversial shooting in Florida in late 2011. I calmly explained the difference between a hoodie and the capuche, the garment that covers the shoulders and neck and when necessary the head as well. It was a religious garment that is very different from a hoodie.

I also corrected her that I was a priest not a brother. “I am Father Brian not Brother Brian.” She thought the difference was that the Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn wore black religious habits and my Province wore brown habits. I corrected her and explained that the O.F.M.s who wore brown habits were a mixture composed of priests and brothers. I went on to explain that the Franciscan Conventuals, who also wore a black habit, were likewise a mixture of priests and brothers. I then explained to her

about the Capuchins and the Third Order Regular from whom the Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn come.

She gave me a stark expression of disbelief and asked “Well, you are telling me about all the differences among your groups, what do you all share in common?” I told her that we are all Franciscans. She retorted “That means you are all brothers, right?” For this past semester, I have been reflecting on this question after being constantly addressed as “Brother” instead of “Father” by students, faculty, staff and alumni alike. Finally on Christmas Eve I looked at the manger in the church at Our Lady of Peace Parish in Brooklyn where I reside and I thought of St. Francis of Assisi at Christmas in Greccio. The answer came to me, “Right, we are all brothers!”

### **INFLUENTIAL BROTHERS**

A. I have been saying Mass and giving talks at St. Francis College for over ten years. I have become familiar with many of the Brooklyn Brothers and found them to be friendly, scholarly and good humored. One of them, Brother Joseph Moloney, O.S.F., joked with me when I first arrived and said, “Hey, if it weren’t for the Brooklyn Brothers, St. Bonaventure University would not have a college charter.” What he meant was that my Province of The Holy Name which once owned and still influences the University was greatly influenced by the charter St. Francis College had from New York State and which the Brooklyn Brothers founded. At Brother Joseph Moloney’s wake in the fall of this year, I fondly recalled this conversation and the great bond between Holy Name Province and the Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn for over 150 years.

B. Earlier in 2012, I was invited to the Fortieth Anniversary of Brother Joseph LaGressa’s religious profession. Brother Joseph is from the Immaculate Conception Province based in the Northeast of the USA. It overlaps in certain geographical regions with Holy Name Province. Immaculate Conception Province was also

directly responsible for the founding of St. Bonaventure University in Allegany, NY. It was later that Holy Name Province assumed responsibility for “Bona’s” but the University still remains an international gathering place for Franciscan scholars and students who desire to learn and evangelize in the living Franciscan tradition. I have known Brother LaGressa since his Fifteenth Anniversary of religious profession when we worked together with the young adult ministry in the Archdiocese of Boston. Brother LaGressa was so effective with youth and young adult ministry that he was asked by then Cardinal Bernard Law to be on an advisory committee for the Archdiocese for this meaningful ministry. And did he advise! I vividly recall when he got in a dispute with the Cardinal that Brother LaGressa skillfully asserted to Cardinal Law, “With all due respect Your Eminence, the City of Boston has a sign named after you—ONE WAY.” Brother LaGressa made his point in more ways than one with this insightful remark. We still get together on occasion since he visits me in Our Lady of Peace Parish in Brooklyn which is administered by the Immaculate Conception Province.

C. On Nov. 3, 2012, one of the most influential brothers in my Franciscan life, Brother Juniper Capece, O.F.M., was called home to God by Sister Death. Brother Juniper was a tailor and habit maker in Holy Name Province for fifty-six years until in 2009 he retired to Holy Name College in Silver Spring, Maryland. Besides making my religious habit, he made the habits for thousands of friars through those years.

*JUNIPER*

Jubilant was my first impression of Juniper when I met him in the friars’ recreation room in the Siena College Friary when I was a senior and contemplating religious life in the fall of 1977. He was in full habit and sandals with a drink in his hand playing the game Twister with another friar. I laughed out loud at this unexpected sight of these two friars falling over each other as they

moved to place a foot in one of the colored circles of the mat. I immediately appreciated the earthiness of the Franciscans.

Understanding was the constant demeanor of Juniper for the thirty-five years I have known him. He was a genial listener and always went out of his way when he perceived that a friar (ordained, lay or in formation) was in need of some type of consolation or reassurance. In words and actions he consistently encouraged anyone going through difficult times. I am convinced that he heard more friars' confessions than most priests and he kept each one to himself. He never betrayed a confidence. I consider him one of the best confessors ever in our province. Yes, even though sacramental absolution is not in their scope, brothers hear confessions, too!

Naughty but nice! If you had the unique privilege of being on Juniper's mailing list, chances are you received letters filled with a series of hilarious cartoons spiced with bawdy jokes and pithy spiritual sayings. Yes some were quite naughty but the spiritual sayings were more than nice—they were meaningful. Juniper quietly believed that the vow friars struggled with most was chastity. In a society filled with overt sexual messages whether through magazines, movies or online, sexual passions are easily aroused. Juniper firmly believed that if one laughs at oneself despite all the many temptations these spiritual sayings can help one find coping skills for living a celibate life. After reading numerous articles and texts on this subject, this so called uneducated brother had the best advice for those struggling with celibacy. He urged us to be honest with ourselves. Know that you are not alone but with brothers. Don't take yourself too seriously and most of all bring it to the Lord with prayer. Not simple-minded just pure simplicity.

Intuitive was Juniper's key gift. He knew before the formation team what formation student would be approved for solemn vows or what lay employee was hard working or not. Juniper never hesitated to pick up a



mop and clean the floor, take out the garbage, wash the dishes or even collect and distribute the mail. He sensed goodness in a person right away and as quickly he could sense deceit. In the latter case he did not hesitate to tell that person of his shortcoming for the sake of fraternal correction.

Professional characterized Juniper's dutiful work ethic. He possessed tremendous skill with his gifts as a tailor. Not only did he make religious habits for many Franciscans even beyond the Province but well-known tailors and dressmakers sought out his professional expertise on material, design and measuring sizes. He was a mentor for many religious and lay people who still make religious habits today.

Entertaining was among Juniper's great gifts. Whether he was sharing humorous stories in the rec room, at the dinner table or in the garden—everyone in the room was radiant with joy with this spry brother's love for life. He entertained you because he cared about you and you were important to him. He loved fraternity and constantly entertained us because he wanted us to experience fraternity in the local community rather than in some clandestine liaison that one may later regret. Juniper exuded true Franciscan joy as a means of keeping us laughing and keeping us in the community.

Religious life is based in prayer both personal and communal. Juniper loved participating in the Liturgy of the Hours through morning and evening prayer and especially in the celebration of daily Eucharist. He always believed and practiced the belief that we receive the Body of Christ (Eucharist) as the Body of Christ (Community.) Personal prayer was his constant guide and even when Sister Death was fast approaching in early November, 2012, Juniper was not afraid. He echoed the words of St. Francis "My God and My All" and experienced his *Transitus* from death into eternal life.

**CLOSING WORDS**

Since Vatican II, numerous Franciscan documents have expressed the need to identify ourselves as brothers and not just priests and brothers. In the words of his Testament St. Francis wrote, "... the Lord gave me some brothers." My new ministry and new fraternity encourage me to share the Franciscan charism with other Franciscan provinces and orders. We are Franciscan Catholics not Franciscan Congregationalists! We are not separate entities but part of a greater global body called the Franciscans.

Through the inspiration of a young Latina freshman student and three remarkable Franciscan brothers named Joseph, Juniper and Joseph, I have renewed my Franciscan identity as being Brother Brian rather than Father Brian. Why? Because that is what we truly are – brothers to one another and to all!

## **LEARNING TO WALK THE PILGRIM PATH**

**ROBERT STEWART, O.F.M.**

Saint Clare, in her second letter to Agnes of Prague, directs her to walk the pilgrim path of life, barefooted with joy and perseverance despite its difficulties and challenges.

What you hold, may you hold, What you do, may you do and not stop. But with swift pace, light step, unswerving feet, so that even your steps stir up no dust, May you go forward securely, joyfully and swiftly, on a path of prudent happiness, believing nothing, agreeing with nothing that would dissuade you from this commitment or would place a stumbling block for you on the way, so that nothing prevents you from offering your vows to the most high in the perfection to which the spirit of the Lord has called you (2LAg 11-14).

The path that both Francis and Clare followed was the pilgrim path. They committed themselves to become barefoot disciples by following in the footprints of Christ.

My first experience of walking the pilgrim path was when I was a young student at the University and took part in "The Student Cross." Starting on Palm Sunday I joined other students in walking the ancient pilgrim path from London to the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, a medieval place of pilgrimage. Between us we carried a

large wooden cross. Tired and weary after one hundred and twenty miles we arrived on Good Friday in Walsingham at the Slipper Chapel. There, following tradition, we took off our shoes before walking the final mile of the pilgrimage. It was icy, snowing and the municipality had recently re-flinted the road. Our agony was compounded by the local policeman who kept grinding the flint-stones with his boots and saying. "You young gentlemen will do yourselves irreparable harm" and although he repeated his warning I felt I was not doing myself harm but joining the barefooted pilgrims throughout ages and the world: people who chose to walk humbly before the Lord encountering the earth (the humus) in vulnerability and pain.

One of those people who chose to 'walk humbly before the Lord encountering the earth in vulnerability and pain' was Ortolana Offreduccio, the mother of Clare. She had undertaken a number of pilgrimages: to Rome; to Compestella – the shrine of Saint James; to Monte Gargano – a place of pilgrimage in honor of Saint Michael the Archangel. She had also traveled the hazardous and dangerous route to the Holy Land where she walked the paths of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Ortolana must have often regaled her children with the story of her pilgrimages and the difficulties she encountered. These childhood influences nourished and influenced Clare as she set out on her barefoot pilgrimage into God, the final end of her journey in life.

It was years after my first experience of being a barefooted pilgrim that I discovered that being barefooted was a rich biblical theme into which Clare entered following Francis. When Moses approached the burning bush and there encountered God he was instructed "Come no closer. Remove your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5). The prophet Isaiah walked barefoot for three years (Isaiah 20:3). Jesus sent out the seventy others in pairs saying "Go on your way. I am sending you out like lambs in the midst of wolves.

Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road" (Luke 10:4).

Being barefooted entails showing respect to all the "burning bushes" in which we daily encounter the Lord living in his creatures and all creation. Francis and Clare's respect for the sacramentality of all creation was born as they walked barefooted the pilgrim path.

It is easy to overlook the fact that walking is a risky business. Young children do not walk, they toddle; old folks do not walk, they shuffle. It is only in our middle years that we take the risk of walking. For when we walk we constantly put ourselves at risk as we raise one leg, balance on the other leg that is grounded and start to topple forward until we break our fall with the front foot. We then repeat the process as we balance on the front foot and continue to take the risk of losing one's balance, raising the other. Walking is a risky business but one that is essential to making progress. If we ever need to learn how to walk again without thinking, we will have to consecrate hard and be aware of the risk involved in walking, until we regain the skill. It requires great courage and humility to walk the pilgrim path, following the footprints of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Walking the world as a pilgrim requires the skill of letting go and not choosing our path but being a follower of the way with unswerving feet.

Clare also invites Agnes to walk lightly along the path so that we do not stir up dust. When I was ordained I received a letter from my cousin, who was a Cistercian Monk, in which he counselled me, quoting Peguy, "Do not trample in the vineyard of the Lord with the feet of Elephants." He was telling me that I should respect all others as loved by God and never trample on the bruised reed or extinguish the smouldering fire. Francis and Clare never spoke about the ills of society or about the evils of the times but only of the abiding love of God made manifest above all in the humility of the Incarnation and the passionate outpouring of love of the Crucified Christ.

The pilgrim path of following the footsteps of Christ entails being washed and washing others feet. The pas-

sage in John's Gospel, which records the washing of the disciples' feet, has great significance for Francis and Clare. Clare literary washed her sisters' feet and Francis demanded his brothers do the same. It spoke to them of servant leadership and of the privilege of service. However it was within this event that Peter first experienced the stumbling block which is a constant threat to us all, for to have our feet washed is to receive. Having our feet washed is difficult to accept because we cannot receive this gift without adjusting in a profound and deep way our mind and heart. Most of us are good at "doing good," but weak on allowing others to serve us and discover in the other the God who washes feet. Discipleship at its most radical level does not mean doing things for God or others but allowing Christ to do things for us. It entails opening ourselves to God's love so that this love may transform us into lovers and so restore us to our original dignity. The foot washing reveals the depth of the self-giving love of God who made himself our slave to win our love. The foot washing shows us the mutuality of service. God washes our feet and asks us to allow him to serve others in and through us. This is the way of life we have vowed ourselves to follow.

The pilgrim path that Clare invites us, "... as someone zealous for the holiest poverty, and in the spirit of great humility and with most ardent charity," (2Ag 7) is to cling to the footsteps of Christ. He alone is the Way.

In this second letter to Agnes, Clare spells out the path of the barefooted pilgrim:

"If you suffer with Him, you shall reign with Him, [if you] weep [with Him], you shall rejoice with Him; [if you] die [with Him] on the cross of tribulation, you shall possess heavenly mansion in the splendor of the saints" (2Ag 21).

This path is followed by those who espouse themselves to Christ and with burning love keep their eyes firmly fixed on the great humility and the most dreadful suf-

fering of the crucified Christ and who contemplate with glowing love the love revealed in the birth, life, suffering and death of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Clare invites those who follow the pilgrim path to cling to the Lord: "Believing nothing, agreeing with nothing which would dissuade you from this resolution or which would place a stumbling block to you on the way" (2Ag 14). She is aware of the rocks on the way as we journey both externally and internally.

The external journey is hazardous because it is traversed through the country of relationships "As you did it to the least of my little ones you did it to me" (Matt 25:40). It entails replacing the center of one's life from self to the other. Often on the path of making the others' welfare as important as our own we trip on the pebbles of generosity. We lose sight of the necessity of always being generous in imitation of Christ who gives himself totally to us and ask that we give ourselves totally to him. So often greed disguised as discretion warns us not to be too generous to others before we have ensured our own needs and security – give a little but keep enough at hand for a rainy day. Clare advises we follow the footsteps of Christ, "Whose generosity is more abundant."

Some years ago I was invited to go on pilgrimage to Medjugorje where Our Lady is reputed to have appeared to four children in 1981. She has continued to send messages of peace and reconciliation to the world through them ever since. On one of the days of the pilgrimage the leader scheduled mass at dawn on the top of Mount Krizevac (Cross Mountain) the mountain which dominates the village. In 1933 the villages had erected a very large cross on the top of this mountain and it was at the base of the cross we were to celebrate the dawn mass. The arrangements meant that I had to climb the mountain in the dark with only a small torch to light the way. To aggravate the situation I was told that it was a traditional act of penance to climb the mountain barefooted. As leader of the pilgrimage of penance could I do less than conform to tradition? For two hours I gingerly made my

way to the top of the mountain trying to avoid striking my foot on a rock or slipping on the shale. I was spurred on my way by the example of the old ladies in black who were climbing barefoot in the dark, rosary in hand, driven forward by the dynamics of love, concentrating totally on their beloved while I was still concentrating on my pain and getting to the top in time to celebrate mass at dawn. When would I become totally other directed?

As the dawn broke and the mass progressed the light began to bathe the landscape and the beauty of God reflected in glory of his creation. I began to think of the inward journey and the necessity of light to see the beauty hidden in the darkness. It is only the light of Christ which had come into the word that would unmask the many delusions that are hidden in the depths of our lives. It is only when the light reveals the many protective layers we clothe ourselves in, the anxieties and fears that we can begin to stand naked. Only then can we make the final step of our pilgrimage and walk naked with the naked Christ and recover paradise so long lost in the darkness of sin. Then in the cool of the evening we can walk the final stages of our pilgrimage with him:

Whose power is stronger, whose generosity is more abundant, whose appearance more beautiful, whose love more tender, whose courtesy more gracious, in whose embrace you are already caught up (1Ag 9-10).

Clinging to Christ is the way to learn to walk the pilgrim path. You learn, in the midst of walking barefooted, the secret of the pilgrim: that you never walk alone because he is always with us.

“Even were I to walk through the valley of deepest darkness I should fear no harm, for you are with me” (Psalm 23:4).



## LITANY OF SAINT MARIANNE COPE<sup>1</sup>

ANDRE CIRINO, O.F.M.

*Lord have mercy!*

*Christ have mercy!*

*Lord have mercy!*

*Christ hear us!*

*God, Father in heaven,*

*God, Son, our Redeemer,*

*God, Holy Spirit,*

*Holy Mary, Mother of God,*

*Holy Father Francis,*

*Holy Mother Clare,*

*St. Marianne, native of Germany,*

*St. Marianne, immigrant to America,*

*St. Marianne, child of New York,*

*St. Marianne, religious in Syracuse,*

*St. Marianne, missionary to Hawai'i,*

*St. Marianne, apostle to Kalaupapa,*

*St. Marianne, teacher of children,*

*St. Marianne, principal of a Catholic school,*

*St. Marianne, builder of hospitals,*

*St. Marianne, servant leader to her sisters,*

*Lord have mercy!*

*Christ have mercy!*

*Lord have mercy!*

*Christ graciously hear us!*

*Have mercy on us!*

*Have mercy on us!*

*Have mercy on us!*

*Pray for us!*

*Pray for us!*

*Pray for us!*

*Pray for us!*

*Pray for us!*

*Pray for us!*

*Pray for us!*

*Pray for us!*

*Pray for us!*

*Pray for us!*

*Pray for us!*

*Pray for us!*

*Pray for us!*

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<sup>1</sup> Author's note: I was present for the canonization of Saint Marianne Cope, facilitating a pilgrimage for the Franciscan Sisters of the Neumann Community. On the afternoon of her canonization, reflecting on this great woman, I composed a litany in her honor.

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<i>St. Marianne, mother of outcasts,</i>	<i>Pray for us!</i>
<i>St. Marianne, mother of lepers' children,</i>	<i>Pray for us!</i>
<i>St. Marianne, mother in suffering,</i>	<i>Pray for us!</i>
<i>St. Marianne, mother to the dying,</i>	<i>Pray for us!</i>

<i>St. Marianne, restorer of dignity,</i>	<i>Pray for us!</i>
<i>St. Marianne, comfort of the afflicted,</i>	<i>Pray for us!</i>
<i>St. Marianne, fearless of illness,</i>	<i>Pray for us!</i>
<i>St. Marianne, beloved daughter of Francis and Clare,</i>	<i>Pray for us!</i>

<i>Christ hear us!</i>	<i>Christ hear us!</i>
<i>Lord Jesus, hear our prayer!</i>	<i>Lord Jesus, hear our prayer!</i>
<i>Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, Have mercy on us!</i>	
<i>Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, Have mercy on us!</i>	
<i>Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, Have mercy on us!</i>	

*Let us pray: O God, who called us to serve your Son in the least of our brothers and sisters, grant, we pray, that by the example and intercession of Saint Marianne, the virgin, we may burn with love for you and those who suffer. We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen!*



## BOOK REVIEW

Stewart, Mary Esther. *Meet Our Brother Bonaventure: Reflections on The Journey into God*. Phoenix, AZ: Tau Publishing (2012). \$10.95.

Mary Esther Stewart has introduced us to a long awaited insight into Bonaventure as “Brother.” *Meet our Brother Bonaventure* is a total joy to read, to reflect on, and to take a journey with the young man who became the Franciscan scholar we know today. This piece of work complements many of Stewart’s pieces of Franciscan artwork that have brought to life our Franciscan story through the hands of Francis and Clare. This masterpiece in its simplicity brings to light an aspect of Bonaventure’s life that we can understand, the inner “spirit” of the man named *BonaVentura* – Good Journey. This work is being used – by retreatants, Freshman University 101 courses at our Franciscan universities, and spiritual reading by many secular and religious Franciscans – to understand Bonaventure’s Franciscan theological and spiritual writings. It is a wonderful book written for everyone to see our Brother Bonaventure through new lenses.

Mary Esther Stewart’s insights come from working for years as a facilitator with Andre Cirino and Josef Raischl on their retreat program, *Soul’s Journey into God*. Stewart’s purpose is to introduce Bonaventure as a friend and brother to the reader and to show how his works inspired her to write this reflection and hopefully also to inspire the reader’s spiritual life. The reader is led on this journey through the eyes of Bonaventure, a young theology

student in the thirteenth century, beginning studies in the School of Theology at the University of Paris. This creative approach explains the distinct steps of Bonaventure's *Itinerarium*. Each chapter is divided into four parts. The author sets the reader in a fictitious medieval university scene, followed by her own perceptions, with a sequence to give the reader an opportunity to interact, journal, and respond to Bonaventure's ideas. The last section of each chapter is a series of quotations from Bonaventure's texts to guide the reader using the new translation by Raischl and Cirino's *Journey into God*. Stewart has used these quotes in her personal prayer life and shares them with the reader for understanding and reflection for each particular step of Bonaventure's work.

In addition, Stewart opens with an introduction to her friend Brother Bonaventure and proceeds to give each chapter a title that invites the reader to an open door thus setting the scene set for a reflection that is most helpful for comprehending Bonaventure's original manuscript. The Prologue begins the journey *In Search of Peace*, with Bonaventure following the footprints of Francis as he climbs Mount *La Verna* for solitude to reflect on the state of affairs of the Franciscan Order at the time and for guidance from the Spirit. In Chapter One, as Bonaventure retraces his own steps starting out as a young friar in his first biology Class, Stewart ponders what God's intent was for Bonaventure and reflects on our beginnings and the footprints of God in our own lives.

In *The Gifts of God*, our anxious student narrator moves on to his first physiology class to study the senses. What is unique is not so much the structural understanding of sight and hearing as it is the mathematical description of quantities and proportions. The narrator is able to use this approach to relate the senses to the environment, a common practice for a theology student in 1252. Now as the narrator walks with the gifts of God, we question how we are informed by our senses and how we come to know our Creator. This leads into the next year of studies as a student in psychology. The first year was devoted

to general biology and a study of the human body from a physiological perspective. Now it is time to enter into the human psyche. With this thirteenth century student you begin to ponder the connection between the natural world, the human senses and how humans think and process information with finding inner peace, being closer to God?

This is where Stewart addresses Bonaventure's insights of *the image of God* within us. The uniqueness of each person is defined by the Trinity within us as three elements of our soul or psyche – our memory, our intellect and our will. Our memory consists of sensory data collected in our lives. Our intellect processes our experiences and makes judgments from that information unique to us. The will lets us choose to act after processing the information. The author provides some very practical reflection for the reader to process how the Trinity, elements/faculties of memory, intellect and will could apply in our own lives. She gives the following example: you use memory when your parents tell you buttermilk is good for you; you use intellect – you want to be healthy; you use Will – you choose to drink two cups of buttermilk each day. This suggests extending this reflection to considering a person, an attitude, or an issue, and how these stages of processing the information lead through memory and intellect, then to the will to act.

This leads us to the study *in the humanity of God*. Our study of the human soul/psyche with the young Bonaventure gives us a glimpse of how we are created in God's image, but now our next class with Bonaventure is *Christology*, a human perspective of the divine relationship of the Trinity integral to Bonaventure's theology. This is the conversion point for the human person to move *through* the faculties of the soul/psyche to that image of God. However, so much in our cultural, social and emotional lives has influenced our experiences that at times we are biased and self-centered, so we look with narrow lenses of how our Will chooses to respond and may not always be an image of God's love in us. This is

where the understanding of the Incarnation is essential to our Franciscan Spirituality.

Stewart highlights how in Francis's moment of suffering in his life, he marveled at the beauty of creation and the beauty within each person. Jesus' mission on earth was to bring the Good News of God's love and to share in the suffering of humanity, but we are not alone in those moments. This conversion to understanding through *faith*, *hope* and *love* brings graced moments of God's love and thus we respond to the world around us with new lenses. Faith is our willingness to take a risk. Hope is our willingness to wait patiently in those moments of suffering, discomfort or pain. Love is our willingness to make and keep a commitment that leads to goodness of all of God's creation and to love God above all and our neighbors as ourselves.

The word, *willingness*, is stressed throughout this explanation. For Bonaventure the human will has free choice to act and to serve in the goodness of God's love or not. Stewart demonstrates the power of conversion through a moment of conversion in Francis's life. Francis's memory held that lepers were diseased individuals. His intellect formed the judgment that one should not associate with lepers. Therefore, Francis's will was to choose that lepers are to be avoided. However, one day in a moment of conversion, Francis responded to God's grace by faith and risked embracing the leper. Francis suffered patiently the stench of the leper and willingness to hope. He responded to God's love by committing himself to care for the lepers throughout his life. It was during the moment of discomfort that the cycle was broken and Francis experienced conversion, and the love poured out. How do we accept the challenge to reflect upon our own story of conversion, and how do we process and choose to act based on the data?

Esther Stewart refers to these opportunities as gifts to experience God's response to our humanity so that we can journey toward God in faith, hope, and love. This is our willingness to take risk, our willingness to wait

patiently, and our willingness to freely commit to act out of our goodness and the Goodness of God. Then is the human soul moved to be in union and wholeness with God and in relationship with all creation – the ultimate “Love Journey.”

The author moves us from our Christology course to Br. Bonaventure’s understanding *in the Being of God* through metaphysics and the study of Being. So often we describe ourselves by what we do. Here we look at our being to be all beauty within the oneness of God. Beauty is to be the balance in perfect harmony of God’s goodness. Stewart emphasizes, “... if such a God holds us in being, then we can know that we are very wanted, very dependent and very grateful. Can we take the time to find the fullness of our being and to come to peace and to the image of our Creator?” The reader is invited from Psalm 46 to *Be Still and know that I am God* and just “BE.”

We, with Br. Bonaventure, are now halfway through our third year at the School of Theology, and we move to the study of goodness, ethics. *In the Goodness of God*, the first name of God is Good, and goodness is synonymous with love. This is where Br. Bonaventure uses the nature of goodness to explain the Trinity. With Bonaventure all relationships involve three, the same as the Trinity. The everyday human relationships reflect a Trinitarian action among Father (the lover), Son (the Beloved) and Spirit (the loving). Stewart gives this example: you love your child, your child loves you and you share that love with each other. The overflowing goodness of God is also expressed through the image of a three-tiered fountain that is overflowing continuously to give life to each tier. Stewart uses the images from Elizabeth Johnson and Ilia Delio to compare this analogy of the Trinity to being invited into the dance by the Father (creation), the Son being our ticket to the dance (instruction) and the Spirit being the entrance to the dance (love poured out). The joy of the music carries us on for eternity to be part of the dance.

Br. Bonaventure reminds us that love has to be free and cannot be forced. This will be determined by how we use our will to choose the freedom to goodness, beauty, truth and unity for fullness of being. Jesus gave us the challenge to be good and holy as our Father, to be compassionate and forgiving, to walk with those less fortunate, and to advocate for justice and peace for the care of all of God's Creation. Likewise we can move from non-being (ignoring our potential) to being, from deception and chaos to unity, from deformity to beauty and self-centeredness to goodness choosing to participate in the life of the Trinity. This is where we are on our journey *into* God. And Francis's greeting of "*Peace and all Good*" is a reminder of the goodness of God overflowing in each of us and all those with whom we journey daily. This brings us to the question: What is the loving thing to do?

This in turn brings us *in the Peace of God*. Stewart concludes by asking whether our four years at the University of Paris in the Franciscan School of Theology brought us a sense of peace and focus in our life. Are we able to let go of those issues that cause us stress? Now do we understand Br. Bonaventure's words that you are God and does each of us see God in ourselves? *May God give you peace and all good. May God guide you through the darkness to discover God's superluminous love.*

Paula J. Scraba Ph.D., O.F.S.  
*St. Bonaventure University*



## BOOK REVIEW

*Holding Jesus Reflections on Mary the Mother of God* written by Alfred McBride, O. Praem. is an interesting presentation on Mary. Although I discovered nothing new there are many thoughts worthy of reflection time. Each reflection is presented in the same format: suggested readings, inspirational quote, reflection, question and prayer. The concluding prayers are worth taking time to contemplate even if there were nothing else given. With the other four parts there is much to ponder.

During my first read there seemed to be nothing challenging, nothing exciting until something caught my attention, causing me to take a second look. And in that second reading I was caught up. Reader, be aware: there is much food for thought here that may not be apparent in a cursory approach. The questions after the reflection are meant to intrigue one's mind throughout the day. It is in the search for an answer that one is drawn well beyond the surface. In addition there are the two Scripture readings for each topic which entice one to journey contemplatively for quite some time. To say nothing of the inspirational quotes! A few of these quotes, taken singly, are rather ordinary but in the context of the entire reflection the connections are rich and reflection fruitful.

Depending upon what you desire in a spiritual read you could discover it in this book. If you want something brief and quick this will meet your need. If you desire something more in depth just give yourself to the readings and reflections to see where they lead. If you are looking for something on Mary that is not too theological-

ly dense you can find it here. If you want to have a picture of Mary that is real and human this word portrait will enrich your imagination. If you want to plumb all the different connections a reflection on Mary can point toward you'll find multiple paths here. If you want a resource on Mary with unusual slants for all seasons then this will shine new light for you. For all of the above reasons, as well as for personal enrichment, this book is worth the time you spend with it.

The book is developed in three parts. Part one, "Holding the Child Jesus," provides reflections for everyday of Advent concluding with Christmas. Though several of the meditations focus on Mary holding the infant Jesus Father Alfred explores the many ways in which we hold another. Yes, Mary and Jesus are the central figures but the reader also enters into the imagery. The reader who takes the time and delves into the reflection, allowing the question to simmer within one's heart, will gain an unexpected richness.

"Holding Jesus During His Adult Ministry" is part two and consists of eight reflections. The material for each reflection follows the same pattern but provides a variety of formats with which the reader may examine the topic. Though there are only eight topics sufficient material is provided for days of contemplation. One of the advantages is that four of the five sections are brief. This may seem like a contradiction but it is not. In today's busy lifestyle one does not need hours to recognize what is worth pondering. The pondering however, may take hours or days as one moves through the various activities of life.

Part three is "Holding Jesus During His Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Sending of the Spirit." A journey through the end of the Jesus' life is provided in seven reflections. Father Alfred has reflected upon every aspect of life. The reader will know Mary differently, pondering and walking with her as she invites the reader to hold her son, Jesus, throughout his life. In knowing Mary differently, we can know ourselves anew, gaining self knowl-

edge as we pray with *Holding Jesus Reflections on Mary the Mother of God*.

Diane Jamison, O.S.F.  
Oldenburg, Indiana



Luke, Evangelist and Iconographer,  
painting an image of Mary holding Jesus in her arms.

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For more information, please contact Susan Barnes:  
[susan@franciscancentertampa.org](mailto:susan@franciscancentertampa.org), or (813) 229-2695.



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Contact: GJRyan@optonline.net, (732) 681-6238

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*Michael Crosby is a Capuchin Franciscan who lives in Milwaukee. His preaching and writing on contemporary biblical discipleship has taken him around the world where he leads retreats, workshops and parish missions.*



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“Navigating Change—the gifts and wisdom of body, mind, and spirit”  
Norma Janssen, OSF; Mary Ruth Broz, RSM; Carol Dolan



July 12-19, 2013—Franciscan Retreat  
“Becoming a Dangerous Memory in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century...Calling Upon Francis  
and Clare to Lead the Way”  
Norma Rocklage, OSF



July 24-28 (optional additional days 29, 30), 2012-Silent Retreat  
“Silent Directed Retreat”  
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**(Sunday - Saturday)**

**Nancy Harrison, Roberta Marie Doneth, OSF**

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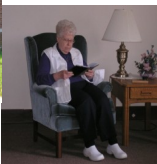
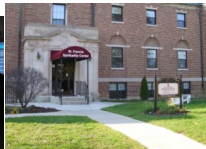
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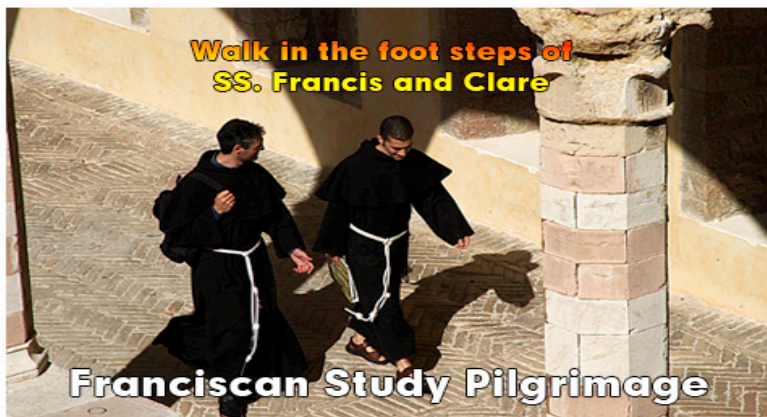
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June 24-28, 2013, Mon-Fri, 1:00 - 3:30 PM

### Clare and Her Sisters: Their Life, Vision and Legacy

Dr. Maria Pia Alberzoni

## COURSES

### Three Weeks

July 1 – 19, 2013, Monday – Friday

9:00 – 12:00/Noon

### A Theology of Presence and Ministry in the Franciscan Tradition

Dr. Amanda Quantz

### Development of the Franciscan Person (SFS 538)

Fr. David Couturier, OFM Cap, Ph.D.

1:00 – 3:40 PM

### The Writings of Francis and Clare (SFS 525)

Dr. Jean Francois Godet-Calogeras

### Retrieving a Franciscan Philosophy of Social Engagement

Br. Keith Warner, OFM, Ph.D.

## General Orientation Courses in Franciscan Studies

Two Weeks, June 24-July 5, 2013

Francis: His Life and Charism (SFS 520), Dr. Mary Meany

Three Weeks, July 8-26, 2013

Survey of Franciscan History (SFS 501), Fr. Maurice Carmody, D.Hist.Eccles.

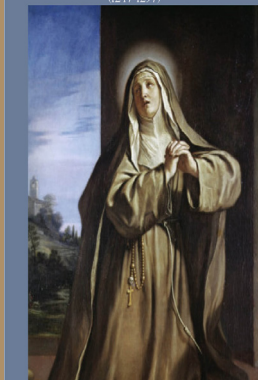
Formation Roundtable, July 9, 11, 16, 18

Fr. Jack Rathschmidt, OFM, Cap.

Four Sessions: July 9, 11, 16, 18

TRANSLATED BY THOMAS RENNA, PH.D.  
AND SHANNON LARSON

THE LIFE OF SAINT  
MARGARET OF CORTONA  
(1217-1297)



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Title: *The Life of Saint Margaret of Cortona*

Author: Translated by Thomas Renna and Shannon Larson

ISBN: 978-1-57659-301-1

Price: \$44.95

Pages: 344

Publication Date: August 2012

Format: Hard Cover

Series: N/A

BISAC: REL110000 RELIGION/Christianity/Saints and Sainthood

REL012130 RELIGION / Christian Life / Women's Issues

HIS037010 HISTORY / Medieval

Saint Margaret of Cortona is the light of the Third Order of Francis. Such is the theme of the most extensive biography of any Franciscan Tertiary in the Middle Ages. Margaret's extraordinary career brings the historian closer to the early development of the Franciscans and the Order of Penance; it tells us much about how women saints were described, and about how civic cults of saints emerged. Another window, although a smaller one, opens to the tensions between the Franciscan Community and the Spiritual Franciscans before the split prior to Pope John XXII. Indeed it could be said that we know more about Margaret of Cortona than about any woman of thirteenth-century Italy, with the exception of Clare of Assisi and Clare of Montefalco.

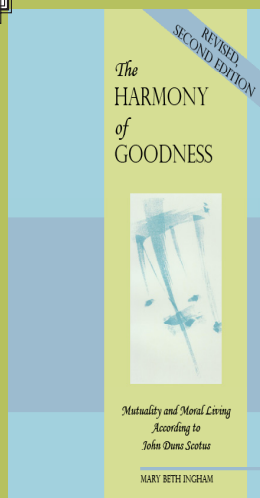
This edition is translated from the critical Latin edition by Fortunato Iozzelli, O.F.M. of *The Life of Saint Margaret of Cortona* by Fra Giunta Bevegnati. The original translation by Thomas Renna has been edited by Shannon Larson.

THOMAS RENNA, Professor of History at Saginaw Valley State University, Michigan, teaches history of the Middle Ages, Ancient Rome, Renaissance, France, and ancient and modern Middle East. He has an undergraduate degree in History from the University of Scranton, a masters of Medieval History from the University of Nebraska and a PhD in Medieval History from Brown University.

Renna has published 3 books, including *Jerusalem in Medieval Thought 400-1300* (Mellen Pr 2002), 120 journal articles on medieval thought: political theory, church-state conflicts, Franciscan, Cistercian, Benedictine, biblical exegesis, hagiography, manuscript illumination, Petrarch, Augustine. He also has 160 paper presentations at conferences in US, Canada, Europe, and Middle East.

Renna has received numerous awards and fellowships for scholarship and teaching.

SHANNON LARSON has a Bachelor's degree from Northwestern College where she studied Egyptian, Jewish, and Church history and biblical studies. She has a Master's degree in Medieval History from Marquette University. There, she specialized in crime and justice. Larson's research has focused on the intersection of rape and virginity in medieval discursive contexts, and on British and Continental jurisprudence. She is currently an independent scholar and works part time at an historical society.



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Title: *The Harmony of Goodness: Mutuality and Moral Living According to John Duns Scotus*

Author: by Mary Beth Ingham

ISBN: 978-1-57659-336-3

Price: \$24.95

Pages: 180

Publication Date: July 2012

Format: Tradepaper

Series: N/A

BISAC: REL 067070 RELIGION / Christian Theology / Ethics

PHI 005000 PHILOSOPHY / Ethics & Moral Philosophy

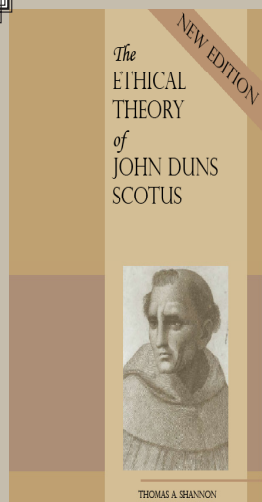
REL 051000 RELIGION / Philosophy

Since the first publication of *The Harmony of Goodness* in 1996, much work has appeared in print on Scotus' theological and philosophical vision including the gradual completion of the Vatican edition of Scotus' *Ordinatio*. Various congresses and international gatherings continue to highlight the important significance of this great medieval thinker for the new millennium. Drawing upon the work of several significant scholars combined with her own deepened conviction that understanding Scotus' moral philosophy and theology must be understood within the broader context of Franciscan spirituality, including the role of Stoic and monastic influences on the medieval Franciscans, Mary Beth Ingham, C.S.J., offers this new edition of *The Harmony of Goodness*. Scotus' articulation of a moral vision to lived harmony and to moral living as a path of beauty is offered anew by Ingham in this new edition.

**SR. MARY ELIZABETH INGHAM, C.S.J.**, is Professor of Philosophical Theology at the Franciscan School of Theology, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. She earned her Ph.D. from Universite de Fribourg, Switzerland. Her specialties include the History of Medieval Philosophy, Franciscan Tradition, John Duns Scotus, Stoicism and its influence on Medieval Philosophy, and Franciscan spiritual tradition and its influence on Scotus and others. Ingham has authored several texts on Scotus including the best-selling, *Scotus for Dunces – an Introduction to the Subtle Doctor*.

Mary Beth Ingham's *The Harmony of Goodness* offers a finely tuned study of John Dun Scotus marked by clarity and conviction. No one is more adept and accomplished than Ingham when it comes to exploring, articulating, and retrieving the intricate thought of the Subtle Doctor for contemporary readers. In *The Harmony of Goodness*, she provides a compelling ethical worldview that is grounded in the Franciscan belief in the goodness of both the Creator and Creation, and the invitation to live accordingly.

- Dr. Timothy Johnson, PhD, Professor and Department Chair, Humanities, Flagler College



Title: *The Ethical Theory of John Duns Scotus*

Author: by Thomas A. Shannon, PhD

ISBN: 978-1-57659-341-7

Price: \$24.95

Pages: 200

Publication Date: September 2012

Format: Tradepaper

Series: N/A

BISAC: PHI005000 PHILOSOPHY / Ethics & Moral Philosophy

REL012110 RELIGION / Christian Life / Social Issues

PHI012000 PHILOSOPHY / History & Surveys / Medieval

Is the thought of John Duns Scotus relevant for the 21st century? Dr. Thomas A. Shannon discovers areas of congruence and insight between several contemporary issues and the work of the 13th century Franciscan in this new edition of his work, *The Ethical Theory of John Duns Scotus*.

THOMAS A. SHANNON, PHD, is professor emeritus of religion and social ethics in the Department of Humanities and Arts at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, Massachusetts. Professor Shannon also holds the Paul McKeever Chair of Moral Theology at St. John's University in Queens, New York. He is the author, co-author or editor of more than 35 books and 40 articles in bioethics and Roman Catholic social justice.



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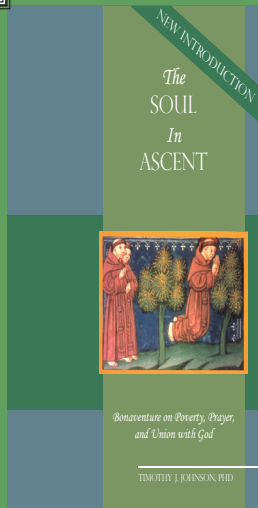
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Title: *The Soul in Ascent: Bonaventure on Poverty, Prayer, and Union With God*

Author: Timothy J. Johnson

ISBN: 978-1-57659-342-4

Price: \$24.95

Pages: 288

Publication Date: September 2012

Format: Tradepaper

Series: N/A

BISAC: REL 012080 RELIGION / Christian Life / Prayer

REL 058010 RELIGION / Sermons / Christian

REL 067110 RELIGION / Christian Theology / Systematic

First published by Franciscan press in 2000, Dr. Timothy J. Johnson's *The Soul in Ascent: Bonaventure on Poverty, Prayer and Union with God* has offered a thorough textual study of the importance of prayer in Bonaventure's theology and life. This new edition is updated to include Johnson's most recent work on Bonaventure's Sunday Sermons sourced from his work, *The Sunday Sermons of St. Bonaventure – Bonaventure Texts in Translation Series*. This new edition is a must-read book for anyone interested in Franciscan spirituality and theology.

**TIMOTHY J. JOHNSON** is Professor of Religion and Humanities Department Chair at Flagler College, St. Augustine, Florida. A Senior Fulbright Scholar, Dr. Johnson holds a Doctorate in Sacred Theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He also holds a Licentiate in Sacred Theology and a Diploma Litterarum Latinarum from the Pontifical Gregorian University, a Bachelor's in Sacred Theology from Pontifical Theological Faculty of St. Bonaventure, Rome, and a B.A. in Theology from St. Louis University. Dr. Johnson has taught in Europe and Africa. His primary area of expertise is the history of Christian spirituality and theology. Dr. Johnson has published numerous journal articles and books on Franciscan topics including *Bonaventure – Mystic of God's Word* and *The Sunday Sermons of St. Bonaventure*.



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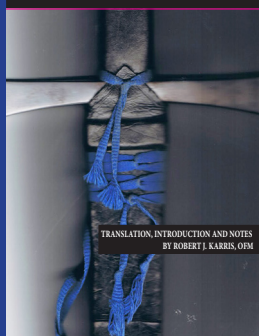
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SPIRITUAL WARFARE  
AND SIX OTHER  
SPIRITUAL WRITINGS OF  
PETER OF JOHN OLIVI



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*Spiritual Warfare and Six Other Spiritual Writings of Peter of John Olivi*

Author: translation, introduction and notes by Robert J. Karris, O.F.M.

ISBN: 978-1-57659-344-8

Price: \$19.95

Pages: 120

Publication Date: August, 2012

Format: Paperback

Series: N/A

BISAC: REL 099000 RELIGION / Christian Life / Spiritual Warfare

REL 051000 RELIGION / Philosophy

REL 062000 RELIGION / Spirituality

While Peter of John Olivi (d. 1298) is generally classified more as a theologian and/or philosopher than as a spiritual director, Robert Karris presents several short works by Olivi which clearly indicate that he was concerned for the spiritual progress of lay people, too. Besides Olivi's four spiritual writings – *The Armed Soldier*, *The Prayer of Thanksgiving*, *Lessons on Growth in the Spiritual Life* and *Remedies against Spiritual Temptations* – Karris adds his treatise on *The Lord's Prayer*, on *The Seven Sentiments of Christ Jesus*, and an abbreviated version of his commentary on *Mary's response to Gabriel in Luke 1:26-38*.

In addition to the works of Olivi, Karris provides a plethora of footnotes to aid the reader, and in an appendix he has translated two interpretive parallels to help readers see where Olivi follows traditional lines of thought and where he diverges into his own unique treatment.

For too long the temptation to dismiss Olivi as a Franciscan reformer who ran afoul of the Roman authorities after his death has kept his writings in the background of Franciscan scholarship. Now, with this short but penetrating introduction to another facet of Peter of John Olivi's ministry, Karris gives us reason to look again and find new treasures in the life of Olivi which can enrich us today.

**ROBERT J. KARRIS, O.F.M., Th.D.**, is a Franciscan priest of the Sacred Heart Province whose headquarters are in St. Louis. He earned an S.T.L. from Catholic University of America and a Th.D. from Harvard University in New Testament and Early Church History. Fr. Karris is a former professor of New Testament at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and a former Provincial Minister of Sacred Heart Province and General Counselor of the Order of Friars Minor. Currently, he is research professor at The Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University. He has been widely published and his most recent New Testament books are, *John: Stories of the Word and Faith* and *Eating Your Way through Luke's Gospel*. He is a past president of the Catholic Biblical Association of America and for the last four years he has preached in over 120 churches in the United States on behalf of the poor served by Food for the Poor. He is general editor of the 15-volume *Works of St. Bonaventure* series published by Franciscan Institute Publications. Among other books with Franciscan Institute Publications, Fr. Karris has written *The Admonitions of St. Francis: Sources and Meanings* and has translated and edited several including, *Defense of the Mendicants* (translated by Karris and Jose de Vinck), *Disputed Questions on Evangelical Perfection* (translated by Karris and Thomas Reist, O.F.M.), *Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of John* (edited by Karris), *Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (edited by Karris), *Bonaventure's Commentary on Ecclesiastes* (edited by Karris and Campion Murray, O.F.M.), *In the Name of St. Francis: A History of the Friars Minor and Franciscanism Until the Early Sixteenth Century* (by Grado Giovanni Merlo, translated by Karris and Raphael Bonnano, O.F.M.).

The Franciscan Masters of Scripture

**ST. BONAVENTURE'S  
COMMENTARY ON JOHN'S GOSPEL**

**Thirty Days of Reflection and Prayer**

**By Robert J. Karris**



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Title: The Franciscan Masters of Scripture: **St. Bonaventure's Commentary on John's Gospel**

Author: edited by Robert J. Karris

ISBN: 978-1-57659-364-6

Price: \$12.95

Pages: 100

Publication Date: December 2012

Format: Paperback

Series: N/A

BISAC: REL 006130 RELIGION / Biblical Meditations / New Testament

REL 006070 RELIGION / Biblical Commentary / New Testament

REL 012020 RELIGION / Christian Life / Devotional

It seems that a word of general orientation is in order for those coming to Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of John for the first time. Bonaventure's style of commentary consists of a detailed outline of the text, running commentary on the individual verses, and answers to questions that arise from the text.

In my selection of the Johannine passages for thirty days, I have given preferential treatment to those passages used in the liturgy during Cycle B and for Christmas, Sundays in Lent, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Sundays after Easter. Perhaps preachers may want to share with their congregations interpretations that are so old that they are new, that sparkle because Bonaventure has singled out the very best from tradition, and that challenge our hackneyed ways of interpreting a favorite passage such as Jesus' healing of a man who had been disabled for thirty-eight years (John 5).

Each day is arranged in the following manner. At the beginning I tell readers what passage from John's Gospel to read and meditate upon. Then I provide Bonaventure's commentary on one or two verses of the passage under consideration. My Reflection follows Bonaventure's interpretation. In the Reflection I relate Bonaventure's commentary to the rest of the passage being interpreted, to contemporary exposition, and to themes in the rest of the Gospel. I conclude each day with a Prayer, which is meant to be a springboard for readers' own prayers.

*In Thirty Days author and reader undertake a month-long pilgrimage into wisdom. Here a master of scriptural theology unites the best in contemporary scholarship with the best in medieval Franciscan contemplation on the Word of God. Karris's usual combination of a pithy and illuminating style with a deep and enriching content invites us into a feast of learning. The result for both preacher and receiver: a spiritual experience of knowledge, meditation, prayer, and application to daily life.*

- Joseph P. Chinnici, O.F.M., Franciscan School of Theology, Berkeley, California

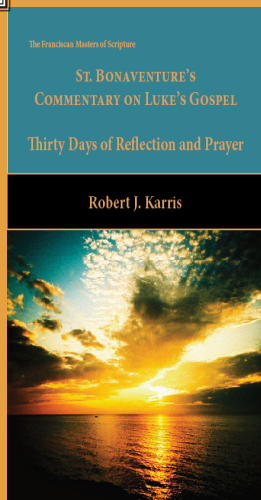
*For more than a decade, Robert J. Karris—renowned Lucan scholar—has applied his exegetical expertise to the recovery of St. Bonaventure's genius as medieval "master of the sacred page." While certain works of Bonaventure are famous treatises on theological themes (e.g., *The Itinerary of the Mind in God*, *The Breviloquium*), his magisterial works of Scripture commentary have only recently started being available in English. Having completed the translation of Bonaventuran Commentaries on John and Luke, Fr. Karris now seeks to lead us into the mine of hidden gems of reflection. The work is itself a jewel. Short, pithy extracts of Bonaventure's writing, reflections that bridge the gap from medieval to post-modern minds, and short prayerful responses to round out a busy person's meditation on the Word. These are the clear, marvelously assembled contents of this small vade mecum. This "good venture" into the Seraphic Doctor's works honors the original author. If you love standing in the stream of Christian tradition experienced as "ever ancient, ever new," you will love this book.*

- Margaret Carney, O.S.F., St. Bonaventure University

*In the tradition of lectio divina, Bob Karris, O.F.M., offers us a way to prayerfully explore the Seraphic Doctor's Commentary on the Gospel of John. Karris has insightfully selected thirty gospel texts with Bonaventure's comments to help us deepen our Christian discipleship. This is Franciscan scholarship at its finest: to lead one to an encounter with the Living Lord!*

- Michael Perry, O.F.M., Vicar General, Order of Friars Minor, Rome

**ROBERT J. KARRIS, OFM, THD**, is a Franciscan priest of the Sacred Heart Province whose headquarters are in St. Louis. He earned an STL from Catholic University of America and a Th.D. from Harvard University in New Testament and Early Church History. Fr. Karris is a former professor of New Testament at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and a former Provincial Minister of Sacred Heart Province and General Councilor of the Order of Friars Minor. Currently, he is research professor at The Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University. He has been widely published and his most recent New Testament books are: *John: Stories of the Word and Faith and Eating Your Way through Luke's Gospel*. He is a past president of the Catholic Biblical Association of America and for the last four years he has preached in over 120 churches in the United States on behalf of the poor served by Food for the Poor. He is general editor of the 15-volume *Works of St. Bonaventure* series published by Franciscan Institute Publications. Among other books with Franciscan Institute Publications, Fr. Karris has written *The Admonitions of St. Francis: Sources and Meanings* and has translated and edited several including, *Defense of the Mendicants* (translated by Karris and Jose de Vinck), *Disputed Questions on Evangelical Perfection* (translated by Karris and Thomas Reist, OFM), *Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of John* (edited by Karris), *Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (edited by Karris), *Bonaventure's Commentary on Ecclesiastes* (edited by Karris and Campton Murray, OFM), *In the Name of St. Francis: A History of the Friars Minor and Franciscanism Until the Early Sixteenth Century* (by Gordo Giovanni Merlo, translated by Karris and Raphael Bonanno, OFM).



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**St. Bonaventure's Commentary on Luke's Gospel Thirty Days of Reflection and Prayer**

Author: edited by Robert J. Karris, O.F.M.

ISBN: 978-1-57659-345-5

Price: \$12.95

Pages: 128

Publication Date: August, 2012

Format: Paperback

Series: N/A

BISAC: REL 006130 RELIGION / Biblical Meditations / New Testament

REL 006070 RELIGION / Biblical Commentary / New Testament

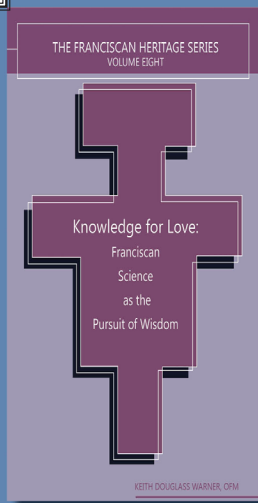
REL 012020 RELIGION / Christian Life / Devotional

Bonaventure has many insights to share not only with members of the Franciscan Family, but also with the church at large. From his work on translating and annotating St. Bonaventure's three-volume *Commentary on Luke's Gospel*, noted Scripture scholar Robert Karris has developed this book of reflections for thirty days. Playfully referring to them as "BonaLuke bites," Karris gives preferential treatment to those passages used in the Sunday lectionary during Cycle C.

A user-friendly format begins with the passages from Luke's Gospel followed by Bonaventure's commentary on one or two verses under consideration. Karris's reflection follows that of Bonaventure and concludes with a prayer. Some readers may reverse the process as they are meant as springboards for the readers' own reflections and prayer.

Today Lukan scholars acknowledge many "Franciscan" themes in Luke's Gospel. Members of the Franciscan Family will enjoy reacquainting themselves with the charism through the lens of Luke's Gospel. Perhaps preachers will find that old interpretations are new again and can sparkle because Bonaventure has singled out the very best from tradition to challenge our normal way of interpreting passages familiar through years of liturgical use.

**ROBERT J. KARRIS, O.F.M., Th.D.**, is a Franciscan priest of the Sacred Heart Province whose headquarters are in St. Louis. He earned an S.T.L. from Catholic University of America and a Th.D. from Harvard University in New Testament and Early Church History. Fr. Karris is a former professor of New Testament at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and a former Provincial Minister of Sacred Heart Province and General Councilor of the Order of Friars Minor. Currently, he is research professor at The Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University. He has been widely published and his most recent New Testament books are, *John: Stories of the Word and Faith* and *Eating Your Way through Luke's Gospel*. He is a past president of the Catholic Biblical Association of America and for the last four years he has preached in over 120 churches in the United States on behalf of the poor served by Food for the Poor. He is general editor of the 15-volume *Works of St. Bonaventure* series published by Franciscan Institute Publications. Among other books with Franciscan Institute Publications, Fr. Karris has written *The Admonitions of St. Francis: Sources and Meanings* and has translated and edited several including, *Defense of the Mendicants* (translated by Karris and Jose de Vinck), *Disputed Questions on Evangelical Perfection* (translated by Karris and Thomas Reist, O.F.M.), *Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of John* (edited by Karris), *Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (edited by Karris), *Bonaventure's Commentary on Ecclesiastes* (edited by Karris and Campion Murray, O.F.M.), *In the Name of St. Francis: A History of the Friars Minor and Franciscanism Until the Early Sixteenth Century* (by Grado Giovanni Merlo, translated by Karris and Raphael Bonnanno, O.F.M.).



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***Knowledge for Love: Franciscan Science as the Pursuit of Wisdom***

Author: by Keith Douglass Warner, OFM

ISBN: 978-1-57659-361-5

Price: \$12.00

Pages: 86

Publication Date: August 2012

Format: Paperback

Series: Franciscan Heritage Series, Volume 8

BISAC: SCIO34000 SCIENCE / History

HIS037010 HISTORY / Medieval

REL030000 RELIGION / Christian Ministry / Evangelism

This essay extends the retrieval of the Franciscan intellectual tradition into the sciences by presenting the vocation and work of three Franciscan scientists. Friar Bartholomew the Englishman taught his fellow Franciscans with the best available scientific knowledge to prepare them for preaching in foreign lands. Friar Roger Bacon conducted research into the natural world to advance scientific knowledge in service of the Church. Friar Bernardino de Sahagún investigated the life, worldview and culture of the Aztec peoples in New Spain (now Mexico) to interpret these for his fellow Franciscans. In the Franciscan tradition, learning about nature helps one grow in wisdom, and thus Franciscan science is knowledge for love. This essay argues that the retrieval of our Franciscan intellectual tradition could and should include the sciences.

This is the eighth in a series intended to encompass topics which will connect the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition with today's language of our Christian Catholic Franciscan way of Gospel Life. Previous volumes have presented an overview of the tradition, discussed dimensions of creation and Christian anthropology in Franciscan theology, and illustrated them through an iconographic tradition found in the Gospel of John. It is our hope that *Women of the Streets: Early Franciscan Women and their Mendicant Vocation* will add to our understanding of the Franciscan intellectual tradition, just as the sermons, commentaries, and treatises of Bonaventure, Scotus, or Ockham, because these stories reveal how lay women gained a kind of religious education through their informal affiliations with the friars that in turn allowed them to attain significant roles of influence and leadership in their communities.

**KEITH DOUGLASS WARNER, OFM** is a Franciscan Friar and directs the Center's fellowship and grants programs, and supports STS curriculum development across the campus. He coordinates the undergraduate STS minor. He works closely with faculty to develop STS teaching capacity. Keith has an MA in Spirituality from the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, and a PhD in Environmental Studies from University of California Santa Cruz.

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See ad p.89

**Holy Week Retreat  
Fr. Pat Foley and Team**

**March 28-31, 2013**

**San Damiano Retreat Danville, CA**

See ad p. 86

**Holy Week Retreat  
with Father Michael Crosby, O.F.M.  
March 28-31, 2013  
Franciscan Center  
Tampa, Florida**

See ad p. 86

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See ad p. 88