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FOREWORD

'Spring has sprung' ... and the earth sings with gladness here in the Enchanted Mountains of western New York. The students have flocked to the library for exam prep and all's right with the world.

We are blessed with some new writers to the pages of this issue of *The Cord*. Benjamin Brown is sharing his reflections on the Franciscan view of research, Chris Dyczek draws connections between Frederic Ozanam and Paul Sabatier, and Sister Gloria Wirba introduces us to the challenges of being an African religious woman. In addition to these welcome new voices we hear from Sister Teresine about Francis's *Letter to the Faithful*, Lance Richey explores a new title and role for Brother Elias and Robert Stewart sheds some light on Franciscan mysticism. We also have two book reviews, one from David Flood and the other from Paula Scraba. I think I can guarantee that you'll find something of interest in these pages.

I am happy to announce the publication of a new book titled *The Franciscan Moral Vision: Responding to God's Love.* Contributions from Thomas Nairn, Kenan Osborne, Thomas Shannon, Mary Beth Ingham and Joseph Chinnici make this a "must have" on a Franciscan bookshelf. Be sure to check this title out on our website.

By the end of May another new title will be arriving in our warehouse: *Early Commentaries on the Rule of the Friars Minor*, Volume 1. This volume contains the Commentary of 1242 – otherwise known as 'the Four Masters' – and the commentaries by Hugh of Digne, David of Augsburg and John of Wales. Two more volumes will follow with translations of commentaries from Angelo Clareno, John of Pecham, and Peter of John Olivi. A wealth of research has gone into producing these translations which provide priceless insights into the minds of thirteenth and fourteenth century friars concerning living a Franciscan life. Let us give thanks to God for the grace of those who have gone before us ... and keep us faithful witnesses in living the Franciscan charism today.

Daria R. Mitchell, a. S.F.

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"I Am Obliged to Administer the Words of My Lord" The Longer Version of Francis of Assisi's Letter to the Faithful

TERESINE GLASER, O.S.F.

Introduction

Eight-hundred years ago Francis of Assisi applied quill to parchment inscribing there for posterity the direction for living the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as he received this from the Holy Spirit. Scholars continue to probe manuscripts attempting to learn more about two documents frequently referred to respectively as the First and Second Versions of Francis's Letters to the Faithful.¹ Through the centuries, each of these texts has been known by various titles. Until recently, the consensus of many scholars was that the shorter text, traditionally referred to as the First Version, was written prior to the longer text, traditionally referred to as the Second Version. Recent scholars, among them David Flood and Michael Cusato, offer convincing evidence that the longer text was written prior to the shorter text.² In this brief paper I focus on the longer text, referring to the shorter text

¹ Francis of Assisi, *Earlier Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance* (The First Version of the Letter to the Faithful) and *Later Admonition and Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance* (Second Version of the Letter to the Faithful), 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), 41-51. Hereafter this volume is referred to as *FA:ED* 1 followed by page numbers.

² Michael F. Cusato, "The Letters to the Faithful," in *Studies in Early Franciscan Sources*, vol. 1, *The Writings of Francis of Assisi: Letters and Prayers*, ed. Michael W. Blastic, Jay M. Hammond, and J. A.

as needed for clarification and/or comparison purposes. To simplify the text of my paper, I follow Cusato's lead, referring to each text respectively as the *Longer Version* and the *Shorter Version*. Cusato maintains that the *Longer Version* was written "some time between late September 1220 and summer of 1221."

Thaddée Matura draws a close parallel between Chapter 23 of the *Earlier Rule* and the *Second Version* of the Letter to the Faithful (Longer Version). Therefore, I suggest that, while Francis is acknowledged as founder of the rapidly-expanding male order, known initially as the Lesser Brothers, at the same time, he considered it his responsibility to share God's message of salvation with all people, regardless of their status, who chose to follow his teaching in their efforts to reform their lives and, in so doing, reform the church of their day. Francis provided relevant guidelines for pursuing this in both versions of his *Letters to the Faithful*.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Three contextual elements provide important background for understanding the message of the *Longer Version* of Francis's letter: papal attempts to reform corruption in the church, the vitality of the penitential movement and the *vita apostolica*, and problems within the early brotherhood. The history of the church during the eleventh and twelfth centuries is one of endless entanglement with powerful kingdoms for domination of the European continent. Reviewing this history gives one the impression that many of the roughly thirty-four popes elected during these two centuries considered political

Wayne Hellmann (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2011), 165-72.

³ Cusato, in Studies in Early Franciscan Sources, Vol. 1, 170.

⁴ Thaddée Matura, *Francis of Assisi: The Message in His Writings*, 2nd ed., trans. Paul Barrett, ed. Roberta A. McKelvie and Daria Mitchell (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2004), 31.

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control of the continent essential to their exercise of ecclesiastical authority. The boundaries between religious and political control were porous; papal reform sought to free the church from lay involvement. Secondly, clerical behavior and religious practice among the laity had fallen into deplorable abuse; the papacy sought to reform these conditions primarily through mandating education of the clergy and comprehensive pastoral renewal known as cura animarium. Thirdly, internal (heresy) and external (advance of Islam) forces were threatening Christianity. Through two major Councils, Third Lateran convoked by Alexander III in 1179 and Fourth Lateran convoked by Innocent III in 1215, and numerous papal decrees, the papacy attempted to strengthen the church from within through condemning heresies, mandating effective preaching by educated and canonically authorized clergy, encouraging reverential reception of the sacraments and authentic devotional practice—and from without, through crusades.

A second significant context for reading Francis's Longer Version is the vitality of the penitential movement and vita apostolica. Raffaele Pazzelli traces the penitential movement to "the dawn of Christianity." 5 Scriptural basis for the penitential movement is found in John's First Epistle, particularly 1 John 1:8-10 and 2:1-2, where Christians are reminded of both the human tendency to sin and Christ's forgiveness. Penitents emphasized conversion of the heart, that is, changing behaviors and attitudes that lead to sin. For the protection of the church and the penitents, they were required to seek canonical approval. The emerging desire of the laity for church reform, accompanied by their increasing literacy, led many to search out examples of apostolic communities in the Acts of the Apostles and led to the emergence of the vita apostolica. Its members focused on reform through penance, poverty and preaching.

⁵ Raffaele Pazzelli, *St. Francis and the Third Order: The Franciscan and pre-Franciscan Penitential Movement* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1989), 4.

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Penitents were particularly helpful to the church during periods of reform. Early in Francis's conversion process, while praying before the crucifix in the little dilapidated church of San Damiano below Assisi, he heard Christ's voice direct him to rebuild his church which was visibly falling into ruin. Francis initially applied this directive to physically repairing San Damiano. However, he came to understand that Christ was asking him to repair the Christian church which had fallen into disrepair—and he realized that he must begin with his own conversion. Toward this end, he became a canonically recognized penitent. Pazzeli states:

Probably no one can tell us just how much his penitential experience affected his spirit and outlook; but one thing is certain—through the penitential movement Francis came to realize the lively desire spreading among Christians for a more evangelical life; and even more, for the urgent need of spiritual guides to show the people the way to remain faithful to God and the Church.⁶

As a penitent, Francis learned the language of people's hearts, and they learned the language of his heart. Through this shared language, Francis

was able to present [to them]the human face of Christ, God made man to share and bestow an incomparable meaning on ordinary, daily human life. In this way the profound value of everyday life was recovered for each person.⁷

Thirdly, Cusato maintains that Francis wrote both versions of his *Letters to the Faithful* soon after returning

⁶ Pazzelli, 89-90.

⁷ Prospero Rivi, "Francis of Assisi and the Laity of His Time," *Grey-friars Review* 15, Supplement (2001): 53.

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from his journey to Egypt and Acre.⁸ Not only was he ill, but, as Cusato summarizes:

the task of corralling [the] growing and increasingly diverse group of friars—with clerics wanting to move the fraternity in directions not in accord with the intentions of the founder—had simply become too daunting for one unfamiliar with the specifics of canon law and demands of curial politics.⁹

Francis resigned his administrative role of the Order but "would continue to try to exercise a formative role in the life of the friars" as the "exemplar" of their form of life. ¹⁰ Most of Francis's writings emerge from this period when his itinerant preaching was limited by his impaired physical condition. Cusato states that these writings

had as their express purpose the communication and dissemination of the fundamental elements of the minorite vision which he believed had been revealed to him and his followers [all who follow the way of the Gospel] by God himself.¹¹

Francis and Scripture

Any attempt to understand the message of Francis's writings is inadequate without understanding his relationship to scripture. Matura tells us that "the Old and New Testaments are the backdrop to Francis's writings," generally relying on John's gospel for his "vision of the Triune God," on Paul's writings for his view of humanity and the Synoptic Gospels for applying Jesus' teaching

⁸ For his discussion regarding the dating of these letters see Cusato, in *Studies in Early Franciscan Sources*, Vol. 1, 178-80. The editors of *FA:ED* 1, using Kajetan Esser as their source, offer the range 1209-1215 as dates for the Shorter Version, 41.

 $^{^{\}rm 9}$ Cusato, in Studies in Early Franciscan Sources, Vol. 1, 171.

¹⁰ Cusato, in Studies in Early Franciscan Sources, Vol. 1, 171.

¹¹ Cusato, in Studies in Early Franciscan Sources, Vol. 1, 171-72.

to Christian living.¹² Pazzelli theorizes that Francis's initial adult formation in scripture and spiritual life took place during the years between his abandonment of his military career and his family and the formation of the nucleus of the Lesser Brothers, i.e., roughly from 1206 to 1209.13 During these years as a penitent, Francis wandered through the Umbrian countryside, likely staying for periods of time at Benedictine monasteries and hostelries. Some of these monasteries were equipped with a library and scriptorium. Here, in addition to his access to scripture through participation in the Mass and Divine Office, Francis may also have studied scripture under monks who recognized his serious interest in scripture. Pazzelli states that, "it would seem logical to suppose that Francis refined his theological, scriptural and spiritual knowledge during his stays in these monasteries."14

Given his deepening familiarity with scripture, Francis integrated scriptural references into his writings in a variety of ways, using scripture as a lens through which he related with reality the way a scientist may use his/her discipline as a lens for processing reality. Matura mentions several ways Francis used scripture in his writing, among these, weaving entire passages from scripture into his own texts as he did in his *Office of the Passion* or constructing large portions of a given text from scripture as he does in the *Longer Version of the Letter to the Faithful*. Francis moved back and forth effortlessly between his native language and scriptural language much the same way that a bilingual person moves unnoticeably between two languages with which s/he is equally familiar. Julio Mico states that

it was Francis's familiarity with the language of the liturgy, the Scriptures, especially the psalms, and the Fathers, that provided him with the vocabulary

¹² Matura, 15.

¹³ Pazzelli, 89.

¹⁴ Pazzelli, 92.

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he used in preaching about the transcendence of God.¹⁵

ANALYSIS

The *Earlier Rule* which, according to the editors of *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, "developed in light of the experiences of the brothers, the teaching of the Church, especially the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council, and the teachings of Francis himself" was finalized at the Pentecost Chapter of 1221. ¹⁶ Describing the important relationship between Chapter 23 of the *Earlier Rule* and the *Longer Version* of the *Letter to the Faithful*, Matura states:

While the *Earlier Rule* (23: 1-6) provided an overview of Francis's image of God and his plan for our salvation, this *Letter* lists and describes the modes of conduct required by the Gospel life preached by Christ. The *Earlier Rule* was concerned with the theology of salvation, while the *Letter* deals with living the Gospel life in order to attain that salvation.¹⁷

Matura describes the *Longer Version* as "the nearest thing to a theological treatise" that Francis wrote. Since Cusato locates the writing of this version during approximately the same time as the drafting of the *Earlier Rule*, and given Francis's experience as a lay penitent, as well as his recent experience with Muslims, one might safely theorize that, as Francis worked on a rule for the brothers, he felt compelled to provide a *forma vita* for the laity and expand this to include all God's people. He addresses his message to: "all Christian religious people:

¹⁵ Julio Mico, "The Spirituality of St. Francis: Francis's Image of God," *Greyfriars Review* 7.2 (1993): 135.

¹⁶ FA:ED 1, 63.

¹⁷ Matura, 38-39.

¹⁸ Matura, 39.

clergy and laity, men and women, and to all who live in the whole world" (1), thereby making it a universal message. 19 Verse 2 supports this. Francis states: "Because I am the servant of all, I am obliged to serve all and to administer the fragrant words of my Lord to them." (Emphasis added.) The Trinitarian perspective that permeates Francis's writing is evident here as he reminds his recipients that he is offering them "the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Word of the Father, and the words of the Holy Spirit, which are spirit and life" (3). Matura states that Francis "had a wide and comprehensive grasp of the whole message of salvation."20 Therefore he frames the Longer Version within the context of the "most high Father" sending forth His Word to humanity (4) and his closing plea, that humanity return the Father's gift by receiving, putting into practice and observing "these words and the others of our Lord Jesus Christ with humility and love" (87).

In verses 4 through 24, Francis reviews the mystery of God's extravagant love for humanity and directs the recipients of his letter to ground themselves in this mystery and its corresponding responsibilities. Emphasizing the incomprehensible, yet authentic, reality of the Incarnation and its extension in the life-sustaining properties of the Eucharist, Francis challenges the Cathars' denial of the Incarnation. He holds up the example of Christ, who placed "His will in the will of His Father," as the "example that we might follow His footprints" (10-13). Francis then contrasts the lives of those who "love the darkness more than the light" (16) with the happiness and blessedness of "those who love God and neighbor and, as "true adorers adore the Father in Spirit and Truth" (19). Referencing the Our Father, Francis reminds his recipients that "we should pray always and not become weary" (21). He closes

¹⁹ Francis of Assisi, *Longer Version of the Letter to the Faithful*, in *FA:ED* 1, 45. Hereafter all verse citations to the *Longer Version of the Letter to the Faithful* will be enclosed in parentheses following the quotation.

²⁰ Matura, 19.

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this section with a direct reference to the constitutions of Lateran IV concerning confession of sins to a priest and worthy reception of the Eucharist (22-24). "Whoever does not eat [Christ's] flesh and drink His blood," Francis writes, "cannot enter the kingdom of God" (23).

Francis transitions to the next section of his letter, verses 25 through 47, a call to reform and to penance, with the reminder, "let us produce worthy fruits of penance" (25). By referring here to Luke 3:8a, "Give some evidence that you mean to reform," Francis situates the call to penance in John the Baptist calling people to penance. Cusato suggests that Francis is addressing people who call themselves Christians but whose "actions do not match their words with any consistency or integrity."21 Helping people to examine their lives, he enumerates behaviors consistent with walking in Jesus' footprints. Francis encourages his recipients, in direct opposition to the Cathars and Waldensians, to visit churches frequently and to venerate and reverence priests, "not so much for themselves, but because of their office and administration of the most holy Body and Blood of Christ" (33). As opposed to hating their bodies, thinking their materiality renders them evil. Francis advises them to not make their bodies instruments of the "vices and sins [which] come from the heart" (37). Penitents must be "simple, humble and pure" (46), and submissive "to every human creature for God's sake" (47). By referring to John the Baptist's call to repentance at the beginning of this section, Francis is reminding his recipients that "repentance—the doing of penance through acts of justice, love and mercy towards others—is the very instrument that brings the Kingdom of God to birth."22 Matura reminds us that "the radical nature of the Christian life is based on the radical nature of God's love for us."23 In his directives pertaining to the basic requirements of the Christian's penitential way of life, Francis incorporates elements of orthodoxy and

²¹ Cusato, 176.

²² Cusato, 186,

²³ Matura, 46.

reform that were uppermost among Pope Innocent III's reasons for convoking the Fourth Lateran Council.

In verses 48 through 62, Francis speaks to recipients who are already living in penance and who, while living on earth, exemplify "the life of those in the heavenly Jerusalem gathered around the throne of the Lamb."²⁴ Having listed the requirements of the Christian way of life and the interiority of heart which nourishes faithfulness in living these requirements, Francis next describes the rewards.

And the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon all those men and women who have done and persevered in these things and It will make a home and dwelling place in them. And they will be the children of the heavenly Father, Whose works they do. And they are spouses, brothers and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ (48-50).

Matura states that this "densely packed passage," verses 48 through 50, is "one of the most 'mystical' passages in [Francis's] writing, [in which] he tells of the coming of the Holy Spirit to 'rest upon them' and 'dwell among them,' giving them access to the life of the Trinity."²⁵

After describing in verses 51 through 53 the behaviors required for becoming spouses, brothers and mothers of Christ, Francis, no longer able to contain himself, bursts forth:

O how glorious and holy and great to have a Father in heaven. O how holy, consoling, beautiful and wonderful to have such a Spouse! O how holy and how loving, gratifying, humbling, peace-giving, sweet, worthy of love, and above all things desirable it is to have such a Brother and such a Son: our Lord Jesus Christ, who laid down his life for

²⁴ Cusato, 176.

²⁵ Matura, 45.

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his sheep and prayed to his Father, saying: Holy Father, save in your name those whom you have given me ... (54-56).

Francis, with perhaps a vivid realization of how God has worked through him, continues Christ's priestly prayer. "Father, all those whom you have given me in the world were yours and you have given them to me. The words that you gave me, I have given them.... I pray for them ..." (57-58). As Jesus prayed for his apostles, now Francis prays: "And I wish, Father, that where I am they may be with me that they may see my glory in your kingdom" (60). All that is left for Francis now is to gather up all creation in a hymn of praise: "Let every creature ... give praise, glory, honor and blessing To [sic] Him who suffered so much ... and who alone is holy, worthy of praise and blessing through endless ages. Amen" (61-62).

The tone of verses 63 through 85 changes significantly from that of the previous verses. This graphic description of the fate of unrepentant persons may have been inserted by another hand, for preaching situations, to emphasize the importance of living Christian penance.²⁶

Finally, Francis, appearing to commemorate the servant status Christ manifested at the Last Supper, states:

I, brother Francis, your lesser servant, with a wish to kiss your feet, beg and implore you in the love that is God, to receive, to put into practice, and to observe, as you should, these words and the others of our Lord Jesus Christ with humility and love (87).

In this way, his faithful followers return all to the Father who, in the beginning, sent humanity his Word. In conclusion, Francis asks the Triune God to bless "all those men and women who receive [his words] with

 $^{^{26}}$ See Cusato, Cusato, in $\it Studies$ in Early Franciscan Sources, Vol. 1, 193-95.

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kindness, understand them and send copies of them to others, if they have persevered to the end in them. Amen" (88).

Conclusion

Francis determined that the life according to the gospel, revealed to him only after "the Lord gave me some brothers"27 was not his, or their, private possession, but one which, because he believed this was essential to salvation, must be shared with all people. This he attempted to do, along with his brothers, during their years of preaching through example and word. When Francis was no longer able to do this, because of failing health, as he states in his letter, he felt obligated to share this through his writing. The text of the Shorter Version, rather written prior to or as a summary of the Longer Version, contains the core of the latter version. Scholars believe the Shorter Version was initially directed to members of the inchoate Third Order. In 1978 this version was adopted as the prologue of the Third Order Secular rule and in 1982 of the Third Order Regular rule. Margaret Carney notes that this version "stands at the beginning of both pontifically approved rule texts to express a textual and spiritual connection with the earliest Franciscan penitents."28 She states:

Perhaps the twenty-first century will witness an unfolding of the lay character that stands at the root of Franciscan awareness. Perhaps in that process this document (these documents?) will ultimately be read alongside such key texts as the Rule of 1221, the Admonitions and, the Rule of

²⁷ Francis of Assisi, Testament 14, in FA:ED 1, 125.

²⁸ Margaret Carney, "The 'Letter' of Fourteen Names: Reading 'The Exhortation," in *Francis of Assisi: History, Hagiography and Hermeneutics in the Early Documents*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, foreword by Joseph P. Chinnici (New York: New City Press, 2004), 91.

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Clare as a repository of the most important indicators of Franciscan authenticity for those engaged in its modern incarnations.²⁹

Francis's intention and Carney's dream, I submit, are being realized today, not only by vowed members of Third Order Secular confraternities and Associates of Third Order congregations of women, but also by Christians and non-Christians throughout the world who find the inspiration for their love of God and neighbor in the example and message of Francis.

²⁹ Carney, "The 'Letter' of Fourteen Names," 102.

Franciscan Mysticism

ROBERT STEWART, O.F.M.

MYSTICISM AND MYSTERY

Before speaking of Franciscan mysticism it is first necessary to explain what mysticism is. Mysticism in its broadest sense articulates the deepest longing of the human spirit for an experience of the Transcendent Other and an understanding of it. Mysticism in the Christian tradition is related to the divine mystery, the innermost reality of God and his divine plan which was hidden from ages past.

The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them (Catechism of the Catholic Faith, 234).

.... God has revealed his innermost secret: God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and he has destined us to share in that exchange (Catechism of the Catholic Faith, 221).

The mystery is that we are called to live in the eternal exchange of love through our Lord Jesus Christ. God is love and the meaning of existence is love.

Mystery, from the Christian point of view, then is not an unsolvable problem but a life lived in faith, in praise and thanksgiving and above all in love. This life is beyond

anything we can comprehend. It is bathed in mystery but its fullness is revealed to us by God.

Unfortunately for many mysticism lies beyond the frontiers of everyday life. The mystical experience is seen as something esoteric, beyond the reach of most, reserved for some rather extraordinary folks who levitate or have ecstatic visions.

Franciscan Mysticism is Incarnational

In the Franciscan tradition mysticism does not belong to the esoteric realm or in something extraordinary that is only available to a special group far removed from the mundane world and the daily routine of everyday life. Rather, it refers to listening to the Word of God. The Word reveals the nearness of God in Christ and his promise "I shall be with you always" (Matt 8:20) and further reveals our call to share eternal life in the love of Christ. It is rooted in the humility of the Incarnation, in the amazing truth that God has come among us to share his life with us.

From a Franciscan perspective, mysticism is indeed connected to mystery but the term mystery has this specific meaning, it reveals that God in Christ has come to dwell among us in the person of the Word made flesh. In the Franciscan teaching Jesus is not only an historical figure but is the transcendent reality of God who has grasped us by "making his home among us" (John 1:14). Not only has he pitched his tent among us but has chosen to live within us. "Anyone who loves me will heed what I say; then my Father will love him and we will, come to him and make our dwelling with him" (John 14:23). Mystery refers to the reality of God made flesh, revealed, communicated and actually present as a loving, saving force within every human being, in the entire universe and in all history.

For Francis, Jesus Christ is living in the Church, in the Eucharist, in the Gospel, in the life of every Christian and in the whole cosmos. Christ reveals himself to Francis in the Gospel, as the way to live. The Gospel is not just a literary text but a mystery of a living presence of the transcendent God made incarnate in the womb of the Virgin Mary and now living among us in the Spirit-filled scriptures. The inspired Gospel is the mystery revealed and, at the same time, hidden by the text that has to be internalized and lived in the midst of daily life.

According to Francis the gospel life is the mystical apprehension of the mystery of Jesus Christ, who is present and actually speaks in his Gospel, gives himself to us in the Eucharist, lives in the life of the faithful. As in Mary's womb, so in the life of the faithful the Word becomes flesh again by the working of the spirit of love, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ can continue to live and glorify the Father. Jesus Christ forever finding his meat and drink in obeying the Father, loving and giving thanks to him, offers us an opportunity to share in that life of obedience, praise and thanksgiving. Francis assures us that the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon all those men and women who follow in the footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ enabling them to share his life.

Franciscan Mysticism is Eucharistic

Francis invites us to discover that the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, are not ends in themselves but are means that can lead us safely to a mystical experience of God. Francis was overwhelmed by the fact that God became man so that he may be come bread given for the life of the world.

O admirable heights and sublime lowliness! O sublime humility! O humble sublimity! That the Lord of the universe, God and the Son of God, so humbles himself that for our salvation he hides himself under the little form of bread! Look brothers at the humility of God and pour out your hearts before him! Humble yourself, as well, that you may

be exalted by him. Therefore, hold back nothing of yourself for yourself so that he who gives himself totally to you may receive you totally (Letter to the Entire Order, 27-29).¹

For Francis, the Mystery of God's coming near means that the majesty of God expresses itself in the most profound humility and self-emptying love. The amazing but simple truth is that in the Eucharist the Holy Trinity comes to meet us and invite us to be drawn into the unity of life in the Trinity through Christ Our Lord. Sharing through the Eucharist in the life that flows between the persons of the Trinity is to be truly wrapped in mystery.

Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me (John 6:57).

The mystical experience is an unmediated contact with God achieved when Christ enters us in Communion, when we eat his body. Further, Jesus tells us that when we participate in his loving made present in the Eucharist, we begin to live with the same divine life that he shares with his heavenly Father. The mystical experience of the divine presence in our lives challenges us to accept this truth that "we must give ourselves wholly to him who has given himself wholly to us." Jesus' teaching of unselfish love must be accepted before we can fruitfully receive the primary sacramental expression of that love which is the Eucharist. Francis endorses this truth when he points out the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of love, is the one who inspires in the faithful an understanding of the mystery. It comes down to seeing and believing according to the Spirit.

It is the Spirit of the Lord, therefore, that lives in its faithful, that receives the Body and Blood of the Lord. All others who do not share in this same

¹ FA:ED 1, 118.

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Spirit and who presume to receive him eat and drink judgment on themselves (Adm1:12-13).²

It is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of love, who is the true receiver. The real meaning of the Eucharist is all about God's love for us received through the Spirit and enabling us to attempt to love others as Christ did. This mutual indwelling of the Spirit in us and us in the Spirit through love allows us to recognize the Son with spiritual eyes.

And as he appeared to the holy apostles in true flesh, so now he reveals himself to us in the sacred bread. And as they saw only his flesh by means of their bodily eyes, yet believed him to be God as they contemplated him with eyes of faith, so as we see bread and wine with [our] bodily eyes, we too are to see and firmly believe them to be his most holy Body and Blood, as he himself says: 'Behold I am with you even to the end of the world' (Matt 28:20).³

Franciscan Mysticism and Seeing with Spiritual Eyes

Francis was very concerned that we look into the world with the eyes of the Spirit who dwells in us. The vision enables us to see the world with a sacramental and mystical vision.

Helen Keller who was blind and deaf said:

I have walked with people whose eyes are full of light but who see nothing in the sea, nothing in the sky, nothing in the city streets, nothing in books. It is better to sail forever in the light of blindness ... than to be content with the mere act of seeing.⁴

² FA:ED 1, 129.

³ FA:ED 1, 129.

⁴ Helen Keller, *The World I Live In* (New York: The Century Co., 1908), 85.

The secular Franciscan poet, Francis Thompson caught this tragedy of seeing and not perceiving in his poem, *In no Strange Land:*

O world intangible we touch thee, O world unknowable, we know thee, Inapproachable, we clutch you, O world invisible, we view thee,⁵

Francis's vision of the world was seeing and perceiving reality in a mystical and sacramental fashion with the eyes of the Spirit, the eyes of love. Because of the revelation and acceptance of the love of God by him and his total loving response to that love he was able to see God present in all creation. In that vision he reflected the biblical vision of the connectedness of heaven and earth. For him this new relationship of belonging and attachment which flows from love allowed him always respectfully and prayerfully to be present to everything and everyone. This new vision is the result of true conversion.

"Blessed are those whose hearts are pure; they shall see God" (Matt 5:8).

Francis explains his conversion to purity of heart in his *Testament*:

While I was in sin, it seemed very bitter to me to see lepers. And the Lord himself led me among them and I had mercy upon them. And when I left them that which seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness of soul and body (Test 1-3).⁶

Through the grace of God Francis, as also the poet, was able to recognize that with estranged eyes we miss the mystical depths of the ordinary. Estranged from God who loved us and all he had created we miss him playing in His world.

⁵ Francis Thompson, In No Strange Land [1908](Allspirit.co.uk).

⁶ FA:ED 1, 124.

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... for Christ plays in ten thousand places, lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his, to the Father through the features of men's faces⁷

Saint Francis shared this mystical vision as with faith-filled eyes he lovingly perceived and saw the transcendent God immanent in all creation. Beyond the coarse, commonplace features of our world he saw the splendor of the divinity. He reflected on this truth and transposed his vision into the wonderful *Canticle of Creation* in which he expressed his deep sense of mysticism in perceiving God's presence in all creation.

Praised be you, my Lord, with all your creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun, Who is the day and through whom you give us light.

And he is beautiful ad radiant with great splendor; and bears a likeness to you, Most High One.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, In heaven You formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Wind, and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather through which you give sustenance to your creatures.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water, which is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you light the night and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be you, my Lord through our Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us and who produces varied fruits with colored flowers and herbs.

⁷ Gerard Manley Hopkins, "As Kingfishers Catch Fire," in *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Poems and Prose* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1985).

But while Francis expresses his deep sense of mysticism in perceiving God's presence in all Creation the mystery remains. The God who is near is distant; the God perceived is still hidden. Even when God reveals himself, he remains a mystery beyond words. So Francis begins the Canticle with these words:

Most High, all-powerful, good Lord, yours are the praises, the glory, the honor, and all blessings, To you alone, Most High do they belong, and no man is worthy to mention Your name.

God cannot be known in his essence. We can draw closer to God by humbly and reverently being open to the mysterious power of God at work in creation. But at the same time we must wait in awe of the majesty of God who reveals himself in humility. So Francis ends the Canticle with these words:

Praise and bless my Lord and give him thanks and serve him with great humility.8

The contemporary mystic and scientist Teilhard de Chardin wrote:

All around us, to right and left, in front and behind, above and below, we have only to go beyond the frontier of sensible appearances in order to see the divine welling up and showing through. It is not only close to us, in front of us, that the divine presence has revealed itself.... We imagine it as distant and inaccessible, whereas in fact we live steeped in its burning layers.⁹

The divine mystery shows itself through the faces of the everyday world to those who look with deep humility, wonder, awe, love and faith-filled eyes on that world. The challenge is to go beyond the frontier of the sensible ap-

⁸ FA:ED 1, 113-14.

⁹ Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001), 89.

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pearances to apprehend the beauty, truth and goodness of all creation.

Saint Clare invites us to go beyond the sensible appearance when she invites Agnes to:

Look upon him who became contemptible for you and follow him, making yourself contemptible in the world for him.... O most noble queen, gaze upon (him), consider (him), contemplate (him) as you desire to imitate (him) (Second Letter to Agnes 19-20).¹⁰

The sequence is to look, to gaze, to consider, to contemplate so that we imitate the love of Christ you see on the cross. The Christ whose passion continues wherever and whenever there is suffering. Clare stresses that the real test of contemplation resides not in the experience itself but in the love that it brings to fruition through imitation. When we look into the world through the lens of charity, of burning love for the Poor Crucified Christ then indeed the world of our everyday is "charged with the grandeur of God" as the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins proclaims.

Franciscan Mysticism is Christ Centred.

Franciscan mysticism is Christ centred but it is theologically Trinitarian. It is the Father who so loved the world that he sent his Son into the world to redeem the world. It is the Son who freely gave his life for us on the Cross and whom the Father raised to life. It is the Son who returned triumphant over death to the Father to pour out his Spirit into our hearts enabling us to cry Abba, Father. Always Francis's theology is Trinitarian but it is through Christ that the loving family relations were established, as through his Spirit we become mystically spouses, brothers and mothers of Jesus.

¹⁰ 2LAg 19-20, in *CA:ED*, *The Lady*, trans. Regis Armstrong (New York: New City Press, 2006), 49.

... the Spirit of the Lord will rest (Isa 11:2) upon all those men and women who have done and persevered in these things (following in the footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ) and he will make his home and dwelling among them. They will be children of the heavenly Father (cf. Matt 5:23), whose work they do. And they are spouses, brothers and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ.(cf. Matt 16:24). We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined to Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. We are brothers when we do the will of his Father who is in heaven. (cf. Matt 12;50). [We are] mothers when we carry him in our heart and body (cf. 1 Cor. 6:20) through love and a pure and sincere conscience; we give birth to him through (his) holy manner of working which should shine before others as an example (cf. Matt 5:16) (Second Letter of Francis to the Faithful 48-53).11

Firstly, Francis indicates that we have entered, by the power of the Holy Spirit into a mystical nuptial relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. He himself took as his mystical bride the "Lady Poverty" while Clare encourages Agnes with these words:

because you are the spouse and mother and sister of my Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor 11:2; Matt 12:50) and have been adorned resplendently with the sign of inviolable virginity and most holy poverty: Be strengthened in the holy service which you have undertaken out of an ardent desire for the Poor Crucified (First Letter to Agnes 12-13).¹²

Clare sees that it is through his sufferings that Jesus prepares the marriage feast of the Kingdom of God in which we are wedded to Christ. Despite the barbaric treatment of Jesus there remains a beauty about him that draws us to Him beyond the level of physical suffering to

¹¹ FA:ED 1, 48-49.

^{12 1}LAg 12-13, CA:ED, 44-45.

a mystical marriage to the poor and crucified Bridegroom. Through her nuptial relations to Christ, Clare connects love, desire and service with mystical knowledge through the contemplation of the poor, crucified Christ.

Secondly we are incorporated into Christ when we see and know the Father's will in following the Gospel, finding in it our meat and drink, as Christ did. Doing as Christ did, allows us to become children of God, sons in the Son and in him able to relate in love to the Father.

Thirdly and even greater when we do the will of God, we are mothers of Christ. Jesus had proclaimed that those who do the will of God are his brother and sister and mother (cf. Mark 3:33-35). So Francis teaches that just as the Word took flesh in Mary through the working of the word and the Holy Spirit, so Christ is conceived and brought to birth mystically once more in the believer, again through the working of the word and the Holy Spirit. When the Gospel comes alive, it is Christ who lives again and the Incarnation continues.

This mystical vision is captured in the poem "True Love" by Sir Philip Sidney:

My true love hath my heart and I have his, By just exchange one for another given; I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss, There never was a better bargain driven. My true love hath my heart and I have his.

His heart in me keeps him and me in one, My heart in him his thoughts and senses guide; He loves my heart, for once it was his own, I cherish his because in me it bides. My true love hath my heart and I have his.¹³

The theme of exchange or *Sacrum commercium* is very strong in the Franciscan tradition. I give myself to him and he gives himself to me.

¹³ Philip Sidney, "True Love."

What a great laudable exchange to leave the things of time for those of eternity, to choose the things of heaven for the goods of the earth, to receive the hundred-fold in place of one,

and to possess a blessed and eternal life (First Letter of Agnes, 30).¹⁴

Franciscan Mysticism and Love

From the beginning of the Christian tradition Saint Paul connected love with mystical apprehension of the mystery of Christ.

That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith and may love be the root and foundation of your life. Thus, you will be able to know fully, with all the holy ones, the breadth and length and height and depth of Christ's love (Eph 3:17-19).

Francis, we have seen, reflecting on the Spirit of love saw that it had established us in intimate relations with Christ as his spouse, brother and mother. These relations allow us to make love of Christ "the root and foundation" of our lives. This love is, in the Franciscan tradition, the basis of mystical apprehension. The spiritual meaning of the mystery is discovered by entering into it and living it with love. Love is the Gospel life to be loved. The Franciscan way of life is Christ who is the Gospel and by living the Gospel life we may come to know "the breath and length and depths of Christ's love."

The Word of God, which is embodied in the Gospel, is a living and effective word that does not attain its true fulfilment and full meaning except through the transformation it brings about in the one who receives it in faith and love. Contemplation, in the Franciscan tradition is always directed to transformation, to imitation of the Crucified Christ we contemplate. The height of Fran-

^{14 1}LAg, 30, CA:ED, 46.

cis's contemplation was evident on La Verna when he was marked with the sign of the crucified. True knowledge of the Gospel is only discovered in the living of the Gospel. For Francis the truth of the Gospel is not a thing to be known but a mystery, a living, loving person to be followed. It is a life to be lived with the beloved Jesus Christ.

Regarding this life with the beloved Clare exulted:

I rejoice with you in the joy of the Spirit (1Thes 1:6) O bride of Christ ...

Happy, indeed, is she to whom it is given to share this sacred banquet to cling with all her heart to him

whose beauty all the heavenly host admire unceasingly,

whose love inflames our love, whose contemplation is our refreshment, whose graciousness is our joy, whose gentleness fills us to overflowing, whose remembrance brings a gentle light, whose fragrance will revive the dead, whose gracious vision will be the happiness of all the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem (Fourth Letter to Agnes 9-13).¹⁵

This loving relationship caries us to the frontiers of the mystical and enables us to go beyond the confines of the immediate empirical consciousness into the open space of transcendent experience. We can do little about the mystical experience itself but we can do much to take a lingering look at reality. We can do much to care and show concern for the everyday world through which the divine mystery shows itself in persons, events and things that we encounter day by day. It is to the poets and musicians, the lovers and carers of creations that we must go to understand Franciscan mysticism.

^{15 4}LAg, 9-13, 54-55.

Franciscan mysticism and the care for Creation

Franciscan mysticism is grounded in caring involvement with the everyday world. We are invited to care for creation so as to discover the intrinsic value of everything. All reality has an essential value. For Francis everyone and everything in the world matters. That is why Francis is reputed to have removed a worm from the path so that no one should stand on it. Franciscan mysticism demands that persons, events and things are perceived and met for their own sake with the mystery of their unique individual being, their "thisness" as the primary concern. God, beings, reveal themselves to receptive listening hearts and the contemplative gaze in their oneness. Things are God-like in their being, for every contingent being is because of God who alone is the necessary being. All that is, is because of Christ. This truth is captured by the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, who was inspired by the Franciscan Blessed John Duns Scotus:

As kingfisher catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;... Deals out that being indoors each one dwells; Selves—does itself: myself it speaks and spells Crying *What I do is me: for this I came.*

I say more; the just man justices; Keeps grace; that keeps all his going graces; Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is—Christ.¹⁶

Care creates space for revelation, for the realization that in Christ we live and move and have our being. It waits for the disclosure of God. It relinquishes the need to be in control and gives time to watch the daisies grow.

Nikos Kazantzakis, the Greek novelist was a lover of Saint Francis and wrote a novel of his life. In his novel "Zorba the Greek" Kazantzakis captured something of the spirit of Franciscan mysticism. Zorba taking a walk

¹⁶ Hopkins, "As Kingfishers Catch Fire."

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with his friend "the boss," the purely pragmatic man, saw some wild narcissi:

He looked at them for a long while, as if he could not see enough of them, as if he were seeing narcissi for the first time. He closed his eyes and smelled them, sighed and gave to me.

If we only knew, boss, what the stones and rain and flowers say. Maybe they call—call us—and we don't hear them. When will people's ears be open, boss? When shall we have our eyes open to see? When shall we open our arms to embrace everything—stones, rain, flowers, and men?¹⁷

Francis and Clare opened their arms, their ears, and above all their eyes to gratefully accept the world given to them by God and they invited us to do the same. In wonder and awe they sensed the mystery at the heart of the world. We are called to experience in mystical awareness the ultimate mystery that sustains all things in being. As Franciscans we celebrate the beauty of creation without needing to possess it. We learn to dwell with things and listen to the transcendent messages hidden and disclosed in each moment of time. We learn to participate in the coming of the Kingdom.

To care is to love, and the opposite of love is not hate, but not caring. When we do not care we lose our brotherly or sisterly connection with all creation. We lose sight of the divine presence at the frontier of each person, event or thing. The mode of care is an expression of human consciousness of our unity of being as creatures of God. We are fellow creatures with all God's creation. We are lovers of reality. The real, the mystery of God, reveals itself to the receptive ones, to those who have learnt to stand still in awe in the presence of all realty.

¹⁷ Nikos Kazantzakis, *Zorba the Greek* (New York: Scribner Publishing, 1975), 107-08.

Conclusion

Franciscan mysticism is rooted in the love of God who through the mystery of the Incarnation has humbled himself to live among us and in us. The realization that the mystery has made himself present through the Incarnation and through the continuing of the Incarnation into time and space in the Church opens to us the possibility to encounter the divine presence. This encounter is actualized in the living of the Gospel life when we come to the realization that all is gift to be received with faithfilled eyes. It is when we rejoice in our possessing nothing but the everyday into whose depths we are led by the Spirit that we learn through reverence and care to face the mystery of life. Then through contemplation, which is a long, lingering look at the real, we begin to encounter God residing in the heart of the world. The Franciscan mystic has found something extraordinary and fulfilling in the ordinary where she or he find the nearness of God in the least of his little ones and in Christ dwelling in the cosmos and the course of history. Through caring involvement in the everyday world we can come to the mystical awareness of the divine presence at the frontier of every person, event and thing.

THE FRANCISCAN QUESTION FROM OZANAM TO SABATIER

CHRIS DYCZEK, O.F.M.

There was only a slight interest shown in the person of St. Francis, his communities and his intentions in relation to the Christian world during the eighteenth century. Even the little encouragement given to dramatic forms of piety was often half-hearted. Many felt nervous of the imagined ability of the bishops and heads of religious orders to promote new power games. Many preferred to back a new style of orderliness, achievable through secular sciences. There was sympathy for this trend also amongst prominent figures in the churches. Pope Benedict XIV (Prospero Lambertini) was notable for his distrust of superstition. When he read about a miraculous light being seen around holy people, he commented that many kinds of luminosity are perfectly natural.1 He proposed that when someone claims to have seen a supernatural radiance around a servant of God, that person should be examined for their reliability and also for their sanity. It would be better to get several witnesses to come forward. In using such challenges, his De canonizatione built on a new academic trend among Catholic scholars of removing dubious miraculous stories attributed to ancient saints from the core material for meditation supplied for general use. He approached the texts that were produced by earlier centuries with a distinct freedom of interpretation. Obviously, a lot of medieval material would be elimi-

¹ Renée Haynes, *Philosopher King: The Humanist Pope Benedict XIV* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), 134-35.

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nated in this process, and other medieval writings would simply be avoided in the general mood of suspicion about enthusiasm. Having the freedom to read texts selectively, to pick out and prefer those sections which seemed to include humanist values, was going to affect how people read the motives and commitments of the Christian figures they met within the available stories of conversion.

For these reasons, it was not a foregone conclusion that the nineteenth century's revival of interest in the Middle Ages would bring about a new appreciation of neglected saints. This is true even of St. Francis and his followers. That an able Protestant scholar, Paul Sabatier, was one of those who pursued and ensured this revival of interest, is even more surprising. Some nuances of interpretation were inevitable, whatever branch of Christianity began the investigation or took the lead. For instance, the theological historian Jaroslav Pelikan suggests that "the interpretation of Francis that has had the widest influence in modern times has been ... that of Paul Sabatier, who believed that the original message of Francis had been expurgated by his later disciples ... in order to make him acceptable to church authorities."2 Present day scholars still "have had to rely on his researches and editions to argue against him." Pelikan goes on to describe the spirit of Francis as one of "obedience to Christ the Divine and Human Model." But this description is so broad it would fit all of the biographies of Francis, including those by Thomas of Celano and St. Bonaventure, not just the Mirror of Perfection, which seemed so significant to Sabatier.

A REVIVAL OF MULTIPLE VIEWS OF ST. FRANCIS

Sabatier did his research towards the end of the nineteenth century. His close attention to manuscripts certainly did set a higher standard of historical scholarship than had generally been sought in the case of Franciscan

² Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus through the Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 142, 143.

sources. However, much earlier in the century, key figures in the Franciscan story had been presented to the reading public in new formats. De Montalembert's detailed biography of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, published in 1836, was a seminal work, triggering careful studies of other partly-hidden portions of history. (The English translation only appeared in 1904). Frederic Ozanam, who was on good terms with Montalembert, played an equally important role, reviving interest in the Franciscan poet and polemicist Jacopone da Todi. As we shall see, it is not a far-fetched idea, to ask whether Paul Sabatier was indebted indirectly to Ozanam. Ozanam had taught Ernest Renan, and it was Renan who nurtured Sabatier's interest to begin his work on St. Francis. But first we may note the subsequent effects of this revived Franciscan storytelling. Edward Hutton translated Omer Englebert's Saint Francis of Assisi, which was published in 1950. His introduction agrees with Sabatier's view that Francis "was certainly the only Christian to take Christ quite literally at His Word."3 There are good reasons for taking this as a starting point: most of all, because it asks us to focus on the prophetic creativity and striking character of Francis Bernadone. But there are also reasons for questioning this summary statement: it isolates Francis from all of his contemporaries, and might make us consider him with no community of fellow believers. It is important to ask whether Sabatier made this latter mistake, and we find that he did not go entirely wrong on this point. So we must also ask how later users of Sabatier, including ourselves, can avoid the mistaken approach. Here we find some recurring difficulties: that Francis shows a level of individual initiative that was rare in his time, and that many of his followers and community collaborators failed to appreciate fully the integrity of his aims.

When Esser and Grau wrote *Love's Reply*, in 1958, they were relying on limited aspects of Paul Sabatier's approach, in order to correct what they saw as some of his

³ Omer Englebert, *Saint Francis of Assisi*, trans. E. Hutton (London: Burns and Oates, 1950), 13.

shortcomings. Sabatier had been encouraged by Ernest Renan to be scientific, to analyse historical documents down to the very basic fragments, taking only the most reliable ones from which to build up a picture of the true original events. Clearing away misleading elaborations, as we have seen in Pelikan's summary, seemed like the way to get beyond preconceptions and let Francis speak for himself. Esser and Grau do the same. They examine certain inter-relating themes. Eucharist, penance, communal prayer and a resulting humility are all assumed to work together as a matrix out of which had come Francis, the perfectly trained preacher. But in doing this, they aimed, just as Sabatier had done, to eliminate mentalities that seemed to them unattractive. Sabatier praised lay preaching that, coming from Francis in the "simple words" understood by peasants, "seemed to his hearers like a flaming sword penetrating to the very depths of their conscience." Esser and Grau tell us that "singularity" and "eccentricity" would be unwelcome to Francis, and would have been viewed as lacking humility by the people whose outlook he shared and supported. 5 But it is not clear on what basis they were prepared to make this claim.

I want to suggest that some of the assumptions in two viewpoints, one Protestant, the other Catholic, reflect the thinking of the periods in which they were written, and not the medieval world they intended to present more clearly. Other sections of both Sabatier and Esser and Grau are more trustworthy, and of considerable value when we want to understand those remote early Franciscans. Those very committed communities certainly were inspired by lay preaching and by humility, and may at times have worried about their more erratic members. My reason for picking out these topics is to recognize that a supposedly scientific method can end up telling us more

⁴ Paul Sabatier, *Life of Francis of Assisi*, trans. Louise S. Houghton (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), 71.

⁵ Cajetan Esser and Engelbert Grau, *Love's Reply*, trans. Ignatius Brady (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1963), 246.

about modern assumptions, and less about the past reality. The lesson to be learned is that analyzing sources down to some basic fragments (whether we see these in Protestant or Catholic terms) does not sufficiently describe what must happen to produce a good historical interpretation. Sabatier used newly discovered fragments to rule out some aspects of Bonaventure's biographies as mere ecclesiastical exaggeration, as distortions of St. Francis's mentality. Esser and Grau try to reverse this by using 1 Celano 54 "you are our model of humility" to support the idea of a tight matrix of interweaving concerns, and a single approved personality type.⁶ They do not seem to be open to the thought that practices of penance, and attitudes to the Eucharist, were rather different in 1206, when Francis began, to their own viewpoint in Germany in 1950.

The passage from 1 Celano does indicate a valid basis from which to modify and challenge Sabatier, because it shows some continuity with Francis's own words, through Celano, to Bonaventure. Humility is a major theme in Bonaventure's account, largely because he wants to ask his educated clerical readership to have less regard for power and prestige. However, Sabatier is right to notice that Celano's writing style is very different from that of Bonaventure. Celano pays little attention to the forms of humility. It may therefore have been just one feature of conversion amongst many others, in his experience, rather than an overriding measure of authentic faith. Yet this fact does not, in itself, prove that Bonaventure was mistaken to make more of the virtue of humility, to attract the support of a theologically trained readership. Nor does the fact that he did so, demonstrate that Thomas of Celano's omission is so startling that his writing must be seen as bad reporting. Furthermore, Sabatier was too careful a scholar to have ignored Bonaventure's work, for references to his Legenda major are plentiful in his footnotes.

⁶ Esser and Grau, Love's Reply, 247.

More recently, the three volume edition of the Franciscan sources that came out from 1999 to 2001 has made available the results of a large amount of scholarship. Not all of this has been a matter of detailed analysis of manuscripts and styles, although that certainly has made a big difference in some areas. This extensive and methodical analysis eventually showed one of Sabatier's main contentions to be wrong.7 He initially regarded The Mirror of Perfection as having been written by Brother Leo in 1228, and saw it therefore as earlier than 1 Celano. During Sabatier's lifetime, Leonard Lemmens discovered a different and shorter version of *The Mirror of Perfection*, which he published in 1901. Sabatier accepted this challenge, examining forty-five manuscripts in detail, to get a better sense of the relevant dates. When his findings were published (shortly after his death) he had accepted that the document he had first drawn to everyone's notice probably dates from 1318. Nevertheless, both this text, and that found by Lemmens, made use of writings by Br. Leo, which therefore does suggest that the idea of a purified faith played a key part in the early communities of St. Francis. Moreover, the growing range of academic research triggered by Sabatier led to the reconstruction of a specific alternative witness, still focussed on the Order's early simplicity, now known as The Assisi Compilation. But this witness would nowadays be dated to 1310. The three volume edition of all these texts (including both Lemmens and Sabatier's editions in volume III) allows us to compare this Compilation with *The Legend of the Three* Companions (dating from 1246-47), which highlights the unique character of Francis, and The Anonymous of Peruqia (dating from 1240-1), which shows the shared communal simplicity of Francis and his followers.8

⁷ Most of this paragraph is derived from R.J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short, *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, 3 vols. (New York: New City Press, 2001) vol. III, *The Prophet*, 207-12.

⁸ See Armstrong, et al., *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, 3 vols. (New York: New City Press, 2001) vol. II, *The Founder*, 31-32, 61-64, 113-16 for this and further background material.

At times, much of this scholarship can still feel like a continuation of the historical perspectives of Renan and Sabatier. Englebert's preface adds other nineteenth century historians of religion and culture into the picture: Henry Thode, K. Muller, Voigt and Ehrle in Germany stand alongside Michelet, Taine and others in France. In 1856 an earlier Protestant, Karl Hase published a biography, Franz von Assisi. This was translated into French by Ch. Berthoud, and that translation led to Ernest Renan's attractive Nouvelles études d'histoire religieuse (1888).9 Four years earlier Renan told the young Sabatier that he must become the historian of Francis of Assisi. the figure who "saved the Church in the thirteenth century." The debate about how that salvation took shape has remained a live one, but we might ask what makes it so intriguing. It is not purely the enjoyment of facing an enigma, the sorting out of manuscripts and their dates. If people still read some of these writers, it is because of the quality of their writing, and the spiritual pleasure of imagination and faith working at a process of discovery together. Moreover, several more recent historians were not very orthodox: Michelet pursued a pantheistic reading of history, and Renan at times did likewise. In this regard, Sabatier is more orthodox. His final eighty-page section on "The Critical Study of the Sources" might be overwhelming to any reader who had not already spent time with many of those sources. 10 The same would be true of any equivalent modern pieces of scholarship that examined and compared the sources. But the previous main sections of his book contain much that can help

⁹ Englebert, Saint Francis, 29.

¹⁰ Sabatier, *Francis of Assisi*, 349-432. This is where we meet his rather polarising interpretation of Br. Elias. It would be advisable to compare this with a different account, such as J. Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order From its Origins to the Year 1517* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 96-104. This relates especially to events within a few years of St. Francis's death, but it raises problems about how to interpret various trends within the life-time of Francis. This means it raises difficulties about how to appreciate the relationships between his early companions too.

Catholic readers to appreciate the prophetic character of the Franciscan movement.

FREDERIC OZANAM ON FREEDOM AND PROPHECY

Where some modern readers have been uneasy about Sabatier's approach, it has been because they saw his emphasis on freedom as too Protestant, too detached from institutional circumstances. However, we cannot simply eliminate the concept of freedom from our interpretations. Mary Clark wrote about St. Augustine as "The Philosopher of Freedom," stating that "the secret of freedom is to desire nothing more than a good will."11 But her added thought, that rival images can undermine this, was appreciated by various early, academically able friars, who made extensive use of Augustine. They saw an affinity between the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as understood by Augustine of Hippo, and the unfolding openness to that same guidance as we recognise it in Francis of Assisi. Frederic Ozanam was particularly keen to celebrate the liberating qualities of St. Francis's Canticle of the Creatures, which he set alongside poetry by Jacopone da Todi and other Franciscan writings, as examples of a medieval view of the loving mercy of God. He spent a year in Italy specifically investigating relevant manuscripts, and making the work of Jacopone known to an extent that had not previously been possible. His book The Franciscan Poets indicates possible parallels between the songs or laude composed by Jacopone and the simple, direct communal commitment that can be found in the Fioretti. Ozanam also involved other people in his project of recovering Franciscan inspiration as a prophetic language. His wife Amélie worked at translating the Fioretti into French. His

¹¹ Mary T. Clark, *Augustine, Philosopher of Freedom* (New York: Desclée Co., 1958), 167.

friend François Lallier made a translation (in 1844) of Bonaventure's *Journey of the Mind into God*. 12

Frederic Ozanam was born in 1813, just two hundred years ago. The date is significant. The French Revolution had begun a large-scale alteration of the structures in French society, and its intention of greatly cutting down the Church's involvement in education was a continuing ideology for many citizens of the country. They appealed to the slogan of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" as the basis for a theory of progress that had little room for religion. Ozanam trained to become a lecturer (and then professor) in Foreign Literature at the Sorbonne. However, what he saw in the different literatures of Europe was extensive evidence of how Christianity had promoted its own gospel-based account of freedom, equality and fraternal fellowship. The politicians and ideologists were simply making clumsy and unsatisfactory use of an understanding of God's gifts that is most typically Christian. He became an apologist for the diversity and integrity of Catholic traditions. Making Franciscan sources better known and more available was an invitation to other believers to speak out confidently about their faith and its resources.

Ozanam's account of Jacopone draws attention to his having turned down the idea of ordination, remaining a lay brother in order to write in "the dialect of the Umbrian hills, spoken by the humblest laborers and peasants." This concern to reach the most vulnerable and hard-hit members of society is a theme which Ozanam notices again when he is writing about the early Church, speaking of the peasants travelling for miles to reach the church of St. Felix of Nola and to celebrate with honest integrity the faith that sustains them. But Christianity has a message for people at every level of society. Thus he says of

¹² Gérard Cholvy, *Frédéric Ozanam* (Saint-Amand-Montrond: Éd. Fayard, 2003), 701n. This French biography is the best current work on Ozanam.

¹³ Frederic Ozanam, *The Franciscan Poets*, trans. A. E. Nellen and N. C. Craig (London: David Nutt, 1914), 242.

Jacopone that "his genius.... exercised itself freely on an infinite number of subjects, treating in turn of the most important questions of Christian metaphysics, the quarrels which rent the Church, and the mysteries which gave her consolation."14 Ozanam presents the implications of a long poem by Jacopone called "On Justice and Mercy and How Man was made Whole,"15 which "aims at celebrating the redemption of human nature."16 It is an allegorical trial scene. Mercy "hastily summoned her daughters": "Penitence first puts into the heart of man fear, which cast out false security," but then Penitence sends up a prayer to the Heavenly Court: "I demand mercy, and not justice."17 And as soon as Mercy enters the Heavenly Court, she says, "Lord, I weep for my heritage, of which Justice has despoiled me. In afflicting man, it is I whom she has mortally wounded, and she has robbed me of all my honor." Justice hangs on, nevertheless, defending the need for a penalty.

However, a broader viewpoint now develops. The Beatitudes enter the Court. They say, "Lord, we are pilgrims, born in your realm; give us shelter. We have made our pilgrimage in winter and summer, passing bitter days and cruel nights. Everyone spurns us, and thinks himself wise, in so doing, for we are more detested than death." Mercy's distress at this leads her to make a deeper statement: "the infirmity of man is so great that he can in no wise be healed unless you remove the frailty...." God and Christ, of course, are present to make their decisive response. But what they say is startling all the same. Christ speaks: "Your demand is wise.... I am intoxicated with love to such a degree that I shall be deemed a madman.... I will die for his sin." Salvation is a tremendous undertaking that originates in God's immeasurable generosity.

¹⁴ Ozanam, Franciscan Poets, 242.

¹⁵ Jacopone da Todi, *The Lauds*, trans. S. and E. Hughes (London: SPCK, 1982), 146 for the full text.

¹⁶ Ozanam, Franciscan Poets, 256.

¹⁷ Ozanam, Franciscan Poets, 257-58.

¹⁸ Ozanam, Franciscan Poets, 259-60.

Only this can amend the frailty that makes human society so readily cruel. The seven Beatitudes then give birth to the new human reality, with the words "Peace has entered into the heart of man." ¹⁹

It is worth bearing in mind that this allegory comes sufficiently close to a Protestant Christian view of redemption to have colored Sabatier's understanding of St. Francis. The freedom he attributes to Francis expresses precisely this style of concern for human frailty, which derives from a similar sense of Francis's intimate relationship with Christ as the Savior. Ozanam was confirmed in his notion of fragile human initiatives being supported by God when he also discovered the manuscript of a lost medieval poem, the Stabat Mater Speciosa, a counterpart of the familiar Stabat Mater Dolorosa. It has a similar Latin style, but with a focus on Mary's awareness in Bethlehem, beside the manger and the child Jesus.20 Sabatier and Ozanam both thought of the Fioretti as an early work, a record of the first Franciscan communal and fraternal activity. The spontaneity they read there seemed to be a result of the gift of freedom, a belief in new beginnings for the adopted children of God. Our modern scholarship places the Fioretti a lot later, after 1300, but we need not assume that therefore it tells us little about Francis's actual experience. Perhaps it reflects the intensity that was needed amongst the friars who wanted to remain close to an approximation of the first initiatives. Thus it provides us with a valid commentary on how charisms can exercise their power and appeal for a considerable length of time.

The "genius" which Ozanam identifies in Jacopone was something both poetic and prophetic, in his opinion. This is a typical combination for the Romantic period right across Europe. The poet Lamartine, who was on good terms with Ozanam, deliberately wrote religious poetry that had a psalm-like character but which spoke

¹⁹ Ozanam, Franciscan Poets, 261.

²⁰ Ozanam, *Franciscan Poets*, 240-303. Franz Liszt set both poems to music in his oratorio Christus.

out against the social evils of industrialised city life. The Exodus theme of liberation runs through his poems, and was appreciated by Ozanam and his co-workers in the St. Vincent de Paul meetings (of which he was the most vocal promoter). Liberation was something to celebrate, in the Old Testament and the New, because it brought the weak and the neglected members of society a fresh experience of trust and solidarity. Focussed on God's guidance, it empowered a range of small communities in their aim of achieving a more caring set of relationships. We should be cautious then not to avoid Sabatier's best insights, even if we have to adjust our scholarship to take other writings into account. Any genuine interpretation of the motivation, gifts and effectiveness of St. Francis has to include a view of his ideals, his sense of liberating guidance, his community-minded dynamism, and his compassion for those who struggle. All of these occur in Sabatier's work.

DISCOVERING A SHARED LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

Looking back on his days as a student in the classes given by Frederic Ozanam, Ernest Renan said, "Oh, how we loved him!" Ozanam, with his "Franciscan soul," had a transformative effect on many of his students. Renan, however, was caught up in a scholarly debate about how much academic work is scientific and how much is artistic. His view of Jesus (in his book Vie de Jésus) was shaped by a desire to know what would make us see Jesus as an ideal human being, the basis for a Christianity that enables more people to flourish. In England at this time, writers such as John Robert Seeley and Frederic William Farrar were pursuing a similar goal. From a more appealing image of Jesus it was a short step to insist on the appealing aspects of St. Francis. His research, and the reactions to it, led Renan to reject much traditional theology, to the extent of becoming for a while very bitter towards the Church. But he did not let that kill off his memory of a fine lecturer who understood how to unburden the hearts and minds of his students.

Ozanam had a short life - he died in 1853 - in the course of which he achieved a great deal. His published writings include Civilisation in the Fifth Century, which opened up a more complex appreciation of the Christianization of Europe, with sections on art, philosophy, theology, how Latin became Christian, the extent to which paganism ever really perished, and the roles of women in the Church of late antiquity. The battle to end slavery is a major theme within this book, but it is not a naive picture that he constructs. He gives plenty of information about corruption and superficial conformity within the new Christian structures after Constantine, but he is careful to provide deeper insights into those who tried hardest to make Christian beliefs a splendid reality. When he explores the outlooks of figures such as Ambrose, Cyprian. Prudentius, Anthony of Egypt, Apuleius, Basil, Augustine, and Leo I, we notice him identifying both the realism of their predicaments and the ideals which they hoped to uphold. This is a mark of his sensitivity to the art of authentic biography. He also notices how their theologies differ, to some extent. Any genuine Christians will find themselves alternating between distressing prospects and moments of welcome illumination. When we read the biographies of believers we may say, for instance, "I wish I had read more details about ...," asking for facts, or "There was not enough on how they prayed ...," or "What were the images and concepts that drove them to do those great things ...?" Respect for this range of questioning is what may also indicate how successful Sabatier or anyone else has been in conveying a rounded understanding of a genuinely human life.

When it comes to understanding St. Francis, however, what we know is no simple matter to pin down. We already know that Thomas of Celano, in writing his *Second Life of St. Francis*, adopted a thoroughly different framework and set of key messages from those he used in his First Life. Most of these are embedded in the theological character of the narration, rather than in actual statements said to have come directly from Francis. Dalarun

sums up the difference between the First and Second Lives: "here the debaucher who drags himself through the mire, there a predestined saint who goes through the world without failing." In the later work, ideals of chivalry take over from the careful record twenty years earlier of the courage and confusion of the young man Francis Bernadone. Dalarun sees Celano nevertheless as a very sensitive and careful biographer, one who "seeks to reconcile respect for the historical truth and discretion." The failures that take place where a group of believers has shared the life of the Spirit can become a liability to the later community, if the trend is for society to become very touchy or easily disconcerted.

A saint's biography, however honest, is never a straightforward snapshot. This same is true of the gospels and what they tell us about Christ. Furthermore the nineteenth century's sudden vigorous interest in history meant that a whole range of other historical figures were being probed and questioned, the writers who had recorded some versions of their lives being held up to scrutiny. This sat uneasily with the most doctrinally orthodox and literal-minded Catholics, who frequently found themselves confident of their "realism" but challenged by another set of firm Catholics, convinced of the integrity of their idealism. It seemed as if one had to choose on which side of this fence one should fall. At the same time, there was a growing appreciation that both sides of the fence were likely to be applicable to any one narrated biographical record. There had to be a way of explaining motivation that incorporated both realism and ideals.

Paul Sabatier published his *Life of St. Francis of Assisi* in 1894. In the previous year, 1893, Maurice Blondel published his religious philosophical treatise, *L'Action*, a study of the relationship between life's troubling finite aspects and God's infinite availability to guide us through our unanswered needs. They make an interesting pair for comparison. Blondel proposed a style of faith, willing, and

²¹ Jacques Dalarun, *Francis of Assisi and the Feminine* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2006), 99.

awareness in which any neat dichotomy of realism and idealism is seen as artificial and abstract. This became known as the "method of immanentism," and it has been an important contributor to the thinking of a number of well-known modern theologians. It is significant that Ozanam's student, Elme-Marie Caro taught Léon Ollé-Laprune, who in turn worked with Blondel in discussions that led to his seminal book. I have tried to indicate how Ozanam had been aiming at a similarly holistic notion of human experience, a blending of realism about hardship with a lively alertness to the ideals of the New Testament and Christian tradition. This blending was sometimes referred to as "vitalism." But this is more than a philosophical hypothesis. It is intrinsic to the process of giving a thorough account of a complex human life-style that contains a great diversity of events and circumstances.

We could ask how well Sabatier presents a similar process of groups of believers discovering and sharing life in the Spirit. His chapter on the group of Franciscan companions travelling to Rivo-Torto in 1210-11 demonstrates quite well some of his uses of narrative modification to build up a valid perspective. When the friars cross the Campagna region outside Rome, they have to follow an "implacable" dusty road across pastures separated by "parched and ragged" thickets. They pass "a few abandoned huts," in a region where the lack of air is debilitating, as dust "parches your mouth": energy "ebbs away, a dumb dejection seizes you" and the "homesickness" with which they started on this journey turns to fever.²² The contrast between all of this exhaustion, and the sudden offer of help from an unknown traveller, is used by Sabatier to remind us how important to the friars' life-style was their belief in Providence. Celano's section 34 tells us that they were hungry and exhausted, but mentions only the Spoleto Valley, not Rivo-Torto (a detail found in the Legend of the Three Companions). The "chance traveller" of Sabatier's version was for Celano someone "they honestly

²² Paul Sabatier, *The Life of St. Francis of Assisi* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1904 [1894]), 103-04.

did not recognise" who gave them bread.²³ Celano does also state that they were learning to trust God's grace. So what Sabatier has done is to move that message into a slightly more Bonaventurean version, by making this a reference to Providence.

Sabatier tells us that he finds Celano's writing to be especially animated when he is describing this early phase of the Order's existence, and suggests that it seemed to him like a "radiant dawn."²⁴ This is a signal to focus less on the painful realism of mendicant existence, and to consider how they found and appreciated their shelter, "enjoying the happiness of being together, forming a thousand plans, and more than ever delighting in the charm of freedom from care."25 Ideals are crucial: their "apostolic mission" is "clear and imperative," Francis himself is "filled with a new ardor." A contrast is made between "noisy, feverish pleasures" bought with money and "those sweet, quiet, modest but profound, lasting and peaceful joys, enlarging, not wearying the heart." Sabatier quotes one of the poetic metaphors used by Celano (1 Cel 36) about barren land "already covered with a rich harvest" and the withered vine that "began again to blossom." 26 This enabled him to show Francis as helping the local people to overcome the heavy realism of mortal existence with his "simple preaching," which "snatched his hearers from the mire and blood in which they were painfully trudging, and in spite of themselves carried them to the very heavens." Francis relied on "exhortations" a lot, but ones "in which the sternest reproaches were mingled with so much of love," says Sabatier. There is a hint of Jacopone, I suggest, in this approach.

²³ Thomas of Celano, *The Life of Saint Francis*, 34, in R. J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, and W. J. Short eds., *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents* (New York: New City Press, 1999), vol. I, *The Saint*, 213.

²⁴ Sabatier, St. Francis, 106.

²⁵ Sabatier, St. Francis, 105, 108.

²⁶ Sabatier, St. Francis, 107, 106.

THE NARRATOR'S VIEWPOINT IN THE FRANCISCAN QUESTION

Dalarun points out that the differences between Celano's First Life and his Second are so complex and significant that these alone are enough reason for us to continue to ponder "the Franciscan Question," namely, how well can we know the person of St. Francis, and how far might we get towards understanding how he achieved his extensive impact on his contemporaries? The few quotes I have given from Sabatier give us hints about one viable procedure for tackling this question. If we can imagine how the preaching of Francis removed the burdens of stark realism, and opened up a way of contemplating heaven's ideal, grace, and God's eternal love, then we should become better at switching back and forth between Celano's early text and his later one. The ability to treasure simple, yet profound ideals of companionship and prayer, in the midst of a wearisome and noisy society, is what reveals love to those who long for it. It is the blending of the real and the ideal that "enlarges the heart."

If we wanted to explore all of the dimensions of freedom, equality and brotherly (and sisterly) supportiveness that lay behind the stories of St. Francis's communities, it would take a much fuller treatment. It would require a much longer article than this one. It is nevertheless a desirable project for some to undertake. It will be a project with better chances of success if it continues to develop the insights achieved by Sabatier and Blondel. We have moved on from the Romantic sensibility of the Victorian age, but we have not shed approaches to story-telling in which passing metaphors, glimpses of kindness, and unexpected generosity can stir the listener's imagination into life. The goal should now be to achieve a more probing understanding of the communal dynamics behind the medieval versions of story-telling. Sabatier had begun to do this, when he noted Celano's selective enthusiasm for the early years of the Order's mendicant existence. But more thought has to be applied to possible conversations, involving people such as Leo, Giles, Pacificus, Elias and

others, who played small or large parts in getting the oral traditions written down and disseminated. Each of these named figures (along with others who we cannot put a name to) had their own ways of expressing the spirit of freedom: freedom from fear, freedom from stifling control by former structures, freedom to approach the sick and the poor directly with offers of healing, kindness or instruction in the faith language of Scripture.

This is a demanding academic task. It means that we cannot equate the strong convictions we meet in the literary voice of Celano with the actual liberated mentality of Francis himself, or with the quite diverse and different liberated mentalities of each of his followers and associates. After Francis's death, as has been said by one commentator, each of those who had known him began to speak more about their own experience, even when they seemed to be recalling the activities of the man from Assisi. Students of narrative will appreciate that the physical freedom of a band of companions, to move across a landscape, however inhospitable, is not the core aspect and tension-filled character of freedom that must have existed in each inter-personal exchange of views. Sabatier's account of the relationships between Francis and Elias cannot be the last word on that tricky relationship. But it may trigger our own line of questioning about how difficult it is to know what these two individuals shared or agreed on. Discussing realities and ideals, and the resistance or obstacles involved in blending the two would be an illuminating place to start. Frederic Ozanam's centenary should serve as a stimulus to lively, fresh debate.

REFLECTIONS ON ST. FRANCIS AND THE NATURE OF RESEARCH¹

BENJAMIN BROWN

While St. Francis's cautiousness regarding academic study is well-known, because he knew all too well how easily knowledge can lead to pride and arrogance, the Franciscan tradition fairly quickly found a happy home in the early universities. This essay focuses on research in particular, whether it be in the sciences or humanities, or anything else for that matter, articulating several reasons why doing research is not just merely acceptable at a Franciscan college or university, but is particularly appropriate and even positively demanded by the nature and values of the Franciscan tradition.

SETTING THE STAGE

My three oldest children (the oldest is seven) asked me the other day why we cannot just eat pizza and ice cream all the time; in fact, they all kind of rallied together on this point and became rather insistent. I explained briefly about nutrition and how we need many different types of food to be healthy. Our five-year-old, however, insisted that his body was different, that he did not actually need tomatoes and mushrooms. After a little exchange, he was worked into a logical corner and forced to play his trump card: "Yeah, but Jesus could eat whatever he wanted, and

¹ This text is adapted from a presentation originally given as the keynote address for the Research Symposium of Lourdes University in Sylvania, OH on April 20, 2010.

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[and this is the key point] he could make it the same for me, too." At this point his smug little face spoke volumes: "Take that, Dad!"

I will come back to that story in what follows as I reflect on how worldview, specifically a Franciscan worldview, affects the possibility and the character of research. In particular, I want to focus on three things that seem to me key elements for a healthy approach to research: wonder and curiosity; confidence in the rational order of the universe; and a sense of encouraging security. All three are strongly characteristic of the Franciscan tradition, and so research of all kinds is especially fitting at a Franciscan school.

Let me begin with a couple thought experiments to help probe the necessary preconditions for the possibility of even doing research at all. These presuppositions are so fundamental that they go almost entirely unnoticed, but as with all fundamentals, the entire edifice rests upon them, whether we are cognizant of it or not. So, the first thought experiment: imagine a world in which one day objects fall down and the next day may rise up like balloons and then on some other day they may suddenly not fall nor rise at all but sit in the air precisely where they are placed. Or imagine a world in which one day your dog spontaneously turns into a tree and the next into jello. Or, to return to my son's argument, imagine a world in which Jesus could intervene and make ice cream into a health food. Imagine, further, that there is no way to predict what will happen on any given day, because everything is literally causeless and random. Or better yet, imagine that the cause is a very powerful being who daily changes gravity or the tides or the ability of our muscles to contract based on this being's own mood or preference. What would it be like to do research in such a world? It would be impossible, actually, since research assumes orderly cause and effect relationships, rationality, and stability. Without these, one would not even think to systematically observe, organize, chart, or study.

On the other hand, as a second thought experiment, imagine a thoroughly hedonistic world, one in which nothing is truly good - only more or less pleasant or useful, a world in which nothing is mysterious or curious or thought-provoking, only a confluence of elements that bumps into another such confluence causing further effects and eventually pleasure or pain. A world in which love is merely hormones, a dead body can be thrown in the trash because it is no longer a person, and beauty is nothing more than raw visual pleasure. What would research look like in a universe such as this? It would be purely practical, designed solely for the sake of some intermediary application that would contribute to the researcher's personal pleasure or merely as a job done for the sake of a paycheck. There would be no thrill of discovery for its own sake, no awe, no wonder, no reveling or rejoicing in an uncovered truth, for in such a world everything is ultimately without meaning. Research would be purely utilitarian and self-centered. It would have no soul, no heart, no life to it. The only meaning, if you could call it that, would be raw practicality, and thus wonder and the excitement of discovery would be drowned in the frigid seas of cold calculation.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In order to avoid these two extremes, we need a certain worldview. For that I turn to St. Francis, but first generally to the medieval world in which he lived. The thirteenth century marks something of a turning point in the history of Western Civilization, a point at which a human culture (among other things) has been essentially purified of divinizing the world, of nature-worship. After centuries of evangelizing the new Germanic and Norse settlers in Europe, the Judeo-Christian (and Muslim) distinction between God and creation has finally taken hold throughout the culture. No longer are the sun, moon, trees and rivers seen as gods; no longer is nature a source of irrational fear, the province of supernatural

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and fickle powers which may at any moment and for no seeming reason turn their full force upon those who dare draw too close. No longer are the stars seen as the cause of human affairs, and no more does an arbitrary fate rule human life.

The reason for this new state of affairs is a different religious vision – a very old one, but one which had only recently penetrated deeply into the ethos of a whole people. This vision, which St. Francis of Assisi inherits in all its freshness, holds together both a God who is completely other than the world and a God who lovingly cares for the world.

Because of this new moment in history, St. Francis is able to return to the natural world with a novel perspective (it is sometimes hard for us to appreciate just how novel this is, because we have gotten used to the idea), one that elevates and humanizes it without divinizing it. Creation is God's special gift that shares in the divine image and points us back to God. Francis can bend a knee before the world now in a new way, not because the sun is a god, but because the sun shares in God's existence and beauty and so also shows forth in its own way the radiant beauty of God. He can appreciate the sun and moon as his brother and sister, because they and he are both created by the same God. This new worldview leads to at least three consequences: first, all creation should be approached with reverence and awe (but not worshipped); second, all creation can be studied because it is rationally organized, the creation of a loving and wise God: and third, all creation should be studied because it is a gift which encourages us to unwrap it. Let me take each of these in turn.

WONDER

Of these three, the beauty and mystery of nature and their attendant wonder are preeminent in the Franciscan vision, since creation is best described as a personal gift in which one comes to know and love the Giver. In Francis we find a world filled with mystery that invites us to appreciation, gratitude and wonder, whose depths cannot be plumbed because they are a reflection of *Infinite* Goodness, Truth and Beauty. Research - of all kinds, not just in the sciences, though I am focusing on that aspect of the picture for the moment – is thus freed from a certain slavishness. It ceases to be merely utilitarian and becomes something good in itself; it ceases to be merely self-advancing and becomes a matter of delight in the other. One does not always have to ask about one's studies: what good is it, what will it get me, how much money will that make me, etc. In other words, research becomes a truly human endeavor, something more than a merely rationalistic analysis of things for which one does not care at all but which one merely uses. Research even of the inanimate world ultimately becomes an interpersonal encounter, for through it one comes to know and take delight in God's very self, in whose existence everything else shares. And is that not the experience we have when we discover something new? Is not the delight of discovery always tinged with the interpersonal? Isn't it rather like what we experience when we just enjoy conversing with an old friend?

RATIONAL ORDER

Simultaneously, as the creation of a God who is all-wise and supremely rational, the Franciscan spirit approaches creation with not only reverence, awe and wonder, but also with the utmost confidence of finding explanations, even in the midst of still deeper amazement and further questions. Because God is both distinct from the world (not just one of the overgrown adolescents of Greek mythology) and supremely wise, the world has been created rationally, with wisdom, and so it is consistent and stable, not arbitrary and ephemeral. It can be examined closely and understood; it will not change arbitrarily, and it is governed by natural laws. If, when I seek out an answer to a question, I am not certain

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that all my close investigation and careful thought will yield a result of enduring value, then I will not bother. Research is impossible in an arbitrary world without laws of nature, laws of history, laws of human interaction, and so forth. We often take it for granted, but there is really a kind of faith involved in believing that the world is rationally ordered, a faith that has not always been present throughout human history. Along the same lines, faith in a God who will magically make junk food healthy is just as problematic for research as belief in gods who act on whims – but good luck convincing my five-year-old of that!

Another way of seeing all this is to realize that only when you combine the previous two circumstances, mystery and rationality, do you get curiosity, without which there would be no research. Curiosity arises when one encounters something enticingly unexplained which then arouses both wonder at the exciting and mysterious new phenomenon and confidence that with further exploration the new wonder at hand will share at least some of its secrets. In order to be curious one must both care about the issue/phenomenon (recall the experience of sharing an exciting discovery with someone who is not at all interested – without interest, there is no curiosity) and be confident that an answer exists and can be found.

ENCOURAGEMENT

As I have reflected over the years on what I as a parent need to do to foster the budding young minds of my children, I have realized how important it is for me to encourage and free them to explore (within appropriate limits, of course). Research will never flourish if it is given only a grudging permission or if mistakes are punished. My children will be afraid of stepping out into the unknown if I do not assure them that it is safe, assure them that I am with them throughout to help with any problems and take delight with them in both the successes and failures. For example, my three-year-old daughter is very scared of

bees, and by extension all bugs (which are all just types of bees in disguise in her mind). As spring showed its head a few weeks ago, she refused to go outside, unless I was with her. If I held her, she was fascinated by everything around and wanted to examine and explore. She would even touch a bug or two while it was crawling on my hand. She needed a sense of security in order for her curiosity to bloom.

St. Francis arrives at the same endpoint, but by a rather different route. Threatened with being disowned by his earthly father, Francis peremptorily takes off his very clothes, returns them to his father and then proceeds almost to float away, so light does he feel, singing troubadour songs of love to his Father in heaven. St. Francis gave up everything in his embrace of Lady Poverty, throwing himself totally into the arms of God. Only then is he freed to turn back to created things objectively and with the encouragement of a God who wants all humans to delight in the really big playground created just for our exploration. When we finally accept that absolutely every last thing is a gift, then all things become safe, like in a playground, and all are in fact positively invitations to come to know them better, like a gift-wrapped present that just begs to be opened.

One aspect of this vision is the confidence that faith and reason are two wings which work together to make flight possible. Neither has anything to fear from the other. Both faith and reason lead to the truth and mutually support one another in that journey. Thus, the Christian can be a person of deep faith and also a person who unflinchingly faces – or even more so, delights in – all that the created world has to teach. We should never refrain from asking hard questions, for everything that exists has been created by Truth itself, a Truth which sets us free: free to ask, free to search and free to enjoy and revel in the act of knowing. There is only one God, and the revelation of that God is to be found not only in the Bible, but in the very world itself. In fact, the God of St. Francis does not just permit but positively requires

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that we study the natural world, for it is God's gift to us not only so that we can come to know and love God better, but so that we can take delight in the gift itself.

Because of these three characteristics of research, there is something particularly appropriate about doing and celebrating research at a Franciscan college, because the most profound spirit and possibility of research are grounded so clearly and strongly in that tradition. In fact, it has been convincingly argued by a variety of scholars that modern science finds its beginning in the High Middle Ages,² animated as they were by the Franciscan way, because there we find uniquely combined appreciation for the mystery of the world, confidence in its rationality, and encouragement to delve into it.

RAMIFICATIONS

In conclusion, I want to suggest two other insights related to the above that the Franciscan tradition teaches us about research.

First, research which respects the integrity of the subject and fosters its good is more appropriate than research which breaks the subject to find out how it works. Part of what gives research meaning is the delight in knowing not just raw facts, but things, animals and people themselves. Naturally, this applies to animals and especially people more than rocks or molecules. Jane Goodall, for example, came to know not just about chimpanzees, but the chimps themselves. Such an approach is particularly healthy and fitting in a Franciscan vision, which is why Francis has been named patron saint of ecology.

Secondly, we must be sure to remember the humility of St. Francis. Humility is not self-negation, but rather self-knowledge. Humility is not puffed up because it recognizes that I am not God, but it is also not down-

² For example, Rodney Stark, *For the Glory of God: How Monotheism Led to Reformations, Science, Witch-Hunts, and the End of Slavery* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2003), chapter 3.

hearted because it recognizes that, as God's handiwork and even more so God's beloved child, I am very good. And so are my fellow humans. And so is all of creation. It is because of his humility that Francis can say with reverence and awe, "Brother Sun" and "Sister Moon." Humility gives research its highest meaning, because humility directs all knowledge back to its source and bows in recognition that in the end there is only one who is the Answer who in a real sense gives all knowledge to us.³ And that is just what we experience in our research, is it not, in the so-called "ah ha" moment, the flash of insight that puts all the pieces together. It is experienced precisely as something suddenly received, rather than produced (though certainly we have done something important to prepare fertile ground in which it can take root). It is a gift given from outside ourselves which sparks other questions and calls us on to more and better and deeper answers and ultimately to that Answer to our deepest questions, which, no matter how important our act of searching, can in the end only be received as a Gift.

³ St. Bonaventure's insistence on the necessity of the divine light enlightening the mind (theory of illumination) is so very characteristic of the Franciscan ethos.

Brother Elias: Patron Saint of Business Leaders?

LANCE B. RICHEY, Ph.D.

Prophet. Preacher. Mystic. Stigmatist. Legend. Saint Francis of Assisi was all these things, and much more. Almost eight centuries after his death in 1226, Francis remains perhaps the most beloved of all saints, and tens of thousands of his Franciscan sons and daughters continue his work across the globe. However, there is one word that definitely does not describe Francis: "administrator." No saint was ever less suited to the demands of managing a fast-growing and widely dispersed religious order.

This monumental task fell instead to one of his earliest disciples: Brother Elias of Cortona (1180-1253). He was in many respects a mirror-image of the Saint of Assisi, strong where Francis was weakest and weak where Francis was strongest. Often reviled during his lifetime and largely forgotten afterwards, Brother Elias was a gifted leader who was perhaps more important to the survival and success of the Franciscan movement than Francis himself.

Having started his career by giving away his father's merchandise, Francis's practical lessons for the market-place are sometimes hard to discern. This is complicated by the fact that Francis was made a saint while his justifiably outraged father is usually made the villain in the tale. Given this, it is hardly surprising that pursuing a career in the private sector is viewed by many Christians

as, if not vaguely immoral, then certainly less worthy than a career in public service or non-profit organizations.

To correct this error, in 2012 the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace issued a document, *Vocation of the Business Leader: A Reflection.* Recognizing not only the necessity but the real goodness of private enterprise, the document aims to help business leaders "live out their vocation as faithful stewards to their calling, ... [and] show them the possibilities and promise of the good they can do and which they ought to do —the good which is distinctively theirs."

In light of this renewed interest in developing a distinctive spirituality for businessmen and women, fitted to their unique responsibilities and challenges, perhaps it is time to revisit Brother Elias and the valuable lessons (many positive, but some negative) he offers for business leaders of all ages who struggle to balance the demands of their careers with their baptismal promises.

ELIAS: THE FRANCISCAN CEO

No one builds a movement alone – even Jesus needed twelve apostles. Francis was no different. Within a few months of renouncing his inheritance and family before the Bishop in Assisi, he began to attract followers who wanted to share in his work of rebuilding churches (and, eventually, the Church). One of the earliest was Elias of Cortona, who joined Francis in 1211. Of all those who joined the movement, none would prove more essential to its growth during Francis's lifetime or its survival after his death.

Perhaps no other episode in Francis's life seems more relevant to our modern world than his encounter with the Sultan in 1219, when he first substituted dialogue for

¹ Biographical information about Elias of Cortona is taken from John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order From Its Origins to the Year 1517* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1968); see especially the chapter "Brother Elias 1232-1239," 96-104.

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armed conflict in the Christian-Muslim encounter during the Crusades. However, in 1217, two years before Francis's journey to Egypt, Brother Elias had already been sent by Francis to organize those Friars who lived in the Holy Land near the places where Jesus lived and taught (the care for which they continue to provide to this day). While Francis inspired this mission, it was Elias who laid the organizational foundation for its accomplishment.

By 1220, when the movement he founded had clearly outstripped Francis's ability to organize and administer it, he turned once again to Brother Elias. As Vicar, Elias shepherded the order through a period of dramatic growth (it would exceed five thousand men and hundreds of women scattered across two continents before Francis died). In addition, he obtained approval of a formal rule that gave a solid legal and administrative structure to the often-fractious community. This was accomplished often without help from Francis, whose health was rapidly failing, and occasionally in the face of opposition from him and his more idealistic companions.

When Francis died in 1226, the order to which his religious genius had given birth was threatened by confusion and chaos, only to be rescued yet again by Elias. He oversaw the burial of Francis in Assisi (no small feat in an age when neighboring towns desperately wanted his remains and the pilgrims who would come to venerate them) and helped the order navigate the crisis of authority that Francis's death had caused. In the critical first year following Francis's death, when anarchy threatened the movement, the leadership of Elias was essential to its survival and continued growth. In effect, Brother Elias successfully transferred the religious authority of the saint to the organization he founded, guaranteeing that Francis's vision would not die with him.

Replaced as General Minister in 1227, Elias undertook the massive work of designing, constructing and financing the Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi, certainly the most recognizable monument to the saint we possess. Elias was present when Francis was canonized in 1228,

and led the transfer of his remains to the Basilica in 1230. While very few of the millions of pilgrims to Assisi over the centuries have heard of Brother Elias, the beautiful Church in which they honor the Saint nevertheless remains the work of Elias more than any other person (including Francis).

The canonization of Francis, far from ending troubles within the order, seems only to have increased them as everyone attempted to claim Francis as his or her own. When Elias returned to leadership in 1232, the Franciscan movement was embroiled in controversy over the observance of poverty in an order whose growing size and influence demanded both property and education for its members (both of which Francis had warned against). To the surprise of many, Elias managed not only to hold the order together but to place it in the service of the larger Church. However, this required him to reorganize its structure and to demote or remove those opposed to his reforms. This strategy, while successful, sowed the seeds of Elias's downfall.

As usually happens with a leader who is capable, determined and supremely self-confident, Brother Elias made many enemies. These included not only those purists who wanted to enforce a radical poverty incompatible with the work of the order, but also by the more ambitious and educated priests who resented being led by a lay brother. His abrupt management style certainly gave no little ammunition for his opponents, and by 1239 Elias was forced from leadership of the order. Shortly thereafter he was expelled from the Franciscans entirely.

The story of Elias from 1240 until his death in 1253 is a sad one. After his expulsion from the order, Elias sought the support of Emperor Frederick II (who had already been excommunicated by Pope Gregory IX during their interminable political struggles) and was excommunicated himself. Living as an exile for the next decade, it was only on his deathbed that he repented his disobedience, at long last dying within the fold of the Church on April 22, 1253. Nevertheless, the scandal of his excom-

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munication provided his enemies with an excuse to bury the memory of his not inconsiderable accomplishments with him in Cortona, where he remains to this day.

THE VOCATION OF THE BUSINESS LEADER

Those traits that made Brother Elias absolutely indispensible to the growing Franciscan movement would immediately by recognized and sought-after by any multinational corporation today. Indeed, it requires little imagination to picture a modern Elias leading a culturally-iconic business such as Apple, Starbucks or Nike, with supply chains and customers around the globe. And, unless we condemn all such companies as incompatible with the Christian faith, there must be a way to incarnate the gospel in the lives of those who work there. Perhaps Brother Elias can help show us how to do this.

As Vocation of the Business Leader: A Reflection recognizes, the greatest spiritual danger most businesspeople face is a "split between faith and daily business practice," where the workplace and the worship space occupy entirely separate parts of one's life. This inevitably leads to the idolization of money and power, since

business leaders who do not see themselves serving others and God in their working lives will fill the void of purpose with a less worthy substitute. The divided life is not unified or integrated: it is fundamentally disordered, and thus fails to live up to God's call.²

Unless they are given the tools for seeing their careers as a part of their Christian calling, and not a distraction from it, this "divided life" can prove deadly to faith.

To avoid this spiritual trap, businessmen and women must redefine their careers as a vocation, that is, "a gen-

² Vocation of the Business Leader: A Reflection (Vatican City: Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2012), #10, 6.

uine human and Christian calling" whereby they live out their baptismal promises to promote the common good. Accordingly, *Vocation of the Business Leader* emphasizes the dignity of business leaders, who

have a special role to play in the unfolding of creation—they not only provide goods and services and constantly improve them through innovating and harnessing science and technology, but they also help to shape organizations which will extend this work into the future.³

In a business culture dominated by short-term thinking, business leaders need to remember that the influence of their work reaches far beyond the next quarterly statement or shareholder meeting, and into the lives of countless people unknown to them. Here the legacy of Brother Elias can serve as a model for recognizing the long-term effects of our seemingly mundane daily labors in the office. More than 750 years after his death, every Franciscan novice who first puts on the habit, and every pilgrim who kneels before Francis's tomb, still shares in and deeply benefits from the work of Elias as leader and builder. To be a true leader is to cooperate with the creative work of the Spirit.

To make a business succeed, though, and to organize a large group of workers such that their labors benefit both them and the world outside the company, often requires one to make very hard decisions about personnel and positions. In every organization, executive decisions must constantly be made not only about whom to hire, but also whom to fire, and not only about where to invest resources, but also where to divest them as well. All these decisions have very real human costs, making it even more important that those making them be persons of principle and vision.

 $^{^{3}}$ Vocation of the Business Leader, #7, 5.

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Because of the importance of these decisions, in a good business leader there is "no substitute for sound judgment (practical wisdom) and right relationships (justice)." Only a leader with both can discern the right course for the company which strikes an appropriate balance between compassion for individual workers and protection of the common good of all employees and customers. There is no magic formula that fits every company in every situation. Rather, as *Vocation of the Business Leader* tells us.

ethical social principles, illumined for Christians by the Gospel, provide direction for good businesses, but the navigation falls to the seasoned and intelligent judgments of virtuous business leaders who can wisely manage the complexity and tensions arising in particular cases.⁴

This burden of leadership, which every business leader has felt at some time, is both the most unpleasant and the most important task entrusted to them. It is often the source of tension, resentment and anxiety among all affected, yet without it no good thing can happen in a company. As Francis himself had learned to his dismay, leading Franciscans is not unlike herding cats. And while Francis could lay that task aside, it fell to Brother Elias to take it back up and carry it for many years. While he did not always perform it perfectly or graciously (and which leader does?), he did perform it well. His reward, ultimately, was to be despised by those he served and driven from the very order he had saved – and even after his death to be concealed in the shadow of the universally-beloved Francis.

Even in his seeming failure and rejection as a leader, Brother Elias has much to teach leaders of today. No one who professes faith in a man who died on the cross, abandoned by his followers and condemned as a

 $^{^{\}rm 4}$ Vocation of the Business Leader, #59, 19.

criminal, can ever make popularity the ultimate measure of success. If we remember that Elias's rejection by his brethren and suffering as an exile ended in repentance and reconciliation, so too should every Christian business leader keep in mind that even unpopularity and apparent failure should be judged from a longer perspective than the length of one's own career with a company. Like any effective leader, Elias's failures can be as instructive and valuable as his successes, no more so than in this case.

A PATRON SAINT OF BUSINESS LEADERS?

Clearly, Francis's personality could not have been less suited to the demands of leadership over the movement which his own charisma and sanctity had brought into existence. Even during his own lifetime the Franciscan movement had outstripped Francis's always minimal ability to organize and direct it. Were it not for the gifts and labors of the oft-reviled and almost-forgotten Brother Elias, the religious movement begun by Francis might well have died with him. Indeed, there is no other person in the history of the Franciscan order to whom we are more indebted for preserving the memory and work of Francis than Brother Elias.

Almost entirely forgotten outside of Franciscan circles (and largely forgotten even there), Brother Elias of Cortona remains a fascinating and enigmatic figure, a mirrorimage who both contrasts with and completes our image of Saint Francis. An able administrator when Francis most needed one, a legislator and lawyer when the movement most needed one, an architect and financier when Assisi most needed one, and leader and (perhaps) dictator when the order required one, Elias was everything that Francis was not. However, as is so often the case, the very gifts and skills which made him an indispensible man also made him a misfit within the Franciscan order, appreciated by none and reviled by those who needed him

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most. And if his stiff neck led to his excommunication, his fundamentally Franciscan heart eventually led him to repentance as well.

The stated purpose of Vocation of the Business Leader: A Reflection is to help business leaders to "see the challenges and opportunities in the world of work; judge them according to the social principles of the Church; and act as leaders who serve God."5 On those criteria, and with tongue only slightly in cheek, I would propose that Brother Elias of Cortona (uncanonized as he is and will almost certainly remain) be named Patron Saint of Business Leaders. The challenges which Brother Elias successfully confronted in organizing and managing a growing religious movement are certainly familiar to any businessperson trying to break into a new market, grow a company and improve the quality not only of her product but the lives of her co-workers as well. When measured against that demanding standard, and not the more ethereal one by which we judge Saint Francis, Brother Elias more than measures up as a flawed but gifted leader deserving of more recognition and respect than he received from those whom he struggled to serve. As any business leader would agree, who better for a Patron Saint?

 $^{^{5}}$ Vocation of the Business Leader, 3.

THE CHALLENGE OF BEING AN AFRICAN RELIGIOUS WOMAN TODAY

GLORIA WIRBA, T.S.S.F.

Introduction

In a culture still imprisoned by certain traditions, taboos and practices which often render, particularly, women and children victims of enormous pain and suffering, African religious women today seek various ways of proclaiming the Gospel to their people as the Good News, a message of life. Consecration through the profession of the evangelical counsels inspires a way of living that has a glaring or eloquent social impact on the African society. When lived fully and authentically, these evangelical values become a great challenge to this society dominated by craving for material goods, liberty and affection. In fact, today African religious women are invited to stand as eloquent witnesses of the Kingdom of God which is the principal longing of the human heart. This message is not only to be communicated in words, but fundamentally through fidelity and authenticity to their vocation.

Religious life has found fertile ground in Africa and continues to experience rapid growth. Evidently, its rate of expansion contrasts favorably with the stagnation and decline of religious vocations presently experienced by the Churches in Europe and North America. This increase leaves no doubt about the significant numeric force of religious women in this continent. While we admit the rapid growth and the indispensable contribution of African religious women to the African Church today, we

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are equally aware of the many challenges they are called upon to confront. Often when these challenges are not adequately handled they not only render the apostolates less fruitful, but above all they diminish the initial enthusiasm and fidelity to the religious vocation.

THE CHALLENGE TO SEARCH FOR THEIR SPECIFIC IDENTITY

The basic challenge for African religious women today is the search for their specific identity as women from the African culture, called, consecrated and sent on mission to evangelize and to incarnate the Gospel into their own socio-cultural reality. This brings our minds to a crucial question of what it actually means to be a consecrated religious woman in Africa with all the cultural, social, political and economic problems presently ravaging this continent. The African woman has generously welcomed religious life but today more than ever the question of who she is and what it means to be a religious woman in African contemporary society haunts her conscience, both at the individual and the community levels.

African religious women question the validity of a form of life simply transferred from Europe and America to Africa. Though it has and still bears fruit, they believe it would bear more fruit if it is authentically inculturated into the African cultural, social and economic reality. According to Semporé, this process demands three concrete steps: to discern what in the African culture is not compatible or does not favor the growth and full realization of this way of life. Secondly, to discern in the gift received what belongs to its essence and inalienable nature and what to the package. Thirdly, to determine the necessary help, care and attention to be given to this form of life for it to be authentically implanted so that it might bear abundant and desirable fruit in the African soil.¹

¹ Cf. S. Sempore, "Les Défis de la Vie Religieuse en Afrique: Eclairage Historique," in *Annales de l'Ecole Théologique Saint-Cyprien*, 17 (2005): 265.

THE CHALLENGE TO BE PROPHETIC WITNESSES

The role of an African woman becomes more prominent when life is concerned; wherever life is threatened, she feels deeply intimidated and stands on the forefront for its defense. African religious women are thus called upon to stand on the forefront to witness to the Gospel as the message of life and love. In effect, Africa today needs prophets who do not only denounce the social, economic, cultural and political ills of this society, but who equally demonstrate with their lives another way of living rooted on the Gospel values and who can even go as far as offering their lives for the Truth. Prophetic witness does not consist fundamentally in proclamation, but derives from a "persuasive power, from consistency between proclamation and life."2 Thus, it is not based principally on doing something, but rather on being for Somebody - Jesus - and the readiness to reveal that Person to the society that is constantly blind or alienates itself from him.

To incarnate the Gospel message into their sociocultural reality, African religious women must identify their prophetic mission in the African Church and in the reality of their present society. This is a challenge to rediscover the prophetic role of our founders/foundresses, i.e. rediscovering the activity of the Holy Spirit which animated them and which continues to be at work today. This entails going back to the roots, to the Gospel vocation of the Church. It equally means relating the socio-cultural conditions of our contemporary society with our charism³ which is a dynamic force to be interpreted according to various situations, time and space.

African religious women are challenged to respond to the perennial questions which their people ask about this present life and the life to come, about the mystery of pain and suffering, about relationships, etc.

² Vita Consecrata, n. 85.

³ Cf. M. Azevello, *Vocation for Mission: The Challenge of Religious Life Today* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 142.

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As consecrated persons they are called to be a light in a society characterized by political instability, rampant conflicts and wars, sickness, death etc. These are divine pleas which only souls accustomed to following God's will in everything can assimilate faithfully and then translate courageously into choices which are consistent with the original charism and which correspond to the demands of the concrete life situation. Faced with the many and pressing problems which sometimes seem to compromise or even overwhelm them, consecrated women in Africa today cannot fail to feel the commitment to bear in their hearts and in their prayer the innumerable needs of their people. With the feminine sensibility and patience they are invited to help their people to be aware of the need for God and for an effort of liberation from sin and death.

The rediscovery of the Gospel roots of our religious life is for today's religious women of Africa a fundamental, most urgent and unavoidable task. Our contribution to evangelization does not lie so much on our "doing" but fundamentally on our "being," which proves the truth of what we proclaim. Without authenticity of life, the religious identity is lost and mission is thus transformed into a counter-witness. In fact, "the first form of evangelization today is witness. People today put more trust in witnesses than in teachers, in experience than in teaching, and in life and action than in theories."

THE CHALLENGE FOR AN INTEGRAL RELIGIOUS FORMATION

In Africa today, religious congregations are graced with numerous vocations, but handicapped by the lack of a solid formation which would help them to understand their identity and role in the Church and to assume it fully as African women consecrated totally to God in the service of their brothers and sisters. In effect, the crucial question that faces these religious women could be summed up by the question: What type of formation for

⁴ Cf. Vita Consecrata, n. 73.

 $^{^{5}}$ Redemptoris missio, n. 42 and Evangelii nuntiandi, n. 41.

which form of religious life? Since formation depends very much on the concepts that we have about religious life and on how it is lived, from the image that is created and projected about it, there is a lack of a deep understanding of this way of life by our people and sometimes by some religious themselves who equally misunderstand what constitutes authentic formation for African religious women.

FORMATION TO BE AUTHENTIC AFRICAN WOMEN

I am personally convinced that formation to become a faithful African religious woman can only be founded on her authenticity as an African woman; rendering the African woman genuine not only according to the cultural values and norms, but letting the Gospel enlighten, purify and uplift these values. This would be the pillar on which religious formation in its various aspects could anchor to create religious women who feel accomplished and fully realized; women who are fully responsible with deep personal convictions, who strive to implement, to share and who are capable of taking initiatives as mature and responsible women religious.

In fact, Africa today has a deep need for religious women who would carry in themselves the passionate love of God which they themselves have personally experienced and who will spread it to others as a spark of hope for a better future. In a society characterized by so much pain, suffering, fear, anguish and all sorts of social and political ills, religious women are challenged to shine out as signs of God's infinite love and mercy and of the future realisation of the Kingdom. Since one can only give what he/she has, the efficiency and depth of this mission lies heavily on who they themselves are as women in the African culture who have dedicated themselves to be used by God as instruments of his mercy and love.

For this to be truly realized there is an urgent need for a type of formation which distinguishes as much as possible the content from the form, the value itself from

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the cultural formulation; in other words formation that proposes and inculcates evangelical and charismatic values to African girls without linking them to the Western culture or setting Western religious women as models. African religious women today need a type of religious formation which will safeguard the anthropological values of their culture, while translating them into different modalities of believing, living and of expression in concrete behavior. This calls for a need to transcend the external and to attain the internal factors, to go beyond the form to discover the essence. It is not enough to design a religious dress according to the African pattern, to adopt some cultural aspects in the profession ritual, for example blood pact among the Congolese sisters, but there is need to touch the cultural views of life, of the world, of reality, of relating to others and with God as the Ultimate Reality. This delicate, yet important task regards African religious women themselves who are challenged to present themselves as authentic women with their feminine character that must first be enlightened by the personal experience with God who has consecrated and sent them to be signs of his boundless love and mercy. In effect, when people meet them, they should first see African women who have chosen to follow God in a specific way which does not alienate, but brings them closer to their people with a particular mission of revealing God's love.

We could thus affirm that without hesitation the type of religious formation that is useful and effective for the African woman today is that which does not in any way disfigure her African identity but which modifies, transforms and purifies certain aspects of her cultural baggage. At the same time she must be open to learn what is good and valuable in other cultures. She must remain an African woman consecrated to God. It is this being as African that the grace of God will assume to make her an

authentic religious.⁶ This is a long and complex duty, but not without fruits.

FORMATION TO BE FAITHFUL RELIGIOUS WOMEN

For the formation of African religious women to be complete and genuine, it must include every aspect of the Christian life; provide a human, cultural, spiritual and pastoral preparation which pays particular attention to the harmonious integration of all its various aspects.⁷ It must touch in a profound way the spiritual dimension which is the unifying centre of the journey into religious life since the entire process configures and leads towards Christ. This entails a serious pedagogy of faith aimed at helping African religious women to attain a mature and profound experience of God through reading and listening to His Word, participation in the sacraments, liturgical celebration, personal and community prayer, spiritual reading, spiritual direction, etc. All these practices are aimed at helping them to become more and more disciples of Christ, getting in close union with and in configuration to Him. It is a matter of putting on His mind and sharing in a deeper manner His gift of Himself to the Father and His brotherly service to humanity. This process requires a genuine and continuous conversion; putting on the mind of Christ (cf. Romans 13:14), stripping off selfishness and egoism (cf. Ephesians 4: 22-24) and walking according to the dictates of the Holy Spirit.8 Spiritual formation should be founded on profound biblical-theological and spiritual studies.

Spiritual life is the most essential dimension of religious consecration through which religious discover their specific identity and allow themselves to be guided by

⁶ Cf. Leon de Saint Moulin (ed.), *Oeuvres Complètes du Cardinal Malula, Textes Concernant la Vie Religieuses*, Vol. 5: 256-57.

⁷ Cf. Vita Consecrata, n. 65.

⁸ Cf. Sacred Congregation for Religious and For Secular Institutes, *Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on Religious Life* (May 31, 1983), n. 45.

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the charismatic gift of the institute. Religious formation, thus, promotes a spirituality that permits those involved to interiorise their experience of God through personal prayer, liturgical celebration, spiritual exercises, various forms of ascetism, etc. This formation is also based on the study, understanding and practice of the evangelical counsels, i.e. learning to put on Christ in his poverty, obedience and love, to know deeply the spirituality, rule and constitutions of the institute. This dynamic process starts with initial stage of religious life and continues for the rest of life. The need for a constant maturity in the religious experience strengthened by God's grace, personal efforts and determination demands that this formation be continuous, hence, the need for permanent formation.

THE CHALLENGE TO BE SELF-RELIANT

Religious life will never be effectively incarnated in Africa unless our communities are organized according to our proper resources and standard of life. If they actually wish to cease appearing like foreign institutions imported to the tropics which cannot survive without foreign aid, African religious women must set up their structures and works according to their local possibilities and capacities. In talking about this syndrome in the African Church which applies forcefully to religious congregations, Uzukwu underlines dependency as an attitude which kills initiative and creativity thus rendering the African Church poorer:

Indeed, the dependency syndrome of the Churches in Africa on the material level appears to be congenital. Material dependency leaves the road wide open to lack of creativity and even blackmail ... the beggar has no self-respect. Self-respect of the

⁹ Cf. N. Mugarukiro, "La Religieuse Africaine et l'Inculturation de la vie consacrée en Afrique Noire," in *Revue Africaine de Théologie*, 12 (1988): 134.

Churches in Africa and indeed for the African nations, will keep on being elusive until there is a certain level of self-reliance on the material level.¹⁰

A real poor person in the evangelical sense is not one who counts and is satisfied with what others give, but rather one who through his/her own sweat helps to ameliorate his/her own condition and that of others. Work thus constitutes an essential and integral part of Christian poverty. St Paul himself says it: "We urged you when we were with you not to let anyone eat who refused to work.... In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we urge and call on people like this kind to go on working and earning the food they that they eat" (2 Thess 3:12). The history of religious life confirms extensively how work has always constituted a fundamental chapter for each return to the authentic spirit of the Gospel. Monasteries of the medieval era are a splendid example of centres not only of prayer, but of development and culture. Hence the motto of the Benedictines: Prayer and Work.

Most of the African congregations count essentially on foreign aid for survival. Some still consider this aid an inalienable right. While I personally appreciate the value of Christian solidarity and collaboration, I emphatically underline the danger of the syndrome of dependence which characterizes religious life in Africa. This does not only affect the lifestyle, but equally the future of religious life in this continent; once this umbilical cord will be cut, the results will be a serious crisis with drastic and dramatic repercussions.

Dependence renders us poor in a double sense; poor because of our context and above all because of the lost of identity. We keep attracting the sympathy of others so as to continue to benefit from their financial resources.¹¹

¹⁰ E. Uzukwu, *A listening Church: Autonomy and Communion in African Churches* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 88.

¹¹ Cf. G. Ndonji, "Le problématique de la pauvreté religieuse dans un contexte de misère sociale," in Asuma – Usuma (ed.), La Vie Consacrée dans l'Eglise di Congo: Bilans et Perspectives, Actes du Colloque

Gloria Wirba

This makes our poverty to be absolute and total; when persons are bereft of their identity, their dignity, thought, ambitions and even the spirit of creativity, they sink into a type of poverty which does not only concern the external goods or possessions, but which strike at the very being, essence and dignity of the human person. This is what Mveng refers to as "anthropological poverty." ¹²

Conclusion

The African Church and society today look in hopeful expectancy to their religious women as they struggle to grasp their real identity and role amidst many challenges and difficulties. Effectively, African religious women ardently desire to become who they are truly called to be; authentic African women consecrated and sent on mission to incarnate the Gospel message into their socio-cultural reality. Definitely, contemporary Africa needs religious women who are an embodiment of the passionate love of God and its incarnation into the various situations of life. Therefore, there is an ardent need for a type of formation which does not alienate these women from their culture, but which integrates them into it as signs of hope for their people. In this way their religious consecration through the profession of the evangelical counsels will have an eloquent and fruitful impact on their society characterized by many difficulties and challenges.

National sur la Vie Consacrée en R. D. Congo (Kinshasa: Mediaspaul Publication, 2007), 91-92.

¹² E. Mveng, *Identità Africana e Cristianesimo* (Torino: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1990), 100.

BOOK REVIEW

André Vauchez. Francis of Assisi The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint. Yale University Press, 2012.

André Vauchez published his first article on Francis of Assisi in 1968. He did not stop at that first article and kept taking notes on the Umbrian saint. Forty years later, he turned his abundant data into a highly accomplished book. It was published in Paris by Fayard in 2009 and won the Chateaubriand prize for history in 2010. It has now appeared in English, translated by a student of his (at the Sorbonne), Michael Cusato, and published by Yale University Press (2012).

The substantial volume is divided into four parts, covering 336 pages. It has a preface (ix-xv) and supporting material (Notes, Bibliography, Index, and other matter) on pages 337-98. I range the book above the many lives of Francis that have appeared in recent years. I will sum up the four parts and then explain my hesitation at following Vauchez on his historiographical journey.

The first of the four parts of the book tells the story of Francis ("A Biographical Sketch, 1182-1226," 1-135). Vauchez turns to *The Legend of the Three Companions* as the "best guide" for an account of his youth. Towards the end of an excellent description of Assisi as a commune, he observes that Francis "was never taken in by any mythology of progress" (13). No social program, no politics. He then shifts into Francis's "public life" (33) by stressing the slow mutation in his ways, clearly distinct

¹ Émissions Art d'Oise, heard January 17, 2013.

from a sudden conversion. He emphasizes that Francis remained a layman as he turned religious. Repeatedly in the book Vauchez mentions Francis's lay identity. Once the brotherhood began and his reputation of holiness spread, Francis used his communicative skills to play himself, as he was, and nothing more. His sincerity and integrity found favor.

In his account Vauchez gives Francis's encounter with Sultan al-Kamil close attention (86-94). He reviews the literature on the two men. He concludes that Francis both earned and extended respect in his meeting with al-Malik al-Kamil. As with Vauchez's description of the commune, this is one of several outstanding if untitled minichapters woven into the book.

At one moment Vauchez turns to what he sees as "institutional vagueness" in the early years of the fraternity, along with the need to clear its relations with the church. He navigates the question carefully without grappling at any length with the details of the two Rules. If the question is institutional, then the Rules are, somehow, the answer. The overworked story where Francis called himself a fool (104) obscures seeing the question whole. After all, there was an approved Rule at hand and, whatever the year, it had Francis's support. Vauchez returns to the question in the book's fourth part where he speaks about Francis and the church.

This part of the book is finished with several clear and balanced pages on the stigmatization (128-31), another successful minichapter. Vauchez returns to the question later on (217) and finishes by taking a positive stand on the strange wounds (227). He concludes his "biographical sketch" by looking closely at Francis's last words to his brothers, the *Testament*, a text often referred to in the preceding pages.

With the biography of Francis covered, Vauchez covers Francis's death and his immediate afterlife in the second part of the book ("Death and Transfiguration of Francis, 1226-1253," 137-81). Pope Gregory IX saw rapidly to Francis's canonization (1228). The canonization bull

claimed him as ally and support against the church's enemies. In his account of Francis's life, a companion to the canonization, Thomas of Celano introduced Pope Gregory and the poor and humble Francis as the church's answer to the problems and challenges of the times. In Thomas's extension of "poor and humble" to the brotherhood, Vauchez sees "the first attempt" (149) to make Francis's message that of the order.² At this passage of the story he takes the time to bring in the basilica, Francis's final resting place, with another fine minichapter.

The book's second part includes two chapters, Chapters 3 and 4. (The first and third parts each contain two chapters as well, whereas the fourth has six chapters.) In Chapter 4, Francis dies a second time (181). He slips away from the common memory. I find following Vauchez here difficult, for there is too much contrary evidence to speak of a second death of Francis as he does. Moreover he begins Part III by observing that, between 1230 and 1263, "lives of Francis multiplied" (185).

In Part III André Vauchez surveys "Images and Myths of Francis of Assisi from the Middle Ages to Today " (185-251). (Clearly this is a huge hunk of time and he brings it off well.) After considering the difficulties of handling the various stories about Francis, he arrives at the Legenda maior of Bonaventure of Bagnoregio. Bonaventure set out to produce the definitive account. He drew on the available data to present an ascetic and mystical Francis. With the support of the general chapter of 1266, he declared it the only and official image of the saint. Other narratives were to be collected and destroyed, not only in the order's convents but elsewhere as well. A master of prose as well as of theology, Bonaventure "largely succeeded" (196 and 200) in imposing his Legenda as the story. There were still many friars who did not accept a purely theological Francis and, though they have caused

² Poverty and humility appear early in Franciscan history, at the beginning of *Early Rule* IX. Although Thomas of Celano drew on the *Early Rule* for §§38-41, his use of the material indicates clearly that he did not understand the text.

trouble down to our day, by and large the institution had tamed its saint and made him pastorally useful to the church. Before moving on to modern times, Vauchez has one of his minichapters on the many paintings of Francis. He concludes by referring to Bellini's Francis (circa 1490). Fayard put the painting on the cover of its François d'Assise. Entre histoire et mémoire (Francis of Assisi. Between History and Memory).

With Part III, Chapter 6, Vauchez surveys the way Francis was handled from the "sixteenth to the twentieth centuries" (229-48). He starts with Luther and ends with the Italian historians, with Manselli, Merlo, Miccoli, *e tuti quanti*. Along the way, he locates the beginning of Franciscan historiography in the Order, mentioning especially Luke Wadding, whose *Annales* is a treasure-trove of information (1625ff.). Paul Sabatier sets off contemporary scholarship with his life of Francis (1893-1894).

Vauchez continues his study of Francis in Part Four (247-336) by reflecting on points that regularly arise in a discussion of Francis's life: his experience of God as well as of the world, his way with Scripture, Francis's charism and his religion. These essays come across as personal reflections, stimulated by Vauchez' study of Francis of Assisi. This part of the book is more open to discussion than his historical readings, for it involves presuppositions about history and theology.

Vauchez' book is, as the title makes clear, first and foremost a history of Francis. It is a history by a recognized medievalist approaching the end of a busy and successful career. A book of considerable merit, it will exercise much influence on those who examine Franciscan origins and try to understand Francis of Assisi. Alas, Vauchez works too easily with the stories about Francis that began accumulating soon after his death. Put another way, Vauchez does not give the early writings (commonly referred to as Francis's writings) the primary attention they deserve. He tells the story of Saint Francis rather than of Brother Francis. Moreover, although he uses the

The Cord, 63.2 (2013)

term "movement" to designate the brotherhood, he holds fast to Francis's (and the brothers') consciously harmless relation to the society of his day. (We find the same in the books and essays of the Italian historians whom he hails. Miccoli, in particular, forswears the slightest tint of politics in Francis's behavior.) In *The Letter to the Faithful* (which I call the "Message of Recall and Encouragement," with the earliest copy of the text as my warrant), Francis censures as blind the way the wealthy use their possessions. He then tells the story of a rich and dying man who will not see to a just distribution of his holdings. He leaves them to his family. Francis sends him to hell for such social injustice. And he tells his readers to make copies of the text and circulate it. This, I dare propose, is something more than an encouragement to private piety.

David Flood, O.F.M. St. Bonaventure University

BOOK REVIEW

St. Bonaventure. *Journey into God*, trans. Josef Raischl and André Cirino. *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*. Bonaventure Journey Series, Vol. 1. Phoenix, AZ: Tau Publishing, 2012.

There is a history in the making of this text by Josef Raischl and André Cirino that tells the story of a medieval manuscript coming to life again in the twenty-first century. Over the years, many have had the pleasure of experiencing Bonaventure through the Journey Into God Retreat with Raischl and Cirino, assisted by Mary Esther Stewart. The original book, Journey Into God: A Forty Day Retreat with Bonaventure, Francis and Clare, with Zachary Hayes's translation of the Itinerarium Mentis in Deum, was a good means in assisting retreatants on their journey. However, over the years, with feedback from retreatants as well as trying to gain a more insightful translation for the twenty-first century, a newer and more understandable version of the translation is available. In the Introduction, Raischl explains they have chosen the word "psyche" for mens in this new translation to encompass the synonyms of soul, mind and spirit to be inclusive with the meaning of life, vitality and being.

The reader will also notice that this is Volume One in the Bonaventure Series by Tau Publishing along with the Journey Into God Retreat Team member, Mary Esther Stewart's, recent publication of *Meet Our Brother Bonaventure: Reflections on The Journey into God.*

One of the first insights to catch the reader's eye is the beautiful artwork and photography that accompanies the themes and chapters. The artwork and photography are provided not only by the authors, but also by their family members and friends, Josef, Jona Raischl, and Walter Hackhoker. Each piece of artwork in the book provides an excerpt from the text of Journey into God for further personal reflection and understanding of the meaning for the reader.

In this new translation, André Cirino sets the tone with a very creative and imaginative life of Saint Bonaventure written in the first person. It is based on actual historical data but provides the reader with insights from Saint Bonaventure himself. This covers his life from growing up in Bagnoregio, his days in Paris at the University of Paris with his writings, his appointment as the general minister in a time of turmoil in the Order, his journey to LaVerna to find his own soul in God, the appointments by the Pope as Archbishop and Cardinal, leading to meeting Sister Death and being canonized a saint and Seraphic Doctor of The Church. It is in this setting that one experiences a picturesque beginning in the Prologue of Journey Into God. The scene is an illumination of the sky above Mount LaVerna of God's goodness. This is where Bonaventure begins his reflection of the peace of spirit that Francis also experienced in his journey into God.

This is a reminder from Bonaventure to take our time and "ruminate" over the experience of the Journey in which we are about to enter. Chapter One is titled: *The Steps of the Journey into God and the Contemplation of God through the Vestiges in the Universe.* The reader is also guided by the reflection: "Here begins the contemplation of the poor one in the desert." This is followed by scenes of a single candle surrounded by the flicker of surrounding flames symbolizing the upward movement to God with quotes from the first chapter's text. The highest good of God is represented by a close-up view of the seeds of a flower, contemplation of truth from the mountain peaks and the

journey to the heart with a lone person on a mountain peak in the distance. The chapter ends by leading us into the next chapter through the eyes of a butterfly reminding us of the spiritual senses from the heart to praising all of God's creation.

A lily pad is the opening for Chapter Two: The Contemplation of God in the Vestiges in the World of the Senses. The picture is of a suspended church ceiling and is the essence of beauty without proportion followed by the symbol used in many of Cirino's writings and lectures. It is an overflowing water fountain emanating the overflowing goodness of God's delight and the Trinity. The uniqueness of God's creation is seen in the last part of the chapter of an unusual prairie bush blowing in the wind. It is interesting that the black and white photo of two hands clasping each other signifying the power of choice leads us into Chapter Three: The Contemplation of God through the image imprinted on Our Natural Powers. What are those natural powers? Could it be a cave or could it be a tomb in the middle of a mountain that teaches us to see the truth within ourselves? The towering white birch trees together stress above all that the desire that moves us to love the most is happiness.

The Contemplation of God in the Image Reformed by the Gifts of Grace for Chapter Four is again represented by a black and white picture of hands, but this time they are the hands of an elderly person and a very young person working together on a puzzle with a message that at times human beings totally immersed in deception are unable to see themselves as the image of God. Yet we may see that divine Wisdom of God in a flood of light shining through the window of an old stone house with the shadow imprint on the ground of these intellectual lights. The depth of that discerning wisdom is seen in an ocean sunrise with vibrating colors remind us that this is ours only if we believe, hope, and love in Christ.

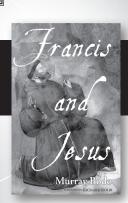
Chapter Five enters into the realm of *The Contemplation* of the Divine Unity through God's Primary Name, Which is Being with a small excerpt of the top of the San Damiano

Cross of Christ looking up to the Father. The image of being in the Alpha and the Omega that its being remains in the present with neither past or future is shown by a lone burnt out tree standing in a rock canyon against the dark blue sky. One can also picture a piece of dried out driftwood on the rocky seashore stressing that being may occur only from non-being. A scene out of Calvary leads the reader into Chapter Six: *The Contemplation of the Most Blessed Trinity in Its Name, Which is Good,* reverberates that God is all powerful, all knowing and all good. A waterfall similar to the one in the movie *The Mission,* expresses that "the supreme good is supremely self-diffusive."

An antiquated light post seen at the end of the journey leaving behind the world of senses now challenges one to be drawn back into unity with the One. This is From The Mystical Experience our Intellect Rests and Our Affection Passes over Entirely into God through Ecstasy for Chapter Seven. The helplessness of Nature and even personal effort are portrayed in the mysteriousness of a collage of bright colors from a forest fire to contemplate all these things that transcend not only the world of the senses, but those within ourselves. This is followed by a peaceful and serene scene of a quiet ocean sunset with a lone seagull and in the distance the setting sun resting across the ocean and shore to that point in time when the "truly contemplative person is filled with the light of heavenly wisdom."

The reader is brought to the close of the journey with a violet light show in the sky of lightning with the challenge that asks: How is this all to come into one's being? This will depend on: ask grace, not doctrine; desire, not intellect; the groaning of prayer and not studious reading; the Spouse not the teacher; darkness not clarity. Amen.

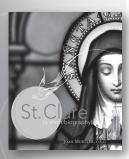
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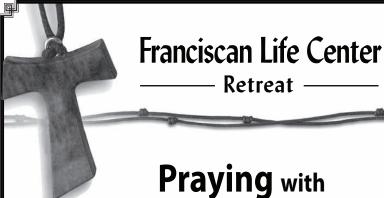
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Ramona Miller, OSF developed her affection for Bonaventure's writings while earning her Master's Degree at St. Bonaventure University. Her extensive background includes ministering in parishes, retreat centers, Franciscan School of Theology and serving as a member of her congregational leadership team. She is the author of *In the Footsteps of Saint Clare* and is co-author of *Praying with Clare of Assisi*.

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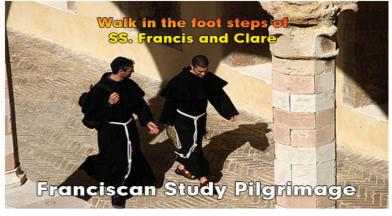
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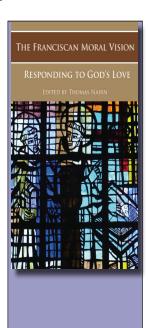
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In the last half century, contemporary Catholic moral theology has developed at a rapid pace. Franciscan scholars have played a major part in this renewal of contemporary moral theology. Yet, these moral insights from the Franciscan tradition have, to a great extent, been overlooked by the English speaking world since many of the works have not been available in English. The authors of this volume of essays hope that this contribution on the Franciscan moral vision will help to broaden the conversation regarding moral theology and continue the work already accomplished by the many authors working in non-English languages. Scholar contributors to this volume of essays include Joseph Chinnici, Kenan Osborne, Thomas Shannon, Thomas Nairn and Mary Beth Ingham.

For too long the Franciscan contribution to the personalist, relational turn in renewing moral theology has been largely overlooked in the English speaking world. With this volume, however, we now have access to an understanding of the moral life rooted in the spiritual experience of divine love in the life of St. Francis and in the subsequent reflection of the Franciscan tradition on God's graciously gifting us with creation, the Incarnation, the Holy Spirit, and the dignity of each person. This collection, as is the Franciscan moral vision itself, is a fine example of the inseparability of morality and spirituality.

The Franciscan moral vision is an aesthetic vision whereby living morally is the act of reflecting the beauty, graciousness, and generosity of the Triune God. Such an approach to the moral life stands in contrast to the more familiar stance emphasizing divine judgment, human fallenness, sin, and the law.

A great service of these essays is to draw out the implications of "generosity in action" not only for personal discernment but also for social justice, ecology, and economics. By moving from vision to practice, these essays participate in the spirit of Francis to be a prophetic voice calling us to live in self-giving relationships of mutuality with one another and, indeed, with all of creation.

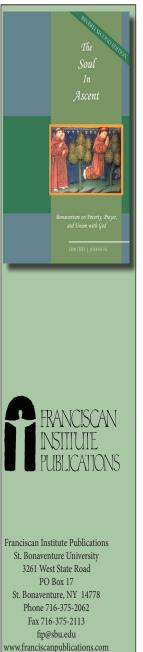
 Richard M. Gula, S.S., currently serves as the Director of Personnel for the Society of St. Sulpice, Baltimore, MD. His writings include The Good Life: Where Morality and Spirituality Meet (1999) and Moral Discernment: Moral Decision Guide (1997).



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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.



Educational Enrichment: One Week

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

Franciscan Institute, Summer 2013

A Theology of Presence and Ministry in the Franciscan Tradition

Dr. Amanda Quantz

Two New Courses

Rooted in its belief in and understanding of the nature and revelation of the Triune God, the Franciscan Tradition has articulated its understanding of the fundamental vocation of every person in terms of the following of Christ (*imitatio Christi*) after the example of Francis and Clare of Assisi in "word and deed," as the brothers and sisters, religious and lay, "going through the world." This course will explore the fundamental theological assumptions, core values, attitudes and perspectives proposed by the tradition as a particular way of being with and for others in various forms of service and pastoral care.

Students who participate in this course will have a clear understanding of (1) the theological-spiritual vision that frames and animates the life and ministry of Franciscans, (2) the practical attitudes and actions that embody that vision, and (3) the personal and interpersonal skills needed for an appropriate use of self in ministry and (4) the core set of Franciscan beliefs, values, and actions that ideally characterize "their way" of being in the world and serving "with great humility."



Retrieving Franciscan Philosophy for Social Engagement

Keith Douglas Warner OFM

Franciscan social philosophy proposes the ideals of St. Francis to shape society and its political and economic institutions. This course will examine how medieval friars expressed a Franciscan understanding of economics, politics, and society. It will use a retrieval methodology to investigate core philosophical and ethical values from this tradition that could contribute to contemporary social engagement. It will investigate the congruence between entrepreneur-ship, generosity and an ethic of mutuality; between poverty, the philosophy of money, and the moral agency of the poor; and between fraternity, the ethic of contract and the common good. As a result of this class, students will be able to describe the influence of Franciscan social philosophy on political economic thought and Catholic social teaching, and to contribute to the retrieval of Franciscan philosophy for contemporary social engagement with issues of economic justice, globalization, and civic life.

Three Weeks, July 1 - 19, 2013

Monday - Friday

For Information and Details contact:

franinst@sbu.edu; Email: nriggs@sbu.edu; Call: 716-375-2105



At the printer:

Title: Early Commentaries on the Rule of the Friars Minor

Edited by David Flood, O.F.M.

ISBN: 978-1-57659-236-6 Price: \$49.95

Pages: 282

Publication Date: May 2013

Format: Tradepaper

Series: Early Commentaries on the Rule of the Friars Minor,

Volume 1

BISAC REL 108020 RELIGION/Christian Church/History

REL 010000 RELIGION/Christianity/Catholic

REL 081000 RELIGION/Clergy

Volume I contains The 1242 Commentary (formerly known as The Four Masters, or The Paris Masters), The Commentary of Hugh of Digne, The Commentary of David of Augsburg and The Commentary of John of Wales. The study of rule commentaries is a crucial part of understanding the rationale behind the way of life of the friars. By publishing a series of translation of the most significant early rule commentaries, the Franciscan Institute seeks to encourage the study of these documents and render the commentaries accessible to a wider audience. This volume will be accompanied by two others: Volume II will contain translations of the Commentaries of John Pecham and Peter of John Olivi. Volume III will provide a translation of the Commentary of Angelo of Clareno.

DAVID FLOOD, O.F.M., is a member of the research faculty at the Franciscan Institute. A renowned and pioneering scholar of Franciscan history, he is the author of fifteen books, numerous articles and several critical editions of tests on early Franciscan history. He received his doctorates in history and philosophy from the Universität Koln. With FRANCISCAN INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS, he has published: The Daily Labor of Early Franciscans (2010), Peter of John Olivi on Genesis (2007, critical edition), Peter of John Olivi on the Acts of the Apostles (2001, critical edition) and Peter of John Olivi on the Bible (1997, critical edition), Nicolaus Minorita: Chronica [The Early 13th Century Poverty Controversy] (1996, with Gedeon Gál, O.E.M.) and The Birth of a Movement (1975, with Thaddée Matura).



FRANCISCAN FEDERATION Third Order Regular

of the Sisters and Brothers of the United States

Position Opening: Executive Director of Franciscan Federation (Re-posting)

The Franciscan Federation of the Sisters and Brothers in the United States, Third Order Regular, has reopened the search for an Executive Director to begin duties on or before January 2, 2014. The Federation's mission is to promote the exploration and study of Franciscan Evangelical life through national and regional programming. The office of the Federation is currently located in Washington, DC where the Executive Director directs and oversees the administration and programs of the Federation. Other responsibilities include representing the Federation in designated external forums and assisting the National Board in its role of creating policies, implementing Federation objectives and securing funds from foundations, corporations and individuals. The Executive Director will work with the National Board and the Commission of Elected Leaders as they determine the future direction of the Federation.

Interested individuals are encouraged to visit the Federation's website (www.franfed.org). On request, a full job description can be obtained from the address below.

Letters of application and resumes should be submitted no later than July 10, 2013 to: Sr. Edna Michel, OSF, 200 St. Francis Ave., Tiffin, OH 44883 emichel@tiffinfranciscans.org

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RETREAT: July 12 (7 pm) - July 18 (noon), 2013 Director: Ramona Miller OSF

FEE \$400

franciscanlife@fslf.org Phone: 320-632-0668 Website: www.fslf.org

Franciscan Federation 2013 Annual Conference Pittsburgh Marriott City Center July 19-22, 2013

Franciscan Life in Evolution
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