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Foreword

In the middle of this sweltering Western New York summer we gathered to celebrate the feast of St. Bonaventure in typical Institute style. Following the liturgy a festive meal provided the venue for continuing the observance of summer's "High Holy Days." It's difficult to find a group of people who can celebrate with more genuine gusto than Institute Summer School students and faculty!

This issue of *The Cord* contains some new and some familiar contributors: Poor Clare Laura Hammel and Friar Lawrence Jagdfeld are new to our pages. Sister Laura writes about the rule and its place in the lives of Second and Third Order members. Friar Lawrence writes about ministry to, with and among those who are sick and disabled. Articles brought to us by returning authors span topics of history, both fifteenth century New World explorers and twentieth century Europe post WWII; contemporary and medieval insights into the story of the Prodigal Son; how to integrate Franciscan values in daily life; a critique of medieval images of friars found in literature, and a book review of an upcoming Franciscan Institute Publications new title. The cover illustration is a photograph of a fresco of Clare and her sisters in the Church of San Damiano, Assisi. Something for everyone ...

The reorganization of the Institute and its traditional Research/Teaching/Publishing branches is still ongoing. One result of this reorganization, however, is that my position has been eliminated. On a personal level this is a sad fact of life as I have truly enjoyed and been enriched by the work I've done on *The Cord* in the past seven years. I do not know what is in store for Franciscan Institute Publications or *The Cord*, but I want you all to know what a privilege it has been for me to work with and get to know all of you generous writers and readers of the journal. Let us all keep in touch, at least in our prayers, so that the charism we share continues to inform, and direct our lives. Peace and all good,

Daria R. Mitchell, O.S.F.

About Our Contributors

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The Apocalypse in St. Augustine: Christopher Columbus, Religion, and the New World

Timothy J. Johnson, Ph.D.

... I urged Your Highnesses to spend all the profits of this my enterprise on the conquest of Jerusalem and Your Highnesses laughed and said that it would please them and that even without this profit they had that desire.[1]

While common pedagogy ensures that most students know the date of Christopher Columbus's first trans-Atlantic voyage, it often avoids the complex religious reasons that, in part, inspired and funded his epic endeavor. Just why did Columbus (1451-1506) sail the ocean blue in 1492? The traditional response focuses on the economic and political power struggles of late medieval Europe. Why else would this mariner set out on such a dangerous journey if wealth and influence were not the motivating factors for him and his patrons? This essay claims that the "apocalytic imagination," which dominated late medieval culture, offers a unique perspective on Columbus and what would become the Spanish legacy in the Americas.

The first section of this study examines the origin and development of apocalyptic imagination in antiquity. The second section explores this unique worldview, which first

[1] *The Diario of Christopher Columbus's First Voyage to America 1492-1493, Abstracted by Fray Bartlomé de las Casas*, transcribed and translated with Notes and Commentary by Oliver Dunn and James E. Kelly, Jr. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 291. I want to thank Peggy Dyess for her aid in gathering the requisite bibliographical resources for this essay. Thanks as well to Agnieszka Johnson and Katherine Wrisley for their editorial assistance.

emerged in Iran, within the context of medieval Christianity. This initial research is crucial since the apocalytic perspective served as the foundation of the religious dynamic that inspired Columbus to seek out a new route to the East. Success in this endeavor, he contended, could then lead to the capture of Jerusalem and the return of the "Holy Land" to Christian control. The third section focuses on the years immediately preceding and following the fall of Muslim Granada in 1492 and the first voyage to the Indies. During this period Columbus, whose religious identity and sense of mission were influenced by ancient prophecies and apocalyptic Franciscan thought,[2] gradually interpreted his role in salvation history as one who was to bring the Gospel to the ends of the earth and hasten the return of Christ as foretold in Scripture. The voyages of Columbus, the Spanish presence in their New World, and the subsequent founding of St. Augustine thus were influenced by economics and politics, but likewise were ultimately rooted in an apocalyptic fervor that came to see the Americas as the center stage of Spanish evangelization, not a distant sanctuary for religious freedom as did the later English Puritans.[3] The fourth section argues that the apocalyptic legacy of Columbus – be it unknown, contested, damned, praised, ignored or forgot-

[2] The classic work on this theme remains Alain Milhou, *Colón y su mentalidad mesiánica en el ambiente franciscanista español* (Valladolid: 1982). See also José Luis Mora Mérida, "Los franciscanos y Colón: mitos y misión franciscana y su influencia en los descubrimientos indianos," in *Congreso de Historia del Descubrimiento: 1492-1556* , vol. 4, (1992), 593-612, and John Leddy Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 19-23.

[3] On apocalyptic thought and the early English settlers in North America, see Reiner Smolinski, "Apocalypticism in Colonial North America," in *Apocalypticism in the Modern Period and the Contemporary Age*, ed. Stephen J. Stein, vol. 3, in *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism* (New York: Continuum, 1999), 36-71. For a comparison between English and Spanish perspectives on the indigenous peoples in the early colonial period, see Djelal Kadir, *Columbus and the Ends of the Earth: Europe's Prophetic Rhetoric as Conquering Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 137-92.

ten – includes an undeniable core of universalism;[4] it can speak to the historical experience of St. Augustine and the unrelenting hopes of many of its residents through the ages, regardless of their religious faith, ethnic background, or national origin.

The Genesis and Development of Apocalyptic Thought in Antiquity

When referring to "apocalyptic thought" through the ages, scholars of religion speak in terms of the belief in the imminent ending of world, which will be convulsed in an epic struggle between good and evil, and restored again to the faithful elect when the malevolent forces are destroyed.[5] However, mention of the word "apocalypse" (from the Greek ἀποκάλυψις/apokálypsis; meaning a "lifting of the veil" or "revelation") in contemporary culture often conjures up cinematic imagery of the cataclysmic destruction of the earth. Just as every story on the silver screen has an end so, too, must the world. Yes, *Apocalypse now* – indeed.[6] Be they errant asteroids or aliens,

[4] For a critique of Columbus's universalism from a post-colonial perspective, see Filipe Maia, "De-Colonizing Heaven: A De-colonial reading of Columbus, Colonial Soteriology," in *Apuntes* 31/2 (2011), 44-67. See also Kadir, *Columbus and the Ends of the Earth: Europe's Prophetic Rhetoric as Conquering Ideology*.

[5] Brett E. Whalen, *Dominion of God: Christendom and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 237, n. 2.

[6] On apocalyptic themes in cinema, see Conrad E. Ostwalt, Jr., "Hollywood and Armageddon: Apocalyptic Theme in Recent Cinematic Presentation," in Joel W. Martin and Conrad E. Ostwalt, Jr, *Screening the Sacred: Religion, Myth, and Ideology in Popular American Film* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 55-63 and "Armageddon at the Millennial Dawn," in *Religion and Film*, vol. 4/1 (2000) at http://www.unomaha.edu/jrf/armagedd.htm (Accessed 03.03.2012). The identification of Hollywood and apocalyptic themes continues, see "The Big Reveal: Why Does the Bible End That Way?" in *The New Yorker* where Adam Gopnik reviews Elaine Pagels's *Revelations: Visions, Prophecy, and Politics in the Book of Revelation* (New York: Viking, 2012) at http://www.newyorker.com/ arts/critics/books/2012/03/05/120305crbo_books_gopnik (Accessed 03.06.2012). I would like to thank Catherine Scine for this reference.

volcanic fissures or obscure Mayan deities, someone or something somewhere wants to draw the final curtain on the world in a violent, convulsive manner. Fixation on the year 2000 and once again on 2012, thanks to opportunistic and erroneous interpretations of the Mayan Calendar, underscores a widespread cultural fascination with "revelations" regarding the ultimate fate of humanity. Even if the world survives these apocalyptic forces, humanity often inherits at best, a frightening landscape of fear and want characterized in the widely popular book and movie series, *The Hunger Games*.

The commonly held cultural perspective on the end presupposes a beginning, a point where time begins and history commences. This linear view is relatively recent. Ancient Sumerian, Egyptian, and Vedic cultures viewed time as cyclical, and their myths spoke of continual birth, cosmic warfare, destruction, and rebirth.[7] Both the past and the future fused into the eternal now. For their part, both the Greeks and the Romans concerned themselves more with the past than the future. The mythic beginnings of both peoples were crucial to their identities and grounded in the stories of such heroes such as Odysseus in Homer's *Odyssey* and Aeneas in Vergil's *Aeneid*. The dramatic and violent end of the cosmos with a concomitant messiah figure, universal resurrection and final judgment, as envisioned in Jewish and Christian eschatological literature such as the *Book of Daniel* and the *Book of Revelation*, is absent in Greek and Roman antiquity.[8]

While many Christian denominations readily ascribe to an apocalyptic worldview, few know that this perspective originated in what is modern day Iran and predates

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[7] Norman Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos and the World to Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 3-76.

[8] Hubert Cancik, "The End of the World, of History, and of the Individual in Greek and Roman Antiquity," *in The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, vol. 1, *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, ed. John J. Collins (New York: Continuum, 1999), 86-87.

Judaism and Christianity.[9] As early as 1500 BCE a religious reformer by the name of Zoroaster proclaimed a startling message that attracted followers throughout Persia. Known later as Zoroastrians, they produced the *Avesta*, which is a sacred collection of teachings and hymns. Instead of a pantheon of gods, they claimed there was only one god, Ahura Mazda, who was the creator and guardian of the world. Although an evil force existed, Ahura Mazda would triumph and usher in an eternity of cosmic harmony in the final *Frasho-kereti* (making wonderful).[10]

Indeed, the Zoroastrians distinguished between eternity and temporality.[11] The creation of time in series of millennia provided the place and space in which the forces of good and evil could struggle for supremacy; however, in contradistinction to Egyptian, Sumerian, and Vedic cultures, time would come to a definitive end. How would believers recognize the end was near? Those keen to the sign of the times will know that the final millennial savior (Saoshyant) is coming when evil runs rampant, vows are broken, families are torn apart by hatred, traditional religion is replaced by foreign practices, weather patterns are disrupted, crops fail, and animals and humans alike will take on a distorted appearance. Only then will the savior arrive to crush the demonic forces of evil in a final battle, raise the dead, grant immortality to the righteous, and renew the world as an everlasting paradise.[12]

Christian readers in particular will undoubtedly recognize similar themes throughout the New Testament and in selected texts from the Jewish scriptures. Proving that one religion definitively influenced another can be a

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[9] Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos and the World to Come*, 77-104 and Anders Hutlård, "Persian Apocalypticism," in *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, 39-83. It is important to note that Zoroastrianism remains a living religion, see Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

[10] *Zoroastrianism: Textual Sources for the Study of Religion*, ed. and trans. Mary Boyce (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 21, 35, and 53.

[11] Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos and the World to Come*, 82.

[12] Hutlård, "Persian Apocalypticism," 42-60.

tenuous task, but Zoroastrianism clearly played a role in the nascent development of Jewish and Christian apocalypticism.[13] Jewish and early Christian literature (Third Century BCE to Second Century CE), often popular but not always canonical, is replete with images and themes reminiscent of Zoroastrianism.[14] The *Second Letter to Timothy* (3:1-5) attributed to Paul, a Jew from Tarsus, sounds strikingly familiar:

> *You must understand this, that in the last days, distressing times will come. For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable slanderers, profligates, brutes, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God …*[15]

In Chapter 13 of the *Gospel of Mark*, in a section scholars refer to as the "Little Apocalypse," Jesus of Nazareth speaks of the tribulations that will befall humanity until the messianic Son of Man from chapter 7 from the *Book of Daniel* will gather the elect together for the final judgment.[16] Various New Testament authors appeal to the apocalyptic motif, but no one with the intensity of John of Patmos, whose aptly titled *Book of Revelation*,

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[13] Hutlård, "Persian Apocalypticism," 80-81, and Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos and the World to Come*, 220-25.

[14] On this intriguing, albeit little known literature, see *Apocalyptic Literature: A Reader*, ed. Mitchel G. Reddish (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995).

[15] *The HarperCollins Study Bible*: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993), 2241. Unless noted otherwise, all references to the Bible will come from this edition.

[16] On Mark 13, see Richard A Horsley, "The Kingdom of God and the Renewal of Israel: Synoptic Gospels, Jesus Movements, and Apocalypticism," in *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, 326-31. On Jesus and the apocalyptic message, see Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), esp. 125-62.

or simply, the *Apocalypse*, announces a harrowing series of cataclysmic political, economic, and environmental events culminating in the return of Christ, the subjugation of satanic forces, and the establishment of a New Jerusalem on earth for the righteous. The centrality of Jerusalem to narratives of the end may have waxed and waned in the coming centuries, but it was a central tenet of Columbus's worldview, and the city has never ceased to be a rich source of inspiration and conflict[17] due to the hope it offers to the faithful. Ultimately the *Book of Revelation* (21:1-5) offers a variation of the Zoroastrian "making wonderful" as John of Patmos exclaims:

> *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.' And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.'*

When the New Jerusalem did not appear and Christ did not return as many expected, Christians raised questions as evidenced in Paul's *First* and *Second Letter to the Thessalonians* and began to refocus and reinterpret their beliefs regarding the end. In response to "scoffers" who derided the promise of the Lord's coming and final judgment, the author of the *Second Letter of Peter* (3:8-9) consoled his fellow believers with these words, *But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is*

[17] Annabel Jane Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem: Relics, Replicas, Theme Parks* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006).

like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. What appears to some to be an inexplicable delay is only a sign of God's mercy since it allows more people to repent and join the company of the saved. Despite such counsel apocalyptic fever continued to grip segments of the early Christian community, most likely to the chagrin of bishops who may have feared watching people "head for the hills," only to return sheepishly back to their homes when they realized that they had misread the signs of the times.

The propensity for provoking just such social and religious unrest may be one of the reasons why the *Book of Revelation* was almost excluded from the New Testament canon.[18] For his part, Augustine, bishop of Hippo (354-430) and the namesake of the nation's oldest colonial city, did not reject the *Book of Revelation* but interpreted it in what would become the classical approach to apocalypticism in Western Christianity. In his magisterial *City of God*, Augustine asserted that the return of Christ amid great tribulations, the resurrection and judgment of the dead and renewal of the world are irrefutable facets of Christian doctrine.[19] Nevertheless, he cautioned believers to resist the temptation to calculate the end by equating current historical events with specific passages in the *Book of Revelation*. While people should live in a state of continual readiness and long for the end, no one knows the time. Augustine's reticence in specifying a particular time remained a foundational theological principle of interpretation – at least until the appearance of a monk from an obscure area of Italy on the ecclesial world stage

[18] On the *Book of Revelation* and the New Testament canon see Elaine Pagels, *Revelations: Visions, Prophecy, and Politics in the Book of Revelation* (New York: Viking, 2012), esp. 103-170. For an overview of how the *Book of Revelation* has been interpreted through the centuries, see Arthur W. Wainwright, *Mysterious Apocalypse: Interpreting the Book of Revelation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993).

[19] Brian E. Daley, "Apocalypticism in Early Christian Theology" in *Apocalypticism in Western History and Culture*, ed. Bernard McGinn, vol. 2 of *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism* (New York: Continuum, 1999), 30-33.

in the twelfth century. Joachim of Fiore upended Augustine's long-standing perspective and set in motion a series of apocalyptic calculations that impacted many, including Christopher Columbus and the Franciscan friars who would evangelize the Americas.

Joachim of Fiore, Spiritual Franciscans, and the Medieval Apocalypse

Born about 1135 in Calabria, a region located in what is popularly referred to as the "toe" of Italy's "boot," Joachim was educated to follow the career path of his father.[20] He decided to dedicate himself to God, instead of civil administration in the Sicilian court, after a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He entered the Benedictine Order where he was ordained and appointed abbot of the monastery in Corrazzo. After his community was incorporated into the Cistercian Order, Joachim decided to found his own monastery in a remote area of Calabria called San Giovanni da Fiore. He remained there until his death in 1202. Although far from the political and ecclesial power centers of Europe, royalty and clergy alike sought his spiritual counsel. Richard the Lionhearted spoke with Joachim in 1191.[21] The crusading English monarch was en route to the Holy Land to recapture Jerusalem, which had fallen under Islamic control in 1187. The king heard from the visionary Calabrian abbot the deeply disturbing revelation that the dreaded Anti-Christ had already been born and the third and that last phase of history was about to begin.

The fact that Joahchim's apocalyptic claims were taken seriously by the most influential political and religious leaders of his day highlights the chasm between contem-

[20] *Apocalyptic Spirituality: Treatises and Letters of Lactantius, Adso of Montier-En-Der, Joachim of Fiore, The Spiritual Franciscans, Savonarola*, trans. and intro. Bernard McGinn (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1979), 97-112.

[21] Bernard McGinn, "Apocalypticism and Church Reform 1100-1500," in *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, vol. 2 *Apocalypticism in Western History and Culture*, 85-86.

porary Western culture and the Middle Ages.[22] Today the majority marginalizes and ridicules those who make fervent appeals to the *Book of Revelation*, warn of an impending Armageddon, and predict a specific date for the end of the world. At best they are considered "math challenged" because their dates are always wrong or at worst, they are viewed as dangerous fanatics who gleefully await the destruction of humanity. The fiery end of David Koresh and his followers in Waco, Texas, in 1993 remains fixed in the minds of many as an indelible reminder of the consequences of apocalyptic fervor and the "wackos" it produces. In the Middle Ages prince and pauper, pope and priest, men and women, young and old saw the world differently since apocalyptic expectations permeated general society in a manner not even witnessed in the early days of Christianity.

Joachim's message appealed to the medieval populace on the theoretical and practical level. He offered them a way of both interpreting and living in a world threatened in the present and consumed by trepidation for the future. While there was much to fear, God would soon intervene in history, and those who will have suffered through the tribulations of the last days will receive the gift of everlasting peace.[23]

Joachim's major works are the *Exposition on the Apocalypse*, the *Book of Concordance*, the *Ten-Stringed Psaltery*, and the enigmatic *Book of Forms*. By no means an "easy read," these texts are replete with obscure symbolism and steeped in intricate biblical exegesis.[24] The origins of his proclamation of an impending crisis and redemption are grounded in a two-fold revelation that occurred on Easter 1183 after a year of struggling with the meaning of the *Book of Revelation*. Not only did he now understand the text at the linguistic level and how

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[22] On Western apocalytic thought in the Middle Ages, see Whalen, *Dominion of God: Christendom and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*.

[23] Joachim of Fiore, *Letter to the Abbot of Valdona*, in *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 118-19.

[24] *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 97.

it agreed with the *Old Testament* and *New Testament*, he also perceived the truth of the text through a series of visual forms or symbols. Among the best known are the figures of the seven-headed dragon from *Revelation* 12:3 and the Trinitarian rings. The first image identified each dragon as a king, past or present. Joachim claimed that the sixth king was Saladin (1138-1193), the Kurdish Muslim who captured Jerusalem in 1187 and stymied Richard the Lionhearted's repeated attempts to recapture the holy city. In his description of this period marked by the devastating defeat of Christian forces, Joachim held out hope:

> *After this destruction, which has already in some part begun, the Christians will be victorious. Those who fear the name of the Lord will rejoice when the head of the beast over which the sixth king reigns has been brought almost to extermination and ruin. Then, after a few years, its wound will be healed, and the king who will be in charge of it (whether it be Saladin if he is still alive, or another in his place) will gather a much larger army and incite universal war against God's elect. Many will be crowned with martyrdom in those days. In that time also the seventh head of the dragon will arise, namely, that king who is called Antichrist, and a multitude of false prophets with him.*[25]

The seventh king, alive but not yet known to the world, was the Anti-Christ Joachim had warned Richard of during his Calabrian sojourn in 1191. The second image depicted the ages of history as interlinked circles from a Trinitarian hermeneutic. The first age or *status* was identified with the Father and the Old Testament, the second *status* with the Son and the New Testament, and the third *status* with the Holy Spirit and a new, spiritual Jerusalem constituted by monks and laity alike. Peering toward this

[25] Joachim of Fiore, *Book of Figures* in *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 118-19.

apocalyptic horizon, Joachim claimed two new religious orders of *viri spirituales* (spiritual men) who would be the harbingers of this utopian vision.

Joachim died in 1202, but his critics could not bury his message. Two new religious orders, the Dominicans and Franciscans, emerged within a decade of Joachim's passing. Franciscans were particularly drawn to Joachim's views and other pseudonymous writings attributed to the Calabrian prophet. Referred to as an *alter Christus* (another Christ), Francis of Assisi evoked in the medieval imagination the angel of *Revelation* 7:2, *I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God* … The radical evangelical life of Francis, marked by austere poverty, together with the widespread belief that he had received the wounds of Christ in his flesh, convinced numerous brothers that he was the precursor of the final age.[26] One friar in 1254, Geraldo of Borgo San Donnino, went so far as to assert in his *Introduction to the Eternal Gospel* that the present world would end in 1260, and the third *status* would begin. In this age of the Holy Spirit, the *Old Testament* and *New Testament* would be supplanted by Joachim's writings and the church would be refashioned in the image of the Franciscans. Needless to say, the ecclesial hierarchy in general did not look favorably on this proposal, or a view of history that replaced established institutional structures with an ill-defined movement of the spirit; Geraldo was condemned to life-long imprisonment.

Other Franciscans such as Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (1217-1274) and Peter John Olivi (1248-1298) nuanced their theological positions but continued to read Joachim's works and refused to step back from the view that Francis of Assisi's entrance onto the stage of world history heralded the beginning of the end.[27] Bonaventure referred to him as the "angel of the sixth seal" and

[26] This theme is treated extensively in Stanislao da Campagnola, *L'Angelo del Sesto Sigillo e l'Alter Christus* (Rome: Antonianum, 1971).

[27] McGinn, "Apocalypticism and Church Reform 1100-1500," 89-97.

spoke of the brothers as *viri spirituales*.[28] Olivi, a student of Bonaventure's at the University of Paris, pushed the ecclesial boundaries of tolerance further by identifying the *third status* with the Franciscan Order and criticizing the carnality of the current church. Even more troubling to some, he intimated a link between the Anti-Christ and the Papacy.[29]

To counter the threat of the Antichrist, whom some brothers believed was realized in Pope John XXII (1244-1334), talk spread in and beyond Franciscan circles in the ensuing years of a *pastor angelicus* (angelic pope) who, together with the Last Emperor mentioned in numerous apocalyptic works, would ensure a millennial period of peace by reforming the church, retaking Jerusalem, vanquishing the Muslims, converting the Tartars (Mongols),[30] and defeating the Anti-Christ. John of Rupiscissa (1310-1365) synthesized these Joachmite-Franciscan views with an emphasis on the global-political consequences of the impending apocalypse.[31] The echo of his voice and others can be heard over a century later in the *Libro del las profecías* (*The Book of Prophecies*) of Christopher Columbus, when he commented on the biblical texts and ecclesial writers he compiled as early as late November, 1500, in the aftermath of his third voyage across the "Ocean Sea":

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[28] *The Sunday Sermons of Saint Bonaventure*, ed. and trans. Timothy J. Johnson, in WSB XII (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2008), 31-33.

[29] Whalen, *Dominion of God: Christendom and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, 210.

[30] Franciscan friars had already reached Mongolia to meet the khan-elect Güyü and witnessed his enthronement in August, 1246. See Peter Jackson, "Franciscans as papal and royal envoys to the Tartars (1245-1255)," in *Cambridge Companion to Francis of Assisi*, ed. Michael J. P. Robson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 224-39.

[31] *Visions of the End*, ed. Bernard McGinn (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 230-33. On John of Rupiscissa as the precursor to Christopher Columbus, see Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World*, 18-19.

> *I said above that much that has been prophesied remains to be fulfilled, and I say that these are the world's great events, and I say that a sign of this is the acceleration of our Lord's activities in this world. I know this from the recent preaching of the gospel in so many lands. The Calabria abbot Joachim said that whoever was to rebuild the temple on Mount Zion would come from Spain. The cardinal Pierre d'Ailly wrote at length about the end of the religion of Mohammed and the coming of the Antichrist in his treatise, De concordia astronomice veritatis et narrationis historice [On the Accord of Astronomical Truth and History].*[32]

Columbus reiterated this claim in the *Lettera Rarissima* (*The Rarest of Letters*) written during his fourth and final voyage to the Americas (1502-1504). As his words indicate, he once again linked his destiny to that of the Spanish royal court and hoped for yet another future opportunity to fulfill prophecy:

> *Jerusalem and Mount Sion are to be rebuilt by the hands of the Christians, as God has declared by the mouth of the prophet in the fourteenth Psalm (vv. 7-8). The Abbot Joachim said he who should do this was to come from Spain ... and the emperor of China has, some time since, sent for wise men to instruct him in the faith of Christ. Who will offer himself for this work? Should anyone do so, I pledge myself, in*

[32] *The Book of Prophecies Edited by Christopher Columbus*, ed. Ruberto Rusconi and trans, Blair Sullivan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 77. This relatively unknown text is crucial to understanding the apocalyptic fervor that held sway over Columbus and many others in fifteenth century Europe. See also *The Libro del las profecías of Christopher Columbus*, trans. and comm. by Delno C. West and August Kling (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1991), 105. The most extensive study of the manuscript with the requisite critical apparatus is found in *Cristoforo Colombo, Lettere e Scritti (1495-1506) Libro del las profecías*, ed. Ruberto Rusconi (Roma: Liberia dello stato, 1993).

the name of God, to convey him hither, provided the Lord permits me to return to Spain.[33]

Columbus, the (Last) Reconquista, and the Apocalypse in the New World

By the end of the fifteenth century the Franciscans were divided effectively into the "Conventuals" and "Observants." Conflicting views regarding the vow of poverty and the Franciscan Order's role in the eschatological end-time scenario fostered a growing fissure among the brothers, and to the identification of the more radical friars known as "spiritual Franciscans."[34] The Observant friars pushed for a reform of the Order and the entire Church, and thus shared many of the views of their "spiritual" predecessors. The most powerful ecclesial figure in Spain, Cardinal Ximenes de Cisñeros, belonged to the Observant faction and promoted the reform movement in western Spain and elsewhere.[35] He enjoyed, together with his confreres, the favor of the Spanish royalty in the persons of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel.

While Columbus may have encountered reformed Franciscans earlier, it is clear that he came into their orbit of influence in 1485. When he did, their dedication to an apocalytic worldview had reached a fever pitch.[36] After King John II of Portugal refused to fund his voyage across

[33] *Visions of the End*, 285. For the Spanish text, see *Select letters of Christopher Columbus with other original documents relating to this four voyages to the new world*, ed. R.H. Major (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), 204-05.

[34] David Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century after Saint Francis* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001).

[35] These reformed friars would become central to the evangelization efforts in the Americas, see José Sánchez Herrero in "Los movimientos franciscanos radicales y la misión y evangelización franciscana en América," in *Congreso de Historia del Descubrimiento: 1492-1556*, vol. 4, (1992), 565-92.

[36] West, *The Libro del las profecías of Christopher Columbus*, 27. See also, Juan Gil Fernández, "Los franciscanos y Colón," in *Archivo Ibero-Americano*, 46/181-82 (1985), 77-110. On the possibility of Columbus being a member of the Franciscan Third Order, see Milhou,

the mysterious "Ocean Sea," Columbus and his son Diego arrived at the Observant convent of Santa Maria de La Rábida in 1485. Located in Andalusia and in close proximity to the port of Palos, La Rábida provided a decent library, astronomical observatory, and most importantly, a sympathetic and resourceful community of friars eager to assist Columbus.

While the key to winning the patronage of the united realms of Castile and Aragón certainly cannot be reduced to religious influence and sensibility, the intersection of faith and political perspectives among these Iberian Franciscans, Columbus, and the Spanish Crown played an obvious role.[37] Among the friars at La Rábida, Antonio de Marchena was a well-known astrologer-astronomer, whom the royal court held in high regard. He helped secure the first meeting between Queen Isabel and Columbus with a letter addressed to Hernando de Talavera, the queen's confessor. Another friar and previous royal confessor, John Pérez, became a close confidant of Columbus and interceded later with the monarchs as well; indeed, when Columbus finally received royal patronage, John led the procession on May 3, 1492, to the harbor in Palos where he blessed the departing sailors. When the exploratory-ambassadorial first voyage returned on March 15, 1493, Columbus sought out Pérez at La Rábida and invited him to join the second voyage, which focused more explicitly on colonialization and evangelization.

With the assistance of the friars and a consortium of economic and political patrons, Columbus proposed a voyage across the "Ocean Sea" driven by his burgeoning apocalyptic fervor. Annotations on his favorite scientific textbook, Pierre of d'Ailly's (1351-1420) *Imago mundi* (*Image of the World*), indicate that the subject of the end

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Colón y su mentalidad mesiánica en el ambiente franciscanista español, 42-45.

[37] On the question of patronage, see Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Columbus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 45-65; esp. 60-61 with regard to the Franciscans. See also *The Libro del las profecías of Christopher Columbus*, 55-58.

of the world may have already garnered his attention as early as 1480.[38] The *Book of Prophecies*, which Columbus compiled between 1501 and 1505, may contain sections dating back to as early as 1481.[39] Four handwritten notes in another one of his favorite textbooks, the *Historia rerum ubique gestarum* (*History of Facts and Events*) of Pope Pius II (1405-1464), appear to identify the salient points of his nascent proposal. Quoting the prophet Isaiah, the Psalms, Josephus, Augustine and others, Columbus pointed out how these authoritative sources confirmed that God's word needed to be proclaimed to the distant islands, great riches would be obtained there for the sake of Jerusalem, and that the date of Christ's return could be calculated to 155 years in the future.

Working later with the Carthusian monk, Gaspar Gorrico, Columbus completed the *Book of Prophecies* (1500-1505) by appealing to biblical passages and theological sources drawn from a broad range of ancient and medieval authorities. With this compilation, he intended to demonstrate to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel that the discovery and exploration of the Indies during his three previous ocean passages was an integral part of salvation history. He argued that they were the first steps toward the liberation of Jerusalem, the end of Islamic domination in the Holy Land, and the salvation of the entire human race through the proclamation of the Gospel.[40] In his *Dia-*

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[38] Fernández-Armesto, *Columbus*, 41-42 and *The Libro del las profecías of Christopher Columbus*, 16. On Columbus's reading of Pierre of d'Ailly, *Imago mundi* and other influential works, see Pauline M. Watts, "Prophecy and Discovery: On the Spiritual Origins of Christopher Columbus's 'Enterprise of the Indies,'" in *The American Historical Review*, vol. 90/1 (1985), 73-102. On Pierre of d'Ailly's works and the difficulty of dating possible notations by Columbus, see Rusconi, *The Book of Prophecies*, 283-88.

[39] West, *The Libro del las profecías of Christopher Columbus*, 86-92. This argument is based on notes in Columbus's copy of the *Historia rerum ubique gestarum* of Pope Pius II, which was published in 1477. Even if the date 1481 is disputed, Columbus was reading the *Historia* as early as 1485. See Fernández-Armesto, *Columbus*, 41.

[40] Rusconi, *The Book of Prophecies Edited by Christopher Columbus*, 5.

rio from the first voyage to the Indies – the same journal in which he petitioned that all his profits be dedicated to the capture of Jerusalem – Columbus also reminded the sovereigns of their commitment to his apocalyptic vision after their victory over the Muslims of Granada in 1492:

> *Whereas ... because of the report that I had given to Your Highnesses about the lands of India and a prince who is called "Great Khan" ... how, many times, he and his predecessors had sent to Rome to ask for men learned in our Holy Faith in order that they might instruct them in it and how the Holy Father had never provided them; and thus so many people were lost, falling into idolatry and accepting false and harmful religions and Your Highnesses, as Catholic Christians and Princes, lovers and promoters of the Holy Christian Faith, and enemies of the false doctrines of Mahomet and of all the idolatries and heresies, you thought of sending me, Christóbal Colón, to the said regions of India to see the said princes and peoples of the lands, and the characteristics of the lands and of everything, and to see how their conversion to our Holy Faith might be undertaken. And you commanded that I should not go to the East by land, by which it is customary to go, but by the route to the West, by which route we do know for certain that anyone previously passed.*[41]

Columbus's statement, couched in legal language, faithfully represented his own beliefs. They are formulated in a way that would appeal to the Catholic monarchs.[42] His proposed project resonated well with some factions in the halls of the Spanish court, but the petitionary process lasted seven years before the monarchs granted him approval. Financing the endeavor fell to a consortium of royal and private financiers who, despite the obvious

[41] *The Diario of Christopher Columbus's First Voyage to America 1492-1493*, 16-19.

[42] Fernández-Armesto, *Columbus*, 69.

risks and others yet unknown, hoped to profit from a lucrative Asian trade route.[43] By January of 1492, funding was secured, and with the conquest of the last Islamic stronghold on the Iberian Peninsula, the sovereigns of Spain looked beyond their newly defined borders toward Asia; this vision included the final *Reconquista*: Jerusalem, the *umbilicus mundi* (center of the earth). The defeat of the Moors (January 2, 1492), the expulsion of the Jews (March 31, 1492), the union of Castile and Aragón with Grenada, the dream of an alliance with Prester John, the mythical Christian ruler in the East, and the hope for the conversion of the Great Khan of Cathay[44] heralded a messianic period of universalism lead by Spain and focused on Jerusalem. On April 17, 1492, Columbus received his long sought commission to cross the "Ocean Sea."[45]

Columbus, as well as his royal patrons, were willing partners in the grand apocalyptic narrative written centuries earlier and popularized in Spain and throughout European Christendom in the fifteenth century. Prophecies like the *Vae mundo* (*Woe to the World*) which originated after the fall of Acre, the last Christian city in the Holy Land in 1291,[46] circulated in the courts of Castile and Aragón. Often attributed to Joachim of Fiore and promoted by Franciscans, these popular accounts of the end spoke of the "Last World Emperor" who would usher in the millennial peace foretold in the Scriptures and re-

[43] Fernández-Armesto, *Columbus*, 62-63.

[44] The Franciscan friar, John of Montecorvino, had reached Beijing some two centuries earlier (ca. 1292) and was well received by Temür Khan, the grandson of Kublai Khan. Friars remained in China until they were expelled from Beijing in 1369. See: E. Randolph Daniels, "Franciscan Missions," in the *Cambridge Companion to Francis of Assisi*, ed. Michael J. P. Robson, 253-54.

[45] Alain Milhou, "Apocalypticism in Central and South American Colonialism," in *Apocalypticism in the Modern Period and the Contemporary Age*, 3-7, and Milhou, *Colón y su mentalidad mesiánica en el ambiente franciscanista español*, 169-87.

[46] Robert E. Lerner, "Medieval Prophecy and Religious Dissent," in *Past & Present*, n. 72 (1976), 14.

claim the land of the one Christ for his faithful people.[47] Indeed, Genovese ambassadors on a visit to Columbus and the royal court in 1493 may have alluded to such prophecies when they called upon the victors of Grenada to retake Jerusalem.[48] As late as 1502, Columbus linked the prophetic destiny of Spanish monarchs with his own voyages and religious convictions at the outset of the *Book of Prophecies*:

> *This is the beginning of the book or collection of auctoritates, sayings, opinions concerning the need to recover the holy city and Mount Zion, and the discovery and conversion of the islands of the Indies and of all the peoples and nations, for Ferdinand and Isabel, our Spanish rulers.*[49]

St. Augustine: A City of Old and New Beginnings

Columbus set sail from the coastal city of Palos on May 3, 1492. When this initial exploratory- ambassadorial first voyage returned on March 15, 1493, Columbus spoke of his sightings not as a "new world" per se, but as previously unknown or rarely seen regions of the "old world," hence, of course, the "Indies" appellation. In the course of the following crossings, he came to believe that he reached Asia as well as a *terra incognita* (unknown world) that indeed was a *terra nova* (new world) for Europeans. Columbus approached his death on May 20, 1506, clinging to his apocalyptic convictions; he had found another route to Asia, while believing that evangelization must continue in the new world of the Indies, and that Jerusalem should return to Christian control.[50] At one

[47] On apocalyptic prophecies and the rulers of Castile and Aragón, see Milhou, *Colón y su mentalidad mesiánica en el ambiente franciscanista español*, 349-403; esp. 377-80.

[48] On this possibility, see Rusconi, *The Book of Prophecies Edited by Christopher Columbus*, 31-32.

[49] *The Book of Prophecies Edited by Christopher Columbus*, 59.

[50] Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Columbus and the Conquest of the Impossible* (London: Phoenix Press, 2000), 126-33.

point when settling his family and financial affairs, he dictated that a deposit be made in the Bank of San Giorgio in Genoa that would finance the final *Reconquista*.[51]

One of the ironies of history is that Columbus's apocalyptic quest to foster the conquest of the ancient city of Jerusalem shifted the geopolitical-spiritual focus of salvation to the Americas as the new promised land of Israel, and site of the New Jerusalem.[52] Initial efforts to evangelize the Indies after the first voyage of Columbus did not share this later worldview; the first priests and friars were tempted to believe that these lands could be easily brought into the existing realm of western Christendom since the peoples did not appear, according to Columbus's initial report, to have their own set of religious beliefs that would impede conversion. The inevitable cultural conflicts, which were magnified by language problems, quickly removed any hope of swiftly assimilating the indigenous peoples into the medieval ecclesial structure.[53] For example, one cleric, who was a member of the second voyage, spent three years with one family learning the language and teaching the faith. His work culminated in a single baptism on September 21, 1496. Soon the apocalyptic imperative of evangelization in the Caribbean region,[54] which Columbus embraced with increasing fervor during and after each voyage, would be subsumed into the larger colonialization designs of the expansive

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[51] *Christopher Columbus and His Family: The Genoese and Ligurian Documents*, ed. and trans. John Dotson, textual ed. Aldo Agosto (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), 341-42; English translation: 167.

[52] Milhou, "Apocalypticism in Central and South American Colonialism," 7.

[53] Roberto Rusconi, "Escatologia e conversione al cristianesimo in Cristoforo Colombo e nei primi anni della colonizzazione europea nelle isole delle 'Indie,'" in *Cristianesimo nella Storia*, 14 (1993), 263-302.

[54] On the early development of the institutional Catholic Church in the Caribbean, see Johannes Meier, *Die Anfänge der Kirche auf den Karibischen Inseln* (Freiburg: Neue Zeitschrift für Missionwissenschaft, 1991). For the story of the first Franciscan convent, see Mariano Errasti, *El primer convento de América: Historia y forma de vida de los franciscanos en su convento de la ciudad de Santo Domingo 1560-1820* (Arantzazu: Ediciones Franciscanas, 2006).

and increasingly self-confident Spanish empire. The story of St. Augustine's foundation and the enduring Spanish legacy in La Florida are undeniable elements of this continually evolving historical reality grounded in the apocalyptic beliefs of Christopher Columbus.

The Spanish legacy celebrated in St. Augustine is, paradoxically, tied to an Italian émigré whose own universal longings reach back into the mists of the distant highlands of ancient Iran. The Zoroastrian desire for a "making wonderful," a time when everyone, everywhere – including the natural world and non-sentient creatures – would realize the Franciscan dream[55] of a world marked by justice, equality, and peace continues to elude even the most sincere efforts of individuals and nations. At times the apocalyptic imagination has been utilized in frightening ways to advance an oppressive, even violent agenda. The popular and scholarly judgment of Columbus's "Enterprise of the Indies" in this regard has oscillated between both extremes. Around the four hundredth centennial of his voyage (1892) some considered him worthy of canonization, while the fifth centennial (1992) heard calls for his damnation.[56] In the Memorial Presbyterian Church in St. Augustine, visitors today can still view a precious incunabulum of Augustine's *City of God*, published before 1492. The book serves as a cautionary tale to anyone who attempts to construct a perfect city within the vicissitudes of time; nevertheless, the desire for such a city remains undiminished.

The apocalyptic quest of Christopher Columbus (Christ bearing dove) offers crucial insight into how to celebrate the Spanish legacy in the city of St. Augustine. Scholars have frequently dismissed the religious aspect of this mariner's worldview or held it suspect, but there is no doubt that Columbus looked for divine guidance

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[55] On this dream, see Timothy J. Johnson "Francis and Creation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Francis of Assisi*, ed. Michael Robson, 143-60.

[56] Carol Delaney, *Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem* (New York: Free Press, 2011), xii-xiii.

in his endeavors and contended he received it.[57] This is to be expected from any medieval *homo viator* (human being as traveler) from Iceland to Italy and beyond, who believed his or her travels were an analogy for the journey from earth to heaven.[58] People of various creeds around the world still interpret their experience of life in similar terms. What emerges unexpectedly in the writings of Christopher Columbus is the universalistic dimensions of his epistemology.[59] To the surprise of perhaps many who hold to their particular beliefs as exclusive, he argued that the divine spirit was at work in his religious community and that of others: *I believe that the Holy Spirit operates in Christians, Jews, Moors, and in all others of any religion, not only in the wise, but the ignorant as well.*[60] He refused to be restrained by the status quo in whatever field of knowledge he studied or by his social and ecclesial status. While he acknowledged God had directed him, he also noted in the *Book of Prophecies* that his own gifts and willingness to learn from others regardless of social status, ethnic origin, and religion were part of a process of discernment and judgment:

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[57] Columbus is hardly an exception here as the history of Christianity attests. On the senses and divine revelation, see *The Spiritual Senses: Perceiving God in Western Christianity*, ed. Paul L. Gavirilyuk and Sarah Coakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[58] This theme is of continual interest to Franciscans, both yesterday and today. See *Pellegrini e forestieri: l'itineranza francescana*, ed. Luigi Padovese (Bologna: EDP, 2004). Bonaventure is the Franciscan master on this theme, see Timothy J. Johnson, "Prologue as Pilgrimage: Bonaventure as Spiritual Cartographer," in *Miscellanea Francescana*, 106-07 (2006-2007), 445-64.

[59] On this point, Columbus reveals himself to be a student of the Franciscan friar, Roger Bacon (1214-1294). See Timothy J. Johnson, "That They May Love the Faith: Roger Bacon on Culture, Language, and Religion," forthcoming in *From La Florida to La California: Franciscan Evangelization in the Spanish Borderlands* (San Francisco: Academy of American Franciscan History, 2012).

Columbus's annotations in Pierre of d'Ailly's *Imago mundi* demonstrate that he was familiar with Bacon's *Opus majus*.

[60] *The Book of Prophecies Edited by Christopher Columbus*, 71.

> *At a very early age I began sailing the sea and have continued until now. This profession creates a curiosity about the secrets of the world. I have been a sailor for forty years, and I have personally sailed to all the known regions. I have had commerce and conversation with knowledgeable people of the clergy and laity, Latins and Greeks, Jews and Moors, and with many others of different religions ... During this time I have studied all kinds of texts: cosmology, histories, chronicles, philosophy, and other disciplines. Through these writings, the hand of our Lord opened my mind to the possibility of sailing to the Indies and gave me the will to attempt this voyage.*[61]

Over the centuries the city of St. Augustine has remained at the center of the struggle for justice, equality, and peace for many peoples with notable victories and defeats, many of which are too easily forgotten or ignored. The quest for the metaphoric "New Jerusalem" continues unabated. The marvelous Spanish legacy in Florida of diversity, which is offered in the daring, albeit flawed Italian Christopher Columbus, is not restricted to the contemplation and celebration of past achievements and present monuments. The universalism of Columbus, while marked by the limitations of time and place found in any historical period[62] – including the beginning of the twenty-first century – remains a rich resource to be retrieved today in La Florida. Linguistically ¡Viva Florida! is an imperative; it is a command that is grounded in

[61] *The Book of Prophecies Edited by Christopher Columbus*, 67-68.

[62] The obvious limits of Columbus's universalism are painfully evident in the cruelty he displayed toward the indigenous peoples in the Caribbean in the midst of his later voyages. His behavior baffled Bartolomé de las Casas, who wrote: "It is a strange thing, and I have said this before, that a man whom I have to say had a good nature and meant well, should be so blind in such a clear matter." For this quote and a concomitant study, see John Hubers, "It is a Strange Thing: The Millennial Blindness of Christopher Columbus," in *Missiology* vol. 37/3 (2009), 333-53.

the past and directed to the present. Like the finest and most optimistic iterations of the apocalytic imagination through the millennia, this essay claims that this imperative also carries the ardent hope of a future "making wonderful" for everyone, regardless of creed, color, or country.

¡Viva Florida!

The Cord, 63.3 (2013)

A Process for Integrating Franciscan Values into Life

Jean Moore, F.S.P.A.

In my work with mission integration for a variety of sponsored institutions and ministries within the areas of health care, higher education, and spiritual direction and retreats, I am often asked to explain the concepts of the Franciscan values of contemplation, conversion, minores, and poverty. Describing what these values mean within the Franciscan context is a reasonable task that I have done numerous times using specific examples from the life of Francis and Clare, and the wealth of scholarship about the theology and spirituality of Francis and Clare. However, the most frequently asked question is, "How do we integrate these into our lives?" For many in these audiences, there may have been snatches of comprehension and enlightenment about the Franciscan values in their personal or professional life, so what they are really asking is "How might I systematically integrate these values into my life?" In addition, for those in sponsored ministries, it is typically the expectation of the sponsoring congregation that the leaders of the organization systematically integrate the values into the ethos, policies, and practices of the institution. Intrigued by this ongoing question, I began to think about how it is we learn to integrate values into our life, which took me back to work I had done previously in higher education in the discipline of the teaching and learning of second languages and cultures. Therefore, I offer here one theory as to how our actions influence our beliefs and values, and

conversely, how our values and beliefs influence our actions. From this theory, I will propose a method of values integration that incorporates a pattern of thinking involving four ways of ethical reasoning.

The Tip of the Iceberg

In the work of cross-cultural understanding, Gary Weaver describes how one's culture is operative in one's life through the metaphoric illustration of an iceberg. (Figure 1)[1]

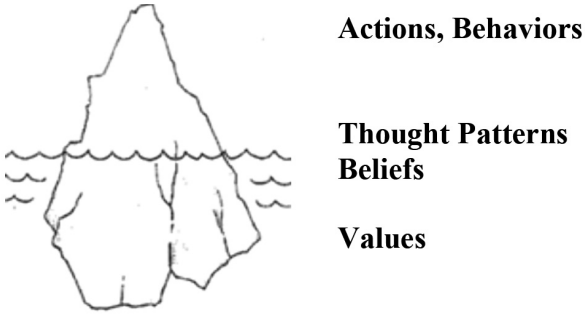


Figure 1. The Tip of the Iceberg.

The tip of the iceberg is that part of a culture that can be observed, felt, heard, tasted, and sensed. It includes the artifacts of a culture such as the language, style of dress, type of food, and many other manifestations. However, more importantly for our discussion here, it includes the responses or actions one uses in any given event or episode of one's life. These actions and behaviors are formed by our thought patterns and beliefs; in other words, the ways in which we perceive life, the expectations we hold, the beliefs we ascribe to, and the habits we form. Our thought patterns and beliefs, in turn, are

[1] Gary R. Weaver, "Understanding and Coping with Cross-Cultural Adjustment Stress," in *Cross-Cultural Orientation: New Conceptualizations and Applications*, ed. R. Michael Paige (New York: University Press of America, 1986).

manifestations of the core values we hold. These values are the foundation of our respective culture, and while we are able to articulate what those values are and what they mean, the essence of these values is manifested in how we behave in every interaction we have with others, with the Earth, and with God. Universally, these values in themselves may be shared by one or more culture, how one believes or thinks about these values will vary across cultures.

As an illustration, let us consider the Franciscan culture. While one can get a myriad of responses from the question, "What are the Franciscan Values?" there is some consensus on the four core values that can be identified from the writings of Francis: contemplation, conversion, minores, and poverty. From these concepts, one can extrapolate such values as hospitality, respect, metanoia, stewardship, integrity, teamwork, compassion, and the list goes on. Whatever one considers to be the absolute core values of the Franciscan culture is not the question; but all will agree that an integration of Franciscan values is the focus of our desire to live a Franciscan way of life.

Typically, when trying to integrate these values into our life, the misstep we take is to go from the value itself directly to the type of action one takes to exhibit a Franciscan response. It has a sort of cause and effect type of approach to it. That is, if I want to live the value of minores, then I must do this and that. This misstep limits the interpretation and illustration of the value to a set of actions, bypassing the way of thinking or believing that can better inform the options that one might take. Furthermore, there is the risk of living out a value on a superficial level, with little, or no, opportunity to plunge the depths of meaning of one's values. True, there can be some movement toward an integration of that value in one's life, but it doesn't always consider the totality of a situation. So, for example, one's actions based on the value of minores might include ministering among the homeless, those with mental illness, or others who are marginalized from society. What needs to be integrated

at a deeper level is one's own perspective of personhood and self, how one's behavior affects another, and what systematic repercussions might arise for the value of minores. In addition, the process of integrating one value will naturally connect it with other values one holds and how those values might be modified in different circumstances and situations.

It seems, then, that the area of focus for values integration in our Franciscan culture is the area of our thought patterns and beliefs – the area of culture that bridges one's values with one's actions. A reading of the texts by Francis of Assisi and about him will illuminate his pattern of thinking, which in turn can point to the values he espoused. For this discussion, I turn to the discipline of Ethics because of the potentially significant impact ethical reasoning can have on our value-based interpersonal relationships. The specific model I will examine here describes four types of reasoning about an ethical dilemma and the underlying Franciscan values one could posit. Following this description, I will employ these modes of thinking in light of an episode in the life of Francis.

Ethical Reasoning and Franciscan Values

In his recently published book, *An Ethical Life: A Practical Guide to Ethical Reasoning*,[2] Dr. Richard Kyte proposes that there are four ways of reasoning about an ethical dilemma. Typically, in group discussions about ethical dilemmas, discussants will come at the issue using one or more of these four types of reasoning. In any one discussion, an individual's chosen way of reasoning usually reflects a value for which that individual might advocate, such as fairness, compassion, humility, or respect. Each way of reasoning has merit in its own right, but is only one way of looking at the issue. Therefore, maintaining one's perspective using only one way of ethical reason-

[2] Richard Kyte, *An Ethical Life: A Practical Guide to Ethical Reasoning* (Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, Christian Brothers Publications, 2012).

ing can result in the discussion becoming a heated argument, a passionate appeal to common sense, or a belief that the only solution to a problem is the one that is based on one's preferred way of thinking about it. Oftentimes, one is not aware of the underlying values that could be present in each method of ethical reasoning. The effect of any decision made about the issue may be shortsighted, biased, or contradictory to one's overall value system, in this case a Franciscan value system. Therefore, I wish to use Kyte's description of the four ways of ethical reasoning as a way to understand how one's values can become manifest into a specific response. To begin, we examine the definition of the four ways of ethical reasoning,[3] and the potential values that underlie each followed by an analysis of Francis's integration of his Gospel values in the decision he makes to act ethically and compassionately toward a priest living with a woman.

Four Ways of Ethical Reasoning

TRUTH. Thinking in terms of the facts of the situation.

What is really going on here? What laws or policies apply? What is the overall context of the situation? What is the history of the situation?

CONSEQUENCES. Thinking in terms of the results of the actions.

Who is going to be affected? How will they be affected? What positive things can happen? What negative things can happen?

FAIRNESS. Thinking in terms of equality and consistency.

How would we feel if someone were doing this to you? Would the action under consideration be fair or just?

[3] Kyte, *An Ethical Life*, 55-56.

Would it be treating people equally or with respect? What would happen if everyone did that?

CHARACTER. Thinking in terms of people's motivations, character traits, or both.

Why are they doing this? What's in it for them? Are the people involved in the situation being generous, lazy, courageous, self-serving, spiteful, considerate, and so on? Are they acting out of anger or resentment or some other negative motivation? Are they acting out of some positive motivation, like gratitude? How will their character be influenced by acting in this way?

Considering the focus and scope of these methods of ethical reasoning, it is possible to posit that the Franciscan values of contemplation, conversion, minores, and poverty form a foundation for this way of reasoning. In addition, extensions of these Franciscan values, such as compassion, respect, reverence, humility, conversion, harmony, justice, love, hospitality, and other nuanced values of Gospel living can be incorporated into the consideration of the social, political, and ecclesial context as part of the process of deciding upon one's ethical and "Franciscan" response.

Turning to the episode in Francis's life, it is possible to hypothesize how Francis might have used these ways of thinking in his interactions with a Manichaean Christian and a local priest based on the response he made to both.

An Analysis of Francis's Encounter with a Priest Living with a Woman

The account of Francis interacting with a local priest living with a woman is presented by Eric Doyle in his book, Song of Brotherhood as an illustration of the spirit of Francis as a passionate, compassionate, loving man.[4]

[4] Eric Doyle, *St. Francis and the Song of Brotherhood* (New York: Seabury Press, 1981), 19.

> … in Stephen of Bourbon's account of a visit [Francis] once made to Lombardy. Being in a district where the local priest was living with a woman, he was asked by a strict "Manichaean" Christian: 'If a priest keeps a concubine and so stains his hands, do we have to believe in his teaching and respect the sacraments he administers?' Instead of replying, St. Francis went straight to the priest's house in the sight of everyone. Kneeling down in front of the priest he said: I do not really know whether these hands are stained as the other man claims they are. In any case, I do know that even if they are, this in no way lessens the power and efficacy of the sacraments of God … that is why I kiss them out of respect for what they administer and out of respect for him who delegated his authority to them.

The Facts

An examination of this passage in light of the four ways of ethical reasoning begins with the extraction of the facts (the truth) of the episode and then proffers the potential course(s) of action or response. Therefore, we know as fact from this account that Francis travelled in Lombardy. Knowing what we might from the life of Francis, we could hypothesize that this travelling occurred between 1212 and 1215.[5] This conjecture might help with understanding the context of the episode, i.e., the ecclesial context of the Medieval Church at that time. There was the presence of the gnostic religion of Manichaeism in this part of Italy, which was very focused on the dualism of the good (the spirit) and evil (the body), as well as the denial of the authority of the Catholic priests based on the belief that Jesus entrusted to all men the divine power of the clergy.[6] In addition, the occurrence

[5] Arnaldo Fortini, *Francis of Assisi* (New York: Seabury Press, 1981), 374-76.

[6] Fortini, *Francis of Assisi*, 253-54.

of concubinage between the clergy and local women was widespread.[7] In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council issued many decrees about the respect and reverence for the Eucharist, the proper care and reception of the Host, and other issues related to appropriate behaviors among the clergy.[8] These documented, historical facts provide the context for the episode and the importance of the facts given in the account. As the account progresses, we know for a fact that Francis kneels before the priest and kisses his hand, and he declares his motives for doing so. His motives are based on his value of respect for the ordained clergy and for God who authorizes this ordination. We also assume as fact, by omission of any contradictory details, that Francis does not directly respond to the Manichaean Christian.

Potential Responses to the Accusation

Developing a comprehensive collection of potential responses to the dilemma is an intermediary step in the process of ethical decision making that becomes the focus of the subsequent steps of reasoning. In this step, one might hypothesize the options Francis had before him for responding to the request of the Manichaean. Francis's options might have been any one, or combination of, the following: to chastise the Manichaean for his heretical beliefs and his judgmental accusation; to acknowledge the accusation and go to the priest to reproach him for his sins; to report the priest to the local bishop for disciplinary action; to accuse the woman of her sinful behavior and order her to leave the priest's house; to preach to anyone who will listen against the heresy and against the actions of the priest; to ignore the whole episode and continue on his way; or to respond as he did.

Given these potential and viable options, it is important to scrutinize each by looking at the ethical implica-

[7] Fortini, *Francis of Assisi*, 253.
[8] Fortini, *Francis of Assisi*, 253.

tions and practical consequences of each option, and to consider the totality of the episode.

Potential Consequences of the Options

This second step of ethical reasoning tests potential consequences for their fairness and appropriateness. In each of the options given above, it is important to consider who will be affected by the options, and in what way. In this account, those who might be affected are not just the Manichaean Christian, the priest, the woman, and Francis, but also Francis's companions, any bystanders in this public space, and the Church as a whole.

The negative consequences might include shame, embarrassment, the acceptance of a judgmental attitude, self-righteousness, misdirected anger or indignation, a lack of humility by placing oneself above another in the process of chastisement or reproach, confusion about the dualistic way of thinking, confusion about the Church's tolerance of certain clerical behaviors, or inappropriate, targeted responses to an incident within the totality of a context.

The positive consequences might be the opportunity to use this episode at another time as a teaching tool; the loving response that is the kneeling down in homage and kissing the hands of the priest; the reinforcement of the love of God for everyone and God's presence in everything; or the broader awareness of an issue in the Church that needs to be addressed by the Council. Depending on the type of reasoning one favors, the facts, the options, and the potential consequences must be weighed according to their fairness, and in the case of ethical thinking, according to God's justice.

Fairness of the Options

In most societies, the issue of fairness is key because it helps to form the basis of a just, orderly, and organized way of life together. It is often the basis of judgment about

the efficacy and appropriateness of a decision. The quality of justice, or fairness, is based on the values shared by most within the culture with the intent that what results is for the common good. The personal agenda, or potential benefit of any one person is never an indicator for fairness.

Character of Those Involved

The final way of thinking is that which involves a calculation of all those involved in the dilemma, their motives, their potential benefits, and the pattern of actions of each one given his, or her, life in context.

In this case, the motives of the Manichaean Christian must be considered. Are these motives self-serving or intended to undermine Francis or the Church? How might one think about the character of the priest, especially vis-à-vis the state of the clergy within the Church at that time? Who, or what, motivates Francis in this dilemma? What is his focus? How might he benefit from his actions? What values are operative within each of these three main characters of the episode, according to the behaviors that are shown?

These questions about the nature and character of each player in the episode are important to consider because one's motives for actions are always a result of one's values, and even more so, one's desires for an intended outcome. The fairness of any decision needs to take these motives and intended results into consideration.

The Ethical Nature of Francis's Response

According to the key factors of "fairness": the consideration for the feelings of all involved, the innate fairness or justice of an action, the reciprocity of the action as fair, and treating others equally and with respect, the only decision that seems "fair" is the decision that Francis made. This decision was one that he could apply to any public confrontation he might encounter; it is based on respect

for the individuals involved; it more than likely is the way he would like to be treated if accused of something similar; and he responds to the only, truly known fact he has at his disposal – the sacramental nature of the priest's hands.

The response Francis makes could indicate that Francis considered the complexity of the episode: the facts, the potential decisions and their consequences, the fairness and justice of those decisions, and the nature of the individuals involved. Francis acts solely upon what he knows for certain; he has options as to how to respond, but his values and way of thinking about others lead him toward the action he takes. He is not concerned with the character of the accuser or the priest, nor does he respond to their motives or benefits. He is not judgmental of the priest and his actions, nor of the accuser and his motives. Yet, in this decision, Francis is able to address the concern of the Manichaean Christian by pointing out the sacramental nature of a corporal element – the hands, thus addressing the dualistic argument of good and evil. In addition, Francis is able to address the contemporary clerical issue of concubinage by focusing on the more important use of the hands by an ordained priest. With both individuals, Francis leaves the decision to each of them as to what is most important, and how they might proceed. He does not make the decision for them.

Through this rather lengthy discussion of a very illustrative account of an interaction Francis has with others, we can garner not only what type of person Francis is, as Eric Doyle proposes,[9] but we can also get a glimpse of how Francis might have come to this decision by the type of thinking he might have employed and the values he lived by. Obviously, Francis did not pull out the newsprint and markers and work this through before he responded; rather, we see a spontaneous response to the

[9] Doyle, *St. Francis and the Song of Brotherhood*, 19. Doyle posits that this episode illustrates the passion that Francis has which motivates him to act with compassion. His response is entirely positive; finding only the good in the man, rather than chastising him.

question put before him. In essence, Francis's response is a practiced one; it is part of the life stance he has nourished through prayer and contemplation on the life of Jesus. It illustrates that he acted upon the values he held and offered to others as a *forma vitae*. They are the values that he integrated as he tried to live a Gospel way of life. We know that Francis did not study philosophy, theology or logic formally, yet we do know that he spent a considerable amount of time in prayer and contemplation so that he could be an effective preacher by his actions more than by his words. His time in eremo – in isolated prayer – was how he developed a way of thinking (praying) that would keep him centered in following Jesus, the ultimate ethical decision maker.

Through this analysis of Francis's encounter with the priest and the Manichaean Christian, we might find a way in which we can integrate the values and forma vitae of Francis into our own life. Perhaps these modes of reasoning ethically can assist us to come to a more appropriate, ethical response to all that we confront daily in our lives, in our global society, in our Church, and in our relationships with God and others.

I return to the question that spurred this discussion, "How do I integrate the Franciscan values into my life more fully?" It seems that one way to facilitate the integration of values in one's life is to examine how one thinks about the events and issues of concern in our world. Following, I propose a few ways in which to "practice" the use of ethical thinking based on Franciscan values for the integration of the same into one's way of life and into the ethos of an organization.

Practical Applications

It is a no-brainer to say that in order to integrate one's values into one's everyday life in a conscious and intentional way, one needs to practice the means by which to do so. There are two ways, as illustrated herein, to practice the integration of values for ethical living and deci-

sion making. The first is that of analysis: to examine the life events of Francis and Clare in light of the decisions they made, and the hypothetical reasoning they may have used to arrive at those decisions. In other words, use a type of analysis illustrated herein to learn from the experts.

The second approach would be to take real-life ethical questions and dilemmas and put them through the same type of analysis. However, instead of only thinking through the issue using the four ways of ethical reasoning, it would be critical to also examine the foundational values by which one chooses to live, or in the case of an organizational process, the shared, foundational values of the organization.

On an organizational level, the result of these processes for ethical reasoning can be a well-rounded, values-based decision that can be communicated to all interested parties effectively because of the use of a sound, comprehensive, potentially unbiased reasoning process. It is more difficult to take issue with such a decision, and it is easier to embrace such a decision because of the shared understanding of the foundational values.

On a personal level, the result of these processes can also be a comprehensive, prayerful, values-based decision that can enhance one's personal stance to lead an ethical and honest way of life as a way to remain loyal to one's inherent integrity.

Specific Areas of Application

For those involved in large, complex, multi-departmental institutions such as health care, higher education, and religious congregations, these modes of ethical thinking can be applied to the development of policies and protocols of the organization; the case-by-case decisions regarding personnel hiring and termination; financial planning and budgetary decisions; or programming and services in response to changing needs. All of these areas need to be considered through the eyes of ethical

thinking and always with the lens of the Franciscan values. The question, "How do our deliberations and actions reflect our Franciscan values in an obvious way?" needs to be on the table at all times. It needs to be the ultimate test of the justice and fairness of every decision made, every policy written, and every human interaction undertaken in the course of everyday business. If not, the "value" of bottom-line economics will be the basis of any decision-making in the organization, and the Franciscan ethos will be lost.

For those involved in smaller enterprises such as spirituality centers and other collective, ministerial ventures, the same modes of ethical thinking apply in each of the areas of policy and operation. However, the challenge within the smaller enterprises is the familiarity of those involved, and the tendency to fall into one way of reasoning ethically at the neglect of other ways of reasoning, typically because of positional authority or authority by voice volume. However, using all four ways of reasoning within a defined process will help the decision-makers stay in accord with the Franciscan values of the institution.

For individuals, I often think of the corollary request that is asked of me, "Teach me to read the newspaper through a Franciscan lens." For those major local, national, international events and issues that we read about, it seems important to cultivate a way of thinking in a way that involves the four ways of reasoning ethically for the purpose of coming to an appropriate personal or public response based on one's Franciscan values.

In one's personal life, there are always ethical dilemmas that confront an individual in the decisions one needs to make on behalf of one's self, family or congregation, one's place of ministry or employment, and in relationship to the Earth. Demands, very similar to the one imposed on Francis by the Manichaean, are often made of us, especially if we are in a position to address situations of conflict, inconsistency, or hypocrisy. Oftentimes, the desired response is the one of least resistance, or benign

consolation, or even inappropriate aggression toward one or another of those involved. In these cases, the perception is, "Well, that's not very Franciscan." Without elaborating on that statement fully with its layers of meaning and its implications, one can be left with the question of "What does it mean to act as a Franciscan?" I submit that using the four ways of ethical reasoning can lead one to respond to any situation in a way that results in the reaction, "Well, that is a Franciscan way of dealing with the problem."

Finally, in addition to using the four ways of ethical reasoning, one also needs to employ the following strategies as part of the process of integrating the Franciscan values into their professional and personal lives: keep the dialogue open toward the understanding of what the Franciscan values mean in this twenty-first century; maintain an open atmosphere where one may express one's way of thinking ethically about the situation, yet be challenged by others to consider other ways of thinking ethically; and ensure that the value and acceptance of prayer and contemplation are inherently part of the process. It is my belief that continual practice of the ethical ways of reasoning along with the strategies mentioned above will facilitate the integration of the Franciscan values such that one's way of thinking, believing, and behaving will bring these values to the surface of a values-based response, and one will truly be seen as one who lives the Franciscan way of life.

Franciscans and the Sick and Disabled

Lawrence Jagdfeld, O.F.M.

When any brother falls sick, the other brothers must serve him as they would wish to be served themselves.
(*Later Rule*, Chapter VI, 9)

Care of the sick is an integral part of the mission of the Catholic Church as witnessed by the many Catholic health care institutions that can be found throughout the world. Many groups of religious men and women are dedicated solely to the care of the sick, following the charism of their founders. Just as Jesus reached out to the many who were in need of healing, Catholics have a special place in their hearts for those who bear the burden of illness.

The Franciscan Family is no exception to that mission. Francis of Assisi understood the need to care for those who bear this cross of infirmity. His dedication to the care of the lepers is part of his response to the Gospel. His *Rule of Life* specifically cites the need to care for the sick members of the community. Clare of Assisi also knew the importance of caring for the sick sisters. Her biographers point out that she cared for the sick sisters, tenderly nursing them back to health or staying with them until death. It is recorded that she bound up the wounds of the sisters. It is also recorded that she was solicitous of their emotional health as well.

While Francis's and Clare's actions may not seem heroic in their scope, we must remember that they were

living in times that regarded the contagion of sickness in a completely different light than we do. Infirmaries and hospices for the sick were essentially places to isolate the sick and to contain disease. By their willingness to care for the lepers and the sick, Francis and Clare are literally laying down their lives for their brothers and sisters. In a day when the bedding of sick people was often burned lest it contaminate the others in the house, Clare is said to have cleaned and laundered the bedclothes of the sick sisters.

The care of the sick was also a charism of the Secular Franciscans who followed Francis. Perhaps the classic example of this lies in St. Elizabeth of Hungary whose life was marked by her solicitude for the sick and the lepers of her time. The list of Secular Franciscans who dedicated their lives to the care of the sick is voluminous indeed.

As a young friar, I was trained and educated to be a teacher. I fully expected that I would spend most of my days in a high school classroom. Indeed, much of my youth was spent thus. However, just a mere seventeen years after my solemn profession, I was diagnosed with Meniere's Disease which gradually robbed me of my ability to hear well enough to maintain order in a high school classroom.

In the early 1980s long before my health began to deteriorate, I had been approached by a friar who asked if I would be willing to serve as a spiritual advisor for a small group of chronically ill people, people who in many cases were home bound or bedridden. He introduced me to an "apostolate" known as CUSA, an acronym that stood for the Catholic Union of the Sick in America. The group was founded in 1947 by a Catholic laywoman by the name of Laure Brunner, a Belgian emigre. She herself had carried the cross of chronic illness and had participated in the *Union Catholique des Malades* in her native Belgium. She missed the contact she had established with the other members of this group especially since correspondence with occupied countries of Europe was not possible during the war. She had decided to form a branch of the

union in the United States. After many years of struggle, she initiated the first "group letter" of CUSA on December 8, 1947. Within a few years, the apostolate had grown to include over 1,000 people linked together through "round robin" letters. Each letter circulated through a group of eight people, one of whom was a Catholic priest who offered spiritual sustenance to these people who were, in many cases, unable to leave their beds or their homes to participate in worship or social activities.

I accepted the invitation as a young man in relatively good health. I was slowly introduced to the lives of people who were suffering from the effects of Multiple and Lateral Sclerosis, Cerebral Palsy, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Hypertension, Migraine Headaches, Fibromyalgia, COPD, etc. As the years passed, I was intrigued by the fact that the purpose of this apostolate was to "sanctify the lives" of those who bore the cross of illness and/or disability. Rather than being served by others, these people were looking for ways to serve. They wanted to explore the notion of redemptive suffering, to offer their pain and isolation for the sake of others. Each group chose for itself an "intention" for which the group prayed and offered their daily struggles. Many of them needed live-in caregivers. However, not satisfied with the notion of being served, they looked for a way to serve the broader church through prayer and support of others who suffered as they did.

It was about ten years after I took on the job of serving as a spiritual advisor for several of the group letters that I was first diagnosed with Meniere's Disease. My brothers in community were extremely solicitous of my needs and cared for me in my illness, especially when I was plagued by vertigo attacks, etc. Surgery relieved me of the problem of dizziness but also robbed me of any hearing on the right side. I began to look for ways to learn sign language and to reach out to others who were similarly afflicted. The Board of Directors of CUSA asked me serve on the Board as one who understood the plight of the chronically ill and/or the disabled from a first-hand perspective.

Another ten years passed, and I was diagnosed with colon cancer. I was very lucky that the disease was discovered before it had made its way into the wall of the colon, and I am grateful for the province policy that dictates that every friar have a colonoscopy at age fifty. A simple procedure removed the cancerous cells. However, the doctor asked me to have an annual colonoscopy for at least five years just in case. Cancer is, perhaps, the one word in our English language that still strikes fear in the heart of everyone who has encountered the disease or who has a loved one who is so afflicted. It was a harrowing experience to be sure. Throughout it all, my fellow CUSANS were there to support me through prayer and their constant correspondence.

Shortly after that, I was referred to a rheumatologist by my physician because of the fact that my hands were becoming cramped and misshapen. The diagnosis this time was psoriatic arthritis complicated by what could be Post-polio Syndrome. The effects of arthritis can be controlled by medication and by therapy, but as time marches on, "Brother Ass" continues to show signs of wear and tear. Today, my mobility is limited by the arthritis, making it difficult for me to walk more than a block or two and limiting the amount of time I can stand without seeking some rest.

Then in 2007, the Board of Directors of CUSA asked if I would take on the job of Administrator of CUSA. My predecessor, Ms. Anna Marie Sopko, had held the position for over thirty years and was looking for the possibility of retirement. The offer came at a time when I was contemplating the diminishment of my ministerial outreach because of the effects of my various disabilities. I accepted the position with gratitude for the chance to continue to serve as well as being served.

Throughout the thirty-five plus years of my priesthood, there have been many instances when I have been called upon to serve the needs of others. As a Franciscan priest, I have tried to take seriously the Gospel admonition to serve rather than be served. However, I can honestly say

that I have had to look at life from both perspectives. I am fortunate in that I live in a community of brothers who assist me in those tasks that I can no longer do for myself. They do serve me in many ways. It is a humbling aspect of community life. I also have to say that I have been served by my fellow CUSANS as well who have taught me the lessons of patience, resignation, acceptance of God's will, as well as charity for others who suffer. They have also included me and my needs in their intercessory prayers which are so much a part of who CUSANS are. The Holy Spirit obviously had a plan in mind when my confrere asked me to serve CUSA back in the 1980s.

CUSA takes much of its inspiration from the writings of St. Paul, particularly Colossians 1:24: *Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church*.... St. Paul and the philosophers of his age believed that new eras in history were "born in travail," much the same as a woman suffers in bringing forth a child. A woman in labor is the classic example of one who is able to rejoice in suffering, bearing the pain of childbirth with a view of what lays beyond the pain, namely, the joy of a child. Christians, according to St. Paul, can also rejoice in their physical pain and emotional distress by bearing their afflictions in union with Jesus, the crucified Savior. By so doing, they assist in giving birth to that day when Christ will return with salvation for believers.

CUSA has had to change over the past sixty years. People with chronic illness and/or disability are no longer as isolated as they have been in the past. The Americans with Disabilities Act has opened much of society and our culture to the needs of people with disabilities. Letter writing is no longer the primary tool of communication as telephones and computers have connected people more quickly and more frequently. The issue of isolation is no longer the same as it has been for people with physical disabilities or illnesses. CUSA has tried to adapt to these realities by connecting people through the use of

electronic mail and the Internet. However, there are still many who prefer to find a letter in the mailbox.

At the same time, while people with physical disabilities are no longer as isolated as they once were, people with cognitive disabilities or mental illnesses are often time still the victims of isolation and neglect. One CUSAN once wrote to me that the holidays were particularly difficult for him as his family actually paid him to stay away from their family gatherings. People with bipolar syndrome, depression, anxiety attacks, etc. are still misunderstood and isolated by others. Another CUSAN once wrote that some in his family often greeted his depression with the admonition to "get over it." Those who suffer from depression would like nothing better than to do so. I have been introduced to people with traumatic brain injuries whose families cannot cope with the profound differences that such injuries bring with them.

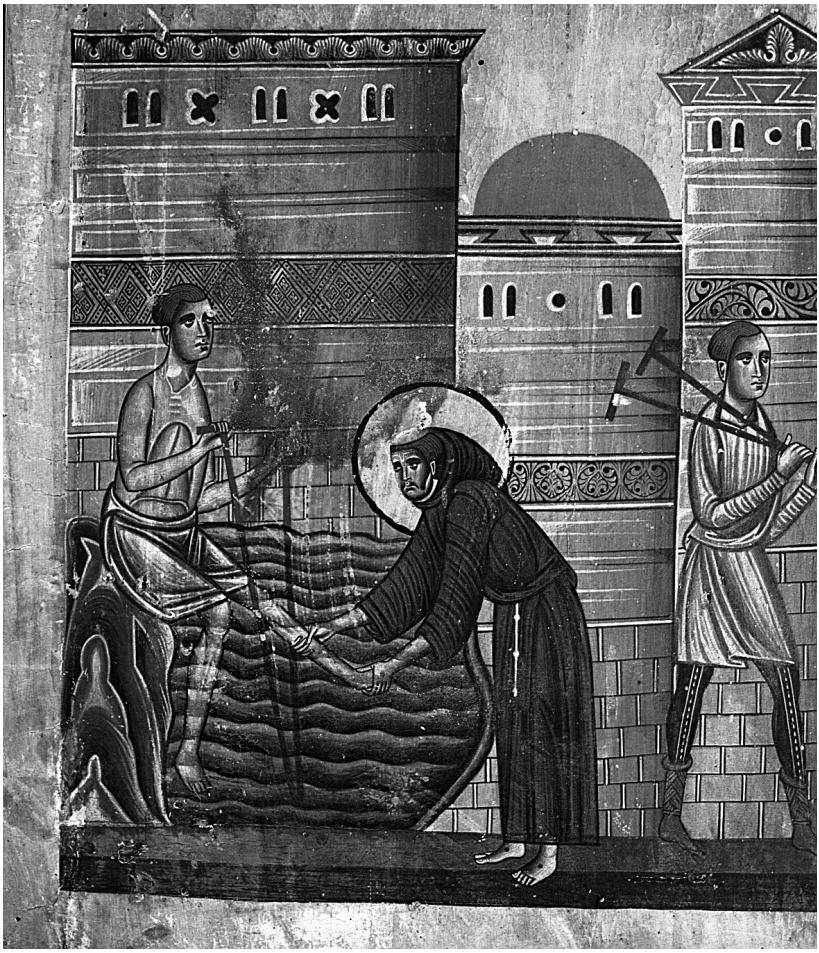
As the war in Afghanistan drags on, the news media was and still is constantly apprising us of the toll of warfare, especially as surgeons have been able to save the lives of those who are wounded. These men and women are often greeted by a system that expects them to find support in their families and communities, people who are often not equipped to deal with the effects of the wounds of war. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is now a common part of our vocabularies, but the skills to deal with its effects are not always as easily learned as the language to describe the problem.

As one who knows the burden of chronic pain, I know what it is to be served. Through CUSA, I have also learned that it is still possible to serve even though my capabilities have been diminished as the years advance. I am indeed fortunate that God has steered my boat toward the haven that is CUSA as I have found in its members another community to serve and which continues to serve me.

In 2012, the Franciscan Province of the Most Sacred Heart accepted CUSA as a sponsored ministry. At a time when many of the friars of our Province are advancing

in age, the Provincial Council recognized that this was indeed another way to serve the needs of the sick and people with disabilities.

As I celebrated Pentecost this year, my thoughts turned toward the movement of the Holy Spirit in my life. I am grateful that the Spirit opened this singular ministry to me when I was much younger with a view to what I would need as I grew older. Those Pentecost ruminations also spurred me to share the good news of CUSA with others who might find themselves in similar circumstances. To that end, I offer these thoughts and make an invitation to visit CUSA at www.cusan.org or on Facebook.



The Cord, 63.3 (2013)

Father Sixtus O'Connor, O.F.M.
chaplain at Nuremberg

Brian Jordan, O.F.M.

In October, 1977, my last semester as an undergraduate at Siena College, Loudonville, NY, my philosophy professor, Father Richard O'Connor was giving a lecture on his course entitled Political Philosophy. We were discussing a line from Goethe's *Faust*, which was "What is religion to you?" As the class progressed, one of my fellow Franciscan students asked, "Why does God send people to hell?" Without any hesitation, Father Richard looked at me with an intense look in his eyes and replied, "I never heard of God sending anyone to hell, people send themselves."[1] That provocative answer inspired me to say "yes" to the call to join the Order of Friars Minor. The decision was made not just by those mere words but by the Franciscan who uttered those penetrating words—Father Sixtus (Richard) O'Connor, US Army chaplain in General Patton's Third Army during World War II and the lone Roman Catholic chaplain during the Nuremberg trial of 1945-46. He also witnessed all ten Nazi war criminals put to death for their crimes. Yes, people can send themselves to hell or even make a decision for heaven.

[1] "Political Philosophy" course taught by Father Richard O'Connor, O.F.M., Department of Philosphy, Siena College, Loudonville, NY, Fall Semester, 1977.

Background

Richard James O'Connor was born March 15, 1909 in Oxford, a small town in upstate New York. He was one of seven children born to John O'Connor and Elizabeth Ann Cooke (Swiss born and native German speaker who taught young Richard German while he was growing up.) He was recruited to join Holy Name Province after graduating from his local high school. He took the religious name of Sixtus and pronounced his solemn vows on Sept. 17, 1933 and was ordained in 1934. Due to his fluent German and desire to teach, Father Sixtus was sent to the University of Munich in 1934 to study philosophy and the classics. Because of the growing Nazi influence in Munich, Fr. Sixtus transferred to the University of Bonn in 1936 to continue his studies. With the outbreak of World War II in 1939, Fr. Sixtus was recalled to the United States and then taught at Siena College. He requested and received permission to serve as a US Army chaplain in 1942.

Following chaplain's school at Harvard University in 1943 he was assigned to serve in General Patton's Third Army. Father Richard was one of the unique World War II chaplains who were allowed to accompany his fellow soldiers whether by jeep or on foot in the battlefield. He witnessed many battles both in France and in Germany. I vividly recall a conversation I had in his room in the Siena College Friary discussing the Third Army coming to the aid of General McAuliffe while he was surrounded in Bastogne during the Battle of Bulge. "The whole world remembers the response "Nuts!" to the German request to surrender. General McAuliffe was very capable of using more colorful language than that," recalled Father Sixtus with a big smile on his face. Although he never shared with me the specifics of the horror of war, he did tell me that he often counseled the wounded and blessed the dead—whether they were full bodies or body parts.

I often thought of Father Sixtus when I encountered the horror of war and terrorism during my years as a Fran-

ciscan ordained to serve. In 1980, while I was a studying Spanish in a language school in Cochabamba, Bolivia, I saw people killed and injured by a military overthrow of the civilian government. In 1986, as a young priest working in the Southeast Bronx, I ministered among families who were victimized by gun violence due to the dangerous drug industry. In 1993, I blessed bodies of victims of a gunfight due to racial tension between Latinos and African Americans when I was a pastor in Silver Spring, Maryland. I blessed bodies and body parts in the aftermath of a deadly earthquake in San Salvador, El Salvador in January 2001. Finally, I served as a chaplain at the World Trade Center from September 2001 to June 2002. During those months, I blessed numerous bodies and body parts. On each solemn occasion, I thought of the calm demeanor and dedicated professionalism of Father Sixtus. I kept on thinking of what he said: that priests were to be a light amid the darkness of fear, anger, and hopelessness. "Jordan," as he frequently called me, "find inner strength through adversity. You will always have obstacles in life; don't get stuck! Move forward and carry on!" Simple words from the Nuremberg chaplain but they had a profound impact on the person hearing them.

Assignment to Nuremberg

As the war in Europe was coming to an end, Father Sixtus figured he would be sent back home and teach again at Siena College. In August 1945, General Patton personally asked Father Sixtus if he would accept a special assignment. When he was informed that he would be a chaplain to the Nazi war criminals who masterminded both the war in Europe and the Holocaust, he immediately accepted. He would have to be present among them during the trials at Nuremberg until the final verdicts were handed down.

The chief Justice of this tribunal was Justice Robert Jackson of the United States. Fr. Sixtus told me in October 1977 that Justice Jackson's insistence on fairness

and understanding in the courtroom reminded him of the great US Supreme Court Justice, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. ("The life of the law is not logic but experience!")

I asked him why he accepted this challenging assignment. With that ever-present intensity in his eye, he looked at me and bellowed—"Because that was my duty as an officer and as a priest and I knew from the beginning that these were no gentlemen!"

According to military records, the Nuremberg tribunal sessions began in the Palace of Justice on August 8, 1945. Originally, twenty-four Nazi war criminals were scheduled for trial but two committed suicide and one was ruled unfit for trial. The military tribunal agreed to the request by the twenty-one war criminals to have chaplains. The team was composed of Father Sixtus O'Connor, Roman Catholic priest and Army officer; Protestant Chaplain Henry Gerecke, Lutheran minister and Army officer, and Dr. G.M. Gilbert, prison psychologist and Army officer. All three spoke fluent German. Since the majority of the war criminals were Protestant, Chaplain Gerecke was in charge and Fr. Sixtus was his assistant.

Father Sixtus told me in a conversation in October 1977 that his selection and that of Gerecke mirrored the age-old split in Germany between Protestant and Catholics. It was in Germany that the Protestant Reformation began with Martin Luther in 1517. Father Sixtus informed me that the chaplains were selected for their cultural sensitivities, linguistic knowledge, and credibility as religious figures. Fr. O'Connor proved himself on the battlefield in France and Germany and Chaplain Gerecke proved himself as a capable hospital chaplain in the Allied hospital in Munich. These traits and experiences enabled them to interact with prisoners on a personal and pastoral level rather than relating as military personnel.

Although he never told me directly of his conversations with the Nazi war criminals, official documents indicate that fifteen of the twenty-one war criminals were Protestant and six were Roman Catholic. Only four of the six Catholics requested spiritual counsel and thirteen of

the fifteen Protestants agreed to counsel by both chaplains and the Army prison psychologist.

Father Sixtus often celebrated Mass for Hans Frank, the Nazi governor-general of Poland who was responsible not only for the occupation of Poland but also put down the Warsaw uprising and ran concentration camps such as Auschwitz-Birkenau. In Poland alone, at least three million Holocaust victims perished under Hans Frank. Franz Von Papen was the Vice Chancellor. Ernest Kaltenbrunner was the chief of the Gestapo in Austria and Arthur Seyss-Inquart was a military adviser to Hitler. Father O'Connor also reached out to the Protestant war criminals if they wanted counsel. One who was later acquitted of charges against him was Hans Fritsche, a former deputy to Dr. Goebbels, the Nazi minister of Propaganda. In his memoirs, he wrote glowingly of the chaplain, "Father Sixtus, ... enjoyed high regard of the Nuremberg prison's inmates, an admiration which was not confined to the Catholic prisoners. He understood life's realities, and this circumstance was of great advantage for the exercise of his spiritual duties."

Fritzsche continued, "This man, a cool and sober observer who spoke without prejudice to the high spiritual office he held, was the American Catholic chaplain of our prison in Nuremberg." Another Nazi war criminal acquitted was Franz von Papen who also wrote in his memoirs about Fr. Sixtus. He wrote, "Father Sixtus O'Connor ... was a great solace to me during this difficult period." Von Papen further states that Fr. O'Connor was directly instrumental in the conversion of Hans Frank who was baptized by Father Sixtus in Nuremberg. There seemed to be a transformation in Hans Frank with his baptism and conversion. Von Papen writes, "In his new-found faith, he looked death unswervingly in the eye for over a year, and one could only admire the new strength of character he had acquired. His conduct was marked in contrast with that of many of his fellow prisoners."[2]

[2] Franz Von Papen, *Franz von Papen Memoirs*, trans. Brian Connell (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1953).

Chaplain Gerecke and Father Sixtus were both amazingly compassionate towards the Nazi war criminals. When the trials ended and the judges were reviewing their decisions, the two chaplains convinced their superiors to allow the families of the defendants to visit them through a screen. Both chaplains and an officer were present during these visits.[3] Again in October 1977, while discussing Dostovevsky's "Crime and Punishment," Father Sixtus remarked in class with a wistful look on his face, "In the criminal justice system, one may find reason to punish those found guilty. However, that does mean you punish the family members of the doomed as well."

Verdicts Rendered

The military tribunal at Nuremberg lasted eleven months from November 1945 until October 1946. Verdicts were rendered on October 1, 1946. Of the twenty-one war criminals, eleven were to be executed; seven were given prison sentences—some for life and others for specific time periods. Three were acquitted—Fritzsche, Schacht, and von Papen. Executions were to be carried out at midnight October 15, 1946 and were to be completed in the early morning of October 16, 1946.

Coincidentally, October 15 was the seventh game of the 1946 World Series between the Boston Red Sox and the St. Louis Cardinals. Father Sixtus challenged his colleague to a wager since Chaplain Gerecke was from the St. Louis area. Father Sixtus picked the Boston Red Sox even though he was a Brooklyn Dodgers fan. The eighth inning was playing on the radio but was turned off when the executions were about to take place. Before the executions occurred, commotion occurred in the cell of Herman Goering. Someone gave him a cyanide pill and he committed suicide in front of some soldiers and the two chaplains. Father Sixtus told me while we were watch-

[3] "Imprisoned Nazi Leaders Still Cherish Memory of US Chaplain They Met During Nuremberg Trial," Press Department, National Catholic Welfare Office, 9/20/54.

ing the World Series between the New York Yankees and Los Angeles Dodgers in mid-October 1977. "I knew all along that Goering would kill himself—he always thought execution was beneath him. Brilliant intellect but had no faith." He then brought up the discussion about Karl Marx and alienation from a recent political philosophy class. "Alienation is the worst thing that can happen—whether it be an individual or a nation." He then looked out the window and barely watched the rest of the World Series game.

Right before the executions took place, the commanding officer of the prison at Nuremberg, Col. Burton Andrus, made this report of the two chaplains: "Father O'Connor and Chaplain Gerecke were untiringly moving from condemned cell to condemned cell. Prayers were now taking on a new meaning, a new urgency."[4]

According to official documents,

> the place for executions was located in the gymnasium of the prison. Brightly lit, the room contained three wooden scaffolds painted black. Thirteen steps up to the platform on which the gallows were erected. The lower part of the gallows were draped with a curtain. Hands tied behind their backs, a black hood pulled over their heads, one by one, each man went to his death.

According to a 1947 interview with newspaper reporter, Jimmy Powers, Father Sixtus shared this reflection about the executions that both he and Chaplain Gerecke witnessed.

> All the prisoners, except Alfred Rosenberg, accepted religious assistance from one of the chaplains. Rosenberg had no last words. All marched quietly up the scaffold with the exception of Streicher. As each prisoner entered the gymnasium—I

[4] William J. Hourihan, "US Army Chaplain Ministry to German War Criminals at Nuremberg 1945-46," 1991.

> don't know why a sports angle seems to impinge upon this tragic affair, but with the broadcast of the World Series game and the basketball court as a background, it was there, nevertheless—the escorting officer turned each prisoner over to his chaplain. At the foot of the stairs, each prisoner was halted and asked to identify himself. This seems to be general Army protocol, just in case there is a mistaken identity or something.[5]

The last of the ten executions was recorded at 2:45 a.m. in the morning of October 16, 1946. Father O'Connor continues in the same interview "We were all limp when it was over. We forgot about the Series and the bet. Days later, I thought to ask what happened after the eighth inning." After the Yankees won the World Series in October 1977, Father Sixtus told me "Every year when the World Series comes around, I think of that night!"

Post-Nuremberg

After the executions, both Chaplain Gerecke and Father Sixtus served the last few months as Army chaplains and eventually returned home to the States. Father Sixtus retired as a US Army major and returned to teach at St. Bonaventure University and Chaplain Gerecke continued as a chaplain on a military base in the United States.

Their assignments at Nuremberg were among the most challenging for any military chaplain in the US armed forces during World War II.[6] Both abided by the confidential nature of their respective ministries. Through the sacrament of Holy Orders, Roman Catholic priests can never divulge the contents of a confession to anyone nor a matter held in the strictest confidence without facing penalty by a bishop or local Ordinary. Whereas, a Lutheran minister is not bound to the sacrament of confes-

[5] *The Siena News*, Loudonville, N.Y., Feb. 28, 1946.

[6] Joseph Persico, "Nuremberg: Infamy on Trial" (New York: Viking Press, 1994).

sion but still must abide by the confidential nature of his ministry.

Lutheran minister Henry Gerecke authored an account of his Nuremberg experiences in an article exclusively written in the September 1, 1951 edition of the *Saturday Evening Post* entitled "I Walked to the Gallows with the Nazi Chiefs."

Within the article, he wrote two interesting sentences. "My assistant, Catholic chaplain, Sixtus O'Connor and I spent eleven months with the perpetrators of World War II. We were the last to counsel with these men and made ten trips to the execution chamber. The world has never heard our story."

However, this article asks the question: "Should the world know the story of these two chaplains, especially with the confidential charge entrusted to them by both their religious vows and the US Department of Defense?" Initially, Gerecke's request to publish an account of his ministry was denied by the Office of the Chief of Chaplains, which wrote in 1951, "The objective was based on the grounds that the manuscript revealed intimate confidences which were deserving the secrecy of the confessional. The War Department discourages anything that would possibly suggest to men that chaplains do not zealously guard intimate knowledge and confidence." The key phrase there is "the secrecy of the confessional." Even though there was an ecumenical effort going on for eleven months during the Nuremberg trials between two Christian chaplains—one a Lutheran minister and the second a Roman Catholic priest, a Lutheran pastor does not hear confessions but a Roman Catholic priest does and will take them to his grave just as Father Sixtus has done.

Chaplain Gerecke skillfully avoided the perception that he was breaking his ministerial confidences and still authored the article. Father O'Connor was asked over and over again by many philosophical journals and secular media to author an article or short book of his Nuremberg experiences; he said that he would not. He did not explain why but those who knew him well knew that he

could not and would not. Father Sixtus would never risk the possibility of breaking the seal of confession nor any secret entrusted to him in confidence—whether they be Catholic, Protestant or even an atheist. Father Sixtus would talk about certain details of the war in Europe and the Nuremberg trials only to those who he believed would appreciate its value and would not make a reputation for themselves at the sufferings of others. He was a true priest, a great philosopher and a compassionate Franciscan.

Hans Frank—Example of Conversion

Perhaps the greatest achievement of Father Sixtus's service at Nuremberg was his ministry to Hans Frank, the governor-general of Poland. Frank had been accused of the murders of over three million people due to his directives ordered by Adolf Hitler and his holocaust of the Jews. According to official documents, Fr. Sixtus ensured that Frank's conversion to Catholicism was genuine before he baptized him in late 1945. According to Army prison psychologist, Dr. Gilbert, who served with both chaplains, Hans Frank relayed his impression to Dr. Gilbert:

> I am glad that you and Father Sixtus at least, still come to talk to me. You know Father Sixtus is such a wonderful man.... And religion is such a comfort—my only comfort now. I look forward to Christmas, now like a little child.[7]

Interestingly enough, in 1981, Niklas Frank, the surviving son of Hans Frank went to visit Father Sixtus while he was teaching philosophy in Siena College. Niklas wrote a book about his father that includes his encounter with Father Sixtus. While Father Sixtus was walking with Hans Frank on his way to execution and when he was

[7] Niklas Frank, "In the Shadow of the Reich," trans. Arthur S. Wensinger and Carole Clew-Hoey (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1991).

about to die, his last words were "Jesus, have mercy!" The book is primarily a struggle of a grieving son trying to come to grips with his father's war crimes. However, his father asked for mercy and this gave the son some degree of consolation.

Closing

About a month after ordination, I met with Father Sixtus in the recreation room of the friary of St. Francis of Assisi Church in Manhattan, following an afternoon of hearing confessions. I told him that I needed a bit of advice. He took me to the side and inquired what happened. I told him without divulging names nor specifics that I heard genuine confessions with sorrow and contrition for a couple of murders and told him that I absolved these particular penitents. Was I right for doing that? He looked me in the eye with his usual intensity and said, "Jordan, you are now an ordained priest and an educated man. Listen, if the penitent is contrite for his or her sins—no matter what they are—murder whatever—yes, you give them spiritual counsel, a worthy penance and unconditional absolution." Then he grabbed me by the arm and got closer to my face and uttered those memorable words that I will never forget. "Jordan, you absolve them of their sins but you don't absolve them of their actions!"[8]

One month later on July 10, 1983, Father Sixtus died peacefully in his sleep in his room in the Siena College Friary. The estimated time of death was around 2:45 a.m., which ironically was the same time that the last of the executions occurred at Nuremberg in the early morning of October 16, 1946. In his July 25, 1983 letter of obituary, then Provincial Minister of Holy Name Province Father Alban Maguire noted that Father Sixtus taught at Siena College from 1953 to 1983 and concluded the he

[8] Conversations between Brian Jordan, O.F.M. and Richard O'Connor, O.F.M., 1977-1983.

"… still find[s] it hard to believe that the intense light in his eyes has at last dimmed."[9]

Even today I vividly recall those conversations during the fall of 1977 both in and outside the political philosophy course Siena College. I can now finally answer the question in Goethe's *Faust* "What is religion to you?" It is the prayer of a worshiping community to Almighty God that brings us together and that good always triumphs over evil! Amen.

From *The Execution of Nazi War Criminals* by Kingsbury Smith

Another colonel went out the door and over to the condemned block to fetch the next man. This was Ernst Kaltenbrunner. He entered the execution chamber at 1.36 a.m., wearing a sweater beneath his blue double-breasted coat. With his lean haggard face furrowed by old dueling scars, this terrible successor to Reinhard Heydrick had a frightening look as he glanced around the room.

He wet his lips apparently in nervousness as he turned to mount the gallows, but he walked steadily. He answered his name in a calm, low voice. When he turned around on the gallows platform he first faced a United States Army Roman Catholic chaplain wearing a Franciscan habit.

[9] Obituary for Father Richard J. O'Connor, O.F.M. by Father Alban Maguire, O.F.M., July 25, 1983. Provincial Office, Holy Name Province.

The Cord, 63.3 (2013)

Contemporary and Medieval Insights into the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)

Robert J. Karris, O.F.M.

For a number of years I have been studying contemporary and medieval interpretations of the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)[1] and have also preached on this most beloved parable. Surely the themes of compassion[2] and food[3] run through this parable. However, in

[1] Robert J. Karris, "Diego de Estella on Luke 15:11-32," *Franciscan Studies* 61 (2003): 97-234; "St. Bernardine of Siena and the Gospel of Divine Mercy (Luke 15:11-32)," *Franciscan Studies* 62 (2004): 31-66; "Francis of Meyronnes' Sermon 57 on the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)," *Franciscan Studies* 63 (2005): 131-58; "Giacomo della Marca's Sunday Sermon 52 on the Ineffable Mercy of God," *Franciscan Studies* 63 (2005): 443-60; "Two Sermons of St. Lawrence of Brindisi," *The Cord* 56.3 (2006): 136-44; "Hildegard of Bingen's Expositio 12.2 on the Parable of the Prodigal Son," *The Cord* 58.2 (2008): 181-89. See also *St. Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of Luke Chapters 9-16*, with an Introduction, Translation and Notes by Robert J. Karris, *Works of St. Bonaventure* VIII/2 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2003), 1422-68; *St. Bonaventure's Commentary on Luke's Gospel: Thirty Days of Reflection and Prayer*, The Franciscan Masters of Scripture (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2012), 44-45 (Day Nineteen); *Peter of John Olivi's Commentary on Luke's Gospel: Thirty Days of Reflection and Prayer* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2013), 42-43 (Day Seventeen).

[2] See Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 140: "The first purpose of the parable is to emphasize the compassion … and the unquestioning love of the father, who mirrors analogically the attitude of God.… The God that Jesus represents and proclaims is precisely the forgiving and merciful God reflected in the parable."

[3] See Robert J. Karris, *Eating Your Way Through Luke's Gospel* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2006), 60: "Since the fattened calf occurs thrice and would be enough luscious meat for one hundred fifty

this article I want to emphasize the theme of money. After that I will comment briefly on three verses: Luke 15:20a: "And the younger son arose and went to his father"; Luke 15:20b: "... his father ... was moved with compassion ... and kissed him"; Luke 15:30: the elder son protests, "But when this son of yours comes, who has devoured his means with prostitutes ..."

The Theme of Money

For my leisure reading I delight in police procedurals where I have discovered that one of truest paths to solving a case is to follow the money.[4] Although scholars are unable to nail down the exact amount of the money the father gave to his younger son, it is clear that the younger son is mindlessly profligate.[5] The father is often called compassionate, and truly he is. But he is also extravagant with the family's assets. The fattened calf does not come cheaply. Perhaps it would cost ten times more than a goat and would feed some 150 people. The father was throwing a huge party, not only for his family and "hired hands," but also for many neighbors, perhaps his entire small village.[6] Is the elder son mean/stingy and

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people from family and village, I judge the food imagery of this parable to be less than incidental."

[4] See especially David A. Holgate, *Prodigality, Liberality and Meanness in the Parable of the Prodigal Son: A Greco-Roman Perspective on Luke 15.11-32*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 187 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999). Snodgrass, 130 concedes that the theme of possessions is present in the parable: "We may agree with Holgate (and others) that the right use of possessions is a subsidiary theme in the parable ..." See also John Nolland, "The Role of Money and Possessions in the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)," *Reading Luke: Interpretation, Reflection, Formation*, ed. Craig G. Bartholomew, Joel B. Green, Anthony C. Thiselton, Scripture and Hermeneutics Series 6 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 178-209.

[5] See Arland J. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 74: "The economy of telling a good story need not encompass all the details of current law and custom ..."

[6] See Richard L. Rohrbaugh, "A Dysfunctional Family and Its Neighbors (Luke 15:11b-32)," *Jesus and His Parables: Interpreting the*

who doesn't want to see any more of the family's assets – HIS assets – wasted? Wasn't it bad enough to lose family assets at the hands of his wanton brother, but now the father is throwing away assets by hosting a huge celebration. The father may contend "But we had to celebrate." The older son might counter: "But did we have to do so in such a ridiculously lavish way?!"

Let's try to express this theme of possessions in contemporary terms. The country-bumpkin younger son gets $20,000, goes to the big city, Rome, and quickly realizes that his money doesn't go far. Transportation to the big city, food, drink, lodging, and entertainment gobble up loads of his cash. He is subjected to smooth talkers with even smoother deals that separate him from even more of his precious money. Like many an "innocent abroad" before him, he ends up owning a bridge over the Tiber. Soon his pockets are empty. Famine strikes. His stomach rumbles. He needs relief. He runs to Daddy.

Recently friends told me that they purchased a cow. The meat from this cow would feed 150 people and would be the main course for a huge celebration. Besides the cost of the meat, add in the costs for pre-prandial, prandial, and post-prandial beverages, etc. $2,000 would seem a minimum price for such a feast. The older son complains that he's never had even a pizza party for him and his five buddies. The cost might be two hundred bucks if you add in the price of three cases of beer. Further, the elder son continues his lament: Why are you, father, continuing to squander MY estate – the family estate – in this brainless way?! First, you give in to your spendthrift second son and give him piles of money. Then you pour money down the drain by hosting a gigantic party for him. And what do you give me? Nothing, nada, zero, zilch, niente. You don't give me so much as a penny!

I'm not saying that the theme of money illumines all facets of this magnificent, multi-layered parable. But it does provide a new angle or two on this most popular

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Parables of Jesus Today, ed. V. George Shillington (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 141-64.

tale. Are we able to imitate the very generous, even prodigal father or do we enjoy imitating the miserly, stingy elder son? Do we delight in God's mindless extravagance in Jesus' ministry to sinners and outcasts? Are we shocked when such extravagance runs counter to our view of who God is? Can we force ourselves to join their party? Do we want our own party without them?

Luke 15:20a: The younger son journeys back home to his father

Commentators are wont to state that when the younger son arrived home, he was hungry, dirty, and disheveled. Artists will depict him wearing tattered clothing and having some dirt smudges on his face. In the fifteenth century St. Bernardine of Siena pulled out all his homiletic stops as he let loose with a parade of adjectives: "… he was squalid, pale, scabby, ghastly, emaciated, consumptive, shoeless, hairy and shaggy, hobbling, clothed in rags that barely covered the essentials, with bowed head, walking with face filled with dejection and confusion, tottering along and hardly able to maintain his balance with a staff, totally different from his former appearance, unrecognized by all who pass him on the road."[7] And this is the person upon whom his father extends such great compassion. In our contemporary argot the prodigal son stinks to high heaven and needs a long, hot shower with tons of heavily perfumed soap. Is the father so crazy that he embraces and kisses this stinking, vermin-infested vagabond?

Luke 15:20b: The father kisses his younger son

In his thirteenth century commentary on this verse St. Bonaventure generously applies words of *The Song of Songs* to the father's kiss: "The origin of this kiss is found in the Word Incarnate, in whom there exists a union of the

[7] *Franciscan Studies* 62 (2004): 55.

highest love and the connection of two natures, through which God kisses us, and we kiss God, accordingly to what *The Song of Songs* 8:1 says: 'Who will give you to me as my brother … that I may find you outside and kiss you, and now no person may despise me?'"[8] In my reflection upon this verse I wrote: "Bonaventure, like St. Bernard of Clairvaux before him, took *The Song of Songs* with utmost seriousness and applied its sometimes erotic language to the relationship between God and humans. Yes, 'let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth.' God the Father is not blowing a kiss at the repentant person or kissing that person on one cheek and then another. From the fact of the Incarnation Bonaventure views this kiss as thigh to thigh, hip to hip, chest to chest, shoulder to shoulder, mouth upon mouth, arms around each other's backs. How intimate! How scandalous! How loving! How prodigally divine!"[9]

Luke 15:30 The elder son claims that his brother squandered the family assets on prostitutes

Commentators are quick to point out the discrepancy between the elder son's claim and the early narrative of Luke 15:13 that merely states that the prodigal son "squandered his assets on a life of dissipation."[10] In a recent article Callie Callon has persuasively suggested that Luke is using a stock trope from Greco-Roman comedy. A pertinent example comes from an excerpt of Anaxippus: "'Suppose a young man's got a girlfriend and is gobbling up his inheritance …'"[11] Callon concludes: "Luke, in telling a story that featured prodigality, could also avail himself of one of the stereotypical features of prodigality common in Greco-Roman comedy: expending one's patri-

[8] See WSB VIII/2, 1444-45.

[9] See *Thirty Days with Bonaventure on Luke*, 45.

[10] New American Bible modified.

[11] See "*Adulescentes* and *Meretrices*: The Correlation between Squandered Patrimony and Prostitutes in the Parable of the Prodigal Son," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 75 (2013): 259-78 (here 277).

mony on love interests, particularly prostitutes. The connection between squandered patrimony and prostitutes would hardly have been shocking, nor would it have confounded an audience in antiquity familiar with the stock tropes of Greco-Roman comedy, as Luke's community was."[12] This comic motif joins hands with two others in the opening gambit of the parable. There is the laughter that accompanies the tale of a country yokel set upon by city slickers. Moreover, imagine the guffaws that issue from a Jewish audience which appreciates the plight of the Jewish rube who has fallen so low as to have to care for swine, those abominable and despicable non-kosher animals.

Conclusion

Jesus' Parable of the Prodigal Son is a classical text, that is, one that is so rich in meaning that its depths can never be fully charted. My purpose in this article is to get our imaginations, minds, and hearts whirling anew around Luke 15:11-32. The result of this whirling may be new personal and pastoral insights.

[12] *CBQ*, 277-78.

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The Devil and the Friar

John Stachura

Authentic Franciscan spirituality governs the story called "The Friar's Tale." Written by a medieval storyteller, Geoffrey Chaucer composed many narratives that embedded valuable lessons of spirituality. Arguably the most interesting storyteller in the long span of the history of English literature, Chaucer (1340-1400) wrote stories that addressed compelling concepts like justice, love, sacrifice, and loss. In "The Friar's Tale," Chaucer developed a winning portrait of what it takes to be an authentic Franciscan in the person of the narrator – a friar whose personal actions illustrated deep piety and earnest attention to religious details. By illustrating the ministry provided by a friar who was unnamed, Chaucer honored the vocation of all Franciscans.

Contrary to the notoriety that usually characterized Chaucer's association with mendicant friars, this story celebrated a friar who never had his hands out for money. This story was the first positive response in English literature to Franciscan spirituality. Formed in the spirit of St. Francis, this nameless narrator is the avatar of every friar.

Neither a profound nor a professional treatise on spirituality, "The Friar's Tale" demonstrates what Franciscans contribute every day to brighten the quality of life. Chaucer made this point by adapting an ageless but popular *exemplum* which was used to teach medieval clergy how to preach. The original focus of this exemplum

was a lawyer. Any occupation, however, that deals with justice may be substituted for the protagonist in this tale's plot: a banker, a realtor, the "re-po" man, or, as in this case, a summoner.

The occupation of summoner was a medieval Church ministry that many people considered undeniably unchristian. The medieval audience had come to regard the office of summoner as an evil. Delegated with awesome authority by the medieval Church, summoners enforced diocesan directives and Church public law. They spoke for the established clergy. Although this office was eliminated in 1378 by the Bishop of London, Chaucer chose to experiment with this concept and to provoke humor. In the person of an unnamed friar narrator, Chaucer scored a major victory for justice.

Known to rely upon bribery, the medieval occupation of summoner was subject to wide corruption. Characterized as the "vigilante" type, the role of summoner may be compared to that even of a young zealous enforcer like Saul who was thrown off his horse upon hearing the Lord's voice. Or, in another example, think of Willy Loman, who was corrupted by the American Dream he pursued. Medieval summoners tracked down deviant Catholics in order to make them reconciled with the Church. Arraigning suspects and prosecuting them in the diocesan civil court made some of these officials very ambitious – and greedy. In short, bribery set in, a fact that Chaucer illustrated graphically here and in many other stories he wrote. He had the Friar-narrator urge everyone to be on the alert for the kinds of manipulations that made ministers like the summoners greedy.

Exposing the corruption and injustice which entangled the office of summoner, the Friar-narrator rose in opposition to any official who seemed to be working like the devil. In the case of truth confronting the force of power, which will succeed? What type of person could best speak up for truth, earnestly confront authority, and survive with his life? Chaucer saw the time was ripe for a friar to be a prophet.

Before he began to tell the story, the Friar recalled a list of injustices in society that needed correction. Some of these injustices remain active in the experiences that endanger people everywhere – even today. Opening with a journalistic account comparable to the actual details reported on the six-o'clock news, the Friar introduced three of the approaches that religious ministers take in order to implement injustice. His narrative steeped in irony, he proceeded to compare the ministry of a summoner, a friar, and the devil. An unlikely trio, but Chaucer wanted people to be aware of real and dangerous forces. Will these religious ministers succeed? Demonstrating how the devil and the summoner sought justice, Chaucer asserted that even apparent religious ministers may deviate from what is right and good. The Friar, on the other hand, demonstrated how his calling had formed him. He enlivened an original thesis with irony: even the devil assisted people seeking salvation.

Made the object of satire for his ruthless disregard for justice and charity, the summoner, one of the characters making the pilgrimage to Canterbury with the Friar, boiled with envy and resentment. Frequent episodes of harsh words and phony charges accentuated the power struggle between him and the Friar: something larger was going on. These two characters symbolized the scandal dating back 100 years before Chaucer's birth. The struggle was between tradition and change, the upstart medieval friars confronting the authority of the scholastics. Known as Anti-fraternalism, this scandal was denounced by St. Bonaventure, a faculty member at the University of Paris, the prestigious school of theology in the Middle Ages.

Chaucer's Pilgrim Friar demonstrated spirituality that provided invaluable assistance in struggles with evil. Controlling his composure with a firm grasp of faith and prayer, he tolerated his tormentor's on-going envy. This tale illustrated his calling. Friars learned to lead people by their faith in the face of the obligations and mishaps that occur daily in life. As *Fratres Minores*, they served the "lesser people," the people who count for less in society. St.

Francis saw them as brothers. Friars devote themselves to a life of simplicity, and their prayer-based practice of *minoritas* enabled them to overcome the false allurements of the material world. A provocative meditation, "The Friar's Tale" dramatized an *exemplum* which the Friar submitted with the poise of a professor. Chaucer's story about a summoner illustrated intentionality that deserved damnation.

What Chaucer wrote in the *Canterbury Tales* probably is the first and foremost source of information about a friar's profession available to most college graduates. The presence of a friar has been pervasive in real life and in literature for over 800 years. The friar *persona* continues to be a towering figure in society, and it is fitting that observable facts about a friar's vocation be investigated and understood. In addition to "The Friar's Tale," Chaucer created incisive satirical insights into the ministry of friars in "The Summoner's Tale" and in "The General Prologue" to his *Canterbury Tales*. In these stories, friars were scrutinized with bitter satire concerning greed. (Citations to Chaucer's "The Friar's Tale" have been derived from *The Riverside Chaucer*, Oxford).

Two s/Summoners carry this story: spelled with a lower case *s* the reference is either to the protagonist in the exemplum or to the defunct diocesan office. Spelled with an upper case *S*, the reference pertains to the friar's personal antagonist among the twenty-eight other Canterbury pilgrims

The occupation of summoner held a low position in the bishop's chain of command. The zeal and fury which marked the quest of some summoners, however, was projected with the brutal and coarse methodology involved with hunting wild animals. Greed, one of Chaucer's favorite themes, plays a dominant role. Like a devil's advocate, the Friar was the promoter of justice.

Persisting with boorish accusations, the Summoner, a layman, tormented the Friar, obviously a learned religious, as someone who was no better than a common beggar. In harmony with the Wife of Bath, the Summoner

quickly registered his opinion against every statement the Friar made. He would not accept the fact that the ministry which friars performed actually helped people reconcile with the Church and even become saints. The Summoner argued that friars were the worst of beggars: they flattered people for money. The poor trusted in God, but friars, the summoner noted, were seen to trust only money in hand. By hearing confessions and imparting absolution, a friar-priest, nevertheless, could cost summoners some money. Implementing reconciliation among sinners, friars out-maneuvered the tactics which summoners used. With their dependence on bribery, summoners were outfoxed by the friars.

Chaucer's dialogue that appears in this essay originated with the Fourteenth Century Middle English idiom. Comprehending its message is not so weird as it seems. Readers can make sense of it by reading a statement one line at a time, out loud, syllable by syllable. Meaning will soon ring out clear as a bell. It works like a charm. Nevertheless, I have prepared close translations of some of Chaucer's language.

The Friar described a summoner as a hired hand who surpassed all other churchmen in uncovering lechery and in hunting down those who gave "smale tythes and small offringe (D 1315). A summoner implemented these violations "on peyne of Cristes curs," i.e. excommunication (D 1347). "Ingenuity," the Friar suggested ironically, drove a summoner to put his hands on multiple suspects by releasing one or two of them who then turned informant. A summoner's job description, quoted below, reveals how this lay minister eagerly overstepped his authority and embellished his personal income.

Summoners prosecuted thirteen crimes listed in the Tale's opening statement. All of them were sanctioned by the same penalty: excommunication. What the Friar delivered was an *ad hoc* confessional aid listing the evils which drove overly-ambitious summoners. Besides producing the major proposition of a syllogism, Chaucer made poetry out of a string of thirteen consecutive legal

terms – all of Latinate origin. Notice that these infractions identified chiefly sins of the flesh.

> In punysshynge of fornicacioun,
> Of wicchecraft, and eek of bawderye
> Of diffamacioun, and avowtrye,
> Of chirche reves, and of testamentz,
> Of contractes and lacke of sacramentz,
> Of usure, and of symonye also.
> But certes, lecchours dide he grettest wo;
> They sholde syngen if that they were hent;
> And smale tytheres weren foule yshent,
> If any persoun wolde upon hem pleyne
> Ther myghte asterte hym no pecunyal peyne.
> For small tithes and for small offrynge
> He made the peple pitously to synge....
> Thanne hadde he, thurgh his jurisdiccioun,
> Power to doon on hem correccioun. (D 1304-1320)

> In punishing of fornication / Of witchcraft, and also of solicitation, / Of defamation, and of embezzlement, and adultery, / And of violation of wills and contracts for marriage, / Of failure to observe the sacraments,/ and also many another crimes. ... Of usury and of simony too. But certainly, to lechers did he greatest woe;/ They had to plead if they were seized; / Unpaid tithes and offerings were punished severely. / If any person would complain./ They would not escape pecuniary pain./ For unpaid tithes and small offerings / He made the people beg piteously. Then had he / Power to do on them correction.)[1]

Next, the Friar described the *modus operandi* which illustrated the savagery with which summoners apprehended fellow Christians. The Friar owned mastery

[1] Modern translation from *The Canterbury Tales* (Barnes & Noble Classics, 2006).

of the imagery of the hunt just as Friar Lawrence in *Romeo and Juliet* exemplified superior knowledge of botany. Most friars were well educated; some were expert in their hobbies. A lover of animals, St. Francis might not appreciate this Friar's resourcefulness and Chaucer's knowledge of the habits of savage animals. Summoners, however, regarded sinners no different from animals hunters slew for sport. Failing to portray divine mercy, these images clearly demonstrated the summoner's brazen activities. May I offer a few examples from the dozen images the Friar elicited:

> Thanks to summoners, the archdeacon punished
> people who neglected to tithe:
> For all smale tithes and for smal offrynge
> He made the peple pitously to synge.
> For er the bisshop caughte hem with his hook
> They weren in the erchedeknes book. (1315-1318)
>
> (*For unpaid tithes and short offerings / He made them piteously to beg./ For before the bishop caught them with his crook,/ They were in the archdeacon's book.*)

Imagery of animals of prey illustrated a summoner's thoroughness:

"Though this Somnour wood were as an hare" (1327). The Friar was contemptuous of the Summoner, whose zeal he compared to the frenzy of a rabbit in heat.

"Women of the styves" (1332). Summoners worked with prostitutes who lured men to their beds and then notified Church authorities. Summoners and the "working women" shared the bribes which the accused eagerly surrendered to avoid trial and public disgrace.

"Purchas" (1451) The number of "prey" actually arrested during one period; "prey" (1376) identified the

human target of the Summoner. At least six references show the prey was not considered a human being but merely an object.

"Rente" is the number of people or income established as incentive for the daily goal.

The devil was at work in the emerging mercantile business world of buying and selling. "Rente" and "purchas" were bookkeeping terms which originated in French business practices. DeMeun, the author of *Le Roman de la rose*, illustrated how these terms developed into a universal system of accounting. Chaucer derived his story-telling expertise from DeMeun, using the same application in his English translations. These two business terms, since they were applied universally in the world of business, came to assume the force of a proverb: "His purchas was wel better than his rente" (A 256). (His profit was greater than his investment). Medieval people, contrary to the example of St. Francis, would conclude an argument with this response and declare victory. The proverb implies that, like other businessmen, the summoner was adept at manipulating the profit principle. Sharp business men would tally the daily income as if on a spreadsheet. Applied to public sinners arraigned by summoners in Church courts, this practice was reprehensible: it ignored the obligation mandated by Christ to effect a ministry of kindness and reconciliation. The profit principle had been developed so well in the business community that "The Friar's Tale" was filled with terms reflecting familiarity with finance and banking. Many metaphorical terms implying the profit motive fill the narrative, and the proverb was clearly restated by the devil in conclusion: "My purchas is th'effect of al my rente" (D 1451). The devils' work with banking, investing, and capital seems to continue in our time with success.

The Exemplum: a humorous story

Riding through a forest on the way to his assignment, a summoner met a young man dressed in Lincoln green. Introducing himself as a bailiff, the stranger offered assistance to the summoner, who shortly fessed up—with embarrassment—that he was a summoner. Soon these two men pledged themselves to each other as brothers in a fraternity. When the stranger asserted that he made a comfortable living by relying on "extorcioun" (D 1439), the summoner agreed that this was the only way he can make a living. They made the word "extortion" sound harmless and of no consequence; it was just an innocent on-the-job necessity. When the stranger said he was a Devil, the summoner failed to acknowledge evil right before his very eyes. It did not phase him at all that he was looking face to face at a devil come from hell. Chaucer implied that summoners not only were evil agents, they were so corrupt as to be ignorant.

The summoner flattered the Devil with quaint civility. Keenly interested and attentive, the two friends extended courtesies and solicitude for each other. As "brothers," they agreed to share the results of the extortion they anticipated – both of them intending to work like the devil. The Devil explained his personal avocation:

> "For somtyme we been Goddes instrumentz. Whan he (a victim) withstandeth oure temptacioun / it is a cause of his savacioun" (1483-85).
> (*Sometimes we are God's instruments and His means to do His Commandments. / When someone withstands our temptation,/ It is the cause of his salvation.*

At his wits end with the sloppy performance of his horses pulling a load of hay over a muddy road, a carter – a typical teamster – cursed the team. He called upon the devil to "have al, bothe hors and cart and hey" (1547). According to the second commandment of the Decalogue,

medieval society believed that the person in whose name a curse was invoked was obligated to implement that curse. And The Law says: "Thou shall not take God's Name in vain." The summoner's impulse was to pounce upon the offer and take possession. "Nay," said the Devil, "elles stynt awhile, and thou shalt see" (D 1558). The horses immediately responded to the frustrated farmer's words of encouragement, and they pulled the wagon out of the mud. No thanks to the first-strike judgment of the summoner, the Devil arranged it so that the farmer will return to his family today, return to work tomorrow, and will not go to hell as the summoner intended.

> "Heere may ye se, myn owene deere brother / The carl spak oo thing, but he thoghte another."
> (*Here may you see, my own dear brother,/ The carter spoke one thing, but he thought another.* D1567-8).

Just doing his job, the summoner was eager to send an honest, hardworking man straight to hell. However, being fair, the Devil ruled that a person's clear intent must be manifest.

They arrived at the home of an old woman. Writers of medieval fiction treated old women as trusting human beings; "old women" were always depicted as easy prey for dirty tricks. Although no charge was pending against her, this "old lady" could easily be duped, the summoner said, into forfeiting protection money. Frantic, the woman panicked at her inability to pay a fine or even substitute her frying pan as collateral.

> "Twelf pens!" quod she, Now, lady Seinte Marie
> So help wisly help me out of care and synne,
> This wyde word thogh I sholde wynne,
> Ne have I nat twelf pens withinne myn hold.
> Ye knowen wel that I am povre and oold;
> Kithe your almesse on me, povre wrecche.

(*Twelve pence!" said she."Now, lady Holy Mary / Do wisely help me, out of care and sin./ This wide world, though I should win,/ I have not twelve pence within my grasp./ You know well that I am poor and old;/ Show charity to me, a poor wreck*. D 1617-22).

Turning to the summoner, she cried out: "Unto the devel blak and rough of hewe / Give I your body and my pan also!" ('*Unto the devil black and rough of hue,/ Give I your body and my pan also,*" D 1623-24). Demonstrating the helplessness of people, "old women" need a champion. Their prayers (their curses) must be answered. The Devil acknowledged the depth and sincerity of what was the woman's clear intent.

And whan the devel herde hirew cursen so
Upon hie knees, he seyde in this manere,
"Now, Mabely, myn owene mooder deere,
Is this youre wyl in ernest that ye seye?"

(*And when the devil heard her curse so,/ Upon his knees he said in this manner;/"Now, Mabel, my own mother dear,/ Is this your will in earnest that you pray?*).

The Devil was intensely checking out the old lady's curse. The Devil had not presented the summoner with a tempting allurement of the world or of the pride of life or of the flesh. The Devil even gave the summoner a second chance to confirm his response or to modify it. Since he adamantly refused to recant his slanderous response, the summoner became the prey: "Nay, olde snot, that is nat myn entente." (*Nay, old cow, that is not my intent.*") With that, the Devil went into attack mode: "Body and soule / Thou shalt with me to helle yet to-night" (D 1636). The Devil secured justice. Like a dragon slayer, he rid the diocese of a monster. In an instant, the summoner was removed to hell.

Who is the devil? What is he like? Mankind's greatest foe, a classic master of deception, can he present as an agent for the good? As "Goddes instrument" (1483), Chaucer's devil was different from any other fallen angel we could ever imagine. He had no cloven hooves, horns, or tail. The classic illustration of the devil in scripture prevails: "The leoun sit in his awayt alway / To sle the innocent, if that he may" (D 1657-58), and "Like a roaring lion, your adversary, the Devil prowls about looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Displaying the same kind of logic that the Friar mastered in scholastic disputation, the Devil patiently reproduced the image of a scholar. He waited for the summoner to commit himself to giving the full consent of his will and acknowledging his intent. As a writer of verisimilitude, Chaucer clearly made his point that the devil may demonstrate the epitome of courtesy. He was introduced as a handsome yeoman decked out for a pleasant day of hunting. He answered questions.

> Thou shalt herafterward, my brother deere,
> Come there thee nedeth nat of me leere,
> For thou shalt, by thyn owene experience,
> Konne in chayer rede of this sentence
> Bet than Virgile, while he was on lyve,
> Or Dant also. (D 1515-1520)

> (You shall hereafter, my brother dear,/ No need from me to learn,/ For you shall, by your own experience,/ As from a professor's chair lecture on this / Better than Virgil, when he was alive,/ Or Dante also.)

These lines project the summoner's permanent domicile. Being snatched to hell was narrated as a parcel of comedy, not the tragedy that every Christian would expect. This description does not match Dante's concept of Hell. Chaucer painted a picture of hell that was different from the kind of a place people avoided with passion. Pleasant and comfortable, this hell would allow

the summoner to have his own "red chair" and presume to lord over it like a master at a university. He could read privately in his own chair and learn all he wanted to know about hell at first hand. This chair, it is obvious, is a permanent fixture, in hell, forever. Pleasant, but miserable. Chaucer's Devil had the last laugh.

Oath-taking was a major structure of this narrative. Oaths guarantee the integrity of a relationship; they anchor the goals sought in a covenant. These characters pledged themselves as brothers forever; their troth proclaimed their commitment to secure each other's welfare. Just as religious professed their vows before God, and husbands and wives pledge themselves to each other, forsaking all others until death, and military personnel take an oath of allegiance under God, so the devil and the summoner obligated themselves to be mutually loyal and steadfast forever. Their "*entente*" was enhanced by their "*trouthe*" (1404).

Of the two "summoners" seen in this exemplum, the Devil was morally superior. He was the kinder one, the more humane, and the more generous! Clearly, one would prefer to align oneself with the devil than with a summoner. It was the summoner's job to save souls, but his character was like that traditionally ascribed to a devil's activity. The Devil explained that it was one's "entente" that made one's decision culpable (D 1556). The summoner himself chose his fate. It was not necessary to have the Devil resemble the classical image of a lion lying in wait for his prey. It was the summoner himself who projected the image of a vicious predator.

The Fiend's patience contrasted with the summoner's eagerness, whose rude treatment of the old widow made her curse him with a desperate plea for justice. She had to be saved from this evil. Ignoring the power of the devil standing right next to him, the summoner was obstinate. One never knows who the devil is or where he will appear. Most times he is not courteous nor was he the figure "blak and rough of hewe" the widow expected. Chaucer has shown how terribly close the power of hell extends to

the "surly bounds of earth."

The Devil calmly escorted his prey to hell. His task completed, what the Devil said parodied what Christ said to the Good Thief: "This day shall you be with me—in Hell." In response to the summoner's question: What is hell like? The Devil replied "No tonge may devyse …" (D 1650), an echo opposite to what I Cor 2:9 depicted: "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, what God has ready for those who love Him."[2]

Classical literature celebrates the companionship of the guides who conducted Dante and Aeneas into Hades. This summoner has his "owene deere brother," the Devil, to guide him (D 1567). The hell where the summoner would send the carter was the hell of classical religious art and dogma. What made the tale signal frightening horror was that the audience was keenly familiar with the nature of Hell. People would vow to avoid it, because the Church teaches us the consequences of sin and damnation. The Friar completed his tale – his "game," he called it – with humor, whereas a congregation in church might expect to hear more about hell fire. With originality, Chaucer offered something different from the ordinary. His narrative was alive with drama and choice.

Consistent with the tone that identified classical fire and brimstone sermons, friars reminded sinners of their destiny: heaven or hell. This friar-narrator calmly and briefly announced the fact that death was always imminent. He added an exemplum to make his point: The Devil lies in ambush on everyone's daily journey in life. Indeed, the road from London to Canterbury was fraught with ambush by robbers and the plague and more. Always the professor, the Friar-narrator apologized that he did not include more information relevant to the moral of this story (D 1645-51). Since massive amounts of authentic teaching exist in the writings of the doctors of the Church, reading all of it would take a thousand years. He exaggerated with humor, expecting the other pilgrims to

[2] All Biblical references cited are from The New Jerusalem Bible.

chuckle with him over his sophisticated, genial response. The actual wording of the Friar's statement alludes to John 21:25: "If these were to be described individually, I do not think the whole world would contain the books that would be written." Again, Chaucer demonstrated his respect for the Gospels.

The friar-narrator of "The Friar's Tale" presented an authentic friar. He was the "solempe" figure that Chaucer should have characterized as the typical image of friars in "The Prologue" to *The Canterbury Tales* (A 209). Concerned for the welfare of his people, this Friar exhorted everyone to be alert, for the devil can strike in an instant, anywhere, any time. Early in his narrative, the Friar outlined the unfair practices of the Office of Summoner as if he were writing an editorial report: his findings were based on fact. His report did not begin in a "galaxy far, far way." In other words, he prepared the audience as if they were, indeed, travelers on their own quest for redemption, moving towards a spiritual Canterbury. We also are pilgrims seeking reconciliation and justice.

Chaucer investigated two images that were well established in sermon lore: the existence of the devil and the existence of hell. He displayed his gift for artistry by incorporating irony. The devil was depicted in frescoes and iconography as the stock figure that Dante had portrayed. With his arrows, the stranger in the exemplum looked like a hunter. Not attired in the usual garb of a hunter, how shall we take him? He proved to be what he said he was: a fiend come from hell. His presence could not have been more clear, but would readers not expect the conventional image of a devil? One dressed in red and waving a sharp pitch fork? This stranger was nattily dressed in green with black trim. Being face to face with a Devil did not make the summoner flinch: after all, he made a pact with the Devil, swearing out an oath that made each of them the other's "owene dear brother." Chaucer used the medieval convention of oath-swearing to serve the climax of the exemplum.

Using the word "entente" six times, Chaucer carefully prepared readers to interpret the Friar's exemplum. It was no accident that the devil allowed the summoner to incriminate himself by making a specific decision of his own free will. God did not send him to hell; the summoner made it his own choice. He failed to reflect God's love for us. The Friar, on the other hand, was a model of patience and *curteisye;* he maintained his control in spite of the Summoner's rude allegations. Disciplined, he knew how to tell a story; presented as a friend to the other Canterbury pilgrims, he was steady-going, open, and centered.

The Friar made his point: his story demonstrated what an evil it was to be aligned with injustice and greed. He responded reverently to the prayer the old woman made to Mary, our Mother. Before bestowing the final blessing, the narrator established a brotherly pose and urged everyone to be alert: "Have faith in Christ, your Champion" (1662). He humbly asked everyone to pray for God's mercy and keep people out of hell. The Friar invited the Pilgrims to be reconciled with God and each other through the sacrament of confession. The old woman taught us to call upon God, praying for help to "Crist Jhesu, kyng of kynges" and "Seinte Marie" (1590). Evaluating the damnation of even a summoner, the Friar discerned everlasting tragedy: "God," he prayed, "that maked after his image / Mankynde, save and gyde us, alle and some" (1642/43). With the grace of God there go all human beings, richly endowed in God's image. Alas, a precious soul, one of the marvelous glories of creation, has been lost forever.

A provocative meditation, "The Friar's Tale" illustrated the different ways a friar, a summoner, and the devil provided ministry to save souls. Which of these characters was a real devil? Imagery points to the reality of the Friar's saving ministry; he prayed that the soul of even an old woman may be made safe for everlasting life.

The Friar told his story much like the way Christ would teach. He kept it short, simple, and pointed, easily remembered. Christ told stories that projected universal

reverberations. Chaucer had to get the ache of injustice off his chest, and he made the Friar's closing remarks point to all of us. Be on guard, the Friar warned, especially when evil is right there in front of you.

Everybody enjoys stories. Storytelling builds community. Talking about them encourages friendship, fun, and decision-making. Stories have a way of pulling people together. Our Lord and Savior told some of the greatest stories and parables. In imitation of Christ, friars use stories to make the truths of morality come to life. Franciscan men and woman have always given attention to authentic story telling. Members of a unique community, their stories reflect the God of truth. Chaucer had it right to make his point with a humorous story.

Portrait of the Friar from the Ellesmere Manuscript of The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer

How Is Our Rule a Model of Transformation for Us

Laura Hammel, O.S.C.

Introduction

When we first came to be Franciscans, we were brought into the Order by learning our rules and traditions. The rule for the Secular Franciscan Order, and our rule for the Poor Clares, The Form of Life, both guide us as we seek to imitate Jesus. For St. Francis and St. Clare the image of Jesus that emerges is that of a penitent. To be a penitent is to be one who serves rather than being served. Thus we are led by our rules to be people who serve rather than seeking to be served.

Our rules are very special gifts for us because they help us to stay on course as we seek to imitate Jesus and to be serving and welcoming people. However, not only do our rules give us guidance and course corrections as we move through life, but they also guide us in another very valuable way. By following the rules of our Orders, we find ourselves being transformed. We don't often think of our rules as modes of transformation. However, as we are guided by them, we discover that we change. We become more open and aware of God's love and of the needs of those around us. We become more aware of our ability to love, and we become more aware of the path that leads to love. It is this transforming aspect of our rules that I want to speak about now.

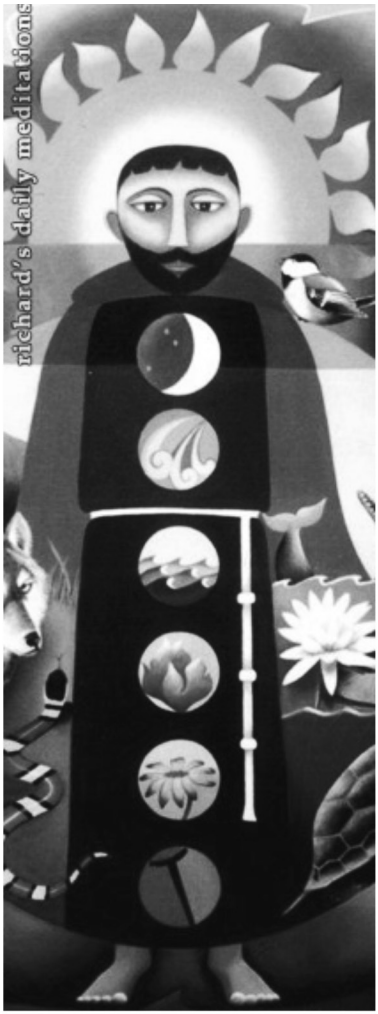
How does this transformation happen? One way we change is that we come to realize more fully the power and nature of God's love. We have a strong traditional belief in our faith that we are tainted with original sin, and that we are here to make retribution for the sin of Adam and Eve. However, our Franciscan tradition sees this traditional thinking in a new light. The birth of Jesus coming in swaddling clothes is the heart of the Franciscan call, "God so loved the world, God sent his Son" (John 3:16). God showed us the depth of his love by coming to us in a manger and taking on our humanity. This action is an affirmation of our humanity and of God's love for creation itself.

We know that Jesus experienced love when he came to us. For example, he experienced love with many friends, such as Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. He also knew tears along the way. He cried at Lazarus's death. His tears show us the depth of his love. We cherish the reality that Jesus Christ became human to relate to us. According to our Rules, God loves all of creation. Richard Rohr explains the implications of St. Francis vision of the incarnation. He said:

> In most paintings of people waiting for the Holy Spirit they are looking upward, with their hands outstretched or raised up, the assumption being that the Holy Spirit will descend from "up" above. In the Great Basilica in Assisi where St Francis is buried, there's a bronze statue of him honoring the Holy Spirit. His posture and perspective are completely different from what we have come to expect. He's looking down into the earth with expectation and desire! This is the change of perspective that became our alternative orthodoxy – although it should have been mainline orthodoxy! He was merely following the movement of the Incarnation, since Christians believe that the Eternal Word be-

came "flesh" (John 1:14, and it is in the material world that God and the holy are to be found.[1]

Rohr's words point out that as Franciscans, we are called to find God in the material world. Because of this, we begin a journey of loving and caring for people around us, and that journey will be a transforming power in our life. When we take the risk to befriend someone this includes the real possibility of rejection. We might even experience heartbreak when someone we love dies. It is difficult to risk love in our world, a world so fragile and so subject to change. But the act of loving opens our heart to the precious quality of that love. As we continue to reach out to others, we will suffer. As a result we will change and mature. We will become more able to show tenderness, forgiveness, and faithfulness.



When I think of the power of transforming love, I remember Matthew's Parable of the ten Talents. A man went on a journey and left his servants with his money to manage while he was away. To one he gave ten talents, to another five, and to the third one. As you remember from the parable, the first two doubled their profits, but the third buried his.

[1] Richard Rohr in an unpublished talk in Assisi, May 2012.

The story ends with this warning: "For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance" (Matt 25:28). I would substitute talents here for love; whoever loves will be given more in abundance while those who cannot love will not know the gifts of love.

When we begin this journey of love that our rules call us to follow, we soon discover that such a journey demands our ability to exercise humility. In seeking to be more humble, we find ourselves changing. Life presents us with many choices that eliminate other choices. Some doors are opened, others are closed. To do one thing is to give up another. When I wanted to leave my work to go to school, I knew that I had to give up other things. I chose to move away from family and friend to begin other activities. On another level, I knew I would meet new people that would change my life and my future.

Another result of our struggles to be humble is the realization that we must open our hearts and minds to others. This is the openness needed for a relationship to start. You must sincerely want the relationship with others. Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, describes the attitude of Jesus in his relationships.

> Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant ... (Phil 2:4-7).

Paul tells us in this scripture how to meet one another's needs unselfishly. He uses the example of Jesus who had everything but chose to come not as a king but as a servant. For me, that is one of the images of Jesus that I love and cherish. It is one of my deepest desires "not to grasp" but rather to let go and be able to serve. It will be a lifelong goal for me. We all know this challenge whether we live in families, fraternities, or communities – it's very

"earthy" because as humans we all struggle to be right, to be noticed, to be seen, and to dominate.

To counter this need to dominate, St. Clare ordered her communities to be ruled not as a hierarchy. Instead the Abbess, the leader of the community, serves the sisters. In any question regarding the community life of the sisters all are to be consulted. St. Clare set the example by caring herself for the ill sisters. She took upon herself to attend to the very personal needs of the women including cleaning them and washing their bedding. This was most unusual in those times. These were not the deeds that a woman of authority who came from a wealthy background like St. Clare was expected to perform. In our Rules, not only are the sisters expected to care for each other, but in questions regarding the community life, all the sisters are involved. If a sister has embarrassed the community in some way, she is not expelled from the group. Instead the sisters are expected to surround her and pray for her. According to St. Clare, these actions mirror Jesus' serving and forgiving others with charity and mercy.

Another way that our rules transform the way we think and act is the emphasis on voluntary poverty. This poverty, one of the distinctive signs of Franciscanism, is not asceticism. Rather it is a desire to make space in our hearts to grow in the likeness of Jesus. We are often quick to crowd the space in our hearts with possessions offered by our modern life. And yet we come to realize that crowding the space in our heart with "things" leaves us empty.

Like the parable of the talents, our journey of transformation is about the heart. Our rule requires us to ask, how open are we to welcome those who have less. We discover that money helps us with the things we need, and it also gives us the ability to help others. As Poor Clares, we are to have no fixed income. Instead we are to rely on a good and gracious God to help us with what we need. In this way poverty helps us to open our hearts as we see God's abundant care for us.

Our rule helps us to be transformed in yet another way. Living in community with other sisters is a demand-

ing practice of love. It takes time, humility, and a poverty of heart to share our struggles and willingly offer reconciliation to each other. These honest encounters with each other in daily life provide their own transformation of change and love over time and history. You, of course, know this as well in your families and fraternities.

I have tried to make Franciscan values concrete. I have a prayer that says it better than I do. It was found in a letter in Ravensbruck death camp during World War II. It moves my heart because the author's heart is so big. His words remind me of the words spoken by Jesus on the cross. I know these actions of forgiveness do happen even in the worst of situations. This man clearly had experienced the kind of transformation in his life that we seek in our own lives as we follow our Franciscan Rules of Order.

> O Lord, remember not only the men and women of good will, but also those of ill will. But do not remember all the suffering they inflicted on us. Remember the fruits we have bought, thanks to this suffering—our comradeship, our loyalty, our humility, our courage, our generosity, the greatness of heart which has grown out of all this, and when they come to judgment let all the fruits which we have borne be their forgiveness.[2]

[2] Lynn C. Bauman, ed., *A Book of Prayers* (Telephone, TX: Praxis Institute Press, 1999), 36.

Book Review

Sean L. Field, *The Rules of Isabelle of France: An English Translation with Introductory Study.* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications 2013). Available in October 2013

The royal Lady, Isabelle of France, is being recovered from obscurity by Sean Field's excellent research. Professor Field's translations (in conjunction with his father) advance the field of scholarship by giving us the English texts of Isabelle's two Rules and three Letters from the Popes. The texts of the Rules allow us to begin to hear more clearly the voice of Isabelle and her expectations of the women who will follow this Tradition. The *Letter of Alexander IV* allows us to see the similarity in "his language" as we compare his praise of Isabelle and of Clare of Assisi in the papal bull for her canonization. Alexander's usage of the image of Light is especially interesting.

This new book adds to our information and points up the fact that dedicated women of the Thirteenth Century lived in various social strata, different countries and accented different spiritual values. Three Popes tried to unify the different experiences of the charism of Thirteenth Century women into one *Form of Life,* according to their papal perception. As Field revives the memory of Isabelle within her historical moment, it will further the dialogue with the other thirteenth century women whom he mentions: Clare of Assisi, Douceline of Digne, Agnes of Prague and the early female followers

of Dominic. Today as research advances, we can profit from the unique vision of each of these women and her contribution to the spirituality of the Thirteenth Century.

Professor Field notes that the *Rule of 1259*, approved by Alexander IV, was revised and approved by Urban IV in 1263. He writes:

> Alexander IV may have had high hopes for the Isabelline Rule of 1259. This text was (in retrospect) his final chance to influence a process of which he had long been a part.... No one was better aware than he of the institutional questions surrounding female Franciscanism. In one sense, the new *Rule of 1259* only further muddied the waters by creating a new option.

Isabelle and Clare of Assisi manifest different perceptions for their life in religion as the text mentions: Isabelle's accent on relationship with the Friars Minor as spiritual guides for her community of royal women and Clare's accent on individual as well as communal Gospel poverty. We should also note Clare's desire for spiritual guidance by the friars who lived at San Damiano and begged for the sisters as exemplified by Clare's hunger strike when Gregory IX wanted to forbid the friars to give spiritual guidance and preaching to the sisters (cf. LCl 37:7).

Isabelle's contribution is truly special because she establishes the community of the *L'Humilité-de-Notre-Dame* as *Soeurs mineures*, but she, herself, remains a lay-woman in the shadows of the Community until her death. As foundress, the text suggests that she continues to exert her royal influence in receiving permission for burials of royalty at the Abbey as well as pilgrimages. Isabelle's choice to remain a lay-woman in the shadows of the community would be an interesting point for further development. How does her presence influence the daily life of the sisters in relation to the Abbess and the usual monastic enclosed structure given her passionate

involvement in the formation of the community structures and values? The book notes that:

> Agnes of Harcourt describes Isabelle as the most dynamic element in these negotiations: The consultations took place in Isabelle's own chambers; it was she who 'put in' and 'eliminated' elements according to her passionate desires; she 'worked and devoted herself so much to this that it can hardly be recounted.'

The author's observation that we do not know of the existence of any Communities today who follow the Rule of Isabelle raises new questions as to the "why" of their historical disappearance. How was Isabelle's Rule and life in the new community affected by Urban IV's Rule which was promulgated only a few months later? How did Urban's Rule, which founded and preserved the Order of Saint Clare even though it distorted Clare's vision of evangelical poverty, influence Isabelle's young community's experience?

It is a timely moment for the appearance of all the information in this compact little book. Its footnotes provide access to continued study of this amazing royal laywoman who dedicated her life to God and to the formation of a new religious community.

Pacelli Millane, O.S.C.

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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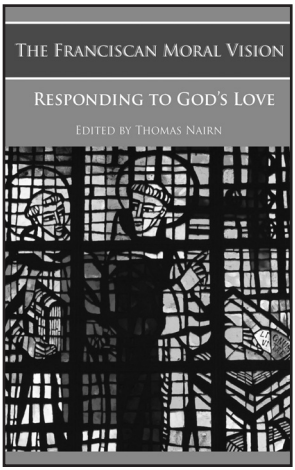

In the last half century, contemporary Catholic moral theology has developed at a rapid pace. Heeding the call of the Second Vatican Council, Catholic moral theologians have united their field of study more closely with Biblical studies, systematic theology, spiritual theology and sacramental theology. 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 those doing moral theology in 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. It is our goal to make the insights of the Franciscan moral tradition more accessible to English readers in today's Catholic Church.

Scholar-contributors to this volume of essays include Joseph Chinnici, Kenan Osborne, Thomas Shannon, Thomas Nairn and Mary Beth Ingham.

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