

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	214
ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS	215
Creation, Cosmology, Contemplation: Reweaving a Franciscan Spirituality on Earth <i>Keith Douglass Warner, O.F.M.</i>	217
Group Transformation <i>Ramona Miller, O.S.F.</i>	231
Assisi and Frederic Ozanam <i>Chris Dyczek, O.F.M.</i>	243
Renewing the Church: The Franciscan Charism, The Challenge of Pope Francis, Our Task as Secular Franciscans <i>Kevin Tortorelli, O.F.M.</i>	259
Graymoor's Father Paul Wattson on Franciscan Poverty <i>Fred Arsenault, O.F.S.</i>	273
MEDIA RESOURCE REVIEW	290
BOOK REVIEW	293
ANNOUNCEMENTS	295
ON THE FRANCISCAN CIRCUIT	300

FOREWORD

Giving thanks for the moderate summer after the seemingly never-ending winter, we are again approaching the beginning of ... football. As you develop your fantasy teams and get into player stats, etc., this issue of *The Cord* should provide a pause that refreshes.

We have some returning favorite authors: Fred Arsenault who gives us insights into the poverty practiced by the Society of the Atonement; Chris Dyczek who shares his interest in the spirituality behind the St. Vincent de Paul Society; Ramona Miller who is working with congregations of women as they face the challenges of finding newness in diminishment; Kevin Tortorelli who explores the challenge of incorporating the Franciscan charism in daily life, and Keith Douglass Warner who engages us in the process of reweaving our Franciscan charism in creation. Rounding out the issue are two short reviews, sent to us by Anne Mulqueen and Diane Gautney Buckley. It's always a blessing when our readers share what has given them new life, whether it's in print or on video.

The cover art is an image of the stigmata, which we will be celebrating when this issue reaches your door. Giotto, of the Basilica frescoes fame, is the artist of this work currently on display at the Louvre. It's time, again, to appeal to those of us who have artistic talent and are willing to share the fruits of your creativity with us to send us new art for the covers. We will happily scan it and give it attribution when used. We are also looking for articles for future issue in the journal. If any of you have given presentations, written papers or reflections on our Franciscan life and are willing to share them with our readers, please send them. You can find information about preparing the files and sending them to *The Cord* on the website: www.franciscanpublications.com or on the inside front cover, and let me thank you in advance for your generous sharing.

Daria R. Mitchell, O.S.F.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

FRED ARSENAULT, O.F.S., is a secular Franciscan in the Holy Spirit Fraternity in Warwick, RI. Having earned degrees in Philosophy and Medical Technology he has published articles in the Journal of the Rhode Island Medical Society.

CHRIS DYCZEK, O.F.M., is a Franciscan friar from the English province. He earned an M.A. in Historical Theology from Fordham University. He lectures in Church History and some Systematic Theology topics at the Franciscan Study Centre in Canterbury and at the University of Kent. In 2009 he was awarded a Ph.D. in Theology from St. Mary's University College, Twickenham, on the subject of Journey Symbolism and Memory in the Nineteenth Century.

DIANE GAUTNEY-BUCKLEY, O.F.S., is a certified spiritual director and a licensed psychologist who provides staff development, retreats, and talks for small groups. She has completed doctoral studies at Columbia in New York and spiritual direction studies at Neumann University in Pennsylvania. She is a professed secular Franciscan and serves her fraternity as Formation director.

RAMONA MILLER, O.S.F., is a member of the Sisters of Saint Francis of Rochester, MN with a vast array of ministerial experiences beginning in education as a teacher in elementary and secondary schools. From 1973-1990 she served in pastoral ministry roles in various places in the Midwest. After earning a Master's in Franciscan Studies from the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, she served as the Program Director for Tau Center in Winona, MN (1992-2000) and Director of Spiritual Formation at the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley (2002-2006). She currently serves on the Executive Council of her congregation. She has been a member of the Franciscan Pilgrimage staff since 1985. Sister Ramona has written *In the Footsteps of St. Clare* (St. Bo-

The Cord, 64.3 (2014)

naventure: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1993) and co-authored *Praying with Clare of Assisi* (Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press, 1994) with Ingrid Peterson, O.S.F.

ANNE MULQUEEN, O.F.S., has served as spiritual assistant to Padre Pio Fraternity in Maryland, is a member of the Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity, a secretary of the Duns Scotus Formation Trust Fund, a contributor to the forthcoming Formation Manual and a board member for the Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life based at Saint Francis University in Loretto, PA. She is married to Bill Mulqueen and has two daughters, Peggy and Nan, and two grandchildren.

KEVIN TORTORELLI, O.F.M., a native of Boston, MA, attended the Washington Theological Union, St. Bonaventure University and Boston College. He was a Visiting Scholar at St. Edmund's College, Cambridge, England. Afterwards, he moved to Loudonville, New York and was on the Siena College Faculty for twelve years where he taught theology and classics. While there he was chaplain to the College Rugby Club and for four years taught Carthusian monks at the Charterhouse, Arlington, VT. More recently, he was Catholic Chaplain to the University of Georgia, Athens. He is presently Director of the Adult Education Program for Saint Francis of Assisi in New York City.

KEITH DOUGLASS WARNER, O.F.M., is a friar of the St. Barbara Province (California). He serves as Director of Education and Action Research for the Center for Science, Technology & Society at Santa Clara University. He studied Franciscan spirituality at Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley with Bill Short, O.F.M., and Joseph Chinnici, O.F.M. He is best known in Franciscan circles for the book he co-authored with Ilia Delio, O.S.F. and Pam Wood: "Care For Creation: A Franciscan Spirituality of the Earth." He can be reached at kwarner@scu.edu. You can find more writings about care for creation and Franciscan spirituality on his webpage www.scu.edu/kwarner

**CREATION, COSMOLOGY, CONTEMPLATION:
REWEAVING A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY
ON EARTH**

KEITH DOUGLASS WARNER, O.F.M.

My own calling to follow Christ in the spirit of St. Francis I trace back to my experiences living in the forests of the Great Pacific Northwest during the early 1980s. I had joined a grassroots lay Christian community, and to support ourselves financially we operated a reforestation co-op. We planted trees throughout the Northwest and the Rockies, from November to July. I planted hundreds of little seedlings each day in the clear cuts, on hillsides steep as cliffs, often in the driving rain. I worked in the midst of the environmental tragedy of our modern industrial forestry. Yet I witnessed beauty as well and came to appreciate the majesty, diversity and complexity of forest ecosystems. I fell in love with nature. I experienced a deep sense of awe living and working in these beautiful yet scarred places. Five years of this work left a deep impression on me, and only later was I able to fully make sense of how I had been affected. I had experienced God's love and goodness expressed in creation. I wanted to respond to this, and began to advocate for creation's protection on religious and ethical grounds, and felt that this is one of the things Francis would do were he alive today. In his vocation, I found an example of radical Christian discipleship that made intuitive sense to me.

During my novitiate, I was introduced to the writings of St. Clare, many of which had only recently appeared in English. My novitiate year coincided with the 800th anniversary of her birth. I do not know of any friars before

1992 who studied the entire body of her writings. I found her articulation of Franciscan contemplation a helpful guide for interpreting my own experience of prayer in creation. The complementarity of action and contemplation, of masculine and feminine, and of right relationship and creation in the Francisclarian tradition continues to feed my vocation and imagination. My desire to further articulate these in my own life, and help others in this, eventually led me to teach at Santa Clara University, where I have been since 2003.

In this article I wish to highlight Franciscan themes of creation, cosmology, and contemplation that we might weave – or reweave – together to renew our Francisclarian tradition in the world today. For each of these keywords, I will first provide a report from the front lines teaching twenty-year-old students. I will share what I have learned about our charism by teaching, or sometimes trying to teach, these themes to the youth of our culture. My experience as a Friar Minor teaching at a Catholic university has been ministering at the intersection of our faith and our society, and I am learning how to translate our tradition to a younger generation.

Second, I will attempt to answer a question: what can we learn/relearn from our tradition to help us understand what we have to offer the church and world? Just as our culture is not static but dynamic, so, too, our identity, our self-understanding as Francisclarian vowed religious evolves. This will draw on the retrieval of our Franciscan intellectual tradition but extend this in what I hope is a fresh way.

Third, I will propose what this might mean for the reweaving of Francisclarian religious life as we move into the future. I believe reweaving is the right metaphor. Francis himself wove together tradition and innovation, and so, too, have many of the most influential figures in our history. The tradition of our past does not hold all the answers we need today as we move into the future. We have the example of Francis's journey of conversions, and a rich procession of holy witnesses to love, knowl-

edge, wisdom, and religious practice. For all the wealth of our tradition, however, I do not believe all the answers can be found in our past. These riches must be wisely woven with our contemporary knowledge and experiences to create something new for the Lord. I try to contribute to the retrieval of our Franciscan intellectual tradition, and I believe it is vitally important. However, I find the metaphor of reweaving to hold a certain organic appeal, in part because the task for us as Franciscan religious is more than knowing. We must also be about living and loving, and for this, the praxis of weaving might help us.

Creation

What do we as Franciscans mean by this word? Creation: all material reality brought into being by the work of God, which necessarily expresses God's love. This word is ancient, derived from scripture and our Judeo-Christian heritage. Yet we speak of our "environmental" crises. How might our evolving Franciscan Catholic understanding of "creation" be related to nature or the environment? This is a fundamental, diagnostic question I pose to my students in my classes. Do these three mean the same or something different? Are you as a human being part of creation? Some students struggle to answer these kinds of questions. Many have had years of environmental education and rich experiences in nature, but they have not been asked to consider the religious dimension of these issues. When I first ask if they know of St. Francis, they generally answer, yes, he was the saint who loved animals. After further study of his ecological consciousness, they find him even more attractive, but they are also a bit confused. His love of creation does not fit with their image of Catholicism. His approach to creation appears to them to be an exception from "normal" Catholic Christianity. "Normal" Catholicism is all about dogma and rules for humans.

For more than twenty-five years, Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI have been unwavering in their teach-

ing of the moral duties of all persons and nations, and especially Catholics, to care for God's creation, yet this is hardly known among American Catholics. One of my students, Waide, once told me that, as a sophomore at Santa Clara, he was in his fourteenth year in Catholic education. He had been a lover of nature since he could first remember, wandering the California hills, poking around in creeks and climbing trees. Why is it, he asked, that no one has ever told him that these dimensions of his life were related?

Here we must confront what I term "The Split." We modern people have alienated ourselves from creation. We believe ourselves to be not a part of creation. We have come to believe that we can somehow live without the abundance of our Sister Mother Earth sharing her goodness with us of every day. We live in the illusion that we can continue to abuse our Sister Mother Earth without serious consequences to ourselves. What a lie this is! What falsehood! What illusion! Of course, this is to say nothing of our duties to safeguard creation, which are clear in the Bible and Church teaching. Waide operated out of the split, and many if not most of my students operate out of the split. Yet who can blame them? Most of our adult American Catholic brothers and sisters have yet to be convinced that creation is something that is religious, that we humans have ethical duties to care for creation. We should not blame the youth for failures of the adults. Yet it is the youth and future generations who will suffer the greatest consequences of our foolish environmental behavior today. I tell my students that the planet they are inheriting is ecologically impoverished and more polluted than the one I entered when I was born, and the world their children will inherit will be more so.

The Split, this sense of separation from creation, is the root cause of the most pressing moral problem facing humanity: the disruption of our climate system. We need a clear-eyed understanding of what is actually happening in the world as the result of our carbon pollution, chiefly by burning of fossil fuels. "Global warming"

does not accurately convey the impact. “Warming” – this sounds comforting, but we should take no comfort from this term. Our planet is retaining more energy from the sun, that is true. Yet the fundamental problem is that the retention of this energy is the disruption of precipitation patterns. Disrupting the climate system means that both droughts and storms become more intense. Deserts become much dryer, and tropical storms become much more destructive. The stable, predictable climate upon which our agriculture and water supplies depend becomes wildly unpredictable. Thus, so-called “global warming” means the disruption of the material basis of human life on this planet.

The Split allows us to live – for a bit longer – in the illusion that we are somehow not fully dependent upon stable weather patterns for food and water. Climate disruption is real, and it is already happening and affecting millions of people. It is by far the most significant environmental issue we face as a human species. Our human-caused disruption of the planet’s life support system is causing massive waves of extinction, and making life for the poor around the world much harder. It is undoing decades of hard work by groups such as Catholic Relief Services providing development assistance for the poor around the world, especially in the tropics.

Climate disruption’s negative impacts are not being felt equally around the world. The US and Europe have benefited the most from burning fossil fuel, but the impacts have been lightest in these countries. Instead, it is the tropics, Asia, Africa, Latin America, that are experiencing the most disruption. These are, generally speaking, where the poorer countries are on Earth, and those who have not benefited from burning fossil fuels to develop their economies. We in the industrialized countries who have made our economies rich through fossil fuel burning are laying a huge environmental burden on the poorer countries in the tropics. This is an injustice. For this reason, we speak of climate justice or climate ethics. This will be a defining issue for the human family in the

twenty-first century. In this way we can see that The Split is not only dangerous for individual souls but also for the poor and our planet.

Our Francisclarian tradition has inspiring riches to help us respond to The Split. Most fundamentally, our tradition holds out examples of a more holistic way of living in, loving and knowing creation. Here I can merely highlight one example, the contribution of Blessed John Duns Scotus and his understanding how the Incarnation of Jesus Christ is related to creation. I claim no expertise in understanding Scotus, but as someone who studies environmental thought I cannot help but be captivated by his approach. I think of him as a visionary Franciscan philosopher who deduced conclusions about creation deductively from his understanding of God. He understood the Incarnation as the Big Event. Everything that exists, all reality, is to support that expression of God's love. Scotus taught that creation is christoform. It is all subordinate. Creation was created for Christ; it was created to bear Christ. Creation is inherently good. It has to be, because it brings Jesus to us. Creation is the very fabric by which the message of God's love comes to us. I recently heard a good Lutheran speak. He quoted the book of Romans: "all creation has fallen." That kind of negative assessment does not convey our Franciscan tradition. Our tradition is one that has a positive, even optimistic, view of creation as good.

On the other hand, a saccharine vision of creation is not faithful to our tradition. Some have attributed the coining of the term "birdbath Franciscanism" to me. I am quite critical of understanding Francis's care for creation as only sentimental. I believe this response is a real distortion of Francis's vision of creation. A contemporary spirituality that seeks to be faithful to the example of Francis must take seriously his integration of pain and suffering with joy and praise of God. The dire state of the Earth's environmental health should impress upon us a more substantive response. Franciscan compassion in this context should find expression in calling our fellow

humans to repent of arrogance and destructiveness and to take their proper place among God's creatures.

Francis's example of humility and love can help us, but we have so much more to draw on, so much more from our theological, philosophical, moral and scientific tradition. Centuries before there was a formal field of "environmental ethics" we Franciscans understood creation to be religiously and ethically significant, worthy of our care, affection, and gratitude. For most of our history, we Franciscans had some understanding of creation as religiously important and playing an important role in salvation history. The needs of our Church and world call for our response.

The most important effort within the US Church today to tackle environmental issues is the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change, formed by an alliance of Catholic organizations and the US Council of Catholic Bishops. Led by a graduate of the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, Dan Misleh, its major outreach is the five-part St. Francis Pledge – linking care for the poor and creation – to pray, learn, assess, act, and advocate.

The response of American Catholics to this has been underwhelming, which underscores a more fundamental challenge to Catholic environmental concerns: most Catholics do not see the connection between care for creation and worship of our Creator. I would suggest we need to preach – by sermons and example – why care for creation is fundamental to a twenty-first century Catholic spirituality. This is in one sense traditional, and requires us to look to our history, but it is also novel and demands we fashion a more just and sustainable future for the planetary commons.

In light of these needs, how might we draw from our Franciscan tradition to reweave Francisclarian religious life as we move into the future? It is not sufficient to echo the witnesses of Francis and Clare, nor to restate the wisdom of the Franciscan masters. We need to find ways to weave care for creation more fully into our practice, prayer, preaching, lifestyle choices (including fasting and

diet), study of nature, and study of our tradition. If we are able to weave these together, we could indeed offer a compelling, integral witness. I believe men and women exploring a vocation to Franciscan religious life will have ever greater knowledge of the Earth and our environmental problems than in the past, and that for many, experiences in nature will contribute to their sense of calling. A Franciscan spirituality of the Earth will be important for attracting and retaining young men and women in religious life. They will be looking at us, as Franciscan religious, to assess the integrity of our common life in light of our global environmental crises. They might raise questions about our level of consumption, our gadgets, our diets, our health, our prayer with nature. They may ask if we have taken the St. Francis Pledge. Alternatively, they might not verbalize the question of whether we care about creation. Yet they will be watching and listening ... and silence on our part can communicate more than we realize.

Cosmology

This word has ancient roots and expresses traditional questions as well: the study of the universe and its purpose. We might also define cosmology as one's worldview. Why study cosmology? To understand creation, but also to understand our role and place within the universe. Another term for cosmology is worldview. The notion of "The Split" conveys this dualistic or fragmented worldview so pervasive today. We desperately need to recover a more robust and integral cosmology, a more holistic worldview, one that conveys a sense of where we fit within the cosmos. This will require us to weave together science and faith in a fresh way.

My students at Santa Clara have a highly technical scientific understanding of the earth and biology. However, this understanding is, from my perspective as a Franciscan, often superficial and warped. They understand "the bits," the "pieces," and the "mechanics" of biology

very well, but their understanding of the natural world is highly fragmented. Yet who can blame them? They are taught that science has the only answers we need! In this worldview, science is rational and true, while religion is irrational dogma and lists of rules. Several years ago I was at an inter-religious conference on ocean conservation, and the topic of global climate disruption arose. A leading conservation scientist outlined his remedy: use the scientific data we have to scare people into taking action. I objected. One cannot scare someone into virtue, into right relationship. Love is the answer. We must find a way to inspire, animate, call forth love, respect and gratitude.

To my students I emphasize, repeatedly, that cosmology is the study of the universe and its purpose. When I ask them on a quiz to define cosmology, many of them omit the “purpose” part. The notion that creation has a purpose seems attractive but rather foreign to most of them. And who can blame them? They receive messages from our culture that the world is a random occurrence, resulting from the accident of chance, and there is no such thing as meaning or purpose – these are illusions. This is actually a very superficial and warped understanding of what recent scientific research is telling us about the universe, biological life and evolution. Many outstanding scientists perceive more than compatibility between their scientific work and their religious worldview.

What can we learn/relearn from our tradition to help us understand what we have to offer the church and world? St. Francis had a cosmology. The *Canticle of Creation* sings of the elements as dynamic, alive, communicative, praising God. It is a cosmic hymn, an appropriate expression of his vernacular theology. To engage our contemporary world and its needs, we need a more systematic understanding of the relationship between God, humanity, and the material world.

Here Bonaventure can be our guide. I learned almost nothing about Bonaventure’s thought during my initial formation; however, I have come to realize how valuable

his theological philosophy can be for reweaving our tradition today.

I was first captivated by the system of symbols he uses to convey the religious purpose of nature: water, river, poem, light, song, mirror, to name a few. More recently, I have come to realize that these metaphors operate at the surface of Bonaventure's system of thought, the sum total of which he uses to convey an integrated understanding of God as Trinity, the entire created cosmos expressing God's generous love, and humanity called to live in God's image. Bonaventure presents the Trinity as communion, as relationship itself, calling us to enter in to love. In his system, all reality is integral and relational. Everything fits in or can be fitted into his cosmology. His worldview is open to other forms of knowledge; it is relational, moral and religious, and deeply Christocentric.

Renewing this integral approach to understanding the relationships between God, the cosmos and humanity is desperately needed by our Church and world today. Bonaventure is a gift not only for us, but can help our Catholic brothers and sisters to recall how big our Catholic tradition is. We could contribute to a renewed Catholic cosmology, to retrieving and reweaving a much more integral approach to understanding ourselves as living within the community-that-is-life.

What might this suggest for the reweaving of Franciscan religious life as we move into the future? I believe we must learn and teach Franciscan cosmology. Many of my confreres who were educated in the pre-Vatican II philosophy program have described to me what they learned from their course on cosmology: the origins and destiny of the universe, the purpose of creation, the nature and limits of human knowledge, and the philosophy of science. I avoided most philosophy in my many years of education because I perceived it to be merely abstract, disembodied, esoteric. I now realize philosophy is essential to understanding the world because it makes visible our assumptions. It is absolutely critical to the future of the church and Franciscan religious life. We all have a

philosophy, or philosophies, whether we realize this or not, whether we admit it or not, whether we are fully aware of it. The Split expresses a philosophy. The belief that science reveals a purposeless universe expresses a philosophy. Birdbath Franciscanism and environmental scare campaigns reflect human assumptions.

Franciscans need to recover a philosophy true to its original meaning: the love of wisdom. We need to teach a cosmology that conveys an integral religious philosophy relating God, creation and humanity. This was once part of the friars' educational program, and it needs to be taught again. However it needs to be taught to all Franciscans to help us engage contemporary social crises. To reweave Franciscan religious life, the teaching of cosmology needs:

1. to help us integrate living, loving and knowing as Franciscans;
2. to integrate scientific understanding with religious understanding of the universe and the skills necessary to mediate these two ways of knowing;
3. to help us learn how to relate the rest of creation, for example, using the tools of ecoliteracy;
4. to integrate understanding with liturgy and religious praxis.

It might sound like a tall order for individual Clarian monasteries to create such a program, but resources do exist for this project. We have in our Franciscan family the resources for this. The OFM friars have made a few tentative efforts to recover a philosophy program that includes some cosmology. What is needed, to draw on Bonaventure's stance, is desire. Were some Franciscan to individually desire to learn this, the resources could be found. Were we to collectively desire to learn and teach this, it could be done.

Contemplation

Creation calls us to pray and enter more deeply into a loving relationship with God. My undergraduate students want to have their own spirituality. Many have an appetite for a deeper experience of God, the spirit, and themselves, but they would not necessarily think of this as being available to them through religion. Most of them enter my class with the belief that spirituality is individual, but religion is institutional, and therefore, these have nothing substantive to say to each other. Many appear to believe that since religion does not support spirituality, they must pursue their own (individualistic) spirituality elsewhere in life. I invite them to recognize some of the logic problems with this understanding and propose religions as the wellspring of all spirituality, including their own, whether they realize this or not. I challenge them to become aware of and reflect upon their own experience of themselves and the Earth, and if they are open to this, to the mystery who is God. Many of them perceive this to be a novel approach to understanding religion. Typical was a student who said to me in class, "I have taken eight years of religion in school, and no one ever told me it had anything to do with experience!"

To help my students reflect on their experience of God in nature, I assign an Earth meditation activity. I lead several guided meditations during the class, which most of them appreciate, and tell me this. Then I instruct them to design and lead an earth meditation with a buddy for their friends. I encourage them to make their own Earth meditation as simple and earthy as possible. I show them ready-to-use guides, but suggest they might want to write their own meditation. I emphasize repeatedly to lead the meditation slowly (this turns out to be the most challenging aspect for them). I assigned this with trepidation the first time but discovered that, with a few exceptions, my students love this activity. They take their friends to the forest, visit gardens, watch the sun come up over the beach, or gaze upon the stars in the night sky. They read

the meditations Pam Wood wrote in "Care for Creation," write their own scripts, lead eco-yoga sessions, or provide the fewest words possible to support a silent outdoor meditation. Their enthusiasm for this activity suggests to me that this kind of prayer experience touches a deep hunger within young people today.

What can we learn/relearn from our tradition to help us understand what we have to offer the church and world? Clare's life can guide us here, for she gives witnesses to the contemplative dimension of our common Franciscan life. The study of cosmology is vital, yet more essential is that we be able to encounter the living God and that we open our lives to the intimacy offered us by the Trinity. The study of Clare during my novitiate classes has played some role in my own sense of calling to contemplative prayer. This has been confirmed by the example of many Poor Clares I have met in my travels. Each monastery I have visited has touched me in some way, and tugs at my spirit, calling me anew to remember to pray. About two years ago, the property where my province had its hermitage was sold. The brother who had lived there for years moved into my fraternity. The two of us, with Bill Short, recreated the province hermitage with some portable but commodious cells nestled in the hills, out of sight of the busy retreat house ministry. I was so proud we were able to replant our hermitage. But a funny thing happened: friar life interrupted. The very day the first hermitage arrived, Bill was asked to assume duties as dean at the Franciscan School of Theology. Before I had finished installing the solar electrical system in the second cell, I received an obedience to become a guardian at another fraternity. Do the brothers desire to live contemplation in their lives? We friars are busy about many things.

What does this suggest for the reweaving of Franciscan religious life as we move into the future? The men in our provincial formation program have thus far expressed the most interest in the hermitage, which I take to be a good sign. Yet I am sad to report I am skeptical

that friars are going to truly dedicate themselves to contemplative practice. If am critical of the friars, then I criticize myself, too, for I do not pray to the degree and depth that I wish I did.

Here I would suggest that the brothers need the sisters. The friars need the Poor Clares to be constant in their invitation to us to pray. The Clares I know do this in ways that are subtle and yet direct. A consistent witness to the contemplative life is essential to the future of our common project, and this might be amplified by more fully weaving this with care for creation and our Franciscan worldview.

Several years ago, an international meeting of the Union of Superiors General expressed the following: the future of religious life lies in its mystical and prophetic dimensions. This is a statement that merits deep meditation. However, I would like to modify it in the following way: this requires a weaving, indeed, a reweaving. Franciscan religious life is one. This demands of us ongoing efforts at integration, at weaving together the mystical and prophetic. This requires our work, our moral agency, our active integration of action and contemplation. With this kind of weaving, we can indeed fashion with our lives a strong, richly textured and beautiful tapestry for God. Please continue to invite us friars and all the people of God to enter the fabric of prayer.

GROUP TRANSFORMATION

RAMONA MILLER, O.S.F.

Butterfly Migration

Once, about thirty years ago, I observed a tree completely covered with Monarch butterflies. It was probably September, because I recall that it was early fall in Winona, Minnesota, along the Mississippi River, and the butterflies were gathering for their long flight to Mexico. The vivid image of a flaming multi-colored tree that had a silent dynamism emanating from it is unforgettable.

Each year the migration of millions of monarch butterflies from Canada and the United States takes place in the fall and their arrival in Mexico coincides with the annual celebration of the Day of the Dead, November 2. If you desire to visit there, you would travel to the UNESCO World Heritage Site, a reserve located sixty miles northwest of Mexico City which spans the borders of Michoacán and México State in the western central highlands of Mexico. The butterflies, congregating in one place in Mexico from their individual habitats in Canada and northeastern United States after a flight of over 2,000 miles, provide us with an image relative to our topic, group transformation.

What genetic instinct is at work that compels the butterflies to come together? How might this image of the gathering of the individual butterflies invite us to transformation?

Group transformation!

We are professed Third Order Regular Franciscans whose common identity is the “desire to live an evangelical conversion of life” (TOR Rule 2). We know from our experience that this requires change – the change to become more virtuous and to die to our old self in order that a new, more joyful person evolves. I am so in awe of Pope Francis. Imagine what transformation he embraced to leave his homeland in Argentina, his family and friends, to come into the papacy. His simple lifestyle of love and service compels us to look at our own self-centeredness and to consider how we might be more inter-relational for the *Joy of the Gospel*.

Migration

Many of the founding mothers of our congregations endured a migration that was radical; an authentic experience of evangelical poverty, and transformation, leading to great fruitfulness. When you consider the emigration of Mother Veronica and the other four women from Zakliczyn, Poland in 1894,¹ to serve the Polish immigrants here in the United States, one cannot help but be amazed how their sense of following God’s will sustained them. Their “direction” for the journey came from that interior place, the heart of one who trusts in God, and believes that they are significant for Gods’ mission.

Separation

The butterflies that leave Canada to begin a 2,000-mile flight to Mexico exemplify for me the importance of living in the present moment with great trust in God and awareness that we are not alone on the journey. This is a

¹ Sister Ramona’s paper was first presented at a congregational gathering to the Bernardine Sisters in Reading, PA. It was offered for publication because the experiences and challenges described are common to most of the Third Order Communities of Women Religious.

new day, and God awaits our new desires to bring forth the kingdom of God here in our midst. Victor Turner, a British cultural anthropologist who died in 1983, provided us a description of stages of personal transformation: 1) separation, 2) liminality, and 3) re-aggregation. Often I used this paradigm to speak with pilgrims at the beginning of the pilgrimage to Assisi, giving them some language for the experience they were embarking upon: 1) separation – leave home to go on a journey; 2) liminality, the experience of migratory vulnerability, not being in charge, – having anonymity and uncertainty of who we are in a group; during this liminal or in-between phase we become more attuned to the spiritual, the transcendent aspect of life. New insights and graces change our attitude about ourselves, and we grow more confident that God will provide for us in the new and unknown future; and 3) re-aggregation – re-entry after the pilgrimage to our ordinary environment, – but with a new inner life, a new personal identity.

I invite us to consider these phases of change as applied to group transformation: 1) separation, 2) migratory vulnerabilities (liminality), and 3) a new way of being. Separation from the past way of approaching life is necessary for us to enter into the newness that God is calling us to each day. During this assembly, together we are separating from the past, and looking for the new way of being Sisters to and with each other. What is it that we need to leave behind to be more open to God's revelation today? This past February 2, our local bishop, Bishop John Michael Quinn of Winona, presided at a diocesan Mass for Consecrated Life. In his homily he used the image of starting each day in prayer with an empty bowl, holding the bowl for God's grace for the day. However, if the bowl is filled with our own preoccupations, or fears, or anger, there is no room for God to fill us. So, the empty bowl is the image for us to leave behind our concerns and come anew each day before God who is the Source of all Good.

On life's journey we experience losses, unchosen separations from those we love. The deaths of our sister friends, or family members or other friends, can weigh upon us and the sadness of grief can hover over us like fog so that we do not see clearly. Every time we have left a former ministry, or a convent, or moved to a new city, we have felt the pain of separation. Sometimes we carry anger because we did not want to move, or we are angry because we feel hurt by the judgments of others for the reason that we had to change ministry or residence.

It is important for our group transformation that each one of us is healed from burdensome and weighty hurts through forgiveness. Reflecting upon life's experiences, we may feel the pain of hurtful events, misunderstandings, and even bitterness in how we were treated. Forgiveness will heal our hearts, enabling us to be so much more a compassionate presence of peace in our world. In 1996, Dr. Robert Enright of the University of Wisconsin founded the Institute for Forgiveness. He gave us this meaning of FORGIVENESS: "a willingness to abandon one's right to resentment, negative judgment and indifferent behavior toward one who unjustly injured us, while fostering the undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity, and even love toward her/him." Forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation. Forgiveness requires the desire to abandon our inner resentment and negative judgment while fostering undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity and even love toward the person and/or persons who have hurt us. This is only possible because we share the life of Jesus, the circle of infinite Love of the Trinity, the power of the Holy Spirit at work within us. It is up to us to choose to be a healthy person in relationship with others in order that we have group transformation.

Taking to heart your document from your last chapter, "Desired Future of Bernadine Franciscan Sisters," compels you to be about transformation. Your International Inspirational Committee has set up agendas for house chapters to awaken each to a new future. The desired changes can only happen if together there is a change of

behavior, a commitment to make a difference. This year's theme, Fraternal Bonds, can make such a difference in the witness of the congregation that others will take notice, like the photographers assembling to take picture of the monarch butterflies clustered together in trees. During our examen of conscience about our relationships, it will come to mind that we need to let go of previous judgments of each other in order to move into a more palpable affection for each other, – the kind of love energy that attracts others to want to be with us. The reconciliation rituals, the festive celebrations, the honoring of each other's positive contributions to the local community, ignite new love energy. Separating from our past ways of thinking and being with each other to become more open to God's grace will expand our hearts. We leave our old selves behind and we enter together the phase of liminality.

Liminality (Migratory Vulnerabilities)

Liminality can be described as a period of ambiguity or disorientation that occurs in the middle stage of a transformative experience before arriving at a new place of being. Persons on pilgrimage experience liminality; they “stand at the threshold”² between their previous way of understanding their relationship with God and the yet-to-be-revealed self-identity in God's plan.

All of us who were professed religious before the *Decree on the Up-to-date Renewal of Religious Life* that came from the Second Vatican Council on October 28, 1965 can relate to the group phases we have lived through in our congregational transformation over these past almost fifty years. We have had to leave behind our former lifestyles, enter into experiential times of becoming renewed religious in a new historical moment. And, we are still living in a phase of liminality, leaving behind the old ways, and unsure of what lies ahead.

² Wikipedia accessed 3/17/14 for background on Victor Turner's description of liminality: (from the Latin word *limen*, meaning “a threshold”).

Migratory Vulnerabilities

Carol Zinn, C.S.J. wrote in *LCWR Occasional Papers (Summer 2012)*, “we are living in a time of unprecedented evolution—that is, we are living in a time of significant choice-making in every aspect of our lives.”³ During this undefined time of liminality we can experience great uncertainty and vulnerability. It might seem like we are in the dark, in chaos, and quite unsettled. Questions that come up include “Who are we?” “What is our direction for this phase of the journey?” We have left behind many of our former successful institutional ministries and we ask “What is ours to do?”

Sister Sandra Schneiders has given us some language for understanding the shift in religious life in her scholarly three volumes on religious life in a new millennium. The first volume, *Finding the Treasure*, helped us to “find,” that is to locate, Religious Life and distinguish it from other forms of life in the Church. As the laity claimed their rightful role granted to them by Baptism to share in the mission of the Church, and the numbers of persons entering into religious life lessened, the question of “who are we?” arose. Serious reflective work has been going on in our congregations to understand the new situation we are living in, and to heighten our consciousness about our prophetic role. The second volume, *Selling All*, taught us to think new thoughts about commitment, that is the two-fold commitment of 1) relationship to Christ in lifelong consecrated chastity, and 2) our commitments to each other in community. The third volume, *Buying the Field*, articulates the Catholic religious life in mission to the world requiring of us radical evangelical poverty.

For the past two years I have been invited to give a day’s workshop on evangelical poverty to inter-congregational novices in St. Louis. This, of course, provoked my

³ Carol Zinn, C.S.J., “What Does Conscious Evolution Have to do with Religious Life? Everything!” *LCWR Occasional Papers (Summer 2012)*: 12.

own deeper reflection on how we live evangelical poverty today in our local communities. Our witness of denying ourselves ownership of property, and contributing our earnings to a common purse, serves as example of goodness and virtue that subconsciously reminds the general public of their social nature, to share with their neighbor. Pope Francis exemplifies radical evangelical poverty in his actions and his teachings of concern for the common good. As we journey on this earth as pilgrims and strangers, we can ask ourselves how do we use “things” well without seeking constantly to accumulate more or to desire to live a more comfortable middle class life?

I used the language *migratory vulnerabilities* to describe a group moving through the liminal phase. When we journey in a fog, so to speak, in the liminal stage, we can be tempted to forget that God is “already living in the city, in the midst of all, and united to each.”⁴ Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, Jesus walks with us, listening intently to us. Our vulnerability causes us to feel insecure, uncertain of where we are going, afraid of the potential costs that the future will demand of us, and these feelings can get projected into a group dynamic with tones of criticism and requests to turn back to the “good ol’ days.” Or move too quickly into the future. The Israelites during the Exodus model for us the behaviors of the liminal phase of group transformation: mistrust of Moses, loss of faith in God, complaining that there was not enough food like what they enjoyed in Egypt. All of this behavior reveals a loss of common hope, and trust that the future will be better. When a congregation is going through changes that are difficult, it is important to have Jeremiah’s words proclaimed: “For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for woe! Plans to give you a future full of hope” (Jer 29:11).

⁴ Pope Francis, *A Big Heart Open to God* (NY: Harper Collins-America Press, 2013), 51.

Together, we pray and share our faith, and together we find glimpses of the Divine Presence with us—like the disciples at Emmaus discovering Christ in the breaking of the bread. Our hearts come alive with hope. Hope and optimism are not the same. Hope is a gift from God. Hope gives us the ability to hold all the tensions without getting weighed down and blocked from the future that God desires of us. Having hope while we experience the shifts from the known to the unknown requires a great trust in our covenant with God.

Remember fifty years ago when we lived with a blind obedience, trusting in our superiors for personal and communal direction? Now, some women religious are uncomfortable with the new level of responsibility and practice of the vow of obedience. We are in the journey together, and all bear responsibility for the discernment process for the future. We do not have equal votes on the major administrative decisions, but we have equal responsibility for fully living a committed life with each other.

Going back to the opening image of the monarch butterflies, consider that it is necessary for them to congregate on trees in Mexico if they are going to survive the dormant season and be prepared to fly north in springtime. They need each other in the cluster to keep each other warm. I dare say that we need each other to have warm and affectionate hearts, to be full of good energy that radiates from us to the world. Contemplation is identified as the first of the five stages for your desired future. Indeed, contemplation as a desired future fuels the spiritual energy that keeps us generating love on the journey.

A new way of being

Persevering through the phases of change within religious life toward the desired future requires awesome sensitivity to mystery, – as mysterious as the butterflies knowing where to fly from Canada to reach Mexico! Mystery is not something that is incomprehensible. Rather, mystery is something that we keep exploring to know

more. In our exploration of the desired future we hear Pope Francis call us to be prophetic: “Religious men and women are prophets. They are those who have chosen a following of Jesus that imitates his life in obedience to the Father, poverty, community life, and chastity. In this sense, the vows cannot end up being caricatures; otherwise, for example, community life becomes hell, and chastity becomes a way of life for unfruitful bachelors ... the charism of religious people is like yeast: prophecy announces the spirit of the gospel.”⁵ Being prophetic requires ongoing discernment to be able to bear public witness to God in concrete historical circumstances. With your stated desired future, you have committed yourselves to publicly become more contemplative, develop partnerships, strengthen fraternal bonds and to live simply. These are not nice personal virtues – these are public commitments.

And in alliance with LCWR and the Franciscan Federation, there are strong resolutions you have taken for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. I am more familiar with those of the Franciscan Federation where we publicly resolved:

2000 – Called for an immediate implementation of a moratorium on the death penalty as an interim step. In addition, the Federation committed itself to stand in support of families of victims as well as families of those who face execution.

2006 – In conjunction with the “International Decade for Action: Water for Life” the members were encouraged to preserve, respect and use wisely, the gift of water. The resolution called for actions in caring for water, specifically refusing to buy and use bottled water.

2006 – Members called for a more comprehensive approach to human trafficking. Members urged to pray for victims of trafficking and to observe National Human Trafficking Awareness Day on April 22nd.

⁵ Pope Francis, *A Big Heart Open to God*, 36-37.

The Cord, 64.3 (2014)

2010 – Members of the Federation, recognizing that we ourselves are pilgrims and strangers, stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters who are migrants by promoting federally legislated comprehensive immigration reform by prayer and action to change attitudes and procedures that discriminate or violate human rights and dignity.

2011 – 2013 for three years the JPIC committee, with grass roots input, have advocated staying with the same focus to strengthen our advocacy for the elimination of human trafficking:

We pledge to work for the elimination of human trafficking and its causes; to advocate for rescue, safety and justice for trafficked persons; and to demand prosecution of perpetrators.

Public statements are influential when we back them up with actions that are broadcast in our newsletters, etc. My own congregation has established a special ministry with dedicated personnel and monies for raising awareness of human trafficking. One can find on our web page photos and stories of the past two years' work that has gained state-wide recognition for networking with city and county law enforcement personnel as well as social workers and others whose professional responsibilities intersect with victims of human trafficking.

Reviewing these resolutions for action reflects the critical prophetic voice of women religious in relation to societal issues.

The Joy of the Gospel by Pope Francis serves as a call to action, the action of living and speaking in such a way that others are attracted to live the Gospel. There is no blueprint for the future of what our religious life will look like ten to twenty years from now. Recall your Mother Veronica and the other women who left Poland to come to the United States. Their common bond was a trust in God and a firm conviction that what they were doing was their role in the building up of the Body of Christ. If they could

Ramona Miller

speak here today, would they not use Francis's words? We have done what was ours to do, – may Christ teach you yours." Group Transformation requires us to think of ourselves collectively as a sign of God's Presence to a dark world looking for light.

Pope Francis: "In various countries conflicts and old divisions from the past are re-emerging. I especially ask Christian communities throughout the world to offer a radiant and attractive witness of fraternal communion ..."⁶

Conclusion

Let us listen together to the song "Wings Unfurled":

Song © Colleen Fulmer.

You are fashioned in my image.
You are woman, radiant glory.
Spirit rising, wings unfurled;
You are beauty for our world.
We are women and we're gifted,
We are young, we are old,
We are mothers, daughters, wives, we are sisters.
We have heard the Spirit callin', givin' rhythm to our
lives,
Weavin' threads of our stories; we're alive!

I am fashioned in God's image,
I am woman, radiant glory.
Spirit rising, wings unfurled;
I am beauty for our world.
We are wisdom, we are song,
In our sufferin' we've grown strong.
We are passion, we are priest, we are prophet.
And we break the bread of friendship and we share the
wine of peace;
We are made in God's image, we are free!

⁶ *The Joy of the Gospel*, #99.

The Cord, 64.3 (2014)

We are fashioned in God's image,
We are woman, radiant glory.
Spirit rising, wings unfurled;
We are beauty for our world.
We are women weaving circles.
In our joy, in our pain.
We are vision, we are hope, we are future.
Embracing one another, arm and arm, the dance
 moves on;
We will echo in our laughter a new song!

ASSISI AND FREDERIC OZANAM

CHRIS DYCZEK, O.F.M.

Frederic Ozanam spent a large part of 1847 on a grant that allowed him to investigate the history of education in Italy in the first half of the middle ages, and especially to locate Franciscan materials and unpublished manuscripts. Most people would be surprised to learn that when a group of students in Paris got together to plan a better Catholic response to the poverty in the city, they began by having talks about history and literature. Their conferences were study days for educated and well-informed young adults. They soon included practical measures such as taking firewood to families that had little means of surviving, and within a few years they focused on larger projects. Ozanam himself was involved in setting up a lending library at a time when most people were still at best semi-literate.

Yet the members did not regard those study days as a wrong route. Their motivation was to nurture young adult Catholicism in a version that could be taken seriously by the unchurched and disaffected French students in the decades after the Revolution. Catechetical classes and spiritual guidance would be a feature of the supportiveness they were bringing to the poor. Without these it would not be possible to set up that sense of a lively, mutually aware community that can exist amongst believers, and which Christ had promised to the weak and the crippled, the confused and the oppressed. The more confident those young adults were about their reli-

gious culture and its varied past, the more creative and sensitive they would be when engaging with the needs of their contemporaries.

Mission-minded believers

In order for young adults to become Christian prophets, then, they will want to receive a better appreciation of how past communities within the Christian context have discovered their best initiatives and brought a new strength of vision into society. They will want to understand cultural changes and diversity. The many friends whom Frederic had attracted as a young man in Lyon wanted to develop a feeling for how language can communicate faith differently through diverse groups of people or in diverse circumstances. Prophetic language has often had a poetic character, from the psalms onwards. Not everyone would have agreed with Ozanam about this, but he saw St. Francis's *Canticle of the Creatures* alongside the *Fioretti* (translated by his wife Amélie) and Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* (translated by his friend François Lallier) as expressing a great Pentecostal response to the call of God. The early friars seemed to him to be continuing a delight in the mission given by Christ, to preach peace and reconciliation to all human nations and cultures.

We often see the Church as some sort of unchangeable and fixed entity throughout Europe for most of its history. However, Ozanam knew that many people had stopped believing this. The French Revolution had been welcomed by many as offering a better style of "liberty, fraternity and equality" than the aristocratic routines of the Catholic Church. He knew that too many Catholics still yearned nostalgically for a marriage of throne and altar, but he felt that this would never have attracted St. Francis, or any mission-minded believer. He wanted to get away from this model, and did so by turning around the claims of the revolutionaries. The terms "liberty, fraternity and equality" are fundamentally Christian ones, he claimed. They had been appreciated as such over the

centuries, as many believers struggled to bring similar ideals to fruition as realities.

Frederic Ozanam was born in 1813, his father having, for a while, served as a doctor for Napoleon's troops, before quietly slipping away. Frederic had cousins in Florence and was himself born in Milan, where he spent the first three years of his life. So he had a natural interest in all things Italian, but especially in the groups of liberal Catholics that had built up amongst scholars and professors in Italy, a number of whom he met or reached by letter. The modern Italian Franciscan scholar, Raoul Manselli, praised Ozanam in the 1960s as an important innovator, whose achievement had been overlooked.¹ He saw him as the first to raise the historical question: how was Europe evangelized and Christianized?

This has become an area for modern academic investigations, but its importance for how we see our religion in relation to society is still often missed. It implies that we still wonder what sort of mission language is best to develop, even within our own societies, in order to address the new mentalities of our day. So when Manselli looked at the past, he saw a history of Catholic preachers liberating people, not a history of establishing ponderous institutions! Ozanam's interest in the *Stabat Mater's* variations, which included one poem with a focus on Mary in Bethlehem, and in the *laude* poetry and songs written by Jacopone da Todi, is based on a similar enthusiasm about the powerful gifts of the Spirit. He published the *Stabat Mater Speciosa*, and it was used by Liszt in his oratorio *Christus*. Marcel Vincent, a modern scholar in the St. Vincent de Paul movement, refers to Ozanam having "a Franciscan soul."² After all, St. Vincent de Paul him-

¹ M. Bartoli, "Ozanam, historien du Moyen Âge," in I. Chaire ed., *Frédéric Ozanam*, Actes du Colloque des 4 et 5 décembre 1998 (Paris: Bayard Éditions, 2001), 247, 250 and 250n. He quotes R. Manselli, "Il medioevo come 'christianitas': una scoperta romantica," *Scritti sul medioevo* (Roma, 1994), 39-79. Also Manselli's "La conversio al Cristianesimo nell'Europa dell' Alto Medioevo" of 1967 on the "strange silence" about the serious academic work by "the great French social apostle."

² I. Chaire ed., *Frédéric Ozanam*, 275.

self was a tertiary Franciscan and had been educated by Franciscans. On a holiday with his wife, Frederic spent time in Assisi and attended a celebration of the Eucharist at the tomb of St. Francis. The *Fioretti*, with their intense convictions about the integrity of a true Christian community, played a central part in how he recommended and appreciated the benefits offered to society by Christianity.

Ozanam grew up in Lyon, where there was a circle of acquaintances, who had a focus on mysticism that brings spontaneity into Catholic experience. Some of these were philosophers and religious writers. Some, such as Pierre Ballanche, saw the past in terms of waves of openness to the action of grace, human receptiveness ebbing and flowing, yet always capable of rediscovering the love revealed in Christ. This was an aspect of communal networking that stimulated Ozanam's own language of faith and hope. Contacting the students from that Lyon background, who knew one another, gave him a strong core of eighteen talented, mutually collaborative young adults, when the St. Vincent de Paul Society was coming into existence. He shared with them the new understanding that faith cannot stand still. If it stops being dynamic, it may die. As a student, he had been made aware of the cynical and sarcastic elements in a modern city-focused education. He realized that he would have to stand up for his beliefs and speak out, challenging some of his lecturers about the lazy assumptions within their arguments. The typical modern view of freedom was often problematic, because it attributed all liberating impulses to unaided human powers, and ruled out the presence of God as a source.

This, too, showed him the value of Franciscan language about the world's imperfect and perishable character as being capable of a celebratory interpretation when read through the lens of Scripture. All branches of creation can tell us something about intelligence, or about the pleasure of beauty, and this will make us want to grasp qualities which are unchanging and absolute,

which we can only find in God. It is by the light of “a divine art” that we learn not to despise imagination and love, he wrote. It helps us to “translate thought by symbols,” allows us to “move heaven,” and to have courage in the face of criticism, and to pray with wisdom. We should learn “the necessity of consulting grace,” of “consulting desire and not thought,” so as to “direct all our understanding and being towards God.” Our wills should lovingly and wisely be “merged in God’s will.” This Franciscan spirit can “breathe so much passion even into philosophy,” says Ozanam, that it will “break free” from “those formalities of education and discussion” which are “too stereotyped” for the generous outlook of people like Bonaventure, or “too circumscribed for his large outlook.”³

Mentalities able to collaborate

It would be a mistake to assume from this that Ozanam (or Bonaventure) wanted to discourage thinking. But he believed that we have to interrupt our ponderous cogitation, in order to let it be transformed into sensitivity, celebration, patience and kindness. Lyon is close to countries neighboring France, where technological and commercial thinking was sometimes relentless. In his travels through Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and England, Ozanam had experienced the grimness of industrialized city life. He saw that it was kept going by technological thinking of a most organized sort. He had also visited libraries and talked to academics in those countries.

The issue of what makes our mental life liberating, in a truly Christian sense, was one which he considered and discussed very carefully. Lyon is also not far from Geneva, where the English historian Edward Gibbon lived for quite a while, whose work was also available in French. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* begins by mocking the friars at the *Ara Coeli* Church in Rome as irrelevant to normal social existence. Ozanam’s *Civili-*

³ F. Ozanam, *The Franciscan Poets*, A. E. Nellen and N. C. Craig, eds. (London: David Nutt, 1914), 128-30.

sation in the Fifth Century is in some respects a defense of the friars and of religious life, as nurturing gifts that can collaborate with and complement those of the laity. He visited the *Ara Coeli* community and read many of the early Christian writers whose works were becoming more widely available during his lifetime. The therapeutic qualities of Christian reflections on the full human stature revealed in Jesus of Nazareth, as begun by that early bishop of Lyon, St. Irenaeus, are explained by Ozanam in terms that cultivate a clear-sighted concern for social well-being. He saw the value of preaching and theology in terms of their potential to resist the various states of panic, frenzy and despair that had once been stirred up by civic mythologies and laws in the cultures of Greek and Roman antiquity.

The picture he produces of the relationship between Christian community (part monastic and part lay), and the broader, more heavy-handed society of the unconverted, is particularly interesting. Panic and despair were once more frequently encountered in the nineteenth century. So an awareness of their grip on people's lives in the early century could offer significant insights once more. For several centuries after Constantine, Christians and pagans had to coexist, living awkwardly alongside one another, just as we do today. This was not a comfortable arrangement. It involved tense conversations about what would be the best patterns of public festival, how much religion should come into it, and what kind. It meant debating what to do when there was a local public outcry about some piece of art that did not fit local piety. It involved explaining how education could become more varied, able to include what had previously played no part in it, such as studying the Bible. Since educational issues, and the need to limit any triumphalist confrontations (favored by some Catholics), were very prominent in France at this period, the examples from late antiquity made a helpful commentary on how Christian themes could enter school curricula without being overwhelming. The mendicant traditions which, in Frederic's view, had learned this

lesson, ought to tell us how faith and hope can be shared, rather than imposed.

Franciscanism: a pivot between past and future

So for Ozanam, events and personalities in the Franciscan movement acted as a pivot between late antiquity and current concerns. When he hoped that an SVP group could be started in Siena, Ozanam was told by a local chaplain that the young adolescents of Tuscany were spoiled, and had a very complacent training, leaving them with a lazy view of the benefits they would probably receive during their lives. Although there were poor and needy neighborhoods in that city, it would be difficult to get a response from the local middle classes. A twelfth century *Siena Chronicle*, discovered and publicized by Ozanam, gave him a more optimistic view of how vigorous the almsgiving spirit of Siena might be. So he began to wonder how the imaginations of the young Sienese might have learned to indulge in too much fantasy, losing their grasp of Christian fundamentals.

This was an old problem for those with the task of educating the young. In the early Christian centuries, writers known as Gnostics had distorted the role of imagination in their manner of retelling a faith narrative. Fantasy became reality for them. Manichaeans, too, had exaggerated what imagination can contribute to faith, whereas Arians had taken an opposite path, and neglected prophetic imagination in favor of organized rationalism. The authentic mentality of a Christian would be a moderating middle path. Ozanam spells out the advantages of this. It would enable a more perceptive and reliable awareness, as well as one capable of great, spontaneous generosity. He provides a view of how Christian theology developed historically in Late Antiquity, to be a flexible style of eloquence for preachers. It was an essential advance in Christian culture, needed whenever church community representatives wanted to be an authentic voice in soci-

ety. It gave them a recognizable mode of communication, with agreed themes and arguments.

The increasingly learned Frederic also had to think about contemporary doctrinal clashes. For example, there were published disagreements between the rather systematic theology of Rosmini and that of Gioberti. Ozanam spoke in favor of the more mystery-centered outlook of Gioberti. He thought about how Chateaubriand (whom he knew) differed from Victor Hugo in commenting on the social forces that make society merciful or cruel. Surely in resisting slavery, as Chrysostom, Ambrose and Augustine had done, the Church's traditions favored a lessening of cruelty wherever possible? He was sure that the medieval Franciscan poet Jacopone da Todi would back him up on this point. He thought about differences between the theologians Möhler (whom he met) and Döllinger (whose friends he met). There were live debates as to how symbolism teaches believers to shape communal relationships in society, with peace-making, and its various metaphors, as the foremost guide. The hostels and hospitals for travellers set up in the fourth and fifth centuries by wealthier Christians were one more example of this. A concern with hospitality had been an identifiable feature of Christianity in its demanding fifth-century circumstances, tackled by laity as well as monks. There had also arisen a substantial understanding that hospitality should nurture the whole person. It should offer education, cultural experiences of art, music and poetry. The supportive Christian network should provide contacts with people who can give guidance that is therapeutic, or reliable in terms of spiritual development.

Freedom, equality and fraternity were catchwords of the French Revolution and also of the social reformers (both Left and Right wing), who continued to push social structures in different directions for the rest of the nineteenth century. But these concepts had, in fact, been significant in the upheavals of the fourth and fifth centuries, when Christians tried to work out what communal and pastoral achievements their new opportunities for public

initiatives would favor. They subsequently remained important in religious writing by friars and other Catholic writers. There were some people in nineteenth century France, of course, shocked by the violence of the Republicans, who saw these as deadly slogans. They readily ignored their original New Testament sources. Ozanam wanted to persuade these people not to lose sight of the full liveliness of Christian sharing and love. Communities of believers must become communities of peace-making, he believed. They should promote the search for more just relationships, whenever they can be experienced as places of equality and openness, not as places maintaining hierarchical power over others. Concern for nourishing the experience of freedom as a gift should be a central aspect of that experience. The fraternal perceptions of relative strengths and weaknesses, and of ways to draw these into creative contributions in a shared life, were likewise dimensions that took a time to learn.

As one of the founders, and a principal source of inspiration, of the SVP groups, Frederic Ozanam did not simply hand out jobs such as secretary and treasurer, or suitable tasks, such as procuring food for the badly-housed unemployed, or appealing for bursaries to get children into schools. These points of merciful organization did happen, of course, and did matter. But he wanted his network of colleagues and friends to feel appreciated and boosted by their discovery of the new value of faith in their lives. Their personal growth had to become a transforming experience that could carry them through their whole lives as a commitment. He saw them all as interacting well because of being more consciously members of the Body of Christ. The desire among stronger members to let the weaker ones realize that they were welcomed, and that they were contributing needed gifts, was what made membership in Christ the primary reality. Being members of Christ's Body was not simply membership of a club of clever planners. Liveliness was acknowledged as good because it meant the Spirit's gifts were taking effect in their lives.

The story of Jacopone da Todi, as told by Ozanam, offered a standpoint from which to progress with this. The formerly proud young lawyer, who had lost his wife in a startling accident, did not immediately get rid of his sharp manner when he became a Franciscan. He said that he saw Christ “stifled in all hearts” by unjust prelates.⁴ His outspokenness landed him in prison. The first letter he wrote pleading for pardon from the Church officials he had challenged was far too defiant, and received no reply. His second letter was humbler. “I have dwelt too long ... at the edge of the Piscina. A great tumult has taken place in the waters during these days of pardon. Time passes, and I still await the command to rise, take up my bed, and return to my dwelling.” A new administration in the Church allowed him to spend his last year of life peacefully in the friary at Collazone. Ozanam describes his “beautiful friendship” with John of Alvernia, “in whom the soul of St. Francis seemed to live again.” He learned the hard way that “hope [works] without expectation of reward.”⁵ Ozanam had friends of his own, such as the poet Lamartine, who might need to learn similar lessons.

The kind of liveliness that is a gift from God is different from that which we generate ourselves, in our keenness to be heard and to make our mark. The ambitions of social reform which were encouraged amongst the SVP membership sometimes became quite political, especially when there were issues of how religion can feature in educational establishments. Tempers could fray, and passions did flare up, even provoking legal proceedings in one instance. Jacopone eventually learned a great tenderness, as is evident in one of the poems quoted in *The Franciscan Poets*.

Love, ... I see that Thou dost transform me, and
makest me to become a love so like Thee that I no
longer dwell in my own heart, and I can no longer
find my way back there. If I perceive in a man some

⁴ F. Ozanam, *The Franciscan Poets*, 216.

⁵ F. Ozanam, *The Franciscan Poets*, 220, 222-23.

Chris Dyzcek

evil, or vice, or temptation, I transform myself and enter into him; I penetrate to the depths of his grief. O boundless love, what a miserable soul hast Thou undertaken to love! O dead Christ! Lay Thy head upon me, draw me from the sea to the shore. Here Thou makest me to languish at the sight of Thy wounds. Oh! Why hast Thou suffered them? Thou hast desired them in order to save me.”⁶

The struggle that Jacopone had to cope with, from the shock of his young wife’s death, must surely have been an important aspect of what Frederic shared with Amelie. Their mutual love was strong, but each saw the other becoming physically vulnerable in times of serious sickness. Yet both were effective peace-makers, because of their deep inner peace, something which they recognized in one another’s lives of prayer.

Interweaving opportunities

Frederic wrote letters to many of his friends, old and new, such as Lallier, Lacordaire, Jean-Jacques Ampère, Dufieux, Janmot, Foisset, Boré, Tomaseo, de Salvo and many more. He had a remarkable charisma for building friendships and sustaining them. His life was an endless interweaving of opportunities to communicate, and he focused all of his faculties upon the spiritual quality of the messages he shared, or the debates and social changes in which he was deeply involved and interested. The St. Vincent de Paul network really did, as a result, offer to young Catholic adults a way of finding the potential of their faith and extending its energies to others. Lending libraries were set up in France, England and other lands. Before he died, the Conferences had reached places outside of the European arena, such as Turkey, Canada and Mexico. People of very diverse cultures were beginning to deepen and strengthen their religious awareness and spirituality.

⁶ F. Ozanam, *The Franciscan Poets*, 224-25.

We might ask ourselves today what purpose there was in a pattern of meetings where many topics could be discussed, papers presented, and each member's religious qualities developed. France offered few opportunities at the time for faith formation, and especially for the sort of formation that would relate directly to current questions about life's purpose, and the inequity of society. Universities were growing in size, literacy was increasing, but the sorts of vigorous chaplaincy support that can sometimes happen today were virtually unknown.

Learning about the notable religious initiatives of the past was a basis, therefore, for training people's imaginations and commitment. Ozanam was persuaded to use his remarkable talent with languages and enter a major academic competition, which he won. As a result, he became a university lecturer's assistant, and then a Professor of Foreign Literature himself. His students were sometimes taken aback to find how much of Europe's centuries of literary achievement had Christian roots and symbolism built into it. Some joked that they were being offered more theology than literature. But others knew that he was opening their eyes to a great sequence of religious cultural activity. Some praised the "prophetic" quality of his lecturing. He wanted readers and listeners to gain a broader vision of what stimulates relationships with Christ and with God. He regarded Francis de Sales, Jeanne Chantal and Teresa of Avila as having lived in an age of the Spirit, equipping themselves to make charity into a many-faceted presence in the world. He saw early Christian writers such as Clement and Gregory the Wonderworker, Cyprian, Ambrose and Augustine as courageous interpreters of Christian language, able to convey to the more well-meaning pagans and half-convinced Catholics why compassion is a tremendous prophetic gift. Transformations of heart and mind, of the whole personality, come about because there are Christians willing to put in time and energy, to formulate new, sensitive and intriguing points of view. There was none of the typical nineteenth century paternalism about this. He was

not telling anyone that he knew what was best for them. If he focused on incarnational language, the aim was to have a clearer willingness to love the presence of Christ in people's lives, because that achieves healing. If he brings in eschatological themes, about readiness for the future kingdom, this was to encourage people to expect greater freedom from what stifles them, and especially from fears or despair.

A major modern commentator on the life and writings of Frederic Ozanam, Gerard Cholvy, makes the following observations. When the young assistant was preparing his first course as the Sorbonne in 1841, he had many sleepless nights. He regarded the auditorium of three hundred students which he would have to face as menacing, probably "badly disposed" towards him.⁷ He felt "crushed" and his lips seemed "paralyzed." He experienced a minute of hesitation and anguish before deciding to appeal to the students' sense of friendship. Applause followed, and a "sort of verve" eventually took hold, winning their approval. His nervous system was "shaken" to the point of both laughter and tears, as he gradually realized that he had many friends in all parts of the room. By the end of his first lecture, the general impression "had been favorable." His emotional romanticism about examining poets for the sake of explaining aspects of Christian love made him very sensitive to atmosphere. When he was younger he had seen in himself a mixture of "singular" impatience and compromising "inertia" or laziness.⁸ He felt he was too prone to vanity. But he was also very much an idealist, which can make it hard to develop what he called "a just and inflexible conscience towards oneself." His honesty about himself gradually turned into a strength. When he was courting his wife-to-be, he was very concerned that she should feel confident about being able to tolerate his quirks. But in fact they built up a re-

⁷ G. Cholvy, *Frédéric Ozanam, L'engagement d'un intellectuel catholique au XIXe siècle* (Saint-Amand-Montrond: Éd. Fayard, 2003), 403-04.

⁸ G. Cholvy, *Frédéric Ozanam*, 428.

The Cord, 64.3 (2014)

markably frank mutual understanding, and collaborated effectively on every level.

The new opportunities that came from becoming a lecturer were not isolated from his previous commitments and undertakings. He had begun to see his calling to write journalism that furthered religious awareness even as teenager. Becoming a lecturer was an intensification of that call. He could now ensure that an educational debate about the roles of Christians in French society would be conducted with a fuller range of authentic sources, rather than the narrow polemical battle that some voices wanted it to be. Interwoven with this larger field and greater audience were those social issues that had so long been his concern, and which could increasingly be made the concern of the Church.

Pentecost and mission

His combination of incarnation and eschatology is close to what is found in the gospels. He regularly read portions from the New Testament in Greek and meditated on those. When he grew ill, he composed a selection of readings that would be a helpful support for other sick people. There was both intimacy with the suffering Servant, and a keen expectation of the heavenly kingdom in this selection. The two aspects create a valuable tension between appreciating the present and becoming willing also to move on. It is also a typical combination in Franciscan writers, the creative tension which distinguishes their theology from Dominican versions. The gospels themselves have been constructed, they believed, out of an interweaving of opportunities for forgiveness, friendship, direct concern, ultimate horizons, light and love, faith and hope. Christian relationships that are truly alive will continue this interweaving of the gifts and talents which make personalities so attractive to one another. We might connect this with a sort of nineteenth century Spirit of Assisi, since Ozanam was conscious of a growing interest in the world religions, and the poten-

tial or limitations of their pieties, when members are living alongside one another. He even wrote a substantial article about Buddhism. The human qualities that can be met in separate cultures vary in subtle ways: Bretons differ from Algerians, and from Byzantine Greeks, and so on. A respect for diversity, and a willingness to engage with it, was for him an indispensable aspect of Christian living. His friend the poet Lamartine wrote a number of religious poems, one of them a hymn to the Holy Spirit. Assisi was the historical confirmation that the mission of Pentecost can always be recovered, and the mystery of God's purposes for the human race remains always enticing us into new encounters.

It was his delight in that hidden fruitfulness, waiting to be discovered in the diversity of human experiences and motivations, that made him write also about various roles taken up by women in the early Church: catechesis, hospitality, academic learning, leadership across a gradually Christianizing culture, the writing of new poetry, and so on. Again, the voice of Clare can point back a short way to the visionary Hildegard, or a long way to Thecla and the hospice-building Fabiola, as well as forward to Jacqueline Pascal and the scholarly Madame de Stael. Sr. Rosalie Rendu, a Daughter of Charity, had been an important resource for setting up styles of outreach to the poor in Paris, because of her longstanding and courageous activities in the worst areas. But it might also be relevant to mention that among the four hundred new women's congregations founded between 1800 and 1880, 25% were Franciscans and Dominicans.⁹ In the north of France, especially, a Franciscan presence had held on during the harsh times, involving lively communities of regular tertiaries. The female Capuchines in Lille were facilitators of the revival. The Church in general was moving on from a rather abstract, moralizing spirituality to one that was "more personalized and more concrete," us-

⁹ C. Langlois, *Le Catholicisme au féminin*, Les congregations françaises à supérieure générale au XIXe siècle (Paris:Éditions du Cerf, 1984), 182, 197, 199.

ing the mendicant models. New styles of preaching were a factor in bringing this about, and Ozanam urged the need for these, through a petition to the Archbishop in Notre Dame.

This wide-ranging exploration of human experience, as opened out by Christian understanding, has a great capacity to set us wondering about how well we appreciate our neighbors. It urges us to dig deeper into the layers of the inner life, and the surprises of human temperament that may be awakened by the Spirit of God. Ozanam, like St. Francis of Assisi, was a remarkable communicator. We can list the areas of communication which he took on: journalism, letter-writing, writing poetry, publishing the results of research, public talks for promoting charitable activity, persuading the hierarchy to set up a better quality of preaching, counseling those in difficulty, giving courses about the eloquent resistance by early Christians to slavery, promoting religious instruction in schools, composing prayers, translating texts for musical use, and evening classes for workers. It should give us pause for thought. With our eager pursuit of new styles of social networking, how much of what we put into words says something attractive about our Christian beliefs? With Ozanam, every one of these initiatives was full of the language of faith, hope and love.

**RENEWING THE CHURCH:
THE FRANCISCAN CHARISM,
THE CHALLENGE OF POPE FRANCIS,
OUR TASK AS SECULAR FRANCISCANS**

KEVIN TORTORELLI, O.F.M.

Brief points of historical overview

In the thirteenth century gospel conversion lay at the heart of the vigorous lay penitential movements of the time. This conversion was rooted in Christ as a change in values and behavior. Francis himself wrote about his early life as a “life of sin.” It was replaced by a life of penance, imitating the apostles who, in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, shared their goods and identified with the poor Christ by caring for the poor and those in need. The medieval penitents lived in a world where, alongside the old landed gentry, a new and wealthy merchant class appeared. We are not surprised to learn that the new merchant class was soon engaged in the same legal issues as the landed gentry – ownership, power, politics and prestige.

Francis was born into that world and left it to join the 90% not similarly born. Very quickly Francis began to build a social system different from the one he had left behind. This social system was rooted in the gospels and was strongly affected by a concern for each person, especially the poor and the outcast. The name that increasingly characterized the Franciscan movement – including Clare – was the “Penitents from Assisi” who left behind established social values for the sake of a deeper rela-

tionship with God and to attend to the human needs they met. Penance exchanged material wealth for the riches of Christ.

There were lay penitential movements before Francis. The Beguines in Flanders come to mind as does Peter Waldo from whom the Waldensians take their name. There were also the Humiliati. There were differences among them but they were often married people, families, sharing some form of community life, prayer and dedication to the poor. The skills by which they maintained their livelihood and that of their families were put to the service of the poor. Pope Innocent III seems to have favored these movements, granting them a certain formal, canonical legitimacy by extending to them a *propositum*, a kind of memorandum of understanding regarding the penitential form of life.

But there were tensions within the penitential movement as the contrast between the Penitents of Assisi and the Cathars (sometimes called the Albigensians) suggests. The issue lay over the nature of the true Church which must be poor, holding all goods in common in the spirit of the apostles. By contrast the medieval Catholic church and her clergy were too concerned about accumulating wealth and property. Thus the Cathars broke with the church to become a heretical sect rejecting both hierarchy and the sacraments. In the view of many this may have served broadly to destabilize the penitential movement.

In the face of this history Francis appears as a lay penitent who valued penance, charity, humility, service, prayer, fasting, and restitution of goods acquired unjustly. In his *Letter to the Faithful* – together with the *Later Exhortation* – Francis provided the “Third Order” its foundational document with its description of doing penance in one’s life as a lay person. It acknowledges the life of God in the soul that leads one to new ways of choosing and acting that are the worthy fruits of penance. He goes on to say that those who do penance love God and neighbor, resist temptation, receive the Eucharist and abide

authentically in their conversion. The first movement for a penitent does not consist in choosing penitential practices or ascetical norms but in a movement of the heart that leads to change in one's life. One counts here Lady Jacopa dei Settesoli, la signora Pressede, and the married couple Luchesio and Buonadonna from Poggibonsi. The first impression of the Penitents of Assisi is of a large and varied group embracing all levels of society, extending even to royalty, – Elizabeth of Hungary, the queen consort of Thuringia. She is a patroness of the Third Order. Rose of Viterbo must be mentioned here as well as Angela of Foligno in both of whom the ascetical life was highly developed.

At first the Penitents of Assisi were not particularly well organized and did not take vows. Together with Elizabeth, mention must be made of Louis IX, King of France whom the friars minor educated when he was the dauphin. The King's life as a penitent was consistent with the whole movement. Mention can be made of Ivo of Brittany who was both a magistrate and a Franciscan lay penitent and, somewhat later, Raymond Lull, a married secular Franciscan. The Church has canonized the married couple Delphine and Elzear who, in a long medieval tradition, lived together in a spiritual marriage. This celibacy within marriage was viewed as a form of penance whose fruitfulness shaped the orthodoxy of the penitential groups.

By the time of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) there is an effort to regulate juridically the various penitential groups in terms of clothing, prayer, fasting and the sacraments. The provision against swearing solemn oaths or carrying weapons is especially noteworthy as it would affect the legal procedures of the court and the sense of justice in society. This could bring the penitents into conflict with the public authorities not least in the time of the Crusades.

It was perhaps inevitable that the first Franciscan Pope, Nicholas IV, would provide a Rule for the Third Order in the form of *Supra montem* issued in 1289. It seemed to put the penitents under the jurisdiction of the friars

minor and this was (to my mind correctly) resisted. In any case the word “Catholic” was added to the penitents’ name and these provisions may reflect the concern, mentioned earlier, that there were forces at work that could destabilize the movement, pulling it toward heresy and into schism.

There were other tensions as well. The increasingly canonical organization of the penitents and even their absorption into other forms of religious observance threatened their autonomy. There is a lot of energy around this development but the forms it finally assumed are recognizable in the Secular Franciscan Order today – a Rule, a novitiate, formal profession, regular monthly meetings to foster community. Secular Franciscans are organized as fraternities on local, regional, national and international levels and are to be found not only within the Catholic Church but the Anglican and Lutheran churches as well. There are about 1.5 million Seculars today.¹ The momentum represented here is vigorously found in the Church of Vatican II and in the fifty years since during which the Secular Franciscans have thoroughly updated and have embraced their role in the contemporary Church with the historically distinctive OFS emphasis on poverty, minority, penance, conversion and contemplative prayer. Today the OFS live a lay life in the church together with secular institutes, the *St. Egidio* community, the *Focolare* movement, *Commune e Liberazione*, third order Carmelite and Dominican communities to mention a very few indeed. Taken together these contemporary lay movements are an impressive fruit of the Council’s invitation to the universal holiness of the Church rooted in our common baptism.

¹ The foregoing is indebted to Ingrid Peterson, “The Third Order of St. Francis,” Michael J.P. Robson, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Francis of Assisi* (NY: Cambridge University Press), 193-207.

A New Evangelization

In these past fifty years the legacy of the Council was a subject of debate, perhaps even argument. Early on as a young bishop, Pope Saint John Paul II wrote an extensive and learned commentary on the documents of Vatican II. But as pope he did not frame the relationship between the Vicar of Peter and the college of bishops to everyone's satisfaction. Collegiality and subsidiarity were ecclesial principles looking for a home. This was particularly evident in the periodic synods where the principle of collegiality was not vigorous in favor of deferring to the Vicar of Peter. The global appointment of bishops called into question a system that seemed to promote and repeatedly identify very cautious men for that office. The emeritus pope Benedict saw himself as in the spirit of Pope St. John Paul II. One result of this cautious mentality is the current English translation of the Mass. It is not the fruit of a broad consultation of a variety of people. In English the translation sounds wooden and latinized. It prefers the passive voice whereas English prefers the active voice. It leans toward the periodic sentence whereas English prefers a simple sentence.

Then just over a year ago, on March 13, 2013, Jorge Mario Bergoglio stepped onto the central balcony of St. Peter's and was introduced to the world as Pope Francis. We recall the moment with its extraordinary simplicity – taking as his own the name of the poor man from Assisi, the pope dressed sparsely in his white cassock waving a bit nervously, the request for his flock to pray for him as he bowed his head toward us, his confession that he was a sinner toward whom God has shown a great and tender mercy, his first Holy Thursday in the *mandatum* when as pope he washed the feet of young offenders in prison among whom were two women, one of them a Muslim. In these gestures one senses something has changed. In the spirit of the Council which, as its first order of business, addressed the mystery of the church in *Lumen Gentium*, Pope Francis speaks often of the Church. He makes

two points: a Church that is poor and a church that is sent to the world. He likens the Church to a field hospital that cares for the grievously wounded and he speaks of the priesthood as good shepherds who have on them the smell of their sheep. The theme of mercy is never far away. In a compelling insight St. Bonaventure wrote that he saw in St. Francis's life an "excess of divine mercy." The Pope would concur, seeing the priesthood as a ministry of mercy to the people of God and the Church herself an example of maternal love. He sees in the Good Samaritan a mercy that accompanies, lifts and heals the neighbor – a striking parable of the "excess of divine mercy."

He has set out his views briefly in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG).² It is his contribution to the new evangelization which has been going on now for a few years. The Pope often speaks of evangelization in terms of a missionary spirituality. The primary reason for evangelization is the love of Jesus Christ which we have received and encountered and which has affected us, changing us at a deep level. The experience of Jesus leads to conversion which is a fundamental change or reorientation at the level of what we embrace as true and affirm as worthwhile. In conversion it is faith that embraces what is true. We see with the eyes of the heart. In our turn Jesus sends us as a good neighbor, a Good Samaritan to others.

What do we bring to others? First, we know our gifts and these gifts help us to discern our calling or vocation. St. Paul calls them charisms. So among us Paul says there are apostles, prophets, evangelizers, pastors, prophets, teachers, healers, administrators, wisdom figures, some with the grace of discernment, others with the charism of faith, others who can work miracles. Compassion is found among us, hospitality, generosity. Some of us work well with our hands, some are creative, some are comfortable in the daunting space of the kitchen (!), some of us are good at sport, others are scholarly and profes-

² Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (Rome: Editrice Vaticana, 2013).

sional. Many will discern in themselves and in each other a number of these charisms. Many gifts, one Spirit; many ministries, one Lord; so much giftedness but one God who enables all these gifts in each one of us (1Cor 12:4-6). All these gifts conspire to build up the body of Christ by proclaiming the Good News of the Lord Jesus and this Good News, lived out in service to others, attracts people to the Church. In this work we learn to listen well as a person makes explicit one's desire for truth, for justice, for God. In the Pope's words we become living sources of water. We are able to say with St. John "we speak of what we have seen and heard."

A Franciscan Evangelization

Evangelizing is a formation, a process of formation as the Gospels clearly show in the lives of the apostles. One advantage of being Franciscan lies in our formation and particularly in our continuing formation. What does this formation embrace? Here the Pope speaks of prayer as contemplation. In our formation contemplation names our encounter with Christ as the Word of God. This means an attentive and intelligent reading and hearing of Scripture in a tradition of *lectio divina*. The Pope speaks here out of his Jesuit tradition of contemplation in speaking of the five human senses (seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting) that in grace become what Ignatius called spiritual senses. These spiritual senses envelop the Scripture, entering especially into the parables, and produce in us a strong sense that we are being moved and deepened in our understanding of creation and in our affection for it. It produces in us a sense of peace or what Ignatius called consolation, a growing love of God and of all things in God. Contemplation tends to confirm in us that we are on a right path. This encounter with the Word in Scripture can take place in a variety of settings but its chief place, the jewel in the crown, will be the Liturgy of the Word at Mass. Growth in contemplation goes hand in hand with growth in holiness or union with God especially in the

Eucharist where risen flesh is food for tormented or sick or sinful flesh, that risen flesh which on the cross canceled the legal claim against us. Pope Francis remarks that we shall be judged on how we have drawn close to suffering flesh, to suffering humanity.

Secondly, our formation as Franciscans will help us encounter an old and persistent spiritual problem called in Greek *acedia*. It is a condition of being listless, tired, worn out, wearied, tense, frustrated, fatigued, sad, even bored regarding our witness to Jesus. Evangelizing comes up against our expectations, our desire to protect our comfort zone. Jesus invites us away from control and calculation toward faith, humility, simplicity – and risk. He invites us to put out into the deep. Peter obeyed this invitation and realized that he was a sinful man. In that excess of divine mercy he was forgiven. His *acedia* was healed. He took a risk. The people who lowered the paralyzed man through the roof toward Jesus below took a risk. The woman “who loved much” and who made her way into Simon the Pharisee’s house in order to acknowledge Jesus took a risk. In this way he frees us from our fear of being unsuccessful, to be seen to fail. Instead we embrace the fundamental truth that in him we are forgiven and healed, a truth in which we grow and mature and let go of expectations. So the best devised programs and timetables don’t work. OK ... but what is the Lord doing? This is the gospel pattern of being pruned and formed as an evangelist who takes a risk for Jesus, stepping out of that comfort zone. The Pope adds don’t give in to pessimism or discouragement. Above all keep a sense of humor.

Thirdly, our formation as Franciscans brings a distinctive temperament to evangelization. It is our poverty that expresses itself in gentleness, hospitality, welcome, inclusiveness, befriending. With each other we can draw strength to move away from a life of bias and decline. Poverty gives us the words, perhaps the poetry, to express our own lives as a narrative of how I have fallen in and out of love with the Lord. Poverty invites us to be creative,

to see differently, to hope in a barren landscape. Poverty sees the excess of divine mercy in my life and in yours. It is not for a moment distracted by the pretense and posturing of power, arrogance or wealth. Poverty recognizes this as posturing because poverty knows such a person is afraid of one's mortality. We rejoice in the great humility and love by which God took on our humanity in Christ. We cherish the Incarnation of the Word. We cherish Our Lady in whom the Word became a human being. This appropriation of Poverty is the gift of the fraternity to each other.

In the life of the fraternity we together affirm that in his Incarnation Christ is committed to us, to our world. He encourages us in the challenges we face. He urges us to a spirit of hope because he has overcome the world. Christ leads the way in living his life as a poor man among the poor and insignificant. He identified with the least as their brother. Look, he befriends tax collectors and sinners ... He eats and drinks with them. Francis stands foursquare here. The little poor man of Assisi befriends every creature as we can see in his Canticle – let every creature praise the most high and glorious Lord for the excess of his mercy. Poverty is never separated from humility and joy. They keep company. And together they evangelize.

Fourthly, our formation as Franciscans allows us to grow in the Lord, in his grace. The love of Christ has brought us to conversion, to a process of life growth and of gospel formation. It points a path in Christ but *not* an easy one.³ In his gospel, St. Luke illumines the path. In his chapters 9-18 Jesus is making his way to Jerusalem and increasingly he turns his attention away from the crowds and toward the Twelve – the first evangelists. So we read: “Meanwhile when the crowd gathered *by the thousands so that they trampled on one another*, {Jesus} began *first* to speak to his disciples (Luke 12:1).” The say-

³ The remainder of this article is indebted to Cardinal Carlo M. Martini, S.J., *Ministers of the Gospel: Meditations on St. Luke's Gospel* (NY: Crossroad, 1970).

The Cord, 64.3 (2014)

ings and teaching that now unfold are among the *hardest sayings* of the Gospel. Jesus says he has come not to bring peace but a sword, to cause division. He urges them to detachment and freedom – sell what you have, give to the poor. Where your heart is there will your treasure also be. This teaching invites to freedom that separates me from whatever distracts me from evangelizing – expectations, self-interest, control, preoccupation. Then this freedom invites me to abandon myself to the Father – how much more will your Father give the good Spirit to those who ask him (Luke 11:13)? In place of anxiety we are invited to trust – Seek first his Kingdom ... and all things shall be given you (Luke 12:22-23). The Father has counted the hairs of your head. These hard sayings are fitted in a framework in which Jesus predicts the cross three times.

The Twelve resist. We're in good company!

While everyone was amazed at all he was doing, he said to his disciples 'let these words sink into your ears – the Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands.' But they did not *understand* this saying; its meaning was *concealed* from them, so that they could not *perceive* it. And they were *afraid* to ask Him about this saying. (Luke 9:44-45 RSV)

This is an extraordinary verdict on the obtuseness of the Twelve. This resistance is part of a pattern of their fear and incomprehension regarding Jesus – “The son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected ... killed ... and rise again. Jesus spoke this openly.” (Mark 8:31-32)

We can conclude that the training of an evangelist is an arduous task in which we can resist the Lord. Let us follow Peter in particular. Jesus is tough on him – “Get away from me Satan! You do not think as God thinks but as men do.” But Jesus does not give up on him – “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you (singular) like wheat but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail and when you have repented you must strengthen your broth-

ers.” But Peter will betray – how can betrayal keep company with strengthening your brothers? Peter collapses interiorly. In the arraignment before the Sanhedrin Peter follows *at a distance* because “I do not know the man.” We can see ourselves here – engaged in evangelizing we find we have arrived at an impasse in which we no longer know what the Lord wants or asks of us. Peter’s weakness lies in the fact that he sees the Gospel as a privilege, something Peter owns and which he may dispose of in his own strength and not as a gift that he must seek humbly and constantly before the Lord. Peter sees the task of evangelization as his, something he owns rather than as a gift to him. As a result his fall is deep, bitter and heart-breaking. But at this rock bottom Peter will learn that the Gospel is God’s free gift, the salvation God freely grants the sinner. If we accept this truth we shall have the right attitude as an evangelist. In that right attitude we allow ourselves to be upset by God’s plan because it is his plan, not ours, his Gospel, not ours, his salvation, not ours. The shrill and piercing cockcrow denounces Peter’s sin. And in that remembered din Peter came to see himself as he really is – loved by Jesus who knows Peter completely. This is the Good News of the Gospel in which Peter stands and in which he was now able to strengthen his brothers. Peter comes to illustrate the interior disposition by which we enter into the Lord’s freedom, detachment and breadth of vision regarding the Good News of the Kingdom. This interior disposition, this freedom, is the result of being forgiven. In this Peter is similar to St. Paul who came to value nothing and to account all as loss and rubbish as long as he may be found in Christ, sharing his suffering, being formed in the likeness of the Lord’s death in which lies the promise of eternal life.

The greatest evangelist of all of course is Jesus. His power is seen in his Passion and Death, his suffering and humiliation, the violence and shame to which he was exposed. When he was crucified, weak and dying, he was exposed to the most bitter temptation – if you are the King of the Jews save yourself. Come down from that cross

and we shall believe. They are temptations because they share a certain view of an all-powerful God. If he came down from the cross then everyone would believe in an obviously powerful and successful God. But no one will believe in a God who accepts death out of love for us. In this Jesus represents a change from the view of a domineering, demanding, impatient God who seeks us for his own ends. We all stand in this gap where Peter had stood between our expectations of real power and Jesus. To a cheering crowd shouting save yourself, show your power, demonstrate to us you are master of all things, Jesus only shows how to serve, how to be Eucharist. Every evangelist leads by service to the Eucharist.

All he has to show for his Passion and Death on the cross is the salvation of a thief caught, convicted and sentenced to death with him. In the course of those seven last words the thief is brought to faith in Jesus, even calling him by his first name – Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom. Before our eyes the thief passes from death to life. In his Passion the effect of Jesus the evangelist touches just one man and him a convicted criminal. One man? And him a thief? Why waste evangelical power for such a meagre result? But there is a connection – a lost thief, a lost sheep, a lost coin, a lost son. Each of those parables is concerned with the one rather than the many. God rejoices over the found sheep, the found coin, the found son, the found thief. God rejoices over each one no matter how least or marginal or unimportant – indeed there is joy among the angels in heaven.

Conclusion

The Order of Secular Franciscans is rooted in the late medieval penitential movements exemplified in Our Holy Father St. Francis. These penitential movements focused on conversion that led to a way of life that was an alternative to medieval feudal society in its commitment to penance or making changes in one's life and in its solidarity

with the poor. The fruit of this conversion is evangelization and the present emphasis of the Church on the New Evangelization indicates a noteworthy continuity with our Franciscan roots of 800 years ago.

Evangelization begins by asking us what gifts has the Lord given you? We spoke about them in connection with St. Paul's teaching regarding charisms, and we saw that all charisms are for the building up of the Body of Christ and for the well-being of our neighbor. But the major emphasis has to do with the importance and value of our Franciscan formation in the fraternity. That formation gives a methodical and disciplined structure to our role as an evangelizing fraternity. First, Franciscan formation develops in us prayer as contemplation. The object of contemplative prayer is God and the Word of God in whom we encounter the salvation of God. Contemplation sees, hears, touches and tastes Jesus of Nazareth in Holy Scripture and especially in the Liturgy of the Word of the Eucharist. Secondly, Franciscan formation prepares us to deal with *acedia* or the fatigue that can come to us because we fail in some program or project in the service of evangelization. Here we saw the importance of taking a risk for the Lord. Some risks miscarry. Sometimes our own unconverted attitudes get in the way – my expectation as to what should be done or what should happen, my desire to control the process of evangelization and its outcome. Thirdly, Franciscan formation shapes in us the fruitfulness of our Franciscan poverty to which the Incarnation of the Savior has given birth. Fourthly, Franciscan formation helps each of us and as a fraternity to grow in Christ. Here we took St. Peter as an example of growth in Christ that embraces our growth from darkness to the ever increasing and beckoning light. Finally, Franciscan formation centers evangelizing on Jesus as the greatest evangelist. Not that he was particularly successful – when he began in the synagogue at Nazareth they wanted to kill him and in his Passion and Death he manages to save one person who was a convicted thief. Jesus shows us that it is love and not success that characterizes evan-

The Cord, 64.3 (2014)

gelization in which we witness to the world with Mary Magdalene that we have seen the Lord. Or with John the beloved apostle: “We *declare* to you ... what we ourselves have *seen* with our eyes ... *touched* with our hands, concerning the Word of Life ... we have *seen* it and *testify* to it and *declare* to you the eternal life that was with the Father ... we *declare* to you what we have *seen* and *heard* so that you also may have fellowship with us ... that our joy may be complete (1John 1:1-4). These are the words of John the evangelist and of the apostolic company of evangelists and of the Church that evangelizes.

GRAYMOOR'S FATHER PAUL WATTSON ON FRANCISCAN POVERTY

FRED ARSENAULT, O.F.S.

Introduction

Graymoor is a small but rugged mountain about fifty miles north of New York City on the eastern side of the Hudson River. The mountain is the home of the Society of the Atonement, commonly known as Franciscan Friars and Sisters of the Atonement founded in 1898, as an Episcopal Franciscan religious order by Father Paul Wattson and Mother Lurana White. Eleven years later, the community became the first corporate body to enter the Catholic Church since the English Reformation. The friars and sisters were incorporated into the Third Order Regular of St. Francis, but they required separate constitutions. Thus, two distinct but related communities were formed.

In 1893, while pastor of St. John Episcopal Church in Kingston, New York, the Reverend Lewis T. Wattson first became aware of St. Francis of Assisi. "A sermon fell into my hands which described St. Francis as the most perfect imitator of Jesus in the whole course of Christianity. This awakened within me the desire of knowing more about the saint who most resembled the Divine Savior."¹

¹ David Gannon, S.A., *Father Paul of Graymoor* (New York: Macmillan, 1959), 22. Before he became a Franciscan, Fr. Paul was known by his baptismal name, Lewis T. Wattson.

It was the watershed event of his life! Father Wattson found a kindred spirit in the Poverello. Citing St. Francis, he began to preach the need for trust in Divine Providence. In the words of David Gannon, S.A., his first biographer, "He asked God for the grace to be more like the seraphic Poverello, who had first inspired Sister Lurana with her deep love for gospel poverty. With God as his witness, he vowed to imitate as closely as possible the ideal of poverty which St. Francis had practiced. He resolved never again to touch money, but to place his entire trust in God."²

In the early years, the Society of the Atonement was fragile. An outbreak of sickness, a natural disaster, or some form of ecclesial stricture could have destroyed the Foundation. The food was plain to the point of monotony; the buildings were simple structures, often difficult to heat in the winter and to cool in the summer humidity. Running water and indoor plumbing were decades away. The little community (two friars and five sisters) shared whatever they had with their poor neighbors. Homeless men were given shelter in a converted chicken coop, aptly named St. Christopher's Inn.³ The very real poverty, the isolation, and the demands of Father Paul for gospel fidelity became a serious challenge to prospective vocations, particularly during the Episcopalian years.

Neither a systematic theologian nor an academic student of Franciscan sources, Father Paul was a Franciscan religious who passionately followed St. Francis as his guide; he was a founder who took responsibility in forming his friars and the sisters; and a priest with pastoral hunger for the salvation of souls and caring for those marginal people who lived at edges of society. It is clear, however, that he had prayerfully reflected upon the meaning

² Gannon, 50. Gannon further based his observation on a talk of Father Paul, Oct. 7, 1933. Gannon notes that Wattson knew that the vow would seem odd in a culture of materialism, and that there would be true humiliation along the way.

³ St. Christopher's Inn still exists as a shelter for men and as a rehabilitation center for the addict and the alcoholic.

of evangelical poverty in his own life, in the formation of the Society of the Atonement, and its role in confronting the excesses of an increasingly materialistic society.

Father Gannon writes, “The charming part of life with Father Paul was that he was so perfectly normal as he lived the Franciscan Rule of life which he had freely chosen.[...] There was nothing ‘eccentric’ or ‘erratic’ about Fr. Paul’s sanctity. Indeed, Fr. Paul was not above the occasional grumble.”⁴ As quoted by Gannon, “If you think you will get used to rising at five o’clock in the morning and like it you are very much mistaken. I am over seventy and I have not gotten used to it yet.”⁵ Nonetheless, it is clear that he had prayerfully reflected upon the meaning of evangelical poverty in his own life, in the life of the Society of the Atonement, and in curing the excesses of an increasingly materialistic society.

In this article, I will first scrutinize Father Paul’s thinking on evangelical poverty. Second, from his ideas, I will discuss three issues of evangelical poverty of interest to vowed and secular Franciscans today. And, third, I will offer some final thoughts on Father Paul and his love of evangelical poverty within Franciscan life.

As much as Possible (Francis of Assisi)

Fred Alvarez, S.A. (1924-2012) was a gentle, joyful and patient friar who had labored for almost twenty-five years in the Diocese of Yokohama, Japan; when he returned to Graymoor in 1985, he accepted the challenge to compile and organize the historical records of Father Paul’s Franciscan vocation, ministry and spirituality. The results of his labor are presented in *Father Paul Wattson, Franciscan*.⁶ From Alvarez’s research, one may illustrate

⁴ Gannon, 314.

⁵ Cited in Gannon, 314.

⁶ Fred Alvarez, S.A., *Fr. Paul Wattson, Franciscan* (Graymoor, Garrison, NY, 2004). In the Preface, John Keane, S.A., wrote, “In compiling this book, Father Alvarez has given us a treasure of information in order to produce an ordered volume of quotes that could not be easily found. Future studies regarding Franciscanism within the American

The Cord, 64.3 (2014)

several aspects of Father Paul's thinking on evangelical poverty, which inspired the formation of his friars, the sisters and Graymoor's Third Order members.

Francis, Lover of Evangelical Poverty

For Father Paul, St. Francis was the standard of gospel poverty. "St. Francis of Assisi glorified Poverty, and idealized her into his bride.... He found more joy and real happiness in sandalled feet and a brown tunic girded around the loins with a rope, than he had ever experienced when, arrayed in gay and costly apparel."⁷ Further, Father Paul noted that St. Francis envisioned evangelical poverty as a remedy for the social and religious ills of the thirteenth century. "Francis lived in an age when the Church was becoming corrupt on account of material possessions.... Material things had become dominant to such an extreme that they were having an effect on the mystical body of the Church, and it was for this reason that God saw fit to call His servant, who should exalt Poverty to the nth degree, and He inspired Francis with a wonderful love of holy poverty."⁸

God's Providence for the Poor

After learning about the Poverello, Wattson began to preach of a Francis-like poverty of the Kingdom of God. In the episode before Bishop Guido outside the cathedral in Assisi, Francis tangibly witnessed to his reliance on God's providence. "St. Francis of Assisi in seeking first the Kingdom of God lay down at his father's feet the very clothes that covered his nakedness and voluntarily gave up his birthright, which was the inheritance of his father's wealth, and he went out trusting absolutely the promise of Christ, 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and

scene will find a handy resource in this excellent volume about Paul Wattson, the Apostle of Christian Unity from upstate New York."

⁷ "Letter to Rosarians," *The Lamp*, Aug, 1924, 251.

⁸ Talk of Father Paul July 17, 1933.

Fred Arsenault

His justice and all you need I will provide for you.'... And so it shall be with all the faithful people of God who seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice."⁹

Father Paul cited the so-called Chapter of Mats when approximately five-thousand friars assembled in Assisi on the Saturday before Pentecost. "St. Francis, as usual, trusted in the Lord to provide for His own, and when the news went abroad throughout the Umbrian Valley that this great company of friars had met together and had nothing to eat, by a common impulse of the people of the neighborhood as far as Perugia, brought in wagons and upon the back of beasts of burden a great quantity of bread, meat oil and even luxuries, and not content with fetching the food, some of the nobility found it to their joy to actually minister and wait upon the friars, serving the food which they brought to the sons of St. Francis."¹⁰

Being Poor in Order to Give

Alvarez noted that the Founder believed poverty was an opportunity for sharing.

The Spirit of Holy Poverty is not merely detachment for detachment's sake. [Rather] we are constrained to be poor out of charity, out of love for others, out of desire to spend and be spent and give those whose need is greater than our own. That was the spirit of Christ; that was the spirit of St. Francis ...

We must always exercise ourselves in holy poverty and economy, using only those things that are needful to observe the life of the poor and this spirit of self-denial, and then with free and lavish hand as God gives to us opportunity, distribute these gifts to the poor as St. Elizabeth of Hungary went down from her palace to distribute the corn in

⁹ Talk on St. Anthony's Hour, Aug. 22, 1937.

¹⁰ St. Anthony's Hour, Nov. 28, 1937.

The Cord, 64.3 (2014)

the time of famine and give alms among the poor, practicing personally real self-denial.”¹¹

Poverty Means Sacrifice

Almost a quarter of a century after his conversion to Roman Catholicism, Father Paul reminded the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement: “Now we ought not to think that even if we love holy poverty we can practice it without any cross or without any inconvenience. If one practiced the vow of poverty and there was no sting about it, it would hardly be the real thing.”¹²

Evangelical poverty must necessarily lead a Franciscan to the Cross.

By the force of example, [Jesus Christ] gave and gave and gave until He had not a shred of clothing on his emaciated limbs nor a drop of blood left in his poor wounded body. Moreover, to all who would come after Him He said that except a man practiced self-denial he could not be His disciple and of those who would follow Him completely and perfectly He demanded the sacrifice not only of their last penny, but the surrender of their body and soul as well.¹³

Poverty and the Holy Spirit

From his first night at Graymoor, sheltered in an old paint shack, until he died in a simple friary cell,¹⁴ Father Paul celebrated a humble and holy joy that reminds one of Mary’s joy, as expressed in her Canticle, “The mighty

¹¹ Talk of Sept. 25, 1926; talk of Father Paul to Sisters, Aug. 4, 1925.

¹² Talk of July 17, 1933 to Atonement Sisters.

¹³ *The Lamp*, Feb. 1915, 51-51. Cited in Fred Alvarez, S.A. *The Union That Nothing Be Lost*, Friars of the Atonement, Heritage Commission, Graymoor, Garrison, NY 10524.

¹⁴ Father Paul’s cell measured nine by seven feet with a small window on one wall. The view from the window is of woods and foliage because he wanted the friars to have the preferred view of the Hudson. The only furniture was a bed, a bureau and a desk.

Fred Arsenault

One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him (Luke 1:49-50).

For Father Paul, evangelical poverty meant more than what was found in his institute's Rule of Life. He told the Sisters of the Atonement in 1924, and again a similar message to cleric novices in 1937,

No, rather get behind the great significance of this great vow, which is: that it is the special means by which you yourself may become an interior Religious, living your spiritual life of union with the Holy Ghost.[...] It is most important, and I hope you will always remember, that the special effect and significance behind holy poverty is that you may be spiritually minded, that you may be sanctified of the Holy Ghost."¹⁵

St. Francis was filled with the joy of the Holy Ghost:

He found more happiness and enjoyment in eating the scraps of food that he obtained as a beggar at the back doors of the houses in Assisi, than he had ever experienced in the splendid banquets over which he presided when his pocket was filled with the money of Peter Bernardone, his father.¹⁶

Danger of Riches

Father Paul preached that the love of money misleads one to "rest" in material goods; they become a passion, which rules a person's life to the extent that the love of God is shut out from the heart. He cited the gospel story of Dives, who ate sumptuously every day and wore fine linen. "... These material things ... take the first place and

¹⁵ Talk of Oct. 14, 1924 to Atonement Sisters; Retreat talk to novices, Aug., 1937.

¹⁶ Radio address of Sept. 3, 1935.

The Cord, 64.3 (2014)

crowd out the consideration of God.”¹⁷ Moreover, love of riches, Father Paul insisted, was behind the neglect by the rich of the poor.

To the unbeliever, that is the gospel of this world, the gospel of wealth and prosperity and success. Why concern themselves about them ...? But the Gospel of Christ was the Gospel to the poor, and it is the characteristic of the Catholic Church down through the centuries, and the characteristic today, one of the evidences that we have of that wonderful power of Christ.¹⁸

Society of the Atonement to be Poor

By the mid-1930s, vocations were beginning to increase and buildings to house them were built. From two friars at its inception, the Society of the Atonement, by 1935, embraced more than twenty priests and forty professed clerics; most lived at Graymoor and in Washington, DC. Thus, in 1925 Father Paul advised, “If you follow the road which keeps you poor all your life, it will make you rich in Heaven.”¹⁹

Moreover, the Society of the Atonement, first in its Episcopalian years and thereafter in its Roman Catholic years, was never without its critics, some of whom accused the Society of the Atonement as amassing wealth and living well. Father Paul adamantly insisted that the building needs of Graymoor did not mean that the friars were rich. He replied to his critics in the pages of *The Lamp*,

Let none of our Readers imagine that the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement are ‘rich’ and rolling in wealth as some critics have declared. Mendicant friars we are, because Christ so ordained in

¹⁷ Talk of Aug. 18, 1926.

¹⁸ Talk of Dec. 7, 1925.

¹⁹ Talk of May 7, 1925.

Fred Arsenault

the Holy Gospel. By our begging we have fed and housed not only our little community of professed religious, but we have given lodgings and food to an ever increasing number of uninvited guests, the poor men of the road, jobless, and penniless who seek our hospitality in Christ's name.²⁰

Society of the Atonement to Minister to the Poor

Following the example of St. Francis, Father Paul was resolute that the members of the Society of the Atonement dedicate themselves to living and working among the poor. Very early in the Society's existence, he wrote to Mother Lurana and her fledgling community,

When ... the Holy Spirit shall have sufficiently taught and trained them for their work, we believe He will send them forth into the slums of the city, and their brown habit shall then be seen where the poor are crowded thickest together and vice and misery are most strongly entrenched.²¹

In 1924, a reader of *The Lamp* branded Father Paul as

eccentric for referring to the homeless men coming to Graymoor as 'Brothers Christopher' instead of 'hoboes and tramps.' Fr. Paul responded that he did not mind the label 'eccentric,' but he appealed to the standard of St. Francis, '... As St. Francis always called himself Brother Francis and clung to that estate, although solicited by those in high authority to assume the dignity of the Priesthood; yet as Saint Francis was always ready to give even his habit to anyone he met more poorly clothed than himself. So he freely gave not only to beggar, but

²⁰ *The Lamp* Sept. 1931, 270.

²¹ See, Mary Celine Flemming, S.A. *A Woman of Unity* (Garrison, NY: Graymoor Press, 1956), 50-51.

The Cord, 64.3 (2014)

even to birds and beasts and inanimate creatures
the loving salutation of Brother....²²

Society of the Atonement to Trust in God

Father Paul and Mother Lurana possessed a profound clarity of faith. They never wavered from obedience to the Covenant between themselves and the Holy Spirit in founding the Society of the Atonement. Trust in God was the ordinary way of life for those who called Graymoor home. Take the issue of finances, for example. Although *some* funds were kept in reserve for emergencies, Father Paul told *The Lamp* readers in 1924, that

As far as the Friars of the Atonement are concerned we can only rely upon the same miracle of Providence being continued, as has followed the development of our Institute from the very start. We have a prayer which we say every day, asking God to give us 'all and only such temporal goods are needful for the fulfillment of our vocation.' That prayer has been literally answered ever since we first began to say it and we have no just reason that it will ever be otherwise.... We simply spend as we go along, depending upon daily arms for our daily needs, and to God, Patron Saints and our Benefactors be praise and thanksgiving.²³

A Battle Worthy of God (Father Paul Wattson)

Upon his death on February 8, 1940, Father Paul left the friars a wealth of historical and spiritual material for the celebration and study of his legacy; from these his thoughts on evangelical poverty may be gleaned. Three issues may be of interest to vowed and secular Franciscans today: first that gospel poverty is more profound than mere detachment; second, that gospel poverty is the es-

²² *The Lamp*, Jan. 1925, 2.

²³ *The Lamp*, June 1914, 249-50.

sence of the apostolate; and third (especially interesting in light of the Second Vatican Council's call for renewal of religious life), that *kenosis* is essential to maintaining evangelical poverty as Franciscans.

(1) Detachment for detachment's sake lacks the profound spiritual dimension of evangelical poverty which St. Francis embraced as a gift from a loving and provident God. True gospel poverty requires a humble trust in a faithful God, because true poverty is itself holy, and, according to Father Paul, it constrains "one to be poor out of charity, out of love for others, out of desire to spend and be spent, and give to those whose need is greater than own."²⁴

Father Paul saw that the betrothal of Lady Poverty to St. Francis was God's gift to the Poverello; it was a joyful union for St. Francis throughout his life, which ended on the rough ground, in a borrowed habit, when St. Francis gave his last earthly breath. Early in the life of the Society of the Atonement, Fr. Paul counseled the small community, "Deep poverty is the oblation of self for others in union with His offering on the Cross. Deep poverty is the atonement and the crucifix is its embodiment."²⁵ Shortly after becoming Roman Catholic, he told the Society of the Atonement, "God forbid that the children of the Atonement should ever be strangers to the passion and crucifixion of Jesus Christ."²⁶ Evangelical poverty was a calling for Father Paul; it was part of the Covenant made with God and therefore exceeded any sense of duty; it was a commitment of love and all who accept the call will necessarily embrace the Cross.

The Society of the Atonement survived the dismal poverty of Graymoor's early days, and the memory of these hardships may have led Father Paul to remind his spiri-

²⁴ Talk of Sept. 25, 1926, cited in *Toward a Spirituality*, Heritage Commission, Autumn Supplement, 1984. Fr. Paul continued, "That was the spirit of Christ, that was the spirit of St. Francis, that was the spirit of all those like Apostles, for example like St. Paul ..."

²⁵ Talk of Oct. 25, 1906 to S. A. Sisters.

²⁶ *The Lamp*, March 1910. Cited in *Toward a Spirituality*, 35.

tual children that, as living conditions on the Mount of the Atonement improved, they should not become dependent on material improvements as the Society of the Atonement grew.

Poverty is really devotion to God the Holy Ghost, and the more we consecrate ourselves, the more we keep ourselves independent of attachment to material things, so that we are just as happy in a hovel as we would be in a palace, and more so, and just as happy if our food was the plain necessities of life. Then [we] will have that joyous spirit within us which characterized our Seraphic Father who always was the joyous saint even in the midst of his greatest physical sufferings.”²⁷

(2) Father Paul wanted the apostolic works of the Society of the Atonement to be distinguished by evangelical poverty, to be poor in order to serve the poor. Over the years, Graymoor has been the Motherhouse, a powerhouse of prayer and formation, but the proper place for the friars, believed Father Paul, was in the missions, in chaplaincies and special ministries working for Christian unity. For Religious, “the vow of poverty represents power, [since it enables Religious to] become the mightiest missionaries of Christ in the history of Christendom.”²⁸ Father Paul required a similar attitude in the Tertiaries associated with the Society of the Atonement. In a letter to Tertiaries in formation he said

As Franciscans we live again the life of St. Francis in his love and devotion to the poor and the unfortunate, and that in a simple, loving way you are to

²⁷ Talk to Atonement Sisters, Sept. 21, 1926.

²⁸ Fred Alvarez, S.A., *The Union that Nothing Be Lost*, Heritage Commission (Graymoor, Garrison, NY, 1989), 122.

Fred Arsenault

bear witness against the selfishness and greed of society.²⁹

In Father Paul's lifetime, the missionary efforts of the Society of the Atonement

were generally undertaken in extremely humble circumstances. In all instances, the people among whom the friars worked were few in numbers, generally a minority, and usually poor economically. According to several published accounts, the friars lived rather modestly in somewhat humble circumstances.... Poverty of circumstances was evidently a guiding principle for Father Paul when making the decision to open a new mission or to discover an old one.³⁰

Gannon noted that, except for the Church Unity Octave, *The Union That Nothing Be Lost* was the greatest glory of Fr. Paul's life. "He planned it as a missionary society which would supply all the material necessities for the front-line trenches, where the Soldiers of Christ fight against the evils of the world for the salvation of souls of men...."³¹

The Fourth Sunday in Lent opened a week of self-denial. It was a week of extra-fasting, and none of the friars were exempt.

On the Fourth Sunday, a card was placed on each one's plate listing the various items of food on the menu for the coming week – which was sparse to

²⁹ Letter of Fr. Paul to Sarah Wall, June 19, 1900. Found in the Archives of Atonement Friars.

³⁰ Charles V. LaFontaine, S.A., "Missionary without Portfolio: Father Paul Wattson of Graymoor," in *Essays in S.A. History*, Heritage Commission (Graymoor/Garrison, NY: Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, 1984), 163.

³¹ Gannon, 221. In Gannon's view, The Church Unity Octave, which has become the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

begin with. Whatever each one denied himself was checked off on the card. At the end of the week the saving of food through this Self-Denial by the community was credited to *The Union That Nothing Be Lost* for distribution to the missions.³²

During that week Father Paul ate one meal a day; the sacrifice of one's comfort for the sake of others was to live gospel poverty as an integral part of their faith and their ministry.

(3) The Second Vatican Council, which ended in 1965, issued the *Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life*. Early in the document, the Fathers wrote, "The appropriate renewal of religious life involves two simultaneous processes: (1) a continuous return to the sources of all Christian life and to the original inspiration behind a given community and (2) an adjustment of the community to the changed conditions of the times."³³ The Council coincided with the general social upheaval of the 1960s, and this created a profound challenge for the Church and for the Society of the Atonement, which was not "left unaffected by these currents and movements in the Roman Church."³⁴ In this regard, the history of the S.A. during these turbulent times is informative. Fr. Horgan notes, "The history of Fr. Paul and Mother Lurana is important because it shows how founding occurred but the history of the S.A. subsequently is just as important because it demonstrates how the founding charism was and is still being clarified."³⁵ The history demonstrates, for example, *The Union That Nothing Be Lost* (UNBL) has remained a valued ministry since the death of Father Paul. From the 1984 *Chapter of Mats* and the General Chapter of 1985,

³² Gannon, 226.

³³ Walter M. Abbott, S.J., General Editor, "The Documents of Vatican II (New York: Guild Press, 1966), 468.

³⁴ Charles Angel and Charles LaFontaine, *Prophet of Reunion, The Life of Father Paul of Graymoor* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), 215.

³⁵ Thaddeus Horgan, S.A. *Being a Franciscan*, Heritage Commission, June 1988, 30.

the friars acknowledge that "... If anything was clearly an Atonement development of something Franciscan the UNBL is it. Father Paul was explicit about [it] by calling it 'pure Franciscanism.'"³⁶ Fr. Horgan continued, "The spirit of poverty must always have a sacrificial motive. [Yet] it is one of joy because it is of God."³⁷ Thus, the friars authenticate their principles upon the experience of St. Francis and his acceptance of the penitential tradition of "conversion of heart" or *metanoia*.

What Francis projects about gospel life is conversion, contemplation, poverty and humility, fraternity, loving obedience and peace-making. Its biblical and theological root is God's Fatherhood and goodness notably manifested in the Incarnation and in Christ's salvific deeds.³⁸

Further, the Heritage Commission of 1988 notes that Gospel poverty calls us to view ourselves as pilgrims and strangers.

But above all, gospel poverty means *kenosis*, 'letting go' of whatever might prevent us from doing God's will. In practical life it is manifested by simplicity and by not appropriating anything. Everything is God's.... For [Francis] it is modeled on Christ's *kenosis* which was salvific and the style of His obedience to the Father's will.³⁹

In their General Statutes, evangelical poverty calls each member of the Society of the Atonement to develop attitudes given by Christ in the Beatitudes: availability to one another and those they serve.

³⁶ Horgan, 49.

³⁷ Horgan, 50.

³⁸ Horgan, 499

³⁹ Horgan, 17.

Final Thoughts

The Mount of the Atonement was for a number of years a place of stark poverty; the Franciscan spirit of mendicancy and trust found a home not far from the glitz and materialism of New York City. Graymoor and its little religious community was a living sign of gospel values. Today, in visiting Graymoor it is obvious that the friars do not live amid extravagance, and thus the sign-value of evangelical poverty, so loved by Father Paul, continues with his spiritual children.

Father Paul more than once spoke of the joy that gospel poverty brought to one's life. It is the quiet joy that rests upon the providence of God rather than the accumulation of superfluous wealth. That joy is what G.K. Chesterton, in his popular biography of St. Francis, saw in the Poverello and we can also find it, as well, in Father Paul's life,

The whole point about St. Francis of Assisi is that he certainly was ascetical and he was certainly not gloomy.... And it is precisely the positive and passionate quality of this part of his personality that is a challenge to the modern mind in the whole problem of the pursuit of pleasure.... On his deathbed, the rocky floor, the world looked down upon a happy man.⁴⁰

In their rule, Secular Franciscans are urged to follow the poor Christ. "Let the Secular Franciscans seek a proper spirit of detachment from temporal goods and by simplifying their own material needs. Let them be mindful that according to the gospel they are stewards of the goods received for the benefit of God's children. (1:11)." Stewardship implies both the notions of *kenosis* and sharing found in the Acts of the Apostles; it affords each person the opportunity to express a concrete sense of gospel

⁴⁰ G.K. Chesterton, *St. Francis of Assisi* (New York: Image Books, 1989), 81.

Fred Arsenault

poverty, according to one's circumstance and state of life. For example, in Warwick, RI, St. Peter's Parish identifies itself as a "Stewardship Church;" the parishioners are formed to take responsibility by offering – by emptying themselves – of their time, talent, and treasure for the building up of the parish community. Parishioners take responsibility for the success of various parish ministries and financial support of the parish community. Father Paul, it appears, would have approved the model.

Father Paul Wattson was a man of extraordinary energy and iron-clad faith. He could have been successful in any field he desired, yet in co-founding the Society of the Atonement, he and Mother Lurana White responded to a *covenant-call* from the Holy Spirit, to live in the tradition of St. Francis: healing wounds, uniting what has fallen apart, and bringing home lost souls.

The Society of the Atonement offers numerous lessons for those who study its story in American Franciscan history. Before Graymoor came into being, a young Episcopal priest had embraced the gospel vision of the Poverello; that image would guide him and Mother Lurana in founding the Society, in forming the friars and sisters, and in discerning the ministries through which the young community would serve.

MEDIA RESOURCE REVIEW

Enkindling Love: The Spiritual Journey of St. Francis according to Bonaventure, by Br. F. Edward Coughlin, O.F.M., Ph.D. <https://www.nowyouknowmedia.com>

The presenter of this lecture series, Br. F. Edward Coughlin, currently is vice president for Franciscan mission at St. Bonaventure University in New York. He is an expert on the life and theology of St. Bonaventure. In 2006, he wrote the introduction for, edited and annotated Volume X of the *Works of St. Bonaventure: Writings on the Spiritual Life*. For a number of years he served on the editorial Board for the Bonaventure Texts Series. Because of his extensive knowledge and experience as a spiritual formator, Br. Ed is able to make these medieval Franciscan saints—Francis and Bonaventure—come alive in these lectures.

As the title suggests, the lectures are based on *The Major Legend of St. Francis*, written by St. Bonaventure. But note carefully that the first two words of the title, *Enkindling Love*, come from *The Triple Way*, also written by St. Bonaventure. I consider this important because the threefold or triple way is a path of ascent into union with God through three spiritual stages: purgation, illumination and union or perfection. In *The Major Legend of St. Francis*, we find St. Bonaventure weaving these three movements in and out of the fabric of St. Francis's life.

Before becoming the seventh Minister General of the Lesser Brothers, St. Bonaventure was the chair of the Franciscan School of Theology at the University of Paris and also a prolific writer. To fully understand this medi-

eval theologian's thought processes and insights into the life of St. Francis, we need a skilled guide to walk with us. In these lectures, Br. Ed Coughlin gives us the tools we need to decipher the depths of Bonaventure's understanding of St. Francis as revealed to us in *The Major Legend*.

During the lectures I became more and more aware of a subtle and then not-so-subtle challenge to enter into the same journey that Bonaventure describes in the life of St. Francis. Br. Ed invites us to see that the two saints, Francis and Bonaventure, provide a well-defined path for the rest of us to follow. And with Br. Ed guiding us into and through the background and structure of each chapter, a verbal portrait emerges of the most perfect follower of Christ, St. Francis of Assisi.

These lectures fit well into the daily life of so many of us who have commitments that prevent us from attending a course of this caliber at a university. Every chapter of *The Major Legend of St. Francis* is covered in this lecture series. And who better to give you a general idea of the themes than St. Bonaventure himself? [Quoting from the Prologue:]

The life of Francis—in its beginning, progress, and end—is described in the following fifteen chapters:

- Chapter One: his manner of life while in the attire of the world.
- Chapter Two: his perfect conversion to God and his restoration of three churches.
- Chapter Three: the foundation of the Order and the approval of the Rule.
- Chapter Four: the progress of the Order under his hand and the confirmation of the Rule.
- Chapter Five: the austerity of his life and how creatures provided him comfort.
- Chapter Six: his humility and obedience and God's condescension to his slightest wish.
- Chapter Seven: his love of poverty and the miraculous fulfillment of his needs.

The Cord, 64.3 (2014)

- Chapter Eight: his affectionate piety and how irrational creatures were affectionate toward him.
- Chapter Nine: the fervor of his charity and his desire for martyrdom.
- Chapter Ten: his zeal for prayer and the power of his prayer.
- Chapter Eleven: his understanding of Scripture and his spirit of prophecy.
- Chapter Twelve: the efficacy of his preaching and his grace of healing.
- Chapter Thirteen: his sacred stigmata.
- Chapter Fourteen: his patience and his passing in death.
- Chapter Fifteen: his canonization and the solemn transferal of his body.

I have taken many courses, attended many lectures, read a lot of books on Franciscan spirituality and theology, and this series of lectures added another dimension to my knowledge and understanding of St. Francis as revealed to us by St. Bonaventure and elucidated for us by Br. Ed—proving that the spiritual journey never ends until union with God. My take-away line—the one that will influence and affect my Franciscan identity—is Bonaventure’s question: “Do [I] desire to imitate or admire Francis?” Time will tell.

Enkindling Love: The Spiritual Journey of St. Francis according to Bonaventure can be purchased either in audio or video format from Now You Know Media, <https://www.nowyouknowmedia.com>. The four DVD or CD set consists of twelve lectures and an electronic study guide. The video is especially well suited for group instruction and discussion. In addition, the DVDs contain many beautiful works of Franciscan art.

Anne Mulqueen, O.F.S.
Chair, Ecumenical-Interfaith Committee
Secular Franciscan Order

BOOK REVIEW

POVERTY: A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

Father Richard Rohr gives us another way to think about this way of life that was so very important to our father, Francis. He says that Francis defined “poverty” as “facing the poor side of everything and finding your riches there.”

Father Richard reminds us for Francis that meant challenges like “*facing the unfamiliar*”; “*the foreign*”; or “*the scary*.” Francis found these challenges in places that we forget to look ... i.e., in places where it seems like things are “good” or appear “just fine.” However, Francis wanted to go deeper, to a more intimate place. He desired to communicate with the heart and soul of people and things. Frequently what blocked entry into those deeper places and the requisite necessary changes to get there were that they were perceived as good or just fine! It was likely a version of “We’ve always done it that way” or “just be nice”! or “If it ain’t broken, don’t fix it.”

The *Radical Grace Daily Meditations* by Father Richard Rohr and John Bookser Feister (Cincinnati, OH: Saint Anthony Messenger Press, 1995) explores the Gospel story of the rich young man in Mark 10 and reveals the invitation and the ensuing struggle with the questions of “what more can I do?” “I’ve been good; I’ve kept the law.” Jesus invited the rich young man, as he did Francis, into the messy world of “loving.” Several events in Francis’s life reveal his struggle with the *Unfamiliar, foreign, or scary!*

When Francis considered following his father’s way of life and his ideas, it would have been a familiar path for Francis – that of becoming a merchant. Yet, Francis

The Cord, 64.3 (2014)

sought the *unfamiliar*. He desired the more intimate life of Spirit. His father was likely giving to lepers, yet this wasn't enough for Francis. He desired to live a deeper, spirit-filled existence with his brothers and sisters. He wanted to do more than "be nice"; he wanted to face his failures to love and encourage others to do likewise.

Francis faced the *foreign* in looking at the ravages of war in his and other towns in his vicinity. He looked at nature as mystical and treasured, animate and inanimate objects were brother and sister.

Francis also took some *scary* steps. He wanted a "rule of life" that was less likely to fall under the power of money and influence rampant in the church at that time. He insisted that "poverty" be the central tenet of the new rule of life. It wasn't just a financial request but a deeper vision/call into the spirit of gospel living. It was a call to look at the limitations of self and others as a means to find the riches of their goodness. For example, Francis was aware of how much Jesus of Nazareth loved Zacharias, Matthew, Peter, Mary Magdalene and a host of others. Jesus faced their limitations and loved them, enabling the riches of their conversions to change them and those around them. Francis wanted to do likewise. Francis calls us to do likewise also.

Diane Gautney-Buckley
Lancaster, PA

Franciscan Studies From Your Home



INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY FRANCISCAN LIFE

Learn about the heritage of Saint Francis of Assisi

The Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life (ICFL) offers a certificate program through distance education on Catholic Franciscan values and their influence on contemporary society.

Available courses are:

**FRANCISCAN GOSPEL LIVING IN
THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD**

**THE FRANCISCANS:
A FAMILY HISTORY**

FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY

**CLARE OF ASSISI: HER
LIFE AND WRITINGS**

FRANCISCAN PRAYER

FRANCISCAN SERVANT LEADERSHIP

**ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI,
AN INTRODUCTION**

**THE RULE OF THE SECULAR
FRANCISCAN ORDER**

**HEALTH CARE IN THE FRANCISCAN
TRADITION**

To learn more contact us at: (814) 472-3219

ICFL@francis.edu

PO Box 600, Loretto, PA 15940

www.francis.edu/ICFLHome.htm





Franciscan Institute Research Agenda 2015 - 2017

The Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University's Research Advisory Council has instituted a research agenda that will center on a series of symposia/workshops to be held at the Institute the next three years in conjunction with the Feast of St. Bonaventure (July 15).

2015: The Work of Peter of John Olivi, particularly his economic thought

This symposium will bring together a select group of scholars to analyze the current status of Olivi studies and foster an interdisciplinary exchange among those in the business, educational, and political fields who might be informed by Olivi's insights and, at the same time, could offer their expertise and experience regarding the challenges and opportunities to faith and action they encounter on a daily basis.

2016: Identity, Innovation and Women in Medieval Religious Communities

This symposium will explore the question of identity, innovation, and women in medieval religious communities while examining issues of diversity and uniformity in female Franciscan communities. Participants will be invited to explore their own experience in light of the centuries-long witnesses of women, who finding inspiration in the stories of Francis, Clare, and others, formed and enfolded their unique visions.

2017: Cultural and Religious Dynamics in the Work of St. Bonaventure

The Franciscan Institute intends to celebrate the patron of the university with a symposium dedicated to the cultural and religious dynamics that shaped the Seraphic Doctor. The subsequent workshop intends to promote an understanding of how culture and religion form individuals and communities, and what elements of Bonaventure's own experience and written work may be retrieved in the contemporary world.

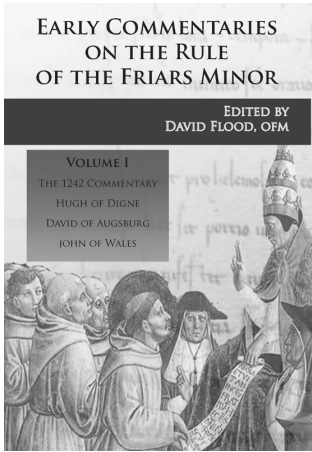
More information about the agenda and support for research can be found at:
www.sbu.edu/franciscaninstitute



FRANCISCAN
INSTITUTE
PUBLICATIONS

New Titles Now Available

NEW SERIES:
EARLY COMMENTARIES ON THE RULE OF
THE FRIARS MINOR



Early Commentaries on the Rule of the Friars Minor, Volume I

Edited by David Flood, OFM

Volume I contains The 1242 Commentary (also known as The Four Masters, or The Paris Masters), The Commentary of Hugh of Digne, The Commentary of David of Augsburg and The Commentary of John of Wales.

The study of rule commentaries is a crucial part of understanding the rationale behind the way of life of the friars. By publishing a series of translations of the most significant early rule commentaries, the

Franciscan Institute seeks to encourage the study of these documents and render the commentaries accessible to a wider audience.

Paperback \$49.95

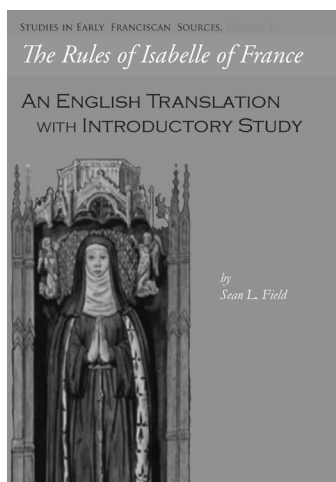
COMING SOON
EARLY COMMENTARIES ON THE RULE OF
THE FRIARS MINOR
VOLUME III
ANGELO CLARENO
Edited by David Burr

Franciscan Institute Publications
fip@sbu.edu • www.franciscanpublications.com



New Titles Now Available

NOW AVAILABLE:
The Latest Edition of the
Studies in Early Franciscan Sources Series



Studies in Early Franciscan Sources - Volume 4
The Rules of Isabelle of France
by Sean Field

Isabelle of France (1225-1270) is best known as the sister of St. Louis and the founder of the female Franciscan community of Longchamp near Paris. In 1259 Pope Alexander IV approved the important new rule for this community which Isabelle had co-authored with a team of leading Franciscan theologians, including St. Bonaventure. This was only the second female-authored rule-after Clare of Assisi's 1253 Form of Life-ever to be approved by the papacy. Moreover, in 1263 Isabelle secured a revision of her rule from Pope Urban IV, which granted her controversial desire to have her sisters be known as *Sorores minores*, analogous to the male *Fratres minores*. In this form the Isabelle rule was adopted by numerous houses, particularly in France and England. In *The Rules of Isabelle of France*, Sean L. Field offers the first published English translations of both versions of this rule, together with a close study of their origins and interest for Franciscan history. The volume also illuminates the larger context around Isabelle of France and Longchamp by including translations (by Larry F. Field) of five papal letters to or concerning Isabelle.

\$19.95 Paperback
\$24.95 Hardcover

Franciscan Institute Publications
fip@sbu.edu • www.franciscanpublications.com



Br. Jeff Macnab, OFM
SILENT ADVENT RETREAT
December 12 - 14, 2014

Fr. Michael Crosby, OFM, Cap.
FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY
January 9 - 11, 2015

Fr. Rusty Shaughnessy, OFM
Karla & Richard Obernesser
MARRIED COUPLES RETREAT
February 13 - 15, 2015

**We offer private retreats with
or without spiritual direction.
Our center has retreat, meet-
ing, and conference space.**



SAN DAMIANO RETREAT

PO Box 767 • Danville, CA 94526 • 925-837-9141 • www.sandamiano.org

Looking for a back issue of *The Cord*?

Check out our archives

www.franciscanpublications.com

ON THE FRANCISCAN CIRCUIT

Franciscan Renewal Center Scottsdale, Arizona

READING THE GOSPELS THROUGH THE FRANCISCAN LENS

Friday, October 10-Sunday, October 12

Mary Beth Ingham, CSJ

Save the date!

Information and registration:

www.thecasa.org 480-948-7460 casa@thecasa.org

Il Ritiro Franciscan Retreat Center

P.O. Box 38 ~ 7935 St. Francis Ln.

Dittmer, MO 63023

636-274-0554 ~ www.il-ritiro.org ~ il.ritiro@gmail.com

Il Ritiro Franciscan Retreat Center is located on a 90 acre natural wooded foothills area of the Ozarks just 45 minutes from St. Louis.

“Autumn Colors, Universe Grandeur”

Oct. 10, 2014 (begins at 7:00 pm) – Oct. 12,
(ends at 11:00 am – includes Sunday Liturgy)

Presenter: Maurice Lange

“Journeying with Christ in Serenity, Courage and Wisdom”

Oct. 24, 2014 (begins at 7:00 pm) – Oct. 26, 2014
(ends at 11:00 am - includes Sunday Liturgy)

Presenter: Sr. Alacoque Burger, OSF

“Embracing the Mystery”

Nov. 14, 2014 (begins at 7:00 pm) – Nov. 16, 2014
(ends at 11:00 am – includes Sunday Liturgy)

Presenter: Steve Givens

“New Year Franciscan Hermitage Experience”

Dec. 29, 2014 (begins at 7:00 pm) – Jan. 1, 2014
(ends at 11:00 am – includes Sunday Liturgy)

Facilitators: Fr. Paul Gallagher, ofm
& Sr. Marlene Geppert, OSF