Table of Contents

Volume 65 Issue 3

From the Editor-in-Chief

David B. Couturier, O.F.M., Cap., is the Editor-in-Chief of *Franciscan Connections*. He is the Dean of the School of Franciscan Studies at St. Bonaventure University and Director of the Franciscan Institute.

Since our last edition, Pope Francis has published his encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, on the need for a new, more fraternal relationship with creation. Pope Francis uses St. Francis of Assisi's life as his model, and St. Bonaventure's philosophy as his theological rationale for the kind of integral ecology of which he is speaking. Clearly, Pope Francis is passionate about the potential of our Franciscan intellectual tradition to heal the social and cultural problems we face.

This volume of Franciscan Connections continues our Institute's passion for Franciscan learning today. Sr. Ann Therese Kelly, O.S.F., shares the beauty and genius of St. Francis' "Canticle of the Creatures" through her glasswork featured on the issue's cover, and within her interview with our Deputy Editor, Kevin Cooley. Sr. Teresine Glaser, O.S.F., and Br. Keith Warner, O.F.M., provide various insights on St. Francis' "Canticle of the Creatures," and the Pope's use of that poetry in his analysis of the state of our planet.

Our volume is anchored by the work of two up-and-coming Franciscan scholars – Br. Daniel Maria Klimek, T.O.R., and Fr. Eric Wood, and an established faculty member of St. Bonaventure University – Dr. Anne Foerst. Br. Daniel offers us the first of a two part series on St. Francis' mysticism, and Fr. Eric provides a wonderful meditation on "The Primacy of Christ." Dr. Foerst contributes a powerful voice to this conversation through her consideration of what a Franciscan-based intellectual journey entails for confident and engaged young scholars today.

We are also providing two historical pieces of immense Franciscan innovation and courage: Br. Bill Short, O.F.M., provides a first-hand account of the canonization process of the soon to be American-Franciscan saint, Junipero Serra; and Dr. Christopher Dalton brings to the fore the amazing work of Franciscans in China throughout the 18th century.

For those readers looking for a literary portal to Franciscan insights, we have a wonderfully engaging piece on the Franciscan influence behind Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poetry by Monica Edwards.

Two pieces engage business and economics: A recap of St. Bonaventure University's Olivi Conference by Timothy Johnson, Ph.D., sets the framework for Franciscan economics in the work of the thirteenth-century friar, Peter of John Olivi; and an excerpt from my new book, *Franciscans and their Finances: Economics in a Disenchanted World* (Franciscan Institute Publications, 2015), ushers in some thoughts on new ideas and paradigms about the way that Franciscans regard economics and their finances today.

The themes within this issue are intriguing and broad. They reflect the wide range of our Franciscan interests today. We hope that these themes engage your imagination and, perhaps, start some interesting conversations in your communities and families.

Fr. Dave

Franciscan

International News

Franciscans around the world are helping to spread ***Laudato Si'***, the pope's encyclical on care for our common home. St. Francis and Franciscan writers are cited several times in this text, whose title is taken from the opening words of St. Francis' "Canticle of the Creatures." During his visit to Sarajevo on June 6, 2015, Pope Francis heard testimonies from several modern martyrs. **Fr. Jozo Puskaric, O.F.M.,** spoke of his four-month imprisonment in a Serbian camp. Later that day, the pope met with ecumenical and interfaith leaders at the city's Franciscan International Study Centre.

Junipero Serra (d. 1784), a teacher and missionary in Spain, Mexico and Alta California, will be canonized by Pope Francis on September 23 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

Several O.F.M. and Capuchin bishops or archbishops will represent their episcopal conferences at this year's October 4-25 **World Synod of Bishops on the Family**. The Capuchins include Charles Chaput (Philadelphia), Francisco Chimoio (Maputo, Mozambique), and Fragkiskos Papamanolis (episcopal conference of Greece). The O.F.Ms. include Hector Miguel Cabrejos Vidarte (Trujillo, Peru), Luis Gerardo Cabrera Herrera (Cuenca, Ecuador), Roberto Octavio Gonzalez Nieves (San Juan, Puerto Rico), and Stane Zore (Ljubljana, Slovenia). Several Capuchins and O.F.Ms. are substitute representatives for their episcopal conference.

Minister General Marco Tasca, O.F.M., Conv. is among the representatives for the Union of Superiors General at this October's World Synod of Bishops on the Family. Other members of the Franciscan family may be among the papal appointees, auditors and staff members—not yet available as *Franciscan Connections* goes to press.

During his June visit to Turin, Pope Francis visited the **Waldensian Temple** and said that the encounter with God's love "enables us to grasp that deep bond that already unites us, despite our differences." After referring to conflicts and violence in past relationships, he said, "I ask forgiveness on behalf of the Catholic Church for unchristian, even inhuman gestures and behavior toward you."

Sr. Carla Casdei, F.S.P., now represents the International Franciscan Conference-T.O.R. on the restructured board of the Franciscans International.

"The Grace of Working" is the theme of the **Capuchins' Plenary Council** (October 26-November 21, 2015) that will meet at their International College of St. Lawrence of Brindisi outside Rome.

Michael Perry, O.F.M., was elected to a six-year term as general minister after completing the last two years of his predecessor's term.

Key websites:
www.ifc.tor.org
www.ofm.org
www.ofmconv.net
www.ofmcap.org
www.franciscanfriars.org

Roundtable

National News

At its June conference in Indianapolis, the **Franciscan Federation honored 26 sisters** nominated by member congregations for a tremendous variety of ministries within the Church and extended service to the world. The Federation will hold its 50th anniversary gathering in Milwaukee, Wisconsin June 17-20, 2016, celebrating its past, present, and future.

William Wicks, O.F.S., former national minister, addressed "The Joy of the Gospel" at the Greater Cincinnati Franciscan Gathering on August 1, 2015.

Six Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity teach at St. Peter Indian Mission School in Bapchule, AZ (south of Phoenix). They are **Pamela Catherine Peasel, Martha Mary Carpenter, Barbara Jean Butler, Carol Mathe, Maria Goretti Scandaliato, and Thereselle Arruda**. Their congregation has staffed this school since 1935.

Ilia Delio, O.S.F., Richard Rohr, O.F.M., and Shane Claiborne are addressing "The Francis Factor: How Saint Francis and Pope Francis Are Changing the World" in Albuquerque, NM August 30-September 1. This program is available as a webcast through **cac.org/events/the-francis-factor**.

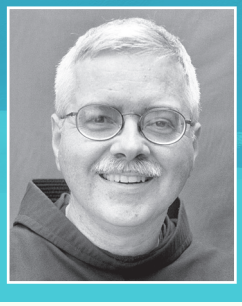
UNESCO has designated five missions in San Antonio (Texas) as World Heritage Sites. Founded between 1718 and 1731, the missions are San Jose, Concepción, San Juan, Espada, and San Antonio de Valero (better known as the Alamo). UNESCO described these missions as "an example of the interweaving of Spanish and Coahuiltecan cultures, illustrated by a variety of features, including the decorative elements of churches, which combine Catholic symbols with indigenous designs inspired by nature."

The Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University hosted 10 Poor Clares for a two-week program focused on Franciscan women. Session I, titled "Leading in the 21st Century: The Feminine Franciscan Imagination," was presented by Dr. Pauline Albert and Sr. Joanne Schatzlein, O.S.F., and Session II, titled "Franciscan Women in America and their Prophetic Imagination," was presented by Sr Florence Deacon, O.S.F. The Institute also hosted a symposium on the work of Peter of John Olivi, a 13th-century Franciscan theologian.

The University of Opportunity: Hope and Help campaign for **Viterbo University (La Crosse, WI)** surpassed last May $42.5 million in gifts, grants, and pledges. Viterbo has built a Nursing Center (2011), Clare Apartments (2012), the Weber Center for the Performing Arts (2013, in partnership with the LaCrosse Community Theatre, renovated the Brophy Center (2013) and restored its San Damiano Chapel (2014). This campaign has also increased the university's endowment to $44 million and has created 113 new endowed and annual scholarships.

On July 15, 2015, **Sr. Dorothy Ortega, O.S.F, Bill Hugo, O.F.M., Cap., and Mary Meany, Ph.D.,** each received St. Bonaventure University's prestigious Gaudete Medal. Recipients of the Gaudete (gou-day-tay), meaning "rejoice" in Latin, are business and community leaders who exemplify the same spirit of joy and service expressed through the lives and teachings of Saints Francis and Clare.

Key websites:
www.franfed.org
www.escofm.org
www.franciscancollegesuniversities.org



Compiled by **Pat McCloskey, O.F.M.,** author of *Peace and Good: Through the Year with Francis of Assisi* (Franciscan Media). Send news items for this column to pmcloskey@FranciscanMedia.org. He serves as Franciscan Editor of *St. Anthony Messenger* and writes its "Dear Reader;" and "Ask a Franciscan" columns. He also edits *Weekday Homily Helps.*

The Canonization:

An inside look at Junípero Serra's shift from Blessed to Saint

By William J. Short, O.F.M.

On November 23, 2014, Pope Francis presided at a canonization ceremony at St. Peter's Basilica. Among those canonized on that occasion was an Italian Franciscan, Ludovico of Casoria (1814-1885), from a small town near Naples. He was well known for his pioneering ministry in the 19th century to people with multiple disabilities. He has been affectionately dubbed "a cyclone of charity." In May of 2014, the Pope visited the center for children with disabilities in Assisi founded by Ludovico, and spoke of his concrete acts of charity that contributed to a welcoming society - the opposite of a "throw-away" society.

To prepare the documents necessary for the canonization of this or any other Franciscan friar, there is a special office in the Franciscan General Curia in Rome, the international headquarters of the Order of Friars Minor. The office is called "The General Postulation of the Causes of the Saints," and it is directed by a friar called the Postulator General, currently Fr. Giangiuseppe Califano, O.F.M., who is from the area near Naples.

Shortly after the canonization of the new Saint Ludovico, the General Postulation office received an unexpected request from the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints, the Vatican office responsible for submitting to the Pope for his approval of any request for canonization. The Congregation was interested in bringing up to date its information on Blessed Junípero Serra, the founder of California's historic Franciscan Missions. Serra had been beatified by Pope (now Saint) John Paul II on September 25, 1988, just one year after the Pope's visit to venerate the tomb of Serra at Mission San Carlos in Carmel, California.

This request, like others that come to the General Postulator's office, was treated with the greatest discretion. Clearly, there was renewed interest in the cause of Blessed Junípero within the Vatican, but there was little information beyond that. One could simply presume that the previous week's canonization of a Franciscan friar had reminded someone in the Congregation that it might be time to look once again at the documentation regarding another Franciscan candidate for sainthood, Padre Serra. But there was also a sense of urgency about the request, with a very short time frame for completing the project. Given the usually slow manner that Roman offices collect information, this should have perhaps given some indication that there was interest at a very high level in the results of this research.

I had the very unexpected privilege of being invited to participate in this project. As Secretary for the upcoming General Chapter of the Franciscan Order, scheduled for Pentecost of 2015, I had arrived at the Franciscan General Curia in October to begin the long process of preparing the various texts and schedules for this month-long international meeting to be held in Assisi.

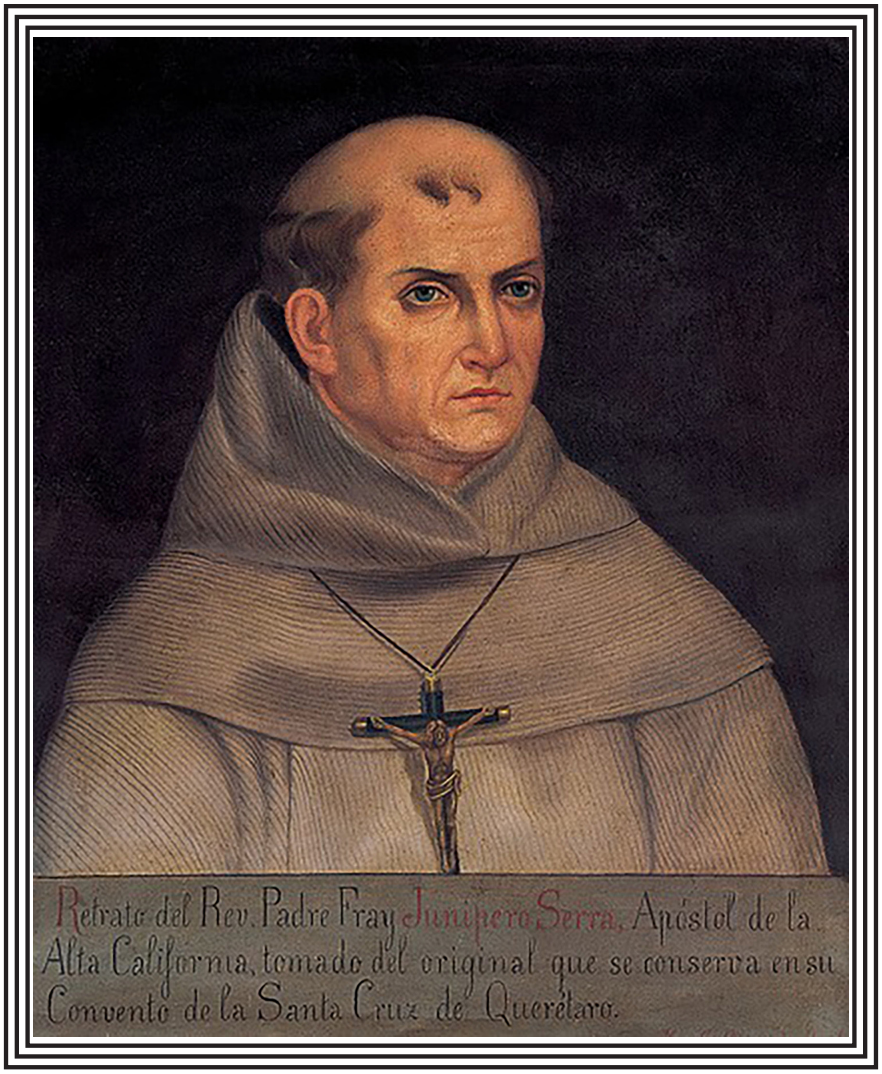
Fr. Califano, the Postulator General, knew that I came from the Franciscan Province of St. Barbara, which has been responsible since the 1930s for gathering information on devotion to Serra - evidence of miracles or favors received through his intercession, and documentation on scholarly research regarding him. He invited me to work quietly and quickly with him and the Vice Postulator General, Fr. Luís Martin Rodriguez of Mexico. For the next few weeks, we contacted scholars who had recently published materials or organized conferences on Serra, especially on the occasion of the three-hundredth anniversary of his birth, celebrated internationally in 2013 with events in Spain, Mexico and California.

It seemed more than a coincidence that some ten years earlier, two scholars of California Mission history, Professors Rose Marie Beebe and Robert Senkewicz, both of Santa Clara University in California, had begun a massive project of assembling a new, scholarly biography of Serra. This work, in collaboration with the Academy of American Franciscan History, publisher of the most important early scholarship on Serra, was about to bear fruit in a new publication, scheduled for release early in 2015 from the University of Oklahoma Press: *Junípero Serra: California, Indians, and the Transformation of a Missionary.* The authors graciously agreed to allow our small team to use their research to prepare much of the documentation on the best current scholarship on the figure of Serra and to provide for a serious examination of critical questions raised about Serra by critics of the Spanish government and its mission policies regarding native peoples.

The amount of new material produced since the 1988 beatification was truly surprising when finally assembled in one volume, a summary in Italian of the information collected covering some 900 pages, and presented to the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints for their review. It includes the kinds of evidence used in the Catholic Church's complex process for presenting a candidate for sainthood. Evidence of popular devotion to this Mallorcan friar is important, and frequently illustrated by the naming of churches, schools or monuments in his honor. Testimony must also be provided from people who attribute to his intercession before God the receiving of graces and favors for which they have prayed. Religious songs, prayers and devotional articles like statues or cards ("holy cards") also show that the person being considered for sainthood has a widespread reputation for holiness among many people in different places over many years. From the time of Serra's beatification in 1988, there was clear evidence of a high level of interest and devotion, spreading from places where he had lived and worked (Mallorca, Mexico and California) to other areas where knowledge of him was increasing, as evidence from several countries of Latin America demonstrated.

Taken all together, the evidence of holiness of life must be attested by reliable biographical information, especially that of eyewitnesses and people who lived and worked closely with the potential saint. The virtues that mark a faithful and fervent follower of Christ must be evident to a high degree. And there must be some

confirming sign of the efficacy of this person's intercession, usually demonstrated through evidence of miracles (usually of healing) that can be examined by reliable experts. In Serra's case, the evidence of his life came from a former student that became his fellow missionary in California, Fray Francisco Palou, and who wrote a detailed biography of his former teacher immediately after his death. One miracle had already been verified at the time of Serra's beatification. The cumulative evidence of other numerous "graces and favors" attributed to his intercession can also be taken into consideration by the Pope as he consults with the cardinals and bishops of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints, who express their opinion on the case in one of their plenary sessions. Finally, the decision regarding the canonization is put before the Consistory of Cardinals.



Little did we realize how quickly Pope Francis would put a spotlight on our quiet efforts to assemble these scholarly materials! During his January 15 flight from Sri Lanka to Manila, the Pope announced to journalists travelling with him that "in September, God willing" he would canonize Blessed Junípero Serra. Suddenly, the urgency of the request for new information made sense. In planning for his upcoming visit to the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia, scheduled for September, 2015, Pope Francis also wished to canonize this Franciscan missionary during a visit to Washington, D.C.

This approach, combining a papal trip with a canonization of a local evangelizer, had already been illustrated in the canonization of the missionary, St. Joseph Vaz (1651-1711), a native of Goa, and a member of the Congregation of the Oratory, during his visit to Sri Lanka, on January 14, 2015. He lived a few years before Serra, but shared some of those same characteristics that illustrate what the Pope means when he speaks of the "new evangelization."

He would later comment on the significance of Serra at a Mass he celebrated on May 2, 2015 at the Pontifical North American College in Rome at the conclusion of "study-day" on the candidate for sainthood. Pope Francis identified three areas of particular importance in the life of Serra: his missionary zeal, his Marian devotion, and his witness of holiness. He went to describe him tellingly as "one of the founding fathers of the United States, a saintly example of the Church's universality and special patron of the Hispanic people of the country."

Archbishop José Gomez, shortly before the May 2 event, further emphasized the significance of Serra as Hispanic: "I think it is special that America's first Hispanic saint will be canonized on American soil by Pope Francis, who is the first Pope from Latin America." Such comments, associating the Serra canonization with the impressive population of Hispanics in California and throughout the United States, may have led to reconsideration of a proposal from the California State Senate to remove the statue of Serra from the Statuary Hall of the U.S. Congress, and to replace it with the image of Sally Ride, the first U.S. woman astronaut and a Californian.

As the Apostolic Journey of Pope Francis has developed, not only will the Serra canonization mark the Washington, D.C. visit, but it will be preceded by a visit to Cuba, appropriately timed to coincide with the restoration of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States, an improvement in relations between the two countries for which the Holy See has worked quietly and effectively over the course of many years.

For those who ponder the importance of symbolism in the unfolding of an international papal trip, the September 2015 Apostolic Journey of Pope Francis to Cuba and the United States is intended to celebrate the importance of the Hispanic heritage and, specifically, the Hispanic Catholic heritage of the Americas. The canonization of Fray Junípero is simply one very visible sign of this papal purpose.

William J. Short, O.F.M., is a friar of the St. Barbara Province of the Franciscan Friars. He received his B.A. from the University of San Francisco, M.A. from the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, and S.T.D. from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Formerly President and Dean of the Franciscan School in Berkeley, he is now Professor of Christian Spirituality at the school's new location at Mission San Luis Rey in Oceanside CA. His teaching and research focus on Franciscan spirituality and history.

Peter of John Olivi Conference July 12-15

By Timothy Johnson, Ph.D.

In a certain sense, a surprising yet most welcomed guest – Pope Francis – set the tone and tenor of the Franciscan Institute's conference on Peter of John Olivi held at Saint Bonaventure University (July 12-15). In a New York Times article that appeared on the eve of the gathering, the pontiff was quoted as saying, "Working for a just distribution of the fruits of the earth and human labor is not mere philanthropy… It is a moral obligation. For Christians, the responsibility is even greater: It is a commandment." With the title of "Economic Justice, Franciscans, and Poverty: Insights and Challenges from Peter of John Olivi," scholars from North America and Europe were well positioned to begin exploring the historical parameters and contemporary implications of the moral and religious obligations identified by Pope Francis.

In the effort to formulate a sustainable, long term research program, the Research Advisory Council (RAC) of the Franciscan Institute had singled out the writings of Peter of John Olivi as the most promising nexus of contemporary concerns and the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition. The rational was readily apparent in one media headline or tagline after another, where pressing issues of justice, economics, and the environment elicited little, if any, focused response grounded in Franciscan spirituality and theology. The latest encyclical, "Laudato Si," echoes the cosmic call for just such a response, and challenges men and women to explore avenues of engagement with the perplexing and indeed fragile state of creation.

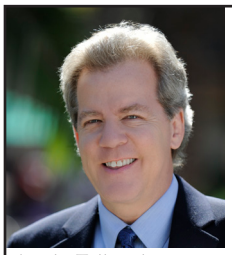
Conference presenters/attendees from left to right: Br. Keith Warner, O.F.M.; Br. David Flood, O.F.M.; Timothy Johnson, Ph.D.; Fr. David Couturier, OF.M., Cap; Dabney Park; Filippo Seda, Ph.D.; Pietro Delcorno, Ph.D.; Juhanna Toivanen, Ph.D.; Marco Bartoli, Ph.D.; and David Burr, Ph.D..

The RAC deemed a prolonged initiative that went beyond simple appeals to Franciscan axioms and texts. The ensuing decision maintained that a long-term commitment to inclusivity was necessary and, in particular, the current situation required a long-term exchange of expertise among business leaders, political activists, economic experts, and proponents of the Franciscan worldview.

The timely publication of Peter of John Olivi's "Treatise on Contracts" by Professor Sylvain Piron afforded Franciscans the opportunity to encounter a 13th century confrere who, while well-versed in philosophy and theology, had engaged the social and political realities of his day in search of a moral foundation and framework for honest, and yes, profitable economic activity. With this gift in hand, literally and figuratively, the Research Advisory Council recommended further study and translation of Olivi's seminal economic work.

With the strong encouragement of President Margaret Carney, the Franciscan Institute swiftly took up the RAC recommendation. Under the auspices of the RAC and the current chair, Dr. Timothy J. Johnson, the Franciscan Institute selected and invited established and emerging scholars in the field of Olivi studies for the 2016 gathering. The unwavering support of Fr. David Couturier, O.F.M., Cap. (Director of the Franciscan Institute), and Jill Smith (Franciscan Institute Publications' Business Manager) ensured the participants enjoyed a congenial, collegial conference from conception to completion. The academic results exceeded expectations as paper after paper sparked in-depth discussion and widespread admiration and respect for the countless economical-religious insights and on-going challenges emanating from the life and writings of this 13th century friar from southern France. Clearly, economic justice cannot be divorced in Olivi from the question of salvation. Fortunately, Franciscan Studies will publish the proceedings of this marvelous conference in 2016. The appearance of this issue will allow the excellent research of the assembled scholars to circulate and reach a broader audience throughout the world.

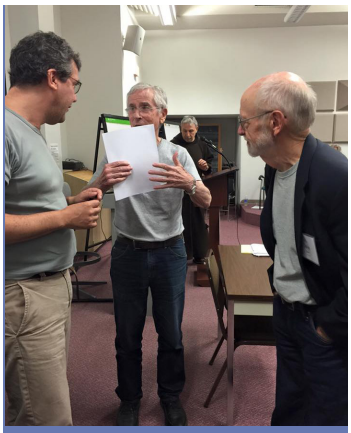
The conference concluded, most fittingly, with a lively and informative roundtable as the vigil of Saint Bonaventure drew near. The initiative of the preceding days now looks forward to future, inclusive conversations with a broad range of institutions and individuals who share Peter of John Olivi's concerns and look to engage the problems of the day from the perspective of St. Francis of Assisi.



Timothy J. Johnson, Ph.D., is the Craig and Audrey Thorn Distinguished Professor of Religion at Flagler College and Chair of the Research Advisory Council of the Franciscan Institute. He holds a Doctorate in Sacred Theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University. Dr. Johnson has published numerous books, essays, and reviews in the field of Christian-Franciscan history and theology, and has taught in Germany, Italy, and Zambia, A Senior Fulbright Fellow, he enjoys teaching undergraduate courses as diverse as the Gospel according to Saint Francis and Religion and Film. Whenever possible, he leads study abroad tours to Italy during the summer semester.

St. Bonaventure University

From left to right - Front Row: Br. Greg Cellini, O.S.F.; Fr. Kyle Hayden, O.F.M.; Timothy Johnson, Ph.D.; Carol Fischer, Ph.D.; Michael Fischer, Ph.D.; Fr. David Flood, O.F.M.; Juhana Toivanen, Ph.D.; Marco Bartoli, Ph.D.; Filippo Sedda, Ph.D.; Fr. David Couturier, O.F.M., Cap.; Sylvain Piron, Ph.D.; Second Row: Marcus Jones; Sr. Margaret Carney, S.T.D.; Jerry Hackett, Ph.D.; Holly Grieco, Ph.D.; Sr. Joy Fabic; Sr. Josephine Mata; Sr. Dorothy Ortega; Dabney Park; Katherine Wrysley Shelby: Krijn Pansters, Ph.D.; Br. Keith Warner, O.F.M.; Josh Benson, Ph.D.; Clifton Stringer; Fr. Jack Rathschmidt, O.F.M., Cap.; Br. Lawrence Laflame, O.F.M., Conv.; Sr. Gloria Ole; Sr. Dorothy McCormack; Br. Anthony Zuba, O.F.M., Cap.; Troy Hilman; Willem Marie Speelman, Ph.D.; Rev. Ryan Thorton, O.F.M.; Fr. Xavier Seubert, O.F.M.; Br. Joseph Glaab, O.F.M.; Br. Martin Bennett, O.F.M., Cap.; Pietro DelCorno, Ph.D.; Marie Clardy, O.F.S.; Bill Haynes. ***Photo provided by Jill Smith.***



Renowned Olivi scholars (from left to right) Sylvain Piron, Ph.D., Br. David Flood, O.F.M., and David Burr, Ph.D., enthusiastically share their thoughts after the first of day of the conference.

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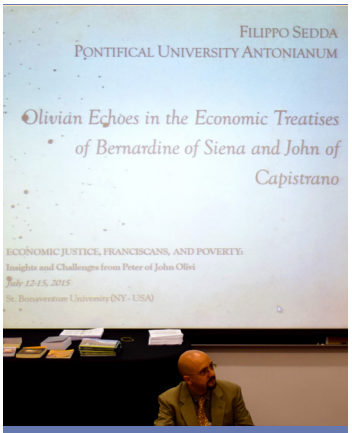
Willem Marie Speelman, Ph.D., presenting his paper "Olivian Spirituality and Economy" on the third day of the conference.



Filippo Seda, Ph.D., presenting his paper "Olivian Echoes in the Economic Treatises of Bernardine of Siena and John of Capistrano" on second day of the conference.

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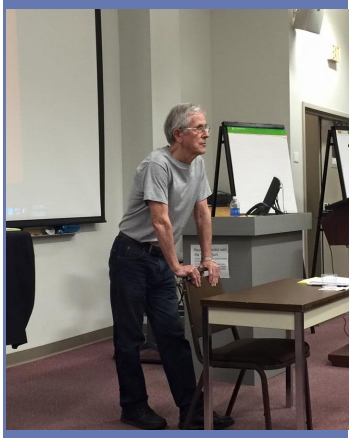

Br. David Flood, O.F.M., presenting his paper "Olivi, Poverty, and Franciscan Life" on the second day of the conference.

Beauty as Sacrament

Coleridge's Franciscan Connection

By Monica Edwards

Photo by *Denny Wilkins*

The three knots in the Franciscan habit symbolize the order's foundational principles of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Yet the cord which binds the fabric of Franciscan spirituality has an unseen fourth knot – beauty. It would not be an overstatement to place beauty alongside the three fundamental virtues. To St. Francis and those who have followed him over the centuries, beauty presents a guide to moral action and a vehicle of transformation. What is now a rich and intricately woven aesthetic theory began with a humble man recognizing the beauty of the natural world. St. Francis saw creation as a Sacrament – a way of knowing and receiving God. As St. Bonaventure explains, "In things of beauty, [Francis] contemplated the One who is supremely beautiful, and, led by the footprints he found in creatures, he followed the Beloved everywhere."[1]

Along with Francis and Bonaventure, one of the greatest contributors to Franciscan aestheticism is John Duns Scotus (d. 1308). Despite Scotus' relative obscurity and reputation for abstruse theories, his contributions to Franciscanism have profound influence on theology and philosophy. Less examined but perhaps equally important is his effect on literature. Such discussions have been largely confined to examinations of the Victorian poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, whose respect for Scotus is well known.[2] However, Scotus' impact on the school that seems to have the most in common with him in terms of beauty – that is, British Romanticism—has been largely overlooked. However, the Romantics have a relationship with the natural world that is as intense and nuanced as that of the Franciscan tradition – and perhaps, in part, inspired by it.

Enter Dr. Richard Simpson, professor of English at St. Bonaventure University and expert on the British Romantics. While attending a seminar given by Sr. Mary Beth Ingham, world renowned Scotus scholar, Simpson scratches his head – which is full of Smith, Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats – and thinks, *this all sounds familiar.* After the presentation, he asks Ingham if she knows of any relationship between the Franciscans and these poets who sound so similar to them.

Although Ingham was unaware of any such connection, Simpson remained convinced that the voices of Scotus and other Franciscans echo in those of the Romantics, whether coincidentally, through a network of influence, or a more direct link.[3] He later posed the question to one of his undergraduate courses, where I became intrigued by the idea. At first, the possible connections between the Franciscans and Romantics seemed endless and untraceable, spanning hundreds of years while speculating on the influence of major religious and literary figures, including Augustine, Francis, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Scotus, William of Ockham, John Milton, and more. However this exploration quickly came to a narrowed focus in a direct relationship between the works of one figure from each movement: Samuel Taylor Coleridge and John Duns Scotus.

Coleridge's letters and lectures make it clear that he read and admired Scotus, and his poetry and literary criticism suggest he may have been strongly impacted by Scotus. His encounters with Scotus' works are known by Coleridge scholars, and Scotus' name graces the indices and footnotes of collections of Coleridge's works. A handful of Coleridge critics mention Scotus in passing to demonstrate how well-read Coleridge was in both philosophy and Christian theology. Rene Gallet is one of the few scholars to acknowledge Scotus' direct influence on Coleridge, focusing on his effects on the development of Coleridge's terminology and ontology. But this connection deserves further attention, especially when examining Coleridge's understanding of beauty and interactions with the natural world. Although the degree to which Coleridge was influenced by Scotus and in what precise areas remains unclear, Coleridge's works can be read through the lens of Franciscanism, revealing a rewarding approach to Coleridge's critical heritage, poetry, and prose.

Coleridge makes at least three notable mentions of Scotus in his letters. His first apparent reference to Scotus is in a letter from the beginning of 1801, in which he admits to never having read Aquinas or Scotus. A few months later, in July 1801, Coleridge mentions Scotus in a letter to Robert Southey: ". . . *Duns Scotus!* I mean to set the poor old Gemman [sic] on his feet again, & in order to wake him out of his present Lethargy, I am burning Locke, Hume, & Hobbes under his nose — they stink worse than Feather or Assafetida."[4] These two letters show undeniably that Coleridge read Scotus for the first time in mid-1801. Therefore, an examination of Scotus' direct influence on Coleridge is only relevant to works the poet composed after that date.

Coleridge's respect for Scotus and hope for his revival demonstrated in this 1801 letter grow to deep admiration by 1803. In the post-script of another letter, Coleridge requests to borrow one of Scotus' works. He adds, "You will laugh heartily at travelling in a Gig with old Duns Scotus for your Companion – God bless the old Schoolmen! they have been my best comforts, & most instructive companions for the last 2 years."[5] It is clear Coleridge approached Scotus' works with interest, enthusiasm, and – as his later comments and humorous tone suggest – delight. By the time Coleridge pens this letter, it is undeniable that Scotus, having earned the titles of "best comfort" and "most instructive companion," has made some degree of impact on the poet.

As Coleridge's letters do not elucidate which of Scotus' works he read, it is important to explain the basics of Scotus' aesthetic theory before going further. Although the Franciscan experience of beauty is deep and multifaceted, Sr. Ingham has done a great deal of work to make the Franciscan vision and Scotus' philosophy more understandable and accessible to modern audiences. This all-too-brief overview is largely indebted to her efforts.

The Franciscan tradition sees creation through the lens of beauty and involves human faculties of observation and meditation coupled with divine influence. In a truly Franciscan experience of beauty, the viewer is much more than a passive observer; he or she takes an active role. Beauty, for Scotus and other Franciscans, becomes a way for human beings to understand themselves, their moral actions, and God. Ultimately, it can create a guide for action

1 Bonaventure, *The Life of Saint Francis*, trans. Ewert Cousins (New York: HarperOne, 2005), 94.

2 See the scholarship of Hywel Thomas, Bernadette Waterman Ward, John Pick, Trent Pomplun, and others.

3 Dr. Simpson is not the only scholar to question this relationship. At a Scotus workshop with Sr. Ingham, I was put into contact with Dr. Robert McParland of Felician, who has studied both the Romantics and Scotus and was researching a similar topic. Dr. McParland pointed to Blake's works as a possible echo of Scotus' principle of *haecceitas*.

4 Samuel Taylor Coleridge to Robert Southey, 22 July 1801, in *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Vol. 2: 1801-1806, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 746.

5 Samuel Taylor Coleridge to John Thelwall, 25 November 1803, in *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Vol. 2: 1801-1806, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 1019.

and has the power to transform the participant.

In the Franciscan tradition, harmony is one of the key aspects of beauty and is established through fitting proportion and the ordered relationship of components. This harmony interacts with both the mind and heart of the observer, producing delight. For Scotus, beauty has both objective and subjective, both rational and emotional, components. For him, we are designed to find pleasure in beauty; the experience is part of what makes human beings human.

Scotus' best known contribution to the Franciscan tradition regards the beauty of individual members of creation. His term for the essence and unique beauty of each agent is *haecceitas*, which can be translated as "thisness." Because it is a gift from God and a mark of the Divine Artist, recognizing the *haecceitas* of a member of creation brings the observer closer to the Creator. Through *haecceity*, Scotus, like Francis, finds Sacrament in creation; Scotus claims, "those things which are known of God are known from their likenesses in creatures."[6]

Those familiar with Coleridge's works may recognize some of these Franciscan themes as elements of his poetry and prose. Coleridge's approach to beauty, fellow members of creation, and the divine seems to echo many of the ideas developed by Scotus. Both figures find beauty and pleasure in the order and balance of the natural world, recognizing natural harmony as a sign of the Creator's rationality and benevolence. Coleridge, in "The Statesman's Manual,"[7] articulates his own sacramental view of creation: "the transmitted power, love and wisdom, of God over all fills, and shines through, nature!"[8] In other words, Coleridge, like Scotus, finds God's qualities reflected in creation and looks to the natural world to learn about Him.

Franciscans believe that the natural world "holds the key to the human journey toward the Creator,"[9] and Coleridge echoes this idea. Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173), a great influence on Scotus and later Franciscans, claims "God has written two books: the Book of Scripture and the Book of Nature."[10] Coleridge uses similar language to express his view of creation; in "The Statesman's Manual," he addresses the reader, saying, "let it not weary you if I digress for a few moments to another book, likewise a revelation of God — the great book of his servant Nature."[11] The linguistic similarities here are striking and could suggest a direct source for Coleridge's view of nature through which he, without stating it outright, aligns himself with the Franciscan sacramental view.

Coleridge's 1802 poem "Hymn Before Sun-rise, in the Vale of Chamouny"[12] can be used as an illustrative example of these Franciscan elements in play, revealing the rewarding potential for a Franciscan reading of Coleridge. The poem, which is addressed to Mont Blanc and its rivers, praises God both for and through natural creations, culminating in a great song of praise. The poem does not present an idyllic view of the natural world; instead, it details an experience of beauty that produces transformation and reintegration. The opening of the poem suggests confusion and fragmentation through silence, dark skies, and jagged rocks. However, after recognizing the mountain's ability to pierce the dark sky, the speaker moves into a prayerful mode. The darkness and doubt do not disappear; they are transformed along with the speaker.

The speaker's direct address to members of creation throughout the poem personifies and dignifies them in a Franciscan manner.[13] The beauty of the mountains and running water is so powerful the speaker's soul stirs within him. Coleridge writes, "Awake, my soul! not only passive praise / Thou owest!"[14] He is so overwhelmed

6 John Duns Scotus, quoted in Allan B. Wolter, *Scotus and Ockham: Selected Essays* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2003), 67.
7 Part of *Lay Sermons* (1816-17).
8 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Appendix C of 'The Stateman's Manual,'" in *Coleridge's Poetry and Prose*, eds. Nicholas Halmi, Paul Magnuson, and Raimonda Modiano (New York: Norton, 2004), 367.
9 Mary Beth Ingham, *Rejoicing in the Works of the Lord: Beauty in the Franciscan Tradition* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2009), 16.
10 Quoted in Ingham, *Rejoicing,* 23.
11 Coleridge, "Appendix C," 366.
12 "Hymn was first published in *Morning Post* in 1802 and printed six other times with some minor revisions. Coleridge took inspiration from his translation of Frederike Brun's "Chamouny at Sunrise," but he departs from Brun's original in key areas. In addition to Brun, William Bowles and Milton have been examined as sources of influence for Coleridge's "Hymn."
13 Although the speaker does not directly refer to members of nature as his brothers and sisters, Coleridge's direct address to the mountain and rivers seems to evoke Francis' approach to creation in "The Canticle of Brother Sun." This direct address marks a significant departure from Coleridge's influence from Brun, who speaks *about* rather than *to* the mountain, and suggests a possibly Franciscan mindset on Coleridge's part.
14 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Hymn Before Sun-Rise, in the Vale of Chamouny,"

that he is brought to tears of joy as he extends his awakening to Mont Blanc and other natural agents, telling them to "wake, and utter praise!"[15]

By directly addressing the mountain and seeking its help in uttering praise of the Creator, he furthers his relationship to it as an equal. Then, in a series of questions, he asks the mountain and the water who is responsible for their creation and their beauty. Whether the response comes from the mountain and rivers, the speaker, or all, the answer resounds: "God! Let the Torrents, like a Shout of Nations / Answer! And let the Ice-plains[16] echo, God!"[17]

As the speaker immerses himself in the mountain's beauty, its form vanishes from his mind, leaving him in the presence of the divine. Coleridge concludes the poem by addressing the mountain as a priest or messenger; it becomes a signifier of the Creator and a means of communication with Him. The final line, which speaks of Earth's thousand voices coming together, provides an example of Coleridge's ultimate definition of beauty, which he elsewhere calls "multëity in unity." This involves an active relationship in which "the many, still seen as many, becomes one."[18] At the end of "Hymn," the many voices of the speaker, mountain, sun, sky, and more join in praise. Although there are a thousand voices at once, the result is harmony and balance, and the individuality of the voices – in Scotist terms, their *haecceity* – is not lost or overwhelmed.

"Hymn" displays what could certainly be classified as a Franciscan experience with nature. Both Scotus and Coleridge argue that while it would be impossible to understand dogma through an experience with beauty, a rational observer cannot fail to recognize God in His creations. In early versions of the poem, Coleridge included a note that read, "Who *would* be, who *could* be an Atheist in this valley of wonders!"[19] Like Scotus, Coleridge does not say that all viewers could or should understand the particulars of Christianity; he simply suggests that anyone in the presence of this beauty should be able to intuit a divine intelligence responsible for its creation.

The final stanza with its address to Mont Blanc as an ambassador or messenger, communicates another Franciscan value. The Franciscans see "the created order as a medium for divine communication."[20] In other words, the natural world opens up a way for human beings and God to communicate with one another. Coleridge's speaker's experience of natural beauty takes him up a ladder from sensory enjoyment, to meditation, and finally to communication with the Divine Artist.

> "The schoolmen from Peter Lombard to Duns Scotus, are not such mere blockheads as they pass for with those who have never perused a line of their writings."
> - Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Perhaps these similarities are coincidental, but the number of Franciscan-sounding themes in Coleridge's works seems to suggest the distinct possibility of direct or indirect Franciscan influence. This article scrapes only the surface of Franciscan aestheticism and addresses a minimum of Coleridge's references to beauty and nature, and these topics deserve a more in-depth analysis. While it is impossible to prove with certainty, the parallels between Scotus's and Coleridge's aesthetic principles seem too numerous and too strong to be a coincidence. They agree in their general definitions of beauty as a harmonious relationship in which the parts still retain their individuality, they value the eye and ear over the other organs of perception, they agree that there is a predetermined agreement between a beautiful object and the faculties of the observer, they see creation as a signifier of God's character, and they view beauty as a medium for divine communication. Whether it is the result of Scotus's influence or not, it is significant that Coleridge adopts a Franciscanesque approach to natural beauty, for these concepts are clearly valuable to Coleridge as both a philosopher and a poet.

in *Coleridge's Poetry and Prose*, eds. Nicholas Halmi, Paul Magnuson, and Raimonda Modiano (New York: Norton, 2004), 195-97, lns. 24-25.

15 Coleridge, "Hymn," ln. 35.

16 Ice for Coleridge is strongly positive (see "Kubla Khan").

17 Coleridge, "Hymn," lns. 58-59.

18 While this understanding of beauty bears striking similarities to Scotus' and appears in Coleridge's later lectures, it would be an overstatement to say Coleridge's definition was influenced entirely by Franciscan sources, for Coleridge began developing his aesthetic theory early in his poetic career.

19 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, quoted in Stuart Curran, *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* (New York: Oxford UP, 1986), 61.

20 Ingham, *Rejoicing,* 23.

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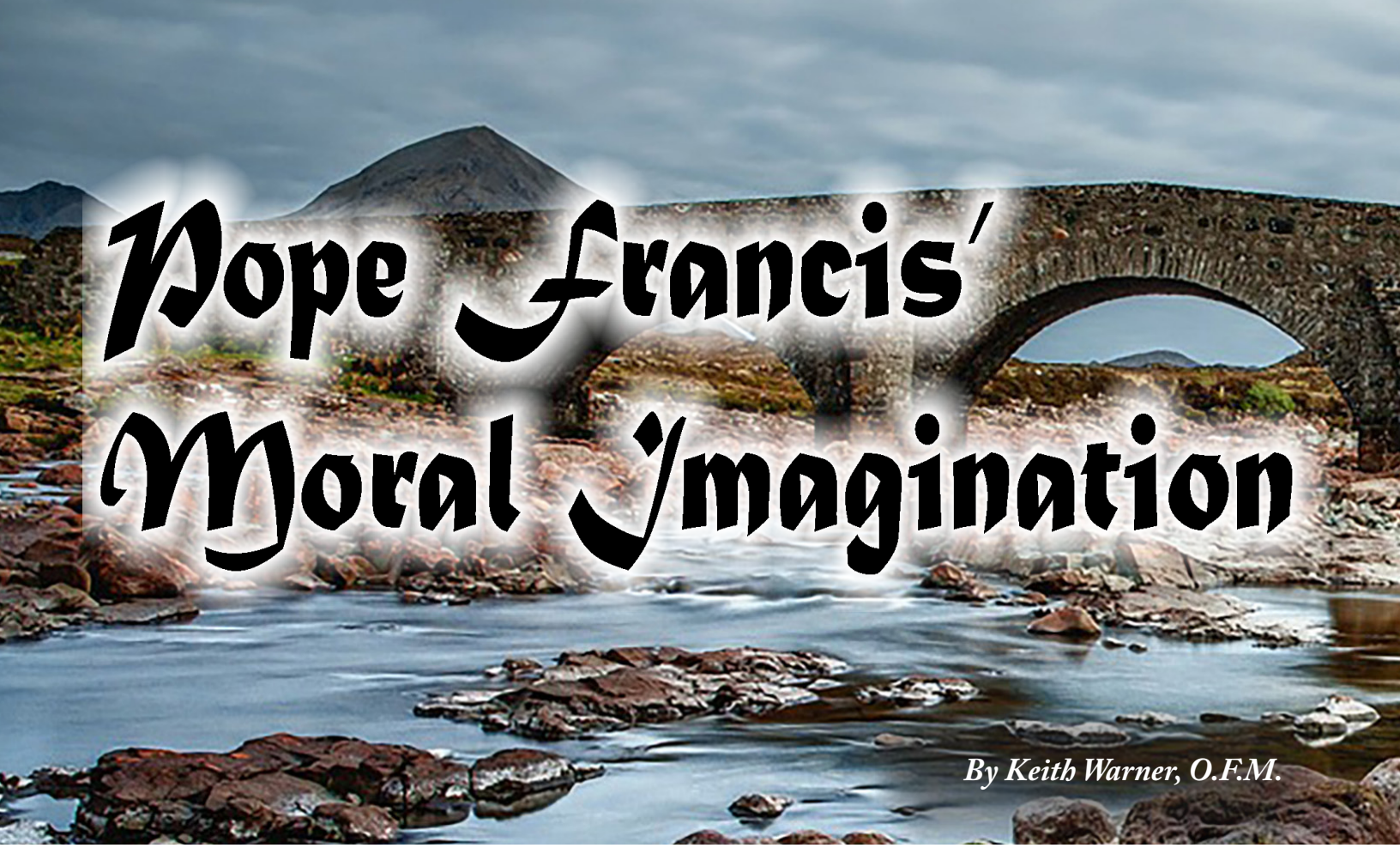

Pope Francis' Moral Imagination

By Keith Warner, O.F.M.

I planted half a million trees as part of an ecumenical lay Christian community based in Oregon during the 1980s. We supported ourselves economically with our reforestation co-op, but the most lasting impact of that experience was to shape my spiritual ecological vision. Throughout that decade, I rued the absence of religious or moral voices to decry the thoughtless harm human beings were causing the Earth. Pope John Paul II would later write and speak about this topic, but few Catholics – or really, anyone – seemed to be listening.

Pope Francis' "Laudato Si'" brings a welcomed voice to our fractured global debate about human-caused climate disruption, and more broadly, to human alienation from creation. Whether the problems have become more acute or this pope is just more popular, people are paying more attention. Pope Francis has not provided a road map for environmental protection through his encyclical, instead he frames the twin tasks before us in moral and religious terms: he argues emphatically for an integral approach to both promote economic justice and protect nature. Today, most Franciscan-hearted people care for the poor and care for creation, yet at times, they seem to be posed in tension. This encyclical brings these two dimensions of an ethic of care into an integral framework, and asserts all Catholics have a duty to embrace them both. Those of us who follow St. Francis have a double duty to embrace both!

The Pope draws inspiration from ancient wisdom. When I was in Buenos Aires for the 400th anniversary of Franciscan Friars in Argentina, I witnessed an animated Cardinal Bergoglio preaching about St. Francis, and his love of the poor and creation. I was surprised when he was elected Pope but, given his homily, not by his chosen papal name: Francis. Pope John Paul II named Francis patron saint of those who "promote ecology," or we might say, teach ecological literacy or ecological spirituality. Francis of Assisi models for us what it means to care for all of creation; Pope Francis enjoins us to act now on its behalf.

On a personal note, I find it arresting that Pope Francis now speaks so vehemently and globally what I have believed for three decades, often it seemed, in isolation. When I applied to become a Franciscan 25 years ago, I wrote about care for creation in my own vocational journey. The friars thought this was admirable, but they could scarcely point to other applicants thus persuaded. Might we friars now promote our Franciscan way of life as working the agenda put forth by "Laudato Si?" Oh, that we would!

This encyclical is remarkable for its voice. It has something for everyone. It offers a primer in environmental science, a reading of the Scriptures for creation themes, an ethical critique of the technocratic paradigm, an exposition of integral ecology, and a call to action. In a sense, we might see this as Pope Francis engaging many different aspects of society with as many different kinds of moral persuasion as possible.

Pope Francis has captured our collective moral imagination by calling all people to join a project of ultimate meaning: protect our planetary life support systems. The notion of "integral ecology," present under other names in most religious traditions, affirms that humanity and nature are inseparable. We cannot effectively protect the planet with three billion people living in poverty and denied the essentials necessary for dignified lives. There is no absolute shortage of resources. We need new ways of sharing creation's bounty.

There is much to be done, and everyone has a part to play. All people are called to exercise their creativity and ingenuity. Integral ecology suggests that we have a shared human project, but our particular tasks are different.

The good news is that we already have an outline of pragmatic solution methodologies. "The New Climate Economy," a 2014 report by the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate, provides compelling examples of how innovation and entrepreneurship can address multiple dimensions of the climate crisis. The report specifies the kinds of solutions the human family has developed and needs to scale – the kind of solutions that follow logically from the message of the papal encyclical. The kinds of creative thinking and ingenious solutions elaborated in this report hearken the Franciscan imagination, expressed so well in Franciscan Connections 65.1 two issues back.

Franciscans now can and must proclaim "Good News!" in both dimensions: for the creation and for the poor. Those in rich countries have a special moral obligation to dramatically reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. They are responsible for the majority of these emissions, and they need to transform their energy systems: generation, transmission, and consumption. Yet, that is not enough, according to the Pope. Poor countries are already experiencing climate disruption, and will suffer its worst effects. Ingenuity and innovation are needed to create climate resilience, the ability to withstand the coming disruptions. Integral ecology requires inclusive solutions.

For example, about one-third of the human family lives in energy poverty, defined as lacking access to modern energy for heating, lighting and cooking. Fuels such as kerosene, dung, or raw wood are dirty, dangerous, unreliable, and unhealthy. There are solutions. Social entrepreneurs across the developing world have demonstrated that renewable, distributed energy can improve the lives and livelihoods of millions of people. Solar home systems, clean-cook stoves, and community microgrids are examples of how innovation and entrepreneurship create exits from energy poverty. These kinds of practical initiatives help the poor withstand the climate disruption already underway while simultaneously affording them with dignified livelihoods.

I teach at a Jesuit, Catholic university in Silicon Valley, home to the world's most audacious innovation ecosystem. Silicon Valley has been an engine of unimaginable wealth. Can these innovators and entrepreneurs look beyond the invention of new products for rich customers and the minting of more millionaires? Taking up the twin challenges proposed by Pope Francis – creating economic justice and protecting the planet – is a worthwhile project for any innovation ecosystem. Technology has created climate change; technological solutions can mitigate it and furnish ways for the poor to become more resilient to its impact.

An international treaty is essential, but its purpose is to shift the trajectory of our collective human behavior. Creative examples of climate innovation and entrepreneurship show us that planetary chaos is not inevitable. With the inspiration and imagination of Pope Francis, we can envision the path forward to a more just, sustainable, and humane world.

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The Canticle of Brother Sun: Reflections on Its Composition

By Teresine Glaser, O.S.F.

Photo by ***Matt Kirkman***

Historical Context

Francis of Assisi was born into a discordant socio-ecclesial milieu not significantly unlike our own. Characteristics of the late twelfth century which bear striking resemblances to our own include, but are not limited to: a) clerical efforts to free the Church from lay control; b) formation of new understandings regarding the relationship between humans and their natural environment; and c) efforts of philosophers and theologians to free themselves from ecclesial censure of their works.

The first of these, known as the Gregorian Reform and promulgated by Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085), was a reaction, at least in part, to the entanglements of Church and State vying for control of Europe. The Reform resulted in rigid separation of sacred and secular. Michael Blastic describes the intensity of this separation:

> The preached reform ideology connected the priesthood with direct access to God through their sacramental power and demanded of clerics a cultic holiness expressed in celibacy. One of the implications of this ideology was that the laity . . . had no access to the sacred and were dependent on priests and monks for their spiritual well-being.[1]

During the twelfth century, this situation began giving way to lay movements whose members demanded reform of the clergy and wanted to return to spiritual life modeled by the early Christians. Many of the sects emerging from these movements were declared heretical.

The second and third characteristics: i.e. a new awareness of humanity's relationship with nature on the one hand, and the rise of philosophers attempting to explicate this newly-experienced relationship on the other, appear intertwined. The efforts of these reformers resulted in severe censure by the official Church. Marie-Dominique Chenu states:

> These men were bent upon a search for the causes of things – the most keen and arduous as well as the most typical of the activities of reason when, confronting nature, men discovered both its fecundity and the chains of necessity by which it is bound; an activity proper to science, and one which clashed violently with religious consciousness, which when it was yet inexperienced and immature, was willing to engage in its characteristic activity of looking immediately to the Supreme Cause, at the expense of disregarding secondary causes.[2]

Chenu states that philosophers rejected this narrow thinking, attempting to demonstrate that it is through the use of the God-

1 Michael W. Blastic, "Francis of Assisi: 'Canticle of the Creatures,'" in *Milestone Documents of World Religions*, http://www.schlagergroup.com/mdwr.php, 787.

2 Marie-Dominique Chenu, "Nature and Man: The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century," in Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Nature, man and society in the twelfth century: essays on new theological perspectives in the Latin West* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1968), 11. . (Hereafter cited as Chenu, "Nature and Man.")

given faculty of reason that humans praise divine power. He quotes a response of William of Conches (c1090-1154) to this denigration of the philosophers' work:

> Ignorant themselves of the forces of nature and wanting to have company in their ignorance, they don't want people to look into anything; they want us to believe like peasants and not to ask the reason behind things. . . . But we say that the reason behind everything should be sought out. . . . If they learn that anyone is so inquiring, they shout out that he is a heretic, placing more reliance on their monkish garb than on their wisdom.[3]

Franciscans know from our own experience that these types of confrontations between philosophers and clerics find ways of seeping down into the populace, thereby shaping their thinking.

Gradually, people were breaking free of the quasi-religious manipulation of their natural surroundings at the same time as the oppressive weight of feudalism was giving way to the emergence of a new economic order. Strides of massive proportions and influence were exploding in the field of technology, e.g. the introduction of machines that could harness waterpower, and mechanical clocks that replaced circadian cycles as the rulers of human life. Unfortunately, rather than fostering a sacred partnership between humans and their natural world, the freedom resulting from manipulation of their natural environment and the reliance on technology promoted human dominance of God's created world. This is the world into which Francisco, son of the bourgeois couple Pietro di Bernardone and Lady Pica, was born.

Theological Context

As the first rays of the sun began illuminating the crests of Mount Subasio, Francis, almost blind, felt them rouse his soul. It had been a night like no other. During a restless dream, he had cried out to his Heavenly Father to relieve the tortuous pain of his body and soul. The little hut adjacent to San Damiano in which he was recuperating, though prepared with loving hands by the Poor Sisters, had become infested with mice and other vermin. His soul was wracked with discouragement over the direction in which the brotherhood was moving. The agonizing sense that he had failed to carry out the mission God entrusted to him tempted Francis to despair:

> 'Lord,' Francis cried out, 'help me in my infirmities so that I may have the strength to bear them patiently!' And suddenly he heard a voice in spirit, 'Tell me, Brother: if, in compensation for your sufferings and tribulations you were given an immense and precious treasure: the whole mass of the earth changed into pure gold, pebbles, into precious stones, and the water of the rivers into perfume, would you not regard the pebbles and the waters as nothing compared to such a treasure? Would you not rejoice?' Blessed Francis answered: 'Lord, it would be a very great, very precious and inestimable treasure beyond all that one can love and desire!' 'Well, Brother,' the voice said, 'be glad and joyful in the midst of your infirmities and tribulations: as of now, live in peace as if you were already sharing my kingdom' (LP 43).

Alexander Gerken states: "God had penetrated [Francis'] night of alienation and abandonment with his life and his love."[4] In that instant, a new morning was born in Francis' soul. *The Canticle of Brother Sun* burst into our world. Eloi Leclerc imagines the scene:

> On this luminous morning, as he savored the Lord's words, [Francis] listened to his own heart's murmuring … Spontaneously, a new song arose to his lips, which this time embraced all of creation. He summoned all creatures together in a universal brotherhood. The sun, the moon, and the stars, the winds and clouds, water, fire, earth, and all creatures poured forth their common praise. All the life of the world was struggling for expression in this song.[5]

3 William of Conches, *Philosophia mundi,* quoted by Chenu, "Nature and Man," 11.

4 Alexander Gerken, "The Theological Intuition of St. Francis of Assisi." *Greyfriars Review* 7:1 (1993), 77.

5 Eloi Leclerc, *Francis of Assisi: Return to the Gospel* (Quincy, Illinois: Franciscan Press, 1983), 129.

Photo by ***Denny Wilkins***

Photo by ***Denny Wilkins***

Francis' companions relate: "He sat down, concentrated a minute, then cried out: 'Most High, all-powerful, and good Lord …'" (LP 43) It can be suggested, without exaggeration, that what broke forth from Francis' soul in response to God's assurance of membership in his kingdom, was a summa of his theology, formed during the past twenty years of his life.

Francis told his companions that he must rejoice greatly in the illness God had given him because of the great blessing the Lord bestowed on him. Then he disclosed to them his reasons for composing the *Canticle*:

> Therefore for His praise, for our consolation and for the edification of our neighbor, I want to write a new *Praise of the Lord* for his creatures, which we use every day, and without which we cannot live. Through them the human race greatly offends the Creator, and every day we are ungrateful for such great graces, because we do not praise, as we should, our Creator and the Giver of all good. (AC 83)

In 1924, G. K. Chesterton said of the *Canticle*, "It is a supremely characteristic work, and much of St. Francis could be reconstructed from that work alone."[6] Building upon Chesterton's assessment of the *Canticle*, Eloi Leclerc stated: "The manner in which Francis here looks at the created world is a key to his inner self, for the *Canticle* undoubtedly has elements that reveal in a special way the personality of its author."[7] Giovanni Pozzi cautions, "We moderns who encounter this text of Francis must not do so on the level of sentimentality, but rather on the level of a relentless probing into the essence of things, in order to touch there the presence of God."[8] Leonardo Boff cautions against romanticizing the *Canticle* when he states: "In romanticism, the *I* remains in its own universe, rich, with varied emotions, but closed in on itself. In an archaic way of thinking like that of Saint Francis, the *I* is urged to rise above itself, to open its closed circle, and to become a brother or sister with all things to sing together a hymn of praise to the Great Father of us all."[9] God's comfort and reassurance during Francis' night of agony reminded Francis once again that through the Incarnation, God's love embraces, in Gerkens' words:

> …every facet of the human condition [transforming] suffering, life and death. We must, therefore, be on our guard against painting a one-sided picture of Francis' spirituality of creation in which the world is seen as a place of unmitigated joy and beauty untouched by suffering and sin. Such a view would mean a complete misunderstanding of the *Canticle of the Sun*.[10]

As Brother Michael Perry anticipated Pope Francis' imminent release of "Laudato Si'" in June, 2015, through a conversation with Cindy Wooden of Catholic New Service, he echoed insights similar to those expressed by Gerken. Wooden relates Perry's interpretation of St. Francis' message:

> While St. Francis' praise of Brother Sun and Sister Moon has been romanticized in many ways, Perry said, the obligations it carries are very realistic and concrete: to defend human dignity, especially the dignity of the poor; to promote dialogue and reconciliation to end war; to safeguard the earth and all living creatures; and to learn to live with just what one needs, not all that one wants.[11]

Conversion

By Francis' own account, his conversional journey – his understanding of humanity's relationship with God and God's all-inclusive creation – begins with his encounter with a leper on a road below Assisi. He discloses this to us in his *Testament*:

> The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, thus to begin doing penance in this way: for when I was in sin, it seemed too bitter for me to see lepers. And the Lord Himself led me among them and I showed mercy to them. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body. And afterwards I delayed a little and left the world. (Test 1-3)

We have become accustomed to recognizing this encounter as a grace-filled intervention of Christ in Francis' life – and then we move on, missing the profound depth of what transpired in this encounter as well as its connection with the *Canticle of Brother Sun*. Moving deeper, can we not say that this leper and Francis worked mercy with each other? In all truth, this leper could have disdained Francis for his wealth and his health. In this conversional embrace, did this leper and Francis not confer the sacrament of God's mercy

6 Gilbert K. Chesterton, *St. Francis of Assisi* (New York: Doran, 1924), 132.
7 Eloi Leclerc, *The Canticle of Creatures: Symbols of Union: An Analysis of St. Francis of Assisi* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1970), 4.
8 Giovanni Pozzi, "Canticle of Brother Sun: From Grammar to Prayer, *Greyfriars Review* 4:1 (1990), 21.
9 Leonardo Boff, *Saint Francis: A Model for Human Liberation*, trans. John W. Diercksmeier (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1988), 38.
10 Gerken, 77.
11 Cindy Wooden, "Franciscan: Encyclical title affirms all creatures have common creator," http://ncronline.org/print/blogs/eco-catholic/franciscan-encyclical-title-affirms-all-creature.

upon each other? We may wonder what would have happened had Francis withdrawn – or had this leper rejected Francis. The depth of the *Canticle's* message lies in the mutuality of encounter: mutual love within the Trinity; mutual love expressed between Trinity and creation; mutual love expressed between humans, and mutual love expressed between humans and nonhuman creation.

Michael Cusato maintains that it was through the conversional embrace with the leper that Francis, socialized in distinctions between persons of value and those who lacked it, was granted the grace to experience all of humanity as children of his heavenly Father. Thus, lepers, like every other person, were his brothers and sisters. Cusato clarifies: "In this encounter with the lepers, Francis discovered an evangelical truth which would form the very foundation of his spirituality and of the movement which would form around him – the insight of the universal fraternity of all creation under the same God."[12] Pat McCloskey informs us, "When Francis kissed a man suffering from leprosy, a spiritual revolution began. 'They' became 'we.'"[13] The truth revealed to Francis was the universal Fatherhood of God with its corollary, that all persons, beginning with the First Son, Christ, are brother and sister to Christ and to each other.

God entrusted a further insight to Francis. Cusato describes this as the grace to "recognize that everything which breaks the bonds of this fraternity (through willful ignorance, moral blindness, or acts of injustice) is what, for him, constitutes 'sin.'"[14] "To do penance," woven into the tapestry of Francis' life and that of his followers through the centuries to the present day, is intimately integrated into Francis' *Canticle*. According to Cusato, "'To do penance' is nothing more – but nothing less – than to live in the Truth, not as the world teaches it but as it is revealed by Christ in the Gospel."[15] Cusato alleges that Francis understood penance as:

> The conversion process itself which extended from the moment of the awareness of one's sin into the sacramental moment and then beyond it into the flow of one's daily life thereafter. In short, to do penance, for Francis, was quite simply a renewed way of life or, in his term, a *forma vitae* that was meant to be the way that one lived the entirety of one's life.[16]

"To do penance" is to participate with Christ daily in restoring the original harmony within God's creation.

This graced insight of universal fraternity gradually matured into Francis' realization that *everything* that exists has its origin in God; therefore, everything is sacred; everything is related. The maturing of this insight is recounted by Thomas of Celano Francis' first biographer. Celano describes Francis preaching to the birds in Bevagna, a little village a few kilometers directly south of Assisi. We read the lovely story, smile, and move on, missing the crucial comment at the end of the passage. Celano writes:

> After the birds had listened so reverently to the word of God, [Francis] began to accuse himself of negligence because he had not preached to them before. From that day on, he carefully exhorted all birds, all animals, all reptiles, and also insensible creatures, to praise and love the Creator, because daily, invoking the name of the Savior, he observed their obedience in his own experience. (1Cel 38)

Given the many stories that associate Francis with animals, it is interesting to note that, unlike the inclusion of animals in the *Benedicite* and Psalm 148, with which Francis was thoroughly conversant, he does not mention animals in his *Canticle*. Pozzi explains this by stating that, in his *Canticle*, Francis went to the very heart of the created world – naming the four elements accepted by the physics of his day. Francis praised his Creator for the mutual harmony of their energies which produce our hospitable environment, rather than naming the creatures we see and touch, for it was through this mutuality that "God's wisdom is supremely manifested: here is rooted the act of praise."[17] In other words, Francis' years of contemplating God's visible creation instructed him about the creative potential God placed in natural elements, and their unadulterated cooperation with God's creative plan. In contrast, Francis, recognizing that humans' sinful arrogance destroys the harmony God intended for all creation, confesses "no human is worthy to mention Your name" (CtC 2b). However, Francis believed that God fashioned the human heart with creative energy enabling it, through "doing penance" to restore creation's original harmony when disrupted through human self-aggrandizement. Thus, in his *Canticle*, Francis transitions from natural elements, addressed in verses three through nine, which praise God by their very existence, to humans in verses ten through thirteen, who praise God through their efforts to restore creation's original harmony when they fractured this through sin. Blasic states: "What God is to be praised for is the human ability to 'give pardon' and 'bear infirmity and tribulation' and sustain all this in 'peace' (10 and 11)."[18]

Legend maintains that Francis added verses ten and eleven to the *Canticle* to inspire reconciliation between the feuding mayor and bishop of Assisi. Similarly, legend recounts that Francis added verses twelve and thirteen at the time of his death. Recent scholarship debates both of these assertions.[19] Perhaps most significant here the importance many scholars attach to affirming that Francis composed his *Canticle* as one integral unit. As scholars continue to analyze Francis' original writings, new insights emerge that continue to disclose more precisely the exquisite depth of Francis' insight into the relationship between God and all creation. These insights emerge through the integrated thought sequence inherent in the *Canticle*.

Basic to Franciscan spirituality is responsibility for restoring

12 Michael F. Cusato, "Hermitage or Marketplace? The Search for an Authentic Franciscan Locus in the World" in *True Followers of Justice: Identity, Insertion, and Itinerancy among the Early Franciscans*, Vol. 10 in Spirit and Life: A Journal of Contemporary Franciscanism, 2000, 11.
13 Pat McCloskey, "All Creation Reveals God," *St. Anthony Messenger*, October, 2007, p. 20.
14 Cusato, "Hermitage," 11.
15 Cusato, "Hermitage," 11.
16 Michael F. Cusato, "To Do Penance / *Facere poenitentiam," The Cord* 57:1 (2007), 8-9.
17 Pozzi, 9.
18 Blastic, 791.
19 Articles by Pozzi and Hammond cited in this paper as well as Edoardo Fumagalli, "The *Canticle of Brother Sun:* Time and Circumstances of Its Composition," *Greyfriars Review* 19.Supplement (2005), 7-20, provide valuable insights on this question. Franciscan Institute Publications anticipates publishing in 2015 Jacques Dalarun's new treatment of Francis' *Canticle* under the title *The Canticle of Brother Sun: Francis of Assisi Reconciled.* . Originally published in French, it is translated into English by Philippe Yates.

the original harmony of God's creative design by living in right relationship with all creation. Prior to his conversion, Francis attempted to avoid any unpleasantness associated with being human. He acknowledged this in his *Testament*: "when I was in sin, it seemed too bitter for me to see lepers" (Test 1). As Francis and his brothers, with their brother and sister lepers, worked mercy with each other:

> Francis came to understand who Jesus Christ was: God's son who humbled himself and took on the ordinary human condition of frailty. . . . The implications of Christ's choice of weakness and poverty in this world reveal the real nature of the human person. To reject or avoid this dimension of human experience, or to try to escape from it, is the sin that leads to eternal death (verse 13).[20]

Francis' ultimate entrusting of his very life to the all-good God is the logical summation of the *Canticle*, thus he implores, "Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death . . . . Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will. . . ." (CtC 12-13). Francis had only to wait now for his body to join his spirit in complete loving surrender. In his dream, the voice had promised, "Well, Brother, be glad and joyful in the midst of your infirmities and tribulations: as of now, live in peace as if you were already sharing my kingdom" (LP 43).

The *Canticle* is a celebration of God's gift to us – the world we inhabit. In composing his *Canticle*, Francis' intention is to return all gifts to God by the way we live with one another and by the way we recognize God in all that is. Blastic states:

> The "Canticle of the Creatures" summarizes and expresses the very meaning of Franciscan life, celebrating as it does creation as a good gift of the good God. It signifies God's intention for creation to be a fraternal space in which all can share in the goodness of God and through its respectful use to allow creation to achieve its purpose in praise of its creator. The "Canticle of the Creatures" expresses the Franciscan vision of reality.[21]

Prayed in the spirit of mutual inclusivity with a burning desire to return all good gifts to the *Summum Bonum*, Francis' *Canticle* becomes the doxology that he intended it to be.

20 Blastic, 791-792.
21 Blastic, 792.

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Seeing God Through Glass

An Interview with Sr. Ann Therese Kelly, O.S.F, conducted by Kevin Cooley

How long have you been creating stained glass art?

Since the mid-80s. I have a background, first of all, in design. I graduated with my master's in fine arts from the Rochester Institute of Technology, and I was a major in printmaking, but I went into glass after I graduated because I had already been taking some classes. And they had the school of American Craftsmen while I was there, and I took some glass classes they had as electives. I quickly moved into glass because, first of all, there was a need for it, and I also saw that it connects well with the religious life. For me, it works. It is a rare thing: I know a few other sisters that do it throughout the country…there are maybe only three or four of us that do it. It's just nice to do something different.

And it has a rich tradition in the church; it goes way back to the early Medieval period. It's wonderfully historical. I'm giving a talk on the history of stained glass in the Roycroft out of East Aurora in the fall in their national conference, so I talk not just on making the glass but about researching the history of glass.

So you have the perspective of both an artist and a scholar here?

Yes, the combination is great. That's what brought me to it—that richness of the history.

How does making stained glass art inform your religious and spiritual experience as a Franciscan?

First of all, the process is important. I always talk about both the process and the research as well as the finished piece. In the process, when I'm actually doing this kind of work, I'm working very much alone. It's a prayer in itself, this work – it's a meditation, it's contemplative. In the non-Christian tradition, it's very Zen-like. It moves throughout time. So the process is important, but then the final image is important because often my images can speak to any faith tradition and even non-faith traditions in their beauty. So I try often to work in a contemporary manner, like this:

[Sr. Ann shows me a print of her work, Canticle of the Sun with St. Francis in Contemplation.]

This is based on St. Francis's poem "The Canticle of the Sun." This is how it all fits into the religious life – I concentrate on writings and poetry, mainly Christian themes, mainly Franciscan themes of Francis and his early writings…I've been working with the Canticle of the Sun for twenty years…twenty years with one poem. Even when the theme is not about the Canticle, I insert – even if it's subtly – Franciscan themes into the work.

What you said about process really speaks to me. It seems like the work is not only a product that exists at one time, but also a dynamic piece that evolves and instills that process in the product.

Yes, it's the same with you as a writer. You have the process of writing that must take you somewhere contemplative as you do it. And then, in the end, you have a finished piece that speaks to other people. It's shared out into other people's lives, and it comes back to you in how they interpret the writing. It's the same with my artwork. I'll get letters and calls from people that say, "This is what I saw in your work!" And it may be something I never intended.

Thank you, that is very helpful. I also wanted to ask you a little more about the medium itself. Does stained glass offer anything that other artistic mediums cannot?

Yes. Let me show you.

[Sr. Ann Therese holds an ornately textured piece of red stained glass up to the bright, hanging studio lights for me to see.]

Sometimes it's very subtle. If you hold this up to the light, it's not just red. It has dimension and texture. Look at that.

I see what we call stained glass as somewhere in between two-dimensional and three-dimensional because of its layering of color and texture. There is something different about this medium. I can make a work in paint, but it's not the same when I translate it into

"Canticle of the Sun with Francis in Contemplation" by Sr. Ann Therese Kelly

glass.

[Sr. Ann unearths what looks like a template outlining the pattern for a new stained glass window from the materials and tools on her work-table.]

So this is the St. Martha in color. And what I'm doing with this is choosing the glass that goes into it. But when I talk to the client, I say to them, "What you see here in paint will translate in a much richer way in glass because of the layering of the different textures and colors." That's why glass is so amazing. Because it's richer than any other medium. And it's also a sustainable medium because it's made from sand and is recyclable in itself. It's transformative.

Do you draw out every stained glass creation that you make ahead of time?

I do. If it's a large piece, I spend up to a year designing. I go back and forth with committees and they look at everything and make suggestions and say, "This is what we see," and oftentimes my job is to convince them to go more contemporary. A lot of people see neo-Gothic windows that are in a lot of churches, and that's all they understand, but it's important for me to convince them that the contemporary is much richer and more full of symbolism than a piece that is totally realistic. As an artist, it's important for me to follow my signature style in my work. Sometimes I have to say, "Well, you don't want me to design this then. You want someone else."

Interesting. I also like what you said about stained glass simultaneously being a two-dimensional and three-dimensional experience. It seems to me like that sort of diversity within the medium allows for an interaction, in a way, with the viewer.

Just think of it this way: for the 13th century person, this was animation. They didn't have TVs. This excited people so much that when Abbot Suger came up with the idea of the Gothic Cathedral, which held more glass, the monks took away the colors from their quarters and chapels because it was too visceral for them. So [the monks] just used gray tones. That's how exciting it was. It was too visual, too exciting, to put the monks in that setting. They needed something calmer as meditative pieces. It would be like taking a young child who had never seen a film before and what it would it would do them. It would make their brains pop! Today, because we're used to that sort of experience, it doesn't excite people as much as it would have at one time.

It's like what you said about holding the red piece up to the glass. You can see a whole world within the color.

Yes. It's like looking through a marble.

Do you think Pope Francis' recent encyclical "Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home" will inspire or influence any of your future work?

Oh yes. I think the other way around too. Bishop Gross came to a recent show I had for artists in the consecrated life in Buffalo, in fact, Dan Riley and David Haack were in the show as well as three of the sisters from the convent in Allegany. So when Bishop Gross came, he saw my window and said, "You need to send this image to the pope right away, because his encyclical is about to come out!" It's exciting to me that the encyclical came out because it speaks to everything I am doing here. He is trying to communicate to people in a visual way where he uses an encyclical, and I am trying to communicate that [same message] with images to motivate and inspire people.

Can you tell us a bit about where some of your works are featured?

Well, I have a skylight in New Jersey. I'm working on a commission right now in Connecticut which is just starting – it's going to be four panels, seven feet and seven inches tall, and I'm going to work with children and have them do some of their drawings and incorporate those into the borders…I also have works in Pittsburgh, and some airbrush drawing work in Rome that I did for one of our chapters. In the Buffalo area, I have several works. I have a thirty-

"Francis in Contemplation" (Sketch) by ***Sr. Ann Therese Kelly***

five-foot window at Niagara University for the Nursing Alumni association, a window at the OLC Chapel in North Tonawanda, and an installation of eighteen windows at the Columban Retreat Center in Derby, NY.

How do viewers tend to react to your work?

Oh, with excitement. They always have questions, like, "What does it mean?" They like seeing the process when they come into the studio. I have people that actually come and ask me to make some things and I do work with individuals that want to try making stained glass.

What do you hope viewers of your work take away from it?

I hope that they take away meaning and that they go on to research that poem or image [that inspired the piece] and become enriched. And also, when I talk about the process, I hope they can walk into a church and look at the stained glass in that church with new eyes and pay more attention to it. Otherwise, people take them for granted. My students will tell me that, even from far past. They'll say, "I never go into church any more and not look at the windows and study them, and look at the process and think about how it was made." I'm really happy with that – that I'm able to enlighten people about this craft.

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Continuing the Journey: Reading Itinerarium Today

By Anne Foerst, Ph.D.

When I wear my computer science hat, I rarely bother to read texts older than 5 years as most of them have become obsolete by then. But when wearing my theology hat, I constantly deal with texts thousands of years old. I am therefore used to dealing with different attitudes to ancient texts that range from "Why even bother?" to reverence.

But the question is whether we can use old to ancient texts in the education of our students today. Can mediaeval texts still be illuminating for them? At St. Bonaventure University, our freshmen foundation course, "The Intellectual Journey," is based on Bonaventure's *Itinerarium*. And even though I have taught that course over 50 times, I continue to be amazed by how much students in the beginning of their college career can get out of it. In the following pages, I will share some of those elements of the *Itinerarium* that work particularly well with students and can enrich all of our lives today.

Let me begin with some hermeneutic remarks. A mediaeval text cannot be understood in its entirety and complexity by laypeople. One can either go the path of scholarship and explain context and thought processes behind the text – a path closed to me since I am not a mediaeval scholar – or one can ignore some of the context and transfer the useful bits into modern times. It is the latter approach I am using here. This means, I won't focus on Bonaventure's underlying Christology, which is influenced by the concept of Jesus as sacrificial lamb. Instead, I will apply the Tillichian concept of Jesus as God becoming flesh in order to understand the human condition and overcome estrangement between God and God's people.

Bonaventure is deeply rooted in the understanding of creation as "ex nihilo" and God as "prima causa." However, modern Biblical scholarship states that in the creation stories in Gen 1 & 2 God does not create "from nothing" but, rather, turns chaos into order. This means, God as "first cause" can be used metaphorically, but has to be brought into dialogue with modern Biblical scholarship as well as Big Bang cosmology.

As mediaeval theologian, Bonaventure shares his contemporaries' fascination with numerology. But when he constantly finds incidences of sacred numbers, it might just be that he constructs his thinking around those quantities. In other words, his numerological insights might be the result of wishful thinking. This is why I only use his central numbers six and eight: the *Itinerarium* has six steps based on the wings of a seraph, and there are eight steps of contemplation.

When stripping the text of some of those mediaeval influences, it is astonishing to see how much wisdom is left. And, even more fascinating, Bonaventure's insights are so deeply rooted in his profound understanding of the human condition that they can be applied equally well in secular settings and provide insights for students from different faith traditions. This requires translating his Christian metaphors into non-religious language.

Introduction to the *Itinerarium*

When Bonaventure wrote his *Itinerarium: The Journey of the Mind into God* in 1259, he was at a special place in his life's journey. He had left the university and his job as professor behind and began to travel from Franciscan community to Franciscan community in a ministerial role. On this journey, he went to Mount Alverno to find time for contemplation. It was here that he wrote the *Itinerarium*. After a life of intellectualism, the recent changes in his life had affected him profoundly. Instead of focusing on intellectual pursuits, he started to concentrate on his experiences and feelings, and his sensual experiences from the road fill the whole text.

So, this text is not the result of ruminations behind monastery walls or of intellectual reflections at a University but of real, lived experiences. He wants to share this experience with his brothers,[1] and he writes the *Itinerarium* to reconstruct his life, his identity, and to encourage them to do the same. After all, humans are always on the move and ought to enjoy it. And for nearly 800 years, readers have drawn spiritual and emotional support from this text.

His *Itinerarium* is not a "mapquest" that lays out the exact way everyone has to traverse his or her life. Quite to the contrary, he encourages each and every reader to find his or her own path in life. He just gives us the tools.

Inspired by Francis' vision in which he saw a six-winged seraph and received the stigmata, Bonaventure uses as a central metaphor for his reflections this seraph. The prologue represents the pedestal on which the angel is standing. The wings are arranged in 3 wing pairs: pair one (step 1 + 2) represent the outside world with reflections on the beauty of the creation as mirror of God in step 1, and reflections of our senses in step 2. Pair 2 (step 3 + 4) represent the inside world with reflections on ourselves in step 3, and reflections on our embeddedness in community in step 4. Pair 3 (step 5 + 6) represent the metaphysical world with reflections on truth and being in step 5, and reflections on meaning and values in step 6. Step 7 represents the head of the seraph, the seat of wisdom for which Bonaventure uses the metaphor of "Throne of Salomon". Please note that this 7th step is not an epilogue because the journey will continue.

In these steps, Bonaventure presents us with a variety of tools to address the questions that are at the foreground of any person's journey: Who am I? Where do I come from? And, most importantly, Where am I going and how will I travel?

The concept of a journey needs to be explored in more depth. A good question to ask is what the difference is between a journey and a trip. A trip means traveling from point A to point B and the purpose of a trip is to arrive at point B. How to arrive there doesn't matter. On a journey, on the other hand, the traveling itself is the focus and the arrival optional or, at least, not the focal point. If we define college as starting in first semester freshmen year (point A) and ending with graduation (point B), living college as a trip would mean to focus on the final exam in every class, and on achieving a good graduation grade in college overall. All those elements of college life that develop character in addition to conveying knowledge will be lost. The enjoyment of learning, the pursuit of curiosity, the development of discipline, the clubs, the sports, the teamwork, the mastery of friendships and relationships, the development towards professionalism and, yes, the partying are all part of the college journey, and to ignore them would make the college experience much less rewarding and enriching.

If we define life as beginning with birth (point A) and ending with death (point B), then life lived as a trip would mean a life that focuses on the end – probably not very fun… If we live life with Bonaventure as a journey instead, we will be in the moment and enjoy what is happening there instead of focusing on arrival at point B. This, unfortunately, is not an easy attitude to develop

1 And I would like to share it with all of us, men and women alike.

towards one's life, and we need Bonaventure's guidance and 8 contemplations to make headway towards such an attitude.

The Prologue

The prologue lays out Bonaventure's vision of a life of learning. He starts the text as a whole, and the prologue with the words "in the beginning" (P,1).[2] This is not just a reference to John 1,1 but also already a reference to the concept of life as a journey. Because every new beginning comes immediately after something else has come to an end. At every beginning we do not just experience the emotions tied to every new beginning such as excitement, curiosity, anticipation, fear, nervousness and apprehension. We simultaneously experience the emotions associated with every ending such as sadness, grief, relief and restfulness.

With this beginning, Bonaventure calls upon "the first beginning." While he reflects upon creation in more depth in step 1, he focuses here on creation as a course for illumination and enlightenment. Enlightenment is a central part of every moment. Every once in a while, we experience an "Aha!" moment and the world looks differently afterwards. Such moments can be illuminating and enriching, but they can also be scary. If a child learns the truth about Santa and the tooth fairy, it helps her on the way towards becoming an adult. But when is the right moment for such illumination? A 6-year old believing in Santa is cute, but a 16-year old still believing in the tooth fairy is deemed to be naive. Moments of enlightenment can be frightening and hurtful, because they can force us to acknowledge a truth we don't want to recognize.

And, yet, the result of enlightenment is peace, specifically the peace that surpasses all our understanding (Phil 4:7). We often understand such peace as a moment of ease, a state of being in which all desires have ceased to be, a moment of acceptance. But such understanding would be incompatible with Bonaventure's vision of life as a journey. I ask my students what they would perceive as a moment of such peace. They often respond by laying out their (very US-American) dream. Many believe that once they have a well-paying job, good social relationships, a partner, family (i.e. 2.5 kids), a house, good cars, and the golden retriever, they will be happy. I usually finish the story for them: one kid becomes drug addicted, the other leaves for college, the dog is killed by a car. Where, then, is the peace they dreamed of?

The answer lies in the acceptance that life is dynamic and changes constantly. Nothing in life ever stays the same and the acceptance of constant change and finding joy in such change is the key for a good life. However, such acceptance is not easy. In fact, such acceptance can only be acquired after many periods of serious reflection and has to be re-acquired again and again because life changes, like moments of enlightenment, can be scary. This is why Bonaventure at this point refers to the throne of Salomon, the seat of wisdom and such peace, as a possible temporary result of a constant journey of learning but not as a permanent state of being.

These reflections cover the very first paragraph of the prologue. If I were to reflect upon the rest of the text in equal depth, I would have to write a book instead of an article. But I wanted to demonstrate how rich this text is and how many insights about the human condition and ways to live a good life we can glean from it. From here on, I will only focus on the highlights.

Another metaphor that helps us understand the life of learning is "climbing up." Bonaventure refers to Jacob's ladder several times (P:3; 1:2,9). According to Genesis 28, this ladder connects heaven and earth, and angels traverse upwards and downwards on it. So, it makes sense that Bonaventure, who sees the goal and end (telos) of the Journey in God, sees climbing Jacob's ladder as good analogy for following his contemplations as they are designed to bring us closer to God. But it makes even more sense to use a mountain climb as a metaphor, and it is justified as Bonaventure himself resided on a mountain while writing this piece. When we climb straight up a ladder, we change perspective insofar as we see the same things from higher up. We are then able to see overlaying structures since we are no longer lost in details. We see unity, as we are not anymore distracted by unimportant differences. But when we climb a ladder, we only look in one direction with occasional looks to the left or right. When we climb a mountain and do not climb straight up but round and round the mountain, we will have a 360 degree impression of the land below, and each time we come back to a specific view, we will see it from a higher vantage point. Bonaventure's lessons are not easily learned but need to be re-acquired numerous times. We cannot go "straight up" and check all those lessons off a checklist once we have passed them. Rather, we have to use his tools numerous times, so that their use becomes a habit that guides our steps.

It is also important to realize that following Bonaventure's steps is not an intellectual but a spiritual exercise. In P:4, he pairs the intellectual faculties necessary to follow his steps with the spiritual faculties that are equally needed: Reading and anointment, speculation and devotion, investigation and admiration, industry and piety, knowledge and love, understanding and humility, study and divinely inspired wisdom. As this is the prologue, he can only point out the necessity of such pairing but cannot yet explain how we will combine these two aspects of a life of learning. We will come to understand the wisdom of all those pairings while reading and reflecting upon his steps. But he gives us already a hint. Before we can experience wisdom, we need to feel the stinging bite of conscience – a concept that is explained and reflected upon in step 3.

Step 1

Now that he has laid out his vision for the life of learning, he starts with the first reflection on the outside world represented by the first wing pair of our six-winged seraph. This beginning is obvious for two reasons. The first is that the Bible, the book that Bonaventure studies, lives, and breathes, starts with the Story of Creation. "In the beginning, God created heaven and earth" (Gen 1:1). Creation is a new beginning or, in Bonaventure's worldview, the first beginning. And in creation, when looked upon in a spiritual frame of mind, it is easy to see the creator. The reason why most religions have creation accounts is that any creation account places us within a narrative that has a beginning, middle, and end. When being part of a story, our lives become meaningful. So, implicit in Bonaventure's reference to the creation stories is the affirmation that our lives have meaning. This differs from scientific accounts in which the narratives of Big Bang cosmology and evolution assign us the role of egg and sperm producing meat machines whose whole purpose is to procreate. Both accounts are important but they fulfill different functions in our lives and Bonaventure wants to guide our steps toward the construction of values and of meaning which is why he needs to start with creation.

But starting with the outside world also makes sense for a secular journey. Nature is the first thing we see when we become

2 I am using a translation that my colleague Oleg Bychkov has done for our work at St. Bonaventure University. This is why I will not use direct quotes but refer to portions of the *Itinerarium by step and number.*

aware of our senses. It surrounds us and we interact with it every second of our lives. In nature we seem to have less ambiguity and more clarity than when reflecting on ourselves. Nature is out there and can be studied and explained in a seemingly objective fashion. We learn to observe nature and to give names to entities within. This is why starting here eases us slowly towards the more complicated reflections that build upon this first step.

Bonaventure first points out that no one can be happy when not climbing up or ascending, but any such ascent needs a superior power to lift us up. Also, this ascent cannot be merely physical but needs the elevation of the heart (1:1). Reflecting upon creation elevates our hearts because we perceive God as "highest creative artist" (1:9) through nature as a mirror. I find the way Bonaventure speaks here about God intriguing. In this address we find the title of "Almighty" and the title of "Creator," but the dominant attribute for God is "Artist".

The most important tool for any artist, as well as for any scientist is observation. A scientist will use observation to develop hypotheses that can be proved or disproved. A scientist ultimately attempts to understand the outside world. An artist also starts with observation but through closely looking, an artist interprets the outside world. An artist, at least in the art that Bonaventure was familiar with, seeks beauty in the outside world and attempts to represent and enhance nature's beauty.

Close observation of nature reveals beauty, order, rules, and a complexity that is fascinating. That means, both scientist and artist look ultimately at nature with awe.

If nature observation is awe inspiring, such observation can be easily connected to a spiritual understanding of nature that finds God's footsteps everywhere. Scientific analysis, as well as the pursuit of art is among the many human endeavors that can raise spiritual awareness.

While we observe nature through our senses, which will be reflected on in step 2, in step 1, Bonaventure focuses on the intellect which is aided by the senses. And, as in the prologue, his understanding of intellectualism is rooted in spirituality. The intellect investigates, and believes, and contemplates (1:10). Contemplation sees things as they are, notices their physical attributes (1:11). When the intellect approaches the outside world with faith, it sees the underlying, meaning-giving narrative structure. Investigation finally will lead us to recognize a hierarchy of complexity. Bonaventure is firmly rooted in the mediaeval belief of the superiority of humans, while we today recognize much more similarities than differences between us and other animals. But such modern insight aids the journey towards humility quite nicely. And we know that there are organisms of lesser and more complexity. Therefore, it makes sense that we can see God metaphorically as the most complex being (1:13).

Step 2

In the second step, the second wing in our first wing pair, Bonaventure continues with his reflections on nature. But while step 1 deals with the combination of observation and awe, step 2 concentrates on our very immediate reaction to our surroundings through our senses. Bonaventure calls our senses portals or gateways into our souls (2:2).

Humans are unique in that they judge their sensual impressions and go out of their way to create positive ones. Our sense of sight makes us create things that are beautiful to look at, turning us into artists; our sense of smell makes us create scents. Our sense of taste (and smell) turns us into cooks, and our sense of hearing into musicians and poets. Our sensuality fosters our imagination, and our imagination, in turn, helps us to create positive sensual impressions.

Bonaventure sees our sensuality only as positive. Our senses give us pleasure (2:5), and they lead us to judgment that leads to explanations and allows the sensual to enter our "thinking faculty" and, ultimately, our soul (2:6). Judgment as consequence of our sensuality helps us to discover truth and God (2:9).

When teaching Bonaventure today, there is a need to reflect upon the downsides of our sensuality as well. Let us focus on just one sense that Bonaventure mentions several times, the sense of taste. The organ for taste is our tongue, and we can taste salty, sour, bitter, sweet, savory (umami), and we can distinguish hot and cold. From an evolutionary perspective, these capabilities make sense. We need salt, we need Vitamin C (sour), we need to avoid poisons, which tend to be bitter. We need sugars (sweet) and we need protein (savory). We also have to make sure that whatever comes into our stomach is not too cold or too hot. When humans came out of Africa, they had to learn to survive the harsh winters in Ice-age Europe. Only because they yearned to please their sense of taste, did they work hard to provide food and learned to store it for the winter. They learned to hunt to satisfy their yearning for umami. They collected and stored fruit to satisfy their yearning for sourness and sweetness.

Unfortunately, today we are still these pleasure-seeking animals, which means that we still go out of our way to please our sense of taste. But with salt, sugar, and meat in overabundance, we tend to eat quite unhealthily. Bonaventure wants us to celebrate sensual pleasures but our pleasure seeking can be harmful. If our rationality preceded our sensuality, we would eat healthily but we are primarily sensual beings and that can lead to problems.

Also, because of our sensuality, we can easily be manipulated. Modern media have, for instance, created an image of physical beauty that is nearly impossible to obtain. Unreflected sensualism makes propaganda possible and we all are subjected to it and victims of it.

Finally, the judgment of our senses leads to estrangement. What one person might perceive as positive sensual input, another might perceive as negative. Some people like Sushi, others hate it. Some people love rap music, others hate it. And it is an easy step from having a certain judgment on a specific sensual input to turning those among us who do not share that judgment into others—and rejecting them. Someone who doesn't like Sushi cannot be reasonable. Someone who likes Rap music, cannot be likable.

But very often, our tastes are not just individual but influenced by our culture. In France, the smell of sweat can serve as sexual stimulant as famously exemplified by Napoleon when he asked his wife Josephine to stop washing as he was coming home. [3] On the other hand, in the US the smell of sweat can act as sexual detriment and artificial scents (as in candles or potpourris) abound. These different preferences can lead to mutual prejudices.

This means, our shared opinions on sensual impressions can unite us, while differences in tastes can divide us, and reflection on step 2 needs to include the ambiguity of sensuality, both the pleasure and the harm that can come from it.

3 Napoleon famously wrote to his wife Josephine from Egypt: "Josephine, stop washing, I am coming home." (Katherine Ashenburg, Clean: An Unsanitised History of Washing, 2009)

Step 3

In the reflections about the first wing pair of our seraph, we learned about observation, the construction of meaning, and the importance and immediacy of our senses. Now, Bonaventure wants us to apply these insights to ourselves. So, the third and fourth step represent the second wing pair of our six-winged seraph and reflect the inside world, our innermost thoughts and feelings. And step 3 focuses on the question, "Who am I?" We have to note that Bonaventure would have found our modern concept of individualism quite strange. He was not familiar with our modern concepts of identity and construction of self. But it is still possible to glean insights from his reflections for our modern times.

We learned in the reflections of the first wing pair, that the outside world offers us ample images and spectacles to contemplate God (2:11). We are to look at every part of creation to see how God shines forth in every creature. But now, we are to turn inward and find God's mirror in ourselves to discover the place "where the divine image shines forth" (3:1).

The first creation story teaches us that we are "images of God." For centuries people have attempted to identify the Imago Dei with specific human features. But in my opinion, the interpretation of human beings as God's images can best be explained in the context of the Decalog. The Hebrew word for image is *saelaem*, which literally means a statue of clay. We are all statues of God. When the Decalog prohibits us from making images, it means that instead of admiring a statue of God we should look for God in other people. A statue of God necessarily limits God's attributes; a good example can be found in the famous image of the Sistine Chapel where God is depicted as an old, white, and male. This, however, is an exclusive image as non-old, non-white and non-male humans cannot be God's images. If we learn to see God in all human beings, God becomes all-inclusive. The assignment of the Imago Dei to human beings in Genesis 1 is therefore not descriptive but affirmative. We all are images of God and valuable in our own unique ways. But is this an easy concept to grasp? And is it easy to know ourselves? And if we really are honest and knowledgeable about ourselves, is it then easy to accept ourselves?

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As mentioned earlier, in the prologue, Bonaventure already hints that self-reflection often leads us to feeling the stinging bite of our conscience. This now becomes the focal point of step 3. We need to recognize that our mind loves itself most fervently, but that it cannot love itself unless it knows itself (3:1). Self-knowledge ideally includes insight into both our strengths and our weaknesses. Self-knowledge allows us to be happy about some of our features and unhappy about others – especially those of our attributes that sting. It is here that the affirmative nature of the Imago Dei becomes crucial. Since we are all divine statues we are beloved and accepted by God as we are. God knows our innermost feelings and desires, God knows everything about us, warts and all, and God loves us. And such acceptance gives us the strength to explore not only our greatness but also our flaws.

In secular terms, such reflection on God's love for us provides the same psychological support as modern therapy. In the relationship between therapist and client, the therapist provides acceptance and support, which in turn enables the client to explore her weaknesses, as she can be sure she won't be judged for them. The modern therapist office is akin to what Bonaventure would have experienced in the sacrament of confession. Or, to use another example, God's affirmative love is comparable to a child's affirmation by her parents. A child will develop into a healthy and confident adult when guided by parental love that is not uncritical but nonetheless unconditional.

And this is where self-reflection can aid our understanding of God. When we reflect on ourselves and get to know ourselves, we become grateful for being beloved as such insight necessarily will reveal flaws. In our relationship with God, we learn to be grateful for God's acceptance of us, and we learn to become self-confident, knowing our strengths and using them wisely, and knowing our weaknesses, and attempting to mitigate their negative effects.

Step 4

In step 4, Bonaventure wants us to remain focused on the inside world but guides us to reflect not only on ourselves, but on our relationship with others. By referring to Ecclesiastes 4, he reminds us that we need one another (4:2). When we fall, someone else needs to raise us up. I have performed several weddings using this passage and always share with my students that the passage ends with the words, "where two lie together, they have it warm. How can one person alone be warm..."

There are two communities embracing the Franciscan brothers whom Bonaventure addresses: the Franciscan community and the church.[4] And in step 4, Bonaventure wants his readers to reflect on their relationship to the church. Given the political situation of the Franciscan order at his time, the still present danger of them being prosecuted for heresy, reflecting this relationship is especially poignant. And it makes sense in this context that Bonaventure refers to the allegorical interpretation of Salomon's "Song of Songs" as describing the relationship between Jesus Christ and the church (4:3). Such allegorical reading of the "Song" fails to acknowledge the erotic and explicitly sexual language of the poems. But Bonaventure also uses sexually ambiguous language in his biography of Francis (Legenda Major) from 1263, when he describes Francis' passion for God and the world. And the use of such language opens up discussions on the similarities (and differences) between sexual passion and passion for knowledge, for God, and for charity, and for justice.

But, again, it is not enough today to remain within Bonaventure's concept of the church as an ideal community. First of all, we know today that every community and every institution participates in human fallenness and estrangement. This means, the inherent imperfection of the church as well as other institutions needs to be discussed. Also, when reflecting on community, we need to include questions of social injustice as laid out in Gaudium et Spes (Vatican II). Such discussions on injustice and poverty need to include the whole range from local to global communities. Finally, we also need to discuss causes for injustice. We have already touched on the construction of otherness and the relation to the other(s) that often stems from it. This is why here we also need to reflect on our prejudices, an exercise that follows naturally from the self-reflections of step 2 and 3. We also need to reflect here on societal categories for the construction of otherness, such as race, class or gender, and the extent to which we all are influenced by them. Only when becoming aware of our own shortcomings, can we then reflect on ways to overcome some of those injustices.

Step 5

The last wing pair of Bonaventure's seraph represents the metaphysical world. The term "metaphysics" literally means "beyond the physical world." Here, we address questions that go beyond our immediate social and sensual concerns such as what is truth? And how do we know what truth is? What is real? And what is really real? In step 1 and 2 we reflected on God as outside ourselves, in step 3 and 4 we reflected on God inside ourselves, and in step 5 we reflect on God as above ourselves (5:1). And when we reflect on the Trinity and the nature of the 3 divine persons, we recognize that God's primary name is "The Good" (5:2). This name captures God's unconditional love for us and for all creation that we already reflected upon in the previous steps.

In the underlying ontology, "God" and "Being" are synonymous, and every other being (including us humans) is of lesser being than God. This is certainly hard to translate into modern times. But Bonaventure links this ontology to God's self-description (Gen 3:14) I Am Who I Am. Unfortunately, when transcribed into the 3rd person singular, this self-description is usually transformed into the male form He Who Is. But this is a limiting interpretation. I Am Who I Am doesn't add any attributes beyond Being to God. And it makes clear that the only way for us to speak about God is with metaphors. In the Bible, metaphors are in abundance. Shepherd, King, Teacher, Judge, Creator, and Lord are among the most commonly used. The New Testament, particularly the gospel of John, adds others such as Door, Winestock, Bread of Life, and Light of the World. All of these metaphors are either explicitly male or gender neutral. But in the Psalms, we also find explicitly female metaphors such as God holds us under her wing (such as chicklets find shelter under their mother hen's wings) or God holds us on her breast. The statement I Am Who I Am allows us yet again to see God as all-encompassing and inclusive, as we have already seen in step 3 where Bonaventure wants us to reflect on the notion that we all are statues of God.

God can only be spoken of in metaphors because the nature of Being is ambiguous. Being is first and last, both eternal and present, simple and yet the greatest, both actual and unchangeable, one and yet all-embracing (5:7). Being first and last captures God as beginning and end of history. God is eternal but is also with us in every single, constantly changing moment. God is the greatest but God's love for us is simple and clear. God, by being with us in each and every moment, changes constantly as we need God to be different to us in different life situations and, yet, God is also eternal and never changing. God is one but this oneness embraces and encapsulates us all. If discussed this way, suddenly Bonaventure's ontology seems less abstract but much more livable and applicable to our lives.

But unfortunately, this understanding of God as Being escapes us because we don't know how to observe and how to truly see. Bonaventure likens our inattention to the physical eye that focuses on different shapes and different colors and completely ignores that the recognition of shapes and colors is only possible because there is light that enables us to see (5:4). Now we realize that the reflection on the importance of observation, as discussed in step 1, ultimately enables us to recognize God's constant presence in the world and in our lives.

Step 6

The last step of the third wing pair about metaphysics finally enables us to ask how we ought to live. As human beings we are confronted with the certainty of death and meaninglessness. This reality leads us to the quest for meaning and the reflection of the values that guide our actions and behaviors.

Bonaventure focuses in this step on God's love for us – a love that is free, a love that is owed to us, or a combination of both (6:2). God gives God's love freely. And yet, by committing God's self to us first in the covenant and then through Jesus, God is also duty-bound to love us. And when reflecting on God's love, as we have done throughout steps 1 through 5, we are now asked to reflect

4 At this point in time, the reference to "church" automatically meant the Roman-Catholic church and I will follow this use even though it certainly is not valid today.

how we can answer God's love for us. We have already reflected on several possible answers. Awe for creation (step 1) is one, as well as the gratefulness for pleasures we experience (step 2). Honest love for ourselves (step 3) and solidarity with others (step 4) are valid responses as well. Recognizing God's presence in every being (step 5) is yet another one. In step 6, Bonaventure wants us to reflect on empathy. And I find that the Biblical text that most helps to illuminate this aspect of love, is the Sermon of the Mount (Mat 5-7).

After the Beatitudes, Matthew quotes two famous Jesus sayings, "You are the salt of the earth", and "you are the light of the world" telling us we are good and invaluable. After that, Jesus goes on toward the most difficult part in the sermon. After stating that he is not on earth to get rid of the law but to fulfill it, he then gives some examples. The two most disturbing are about killing and adultery. Jesus makes the listeners aware that they usually look down on murderers but really shouldn't. Anyone has probably felt incredible hatred towards another and has imagined killing them. This is perfectly normal and harmless as most of us probably never will act on those emotions. However, Jesus points out that by just thinking about murder, you become, in a way, a murderer. The same goes for adultery. All of us have probably desired someone else and found someone else attractive while being in a stable and monogamous relationship. Again, this is perfectly normal. We can't help but do it. However, Jesus points out that even if we just think about someone else without acting on it, we have already been unfaithful.

If Jesus makes it clear that most of us have had hatred for someone or lust for someone else than our partner, it is not to point out how bad we are. Quite the contrary, here he gives us the key to follow his most radical commandment of love, to love our enemies. We might think a murderer is someone really evil and bad; we put criminals behind bars and think they are not like us. We judge the person who cheats on her partner. What Jesus points out here is that we all have had, at some point or another, murder and adultery in our hearts. Such insight will make us humble and, as explored in step 3, grateful for God's acceptance of us. But it also leads to the insight that we have something in common with the person that is judged as most evil by us. And this commonality enables us to understand the other in her otherness. We can feel empathy. This does not mean to excuse any bad behavior. But Jesus calls us to not judge other people but accept them.

We experienced an easier form of this kind of empathy in step 2 when we learned to mitigate the judgment calls we make on sensual impressions. Step 3 taught us the honest love for ourselves, which is a key for empathy: if we recognize our own shortcomings, we will find it much easier to accept shortcomings in other people. And in step 4, we reflected on prejudices and social constructs that separate us from one another. In step 6, we reached the pinnacle of understanding. Love means empathy with everyone as divine statue.

Step 7

Step 7 is not an epilogue. It is not the bookend that complements the prologue. Rather, it reminds us that life's journey never ends. While the reflections of the *Itinerarium* come to an end for now, the questions we have addressed will accompany us throughout the rest of our lives. We will ask the questions again and again but will hopefully come to them from different and, perhaps, elevated vantage points.

The seven steps metaphorically represent the 7 days of creation. In the end of the sixth day God looks back at all that God has created and judges it to be very good (Gen 1:34). This is not an objective statement but another affirmation. God judges everything to be good and loves everything as good.

And on day seven, God rests and blesses everything that God has made (Gen 2:2-3). In the end of our journey through the *Itinerarium*, we are allowed to rest on Salomon's throne (7:1) because we have momentarily achieved wisdom. At this point, all intellectual activities should be given up, and we can concentrate on our affection for the world, our fellow human beings, and God. Such reflection is necessarily mystical and a gift from God. We cannot reach this point on our own volition (7:4)

Learning, hopefully, will give way to grace and intellect to desire. Diligent reading will be replaced by prayer, and we will focus on Jesus and not on academic teachers (7:6). As in the prologue, we need our intellectual faculties to achieve this point but once we have reached this point, we become devoted rather than learned. It is here that pride of learning and intellectualism is transformed into humility and modesty.

Is there something in this very mystical and spiritual account of the temporary end of our journey that can speak to secular people? I would argue, there is! Throughout our lives, we reach mountaintops. Such mountaintops can be graduations, marriages, victories in games, career steps, birth of children, and experiences of death. It is important that at every significant juncture in our life we stop, reflect, and rest. It is important that at those moments, we affirm the goodness of what we have created so far, and to be grateful that we have reached such points. It is important that we celebrate these moments, and take pride in our accomplishments.

But then we have to become aware that the next step on any mountaintop will necessarily lead downwards again into another valley, where we will journey towards new mountaintops. All that is left from previous mountaintops are memories often signified by the graduation certificate in our offices, the photos of partners and children on our desks, and the memories of people passed. These signifiers give us strength to seek out new challenges and new mountaintops and, yet, the questions that are with us throughout any mountain climb will remain the same. But when we internalize Bonaventure's steps, we will climb any mountain in a more enriched way, and we will gain new and enriching life experiences that lead us to live a good life.

Bonaventure's *Itinerarium*, when read in this fashion, gives us guidance towards a life in which each moment is enjoyed and not judged, in which regrets are replaced by acceptance, in which life changes are accepted, and in which grief, joy, anticipation, nervousness, and all those emotions at every ending and every beginning, are celebrated.

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Saint Francis as Mystic: The Multifarious Mysticism of Francis of Assisi

The first in a two-part series by Daniel Maria Klimek, T.O.R.

Introduction

Francis of Assisi is recognized as an iconic figure in the history of Christianity. He is a particularly influential figure in the history of western Christian mysticism. Both his mystical life and a subsequent Franciscan spirituality that was inspired by that life have greatly contributed to influencing popular piety in late-medieval Catholicism. This influence has extended to future centuries and to future spiritualities, such as Ignatian spirituality. His mysticism was unique for the Middle Ages, pioneering a mysticism that was both visionary and Christocentric in nature, with the humanity and suffering of Christ, especially through the Passion, placed at the center of contemplation and devotion. His various visionary experiences played an essential role in his identity as a mystic. Most prominent to this was his famous visionary encounter at Mount La Verna in 1224, resulting in the reception of the stigmata, a historic event in the Christian mystical tradition. Yet, while Francis became known for a particularly late-medieval form of visionary mysticism, it is important to recognize that his mysticism possessed multiple dimensions which speak to the multifariousness of his spiritual experiences. We will examine the manifold mysticism of Francis of Assisi by showing that his mystical life, though greatly influencing late-medieval spirituality, cannot be reduced to one definition of mysticism or to one time frame of thought. There are earlier understandings of mysticism which, while differing from the late-medieval understanding, foreshadowed significant dimensions of the manifold mysticism that Francis would encapsulate. We will turn to these in order to examine the depth and diversity of Francis' mysticism. Let us, however, begin with one of the most important, albeit difficult, matters regarding this subject: the question of definition.

What exactly do we mean when we say "mysticism"? *Mysticism* is a complex word that has been applied diversely and ubiquitously, contingent on the user. For example, mysticism has been used in reference to extraordinary spiritual phenomena like visions, apparitions, trances, ecstasies, inner locutions, stigmata, or levitations; inversely, mysticism can have less of an experiential connotation and has, in this light, been used to refer to speculative neoplatonic ideas associated with apophatic theological discourse, the type found in writers like Pseudo-Dionysius, Gregory of Nyssa, or Meister Eckhart.[1] Furthermore, when we speak of mysticism *experientially* – thus, when we speak of "mystical experiences" – we can find subcategories of the definition by pointing to cultivated mystical experiences versus spontaneous mystical experiences, the former being initiated by spiritual exercises while the latter pertains to unmediated graces.[2] To add further confusion to the mix, the words *mysticism* or *mystical* have been understood differently through different time-periods of religious history. We will examine some of these different historical understandings in pertinent (subsequent) sections. For now, however, let us consider some of the popular scholarly definitions of the word.[3]

Evelyn Underhill has promulgated a popular, if not generic (in its broadness), definition of *mysticism* that has gained widespread acceptance by many modern scholars. Underhill, who played an instrumental role – as both a scholar and a popular writer – in popularizing the study of mysticism in the early twentieth-century, described mysticism as "the direct intuition or experience of God," articulating it even more broadly as "every religious tendency that discovers the way to God direct through inner experience without the mediation of reasoning. The constitutive element in mysticism is immediacy of contact with the deity."[4] The two central components of Underhill's definition are *experientialism* (mysticism is grounded on a personal spiritual experience) and *immediacy* (mysticism is grounded on a *direct* – in other words, unmediated – experience). Many scholars have come to accept Underhill's definition and have used it to set the framework for their own academic projects, highlighting immediacy and experientialism as essential components to understanding mysticism. Some have done this even while substituting their language of God or the Divine with such philosophical parlance as immediate experience with the "absolute" or "ultimate" Reality. As a guiding definition for their work *Mysticism, Holiness East and West*, Denise Lardner Carmody and John Tully Carmody suggest "as a working description of mysticism" the

1 For a history of Christian mysticism see especially Bernard McGinn's multivolume work, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*, vol. 1: *The Foundations of Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad 1991), vol. 2: *The Growth of Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad 1994), vol. 3: *The Flowering of Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad 1998), vol. 4: *The Harvest of Mysticism in Medieval Germany* (New York: Crossroad 2005), vol. 5: *The Varieties of Vernacular Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad, 2012). See also Richard Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth-Century Saints and Their Religious Milieu* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984); especially useful is Kieckhefer's discussion on the numerous forms of mystical experiences on pages 150-179. For the apophatic understanding of medieval mysticism see Denys Turner's important study *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Also Kieckhefer, while applying it himself to describe the experiences of rapture and revelation, agrees that the "term 'mysticism,' more familiar in modern scholarly parlance than it would have been to the [medieval] mystics themselves, can mean various things." *Unquiet Souls*, 151.

2 For a discussion on this distinction within a medieval context, see Barbara Newman, "What Did It Mean to Say 'I Saw'? The Clash between Theory and Practice in Medieval Visionary Culture," in *Speculum* 80 (2005), 1-41.

3 For a history on the definition of the word, see Louis Bouyer, "Mysticism: An Essay on the History of the Word," in Richard Woods, ed., *Understanding Mysticism* (New York: Image Books, 1980), 42-55.

4 As quoted in Steven Fanning, *Mystics of the Christian Tradition* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 2.

"direct experience of ultimate reality."[5] F.C. Happold in *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology*, similarly writes that in "the religious mystic there is a direct experience of the Presence of God."[6] In his book *Mystics of the Christian Tradition*, historian Steven Fanning acknowledges that there is a wide-ranging debate around the definition of the word but, to set a trustworthy framework for his own book, "the definition of mysticism employed in this present work is that of Evelyn Underhill."[7] In his systematic work *Models of Revelation*, Avery Dulles, S.J., dedicates a chapter to the model of "inner experience" which, he explains, as a model of revelation is directly connected to mysticism (Dulles here identified mystical experiences as being revelatory in character).[8] Dulles described the form of this model as "of course an immediate interior experience" and, in the process of noting sources, he listed the contribution of Evelyn Underhill, among "several prominent Anglicans," in articulating such a mystical model of revelation.[9] While Underhill's definition constitutes a useful starting-point it is not, by any means, a definition free of flaws or criticisms. Perhaps the most pervasive criticism that Underhill's definition has received is one coming from constructivist scholars who do not see mystical experiences as *immediate* experiences but, on the contrary, as experiences that are *mediated* and, therefore, filtered by the mystic's cultural and linguistic preconceptions and ideas.[10]

To avoid a reductionist approach, we will not try to compartmentalize Francis of Assisi into any one category or mode of mysticism but, on the contrary, we will deal with the problem of definition by attempting to examine how many diverse (thus, manifold) categories or definitions of mysticism fit into Francis' life, thus observing the multifariousness of his spiritual experiences and journey. In this regard, let us turn to an important hermeneutical note which will be helpful in exploring the depths of Francis' mystical identity.

Extraordinary Mystical Phenomena in Francis' Spiritual Journey

In order to respect the multifariousness of Francis' spiritual experiences and journey it is important not to shy away from the more extravagant forms of mysticism which have been associated with Francis, such as extraordinary phenomena like visions, revelations, ecstasies, levitations, bilocation and, of course, the stigmata. When considering the subject of mysticism, some scholars develop an aversion to discussing such phenomena, perceiving them as dangerous or even unnecessary. The Jesuit scholar William Harmless, for example, writes: "The mystic is often – and mistakenly – portrayed as an otherworldly, dreamy-eyed figure who lapses into ecstatic trances or levitates during prayer, who beholds strange visions or hears heavenly voices, who works miracles, foretells the future, or communes with the dead."[11] Harmless continues:

> I grant that one finds reports of such things – and stranger – in some mystical texts. Such oddities are perhaps what draw some readers to the subject. But that is not what mysticism is about…mystics themselves often regard such phenomena as peripheral to the deeper spiritual quest. They may simply be distractions. They can become barriers to real spiritual progress and, in some cases, be judged demonic.[12]

Francis of Assisi experienced many of the phenomena that Harmless lists. According to Bonaventure, Francis experienced ecstasies, visions, levitations, heavenly voices (or locutions), the gift of prophecy (or foretelling the future), the working of miracles (through the grace of God), in addition to other phenomena like bilocation, the reading of souls, and – perhaps most importantly – the reception of the stigmata.[13] It would not be fair, in trying to properly understand Francis' identity as a mystic, to simply dismiss or ignore these *mystical* phenomena which are so prominently associated with his person. It should be noted that Harmless was, however, writing of *mystics in general* and *not Francis in particular*. If we were, nonetheless, to apply a hermeneutic that dismisses such mystical phenomena as possible barriers or distractions to understanding the mystic's deeper spiritual progress we would, in the example of Francis, be doing a great disservice to the mystic by dismissing the very graces which guided him on his spiritual path. To gain a proper understanding of Francis' spiritual quest means gaining a proper understanding of *the function* that such accompanying phenomena played on that quest. In Francis' case, locutions, visions, and ecstasies were not anomalies which had nothing to do with the saint's mysticism, nor were they barriers and distractions which obstructed him from his deeper spiritual purpose. On the contrary, they were *guiding phenomena* which illuminated his spiritual purpose. By "guiding phenomena," I mean that Francis was literally guided by these mystical graces to fulfill God's plan in his life. We see traces of this fact from Francis' own words in the *Testament*, and corroborations of this fact from the biographies written about him.

In his *Testament*, Francis explains that "after the Lord gave me brothers, no one showed me what I should do…." This preliminary confusion was overcome by Francis through direct instruction in the form of divine revelation: "but the Most High himself revealed to me that I should live according to the form of the holy Gospel."[14] Biographies of Francis, likewise, corroborate the impression that on his spiritual journey Francis was, more often than not, guided by divine rather than human instruction. Frequently that divine instruction came to Francis through forms of mystical phenomena, directing and illuminating his spiritual path. In commenting on the importance of Francis' visionary mysticism, Ewert Cousins explains: "From the beginning to the end of his religious life, as the early biographers witness, Francis was guided by dreams and visions and was himself a catalyst for dreams and visions among

5 As cited in Fanning, ibid., 221. For original source see Lardner Carmody and John Tully Carmody, *Mysticism: Holiness East and West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 10.
6 As cited in Fanning, ibid., 2. For original source see F.C. Happold, *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology* (New York: Penguin Books, 1973), revised edition, 19.
7 Fanning, *Mystics of the Christian Tradition*, 2.
8 Avery Dulles, S.J., *Models of Revelation* (New York: Orbis Books, 1992), revised edition, 69.
9 Ibid., 76, 69.
10 For a good discussion on the constructivist critique of mysticism see Robert K.C. Forman, *The Problem of Pure Consciousness: Mysticism and Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 9-21.
11 William Harmless, S.J., *Mystics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 3.
12 Ibid., 3.
13 Bonaventure, "The Major Legend of St. Francis," *in Such is the Power of Love: Francis of Assisi as Seen by Bonaventure* (New York: New City Press, 2007), eds. Regis J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, William J. Short; see especially pp. 54, 65, 66, 76, 128, etc.
14 As cited in Emilie Griffin, ed., *Francis & Clare of Assisi: Selected Writings* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1982), 64.

his immediate companions."[15] As a significant example of this reality, Cousins points to Francis' famous mystical experience at the church of San Damiano in Assisi which, in many ways, provided the threshold for Francis' spiritual journey. Bonaventure describes the encounter poignantly: "Prostrate before an image of the Crucified, he was filled with no little consolation as he prayed. While his tear-filled eyes were gazing at the Lord's cross, he heard with his bodily ears a voice coming from the cross, telling him three times: 'Francis, go and repair my house which, as you see, is all being destroyed.'"[16] This encounter is followed, in Bonaventure's description, with another mystical grace, that of ecstasy: "Trembling, Francis was stunned at the sound of such an astonishing voice, since he was alone in the church; and as he absorbed the power of the divine words into his heart, he fell into an ecstasy of mind. At last, coming back to himself, he prepared himself to obey and pulled himself together…."[17] Writing of the primary phenomenon that Francis experienced at San Damiano, Cousins explains: "Although this would be categorized technically as an 'audition,' since it is the hearing of a voice, it falls into the general class of extraordinary sense impressions, of which visions form a part; furthermore, it contains the visual content of the crucifix, which 'his eyes were gazing at.'"[18] Cousins, rightly, does not devalue the importance of such phenomena in Francis' mystical life, understanding that they played an instrumental purpose in guiding the saint on his journey. While Francis first interprets this vision (or audition) of rebuilding Christ's Church in a singular manner by perceiving the message materially, once he grasps the spiritual meaning behind the words they become an instrumental catalyst in inspiring his future action toward founding the Friars Minor and, in the process, toward renewing the Catholic Church throughout late-medieval Europe, not to mention throughout subsequent centuries of Christian history with the mendicant order's widespread influence.

It would be a disservice, and a hermeneutical mistake, to dismiss the importance of extraordinary mystical phenomena by presupposing that such realities distract from the deeper, spiritual purpose of the mystical life. In the example of Francis, these accompanying phenomena played an instrumental role in guiding the mystic into a deeper understanding of his spiritual purpose. Thus, such phenomena should not be dismissed when considering the mysticism of Francis as extraneous "signs and wonders" but, on the contrary, be understood as instrumental graces which guided the saint's spiritual journey.

Throughout *The Major Legend of Saint Francis*, Bonaventure describes the various mystical phenomena associated with the saint. It is clear that Bonaventure does this not only to show what a role such graces played in Francis' life, but also to show what a role such graces played in inspiring faith and piety in those impacted by Francis' life, from fellow friars to ecclesiastics, including popes and bishops, to lay persons. For Bonaventure the deeper purpose of presenting these mystical phenomena, which in essence are mystical graces in Francis' life, is to help advance the portrayal of Francis as a symbol of grace.[19] Let us consider the implications that Francis had as a symbol on late-medieval piety with his mysticism.

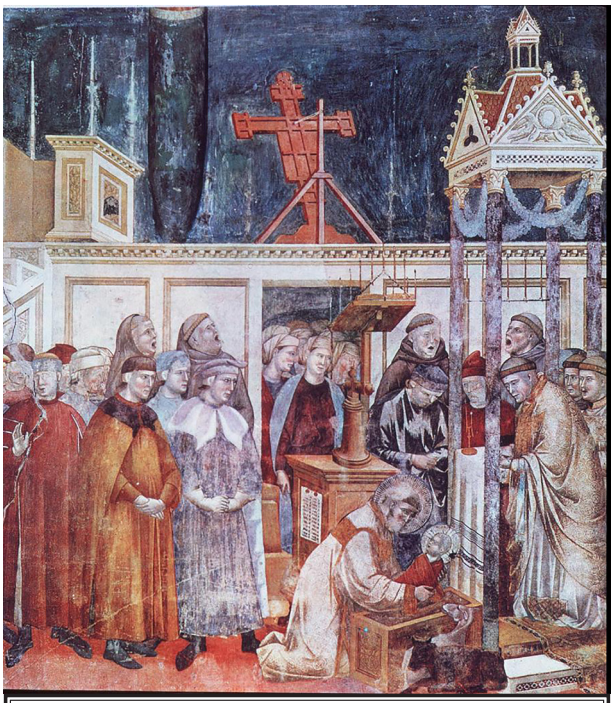
Mysticism of the Historical Event

Ewert Cousins explains that in the history of western Christian mysticism Francis was not only an innovator, with his original spirituality and mystical experiences, but also someone highly responsible for a devotional transition in the late Middle Ages, helping to orient popular piety – in the form of liturgy, art, and spirituality – toward the humanity of Christ. Francis as a mystic achieved this in two major ways: 1) through his mystical experience at Mount La Verna in 1224, resulting in his stigmata, and 2) through a sensual spirituality which he inspired dedicated to contemplating and immersing oneself in Gospel scenes that depicted the life of Jesus.[20] Let us begin by turning to this spirituality, as it had a great impact on medieval and early-modern spirituality.

Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*, first formulated in the sixteenth-century by the Spaniard, are famous for depicting a very sensual spirituality, wherein the devotee is encouraged to place himself in the middle of a Gospel scene from the life of Jesus and internalize, as best as possible, through the imaginative faculties, the essence of that scene: the environment, the persons present, the animals, the drama, the suffering, etc. Interestingly, it was Francis, centuries earlier, who was responsible for influencing such a mode of spirituality. Cousins explains: "Cultivated in the Franciscan milieu, this form of prayer reached its culmination in The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola, where it was developed into one of the most systematic techniques of prayer in the history of Christian spirituality."[21] In other words, Francis of Assisi was the precursor to this influential spiritual method that would spread throughout Europe in the following centuries, a spirituality dedicated to the humanity of Jesus. Cousins calls this spirituality, in connecting it to Francis' mysticism, "the mysticism of the historical event."[22] The historical event is emphasized for two reasons: 1) because in this spirituality significant events of the past, to be contemplated, play a central role in the devotee's consciousness, and 2) because these significant events of the past are historical events from the life of Jesus. "In this type of consciousness, one recalls a significant event in the past, enters into its drama and draws from it spiritual energy, eventually moving beyond the event towards union with God."[23] In the Christian tradition, therefore, these events of Gospel contemplation usually included the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, his ministry throughout Palestine, and his crucifixion, death, and resurrection in Jerusalem. It is noteworthy that meditating on such events was not, however, in itself a novelty; but Francis gave the meditative prayer new flavor. "Although this type of consciousness was present in Christianity from the beginning, especially in the liturgy, it emerged in the thirteenth century in a new form and with new vigor. Under the impetus of Francis, it developed a specific form of mediation which became the characteristic form of Christian meditative prayer for centuries."[24]

15 Ewert H. Cousins, "Francis of Assisi: Christian Mysticism at the Crossroads" in Steven T. Katz, ed., *Mysticism and Religious Traditions*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 169.
16 Bonaventure, "The Major Legend of St. Francis, 54.
17 Ibid, 54.
18 Cousins, "Francis of Assisi," 170.
19 As an illustration of how prominently Bonaventure uses extraordinary phenomena and graces in *The Major Legend* in depicting Francis' mystical life, see for examples of ecstasies pp. 54, 62, 63, 91, 116, 124, 127; for examples of bilocation see pp. 70, 75, 132; for examples of visions and locutions see pp. 54, 65, 66, 76, 128. Some of these graces are experienced by Francis' companions as a result of his influence, and some are especially noteworthy for their Sacramental significance – for example, Bonaventure depicts a form of Eucharistic mysticism in explaining that Francis was "often rapt in ecstasy" after receiving Communion, see Bonaventure, op. cit., 116.
20 Cousins, "Francis of Assisi," 164-169.
21 Ibid., 166.
22 Ibid., 166.
23 Ibid., 166.
24 Ibid., 166.

Let us consider an example of the new form and vigor that would be incorporated into this spirituality through the impetus of Francis. In such a form of prayer the devotee would imagine the physical setting of a Gospel event, therefore meditate on the place, the circumstance, and the persons present – thus, in the example of the Crucifixion, many things would be contemplated: Golgotha, the excruciating suffering of Jesus on the cross, the presence of his mother Mary, her emotional trauma, the presence of John the apostle, the female disciples, the Roman centurions and the angry crowds – but, instead of remaining a detached spectator, the devotee would *immerse him or herself into the event*, becoming an "actor in the drama," so to speak.[25] The devotee would weep with Mary, visualize and touch the blood coming down from the cross, internalize the physical and emotional suffering of the persons present. Such prayerful concentration and imaginative immersion was meant to take the event beyond its historical context and open it up to its deeper spiritual and moral meaning, becoming didactic in character – by teaching such virtues as obedience and holy suffering, in the example of the Crucifixion – and, therefore, leading a devotee to greater union with God. Mediating on, and immersing oneself in, the event of the birth of Christ in a stable at Bethlehem could, to invoke another example, help foster the virtues of poverty and humility.[26] Therefore, these spiritual exercises were meant to be not only contemplative in character but also edifying. In other words, the purpose was not restricted to the past – to spiritually reliving the life of Christ – but extended to the present and the future – to influencing a devotee's growth in virtue.



"The Christmas Crib of Greccio"
Image courtesy of University of California, San Diego

Interestingly, in noting a biographical influence here, it merits recognition that this sensual spirituality of utilizing the imaginative faculties with pictorial realizations of Gospel scenes, materializes itself *most literally* in the life of Francis when, three years before his death, he prepared a manger and reconstructed the Nativity scene in Greccio – physically placing himself, his friars, and surrounding people in a Gospel scene, at the birth of Christ, through the live reconstruction (or, perhaps more aptly, the live imitation). The act was made even more solemn through the celebration of a Mass around the manger. Bonaventure explains:

> He had a manger prepared, hay carried in and an ox led to the spot. The brethren are summoned, the people arrive, the forest amplifies with their cries, and that venerable night is rendered brilliant and solemn by a multitude of bright lights and by resonant and harmonious hymns of praise. The man of God stands before the manger, filled with piety, bathed in tears, and overcome with joy. A solemn Mass is celebrated over the manger, with Francis, a levite of Christ, chanting the holy Gospel.[27]

As to the proper place of situating "the mysticism of the historical event" within the context of Franciscan mysticism, there has been some scholarly disagreement on the matter. While Cousins believes that it "is important to recognize 'the mysticism of the historical event' as a distinctive form of mystical consciousness,"[28] Bernard McGinn, on the other hand—though appreciative of the "historical event" paradigm – disagrees by arguing that "the mysticism of the historical event" should *not* be interpreted as *the core* of Francis' mysticism but, simply, as *the means* with which one is led to a deeper mystical consciousness.[29] McGinn expounds:

> I have no difficulty in seeing a "mysticism of the historical event" as one form of Christian mysticism, and Francis (both the real Francis and the hagiographical model) as playing an important role in its evolution. I would suggest, however, that such intense pictorial realizations of the events of Christ's life should be seen as belonging more to the preparation for a direct and often non-pictorial consciousness of identification with Christ, both human and divine, at the summit of the mystical path, than as constituting its core.[30]

While McGinn does not take issue with "the mysticism of the historical event" *if* it is understood as a means to a deeper, Christ-centered mystical consciousness instead of constituting the core, he does offer a valid historiographical critique of this paradigm. McGinn makes the simple, albeit astute, observation that Francis himself never formulated such a spirituality in his writings: "there is nothing in his writings explicitly dwelling on the imaginative recreation of the events of Christ's life, which Cousins describes as the essence of the mysticism of the historical event."[31] McGinn does, however, concede that there are *implicit* foundations for this model of spirituality in later Franciscan accounts that stress a contemplative emphasis on reliving the historical events of the life of Jesus. McGinn identifies these in "two aspects of the hagiographical picture of the saint's final years – the Christmas crib scene he created at Greccio in 1223, and the reception of the stigmata on Monte Alverna nine months later," thus accentuating lived-contemplation on the birth and crucifixion of Christ.[32]

25 Ibid., 166.
26 As his example in conveying the spirituality, Cousins does use the birth of Christ in Bethlehem. See ibid., 166.
27 Bonaventure, op. cit., 128.
28 Cousins, op. cit., 166.
29 McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism*, 59.
30 Ibid., 59.
31 Ibid., 58.
32 Ibid., 58.

Visionary Mysticism and the Stigmata

What McGinn is, mutually with Cousins, certain about in comprehending Francis' mysticism is the importance of "the Franciscan contribution to mystical identification with Christ."[33] He elaborates: "However we evaluate the significance of the 'mysticism of the historical event,' one thing is clear: the Franciscan contribution to mystical identification with Christ, especially his passion, depended primarily on Francis' unprecedented identification with the Savior through his reception of the stigmata…All accounts of Francis's life stress this as the culminating seal of his holiness."[34] This, as was noted earlier, constituted one of the two main components of Francis' mysticism which inspired a devotional transition in late-medieval piety to the humanity of Christ. "In the sphere of mysticism," Cousins explains, "Francis was also an innovator; his religious experience dramatically shaped the future of western Christianity. He was the recipient of the most celebrated mystical experience of the Middle Ages: the ecstatic vision of Mount La Verna in 1224 of the Six-winged Seraph in the form of the Crucified, during which he received the stigmata."[35] It is noteworthy, in observing Cousins' description, that there are at least three mystical graces in play here: an ecstasy, a visionary experience, and the resulting stigmata. The stigmata, understood as supernatural wounds corresponding to the crucifixion marks of Jesus Christ, personified – in the figure of Francis – the literal embodiment of the Passion of the Christ, complete union and identification with Christ-crucified, suffering with the Lord in his torturous humanity. However, what should not be overlooked is that the stigmata, at least in the popular accounts,[36] *came through a visionary experience*, or encounter. This is important to highlight because Francis was one of the major mystics to revive and popularize a visionary mysticism in late-medieval Christianity:

> While Francis brings to fruition a resurgence of prophetic visionary mysticism in the Middle Ages, what is most innovative is the content of his visionary material. Francis's vision at La Verna of the Six-winged Seraph was derived from Isaiah's vision in the temple, when the latter received his mission as prophet (Isa. 6.1-13); but it contained also the figure of Christ crucified. This figure ushered in a major trend in the history of western Christianity: devotion to the humanity of Christ, especially in his suffering and death. The very stigmata imprinted on Francis's flesh – the first recorded case in history – graphically displays his innovative Christ mysticism.[37]

Cousins especially points out that Francis helped to introduce a major transition, or shift, in medieval mysticism by reorienting focus from the dominant mysticism of the time, which was a speculative neoplatonic mysticism that emphasized cosmic symbols and structures of spiritual ascent in mystical literature – the works of writers like Pseudo-Dionysius, Guigo II and, later, even Bonaventure come to mind[38] – to introducing a different kind of mysticism, a visionary mysticism that was ecstatic and prophetic in character with Christocentric focus on the humanity of Jesus Christ in his suffering. Francis' ecstatic visionary encounters, and especially his most famous visionary encounter resulting in the stigmata, were central symbols in late-medieval piety that helped shift focus to, what Bernard McGinn called, "the new mysticism."[39] Let us consider the influence of the stigmata, as it was such a central symbol (but also a literal component) in Francis' mysticism.

When religious scholars Rudolph M. Bell and Cristina Mazzoni coauthored a work on the twentieth-century Italian saint and mystic Gemma Galgani, they emphasized a mystical grace that she shared with Francis of Assisi: "Finally, there are her stigmata, that most exquisite sign of mystical union, which Gemma Galgani received on the eve of June 8, 1899, the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus."[40] The phraseology here is very interesting in reference to the stigmata as "that most exquisite sign of mystical union." The very appearance of the stigmata is perceived, through this benevolent framework, as something directly signifying *mysticism* and, more particularly, immediate contact with the divine, the stigmatic being touched by the hand of God through a form of mystical union. Such a view sees the recipient of the stigmata as a person chosen by Christ, therefore being isolated for unique (most often, sacred) status, to enter into a special relationship with the Son of God through an elevated sharing in his suffering and death on the Cross. Interestingly, on this point McGinn makes a fascinating observation in regard to Francis' stigmata and subsequent stigmata cases throughout history.

McGinn, of course, recognizes that Francis is the first *recorded* stigmatic in history. However, there is another element about his stigmata that adds to Francis' originality, McGinn explains, beyond the historic precedence he set. There is also the matter of how his followers perceived and portrayed Francis' stigmata, as marks connoting a divine seal from Christ himself on Francis' sanctity and way of life. McGinn expounds:

> The stigmata received by Francis are still unique in the history of Christianity, not so much because these marks were not self-induced (at least several score later stigmatics fall into this category), but primarily because the event was used by Francis's followers to put the seal on his model in following Jesus in a way that no other subsequent report of stigmata, authentic or inauthentic, ever approached. Francis remains the stigmatic. As Dante put it in the "Paradiso," this sign was "the final seal received from Christ and

33 Ibid., 59.
34 Ibid., 59.
35 Cousins, "Francis of Assisi," 164.
36 McGinn, however, notes the work of Chiara Frugoni, who "suggests that a careful study of the early accounts indicates that the seraph vision was originally separate from the appearance of the stigmata. This seems likely, though we have no way of determining what interval may have separated the two, and all the evidence suggests that they both are associated with the retreat on Monte Alverna." See McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism*, 61. For Frugoni's original study see Chiara Frugoni, *Francesco e l'invenzione delle stimmate: Una storia per parole e immagini fino a Bonaventura e Giotto* (Turnin: Einaudi, 1993), esp. pp. 149, 155, and 162.
37 Cousins, "Francis of Assisi," 165.
38 I'm specifically thinking of texts like Pseudo-Dionysius' *Mystical Theology,* Guigo II's *The Ladder of the Monks,* and Bonaventure's *The Soul's Journey to God*, as capturing that dominant (neoplatonic) model of mysticism well.
39 It is in the third volume of his history of Christian mysticism, *The Flowering of Mysticism*, that McGinn introduces the phrase "new mysticism," and dedicates a major portion to depicting the influence of Franciscan spirituality in promulgating this mysticism. See note 1.
40 See Rudolph M. Bell and Cristina Mazzoni, *The Voices of Gemma Galgani: The Life and Afterlife of a Modern Saint* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 17.

borne by his limbs for two years when it pleased God, who had given him such good, to draw him up to the reward he deserved by making himself humble."[41]

It is interesting how McGinn cites Dante as explaining that the stigmata of Francis constituted "the final seal received from Christ," for this, in fact, is exactly how Bonaventure explained the situation at the end of Chapter 4 of *The Major Legend*: "…the stigmata of our Lord Jesus were imprinted upon him by the finger of the living God, as the seal of the Supreme Pontiff, Christ, for the complete confirmation of the rule and the commendation of its author."[42] Francis' stigmata wounds were perceived by his followers through the same benevolent framework with which Bell and Mazzoni introduced Gemma Galgani's stigmata, as a sign of mystical union or divine favor. Moreover, this divine seal that were the stigmata wounds were interpreted as sacred confirmation of the Rule and way of life that Francis, as an innovative mendicant, was promulgating.

This benevolent interpretation of associating the stigmata with divine favor is unique, especially in regard to Francis, because "from the perspective of the history of mysticism," McGinn explains, such an interpretation does not stand the test of theological scrutiny.[43] McGinn clarifies that the portrayal and reception that the significance of Francis' stigmata received was highly distinct for, in future cases, the stigmata were *not* used as measuring marks from which one could discern sanctity or divine favor. There are two fundamental theological principles here that developed in relation to the stigmata. "The first is that the stigmata are not, in themselves, necessarily miraculous, because it is not possible to rule out a psychological origin…Second, and following from this, reception of the stigmata does not, of itself, constitute direct proof for special sanctity of life or of some immediate contact with God."[44] In explaining these matters, McGinn is, it should be noted, considering the *contemporary* context and conception, from an ecclesial perspective, of the significance (or, more aptly, lack thereof) of receiving the stigmata. Today's Church does not, instantly, associate stigmata wounds with sanctity: even famous twentieth-century stigmatics like Padre Pio were elevated to the status of canonization through both their life of virtue and the miracles that transpired through their intercession after their death. The stigmata, though very unique and influential in popular piety, do not constitute means by which the Church judges sanctity. Francis' case, therefore, was original in Church history not only as constituting the first recorded case of the stigmata but, also, as having the stigmata immediately recognized and, in subsequent biographies, portrayed as a seal of divine favor and grace.

Of course, while it is important to consider these matters in studying mysticism and especially phenomena associated with mysticism, it is important not to overlook a fundamental point. In considering the symbolism of Francis' stigmata, particularly what the phenomena meant to late-medieval spirituality, it is important not to neglect the deeper, theological significance of the wounds: as signs of Francis' inner (or spiritual) transformation. Spiritual transformation, as we will observe in greater detail in the following issue, the idea of a new "I," constitutes an essential component of mysticism, and is especially highlighted in a radical form in Francis' mysticism.

There are various important points, therefore, to highlight in understanding Francis' mysticism. Francis experienced various supernatural phenomena, from ecstasies to visions, levitation, the reading of souls, bilocation, stigmata, which need to be understood in their proper context as significant, guiding phenomena that inspired and illuminated his spiritual journey and, as we will explore more in the following issue, that inspired the Rule and ecclesial confirmation of his Order. Francis' life, its literal imitation of Christ, has led to an influential spirituality – what Ewert Cousins called "the mysticism of the historical event" – inspiring devotion in late-medieval Europe toward the suffering and humanity of Christ, and inspiring subsequent spiritualities which have deeply affected Western religious culture, most notably the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises*. There is a noteworthy connection here between the Franciscan and Jesuit traditions. Francis' visionary experience at Mount La Verna, resulting in his stigmata, would lead to influencing a transition in the late Middle Ages toward a prophetic visionary mysticism.[45]

In the winter issue, we will delve further into Francis' mysticism by considering how Francis' mystical life had a direct influence on the institutional elements of the Franciscan order and particularly its later Rule. We will also examine the earliest definition of the term "mystical" in the Christian tradition, a definition that predates both Francis and a late-medieval framework, having its origin in the early patristic period. Yet it is a definition that foreshadows important components of Francis' mystical life, showing how the mysticism of Francis of Assisi transcends a late-medieval understanding, or one that can be restricted to any particular category or time-period, with its trans-historical and multifarious dimensions.

41 McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism*, 60.
42 Bonaventure, op. cit., 77.
43 McGinn, op. cit., 60.
44 Ibid., 60.

45 Modern scholars, Amy Hollywood explains, make a distinction between "female mysticism" and "male mysticism," identifying the former as very bodily, affective, experiential, visionary and even sensual and erotic, the kind of mysticism associated with Angela of Foligno, Mechthild of Magdeburg, and Teresa of Avila, among others. The latter type of mysticism, associated with males, is identified as intellectual and apophatic, the kind of mysticism seen in figures like Pseudo-Dionysius. Hollywood argues, however, that the distinction "does not quite fit the evidence," seeing prominent exceptions to this gender-specific categorizing: "The twelfth-century Cistercian Bernard of Clairvaux, the greatest of the male monastic commentators on the Song of Songs, both initiated and provided the vocabulary and images for erotic mysticism of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The thirteenth century beguine, Marguerite Porete, on the other hand, eschewed visionary experience and erotic ecstasies in favor of an absolute union of the annihilated soul with the divine." In the figure of Francis we also see someone who breaks this gender dichotomy, as Francis as a male mystic was highly responsible in influencing a late-medieval visionary mysticism which would become strongly associated with female mystics. See Amy Hollywood, *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 8.

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The Primacy of Christ

***Excerpted from* The Primacy of Christ, Chapter 3: Blessed John Duns Scotus (ca. 1266-1308)**

By Fr. Eric Wood

Many scholars believe Catholic thought on the primacy of Christ reaches its pinnacle in the work of Blessed John Duns Scotus. Even those who object to his position find it difficult to ignore the depth of his arguments. This does not mean there is no connection in Scotus' work to earlier theologians, and it is important that we recognize and acknowledge these influences in order to fully grasp the depth of Scotus' thought.[1] We can start with his method. Though Scotus utilizes highly philosophical concepts, his method is best understood in the context of his Franciscan background because divine love forms the basis and principle of intelligibility for his whole theological work. This simple fact follows from his belief that the world cannot be understood apart from God's perfectly free, and thus loving, decision to create all things *ad extra.*

From this Scotus will say the created world is a contingent reality, reliant completely on the will of God to create. Such an understanding of creation will lead Scotus to pursue arguments based on predestination, which he sees as a gratuitous (free) unmerited gift that God bestows upon a creature, in favor of the Christocentric position. He will specifically apply an important distinction to his understanding of freedom and the relationship between the will and intellect that will set him apart from previous thinkers. For Scotus does not understand the perfection of the will, as the rational faculty of the soul, to be the mindless and disordered pursuit of what is perceived to be beneficial; but rather the capability to firmly grasp the objective, *ordered* good apart from what is beneficial. This distinction allows Scotus to affirm the Christocentric position precisely because he sees the Incarnation as the greatest good, and the creature to which all of creation is ordered.

Love as the starting point

Recognizing that Scotus is grounded in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, Pope Paul VI describes him as having held "virtue of greater value than learning" and to have confirmed the "pre-eminence of love over knowledge."[2] In speaking of Scotus' work on the primacy, Beraud De Saint-Maurice suggests that one must first realize the love that Scotus had toward the soul of Christ to understand the secret behind Scotus' teachings concerning Christ. "'When I speak praise of Christ, I should prefer to speak in excess rather than be deficient…' This bold exclamation, flooding up from John Duns Scotus' heart aflame with love, betrays the secret of his intuitions regarding Jesus Christ. In this it is understood why our

1 Horan, "How Original was Scotus on the Incarnation?" *Heythrop Journal* 52 (3): 374-92 (2011).

2 Pope Paul VI, *Alma Parans,* July 14, 1966, in *Franciscan Studies* 27, no. I (January 1967), 7. "Beside the principal and magnificent temple, which of St. Thomas Aquinas, there are others, among which, although differing from it in style and size, is that splendid temple which John Duns Scotus, with his ardent and contemplative genius, based on solid foundations and built up with daring pinnacles pointing towards heaven. Following the wake of more than fifty Franciscan Scholastics . . . he assimilated and perfected their teachings and excelled them all, becoming the principal standard-bearer of the Franciscan School . . . St. Francis of Assisi's most beautiful ideal of perfection and the ardour of the Seraphic Spirit are embedded in the work of Scotus and inflame it, for he ever *holds virtue of greater value than learning.* Teaching as he does the *pre –eminence of love over knowledge,* the *universal primacy of Christ,* who is the greatest of God's works . . . he develops to its full height every point of the revealed Gospel truth which Saint John the Evangelist and Saint Paul understood to be preeminent in the divine plan of salvation."

theologian was able to grasp in all its vastness the plan of God in a harmonious and perfect whole, ordered by *love*."[3] St. Bonaventure believed that theology was an "affective science," whereas for other thinkers like St. Thomas it was a "speculative science."[4] John Duns Scotus certainly follows in the tradition of his Franciscan predecessor.

There is a profound connection in this to the Franciscan understanding of theology that led St. Bonaventure, Grosseteste (though not a Franciscan himself), Alexander of Hales, and all the Franciscan theologians who preferred the Christocentric theological path. This is why it is interesting that Horan will cite Scotus' pro-philosophical method as one major distinction between him and the work of previous Christocentric thinkers (especially Grosseteste). "It is through natural reason, not revelation that Scotus believes we are able to delve into the question of the Incarnation and it is with reason that he makes his case."[5]

It is true that Scotus operates very well philosophically, and he does go beyond most of his predecessors, besides St. Bonaventure, in this aspect of his thought. However, to say that Scotus' method relies heavily upon the implications of reason rather than revelation does not seem to paint a fully accurate picture of Scotus' method. As we have just seen in the previous quote from Saint-Maurice, faith and devotion, not reason, provides the motivation for Scotus' thought; and his opinion has its foundation in the Scriptures whereby he is shown to defend a *biblical,* rather than a merely *philosophical,* conception of God and man. As Pancheri observes, in regards to the philosophical nature of Duns Scotus' arguments: "We are *not* dealing with a purely *philosophical conception* elaborated by analyzing human experience, but an eminently theological one inasmuch as Scotus knew how to *emphasize* the *biblical* notion of God and of man in contradistinction to the anaturalistic and physicist concepts peculiar to the Greco-Aristotelians."[6]

Though Scotus did present highly philosophical concepts in his arguments, faith, devotion, and the perspective of love provide the most accurate way of approaching his work. But the significance of Scotus' emphasis on love goes far beyond his method. It provides us the key to understanding his whole argumentation on this issue. The work of Duns Scotus on the primacy of Christ can be described as a synthesis of the two great New Testament evangelists, St. John and St. Paul. The most logical starting point is with the words of St. John, "Deus Caritas est!,""God is love" (1 John 4:16). "This diminutive exposition forms the keystone of the Franciscan Doctor's whole philosophical, theological, ascetic, and mystical system. Duns Scotus does not believe he can escape by means of any science the body of knowledge under which God willed to re-capitulate all knowledge and all love."[7]

Since God is love, love is the only principle by which we can truly understand His work *ad extra.* According to Scotus, love becomes the point of view that allows us to fully comprehend God's creation. The importance of love in Scotus' thought means that a proper understanding of freedom is essential in order to fully appreciate the depth of his arguments on the primacy of Christ. This, though deeply philosophical in nature, will help us grasp precisely why Scotus so adamantly promoted the Franciscan position on the primacy of Christ:

The doctrine of Christ's primacy represents the very center and essence of the salvation mystery, the very substance of the 'historia salutis,' and therefore the primacy will show forth in a dominant way that freedom is at the root of that history. This explains why one will never grasp the depth, originality and intrinsic motivations of Scotus' solution without an adequate knowledge of his teaching on freedom. It is precisely in freedom and love that the person expresses itself in its highest and strictest value. The 'historia salutis' is simply intelligible if we do not find in it the concrete actuation of the love-freedom factor.[8]

3 John Duns Scotus, *Oxon.,* 3, d. 13, q. 4, n. 9 (14, 463) quoted in Beraud De Saint-Maurice, *John Duns Scotus: A Teacher For Our Times,* trans. Columban Duffy, O.F.M. (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1955), 239. "Incommendando enim Christum, malo excedere quam deficere a laude sibi debita, si propter ignorantiam oporteat in alterutrum incidere."
4 Ibid.
5 Horan, "How Original was Scotus on the Incarnation?", 385.
6 Pancheri, *The Universal Primacy of Christ,* 32.
7 Saint-Maurice, *John Duns Scotus: A Teacher For Our Times,* 254.
8 Pancheri, *The Universal Primacy of Christ,* 32.

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Franciscan Economics in a Disenchanted World

By David B. Couturier, O.F.M., Cap.

Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) lived in a time of incredible violence and enormous greed. The son of a wealthy cloth merchant, he lived the high-life and fast-lane adolescence of an up-and-coming new generation of financial entrepreneurs. He was a walking advertisement for his father's fashions, and he was his father's promise for an economy based on hard work and merit not inheritance. He and his father were devoted to a new social ideal whereby families could work their way into the upper class and actually create status for those not born into privilege. It was a radical ideal that Francis and his father, Pietro, promoted and a dangerous one for the times in which they lived.

The medieval world knew almost nothing of "upward mobility," as we know and suppose it. And the "*majores*" of Francis' day were not about to allow access to wealth that easily. The world, as they knew and wanted it, was designed for a hierarchy of the few above the many

The tensions that developed in the 12th and 13th centuries around these questions of access and merit, privilege and power often turned deadly. It was a contest that Francis was at first willing to take up.

His adolescent dreams were of becoming a knight for the good and glory of Assisi. It was a dream that his father was only too willing to support with the best military gear available. Francis went to war with the blessing and the hopes of his family. But, something happened to Francis at the Battle of Collestrada, something that shook him to the core of his soul. Taken prisoner of war, he languished in prison for the better part of a year until ransomed by his father. He was never the same afterwards.

Like many soldiers before and after him, Francis had seen the bloody and fatal consequences of war. However, Francis went further by questioning the roots of the violence and greed that consumed his time. He understood something that many had missed in their justifications for violence in the name of privilege, namely that God was being implicated and even convicted by association with the greed of the day.

Francis had grown up on the apocalyptic and majestic images of God that were current in the Middle Ages. It was common belief that God looked after the world but with a threatening glance and a thunderous judgment against evil. As a boy, Francis would have shaken with dread as he pondered the character of the Almighty in his time. But, something changed in his view of God after his experience of war. His well-chronicled conversion included not just a sensitivity to the poor and a wondrous appreciation for the lowliest of creatures in nature. He found his way to a dramatic and radical love of the humble God, the naked divinity, the approachable incarnate Christ of the Gospels, one whose fundamental stance turned out to be mercy and compassion, and not angry judgment.

Francis came to the conviction that it was this tender and kind God that was obscured and defaced by the violence and greed of his day. And so, it became Francis' mission to reveal once again the goodness of God, which was to be found in abundance in the lowliest and most vulnerable of creatures. In the paradoxical way of mystics, Francis' "economy of abundance" was created by a poverty of dispossession.

Francis embarked on a new mission – to see and experience the world in the fullness of a God who was good, all good, supremely good, all the time and to everyone. And he discovered the remarkable principle that the way to experience the fullness of God was through a process of emptiness. That is, the way to enter the majesty of God was through experiences of minority. In order to experience the abundance of a good and gracious God, Francis had to open up new spaces emptied out of self-aggrandizement and competitive aggression. He had to find his way to the luxurious nature of God's kindness through the portals of vulnerability.

His contemporaries had proposed that the way towards God was through an imitation of majesty and the accumulation of power, prestige and privilege. Francis had learned just the opposite. The way to fullness was by emptiness. And, as his Franciscan brothers and sisters soon learned, this had enormous impact for their use of money and their activities in the economic world. As we will see in this book, their efforts to develop a fraternal or relational economy were not designed to reject or denigrate the world. They did not embark on poverty to castigate and bypass the natural world in order to "get to heaven" as quickly as possible. Quite the opposite!

Francis' re-thinking of the economics of his time, concentrated on the development of his fraternity's use of goods and money, was aimed at the construction of security, joy and peaceful relations, elements of life sorely lacking in the culture of his time. Francis' rule was anticipating Christ's return to "create a new heavens and a new earth," by living in the simplicity of life that forced the brothers and sisters to live in communion and not in competition with one another. Francis wanted his fraternity to experience the fullness of God, not God's stinginess. And so, he created an economic model and plan of life that re-directed the brothers and sisters away from aggression and power-building.

Economics in a Disenchanted World

We now live in a disenchanted world, in which God recedes and is considered but an option in the search for ultimate meaning and value. It is a world where the rule of contemporary economics is so profound and pervasive in our lives that few question its originating principles or test its underlying ontological foundations. As long as the money keeps flowing, even if debts rise dangerously and the stakes against one's own fate are not unreasonably or suspiciously high, we mostly don't want to know what is on the other side of the economic tracks or on the underbelly of our economic arrangements.

For most men and women and, indeed, one could say, for most Christians, there may be a kind of soft resignation that the economic structures we have and the economic principles we hold are, in fact, the only ones available to us. They may be the best we can do, given the sinful condition of humankind and humanity's pen-

chant for avarice, greed and self-interest. At least, we tell and console ourselves, our contemporary models make good use of a sinful state and channel private greed for common good, most of the time and for most everyone who wants them to do so.

But, what if our economic dogma are not true, at least not wholly so? What if our economic arrangements are not inevitable? What if our economic models no longer work? After all, noted economist Thomas Piketty recently suggested that the rising tide of income inequality in the world is not an accident.[1] It is rather part and parcel of capitalism today, a structural deficit that threatens our very democratic order.

In the midst of this, what if we are merely suffering from what Walter Brueggemann calls a "monopoly of imagination" that has conditioned us to believe that *competition* is the only lens through which life can be properly viewed or experienced?[2] What if there are other alternatives? And finally, what if the economic challenges and suffering of the world could be analyzed from another vantage point?

Most Christians and most religious would be shocked to learn that the architects of the economic liberalism on which our social lives are built hold theological positions that are diametrically opposed to our most basic Christian idioms. Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke and the other artisans of economic liberalism have persuaded the world of the "fecundity of evil," that, in the realm of politics and economics, we should no longer attempt to strive after "the good," and evil should be the primary force and originating source of the political order.[3] Goodness, it is held, is too unstable and unpredictable to be the logic of economics. Nature and grace can no longer found humanity's progress in a world constructed for self-sufficiency and individual determination. The logic of modernity is stark, indeed; it holds that public good can only be achieved through the power of violence, fear and aggressiveness. The best we can do, these philosophers argue, is to use violence, fear and competitive aggression to our advantage. We need to use evil to create a common good. As such, modernity ordains an ontological privacy that now determines the inevitability of the competition, isolation, and indeterminability that illustrate our postmodern situation.

In this new logic of the fecundity of evil, religion is sent to the corner by the artisans of the "new economy." It is sent there to fashion a new faith that is more individual and less critical of the secular-scientific worldview that proposes the self-sufficiency of humankind and the infinity of its desires. And there, religion has stayed for almost three hundred years trying to fight the logic of modernity, often with modernity's own tools of practical reason.

However, a new voice is emerging. It is a self-consciously religious voice. It speaks from the heart of a theological tradition that lifts the veil covering the ontological premises of contemporary politics and economics. It is a voice no longer willing to sit idly by as millions die of hunger or live in crushing poverty each and every day. It is a voice that will no longer be relegated only to the corridors of charity, leaving the halls of justice empty of humanity's benevolent nature. It is a voice willing to speak up as contemporary forms of "democracy dissolve(s) society"[4] and erode the common good of its relational and, indeed Trinitarian, heritage and teleology.

That voice comes from the Capuchin-Franciscan Order, a religious community of men founded in the 16th century as a reform movement of the Order founded by St. Francis of Assisi in the 13th century. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the Capuchin Order began a reform of its economic principles and structures and moved toward a more relational form of economics between its members and provinces. The Capuchin-Franciscan Order's project to re-order itself towards a fraternal economy is yet but a small, still voice in the loud and chaotic turbulence that is modern economic liberalism. It begins with a foundational Franciscan theological principle that God is good, all good, supremely good, all the time and to everyone. That insight may seem naïve to modern ears and best left to the private realm of Sunday devotions. But, this is because we have been trained by the architects of modernity to neutralize our most potent beliefs and to domesticate our most powerful dogma. We hardly see the social relevance and the political power of these grand theological truths.

The Capuchin Order has decided to rethink its economic principles and to reorganize its economic structures. When an international organization with outposts in almost 100 countries makes that determination nowadays, it is usually to maximize its profits and to make itself more efficient. Nothing could be further from the truth for these Franciscans. Their motive and their goal are nothing more and nothing less than communion, a communion of life beyond the borders and boundaries that normally condition social life in the world today. They are reorganizing themselves for no other purpose than to be more faithful to their charism of evangelical brotherhood.

At the 2000 Capuchin General Chapter held in Rome, three brothers from Africa stood before the assembled delegates and challenged them to "hear the cry of the poor" in Africa. The fact that this needed to be said in a room filled with dedicated religious and compassionate men from every corner of the earth shocked the delegates. Had not missionaries supplied for the needs of hundreds of thousands, perhaps even millions of Africans, over the years? Had not Provinces around the world gathered money and goods to do what was possible to lift African men and women up from the dregs of poverty? All these efforts notwithstanding, these three delegates were asking for something more than just a fairer distribution of the world's goods. They were asking for love and the justice that flows from love. And this was a new economic starting point or, at least, one that had been underground since the ascendancy of economic liberalism.

Franciscans hold to a simple proposition that God is good and that men and women are not simply competitors for the scarce resources that flow from a stingy God. They are brothers and sisters of a good and gracious God. And so, Franciscan economics, if we can name it as such, is an attempt to flesh out this insight, to create a model of human relations that does not premise nor preordain inevitable fear, aggression, and competition as the lot and fate of humankind. Franciscans understand God as a free communion of persons without domination or deprivation and so reject any system, however successful or efficient it may be, founded on ontological privacy. Sinfulness may be a real and debilitating factor in human relations, but, it does not hold ontological weight or theological priority over grace and redemption. With that belief in mind, the conviction grows that sinfulness can no longer sit unchallenged on the pediments of Wall Street.

1 Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).
2 Walter Brueggemann, 'Welcoming the Stranger," Interpretation and Obedience (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), pp. 290-310.
3 Pierre Manent, *An Intellectual History of Liberalism*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 15.
4 Manent, op.cit., p. 106.

Far-East Franciscan:

Carolus Horatii a Castorano and the Early Franciscan Movement in China

By Christopher Dalton, Ph.D.

In considering far off lands and different walks of life, a natural curiosity often turns our Western attentions to the East, particularly to the enduring civilization of China. The earliest European travelers to China portrayed its wonder and mystery through vivid descriptions of an industrious people engaged in the genius of a golden age. Among these pioneering ambassadors who journeyed to the Mongol court that ruled China in the thirteenth century, and gave reports upon their returns to Europe, were the Franciscan Friars, Giovanni da Pian del Carpini (1185-1252), William of Rubruck (1220-1293), and Giovanni da Montecorvino (1247-1348).[1] While their journeys were separated by a few decades, and the variety of their accounts each focus on different experiences, all were inspired by the Chinese people's interest in religion and the passion they held for their beliefs.

Though the efforts of these early Franciscans in China inspired a small Christian congregation and the establishment of a modest church in Peking (Beijing), the ever-rolling tides of a dynastic cycle soon washed over China and left only an imprint of that earlier time. It was not until the late sixteenth century, over two hundred years later, that the Jesuits were granted a presence in the country as advisors in the imperial court, where they were welcomed as expert scholars of mathematics, astronomy, and engineering. As part of the scholar-elite, they lived in imperial quarters, were granted servants, and primarily associated with other officials and courtiers. As an attempt to re-introduce Christianity, the Jesuits carefully couched the language and ideas of Catholicism in Confucian terms and philosophies, hoping to slowly accommodate elite society and eventually gain permission to proselyte to the common classes. Remarkably, the interest and sense of belief that the early Franciscans perceived among the Chinese endured. The Jesuits experienced significant progress at court, converting high-ranking officials and eminent scholars, all to the effect of inducing Emperor Kangxi (r.1661-1722) to learn more about Christianity. Emperor Kangxi entertained the thought of Christianity as more of a philosophy than a religion, as indicated by several poems he wrote with interwoven Christian, Confucian, and Daoist themes. He regarded it thus as a suitable pursuit of the literate elite, and preferred its accommodation of native Chinese beliefs and rituals. Also, he only tenuously allowed the Jesuits to proselyte and convert among the common classes.

In the eighteenth century, Franciscans once again began arriving in China and received appointments at court, alongside Dominicans. Among these new arrivals, a scarcely remembered friar, Carolus Horatii a Castorano (1673-1755) ministered in China from 1705-1734. Though his contributions have been obscured by time and scattered records, he left a marked influence on the people he served in China. He was an important person in his time.

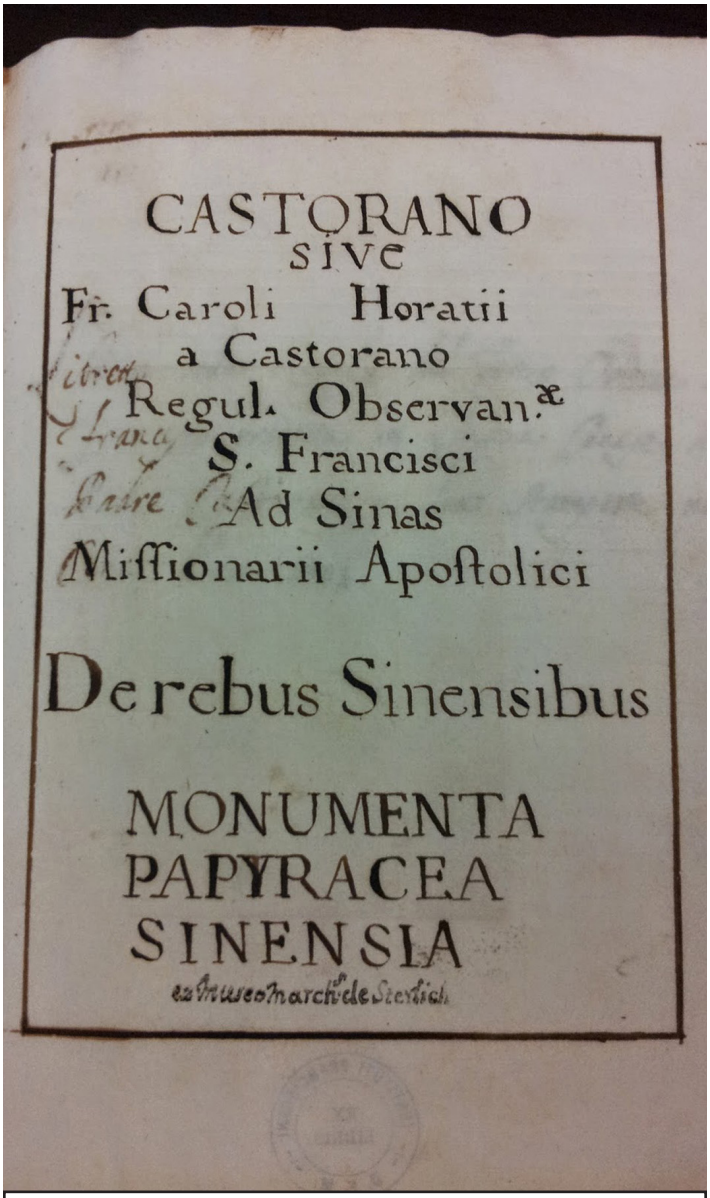

Figure 1
Title Page. *Monumenta Papyracea Sinesia* Vol. 9. By Fr. Carolus Horatii a Castorano. Held in the Special Collections of the Holy Name Library of the Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University.

1 See Frances Wood, *The Silk Road: Two Thousand Years in the Heart of Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 117-119.

He was elected as the Vicar General of Peking in 1707, a position he held until 1713. His talent and ability to master the intricacies of both the colloquial and classical forms of Mandarin made him instrumental in numerous translations and presentations of Papal Constitutions and Imperial Memorials in the years that followed. His mission in China, as professed by the Propaganda Fide in Rome, was that of "Congregation." This term was quite controversial then, as it implied a colonial condition of dioceses abroad. In China it meant very little, except where philosophical, doctrinal, and political lines were drawn between orders like the Jesuits and Franciscans.[2] The intent in China was to resolve a long-standing debate regarding the accommodation of Chinese Christians who performed ceremonial rites for deceased ancestors. The argument over whether this was civic duty or the worship of idolatry became the central focus of the Chinese Rites Controversy. Other concerns lay at the heart of this controversy too. The use and trust of talisman in China was part of Daoism and folk belief. Jesuit accommodation turned this cultural facet toward the production and collection of Christian-like reliquaries or totems. These and other accommodations, while seemingly done for the right reasons, sometimes produced unfortunate misunderstandings.

Castorano and his colleagues, in order to reconcile the misunderstandings, attended numerous audiences with the Kangxi Emperor, earning Castorano at times either the favor or the censure of the imperial court. In 1716, he was responsible for translation and publication of the 1704 Decree of Pope Clement XI, which effectively banned Confucian rites for Chinese Catholics.[3] Upon the decree's presentation to the emperor, Castorano was imprisoned for three months until after all copies of the decree in China could be retracted.[4] After his imprisonment, he quietly returned to his work, and employed his translation skills on church tracts, pamphlets, and letters that encouraged faith in God, Christ, and the order of the church. One illustration he produced portrays the Holy Trinity and the Sign of the Cross (Figure 2). Though not published, it is labeled in Chinese and demonstrates a clear commitment to the instruction of the common classes. Any indication of the Cross or Crucifixion, as the Jesuits discovered a century earlier, was disconcerting to the scholar elite as it resembled the cangue—a yoke-like instrument of punishment and torture reserved for criminals and vagrants of the lower class. Therefore, the Jesuits omitted and concealed this unhappy association with the common classes.[5]

For a time, Castorano travelled outside of Beijing in Hebei Province, visiting with different congregations. During this period he befriended a young Chinese man who converted to Catholicism. The young man, Paolo Cing, was partially literate and maintained a correspondence with Castorano. The few letters indicate a polite relationship between the two, religious devotion being the cornerstone to their communication. One document collected by Castorano, a kind of unofficial report, describes the abuse Paolo received at the hands of a Jesuit priest. It is written in the mode of a legal testimony, though it is improbable that the offending priest would ever be brought to court for his actions. The Jesuit priest is

Figure 2
Holy Trinity and Sign of the Cross. Inscribed are labels which explain the Holy Trinity, the veiled heavens, the light of the sun, and the eclipse to darkness – a reference to the latter events of the crucifixion. By Fr. Carolus Horatii a Castorano. Monumenta Papyracea Sinesia Vol. 9.

named in the letter, but in the following translation I have omitted his name. The short narrative (Figure 3) demonstrates controversial nature of the historic environment and hints at Castorano's concerns at this moment in time:

> A certain Jesuit, the Father at the Catholic Church of Wei Village presided over the members of the church in the area of Zhending Prefecture, Hebei Province. A certain Paolo Cing traveled to Wei Village and asked the Father to come and minister to his sick mother-in-law a few days in a row. The Father did not say that he would go, but he also did not say he would not go. Paolo Chen continued to beseech him, saying, "Will you go my lord, or will you not go my lord? The journey is long and her illness is severe. If my lord, you will not go, then this lowly sinner will ask another Father to go." Upon hearing these words, the Jesuit Priest became agitated and caught sight of the necklace or scapular around Paolo's neck, from which hung a small bag made from the holy cloth of devotion to Our Lady of Seven Sorrows. He then asked Paolo, "What is in that pouch around your neck?" Paolo answered, "It is the holy cloth of devotion to Our Lady of Seven Sorrows." Upon hearing these words, the Father again became very agitated, and became angry, condemning Paolo, saying, "Is it you who have been proselyting the

2 See D.E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2013), 29-31.
3 See Arnulf Camps and Pat McCloskey, The Friars Minor in China (St. Bonaventure, New York: Franciscan Institute, 1995). 8-9.
4 See Albert Chan, *Chinese Books and Documents in the Jesuit Archives in Rome, A Descriptive Catalogue: Japonica—Sinica I-IV* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2002),
5 See D.E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2013), 45-49.

devotion of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows? You are the one who has been manufacturing these strips of fabric? Generously giving a piece to this person and a piece to that person? It is you who have been proselyting the devotion of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows? All of this is a sacrilege of our doctrine. Such things are not meant for the instruction of underlings like yourself." Thereupon, he tied Paolo down atop a wooden bench and began to beat him. Then, Chapel Leader Francis Xie and Chapel Leader Francis Li beseeched the priest, kowtowing repeatedly more than a few times, begging for mercy, whereupon he stopped after a few more beatings with his stick.

In the midst of controversy, confusion, and conflict Castorano sympathized with Paolo. His compassion is evidenced by the preservation of this account in his volume and the preface he wrote for it: "Letter concerning the death of the Chinese Christian Paolo Cing's mother." (Monumenta Papyracea Sinesia Vol. 9. Leaf 36). His attention was drawn toward the misfortune of his friend's loss. Castorano's own misfortune in prison several years earlier perhaps offers a valuable perspective for negotiating such complex adversities. His compassionate investment in Paolo Cing eventually returned a tender mercy, as Paolo would go on to serve as a Father of a small congregation in Wei Village.

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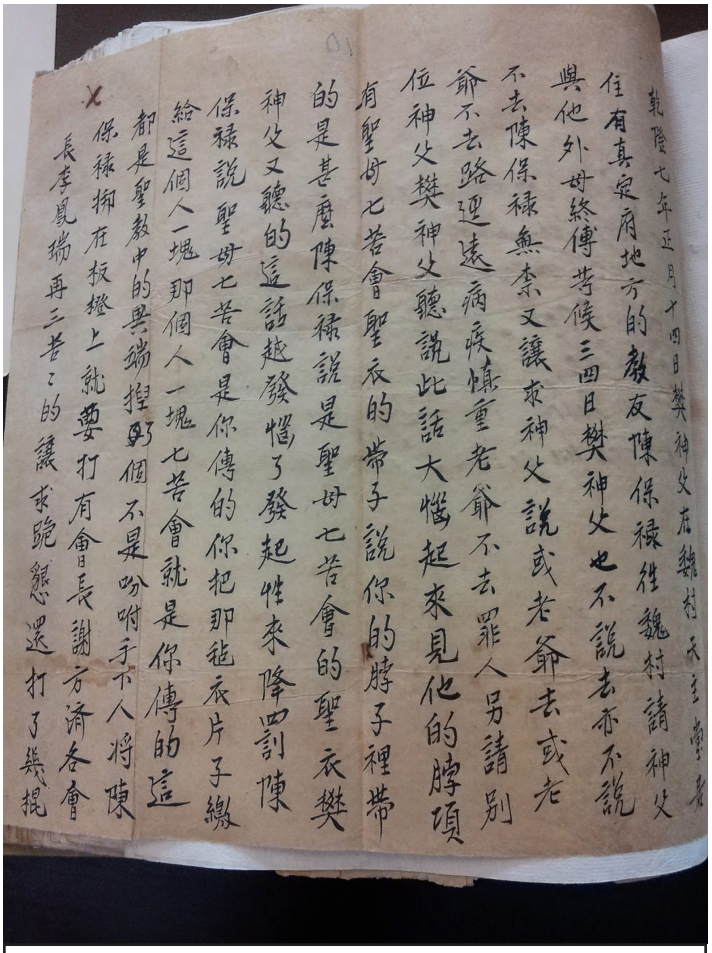

Figure 3
Correspondence between Castorano and Paolo Cing. *Monumenta Papyracea Sinesia* Vol. 9. By Fr. Carolus Horatii a Castorano. Held in the Special Collections of the Holy Name Library of the Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University.