

FRANCISCAN CONNECTIONS: THE CORD – A SPIRITUAL REVIEW



Bonaventure and Trinity

Francis and Heart-Centered Healing

Franciscan Memories and Literary Genres



Franciscan Connections: The Cord – A Spiritual Review

Executive Director: David B. Couturier, O.F.M., Cap.

Editor: Hannah Gordon

Business Manager: Jill M. Smith

Design Editor: Bryan Jackson

Logo Design:

Bri Roberts

Kevin Cooley

Special Thanks:

Fr. Pat McCloskey, O.F.M.

Cover Image:

Candace Porth

©2016 Franciscan Institute Publications, St. Bonaventure University

No material from this periodical may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, without permission in writing from the editor.

Subscription rates: \$35.00 per year domestic print; \$35.00 per year domestic online; \$50.00 per year international print or online; single issue \$12.00 domestic; \$15.00 international. Periodical postage paid at St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 and at additional mailing office.

Send address changes to: *Franciscan Connections: The Cord – A Spiritual Review*
P.O. Box 17 St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 USA.

Advertising:

Ads should be sent to the editor at thecord@sbu.edu

Cost: full page \$120; half page, \$60.00, quarter page, \$30.00.

Ad deadline: 60 days prior to publication of journal, quarterly. (e.g., January 1st for March issue).

FRANCISCAN CONNECTIONS

Franciscan Connections, a quarterly review which deals with topics having to do with the Franciscan spiritual tradition, celebrates over sixty-five years.

Franciscan Connections is a spiritual review that connects, communicates, and conveys the best of Franciscan learning in the twenty-first century. Our regular content consists of Franciscan Impact in Healthcare, Art, Business, Science, Literature and Education. We want to connect men and women to the positive, progressive and prophetic Franciscan tradition.

FRANCISCAN CONNECTIONS:
THE CORD – A SPIRITUAL REVIEW



Clare as Administrator
The Bodiliness
of Franciscan Spirituality
Franciscan Administration
and Gospel Values

VOLUME 64 - ISSUE 3

FALL 2016

Franciscan Connections is always looking for original nonfiction pieces, short fiction, photography, artwork, scholarly articles, and book reviews. Our journal seeks to enlarge the understanding of and appreciation for the Franciscan vision and spirituality. In general, familiarity with what we have published in the past is the best guide to our needs. However, inquiries regarding issue-specific themes are welcome.

Back Issues from 1950 through 2012 are available online at cord.sbu.edu. If you would like to order back issues, please do so at www.franciscanpublications.com



FRANCISCAN
INSTITUTE
PUBLICATIONS

www.franciscanpublications.com

**ST. BONAVENTURE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF FRANCISCAN STUDIES
SUMMER 2017**

- FRANCIS: HIS LIFE AND CHARISM - SFS 520 - June 26 - July 7 (Dr. Joshua Benson)
- SURVEY OF FRANCISCAN HISTORY - SFS 501 - July 10 - July 28 (Dominic Monti, OFM)
- FOUNDATIONS OF FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY - SFS 556 - June 26 - July 14 (Br. Daniel Klimek, TOR)
- ST. BONAVENTURE ON TRUTH, BEAUTY AND GOODNESS PHIL 405-02 July 4-22 (Dr. Anthony Murphy)
- THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH IN BONAVENTURE AND POPE FRANCIS - SFS 564
July 10 - July 28 (Sr. Marie Kolbe, Zamora, OSF, STD)
- FRANCISCAN ROUNDTABLE (Lake Herman, O.F.M., Cap.)
- FRANCISCANS AND HEALTH CARE - SFS 564 July 10 - July 28 (Dr. Jean François Godet Calogeras)

ST. BONAVENTURE CONFERENCE
“FRATER, MAGISTER, MINISTER ET EPISCOPUS”
THE WORKS AND WORLDS OF SAINT BONAVENTURE
JULY 12-15, 2017

The Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University will host a major international conference dedicated to the intellectual heritage and contemporary significance of Saint Bonaventure.

Keynote Speakers

Sacraments: Healing unto Glory
J. A. Wayne Hellmann, OFM Conv.

The Actuality of Saint Bonaventure's Thought
Emmanuel Falque

SECULAR FRANCISCAN CONFERENCE
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FRANCISCAN PERSON: A SPIRITUALITY FOR
SECULAR FRANCISCANS TODAY
July 21-23
David B. Couturier, OFM. Cap.

IGNATIUS BRADY LECTURE
Bonaventure and the Centrality of Love

Ilia Delio, OSF, PhD
Friday, July 14, 2017
7:30 pm





Table of Contents

Volume 66 Issue 4

2 From the Editor-in-Chief

4 Franciscan Roundtable

**6 The Institution in the Mind: University Culture,
Strategic Planning and the Franciscan Imagination**
by David B. Couturier, O.F.M., Cap.

13 Franciscan Memories and Literary Genres
by Chris Dyczek, O.F.M.

15 “Three Poor Women Appeared”
by Kevin Elphick, O.F.S.

**18 Bonaventure’s Contribution to Trinitarian
Doctrine** *by Kyrian Godwin, O.F.M., Cap.*

25 St. Francis and Heart-Centered Healing
by Mary Beth Wisniewski

**28 “Franciscan Women: Medieval and Beyond”
Conference Reflections** *by Alex Kratz, O.F.M.*

**30 “Not What You Once Were, But What You
Henceforth Have Begun To Be”**
by Thomas Piolata, O.F.M., Cap.

**34 Laudato Si: The Most Franciscan Papal
Encyclical Ever** *by Keith Douglass Warner, O.F.M.*

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.

We enter late autumn and early winter here in Western New York. My thoughts turn toward one of my favorite Christmas hymns by Christina Rosetti, "In the Bleak Midwinter," which reminds us of what many of us across the country have in store over the next several months:

In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.

Conditions harden this time of year. Daylight is short and the dark nights are long. And yet, this is the very time when God's light breaks through and humankind is restored and refreshed by an amazing grace. In his second letter to the Thessalonians, St. Paul reminds us that God offers humanity three things: love, 'everlasting encouragement' and 'good hope by grace.' (2 Thess.2:16).

Why did Francis of Assisi give up a life of comfort and revelry in exchange for extreme poverty? We often think of Francis dancing in the Umbrian fields on a bright spring morning or an early summer afternoon. But, how did he find joy when the gales of winter blew and "earth stood hard as iron and water like a stone?" Rosetti's theology lacks the fully incarnational spirit of Francis, as when she says "Heaven and earth shall flee away/when He comes to reign." And yet, she captures Francis' spirit at the conclusion of her hymn.

She recognizes that the only way to meet the poor Christ is with our own poverty, as she writes:

What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man
I would do my part;
Yet what I can, I give Him -
Give my heart.

God doesn't need our success. God doesn't require our achievements. God wants only our heart and this is what Francis of Assisi found. God wanted nothing more than the gift of Francis' merciful heart. This was the bliss that he discovered in his community of lepers and brothers. He could lose the whole world and still experience the fullness of mercy given and received. Francis' whole life became an experiment with this gamble. He stripped himself of every pretense and privilege. He gave up every claim to status and support and still he felt amazingly free, free to be kind, compassionate and considerate without restrictions or reserve. Somewhere in the bleak midwinter when "frosty wind made moan," Francis found his heart and realized the one superior joy of his life was "doing mercy." And that was enough to fill his life with an everlasting joy and a peace that passes all understanding.

Fr. Dave

Franciscan Connections: In Print. Online. Anytime.

Subscribe now at www.franciscanpublications.com



facebook.com/franciscanconnections



New Books from David Couturier, OFM Cap.

Fr. David Couturier, Capuchin, continues his exploration of the themes of transformation and spiritual development in two new books from Franciscan Institute Publications.

The **Four Conversions: A Spirituality of Transformation**, 2nd edition, examines the spiritual and psychological dynamics of conversion. Using the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi as a floor plan of conversion, Couturier studies the fourfold process of spiritual transformation; personal, interpersonal, ecclesial and structural. Integrating the latest insights from Trinitarian theology, family systems theory, clinical psychology and organizational studies, this work will give readers a deeper appreciation for the Church's tradition of faith development.

Pb 2016 978-1-57659-407-0 \$29.95

Franciscans and their Finances: Economics in a Disenchanted World explores the role that money and finances play in the life of Franciscans today. Couturier looks at the challenges of global poverty, income inequality, and consumerism, examining them in the light of Francis of Assisi's call for a more fraternal economy. He pays special attention to the economic concerns of the Millennial-Mosaic generation and the ways that insights from the Franciscan intellectual tradition can provide a new pathway of hope in a disenchanted time.

Pb 2015 978-1-57659-388-2 \$29.95

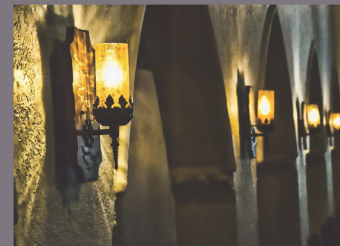


Fr. David B. Couturier, OFM. Cap., is the Dean of the School of Franciscan Studies at St. Bonaventure University. He is a graduate of the Institute of Psychology at the Gregorian University, the Graduate Theological Foundation and the William Alanson White Institute for Psychiatry's Organizational Development Program.

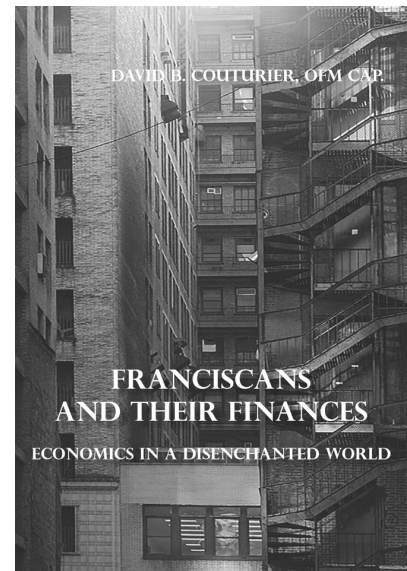
The Four Conversions

A Spirituality of Transformation

2nd Edition



David B. Couturier, OFM Cap.



FRANCISCAN
INSTITUTE
PUBLICATIONS

www.franciscanpublications.com



Franciscan

International News

Pope Francis came to Assisi's Basilica of St. Francis to join other leaders of world religions last September to mark the 30th anniversary of St. John Paul II's prayer day for world peace (October 27, 1986). **"Thirst for Peace: Faiths and Cultures in Dialogue"** was the theme of the conference organized by the Diocese of Assisi, the Franciscan family, and the Community of Sant'Egidio.

In Assisi, Minister General Marco Tasca, O.F.M. Conv celebrated the feast of St. Francis at the St. Mary of the Angels Basilica, and Minister General Michael Perry, O.F.M. did the same at St. Francis Basilica.

Christian, Muslim, and Jewish leaders heard Pope Francis reiterate John Paul II's 2002 declaration, **"Whoever uses religion to foment violence contradicts religion's deepest and truest inspiration."** Pope Francis said that peace means forgiveness, welcome, cooperation, and education to help everyone becomes "artisans of peace."

Antonio Guterres, who takes office as **U.N. Secretary-General** in January 2017, was one of the student founders in Portugal of the Franciscan-backed **Grupo da Luz** (Light Group) in the 1970s. Its members worked with poor people in Lisbon and include Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, Portugal's current president. Guterres was the country's prime minister from 1995 through 2002; three years later he began 10 years of service as head of the U.N. refugee agency. After his nomination as Secretary-General, Portugal's bishops praised him for his "deep sense of humanity and faith."

Presidents of the 13 conferences of Capuchin provincial ministers met in Rome in September to review how the mandates of the Order's 2012 general chapter have been fulfilled and to identify topics for their 2018 general chapter.

Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, prefect of the Congregation for Eastern Churches, joined 500 Jordanian, Bedouin and Christian leaders last October for the reopening of the **Memorial of Moses Church on Mt. Nebo in Jordan**, after almost a decade of restoration work. The Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land acquired this site in 1932 and soon be-

gan archeological work. They discovered remains of a sixth-century basilica built over a third-century church with 8,600 square feet of world-famous mosaic pavements showing flora and fauna of the era. St. John Paul II visited there in 2000 and Pope Benedict XVI nine years later.

John Boyd-Boland, O.F.M., chaplain at **Padua College in suburban Brisbane, Australia**, and adult chaperones led 24 students on a 17-day trip to Rome and Assisi last October. The school has 1,300 students (all male) and is the only high school sponsored by the Friars Minor in Australia.

Friars Mauro Gambetti and Enzo Fortunato, O.F.M. Conv. (respectively Custos of Assisi's Sacro Convento and editor of its magazine *San Francesco*) were present in Moscow when Patriarch Kirill celebrated the Divine Liturgy for Palm Sunday. Afterwards he met with them, greeting them as "brothers."

Key Websites

www.ifc.tor
www.O.F.M..org
www.O.F.M.conv.net
www.O.F.M.cap.org
www.francescanitor.org
www.fiop.org
www.sanfrancesco.org

Roundtable

National News

The Annual Federation Conference of the Franciscan Federation of the Third Order Regular will be held from June 16 through 19 in Buffalo. The Federation's national board is working on a proposal to create **One Franciscan Family Organization** in the U.S., recognizing our complementary gifts and coordinating our common witness to the Franciscan charism.

"Lesser Brothers on a Journey," the theme of the Franciscan Vocation Directors Megaconference last September, drew 34 friars from 20 provinces in the U.S., Australia, Canada, England, Ireland, and Lithuania. Participants came to St. Petersburg, Florida, from the three branches of the Friars Minor, as well as the Brothers of Brooklyn and the Friars of the Renewal. The Capuchin friars will host the next Megaconference in 2018.

Students from 24 Franciscan colleges and universities engaged in service and outreach projects, most in local communities but some outside the United States. **The Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities has a combined enrollment of 50,000 students.** This initiative is one activity within their observance of the **Holy Year of Mercy.**

The ***Juntos Como Hermanos (Together as Brothers)*** brought 16 O.F.M. friars from several provinces to Mt. Alvernia Retreat House (Wappingers Falls, NY) for three days last October to discuss issues in Hispanic ministry. Doctor Hosffmann Ospino, a professor at Boston College, gave a presentation on **Hispanic Catholics in the U.S. today.** They **comprise approximately 40 percent of U.S. Catholics;** two-thirds were born in the U.S. and have English as their first language. A fifth ***Juntos Como Hermanos*** is scheduled for October 2017.

The three North American provinces of the **Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity** maintain a common website at franciscanway.org, with links to their provinces headquartered in Stella Niagara (NY), Denver (CO), and Redwood City (CA).

The **Franciscan Alliance** (14 hospitals in Indiana and Illinois) maintains FranciscanHealth.org. Among that website's offering is an article entitled "4 Steps to More Fully Enjoy the Holiday Season." For site visitors who speak English, free assistance ser-

vices are available in 20 languages through the site's 877-number.

Several **Poor Clare monasteries** in the United States and in other countries were officially designated as pilgrimage sites for the Jubilee Holy Year of Mercy.

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of their congregation, the **Sisters of St. Francis of Clinton, Iowa**, published reflections by sisters, associates, and sojourners on their life and varied ministries in this country, the Bahamas, and Peru (clintonfranciscans.com). The sisters have been teachers, nurses, speech therapists, involved in *L'Arche* communities and ministries to homeless people and to persons with HIV/AIDS.

The seven O.F.M. provinces in the United States are working to establish a **national postulancy program** in Maryland and a **common novitiate** in California.

Sister Sarah Ruble, OSF (Sisters of St. Francis, Rochester, MN) began teaching in St. Paul schools after her first profession in 1987. Currently she teaches girls and boys in kindergarten and says, "Everything is fun and new to the students."

John Vaughn, the O.F.M. minister general from 1979 through 1991, died October 10 in Santa Barbara, California, and is buried in the mission basilica there. A special issue of *Fraternitas*, the O.F.M. international newsletter, will be published about him.

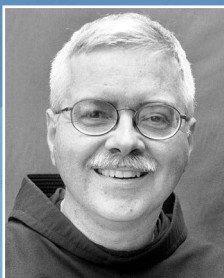
Key Websites

www.franfed.org

www.escO.F.M..org

www.franciscancollegesanduniversities.org

www.FranciscanHealth.org



Compiled by **Pat McCloskey, O.F.M.,** the author of *Peace and Good: Through the Year with Francis of Assisi* (Franciscan Media). Send news items for this column to pmccloskey@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 Institution in the Mind:

University Culture, Strategic Planning and the Franciscan Imagination

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

There is no shortage of works in higher education ready to diagnose the problems of modern universities and colleges and to predict their demise. It is fair to say that no institution, outside of Congress, comes up for more criticism today than schools and the charges levelled against colleges are often quite severe.¹ Andrew Hacker and Claudia Dreifus, for example, in their provocatively titled work, *Higher Education?: How Colleges are Wasting our Money and Failing our Kids*², lay the blame on a system that favors research over teaching and that prefers career training over the liberal arts, with a failed tenure system “that does anything but protect intellectual freedom.”³ All of that because, as Dreifus concludes, the whole system is built on a premise of status and hierarchy, where the richest and most privileged and buffered universities set the pace and standards for higher education and propel the rest of the university-system down frenzied financial paths that are unsustainable.⁴

Sociologist Sigal Avalon agrees. She writes that disparity, not diversity, has now become the critical problematic facing higher education today, noting that class inequality and income disparity in higher education has been steadily rising since the 1980's as a result of increasing tuitions, the high and disproportionate cost of athletics and declining financial aid, but also because of the rising polarization of the classes.⁵

In his most recent book, *Breakpoint: The Changing Marketplace for Higher Education*, Jon McGee makes the case that the challenges facing colleges and universities today are increasing exponentially.⁶ We are in the midst of a perfect storm of demographic, economic, and cultural disruptions that are coming together all at once with a collective and unprecedented magnitude, that the smaller and more vulnerable educational institutions may not be able to weather. These disruptions are of such an order of magnitude that they require nothing less than a total “reimagining of the future.” While many institutions have been racing to imitate the

Ivy Leagues, McGee suggests that colleges need to know “what programs, experiences, or attributes in fact make my institution distinctive... (Effectiveness in the future) rests on a commitment to knowing, understanding, and leveraging the market value of the distinction.”⁷ That is, leaders of higher educational institutions will have to step back and assess the very models they have been using to bring their institutions forward because the forces that are bearing down on them are unprecedented in scope and require skills beyond what most university and college administrators have been groomed for.

One scholar, who comes at this challenge in a different manner, is moral theologian James F. Keenan, SJ, from Boston College. In his new book, *University Ethics*,⁸ Keenan argues that college administrators are not going to solve the systemic challenges their institutions face by using disjointed skill sets—big data analytics, demographic studies, financial gap analyses, and social marketing saturation. He argues that the problems we face find their roots in a more comprehensive problem, in the lack of a coherent view of the modern university and a deficit in the ethical reasoning needed to promote the university as a more responsive and responsible social institution today. He finds the failure in the lack of “university ethics.”

Keenan begins with a startling claim that, while colleges and universities teach ethics across their various departments, schools, and disciplines—to students in biology, business, medicine, journalism, and law, to name a few, no universities in America have courses or, before now, even textbooks, designed specifically to teach ethics to and about universities themselves. Curiously, universities teach others how to be ethical in their professions, but they do not teach themselves. Universities and colleges judge the behaviors of others, but have no systematic format for seeing and judging themselves in an ethical light. In a related article, Keenan teases out his argument this way:

At any university, anyone can take a course on ethics in a number of fields, including business, nursing, law, medicine or journalism. In fact, if one is looking for ethical training in a profession, the courses are found at a university. The only professional institution about which you cannot find any ethics courses listed among the hundreds of courses at any university is precisely the university itself. If you search for a course on university ethics, you will simply not find one.

My complaint is not only that the faculty has no training in professional ethics, but also that other university members are not subject to professional ethical

1 Jonathan R. Cole, *Toward a More Perfect University* (New York: Public Affairs, 2016).

2 Andrew Hacker and Claudia Dreifus, *Higher Education?: How Colleges are Wasting our Money and Failing our Kids— and What we Can Do About it* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2010). Marc C. Taylor agrees that teaching is undervalued, cf. *Crisis on Campus: A Bold Plan for Reforming Our Colleges and Universities* (New York: Knopf, 2010).

3 Jennie Rothenberg Gritz, “What's Wrong with the American University System?” *The Atlantic* <http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2010/07/whats-wrong-with-the-american-university-system/60458/> accessed: May 13, 2016.

4 Claudia Dreifus quoted at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/04/25/whats-wrong-with-american_n_853640.html?slideshow=true#gallery/17749/0. Accessed: May 12, 2016.

5 Sigal Avalon, *Race, Class and Affirmative Action* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2015).

6 Jon McGee, *Breakpoint: The Changing Marketplace for Higher Education* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015).

7 McGee, 115.

8 James F. Keenan, *University Ethics: How Colleges can Build and Benefit from a Culture of Ethics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015).

standards, whether they are in teaching, development, admissions, athletics, student affairs, security, housekeeping, or any other sector of the university. Most of all, the administrators – in particular those at the highest level of the university, from vice presidents and the president to the board of trustees – have not been trained in professional university ethics. It's a small wonder, then, that they do not promote a culture of ethical consciousness and accountability.⁹

As we know, colleges and universities are constantly in the news being caught in ethically compromising situations, whether they be sexual assaults on campus, athletes or coaches behaving badly, gross compensation inequities between academics and athletics, student groups hosting racist parties, widespread cheating and behavioral misconduct, underpaid and underrepresented adjunct faculty, overpaid university presidents, conflicts of interest, plagiarism by students and faculty, grade inflation and numerous other problems. Generally speaking, faculty and administrators who speak often and eloquently about the rights to shared governance do not at the same time articulate by what ethical reasoning, insights or norms they should be held accountable in their own public roles as university employees. Despite the increased need for cooperation and collaboration across all functions of the university or college, faculty, administrators, and staff have no specific training on collaborative forms of leadership, financial responsibility, accountability, confidentiality, organizational truth-telling, institutional due-process, contracts, fair wages, adequate representation, conflicts of interest, conflict resolution, and mediation, among other things.

In short, our colleges and universities are flying blind and in the dark, without the ethical instruments they need to work through the complexities of university relationships and systems today. We are at a time when the volume and velocity of changes impacting our educational systems are speeding up. Ronald Heifetz at Harvard's School of Government suggested not long ago that if we, as institutional leaders, are expecting things to return to some kind of organizational "normal" any time soon, we are surely out of luck.¹⁰ We are in for what he calls a "permanent (state of) crisis" and effective leaders must learn how to manage the anxiety that today's profound demographic, cultural, social, and economic disruptions provide.

Why No University Ethics?

Given the disruptions we encounter and the barrage of misconduct we face, why have universities and colleges not developed the "culture of ethics" they need and that they demand of others? There is little doubt that we need ethical guidance to face issues like: fair compensation, environmental sustainability, racial tensions, college relations with neighbors, students' rights, board of trustee terms of office, the dorm life of students, immigration issues, and the fact that more and more students are unable to keep up with the cost of education, and far too many are withdrawing from college because they can't keep pace with

rising educational costs and fees for service.

These issues are growing in intensity and they impact faculty, staff, students and administrators. And yet, we don't have a common ethical compass. Why? Keenan locates a problem that lies beyond our policies, practices and procedures, one that hides behind the stack of administrative manuals and handbooks that we consult whenever a problem erupts. It has to do with the very picture we have of the university itself. It refers to the inchoate and often un-reflected image we have of ourselves as a university community. Keenan's argument is a tough one.

We do not teach ourselves university ethics, and we don't abide by a transparent and accountable ethical code, Keenan suggests, because at a deeper level than we can normally articulate, we don't think we, as a university community, need one. Amazingly, the organization that argues that the professions of business, law, medicine, and social work need a distinct code and culture of ethics suggests, by its practice to date, that it is exempt from such a need. Keenan goes further in his analysis and criticism.

It is not as simple as universities not wanting a code and culture of ethics in the academy. Keenan suggests that such a culture of ethics would threaten the identity and practice of the university as we know it today. He believes that the academy has not wanted an ethical compass because a "culture of ethics" would challenge what is most sacrosanct and most defended in the university system today, i.e. that the university lives in the secure cultural landscape of individualism. It is what Keenan calls our culture of "fiefdoms." He writes:

Unlike most professionals and civil servants, we function very much as individuals in the academy. Aside from department meetings, we study alone, work alone, teach alone, write alone, and lecture alone; we also grade students individually and write their singular letters of recommendation.

We cannot underestimate the individualism of our scholarly formation and our professional lifestyle. While almost every contemporary professional works in some form of partnership or team work – police officers with their partners, firefighters with their ladder companies, health care workers with their team, and lawyers with their firm – we faculty train alone and then work alone.

... the isolation and the attendant lack of solidarity makes us dull in our sensitivity to matters within the academy that we should be critiquing.¹¹

The arresting silos that plague our university systems, the tedious patterns of communication or non-communication between departments and units, the glacial pace of change and innovation, the shocking trampling of boundaries between boards and administrators, between faculty and students, as well as departments working at cross-purposes to each other are not singular or occasional bad acts of outliers. They now appear as consequences of a system tied to outmoded and ill-serving assumptions of organizational individualism.

What Keenan points to is a prevailing assumption about the way the academy ought to operate. He suggests that academics have been trained and rely heavily on inherited forms of operational autonomy and an almost infallible system of self-deter-

⁹ James F. Keenan, "Practice what you Teach: Do Universities need a Lesson in Ethics?" *U.S. Catholic* 80:2 (February 2015), 17-20.

¹⁰ Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow · Marty Linsky, "Leadership in (Permanent) Crisis," *Harvard Business Review* (July-August 2009), accessed at: <https://hbr.org/2009/07/leadership-in-a-permanent-crisis>.

¹¹ Keenan, *University Ethics*, 58-59.



mination. We see our universities and colleges through a highly individualized lens. This implicit picture of organizational autonomy leads to the creation of institutional silos, departments acting independently, offices begrudgingly answering phone calls or messages “when they choose,” faculty members rarely coming into work and becoming increasingly disconnected from the social life and common acts of the campus community. Faculty and administrators are in a growing tug of institutional power, with lots of talk about shared governance but not much evidence of real shared responsibilities. It is as if we are trying to build a university community with the thin threads of individual interests. This thinning out of common bonds is happening just at a time when strong networks of cooperation and collaboration are most needed. The complexities of global systems, the needs of an interdependent market place, the social demands of Millennial and Mosaic students require more, not less, shared vision and cooperative action. But, those demands come up against the protected fortresses of our “fiefdoms,” as Keenan describes them. Universities have honed the skills of institutional autonomy and privacy when what is demanded are the tools of connectivity and cross-functionality and a mindset for the common good.

Keenan describes what plagues our institutions. We work alone and presume that everyone else does as well. We also assume that if everyone works well at their own jobs, the institution will thrive. What we are not thinking through is the need for regular and ongoing cooperation, collaboration, connectivity, and cross-functionality between individuals—and across departments, units, and functions of the university—for the common good of the whole institution. We don’t think enough about the systems that make institutions work and the collaboration that is required for the continued functioning of our organizations. Faculty, for example, may (and should) focus on curriculum development, but they may not be interested or invested in discussions about the business of enrollment management that makes the delivery of courses and the retention of students possible. Faculty want more influence in the processes of university governance and more say on anything and everything that touches, even tangentially, faculty life on campus. And yet, some balk at learning, to say it crudely, “how the sausage is made,” how the whole system needs to function well and together in order to provide the effective delivery of every student to graduation.

Administrators, for their part, dispense university dollars but sometimes do so by categories that are more and more artificially segregated (academics on one side, athletics on the other). Few employees are capable of thinking constructively across departments. Few institutions have done organizational function audits to trace the supply chain of effective and efficient actions that must go into the delivery of a seamless and satisfactory product for parents and students today.

The crisis we face in universities and colleges today is not primarily at the level of policies and procedures. It is deeper and harder than that. We can argue about what steps need to be taken to grow our universities and respond to their emerging challenges. The data can get us to greater efficiencies. But, data alone cannot get to our underlying problem, namely that the pictures in our mind about what a good university is and how it should thrive are coming apart. Some on our campuses are ratcheting up the rhetoric of “existential threats” to personal autonomy and individual freedom at a time when collective cooperation in an increas-

ingly globalized world is more and more demanded.¹² The institution-in-the-mind that promotes and protects autonomy clashes with the institution-in-the-mind that requires more collaboration and solidarity. Our problem lies in the interior and collective pictures we have of our institutions and how our organizations *ought* to function and how they actually *do* function.

I want to talk about the “organizational imagination of religiously affiliated institutions” and how a Franciscan imagination can help change the way we think about the task, role and authority challenges of our universities and colleges.

The Organizational Imagination of Religiously Affiliated Institutions

For more than 20 years I have worked as a socio-analytic organizational consultant, specializing in the strategic planning and change management needs of religiously-affiliated institutions all around the world. One of the primary tasks of a socio-analyst is the proper understanding and diagnosis of the institutional system as a whole.¹³ Our responsibility at the end of the day is to inquire about and appreciate an organization’s functions and dysfunctions and to help leaders understand how and why departments and units within the institution can stall in chronic patterns of confusion, frustration, rebellion, or apathy.

Socio-analysis studies how organizations behave. As Jean Hutton has said, “Organizations are people behaving: the question is how they behave” at the work they must do and the relationships they must maintain to get information shared and products made for their clients.¹⁴

Among the most central of socio-analysis’ concepts is its most simple—anxiety. People get anxious in the workplace, and groups often share a social anxiety around the tasks, roles, and authority that emerge in institutional life. This group-based anxiety resides in the conventions, customs, practices, and procedures of organizations. Sometimes the anxiety is conscious; most often, it is unconscious. Despite the generally held belief that institutions, including religiously-affiliated ones, function exclusively off their goals and objectives, the fact is that much of organizational life is conditioned by the covert and unconscious norms that impact structure, process, and task.¹⁵ All institutions experience some type of social anxiety when primed by threats to the institution’s survival, competition, competency, generativity, and creativity. The role of the socio-analytically trained consultant is to name the anxiety at play and assist individuals and groups within the institution to claim and work through it.¹⁶

12 Philip Lee, *Academic Freedom at American Universities: Constitutional Rights, Professional Norms and Contractual Duties* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015).

13 Larry Hirrschhorn, *The Workplace Within: The Psychodynamics of Organizations* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988); A. Bain, “On Socio-Analysis” Socio-Analysis, Vol.1 No.1 June 1999; A. Bain, “From Anxiety to Wonder: A New Paradigm for Socio-Analysis” in Centre for Socio-Analysis Newsletter No.1, February 2006; A. Bain, “Sources of Authority: The Double Threads of Anxiety and Wonder” in *Dare to Think the Unthought Known*, Ed. Ajeet N. Mathur, (Tampere, Finland. March 2006); L.J. Gould, “A Methodology for assessing internal working models of the organization -- applications to management and organizational development programs.”

Presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations, New York, New York, 24-25 October, 1987.

14 Jean Hutton, “Organization-in-the-Mind,” in Jean E. Neumann, *Developing Organizational Consultancy* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

15 Kenneth Eisold, *What You Don't Know You Know: Our Hidden Motives in Life, Business, and Everything Else* (New York: Other Press, 2010).

16 David B. Couturier, “The Socio-Analytic Study of Catholic Organizations



Key to properly understanding an organization is to uncover the “institution-in-the-mind” that is operating just below the surface of group functioning.¹⁷ The institution-in-the-mind is “what the individual perceives in his or her head of how activities and relations are structured and connected internally.”¹⁸ The “institution-in-the-mind” is the model in my head of how the organization is supposed to work for me. I create it from my interactions, relations and activities in the institution and how those interactions give rise to images, emotions, values and responses in me. The “institution-in-the-mind” is my distinct experience of the organization, both rationally and non-rationally. It determines how I understand the mission of the institution, how I take up my role at work, and how I interact with others in furtherance of the institution’s goals and objectives.

A few years ago, I was working with a high-ranking prelate who was facing a round of parish mergers and consolidations. The data he had accumulated, the consultations he had held, and all the facts he had amassed indicated that the mergers and closings were necessary. But, he was stalled. He couldn’t make what seemed to be a direct, though complicated, decision. When I asked him why the decision was hard to come by after all these many months of powerful analysis, he pointed to an emotional feeling he couldn’t quite name or resolve. After a few moments of discussion about his role, he admitted that he was afraid of facing parishioners with another round of closing. He knew that there would be negative pushback, and he wasn’t ready for the pain of it all. He knew that, at this moment, his anger would get the best of him, because he felt that parishioners were just being petulant and stubborn in the face of incontrovertible evidence. He was smart enough to know that anger was not a good place from which to make decisions.

As we talked, I asked him if he had ever closed or ended something that was painful. He thought for a moment and remembered his elderly aunt. A few years before, his aunt had come to the moment when she could no longer take care of her old and beautiful Victorian home. There were too many rooms and the maintenance was beyond her strength and skill. Every corner of the house was a threat to her physical health. It was time to move into assisted living and it fell to him, the only surviving nephew, to convince his aunt that it was time to move. He resisted that moment, as he was resisting this moment. I asked him how he got past his resistance back then.

He told me that he let his love for his elderly aunt guide him through his fear of hurting her. He let his compassion acknowledge that his aunt wasn’t stubborn and resistant; she was simply afraid and needed his encouragement, guidance and support, along with his reassurance that he wouldn’t abandon her in her new apartment. Tears came to the bishop’s eyes when he realized that his parishioners were similarly frightened and concerned. They too were giving up the spiritual home they had come to love and feel safe within. I asked him whether he could show the people the same love and make the same promise that they wouldn’t be abandoned by him, that he wouldn’t hide behind bureaucracy to avoid his pastoral responsibilities and the anxieties they produced inside him.

The bishop was fighting with two “institutions-in-the-mind.” The first one was bureaucratic and canonical. It followed proper

policies, procedures, customs and conventions. It was rational, neat, direct but sometimes draconian and unfeeling. It was “all business.” It was a mindset that was surfeited with statistics, gap analyses, and metrics of assessment. It was a business model that was devoid of feelings and the demands of the heart. The second mindset was more relational. It was equally challenging. It too had its particular rules and necessities; it lived in the real world, as well. The difference lay in the subtleties between an “economy of competition and managerial efficiencies” (that thought in terms of scarce resources and short windows of opportunity) and an “economy of communion” that centralized the critical place that the relational bond has in making and sustaining a decision. The bishop was caught in the middle of an organizational paradox, between two competing pictures of what his organization should be. I want to suggest that many in the academy, both administrators and faculty, face a similar stalemate of images. They are caught between competing and contradictory pictures of what the higher education institution should be and look like. The work of university strategic planning will not be solved by tinkering with policies and procedures or adopting more intricate metrics of managerial accountability. The work is deeper than the adjustment of policies and procedures and the delivery of new action plans. The work belongs in the imagination of the university.

Over the years, I have worked with many Franciscan institutions: friars and sisters in local community meetings, Franciscan brothers in regional assemblies and provincial chapters, Franciscan friars and sisters in their governance of hospitals and schools here in the United States and around the world, and I have worked with Franciscans at their international chapters, as they face the realities of growing their ministries across the globe. I have studied their Constitutions; I have read their mission and vision-statements, their by-laws and personnel handbooks. I have been involved when Franciscans have negotiated new relationships with their religiously-affiliated hospitals and colleges. Working on their strategic plans has been fascinating, but helping them come to grips with their internal image of what they expect or want their institutions to be has been intriguing.

Even though they rarely avert to it, Franciscans have internal pictures of how they see and how they expect their institutions to act and perform. Those “interior images” influence the way they see their ministries, the roles they should take up, and the resources they need to do what must be done. Sometimes those interior pictures line up with their stated goals and mission statements and, at other times, there is a gap between what they expect from their institutions and what they see. Sometimes Franciscans can articulate that gap and sometimes they cannot. The latter is most true, when the images are deeply embedded in the minds and hearts of the friars, so deeply engrained that they are rarely reflected on. I would suggest that our faculty and administrators now have similarly competing pictures of how they see and feel their universities and colleges ought to be.

Franciscans and their Institutions

How do Franciscans see their institutions and relate to them, whether they own, sponsor or work in them?

It is said that the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) was a massive gathering of the world’s bishops intent on looking not so much at doctrines and dogmas as much as at the nature of Church itself, its place in society and its relationship with the world and

in America Today,” in print.

17 David Armstrong, *Organization in the Mind: Psychoanalysis, Group Relations and Organizational Consultancy* The Tavistock Clinic Series, (London: Karnac Books, 2004).

18 Hutton, op. cit.



its problems.¹⁹ The opening line of the dogmatic constitution on the church, *Gaudium et Spes* signals the Council's intent to relate differently and more actively with "the joys and hopes, griefs and anguish of the people of our times."²⁰ Xavier University theologian, Peter A Huff, demonstrates that the Church was looking for a new image to describe its relationship to the world. He says,

Prior to this time, the church had been almost seen as a fortress, very much concerned about its own internal stability and integrity and engaging the world in terms of missionary activity, ... Pope John (XXIII) wanted to reinforce that missionary mandate, but he also wanted to create an environment of dialogue, where the church would engage in all the forces of the modern world.²¹

The Council invited all people in the Church to reflect seriously on the shape and form of their collective life. The Council offered Catholics an opportunity to reflect on the images we use to describe our experience of church, i.e. whether it be "the rock" of stability on which the church was founded or the "people of God" on pilgrimage toward the fullness of the kingdom. For Franciscans the post-Vatican II period was an opportunity to reaffirm the fundamental charism of Franciscan life as a life essentially dedicated to gospel brother/sisterhood. That is, the intention of St. Francis in founding the Franciscan Order was not primarily to start a community of workers for specific ministries in the Church. His idea was more radical and substantial. Franciscans were not founded to start hospitals or colleges, to serve in parishes or to preach in churches. Franciscans were founded to express in our own corporate life the fundamental vision of Francis—that all creatures exist as an interdependent community of brothers and sisters under a good and gracious God, a God that Francis experienced as self-diffusive love.

As a young man, Francis had grown up in a society (and Church) convulsed in spasms of incredible violence and amazing greed. He lived in a world armed and hopelessly divided between the privileged few (the "majores") and the destitute many (the "minores"). His conversion to poverty and minority was an economic choice for a new world order based on communion and not competition.²²

The past 50 years have seen an explosion in the study of this renewed sense of charism. Scholars like Zachary Hayes, Regis Armstrong, Ewert Cousins, Kenan Osborne and many others have been able to root this fundamental social charism in the Trinitarian theological tradition of the Victorines in the 11th and 12th centuries and St. Bonaventure in the 13th century.²³ These medieval theological meditations on the rich, diverse social life within the Trinity and its creative social expressions in the creation of an abundantly diverse universe give a renewed vibrancy to the task of renewing our own social and organizational theories, tragically draped in the mantle of an increasingly nihilistic

individualism developed since the rise of the Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries.²⁴

Francis saw the purpose of his life in the development of a gospel brotherhood. He understood that he was creating a new form of community and fraternity with the men and women who followed him. He saw his venture in cosmic terms, as he expressed so elegantly in his famous *Canticle of the Creatures*, where all creatures live in a symphony of collegial and communal praise as "brother sun, sister moon," etc.²⁵ Thus, the organizing principles and ecclesial forms of Franciscan institutions revolve around this deep "fraternal imagination," which is expressed in compassion, respect for the dignity of the individual, peace, care of creation, solidarity especially with the most vulnerable and marginalized, poverty as a rejection of competition and as a profound dependence on and protection of the brotherhood itself, and humility as loving service to one's sisters and brothers.

Franciscan life in its ideal form is shaped by this founding vision of a universal brother/sisterhood, profoundly inclusive and deeply devoted to the thick bonds that connect men and women to each other and, indeed, all creatures to one other in the loving embrace of a God we believe to be good, all good, supremely good, all the time and to everyone.

The Franciscan devotion to the Incarnation, the mystery of the ineffable God entering life at its lowest and most vulnerable point in the deepest poverty and humility, drives a consciousness that the great mysteries of life are best inspected and received at the moments of greatest vulnerability. Francis' lifelong experiment with poverty taught him that he could access the fullness of God even at life's deepest moments of emptiness. Poverty and tragedies were not walls or obstacles to human fulfillment, but windows to deeper and more profound levels of spiritual consciousness. Solidarity with the poor was a privileged entrance way to the divine.

This Franciscan preference for the thick bonds of solidarity clashes mightily with the hyper-individualism and competitive aggressiveness of modern economics. As I indicate in my latest book, *Franciscans and their Finances: Economics in a Disenchanted World*, our Franciscan fraternal economy is a powerful restorative antidote to the originating organizational principles of the modern economy.²⁶ Franciscans do not see humanity in a "war of all against all," as Thomas Hobbes declared at the start of the Enlightenment.²⁷ Nor do Franciscans see "competitive individualism" as the most effective form of human thriving. Franciscans promote economies of communion over those of competition. They reject status and hierarchy in favor of service and fraternity.

Franciscans bring their organizational ideals of communion and solidarity with them to their university experiences. If universities find themselves, as James Keenan suggests, in a "cultural landscape of individualism," stalled in their ethical progress by the creation and maintenance of "fiefdoms," then the Franciscan

19 John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

20 Opening line of the dogmatic constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*.

21 Peter A. Huff (Xavier University) in Jordan Teichner, "Why is Vatican II so important," NPR <http://www.npr.org/2012/10/10/162573716/why-is-vatican-ii-so-important>. Accessed: May 13, 2016.

22 David B. Couturier, *The Fraternal Economy: A Pastoral Psychology of Franciscan Economics* (South Bend, IN: The Victoria Press, 2007) and *Franciscans and their Finances: Economics in a Disenchanted World* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2015).

23 See for example, Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1978).

24 John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1991, 2006); Daniel Maria Klimck, "Franciscan Radical Orthodoxy: Reconciling Cambridge and Assisi," *Franciscan Connections* 66:2, 35-43.

25 Jacques Dalarun, *The Canticle of Brother Sun: Francis of Assisi Reconciled* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2016).

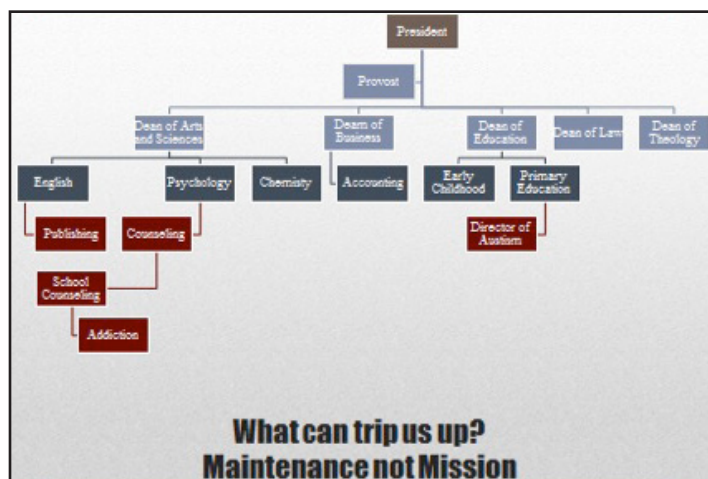
26 David B. Couturier, *Franciscans and their Finances: Economics in a Disenchanted World* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2016).

27 Michael Karlberg and Leslie Buell, "Deconstructing the 'War of all against All': The Prevalence and Implications of War Metaphors and other Adversarial News Schema in Times, Newsweek and MacLeans," *Peace and Conflict Studies* (2005) 12:1, accessed: <http://myweb.www.edu/karlberg/articles/WarOfAll.pdf>.



imagination has an important part to play in the restoration of the modern university. The Franciscan fraternal economy can be a useful palliative to the enervating and depleting aspects of the “managerial university” that has developed around us. The Franciscan imagination with its principles of engagement, dialogue, and commitment to the most vulnerable among us, must become more than pious sound bites preached in our university chapels. These Franciscan principles have to become cherished organizational dynamics put into practice by administrators dedicated to the Franciscan vision, not simply as a pathway for individual spirituality but as an organizational charism that can reform our institutional life, now suffering under the weight of our culture of individualism and aggressive competition.

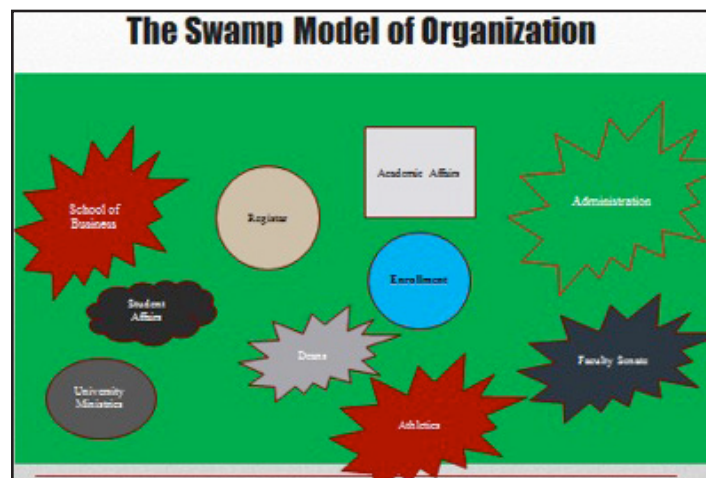
Today’s managerial university pivots more and more between two organizational models, two “institutions-in-the-mind.” The first is the familiar top-down bureaucratic, highly centralized and controlled model found on most organizational charts.



This is the classic image of the “managerial university.” It demonstrates how individuals work, how they report and how much authority they are offered. It is a model of efficiency. Work spreads out into more and more departments, through more and more layers of verticalized accountability. In complex systems, reporting lines increase exponentially. The distance between administrators and the everyday actors becomes longer and more challenging to traverse. Usable information becomes more difficult to access and digest. Complexity forces departments into bunkered mentalities, while data flows vertically not horizontally where it might better be shared and utilized more effectively for the good of our students, parents, and alumni. Mid-level managers feel more and more disempowered as they watch information become lost in its upward flight through the increasing supply chains of command and control. Soon they become disengaged from the process of administration. Authorization gets locked at higher and higher levels, far away from the most local places where entrepreneurial creativity could do the most good. Soon enough, individuals feel like cogs in the great wheel of institutional efficiency. They do their jobs but do not see nor any longer participate in the “big picture” for which they are working.

Many institutions have recognized the dangers of this bureaucratic top-down, command and control organizational model and approach to planning in our academic institutions. And so, they have tried to authorize their departments and units to create more autonomous thinking and more entrepreneurial action at more local levels. Franciscans in many of their institutions have tried to

de-centralize their operations and delegate authority more deeply into the institution. They have, like many secular institutions, dispersed authority making their committees, departments, and units stronger but more loosely connected to one another and to a shared vision. Unfortunately, many Franciscan institutions have created what socio-analysts often call “the swamp.”



This is the organization whose mission and purpose is diffused through the system. Departments, units, ministries, and faculties run semi-autonomously. Each is, as it were, on their own lily pad, developing or diminishing at their own pace, hardly if ever communicating across the pond to other university ventures, increasingly disconnected from any central or organizing purpose. Curiously, while individuals and units experience more autonomy, they also sense more alienation. Each unit is allowed to drive at their own pace. Some units thrive; some departments flounder. In boom times, all get by. In lean years, as resources become more scarce, struggling departments look to central authority to bail them out and wonder why they are “left out in the cold.” In times of scarcity, departments in trouble turn to administrative authorities to rescue them, only to find that there is no “common good” or “shared vision” left to provide institutional assistance. This is when silos and political self-interests become more noticeable and least helpful. This “laissez-faire” institution-in-the-mind, designed to promote creative autonomy and a delegated entrepreneurship ends up, especially when times are tough, increasing a sense of alienation across campuses. Each unit feels (rightly so) that they are paddling alone toward an undescribed or non-descript vision that has little bearing and provides scant relief in promoting a sense of a secure future.

Thus, the origins of what we spoke about moments ago—the arresting silos that plague our university systems, the tedious patterns of communication or non-communication between departments and units, the glacial pace of change and innovation, the shocking trampling of boundaries between boards and administrators, between faculty and students and departments against each other.” Many of these have their origin in this organizational model of hyper-individualism and competitive autonomy.

The Franciscan Imagination and University Culture

The Franciscan charism was never meant to be an individual lifestyle. It has always been a corporate charism, fundamentally a new way of organizing ourselves for a common good and a greater human purpose in this world. For various reasons, due largely to the influence of post-Enlightenment social theories of the “buff-



ered self,” Franciscanism has been interpreted as a largely pious but personally joyous and peace-filled lifestyle before God. It is time to bring our Franciscan corporate passion back into play. We must engage the thick bonds of solidarity that are at the core of the Franciscan movement. We must redesign our institutional planning and decision-making mechanisms to be concurrent with our Franciscan values of compassion, solidarity, care of creation, peace and respect for human dignity. We need to develop a Franciscan mission-centric view of institutional planning. This would take four steps to accomplish. We would need:

1. a thorough understanding and commitment to an applied Franciscan intellectual tradition throughout our university and college system;
2. an education and hiring for Franciscan mission at all levels (Board, Cabinet, Faculty, Staff and Students) that is practical and accessible with appropriate resources and models of engagement;
3. an application of the principles of the “fraternal economy” in all university and college relations, i.e. transparency, accountability, participation, equity, solidarity and austerity;²⁸
4. a recasting of our images and vocabulary of the academy that replace the thin threads of individualism with the thick bonds of solidarity.

Let me conclude by providing a Franciscan examination of organizational consciousness:

1. If you had to draw a picture of what it feels like to live and work in your institution, what image would you draw to describe your experience?
2. If your cabinet, staff, and employees had an opportunity to draw their experience of your college/university at this time, what do you believe their images would look like?
3. What word pictures do people regularly use to describe the college “in the good old days,” what word pictures do they use now?
4. As a leader or administrator, how would you describe working with the following groups: the Faculty Senate/ the Faculty as a whole/ senior administrators/ the board of trustees/ alumni/ students?
5. The paper spoke about the “thick bonds of solidarity” that characterize Franciscan connections. Where do you experience those “thick bonds?”
6. The paper also spoke about the “thin threads of indi-

vidualism” that plague the academy. Where do you experience these “thin threads?”

7. What Franciscan image most informs the way you go about your university/college work?

Conclusion

Colleges and universities are under increasing threat from demographic, cultural and financial disruptions. Higher education administrators are called upon to undertake new and more intense forms of strategic planning that can lead their organizations safely and effectively through turbulent times. Our campuses lack the tools necessary to deal with the volume and velocity of change facing our universities; largely because they lack the ethical reasoning to maneuver in the treacherous waters they are in. What blocks them is a “cultural landscape of individualism.” The Franciscan intellectual tradition provides resources for organizational development and innovation. Franciscanism’s thick bonds of solidarity can replace the thin threads of individualism that universities are now using to meet the challenges of a more globalized and interdependent world. To get there, administrators and faculty, along with Boards and staff, will have to inspect regularly their “institutions-in-the-mind,” as they carry the values, emotions, fears, and social defenses we use to understand the work we do and the roles we take up at our Franciscan colleges and universities.



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.

²⁸ Couturier, *The Fraternal Economy*, 34.





Franciscan Memories and Literary Genres

By Chris Dyczek, O.F.M.

John V. Fleming provided Franciscans with a study of types of writing used by their favorite authors. The *Defensio Fratrum Mendicantium* he described as a “wedding of poetry and apologetics.”¹ Other suggested genres included the *Fioretti* as “an apocryphal gospel” and the *Three Companions* as “a book of rather casual memoirs.” Some writings seem to fit a broad genre such as hagiography, but when explored prove to be more complex. A dilemma about genres can arise for students of Franciscan sources when aiming to make comparisons with work by modern gospel scholarship. Did Francis of Assisi, Giles, Leo and others think of themselves as struggling to set a path through hardships, similar in detail to those known to Jesus’ followers? Or were they travelling in the footprints of their heavenly Saviour Christ? Would they even understand our distinctions between Jesus of Nazareth and the Messiah? Kenneth Cragg has pointed out the uncertainties which still exist for gospel narrative debates about form in our day. He sees a “double recognition” in the New Testament, with it being “a literature made of a faith and a faith making a literature, rooted, alike, in a history, first of the Christ-figure, and then of the Christ-people.”² But he also refers to “the taxing relation we must discern between the actualities of Jesus of Nazareth and the primary faith in the Christ of God.” We strain language to express what was meant by “the divine in the Christ-event” or by “the Christ-event achieved in the crucified.” Here all the gospels take us back to memories of a ministry which “moves, in the soul of Jesus, from assurance of ‘the kingdom of heaven’ which is its central theme. The reality and presence of that kingdom are said to be implicit in the very presence and activity of Jesus.... In the fabric of his teaching, his caring, his healing, in the sheer sincerity of his practice of the kingdom’s ways.” But this still implies that some creative tensions, which puzzle us, operate between Old Testament prophetic phrases and a New Testament social process. Living the gospel life can’t always be summed up simply as a routine “following of Christ” (*sequela Christi*).

The distinction between a history of the Christ-figure and the actualities of Jesus of Nazareth would not been noticed as a standard division in the 13th century. Yet in Franciscan writings we can in fact meet summaries which fit best with one mode of narrative focus, on one occasion, and with another mode at another time. Angela of Foligno, for instance, refers to us knowing “the kind of clothes the Son of Man wore” when he gave us “an example of that poverty... which moved him to hide his supreme power.... He allowed himself to be blasphemed, disparaged, reproached, seized, scourged and crucified, all the while appearing as one without power.”³ In our case, she adds,

we “cannot hide power we do not possess, but must rather discover and acknowledge how powerless we are.” Perhaps our narrative memories amount really to a ‘following of Jesus’ (which would be *sequela Jesu*, my phrase, not hers), as this seems to imply.

When Angelo Clareno also praises those who live a fully Gospel-guided communal life, his summary is more in line with scholastic terminology about the incarnation. He tells us that “Taught by the spirit of Christ, St. Francis understood that the Son of God, by coming into the world, redeemed us by his death, reconciling us to his Father, so unified all who believed in him that.... we are one in him and in each other by the power of his bodily flesh which we eat.”⁴ Discerning the consciousness of Christ as a transcendent reality and presence is the primary focus of faith here. But that is not to ignore the awareness of a community which acts in accord with a dynamic of mission. Friars should be like the first disciples and “all imitators of their way of life [who] determine and strive with all the strength they possess to conform themselves to the life of Christ.” Alongside this, Clareno says, members of any viable Franciscan community would “follow the example of Christ.... So that, unburdened and freed from the constraints of visible things and from all care and concern, so that it [the Order] might more perfectly and humbly follow Christ and more eagerly exert itself in serving him.”

Although Angela of Foligno and Angelo Clareno both use the term ‘giving us an example,’ and would probably agree for the most part on what this means, there is a genuine difference remaining between plunging week after week into messy and dangerous social circumstances and keeping to a liturgically structured mental language of humility. Having to tackle some challenging encounters is also a separate style of journeying experience from having a shared, guided reflection on the level of Christ’s empowerment at work in our conversion. A more detailed study of this distinction could be made through the language of Franciscan sermons and commentaries on the gospels and on the Rule. But for our present purpose, it will be worth considering chiefly a difference in the genre of recorded memories. On the one hand, recalling social encounters in a context of roughly gospel-related phrases. On the other, theological themes relating to empowerment and discernment, which approach a relationship with Christ through symbols, on a more spiritually heightened basis.

We can introduce a third set of records as a social benchmark, using the sayings of Giles of Assisi. These can tell us much more about faith being exercised and deepened through a plurality of social encounters, varied just occasionally in terms of theological phrasing, to encourage spiritual vision and reflection. Giles clearly did deeply prize discernment, yet he also regarded it as taking place as a tough commitment, when remaining inwardly focussed on God’s will or Christ’s love. There is little appeal in his thoughts

1 J. V. Fleming, *An Introduction to Franciscan Literature*, (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977) pp. 91, 67, 50.

2 K. Cragg, “According to the Scriptures”: literacy and revelation’ in M. Wadsworth ed., *Ways of Reading the Bible*, (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1981) pp. 30, 24. 30-31.

3 Bl. Angela of Foligno, ‘L’autobiografia e gli scritti’, in C. J. Lynch ed., *A Poor Man’s Legacy*, (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1987) pp. 177-8.

4 A. Clareno, ‘Expositio Regulae Fratrum Minorum’, L. Oliger ed., in C. J. Lynch ed., *A Poor Man’s Legacy*, pp. 209-210, 208.



to incarnational terminology. He is not often inclined to use academic language. He must be described, therefore, as staying close to popular idioms about obeying the Holy Spirit, which we also notice, though less fully, in Angela of Foligno.

If we intend to apply this differentiation to the writings of St. Bonaventure, a more literary and academic phrasing has to be observed and analysed. He generally did not enter into a process of devising popular aphorisms or exempla, which are so typical of Giles. Nevertheless, the perception of two kinds of writing and communication is genuinely evident. We may think above all about how distinct are the styles of expression and selected content in the *Legenda major* and *Legenda minor*. He was well aware that the readership or audience for each of these works was quite dissimilar. Professional theologians, high-ranking prelates, and the provincial ministers of the Franciscan Order, as well as a mixture of French counts, curia lawyers and international religious diplomats, were all likely to become familiar with the *Legenda major*. However, if they did read it, what they would discover was a call to spiritual discernment and conversion processes, conveyed at a significantly unnerving level. If this was what submitting in obedience to the Holy Spirit had meant for St. Francis, they might say, that process would set up remarkable standards of self-awareness, communal energy, and prayerful integrity for Christians everywhere. The *Legenda minor*, on the other hand, was written as a series of short passages, each conveniently focussed upon a particular occasion, incident, or theme, suitable for reading whenever friars gathered to pray. This meant that it had to be appreciated at a popular level to Franciscans of mixed intellectual abilities, who would appreciate vigorous storytelling. We could go so far as to say, in modern terms, that the word 'legenda' (readings) does not carry the same implication when applied to either writing. The two texts belong, in effect, to quite separate genres.

Here as a familiar passage from the *Legenda major* chapter two. Walking features in it, but the motion is secondary to Francis' prayerful relationship with Christ as Lord:

For one day when Francis went out to meditate in the fields, he walked near the Church of San Damiano which was threatening to collapse because of age. Impelled by the Spirit, he went inside to pray. 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 al being destroyed.'⁵

Bonaventure begins this passage with the expression, "no other teacher in these matters except Christ," then says that Francis "absorbed in the power of the divine words into his heart" and came to understand that the words referred to that spiritual ecclesia "which Christ purchased with his blood." Discernment capabilities decide the genre here, allied to Christological phrases which indicate a creative *imitatio* relationship to Christ, crucified and risen.

Now, in contrast, we may consider a virtual criticism of meditation, spoken by Giles: "It is impossible to acquire virtue without briskness and hard work." But elsewhere Giles also undoes that impression of being a workaholic, with other sayings which appear to be closer to the mind of Francis: "Unhappiness is to get your emo-

tions, your hopes, your will power locked in a fixation on worldly interests for which you neglect and lose spiritual, everlasting values." Perhaps he was able to ponder over the contradictions in his sayings and produced as a result a bridging maxim: "We are not patient under suffering because we are not in love with spiritual release. A steady toiler at spiritual work carries his pack of troubles gladly. His deepest interest is this burden because of the gain his own soul derives from it." Powers of discernment are esteemed highly in this, but as an ascetical habit, not in any theological mode or genre. If there is a genre, we must say that the plunge into social commitments is never far from the thoughts of Giles. One more quote may reveal an aspect of underlying evangelical theology which appealed to him: "You should beg God not to give you many gifts in this world. Ask him to send you into bitter battles and to leave you without his consoling help, so that you can be more richly rewarded later on."

This makes an interesting cameo image to compare with Bonaventure's praise for spiritual courage in the *Legenda minor*, chapter five: "At another time when the man of God was on a preaching journey with a brother companion between Lombardy and the Marches of Treviso, the darkness of night overtook them on the banks of the Po River. The road was exposed to many great dangers because of the river, the marshes and the darkness. His companion insisted that he should implore, in such a necessity, divine assistance. The man of God replied with great confidence: 'God is powerful. If it pleases him, he will make light for us by putting the darkness of night to flight.' What followed was marvellous! He had scarcely finished speaking when, behold, by the power of God such a great light began to shine around them that, while the darkness of night remained in other places, they could see in clear light not only the road but also many other things on the other side of the river."⁶ "If it pleases him" in this narrative is the equivalent to "without his consoling help" in the meditation from Br. Giles. Both are an act of faith where no visible security is available. Walking and "journey" imagery in this passage resemble occasions such as the apostles in a boat at sea in the gospels, where following Jesus (or *sequela*) is an outward action, a symbol of shared perseverance. In the *Legenda major* it is the symbolic inner reality of walking which makes the power of *imitatio* the defining aspect of the genre, alluding to discernment. This would suggest that the *Legenda minor* is closer to Angela of Foligno, while the *Legenda major* comes closer to Clareno. It would be best not to exaggerate the contrast. Yet it deserves to be considered. If medieval faith narratives sometimes moved some distance away from 'theology from above' the interplay of two such alternatives will have helped.

5 St. Bonaventure, *Legenda major*, II.1 in R.J. Armstrong et al, *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, (New York: New City Press, 1999) II, p. 536.



Chris Dyczek, O.F.M., Ph.D., comes from Reading, Berkshire in the United Kingdom. As a friar he has lectured in Church History for ministry students in Canterbury, and in the formulations of Christian doctrine at the University of Kent. At present he is the administrator for a distance learning course in Franciscan Spirituality, based at the Franciscan International Study Centre in Canterbury.



“Three Poor Women Appeared”

By Kevin Elphick, O.F.S.

Among the many experiences of the Divine which punctuate the life of St. Francis, there is one which has not traditionally drawn much attention. It is the account of three poor women who miraculously appeared to St. Francis. The story is recounted in Thomas of Celano among a series of chapters thematically devoted to poor people; the concluding chapters on this topic focusing specifically on poor *women* in particular.

The narrative of the apparition reads as follows:

When Francis, the poor man of Christ, was traveling... he passed through the plain near Rocca Campiglia, taking as a companion on the journey a doctor who was very devoted to the Order. Three poor women appeared by the road as Saint Francis was passing. They were so similar in stature, age, and face that you would think they were a three-part piece of matter, modeled by one form. As Saint Francis approached, they reverently bowed their heads and hailed him with a new greeting, saying: “Welcome, Lady Poverty!” At once the saint was filled with unspeakable joy, for he had in himself nothing that he would so gladly have people hail as what these women had chosen. And since he thought at first that they really were poor women, he turned to the doctor who was accompanying him, and said: “I beg you, for God’s sake, give, so that I can give something to these poor women.” The doctor immediately took out some coins, and leaping from his horse, he gave some to each of them. They then went on for a short way, and suddenly the doctor and the brothers glanced back and saw no women at all on the whole plain. They were utterly amazed and counted the event as a marvel of the Lord, knowing these were not women who had flown away faster than birds.¹

The language describing the three women is inescapably Trinitarian in formula. The Sixth Century martyr, Boethius, serves to exemplify this philosophical style of describing the Trinity: “For equals are equal, likes are like, identicals are identical, each with other; and the relation in the Trinity ... is like a relation of identicals.”² The “one form” of these three women hearkens to the one “form of God” (Philippians 2:6) which Jesus shared with God. The words *form* and *matter* are used in Trinitarian language to describe the unity of Godhead and distinction of Persons respectively.³ Celano has already prepared his readers for this revelation of the Trinity by earlier explaining that “by the word of two or three witnesses the sacrament of the Trinity might be evident.”⁴ In this case, Francis, the doctor, and their traveling companion brothers all bear witness to this appearance of the Trinity.

However, the representation of the Trinity as three poor Women

is startlingly unique and representative of the Franciscan focus on minority and preferential option for the poor. It is the great Gospel inversion whereby God has “cast down the mighty from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly.” (Luke 1:52) Within the societal structures of Francis’ day, women were mistakenly characterized as the “weaker sex.” Responsive to this characterization, Francis intentionally aligned himself with the weaker, knowing that God’s “power is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9) The apparition is a radical departure from expectations, revealing the Trinity as a community of three poor Women.

But Celano is also drawing upon the story of the three Visitors to Abraham and Sarah in Genesis. Christian tradition has interpreted these three Visitors as the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. This understanding is reflected in the well-known 15th century icon of the Trinity by Andrei Rublev, which is modeled after an older icon style known as “The Hospitality of Abraham & Sarah.” Celano draws upon this interpretation of the three Visitors as the Trinity. Where the Lord had appeared to Abraham “in the plains of Mamre” (Genesis 18:1 KJV), Francis’ theophany takes place in “a plain near the Rocca Campiglia.” Celano twice mentions that this apparition takes place on the plain to evoke this same setting. Celano also uses the very same words from the Genesis (18:2) account: “three ... appeared” (“*tres... apparuerunt*” in the original Latin of Celano’s account and the Latin translation of Genesis). Both Abraham and Francis rush to meet the needs of their three guests. But here Celano may be relying more upon the image of Sarah than of Abraham.⁵ Both Francis and Sarah have their gender identities called into question. Of Sarah’s gender, Genesis narrates that “it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women” (Genesis 18:11), given her advanced age. For Francis his gender is now changed by the title “Lady Poverty,” so that he ceases to be after the manner of men. Sarah also had been just given her new name by God. But her response to the visit of God is in marked contrast to Francis’ response. Told that she would conceive a child, Sarah laughed, and then denies to God that she has laughed. When her child is born, she names him “Isaac” which is Hebrew for “laughter.” In marked contrast, Francis revels in his new name “Lady Poverty,” and because of this new gender title, he is “filled with unspeakable joy, for he had in himself nothing that he would so gladly have people hail as what these women had chosen.” Where Sarah laughed at the surprising prospect of giving birth at her age, in contrast, Francis had “... always raised his hands to heaven for the true Israelites ... the little flock...those entrusted to him... His spirit had given birth to them with greater labor pains than a mother feels within herself.”⁶

It is unfortunate that when St. Bonaventure retells this story in *The Major Legend*, he fully removes any Trinitarian interpretation.

1 “The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul” by Thomas of Celano, (Chapter LX) trans. Regis Armstrong et al. in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents Volume II*. (New York: New City Press, 2000), pp. 307–308.

2 Boethius, *De Trinitate*, VI, 17.

3 Boethius, *De Trinitate*, Ch. 2; Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, First Part, Q. 29, A. 2, Reply Obj. 5 (interpreting Boethius’ text).

4 Thomas of Celano, “The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul,” (Chapter XXXVIII). *Early Documents*, Vol. II, p. 292.

5 Matthew of Aquasparta, a pupil of Bonaventure, also compares St. Francis to Abraham and Sarah, using the text from Isaiah 51:2 “Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you.” “Third Sermon on St. Francis” in *Sermons on St. Francis, St. Anthony, and St. Clare*, translated by Campion Murray, O.F.M. (Phoenix, AZ: Tau Publishing, 2013), p. 26. After noting the apparition to Abraham, Matthew also explains that “Christ wanted to transform himself and appear as a stranger” hidden beneath the likeness of the poor person. (p. 58)

6 Thomas of Celano, “The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul,” Chapter CXXXII. *Early Documents*, Vol. II, p. 359.



Where in Celano there is an “appearance” of the Three, and thus an evoking of the Genesis account, in Bonaventure St. Francis is solely “met” by three poor women.⁷ Bonaventure also strips all philosophical Trinitarian language from the account (“three-part,” “matter,” “form”) and offers only physical descriptors (height, age, appearance). Instead of recognizing this as an apparition of the Trinity, Bonaventure instead re-interprets the three women as the three evangelical virtues: poverty, chastity, and obedience, even though poverty alone had been mentioned in the original account. Celano himself could have also chosen to interpret the three women as personified theological virtues (as in Francis’ *Salutation of the Virtues*), except that he offers no textual clues to read the apparition in this manner. If he was alluding to the *Salutation*, then there six women are named. If to his own later reference to “holy simplicity,”⁸ then there he names four personified female virtues.

Bonaventure does acknowledge the uniqueness of the re-gendering in the greeting to St. Francis of “Welcome Lady Poverty,” describing it as “such an unusual greeting.”⁹ He then explains that this naming of Francis as “Lady Poverty” results from Francis taking Poverty as “his mother, his bride, and his lady.” However, Bonaventure clearly pushes his metaphorical language too far, forcing the reader to envision Francis as Lady Poverty himself, as well as envisioning a separate personification of Poverty, who is both a mother of Francis and (by implication, the incestuous) bride of Francis. In order to avoid any Trinitarian interpretation of the apparition of these three Women, Bonaventure engages in confusing, metaphorical gymnastics whereby Poverty is one of the three women greeting Francis, who is himself named as this same “Lady Poverty,” all the while having her also as his mother, bride, and lady. In this regard Bonaventure appears to stumble amidst his metaphors in his haste to rush away from any semblance of a female Trinity. When Bonaventure’s *Legendas* became the sole authorized biographies of St. Francis for the Order, his interpretation of this event in Francis’ life became the dominant explanation handed on in the tradition. An apparition of the Trinity to St. Francis as three poor Women, a theophany unique and specific to the nascent Franciscan tradition, was eclipsed by a later interpretation which relegates the three poor women to metaphorical obscurity.

Sensing the uniqueness of this theophany, Celano had been more modest in his presentation, giving the possibility that his understanding of the event might be “of doubtful interpretation but

most certain as regards the facts.” His humble disclaimer allows the reader to arrive at their own conclusion about what happened, while at the same time recalling a treasured event and memory from among the earliest stories of St. Francis’ life. Roberta McKelvie notes that “There are fundamental texts in the Franciscan tradition... which can and should lead to more egalitarian and collaborative praxis. There are as-yet-unrecovered stories ...which, if recovered and shared, would enrich the tradition immensely.”¹⁰ This text is one such example. It is important to hear afresh Celano describing an unheard of miracle whereby the Trinity appeared to St. Francis as

three poor Women, a quintessentially Franciscan theophany.

What Celano inherits from Francis is the great reversal of the Gospels whereby God has “cast down the mighty from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly.” In this new Reign of God, the known order and structure is upended. Celano explains as much, writing that “the order is reversed.”¹¹ This reversal includes gender status in society, and Francis embraces this reversal. Jacques Dalarun calls it a “scandalous reversal of traditional frameworks... [which] sets a ...process in motion. This is what leads Francis to change not only his position, but, frankly, his sex.”¹² Earlier, Celano had described that while praying, Francis was interrupted by the devil, who “made Francis think of a horribly hunchbacked woman who lived in town... The devil threatened that he would become like her

if he did not turn back sensibly from what he had begun.”¹³ The moral of Celano’s narrative is that Francis *did not* leave off what he had begun, and effectively the devil’s threat is realized: “he became like her.” This chapter culminates in Francis’ embrace and kiss of the leper, wherein that which was previously bitter became sweet. Francis embraces the reversed order; he effectively becomes the outcast woman. He is fully the opposite of his youthful aspirations to be a social-climbing, male merchant soldier.

The experience of the Trinity as three poor Women continues his journey. We have heard this same lesson before: the expected Messiah-King is instead found to be a poor Babe in a manger. The moment of glory and revelation is unexpectedly found in the One crucified, suffering and dying. Where one would have expected powerful and great lords to represent an apparition of the Trinity, instead three impoverished, revelatory Women now appear. But the



7 Armstrong, *Early Documents*, p. 580.

8 Thomas of Celano, “The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul,” *Early Documents*, Vol. II, p. 367.

9 Armstrong, *Early Documents*, p. 581.

10 Roberta A. McKelvie, O.S.F., *Angela of Montegiove: Franciscan, Tertiary, Beguine* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1997), p. 182. The original context is stories of Franciscan women.

11 Thomas of Celano “*The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*,” Chapter V. *Early Documents*, Vol. II, p. 248.

12 Jacques Dalarun, *Francis of Assisi & the Feminine* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2006), p. 267.

13 “*The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*,” Chapter V. *Early Documents*, Vol. II, p. 248.

unexpected reversals continue: Francis is greeted as “Lady” and he is “filled with unspeakable joy, for he had in himself nothing that he would so gladly have people hail as what these women had chosen.” Francis hears himself named both female and poor; the order is fully reversed from his youthful aspirations. While describing a later Franciscan author, Joan Curbet’s observation is equally valid of Francis: “It is perfectly possible to see enacted here one of the fundamental paradoxes of Christianity, and one which had been elaborated extensively by the Franciscan tradition: the exaltation of the humble and lowly above the powers of the earth. In the face of all worldly authorities and value systems, the achievement of spiritual dignity is achieved through conceptual inversions that do not make sense in a worldly setting, but only in the eyes of God, by whom the poor are inherently preferred to the rich, the dispossessed to the mighty. So it is with women...”¹⁴ In the earliest flowering of the Franciscan literary tradition, we find both God and Francis represented as women, and this unexpected inversion is a specifically Franciscan realization.

Vatican II encouraged religious orders to return to and examine the founding charisms of their founders. If we as Franciscans look closely, one of the gifts left to us by St. Francis, part of our legacy, is an experience of the Trinity as three poor Women. From this pauper himself, we have an inheritance of the revelation that God can be imaged as both poor and female. We have yet to celebrate and proclaim this profound inheritance. We have not yet expressed this story in art and ritual. Jacques Dalarun notes that “In the end, by his insistent courting of feminine figures and allegories, his feminization (metaphorically speaking), Francis had some effect on the fate of

women.”¹⁵ Inevitably, this same stance has a concomitant effect on the fate of men as well.

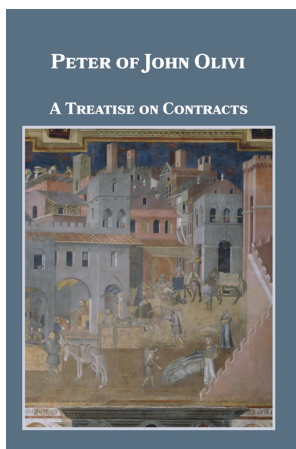
Echoing Roberta McKelvie’s challenge, Celano’s account *is* a fundamental text from the Franciscan tradition which can and should lead to more egalitarian and collaborative praxis. If it is recovered and further shared, it *will* enrich the tradition immensely. We need to treasure and proclaim this story from our earliest Franciscan beginnings. Imagine the transformative power of a Church emboldened to anticipate encountering the Trinity, imaged in three poor Women. Our sermons on Trinity Sunday can boldly recount the story of Francis’ visitation by these Three. We have a gift to share with both the Church and world. Imagine expecting to find God as we encounter the most vulnerable. Imagine being able to find joy when we are called by the same names as the downtrodden. Imagine as you journey today, how the Trinity will appear in unanticipated glory, challenging all preconceived expectations. Hear the Trinity call you by a new name and rejoice! Share and retell our family’s story of the time three poor Women appeared to St. Francis.

15 Dalarun, p. 279.



Kevin Elphick, O.F.S., is a member of the Franciscan Brothers of the Resurrection. His graduate degree in Religious Studies was completed through a cooperative studies initiative between Mundelein College and Spertus College of Judaica in Chicago, IL. He holds a Doctorate in Ministry from Graduate Theological Foundation. He currently works as a supervisor at a national Veterans suicide prevention hotline.

14 Joan Curbet, *Isabel de Villena: Portraits of Holy Women* (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer Inc., 2013), p. 26. Curbet’s context is the writings of the Poor Clare abbess, Isabel of Villena.



PETER OF JOHN OLIVI A TREATISE ON CONTRACTS

Critical Edition and Commentary by Sylvain Piron
Translated from the Latin by Ryan Thornton
and from the French by Michael Cusato, OFM

Peter of John Olivi’s *A Treatise on Contracts* constitutes the first time within the Western tradition that a major intellectual figure addressed economic issues in a comprehensive way. Produced in Narbonne around 1293-1295 as a result of classes taught in the local Franciscan friary, Olivi draws on law, philosophy, and theology in order to present a global view of economics that manages to combine the free will of individual agents and the normative capacities of political communities. Providing the first systematic analysis of the concept of value as well as sophisticated reflections on commercial “capital,” the *Treatise on Contracts* deserves to be considered as a founding document in the history of economic thought.

Following its discovery in the 1970s, Olivi’s text stirred up considerable controversy among historians. With this new critical edition and detailed historical presentation by Sylvain Piron, it is possible to unravel the apparent paradox of how an uncompromising advocate of Franciscan poverty could also be the most penetrating analyst of medieval trade and credit. For the first time ever, this major work is now made available to an English-speaking audience.

Pb 978-1-57659-405-6

\$69.95



www.franciscanpublications.com

Bonaventure's Contribution to Trinitarian Doctrine

By Kyrian Godwin, O.F.M., Cap.

The central truth about God, as taught by the Church and attested to by Sacred Scripture, is that there is only one God, who is three in person, namely: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.¹ The Trinity is the term employed to signify this central truth. The Trinity is the central mystery of Christian life and faith. It is the mystery of God in himself; it is the source of all other mysteries of faith. It is the most essential and fundamental teaching in the hierarchy of the truth of faith.²

This article of faith according to Bonaventure in his *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity* is the foundation of the entire Christian faith.³ This affirmation means that he regarded Christianity to be fundamentally about the Trinity.

Bonaventure inherited a doctrine about God that came along with its own specialized vocabulary which taught that God is one *ousia* and three *hypostases*. This was defined by two ecumenical councils, namely, Nicaea in 325 A.D. and Constantinople in 381 A.D. The mystery of the Trinity, therefore, pervades the whole of Bonaventure's vision of reality. One cannot read his works for long without sensing this. The entire theological endeavour of Bonaventure is inspired by the contemplation of the Trinity. The Trinity is the source and summit of all and thus would leave its stamp upon the world.⁴

The Seraphic Doctor strives to understand all God's activity in the world as the work of the Trinity; that is, creation, Incarnation, redemption, sanctification, and salvation are the work of the Father through the Son in the power of the Spirit. He does not separate his understanding of who God is as a Trinity of Persons from these central Christian teachings.⁵

Bonaventure's theology is trinitarian in a way that his view may be seen as a consistent economic trinitarianism.⁶ For he sees the world and its history as a vast symbol of the trinitarian God who communicates himself in being, in grace, and in consummation.⁷ Bonaventure never gives an extended treatment of the

nature of God independent of the doctrine of the Trinity. Looking at all his works, there is never a tract corresponding to the familiar *De Deo Uno* (On the One God) as found in Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*. In his *Commentary on the Sentences*, after one brief question on the one-ness of God, he proceeds directly to the question of the plurality of persons. He follows the same pattern in the *Breviloquium*. In Bonaventure's thought, the development of the attributes of the divine nature is presented within the framework of the trinitarian question.

Bonaventure's point of Departure

The early Franciscan School, Hayes says, was deeply concerned with the theological implications of the religious experience of St. Francis of Assisi who, because of his experience of Christ, came to emphasize the nature of God as a good and loving Father.⁸ This notion of goodness and love are fundamental in Bonaventure's attempt to show the derivation of persons in the trinity.⁹ Bonaventure employed the neo-Platonic thought of Pseudo-Dionysius and the theological insight of Richard of St. Victor in a way that is distinctively his own. From the neo-

Platonic thought of Pseudo-Dionysius, he derived the principle that the nature of goodness is to be self-diffusive.¹⁰ The centrality of this principle, according to Maria Calisi, cannot be overestimated, because it is the grounds for the necessity of a tri-personal God. It is also the basis for God's relation to the world.¹¹ In Dionysian view, Hayes states:

Goodness is the pre-eminent attribute of God. It is the very definition of the superessential Godhead and the deepest basis for God's creative activity. Since God is good, and since the good is by nature self-diffusive, it follows that God is necessarily self-communicative.¹²

In a similar note, Calisi declares the same saying:

The nature of goodness *per se* is such that it must go out of itself; it must be fecund and productive, ecstatic and self-communicative, generous and self-expressive. Goodness is dynamic: it must act, it cannot merely be. Therefore, the Father *must* be eternally and lovingly self-expressive by generating the Logos or Word. The Word must be a person, not just an infinite number of

1 Cf. Christopher M. Cullen, *Bonaventure*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 117.

2 Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 234. Hereafter referred to as CCC.

3 Bonaventure, *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, q.1, a.2, c, Works of St. Bonaventure III, trans. Zachary Hayes, (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2000).

4 Cf. Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, Works of St. Bonaventure III, trans. Zachary Hayes, (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2000), 30.

5 Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, (St. Bonaventure, New York: The Franciscan Institute, 2008), 19.

6 Economic Trinity is the doctrine concerning how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit relate to each other and the world. The word economic is used from the Greek *oikonomikos*, which means relating to arrangement of activities. Each person has different roles within the Godhead, and each has different roles in relationship to the world.

7 Cf. Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 32.

8 Cf. Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 32-33.

9 Cf. Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 33.

10 Cf. Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 23.

11 Cf. Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 23.

12 Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 33.



abstract ideas, because rationality and love are the highest expression of God's Being, and because personhood is necessary for the perfection of love. Certainly, we speak of goodness from our limited, relative, and imperfect experience of it. The nature of good has been the object of concern, contemplation, and philosophical speculation for thousands of years, long before the Seraphic Doctor's academic sojourn in Paris. When Bonaventure lays claim to this Neoplatonic observation of the good's self-diffusive nature, he applies it analogously to an already well-developed Christian concept of God, which resonated with this philosophical principle.¹³

Thus, we see how the above principle is used to argue for the necessary self-communication of the divine nature, and also provides the basis for understanding the first emanation within God as a natural emanation—which flows necessarily from the dynamism of the divine nature. This however, according to Hayes, is still not sufficient for trinitarian theology due to the fact that it specifies neither the mode nor the number of divine emanation.¹⁴

In order to fill up the incompleteness of the Dionysian model, the Seraphic Doctor makes use of the theological insight of Richard of St. Victor on love. Love, for Richard of St. Victor, is the supreme form of the good, for “of all things that may be called good, love is the best.”¹⁵ Thus he employed the use of it rather than good in working out his understanding of the Trinity. For Bonaventure, this approach though not quite adequate in itself, can be used in conjunction with the Dionysian metaphysics to supplement the understanding of the Trinity.¹⁶

This model offers the possibility of moving beyond the necessary, natural emanation to an understanding of the dynamism of the will from which proceeds a free self-communication; this provides the basis for understanding the procession of the Spirit as an emanation *per modum liberalitatis*; or *per modum amoris*. While the first approach emphasizes the necessary diffusiveness of a fecund nature, the second highlights the communication of liberality from a fecund will. While the nature is the primary principle in the generation of the Son (*natura est principium concomitante voluntate*), the will is a real principle in the spiration of the Spirit (*voluntas est principium concomitante natura*). Since it is the fecundity of the nature and the will from which the emanation flow, and since the intellect precisely as intellect is not fecund, Bonaventure always uses the term *per modum naturae* to designate the first procession. The Augustinian tradition of an intellectual emanation is thus subsumed within this dominant framework.¹⁷

The arguments from the good and from love both lead to the affirmation of a plurality of persons in God. That of love provides

clues for limiting the number of persons to three.¹⁸ In the *Commentary on the Sentences*, on the argument for the plurality of persons, Hayes observes that:

The concepts of goodness and love are subsumed under the notion of beatitude. By way of contrast, in answering the question of why there are only three persons, the notion of beatitudes again stands in the first place; but in the analysis of beatitude, the concept of goodness is omitted, and only the notions of *germanitas* and *caritas* are employed. Here the understanding of charity as perfect love which is both liberal and shared is employed to show that there must be both *dilectio* and *condilectio*; hence there can be no less than three persons. The argument from love appears here as a necessary argument, while later the three modes of love formulated by Richard of St. Victor appear as the first argument from congruity.¹⁹

The two arguments of the Seraphic Doctor reflect both the Dionysian and the Victorine concern. Neither of these arguments can be reduced to the other due to the fact that each provides only a limited vision of the mystery of God.²⁰ The argument from simplicity is a variation of the argument from goodness.

Simplicity is understood to mean indivision, lack of composition, lack of constitutive parts, and lack of immanent actions really distinct from the essence. As such, it is a pure perfection and must be posited in God, who is the highest perfection. The expansive power of the good which is concentrated in the one, simple divine essence raises unity to multiplicity without multiplying the essence. It is precisely because of his supreme simplicity that God is supremely communicable. If God is most simple, He is most communicative and productive in proportion to His being. Therefore, simplicity includes a plurality of persons.²¹

The argument from perfection, according to Hayes:

Is understood as the ability to communicate or to produce another like oneself; it refers to productive power. In the *Commentary* this is taken primarily in the sense of a dynamic power, while in the *Hexaemeron*, it has more of an aesthetic quality reflecting a state of being in God, including origin, order, and lack of division.²²

These arguments, Hayes says, flow together into the heart of primacy which lies at the heart of Bonaventure's doctrine of God.

It is a concept which is involved in some way in the resolution of all the major trinitarian questions: the movement from unity of nature to trinity of persons; the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son; the impossibility of more than three persons; and the personal constitution of the Father.²³

13 Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 25.

14 Cf. Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 33.

15 Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 27.

16 Cf. Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 33.

17 Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 34.

18 Cf. Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 34.

19 Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 34.

20 Cf. Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 35.

21 Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 35.

22 Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 35.

23 Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 35.



Bonaventure's approach in discussing the Trinity, Calisi observes, begins with the person of the Father, rather than with the divine substance or divine being. According to Calisi:

To begin with the divine substance is somewhat more abstract and impersonal approach. A substance may be defined as a thing in itself. A person may be defined as one towards another. This is the way that Augustine and Thomas begin their trinitarian discourses, and then they proceed to discuss the divine persons as mutual and opposite relations *within* Godhead. It is important at the outset that we recognize this difference between beginning with the Father and beginning with the notion of substance. To be personal is to be essentially capable of relationship. To start talking about the Trinity in terms of personhood, rather than substance, is immediately to say that relationality is the nature of God, that the nature of God is love. While almost the entire Western Church understood the doctrine of the Trinity in terms of substance, is it any wonder that the Franciscan would gravitate to an understanding of the Trinity that starts with interpersonal love?²⁴

Bonaventure's starting point of relationality immediately places him in continuity with the Eastern Orthodox approach to Trinitarian theology. Eastern Orthodox theology²⁵ begins with the Father, whereas the Latin western theology begins with the divine substance.²⁶ Also the Orthodox emphasizes personhood more than substance and triuneness more than unity, whereas the Latin emphasizes the divine substance more than personhood and unity more than triuneness.²⁷ It is from this perspective that Bonaventure's trinitarian theology is often characterized as Cappadocian or Greek Patristic. This is due to the fact that he begins his expositions with the distinctiveness of the Divine Persons, rather than with the unifying divine substance.²⁸

The Primacy of the Father in Bonaventure's Theology

Trinity, 35.

24 Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 20.

25 Otherwise called Cappadocian Trinitarian theology or Greek Patristic Trinitarian theology.

26 Cf. Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 20.

27 Cf. Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 21.

28 Cf. Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 31. "The Cappadocian Fathers embraced the term 'monarchy of the Father' (or the *monarchia* of the Father). It means that the Father is unbegotten and does not come from another, and is thereby the sole and unifying Principle of the Trinity. 'Mone arche' in Greek means one principle or one source. Unfortunately, the term can be understood as one rule, but that is not what the Cappadocians meant; they were interested in establishing the unity of the Trinity in the Person of the Father; and not in subordinating the Son and Spirit. It is also true that Bonaventure's trinitarian theology is Cappadocian insofar as he does not expound at any significant length about the nature of God apart from the doctrine of the Trinity. We do not find, for example, in any of Bonaventure's writings, a paradigm similar to Thomas Aquinas who separated the discussion on the doctrine of God into two treatises: *De Deo uno* and *De Deo trino*, i.e., On the One God and On the Triune God. This separation was conducive to the study of God as God is in Godself, which, as Karl Rahner laments, has prevailed ever since in the West so that . . . the Trinity locks itself in even more splendid isolation. In eschewing the Augustinian-Thomistic trinitarian approach, Bonaventure avoids many of the pitfalls of a trinitarian model which is self-contained and isolated. Sadly, this Franciscan tradition did not become the dominant tradition in theology, and until recently was little known." Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 31.

Primacy is fundamental to the Seraphic Doctor's approach to God in general and to the trinity in particular. It is a personal development of Bonaventure and is found in this form in none of his predecessors.²⁹ His focus here, is to prove that primacy, when properly understood, demands the existence of the trinity; for by the fact that God is the First Principle, he is necessarily a trinity.³⁰ Bonaventure in using the philosophical principle that a being is the cause of others because it is first affirmed that "that which is first from eternity is principle from eternity."³¹ He posited that:

The more a being is prior, the more powerful and actual it is. Therefore, the first principle is necessarily most actual and most powerful. But the act of the first principle, in as far as it is principle, is to be active as principle.³²

He further noted that

A being is principle in the fullest sense when it is active as principle and produces by way of perfect production.³³

Bonaventure's use of the philosophical principle according to Hayes, may be understood from the sense of speaking of the divine essence with respect to the world at which level it corresponds to the doctrine of creation.

The divine nature is the rich fountain from which flows the entire created universe. But Bonaventure pushes beyond this to argue that the concept of primacy may be traced into the depths of the divine nature itself where it may be seen as the characteristic of the first divine person. As the divine nature is absolutely prior with respects to all other essences, and thus is *a se* in the fullest sense of the word, so the Father, as that person who is *non ab alio*, is first with respect to the other persons. Hence, there is in God one in whom resides the fullness of divine fecundity with respect to the persons. But since whatever God is in Himself He is in act, it follows that the divine fecundity with respect to God Himself must be in act, and hence there must be a plurality of persons in God.³⁴

God, Hayes would say, is first—not only in the sense that His nature is prior to all created realities, but the concept of primacy must be drawn into the very life of God, where it finds its absolute root in the person of God the Father, who is the source and origin of all, both within and without the Godhead.³⁵ As the absolutely first being, God is being in His fullness,³⁶ and he is the

29 Cf. Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 100.

30 Cf. Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 100.

31 Bonaventure, *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, q. VIII, a.1.

32 Bonaventure, *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, q. VIII, a. 2.

33 Bonaventure, *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, q. VIII, a. 1.

34 Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 36.

35 Cf. Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 100.

36 "A lack of privation can be known only through the corresponding positive quality which is prior not only in the logical order, but in the real order as well. To the degree that something is prior, to the same degree it is more full of the positive qualities and perfection of being. Since God is absolutely prior to all else, He is the full actuality of being in all its necessary perfections. From this, it follows that God is cause of others to the degree that He is first; for to be the first is the same as to be principle. To be principle with respect to the world is to be cause or source from



origin and source of all things. But the primacy for Bonaventure demands not only that God be the cause of the world, but also that He be perfectly and eternally productive within himself.

If He is eternally first, He is eternally principle, most perfect, most actual and productive prior to the production of the world. Indeed, it is precisely because He is productive within that the production of the external world is possible; for the world is not equal with God, but the production of something unequal is necessarily posterior to the production of something equal. The necessary prior condition for the production of the world, therefore, is the eternal production of another who is fully equal with God. Primacy with respect to the world, consequently, requires primacy within God Himself.³⁷

According to Bonaventure:

The production of one being from another can be understood to have been eternal while the production of something from nothing cannot have been eternal. Therefore, the production of one being from another must necessarily be understood as prior to the production of creation in accordance with perfect primacy, but this cannot be conceived except in the uncreated trinity.³⁸

He went ahead to affirm that:

It is impossible to understand the production of a being that is unequal unless one first understands the production of something that is equal. Therefore, if the production of the creature is a production of something unequal, the production of an equal cannot be realized except in the Holy Trinity. Therefore the production of every creature necessarily presupposes the eternal trinity.³⁹

To make clearer his position, he went further to give a detailed explanation saying that:

The perfect is prior to the imperfect both in reality and in our mind; that which is complete is prior to that which is diminished; unity is prior to multiplicity; simple is prior to the composite; the infinite to the finite; act to potency; the immutable to the mutable; the eternal to the temporal; the necessary to the possible. Therefore, if every creature that is produced is imperfect, lacking in the highest unity, composed, finite, and in potency, in some way it is temporal, variable, possible, lacking in actuality and supreme necessity. It is necessary, therefore, that before the production of the creature there be a production of something most perfect, supreme, undivided, most simple, most finite, eternal, immutable, and necessary. This cannot be through the production of something distinct in essence. It is necessary, therefore,

which all emanates and to which all returns. The productive fecundity of god is in proportion to His primacy; His absolute primacy, therefore, designates Him as the universal fountain of all origin, or in Bonaventure's suggestive terms, the *fontalis plenitudo*. He is the absolute source and cause of all that exists." Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 101.

37 Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 101.

38 Bonaventure, *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, q. VIII, a. 4

39 Bonaventure, *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, q. VIII, a. 3.

that it be through the production of a person who is one in essence with the person producing, and equal in power, wisdom, and goodness. But this is to affirm the most blessed trinity.⁴⁰

From the foregoing, one can say that primacy, as Bonaventure submits, actually includes the trinity in as far as the first principle is a trinity by the very fact that it is the first.

Supreme primacy in the supreme and highest principle demands the highest actuality, the highest fontality, and the highest fecundity. For the first principle, by virtue of the fact that it is first, is the most perfect in producing, the most fontal in emanating, and the most fecund in germinating. Therefore, since perfect production, emanation and germination is realized only through two intrinsic modes, namely, by way of nature and by way of will, that is, by way of the word and of love, therefore the highest perfection, fontality, and fecundity necessarily demands two kinds of emanation with respect to the two hypostases which are produced and emanate from the first person as from the first producing principle. Therefore, it is necessary to affirm three persons. And since the most perfect production is not realized except with respect to equals, and the most fontal emanation is not realized except with respect to co-eternals, and the most fecund germination is not realized except with respect to consubstantial beings, it is necessary to admit that the first principle includes within itself three hypostases that are coequal, coeternal, and consubstantial. The primacy of the first principle, therefore, demands the most perfect trinity in order, origin, and distinction; of coequality, coeternity, and consubstantiality; it demands also the highest unity, simplicity, immensity, eternity, immutability, and actuality. Therefore, it requires a trinity in the first principle together with the above-mentioned essential qualities.⁴¹

Because primacy is associated with being first in importance, rank, value, honour, and power, it implies leadership and pre-eminence. Therefore, to speak about the primacy of the Father may sound as though surbodinationism were introduced into the trinity, which is a communion of equal persons in relations.⁴² This is not the case as Calisi will note:

Whatever we know about God the Father, we know through the Son and Spirit because God has revealed Godself in history. This statement suggests two points. One is that we should not divorce the Trinity from the history of salvation, which is made present today in the Church community, the scriptures, and the sacraments. The second point is that we can know God only in history, only in time. God is eternal, and eternity is not 'unending time,' but the absence of time. There is no beginning and no end, no past and no future, but it has been said that there is an ever-present. Therefore, there is no time sequence in eternity - the notion of first, second, third, is repugnant to God. In this sense, then, the Father is

40 Bonaventure, *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, q. VIII, a. 8.

41 Bonaventure, *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, q. VIII, c.

42 Cf. Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 22.

not really first at all. No divine person has primacy. But since we are all time-bound beings, we can speak about eternal things only in sequence and only by using verbs in their present, past, or future tenses. We do not have an eternal verb tense. Therefore, the importance, status, and prominence that are often associated with the 'first' have no reality in God. Bonaventure also speaks of the Father as the cause or origin of the Son and Spirit, but this should not imply the literal beginning of the persons' existence: their existence is eternal. God was/is never without the divine Word and Spirit. Terms like cause, origin, and source, are necessary because we have to begin from somewhere to speak about the Trinity. There is no subordinationism within the Trinity. Perhaps our language itself reveals how substantive, rather than relational, we are in our thinking and imagining. Bonaventure understands divine primacy as eternal fecundity. He maintains as fact the philosophical axiom that 'the more primary a thing is, the more fecund it is, and is therefore the origin of others.' Unquestionably, for Bonaventure, the Father's primacy means nothing other than this: within God there is an unfathomable fecundity of mind and heart; an unfetterable, boundless expression of goodness, a fountain-fullness of self-transcending, Trinity-producing love who willingly over-flows to fill the bottomless chasm between time and eternity so that we may be created, sanctified, and saved.⁴³

In Bonaventure's doctrine of the trinity, a peculiar emphasis is given to the first person whose personal property is expressed in the title *Father*. The Father received an emphasis that would be foreign to the thought of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, and similar to the theology of the classical Greek Fathers.⁴⁴ Here, Hayes would say:

Is the basis of the *egressus* and *reditus* of the universe

43 Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 22.

44 Cf. Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 41.

reflected in the terms *emanation* and *reduction*. It is from the Father that all things come, and it is ultimately in the Father that they will find the status which is the goal of the entire creative process.⁴⁵

The Father, Calisi remarked, is the highly dynamic source of the two-fold diffusion: one within Godself and the other outside of God. The first is the procession of equal persons in the unity of nature and the second is the creation of the universe that participates in goodness in a limited, imperfect way.⁴⁶

Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites

In Bonaventure's theology, the trinity is seen primarily as the mystery of divine fecundity, with the Father as the fecund source of the trinitarian processions. Hence, Bonaventure, as Cousins says, can apply to the Father two principles namely the principle of fecund primordality and the principle of self-diffusion of the

good.⁴⁷ With regards to the first—principle of fecund primordality—the Father is primarily the fecund source of the divine processions. As to the second—principle of the self-diffusion of the good—the Father is the source of the absolute self-diffusion of the good in the trinitarian processions.⁴⁸ Therefore, as Cousins would avers:

This Trinitarian self-diffusion involves a dynamic coincidence of opposites, in which the Father's fecundity expresses itself in a movement into the

Son and a return in the unity of the Spirit. Thus the Son is the *medium* of the Trinitarian dynamism or, as Bonaventure calls him, the *persona media* of the Trinity. This dynamic coincidence of opposites involves another; namely, the coincidence of unity and plurality. Since the Father's fecundity emanates in the Son and the Spirit, the dynamic Trinity necessarily involves a coincidence of unity and diversity on the level of the divinity itself.⁴⁹

Bonaventure achieved one of the most impressive integrations of

45 Zachary Hayes, *The Hidden Center: Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St. Bonaventure*, (New York: The Franciscan Institute, 2000), 13.

46 Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 33.

47 Cf. Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure and The Coincidence of Opposites*, (Illinois: Franciscan Herald Press, 1978), 235.

48 Cf. Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure and The Coincidence of Opposites*, 235.

49 Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure and The Coincidence of Opposites*, 235.





these two aspects of the divinity or images of God; namely: God as self-sufficient absolute and God as self-communicating fecundity. As self-sufficient absolute, God is the timeless absolute, the unmoved mover, distant from the world and radically unlike the world. As self-communicating fecundity, God is outgoing, related, involved, and sharing his perfections with the world.⁵⁰

These two images seem incompatible and ultimately irreconcilable; according to Arthur Lovejoy, there has been a tension throughout the history of Western thought between these two images of God.⁵¹ On this issue, Cousins noted that often in the history of thought, the image of God as self-sufficient has won out, producing a view of God as static and unrelated. While the image of God as self-communicating has produced a finite God, dependent on the world for the activation of his fecundity.⁵² This, he says, is the dilemma facing theologians. For if they ignore the divine fecundity, they produce an image of God as distant and unrelated, an image far removed from the biblical/Christian God who reveals Himself as involved in the world and history even to the point of redeeming the human race through the incarnation and crucifixion. If on the other hand, he says, theologians ignore the divine self-sufficiency, they run the risk of reducing God's transcendence to the limit of the world.⁵³ The Seraphic Doctor, according to Cousins, was able to resolve this dilemma by reconciling these two images of God through the coincidence of opposites. Making reference to Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Sentences*, Cousins says:

In the person of the Father in the Trinity, the two images coincide: As unbegotten, the Father is the self-sufficiency in the Godhead, for he proceeds from no one. At the same time he is the fountain and source of divine processions. Bonaventure not only sees these two images coexisting in the Father, but he sees them present by way of a coincidence of mutually affirming complementarity. This means that one implies and demands the other. For Bonaventure, to be unbegotten implies that Father begets the Son; and to beget the Son implies that the Father is unbegotten. Thus by affirming one, we simultaneously affirm the other. According to Bonaventure's conception, then, we can say: Because the Father is absolutely self-sufficient, he is absolutely self-communicating.⁵⁴

The implication of the above statement according to Cousins, means that:

The image of God as dynamic, processive, self-communicating is not swallowed up by the image of God as self-sufficient. It enables Bonaventure to develop one of the richest doctrines of God as dynamic in the history of theology, a doctrine that has much to say to the process philosophers and theologians of modern times who have taken such pain to affirm the image of God as dynamic. I believe that the most significant contribution of Bonaventure to modern thought is his

position that God is absolutely dynamic in his inner life and hence does not have to depend on the world to manifest himself.⁵⁵

He further posits that:

Bonaventure claims that God is absolutely good; but the good is self-diffusive. Therefore God must be self-diffusive in an absolute way. This absolute self-diffusion of the good can be realized only in the Trinitarian processions: in the Father's generation of the Son and in their spiration of the Holy Spirit. If God had to depend on the world in order to diffuse his goodness, he would never be able to communicate himself adequately, for as Bonaventure says: 'the diffusion that occurred in time in the creation of the world is no more than a pivot or point in comparison with the immense sweep of the eternal goodness.'⁵⁶

On this note, Bonaventure declares that:

The highest good in an unqualified sense is that than which nothing better can be thought. And this is of such a sort that it cannot be thought of as not existing since it is absolutely better to exist than not to exist. And this is a good of such a sort that it cannot be thought of unless it is thought of as three and one. For 'the good is said to be self-diffusive.' The supreme good, therefore, is supremely self-diffusive. But the highest diffusion does not exist unless it is actual and intrinsic, substantial and personal, natural and voluntary, free and necessary, lacking nothing and perfect. In the supreme good there must be from eternity a production that is actual and consubstantial, and a hypostasis as noble as the producer, and this is the case in production by way of generation and spiration. This is understood to mean that what is of the eternal principle is of the eternal co-producer. In this way there can be both a beloved and a co-beloved, one generated and one spirated; that is, Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit. If this were not the case, it would not be the supreme good since it would not be supremely self-diffusive, for that diffusion in time which is seen in creation is a mere center-point in comparison to the immensity of the eternal goodness. From this, it is possible to think of another greater diffusion; namely, that sort of diffusion in which the one diffusing itself communicates the whole of its substance and nature to the other. Therefore, it would not be the highest good if it lacked the ability to do this either in reality or in thought.⁵⁷

Bonaventure and the Filioque issue

Bonaventure's trinitarian theology can be a solid starting point for dialogue between Catholic and Orthodox Churches on the question of *Filioque*. The Creed is our symbol of Christian unity and our confession of Christian faith.⁵⁸ According to Cal-

50 Cf. Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure and The Coincidence of Opposites*, 235f.

51 Cf. Arthur Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1965), 5, 157, 315ff.

52 Cf. Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure and The Coincidence of Opposites*, 236.

53 Cf. Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure and The Coincidence of Opposites*, 236.

54 Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure and The Coincidence of Opposites*, 236.

55 Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure and The Coincidence of Opposites*, 236f.

56 Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure and The Coincidence of Opposites*, 237.

57 Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 6:2. Works of St. Bonaventure II, Revised and Expanded, Intr. & trans. Zachary Hayes, (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2002).

58 Cf. Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tra-*



isi, "Because Bonaventure's trinitarian theology is Cappadocian, it could provide the Catholic Church with an excellent resource from which to dialogue with our Orthodox brothers and sisters on the matter of the *Filioque*."⁵⁹

Both Catholic and Orthodox Church share the same faith in the Trinity. The differences occur in our manners of understanding and explaining some of these mysteries, so they are not primary, but secondary.⁶⁰ The Orthodox major problem with the *Filioque* is that it presents a double procession as they call it. For them, the *Filioque* seems to posit two sources from which the Spirit proceeds. It destroys the Monarchy of the Father or rather the Father's unique distinguishing property of being the sole eternal source of divinity. In the Orthodox model, the Father is the unifying principle.⁶¹

For Bonaventure, the Father is uniquely the unbegotten one, the principle who proceeds from no other. Because he is innascible, He is absolutely the first, and because He is absolutely the first, He is the fecund source of others.⁶² The Father is the point of origin for the immanent processions. He is the *fontalis plenitudo*. Hence there is no model of double procession in Bonaventure's model of trinity because this model upholds the monarchy of the Father, if we understand monarch to mean single source and not single rule.⁶³ The Father, Calisi upholds, is the highly dynamic source of the two-fold diffusion, one within God-self which is the procession of equal persons in the unity of nature, and the other, outside of God, which is the creation of the universe.⁶⁴

Conclusion

Bonaventure's trinitarian theology is not just about God in Godself, otherwise this would have led to an understanding of the Trinity that is locked up within itself, unrelated to us and all of creation. And it would also become divorced from the other Christian teachings. Thus, for Bonaventure, all theological activities, all of God's activity in the world revolves around the trinity. They are works of the Father, through the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁵ He opted for the Greek Cappadocian model because he saw this model operative in salvation history and the one most compatible with the life and experience of St. Francis of Assisi.⁶⁶ His doctrine of the Trinity follows the Cappadocian model based on the self-diffusive good whereby the persons of the trinity are distinguished from each other by their relation of origin.

In developing his trinitarian doctrine, Bonaventure relied on the works of Pseudo-Dionysius and Richard of St. Victor. In Pseudo-Dionysius, he indicated that God who is goodness

itself is self-diffusive, and from Richard of St. Victor, he identifies the highest good as love, which by its very nature seeks to share itself with another. Thus, he complements the Dionysian model of the good with the Victorine emphasis on love.⁶⁷ If God is essentially love, then the ultimate basis of God as love is the primacy of the Father, which as we saw lies at the heart of Bonaventure's doctrine of God.⁶⁸ The Father is the ultimate source of all being. He is the dynamic and fecund source of the immanent procession. The Seraphic Doctor begins his trinitarian discourse with the person of the Father. This is because, he sees and understands the Father's primacy as nothing other than the Father's kenotic, unifying, and inexhaustible fecundity.⁶⁹ To understand the mystery of the Father for Bonaventure is to return to the notion of the Father as unoriginate and fecund and as the fountain fullness of the self-diffusive good. What defines the Father is the coincidence of opposites of unbegottenness and generativity. What we can say about the Father can be said only from the Son, for the Father from all eternity begets a Son similar to himself and expressed himself, and a likeness similar to himself. Thus, in so doing, he expresses the sum total of his potency. If the Father gives everything to the Son, it can be said that the Father can be known only from the one to whom the Father gives everything, namely, the Son.⁷⁰ The rule (primacy) of the Father is not only self-giving, but the very gift of the Father is given in the Son, who is also both receptive to the Father's goodness and like the Father, diffuses the good as self-gift to the Father, the union of which is expressed in the person of the Holy Spirit. The Son is both receiver and giver of the good. In this regards, he shares in the Father's rule of self-giving, so that he, like the Father, is not a self-sufficient monarch, but might be called a 'servant', giving all to the other. The Holy Spirit is the gift of self-donation between the Father and the Son. He too shares in the rule of self-giving, and he is the gift par excellence. Thus, the rule of the Father which is self-gift is the basis of the shared rule of the three divine persons based on the nature of the good as relational.⁷¹

dition, 61.

59 Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 49.

60 Cf. Raniero Cantalamessa, *2nd Lenten Homily 2015*, (March 6, 2015), 1.

61 Cf. Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 61.

62 Cf. Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, 1:3:7. See also Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 42.

63 Cf. Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 62.

64 Cf. Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 33.

65 Cf. Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 19.

66 Cf. Ilia Delio, "Bonaventure's Metaphysics of the Good," *Theological Studies*, 60 (1999), 231.

67 Cf. Ilia Delio, 'Bonaventure's Metaphysics of the Good,' 232.

68 Cf. Zachary Hayes, 'Introduction' in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 35.

69 Cf. Ilia Delio, "Bonaventure's Metaphysics of the Good," 237.

70 Cf. Ilia Delio, "Bonaventure's Metaphysics of the Good," 238.

71 Cf. Ilia Delio, "Bonaventure's Metaphysics of the Good," 238.



Kyrian Godwin, O.F.M., Cap., is a Capuchin Friar from the Custody of Nigeria. He holds a B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Ibadan; STB in Sacred Theology from the Pontifical Urban University; PGDE from Usmanu Dan Fodiyo University, Sokoto and M.A in Theology from Duquesne University. He is a Lecturer at the School of Pastoral and Religious Education of the Dominican Institute, Ibadan-Nigeria.



St. Francis and Heart-Centered Healing

By Mary Beth Wisniewski

Harold's mind is unreliable. Sometimes, the conversations he hears correspond with the voices of the people around him. On other days, there are words only he hears; words that direct and distract. Such whispers from within are unsettling when no one else can hear them. When most people meet someone new, they risk being known. Harold risks being found out.

Harold, who has Schizophrenia, lived in confusion and distress for a long time. He resisted seeking help because it so often came with a loss of independence and isolation. But Harold found a way to hope, housing, community, and employment: "I learned my mind was undependable," he said. Lightly patting his chest, he continued, "I learned to listen to my heart. My mind is unreliable, but my heart finds people I can trust, and I let them make decisions for me." Harold found healing through living from his heart.

Outside the walls of Assisi, there was a hospice for lepers where St. Francis and his brothers would often care for the sick. Within the hospital, there lived a leper who angrily and bitterly opposed all assistance. Having experienced enough pain and rejection he, like Harold, did not risk being known. With the words, "May God give thee peace, my most dear brother," St. Francis approached the man. He did not offer solutions but rather listened to his need and offered a moment of compassion and hospitality. The man, feeling safe in the heart-centered presence of Francis, shared that he wanted to be washed head to foot because he could no longer stand the stench of his wounds. Francis heated water and sweet smelling herbs and bathed him. The story, recounted in the *Conformities and Legenda Antiqua*¹, tells of miraculous healing of physical wounds as Francis bathed the man. But, whatever the change physically, when Francis focused not on disorder or illness, but on loving and understanding the person in front of him, a man cast out by society was able to re-engage in relationship and experience healing.

Listening and acting from the heart is the story of St. Francis. It is also key for people with severe mental illness. When the mind becomes unreliable, we can fight on its turf, focusing on delusions and hallucinations, or we can befriend the whole human being in front of us. It is the conversion moment of living in relationship to Love, and letting Love lead the way.

While my training in psychology and trauma has taught me much about diagnosis and treatment, I have learned much more about healing from my friends and clients who have schizophrenia. Therefore, today I focus on what I have learned from encounter, so that perhaps these encounters will assist others in creating more heart-centered relationships, especially with those with schizophrenia.

Schizophrenia has multiple symptoms, including disorganized speech, abnormal motor behavior, and diminished emotional expression, but it is frequently diagnosed when someone has an episode of psychosis. In psychosis, a person has abnormal sensory experience, whether through hallucinations—hearing or seeing things that do not correspond with the external environment—or delusions—fixed beliefs that are resistant to change despite conflicting evidence.² Psychosis may be brought on not only by schizophrenia but by extreme stress, infection, brain injury, drug use and withdrawal, and a variety of other mental health and medical factors. A full understanding of cause is important before choosing a 'label.' Once someone is given the label of "schizophrenic," it tends to last a lifetime.

Misconceptions which contribute to stigma and lack of care and healing

Diversity is prized in our culture; however, the stigma which often accompanies a diagnosis of schizophrenia indicates that some people are still treated as outcasts. "No one has a coming out party for you when you tell them you have schizophrenia," said a friend with lived experience. Several mistaken beliefs lead to fear and stigmatization.

A major misconception, even amongst some clinicians, is that one episode of psychosis predicts a lifetime of debilitating illness. In fact, "Research suggests that remission can be achieved in 20 to 60 percent of people with schizophrenia."³ A second misconception is that people with schizophrenia are aggressive or violent. However, "The vast majority of persons with schizophrenia are not aggressive and are more frequently victimized than are individuals in the general population."⁴ A third misconception is that the only helpful treatment is a lifetime of anti-psychotic medication. A World Health Organization study on people with schizophrenia found that patients in undeveloped countries like India and Nigeria had better mental health outcomes than in the United States, which relies primarily on the medication model.⁵ Many of the issues of schizophrenia are really issues of disconnection, isolation, and life stressors.⁶

2 American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed.). pp. 98-105. Washington, DC:- American Psychiatric Publishing: 2013

3 Yeomans, David, Mark Taylor, Alan Currie, Richard Whale, Keith Ford, Chris Fear, Joanne Hynes, Gary Sullivan, Bruce Moore, Tom Burns. Resolution and remission in schizophrenia: getting well and staying well. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment* Mar 2010, 16 (2) 86-95; DOI:10.1192/apt.bp.108.006411

4 American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed.). p. 101.. Washington, DC:- American Psychiatric Publishing: 2013

5 Whitaker, Robert. *Mad in America: Bad Science, Bad Medicine, and the Enduring Mistreatment of the Mentally Ill*. Philadelphia, PA: Perseus Publishing, 2002d

6 Warner, Richard. *Recovery from Schizophrenia: Psychiatry and Political Economy*. 3rd Ed. East Sussex: Brunner-Routledge, 2005 <http://www.psychiatry.ru/site->

1 Sabatier, Paul. *Life of St. Francis of Assisi* p. 110. (Conform., 174b, 2, as taken from the *Legenda Antiqua*. Cf. Spec., 56b., 25.). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917



Misconceptions lead to fear of encounter. Too often it is fear, not danger, which causes us to avoid and stigmatize. When we shun and label, we increase vulnerability, and this increases the likelihood of symptoms.

What encounter teaches

Many years ago at a holiday dinner, I sat next to an elderly gentleman. He was soft-spoken, well-read, and kind. He had emigrated from a war-torn country, run a successful business in America, and brought up wonderful children. He had also lived part of his adult life with the symptoms common in schizophrenia. We shared a wonderful evening of stories and family celebration. It was this man and his family who provided me the first space for encounter and sharing from the heart.

Just as Francis found that heart-centered encounter is life-affirming, so can we. When we choose heart-centered listening to others, we find much that is relatable and understandable.

In addition, as a psychotherapist, when I began trying to understand someone's hallucinations or delusions, I often found they had meaning. Delusions and hallucinations are often metaphorical. Some of the messages are not even hard to understand. A young man, whose family included several lawyers and doctors, thought he was the chief of police. His choice likely had much to say about his feelings and hopes to be recognized as a person of status. A woman believed she was shrinking. With everyone doubting her choices and perceptions, it is quite easy to understand she would feel diminished or smaller. In both cases, the delusions seemed to be a tangible manifestation, a concrete representation, of feelings. And then there was Janice.

Janice needed to decide whether or not to stay with her boyfriend. While she still cared for him, he had been abusive. With a soft voice, she mentioned to me that she sometimes sees things that other people don't: "You probably won't believe me but right now I see bats on the ceiling." "I do believe you," I said. Janice offered a hesitant smile of hope and risked being known: "I sometimes think my 'ex' is bad for me, but when I look at my wrist (which was empty of adornment) I see the bracelet he gave me on our first anniversary. It keeps appearing on my wrist. I think it's telling me to go back to him."

Janice and I could have focused on illness and correcting the way she sees the world. We could have focused solely on medical treatments, or I could have given advice about whether or not to return to her ex-boyfriend. It would have been easy to tell Janice to simply ignore the bats—that they are not real. But any of these, without listening, empathy and trying to understand, would also have been diminishing and silencing. Instead, I asked her how the bats made her feel. "They make me want to hide," she said. And what about the bracelet—"How do you feel when you see it?" She whispered, "I feel dread, and I just want to flee." She stopped, looked up in surprise, and stated with conviction—"I am not supposed to go back to him! That's what it means!"

Of course, I probably could have told her this. But, by coming to her own understanding, she learned she had a clearly accessible means of making good decisions. Like Harold, she

could listen to her heart and move toward what was healthy for her.

It can be very helpful to realize we don't have to solve delusions. We don't have to end them, and we cannot even know what is best to do (how do you keep someone from shrinking? What does the chief of police need or want?). What we can do is relate from the heart, ask about feelings, check in on what actions a person may want to take based on their feelings, and help the person take the *healthy* next step. We can reduce anxiety by reducing opposition and becoming more accepting.

What can help

There are actions each of us can take to create healthy, healing, and caring environments and relationships. Perhaps not surprisingly, each of these actions is beneficial not only for those with schizophrenia but to every human being.

1. Talk to the healthy. Listen with your heart. There is health within each of us, and when we seek and respond to the good and the healthy, we give it room in the world.
2. Help others manage the stressors of life—isolation, unemployment, relational, financial and health concerns are known to increase likelihood of mental illness symptoms. Be a healing presence by helping others reduce isolation, learn positive coping skills, or have a safe place to talk and share.
3. Empower those in your care through collaborative decision making and care plans.
4. Make room for encounter. Reach out with a smile, glance, and hospitality to those who are socially isolated or see the world a bit differently.
5. Lastly, end the stigma and any negative words you have about mental illness. Francis distained exclusion. During his time, the outcast of the day was the leper. Disturbing physical symptoms and fear of contagion taught people to stay away. How frightening it must have been to find even a spot of discoloration on one's skin! It doesn't take much imagination to conceive how the earliest signs would be hidden from others. Isolation came quickly. In our world, which says it values diversity, having schizophrenia is a type of diversity that is often hidden, for fear that isolation and judgment will replace relationship.

There are many more people hearing voices than you might suspect. It's the woman you sit next to in class, the elderly father, the neighbor down the street with childhood trauma. You do not know their anxiety and fear, because they have never told you with what they contend. Fearing ostracism, they remain silent.

It is easy to understand why we fear encounter. Someone else's unreliable vision sets up a warning. Our survival mechanism, our fear kicks in, and it is a short step to fleeing and keeping safe through distance. But not all fears are equal. Some are accurate and save us. Some serve only to divide. Often, we fear when we simply don't understand how to help. Rejection, while preserving us physically, leaves us isolated and with a residue of fear. Our goals become containment and distance.

St. Francis offers a different path. As a young man, he once fled the man with leprosy who crossed his path. Fear found its object and recoiled. But Francis, in a moment of the heart

const/userfiles/file/englit/Richard%20Warner%20(Author)%20-%20Recovery%20from%20Schizophrenia%20Psychiatry%20and%20Political%20Economy.pdf

leading the way, returned to that man and embraced him. In that first moment of encounter, he let himself see beyond the sensory distress. He saw to the heart. In that moment he himself began to be healed, and to be grounded in, and live wholly for God. Compassion grew, wisdom grew, love grew, and a saint grew in the moment he reached out in encounter and allowed the good in him to seek good in, and for, the other. As he responded more fully, those who needed healing were able to receive it from him. Later, the most distressed and angry of all learned to trust and receive care. Medicine and isolation are not the only way. We, too, will find that if we offer compassion and encounter, we will connect at a level beyond words, beyond the mind. We will connect with the heart, where we are all safe and whole.



Mary Beth Wisniewski, is a psychotherapist and the Associate Director of the Wellness Center at Cardinal Stritch University. She holds a Master of Science in Educational Psychology, and a Certificate in Trauma Counseling, and has taught Trauma Counseling for the MS in Counseling program at Mount Mary University. She serves the Franciscan Pilgrimage Program as a liaison to the AFCU schools.



SAVE THE DATE

The Bonaventure Conference

July 12-15, 2017

**Celebrating the 800th anniversary
of the birth of St. Bonaventure
with a gathering of the world's foremost
Bonaventure scholars**

at

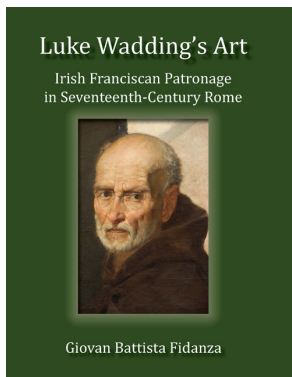
**St. Bonaventure University:
The United States' first Franciscan university**



www.sbu.edu/franciscanstudies

Luke Wadding's Art: Irish Franciscan Patronage in Seventeenth Century Rome

by Giovan Battista Fidanza



The Irish Franciscan friar, Luke Wadding (Waterford, 1588 - Rome, 1657), was a very significant figure for his time. Aged fifteen, he left Ireland for Portugal never to return. In 1618 he moved to Rome as part of a Spanish diplomatic mission to ask the Holy See to recognize the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, remaining there for the rest of his life.

Primarily, Wadding is famous for his highly important contribution to Franciscan history, having written the first eight volumes of *Annales Minorum*, the great work devoted to the history of the three Franciscan orders. As an accomplished theologian, he also played a prominent role in the ecclesiastical politics of Rome in the 1600s.

This book deals with Wadding's artistic involvement in commissioning works of art and architecture, chiefly for 'his' Church of St. Isidore in Rome; his portraits – both painted and engraved – are also investigated. By choosing such important artists as Andrea Sacchi and Carlo Maratti, he was showcasing the Church of St. Isidore as a significant example of art and architecture in seventeenth-century Rome. Most of this research has been carried out from unpublished documents kept in Roman archives.

HC 2016 978-1-57659-401-8 \$79.95



www.franciscanpublications.com

“Franciscan Women: Medieval and Beyond” Conference Reflections

By Alex Kratz, O.F.M.

The author attended the School of Franciscan Studies at St. Bonaventure University during the summer of 2016 and joined in the work of a scholarly and pastoral conference on Franciscan Women in the Franciscan Tradition (July 12–15, 2016). He wrote his reflections and insights for this volume of Franciscan Connections.¹

When I first heard in class that attending the “Franciscan Women: Medieval and Beyond” Conference was going to take the place of our classes, I could sense some internal resistance or “foot-dragging” in my spirit. “I didn’t register for this,” I could hear myself say. I’m glad to say it really was a totally worthwhile experience—intellectually stimulating and thought-provoking. It broadened me to the wider tradition of women—a stratum I can somewhat overlook and underappreciate. One female participant said it best (I’m paraphrasing), “I wasn’t necessarily that excited after reading the titles of the talks, but once I got there, they were really good.” I thoroughly enjoyed the scholarly input that provided fresh perspectives on some figures I did know (Angela of Foligno, Clare) and new information on women, communities or endeavors I didn’t know. I think I attended some 13 presentations, not to mention the wonderful talk by Jacques Dalarun for the Ignatius Brady Lecture.

One of the things that struck me about the Franciscan women through the ages was what I would term “discerned innovation.” I was particularly struck by Amy Koehliner’s documenting on how the Sisters of Saint Francis of Rochester “created a dynamic partnership” with Protestant doctors while the sisters themselves recalibrated their focus from being a strictly teaching congregation to one that now engaged in nursing and the medical apostolate.² This met the need of Rochester’s natural disaster in 1883 when a cyclone devastated the town. This partnership evolved into the world renowned Mayo Clinic. (The presentation prompted me to email my father about when he worked there. He worked there in the finance department from 1965–1967, before and after marrying my mother.) This innovative partnership was a natural outflow—“the good is self-diffusive”—of the sisters’ Franciscan charism that emphasized relational love and trust in a time Protestant nativism and nonexistent ecumenism. Amazingly, the trust was so deep that the partnership was sealed not by the customary written contract but by a handshake. In a way, this was the sisters’ version of going into the “sultan’s camp”—that is, entering into the liminal sphere of getting to know “the other.” Going against the grain in this way modeled to society how good people who believe in God’s goodness can work together—something eminently Franciscan—and certainly way to develop as a Franciscan woman.

As beings made in the image of an essentially relational triune God, we have “an irreducible relationality”³ that should inform our service methodology. In fact, it did at St. Mary’s Hospital. Its institutional culture, as Koehliner noted, had partnerships and relationality *at all levels*—from the surgeons who wouldn’t operate without *their* nursing sister to the sisters themselves who would give up their rooms and sleep on the

floor when the number of patients exceeded the hospital’s room capacity.

The sisters’ relational innovation led to technological innovation. Of course, society will focus on the latter but miss the substratum of the former which was foundational for all that followed. So we can say that relationality led to technology (tubal technology, hospital dietetics, etc.). This thoroughly impressed me. Living out the principle of radical relationality—something women tend to excel at—is one inspiring expression of “developing as a Franciscan woman.”

Another expression was manifested by the practical implementation of the sisters’ motto, “The patient comes first.” This reflects the Franciscan approach to the irreducible dignity of each person. It is a basic Christian belief that each person is endowed with human dignity because the individual is “created in the image of God and unconditionally loved and redeemed by God in Christ....”⁴

No matter how physically unappealing or socially marginalized a person may be, they deserve our care. The Franciscan slant on this is to expand our peripheral vision to those society typically treats as socially invisible—be it the lepers of Francis’s day or the homeless or immigrants in our own. Dawn Nothwehr, OSF, notes “Perhaps the most notable aspect of the life and ministry of Jesus is that he spent no time seeking prestige, but he constantly interacted with ordinary people, especially the powerless poor, widows and children of his day.”⁵ Likewise, the sisters would welcome patients rejected from other medical institutions (and still have a higher recovery rate!) or humbly carry buckets of excrement for patients incapable of self-care. (Since some were farm girls, this wasn’t all that different than farm work.) It would make the Poverello proud! In the *Legenda Maior*, Bonaventure notes of Francis (which Nothwehr quotes) that he “showed deeds of humility and humanity to the lepers with a gentle piety. He visited their houses frequently, generously distributed alms to them, and with a great drive of compassion kissed their hands and their mouths.” (1:6) Like the Rochester sisters, Francis’s charity with lepers was “as broad as their religion.”

Similarly, Amanda Leary (“Receiving the Neighbor: Rethinking the Eucharist in Angela of Foligno”) gave a compelling presentation on Angela of Foligno’s ministry to lepers that became the experiential equivalent to receiving the flesh of Christ at Mass. Leary detailed the Eucharistic parallelism of Angela’s experience in the leprosarium with that of Catholic worshippers at Mass—from the footwashing with female lepers (sounds like Pope Francis on Holy Thursday!), to drinking the used bathwater (Precious Blood), to consuming the leper’s scale (flesh of Christ). It all rendered her visitation and charitable outreach a veritable expression of being “in persona Christi.” This mystically inspired charitable service is quite Franciscan because the care for these untouchables was a seemingly ecstatic experience of incarnational spirituality.⁶ As Angela lived out her version of “the patient comes first,” she discovered the sacramental and Eucharistic quality of the lepers who became Christ for her. The anamnesis-like quality of this experience didn’t relegate the Incarnation to history but made the past present and therefore became wonderfully relevant.

Such impressive figures like Angela call to mind the bold public witness Franciscan women have given throughout the ages. Fearless public witness is hardly a monopoly of Franciscans, but there is definitely

1 This Conference is part of the Franciscan Institute’s annual gathering of researchers in the Franciscan Intellectual tradition at St. Bonaventure University in Western New York. This year’s conference was held July 12–15, 2016 and was hosted by Dr. Lezlie Knox (Marquette University) as the lead organizer. The Conference papers will be published in an upcoming volume from Franciscan Institute Publications.

2 Amy Koehliner, Oregon State University, “Charity ‘as broad as their religion’: The Sisters of Saint Francis of Rochester and the Mayo Clinic, July 14, 2016.

3 David Couturier, *The Four Conversions: A Spirituality of Transformation*, (St. Bonaventure NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2017), 7.

4 Dawn M. Nothwehr, OSF, *The Franciscan View of the Human Person*, 12.

5 Dawn M. Nothwehr, OSF, *The Franciscan View of the Human Person*, 11.

6 Unlike contemporary spirituality’s proclivity towards narcissism whereby “personal conversion is misinterpreted as a solitary journey into privacy,” authentic “personal conversion is fundamentally ecstasies.” (Couturier, *The Four Conversions*, 5–7).



something in our charism that will induce us to “put it out there” when something important is at stake. Francis stripped before the bishop and citizens of Assisi to show God comes even before family (Mt. 6:33) and that wealth can corrupt relationships (Mt. 6:19-20). Similarly, the “performative piety” of various Franciscan women we heard about whose faith was lived out in the streets really impressed me by how these women, sometimes at the cost of ridicule and rejection,⁷ put their faith “out there.”⁸ Thus, Lady Jacoba brokered a peace treaty with the Holy See in a move that broke with family tradition;⁹ Clare doggedly battled with popes for the Privilege of Poverty;¹⁰ Agnes of Prague did the same, obtaining her own Privilege of Poverty while building a hospital;¹¹ Franciscan tertiaries performed “hospice ministry” and ministry to lepers (picking up where the friars left off as they became more clericalized); Humilana of Cecci living out her penitential spirituality in her domestic “cell” in the family *castel torre* which drew public acclaim since “having a live-in penitent [in the family *castel torre*] actually strengthened the family prestige due to the penitent’s [known] spiritual observances”;¹² and Caritas Pirckheimer, as a symbol of the freedom of conscience (“religious freedom” would be the modern equivalent), wrestled steadfastly with the Lutheran city council of Nuremberg to preserve her monastic community’s Catholic and Clarian identity in the face of the imposition of Protestantism.¹³ Even the Poor Clares of the Netherlands repurposed themselves beyond a merely cloistered role to allow spiritual seekers to become monastery guests—now numbering in the hundreds.¹⁴ These diverse Franciscan forms of public engagement, perhaps not all of them strictly qualifying as expressions of “somatic theology,” still illustrate the creative fidelity Franciscan women have exhibited over the ages to make their charism relevant to others and to meet people’s needs. These historical examples and models definitely qualify as instances of developing as Franciscan women since the choice for engagement and witness in diverse forms seems to mirror the remarkable fruitfulness of the *fontalis plenitudo* that is the Father.

One example of creativity that really proved practical for my pilgrimage ministry to the Holy Land was that of Isabel of Villena. She wrote her *vita Christi* not for the general public but for her sisters. Her purpose was to creatively answer the question of what goes on during Holy Saturday when Christ descends among the dead. It’s amazing that I have professed this part of the Creed for years, Sunday after Sunday, and yet have given it so little thought. Her powerful and vivid description of the souls in the “Limbo of the Ancestors” yearning for their Redeemer was, to quote Isabel, so that “we can be Easter witnesses with them.” Although this wasn’t doing anything manifestly public, as Steven McMichael noted, by her filling in the gap between Good Friday and Easter Sunday with a narration of the Harrowing of Hell, she is actually reminding her sisters of the important ecclesial and liturgical point that “Holy Saturday is a major

part of the Triduum.”¹⁵ Her *vita* also demonstrated to me the importance of imagination—Franciscan or just basically Christian—and the dictum that “spiritualities are realities [that] can be put into [the] most effective exercise only by aid of imagination.”¹⁶ I have been guilty of simply skipping over Holy Saturday and just treating it as a day to wait for Easter Sunday. Isabel’s account has also helped me realize that when I talk about Christ’s descent among the dead to pilgrims in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, I can conjure up a more vivid scene to help them visualize the amazing redemptive experiences happened in that realm. Thus, her literary work has, in my opinion, perduring value as a creative exercise in the artistic license of a Franciscan imagination. It will bear fruit for years to come. That too is developing as a Franciscan woman.

The *General Constitutions* of the Friars Minor says that we are to “live among the poor and secularized groups” (art. 87.3). Not unlike the ferment of the 13th century with its new demands for spirituality and religious presence in the public square, postmodern Western society, despite its aggressive and even militant secularism, thirsts for the spiritual and transcendent. Witness the popularity of Taizé, Gregorian chant, monastery retreats, hermitages (often booked for months or years), shrines and even New Age spirituality or pop culture angelology. The “transcendent drive in the human person for the divine”¹⁷ still exists and cries out for expression and fulfillment.¹⁸ Religious retrieval, such as this conference, can help us not only read “the signs of the times” but understand this is a “time for signs.” (People prefer witnesses over teachers.¹⁹) We are called to be those signs. In Francis’s day, the rise of the urban population centers, and their increasingly literate laity led to “a more critical and individualistic mentality”²⁰ similar to our own postmodern societies. This is a call of the Spirit that beckons Franciscans to dig deep into their tradition for creative responses in our witness to the God who is good.

Finally, I would like to thank the Franciscan Institute for making this possible and also my professor for making attendance mandatory. I needed a nudge to enjoy the treasures this conference had in store for us. Pope Francis has reminded the Church in *Evangelii Gaudium* that the New Evangelization requires all hands on board (n. 20). No one can be exempt from this effort to witness to our Lord Jesus Christ in an increasingly post-Christian world. “I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking” how to do evangelization (n. 33). With his native Franciscan sensibility, the Holy Father challenges us to “go forth from our comfort zone in order to reach all the ‘peripheries’ in need of the light of the Gospel.” (n. 20). Often, we male religious tend to think we either have to do it alone or just with other brothers. That is a fallacy. We have allies in this task—and more than allies: we have Franciscan sisters to help us build a more fraternal/sororal and evangelical world. This conference reminded me of that.

7 Deborah Scerbicke made this point about post-Vatican II sisters in our contemporary setting speaking, as she did, about the congregation she knows the best: the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago, of which she is an affiliate (“Caught in a Whirlwind: Lived Theology, Mission and Vision in the Lives of Franciscan Women,” July 14, 2016).

8 Darleen Pryds, Franciscan School of Theology, “Jacobae dei Settesoli, Prasede, and the Lost Legacy of Lay Women in the Earliest Years of the Franciscan Movement,” July 14, 2016.

9 Darlene Pryds, op cit.

10 Although this wasn’t in the public square, there was a public aspect to it given the monastic movement she inspired and her high social status as a noblewomen descended from no less than Charlemagne.

11 Holly Baumgartner, Lourdes University, “Clare, Agnes and Agency in Suffering,” July 13, 2016.

12 Ella Kilgallon, Queen Mary at the University of London, “Female Franciscan Sites of Devotion in the Medieval Italian City: the Domestic ‘Cell,’” July 14, 2016.

13 Pacelli Millane, OSC, Monastere de Saint-Claire, Valleyfield, Quebec, “Caritas Pirckheimer, 16th Century Poor Clare During the Reformation,” July 13, 2016.

14 Jan Sloots, “The Development of the Poor Clares in the Netherlands: From Cloistered Nuns to Contemplative Religious Women,” July 14, 2016.

15 Steven McMichael, O.F.M. Conv., St. Thomas University, “Isabel of Villena on the Appearances of the Risen Christ in her *Vita Christi*,” July 13, 2016.

16 E.H. Johnson as quoted in Michael Paul Gallagher, “Imagination and Faith,” *The Way* 24:2 (April 1984), 118.

17 David Couturier, *The Four Conversions*, 24.

18 This “fundamental drive for theocentric self-transcendence in every human being” is the linchpin in the Theory of Self-Transcendent Consistency authorized by Luigi Rulla, S.J., et alia. (Couturier, *The Four Conversions*, 20-23).

19 Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, “On Evangelization in the Modern World,” n. 41.

20 C. H. Lawrence, *The Friars: The Impact of the Early Mendicant Movement on Western Society*, 3.



Alex Kratz, O.F.M., is a Franciscan Friar of the Province of St. John the Baptist, Assistant Postulant Director for his province and Spiritual Director for Terra Sancta Ministries — a bridge-building apostolate with the Mother Church of Jerusalem. He received his B.A. in Theology from the University of Notre Dame and his M.Div. from Catholic Theological Union. He resides in Detroit.



“Not What You Once Were, But What You Henceforth Have Begun To Be”

By Thomas Piolata, O.F.M., Cap.

This summer, I, along with three other Capuchin student friars from Washington, D.C., were commissioned to form the province's mission band. In light of the Jubilee Year of Mercy, we chose as our theme “The Name of God is Mercy.” For seven weeks, then, we travelled to different Capuchin parishes around the province, and offered missions proclaiming the message of mercy. In general, each mission consisted of Eucharist Adoration, music, preaching, and time for silent reflection. The following is my reflection on mercy, which I delivered this summer. For the sake of readability, I have made some minor changes.

My brothers and sisters: Good evening! Before I begin my reflection with you, I just want to express, on behalf of myself and my brothers with me, our utmost gratitude: thank you for welcoming us into your parish. It is always a blessing to be able to praise with others, to join hands as a community before the Lord, who is our life and our salvation.

As you know, the theme we have chosen is “The Name of God Is Mercy.” To be sure, we have plagiarized this title. It is not ours but rather the name of Pope Francis’ book-length interview, in honor of him proclaiming this year the Jubilee Year of Mercy. And so here we are, four student friars, missioned to proclaim this theme, this truth that lies at the heart of the Gospel. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI, words that Pope Francis echoes at the beginning of his book: “Mercy is . . . the core of the Gospel message; it is the name of God himself, the face with which he revealed himself in the Old Testament and fully in Jesus Christ.”¹

I’d like to begin with a brief story. I want to take you all to my senior year of college, and let me preface this with the following: my collegiate years were, to say the least, *comprehensive*. Not only did I engage seriously in studies and extra-curricular activities, but I also enjoyed a thoroughly active social life—the details of which I will leave to your fantastic imaginations. By the time the end of senior year rolled around, while I had applied to multiple graduate schools, none of my offers really resonated with me. I wanted something else. “Why not just join the Capuchins?” I thought. After all, I had thought of the priesthood and religious life, however uncritically, for the past few years. Maybe it was time to just give it a shot. So, when my peers asked the infamous senior year question, “What are your plans next year?” I would answer: “I’m joining the Franciscans.”

How I wish I could have a snapshot of the faces after they heard those words! “You!” I do not even know if Mary was so surprised when she heard that she would conceive a child by the Holy Spirit. “You know,” they would respond, “that means you can’t do *x* or *y* anymore, right?” Again, I’ll leave the *x*’s and *y*’s to your imagination. I would respond: “Yeah, that’s right.” Almost all of my friends thought I’d be out within a year. In fact, my own sister, before I left, said “See you in a couple of weeks!” Honestly, brothers and sisters, the irony of my vocation could not be any more lucid. But, fast-forward four

years. I’m still here.

I share this story because it captures God’s way of working. God does not know limits. God does not know boundaries. God does not have a litmus test. God is mercy. And that’s that! While the logic of my collegiate friends could not conclude to my Franciscan vocation, the logic of God’s mercy worked in a fundamentally different way. God’s mercy is infinite, unlimited, unrestricted, unbounded; as Saint Paul puts it: God is “rich in mercy” (Eph 2:4). God’s mercy breaks through our sins, breaks through our histories, reaches into our hearts and beckons us to return to God, to be in a relationship with God.

Here’s the point: the brutal fact is that Adam and Eve sinned, and human history is full of sin, and we ourselves have sinned. And the brutal fact is that God does not owe anything to anyone. God does not “owe” us forgiveness or salvation. But: God is *rich in mercy*. God has never withheld God’s hand from history; Adam and Eve sinned, but God did not leave the picture. So with us. God has never once withheld God’s hand from *my* history, from *your* history. Constantly and consistently, God reaches down to us mercifully and provides us with a way to salvation. This is the mercy of God. This is who our God is. Think of it this way: no matter how defiled our history might be, no matter how much we have sinned—and continue to sin over and over again—the mercy of God is like a safety-net: when we fall, we fall into the safety-net of God’s mercy, a safety-net that preserves us and preserves God’s plan for our salvation. Sin cannot cut this net open, which is always there to catch us. That means, whenever we fall, we fall into this fail-safe, this safety-net—a safety-net that, when accepted, allows us to get back up again. I remember the words of a beautiful Carmelite nun, who told me and a group of other Capuchin novices: “Thank God for the gift of the bounce—that we can bounce back.” She wanted us to know that holiness is about bouncing back. Sure: we sin. I sin all of the time. I always fall short of living the Franciscan life well, and the Christian life even more so. But when we fall short, we fall in this safety-net, and we can bounce back. In the words of Pope Francis:

Mercy is the divine attitude which embraces, it is God’s giving himself to us, accepting us, and bowing to forgive. Jesus said he came not for those who were good but for the sinners. He did not come for the healthy, who do not need the doctor, but for the sick. For this reason, we can say that mercy is God’s identity card.²

Let me put it this way: No one is more at home at the foot of the Cross than a sinner. And the Cross leads to Resurrection. This is why, for example, Saint Paul says “Where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more” (Rom 5:20). There’s this horrible image out there that if someone has sinned a lot, they’ll catch on fire if they walk into a church. I’m not denying the reality of sin, but when we sin, mercy is at our fingertips. So it’s not catching on fire that should scare us, but being caught by mercy that ought

¹ *The Name of God is Mercy*, trans. Oonagh Stransky (New York: Random House), 7.

² *The Name of God is Mercy*, 8-9.



to motivate us.

Recall the beginning of the Book of Isaiah. The book begins with rather harsh language, depicting the sins of the people of Israel who have turned away from God. Isaiah writes: “Ah! Sinful nation, people laden with wickedness, evil race, corrupt children” (Is 1:4). After 15 verses of this harsh articulation of Israel’s sins, the tone of the words then change, and change drastically. The reader encounters the mercy of God. “Come now,” we read, “let us set things right, says the Lord: Though your sins be like scarlet, they may become white as snow. Though they be crimson red, they may become white as wool” (Is 1:18).

Notice here the power of God’s mercy. What has been utterly discolored, the Lord restores. I am reminded of the story of St. Margaret of Cortona, a Franciscan saint. Born in the 1200s, Margaret had a difficult family life and eventually ran off with a man. She became his mistress, but could not marry him—due to her social status. After nine years and after bearing him a son, the man died. Here was a woman who had a child out of wedlock, no man to take care of her, and was publically known as a mistress. Distressed and confused, she found refuge with the Franciscans and eventually underwent a deep conversion. Margaret then fell in love with Christ, and in one of her experiences with Him, Christ addressed her as one of His beloved virgins. Margaret was alarmed. How can this be? Clearly, she was not a virgin. Answer: “All is possible to love.”³ The mercy of God offers a forgiveness that restores innocence. I ask all of you this evening: Do you believe in this, God’s mercy? Are you holding onto a past that the Lord has forgiven?

I want to share with you a powerful phrase from one of my favorite saints—St. Bonaventure. He was another Franciscan from the 1200s, who became one of the early leaders of the Order after St. Francis had died. In one of his reflections, Bonaventure says this: “God does not consider what you once were, but what you henceforth have begun to be.”⁴ Let me repeat: “God does not consider what you once were, but what you henceforth have begun to be.” May this be our motto, so that we may attempt every single day to re-commit ourselves to God, God who is rich in mercy.

When I first heard this quote—just over a year ago—I found myself in a rather dark place. I doubted my whole vocation. I looked to the future, and I questioned if I could do it. I looked in the past, and I doubted my call. Past sins clouded my consciousness. Future uncertainties amplified. The present situation in which I found myself grew saturated with doubt, confusion, and anxiety. I think we all know this feeling, when the weight of life becomes seemingly overbearing. Yet, in class one day, my professor shared these words of Bonaventure in his lecture. I could not stop thinking about that quote for days after hearing it. I found myself replaying the words in my head over and over again. Why? Because I slowly began to realize that God is not holding a grudge about what I did yesterday, or last week, or last year. I also realized that God is not waiting for me in some distant abstract future. I understood, brothers and sisters, that what God cares about is me right now—in this very instant. That is where my life lies: not in the future, not in the past, but in the hands of God *right now*. What I do with it *right now* is what matters.

Recall the Prophet Ezekiel. The Lord tells Ezekiel that when

a sinful man repents, “None of the crimes he committed shall be remembered against him.” The Lord says: “Do I indeed derive any pleasure from the death of the wicked? [Answer: No!] . . . Do I not rather rejoice when he turns from his evil way that he may live?” (Ezek 18: 22-23). Do not, therefore, be afraid of confession, of asking for God’s forgiveness over and over again. God always *rejoices* when offering forgiveness. From the book of Proverbs: “He who conceals his sins prospers not, but he who confesses and forsakes them obtains mercy” (28:13). Do not grow weary. Do not carry the weight of sin on your shoulders alone: turn to the mercy of God, for “he does not consider what you once were, but what you henceforth have begun to be.”

Speaking of confession: a few weeks ago while on retreat, I went to confession. Now, I have to be honest: sometimes I question confession, or to be more precise, I question its efficacy. It seems that not only do I continue to sin, but I seem to struggle with the same sins over and over again. At the end of my confession, the priest looked at me and said: “Believe in the mercy of God.” Those words pierced me. Later on that day, while praying, I thought: “God’s mercy is real. It’s really real.” I (re)encountered the reality of God’s mercy anew. How powerful it is to believe in mercy!

My brothers and sisters, I invite all of you to turn to the Lord, to turn to God’s mercy. It is real. It is warm. It is unlimited. And for us sinners, the best part about it: it’s inexhaustible! I sometimes, for example, grow weary because one day I can feel all religious and friar-like and prayerful, and the next day I fall like a dead leaf from a tree in autumn. But God’s mercy—that safety-net!—is right there. God is always there. God *rejoices* when we return to God (cf. Mic 7:18-20). God is our number one fan. God believes in us. I’ve begun more and more to realize that at the center of our faith is not our belief in God, but God’s belief in us. God believes in us.

The Almighty God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, believes in *you*. So when we talk about God’s mercy, we are not talking about something arbitrary. It is a mercy proceeds from God’s great and all-encompassing love for—belief in—*you*. “For God so loved the world,” we all know this famous passage, “that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him” (Jn 3:16-17; cf. Eph 2:4-5). Is it any wonder that Pope Benedict XVI has said that “Jesus Christ is divine mercy in person”?⁵

Think, for example, of the story of Mary’s Annunciation. After Gabriel announces the good news to Mary, she exclaims: “His *mercy* is from age to age to those who fear him. . . . He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his *mercy*” (Lk 1:50, 54). Mary understands that her conception bespeaks God’s mercy. Recall also the birth of John the Baptist. Zechariah, after his son’s birth, praises God, saying that He has “shown mercy” and that he has sent this child to be a prophet who will prepare the way of the Lord, whose “tender mercy” will ultimately guide our feet into peace (Lk 1: 72, 78).

This is our faith. Do not be afraid of the mercy of God. Do not doubt the mercy of God. Turn toward the mercy of God. We cannot live without it.

We cannot live without it. I’m speaking rather literally here. Let me explain. St. Bonaventure teaches us that because we were made from nothing, then we are basically not stable or sufficient by our-

3 Anthony Francis Giovagnoli, *The Life of Saint Margaret of Cortona* (Philadelphia: Peter F. Cunningham & Son, 1888), 10.

4 “Non enim pensat, qualis aliquando fuisti, sed qualis esse amodo incepisti.” “De Quinque Festivitatibus pueri Iesu,” in *Doctoris seraphici S. Bonaventurae opera omnia*, vol. 8, *Opuscula varia ad theologiam mysticam et Res ordinis fratrum minorum spectantia*, ed. The Fathers of the Collegium S. Bonaventurae (Quaracchi: Ex typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1898), 90.

5 “Homily of His Eminence Card. Joseph Ratzinger Dean of the College of Cardinals,” Vatican Website, April 18, 2005, accessed August 10, 2016, http://www.vatican.va/gpII/documents/homily-pro-eligendo-pontifice_20050418_en.html



selves to be ourselves.⁶ In other words, we could, as it were, evaporate at any given moment—and, indeed, we would if we were to rely solely on our own resources. But, and here is the beauty of it all, by God's grace we are conserved minute by minute, second by second.⁷ Why? God does not owe us anything. God does not get any profit from our existence. Answer: Mercy. Love. No other answer suffices. The only logic here is the logic of divine mercy.

I cannot help but draw an equally beautiful conclusion, namely, that God's mercy is intimately within each of us. We do not have to traverse miles and miles looking for God's mercy. All I have to do is think: "If I am, I am because God's mercy is upholding me, conserving me, saving me." My brothers and sisters, the question to ask is not "Where is God's mercy?" but rather "Where isn't God's mercy?" This is not, however, to deny the tragic and evil reality of sin. Sin is, without question, a horrendous evil. Hell is real. In our day and age, I think that we have sometimes forgotten that fact. After all, we *can* reject God's mercy. We can choose to bask in our sinfulness and unworthiness. But in the final analysis, when we take our sin to God, then what was a horrendous evil becomes like a song that sings of God's mercy and love. Think of the story of the Prodigal Son. Think of Jesus the Good Shepherd who rejoices when he goes out to find just that one lost sheep. Recall the countless episodes from the Gospel when Jesus welcomes home a repentant sinner. He does not put them in time out; He does not set them on fire. No! Rather, Jesus, to use St. Bonaventure's words, shows "them the open bosom of divine mercy."⁸

My brothers and sisters, the question before us this evening is this: Do I turn toward the mercy of God or do I trust in my own resources? That's the basic question that faces us. In one of my favorite books, Pope Benedict XVI writes beautifully about the human person; he teaches that "man is not the architect of his own life," that "conversion consists essentially in that decision by which man ceases to be his own creator."⁹ If we distrust God's mercy, if we turn away from it, then we are in effect saying: "I can create myself. I can maintain myself. I can do it myself." How often we are tempted to do so! But tonight, a question lies before us; and that same question will lie before us tomorrow, and the next day and so forth. *Do I turn toward the mercy of God or do I trust in my own resources?*

Here I think of the great words of Shakespeare: "This above all to thine own self be true."¹⁰ Well, true self-knowledge tells us that we cannot rely on our own resources. If we take those words to heart, then my brothers and sisters, run to the mercy of God: for the sake of who you are, for the sake of becoming most fully who you are, run to the mercy of God. I'm reminded of another beautiful passage in St. Bonaventure: "Nothing satisfies the soul, except that which exceeds its capacity."¹¹ If you want to be true to yourself, then turn to

God. Anything here below—anything that we can grasp—will leave the soul restless. May we swallow our pride, and turn to our merciful God, who alone grants rest to our restless hearts.

My brothers and sisters, I have spoken to you of the grandeur of God's mercy. I hope that by the workings of the Holy Spirit, we may ever anew turn to the divine mercy. Yet, that God is mercy must not only motivate us to receive it, but must also motivate us to become a channel ourselves of that mercy. In other words, the mercy of God sheds light on Christian discipleship, and thus on the way in which we, as Christians, have been called forth and chosen by God to live our lives.

Saint Paul, in one of his letters, puts it as clearly as can be stated: "Be imitators of God" (Eph 5:1). Jesus himself tells us to forgive not "seven times but 77 times" (Matt 18: 22), and that number means limitless forgiveness. Remember also that the New Testament calls Jesus Christ the New Adam; this means, as Pope Benedict XVI has beautifully pointed out, that "in him alone appears the complete answer to the question about what the human being is."¹² So: Jesus is divine mercy in person. This means that to be Christian—indeed to be fully human—implies living *not only* from the mercy of God, but *for* the mercy of God: letting that mercy amplify and animate the way in which we live our lives.

This dynamic is exactly what we see in the person of St. Francis of Assisi. As you may know, St. Francis grew up as a very worldly man: money, honors, parties, and all the rest. When he describes his conversion, he places mercy at its core. Before his death, he wrote his final "Testament," and this is what he says:

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.¹³

When he was in sin, lepers—let's take this broadly to mean outcasts—were a bitter sight for him. But then, the Lord led him (and that is the essence of conversion: *being led by God*) among them. *Then*, he showed mercy to them. *Then*, they were no longer bitter but rather a source for sweetness.

I share this story because it sheds light on the following question: What does it mean to show mercy? Francis showed mercy to the lepers. He lowered himself below them; humbled himself; he served them. This is what it means to show mercy. So I ask you: who is for you, for me, the leper—the outcast? An outcast is ultimately just someone we do not want to associate with, someone who makes us feel bitter. Often times, this is our neighbor, a family member, a co-worker; of course it can also mean a beggar, a seemingly rude clerk at a store, and so forth. Regardless, God leads us to the lepers of our life, that we might show mercy to them.

Okay, so how? Let me suggest the following. We heard above from Pope Benedict XVI that Jesus Christ is divine mercy in person and that he reveals to us who we are most fully called to be. Consequently, to be merciful is impossible without a relationship with Christ. I think that this is what happened to St. Francis. One of the early biographers writes beautifully about the Saint's relationship with Jesus; he says: "He was always with Jesus: Jesus in his heart, Jesus in his mouth, Jesus in his ears, Jesus in his eyes, Jesus in his hands,

6 On this point, see Timothy Johnson, *The Soul in Ascent: Bonaventure on Poverty, Prayer, and Union With God* (Quincy: Franciscan Press, 2000), 11ff, and the relevant citations therein.

7 Cf. Bonaventure, *II Sent.* d. 37, a. 1, q. 2, resp.; *I Sent.* d. 8, p. 1, a. 2, q. 2, resp.

8 "The Tree of Life," in *Bonaventure: The Soul's Journey Into God, The Tree of Life, The Life of St. Francis*, trans. Ewert Cousins, *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1978), 136.

9 *Journey to Easter: Spiritual Reflections for the Lenten Season*, trans. Dame Mary Groves (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company), 27

10 A personal note: a priest-mentor shared with me these words over eight years ago when I first shared with him that I feel the possibility of a religious vocation. I have, since then, carried these words in my heart.

11 "nihil sufficit animae, nisi eius capacitatem excedat." "Quaestiones Disputatae de Scientia Christi," in *Doctoris seraphici S. Bonaventurae opera omnia*, vol. 5, *Opuscula varia theologica*, ed. The Fathers of the Collegium S. Bonaventurae (Quaracchi: Ex typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1891), q. 6, resp., p. 35.

12 *In the Beginning... A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall*, trans. Boniface Ramsey (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1995), 48. NB: This book is a compilation of a series of homilies given by Joseph Ratzinger.

13 "The Testament," in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 1, *The Saint*, eds. Regis Armstrong et. al. (New York: New City Press, 1999), 124.



he bore Jesus always in his whole body.”¹⁴ Francis remained close to Jesus; no wonder he was a man who could show mercy to others.

To be like the Lord, my brothers and sisters, let us love the Lord. “[Love] transforms the lover into the beloved.”¹⁵ This phrase captures the way in which St. Bonaventure understands St. Francis. Bonaventure says that “Love of the Crucified Lord was supremely and gloriously aflame in his heart.”¹⁶ The Crucified One is the utter manifestation of divine mercy. St. Francis loved the Crucified, and so became himself a channel and human manifestation of God’s mercy in Christ. This vocation belongs not only to Francis, but to each and every one of us.

“But,” you object, “I’m just not that holy. It’s too hard. I can’t do it.” Brothers and sisters, the spirit of discouragement afflicts us all—personally, I am convinced that discouragement thinks I’m a five-star hotel in which it likes to rest. To draw an analogy: I tried learning guitar a couple of years ago, and whenever I saw one of my brothers—who happens to be an excellent guitarist—play, I’d get discouraged. “Well I’m not going to be that good, so I might as well not even try.” The analogy transfers well when we talk about someone like St. Francis and holiness. To combat this discouragement, let us find encouragement where we began: in the mercy of God. Let us find encouragement in those words of St. Bonaventure: “God does not consider what you once were, but what you henceforth have begun to be.” That is the mercy of God: he considers not what we once were or what we once did, but what we now at this moment have begun to be. Everyday, begin anew. Everyday, re-commit your life to the Lord of Heaven and Earth. It is as if Jesus says this: I do not care how many times you’ve fallen or how often you’ve ignored me; I do not care how little you’ve prayed or how weak you’ve been. Don’t you see, all I want is for you, right now, at this moment, to look at me, to speak to me, to love me and let me love you... “For God,” my brothers and sisters, “does not consider what you once were, but what you henceforth have begun to be.”

My brothers and sisters, in just a moment, we will have time to spend with the Lord in silence. So I leave you with this: if our Lord does not consider what you once were, then I encourage you to let go also. What is holding you back from a deeper relationship with Christ? In the Gospels, a blind man turned to Jesus and said: “Lord have mercy!” (cf. Luke 19:35-43). His sight was restored. Do you have faith in God’s mercy? That he can heal your wounds? What wounds do you conceal from His mercy? My brothers and sisters, be not afraid. Jesus is here. Mercy is here. What matters are not the sins you have committed but what you henceforth have begun to be. Amen.

¹⁴ “The Life of Saint Francis by Thomas of Celano,” in *FAED*: 1, 283.

¹⁵ *The Disciple and the Master: St. Bonaventure’s Sermons on St. Francis of Assisi*, trans. Eric Doyle (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983), 69.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*



Thomas Piolata, O.F.M., Cap., graduated from Saint Louis University in 2012 with an Honors B.A. in Philosophy, Classical Humanities, and Italian Studies. He joined the Capuchin province of St. Augustine, where he professed simple vows in 2014. He now resides at Capuchin College in Washington, D.C. where he graduated with an M.A. in Philosophy. He is pursuing an M.A. in Theology at The Catholic University of America.





Laudato Si:

The Most Franciscan Papal Encyclical Ever

By Keith Douglass Warner, O.F.M.

Address to the Secular Franciscan Quinquennial, St. Louis, Missouri, July 2, 2016

Have you ever thought about how our Father St. Francis feels looking down from heaven on Pope Francis? Don't you think he is feeling overwhelming joy? Do you share that joy? I hope you do!

We are in a truly Franciscan moment in the Church. Fr. Michael Perry O.F.M., the minister general of the Friars Minor, describes Pope Francis' encyclical "The Joy of the Gospel" as a Franciscan vision of the Church. I would certainly agree, and point to "Laudato Si" as a Franciscan vision of Catholic engagement with society and the environment.

I am approaching 25 years in Franciscan religious life, and this is certainly the most Franciscan moment I have witnessed. We are 50 years out from Vatican II, and this is the most Franciscan moment in that period. I would argue that we have to go back to before the Protestant Reformation to find a more Franciscan moment in the church! Now this is exciting! My provincial, Fr. David Gaa, O.F.M., says it's an exciting time to be a Franciscan—and I hope you agree.

Now here's the question: are we as a Franciscan family alert to the present moment? Are we able to follow the Holy Spirit's lead? I am convinced that the future of Franciscan life—religious or lay—looks less like the Little Flowers of St. Francis and a lot more like the spirituality of Laudato Si. In this presentation, I want to accomplish three things:

1. Convince you that this is the most Franciscan papal encyclical ever.
2. Send you on a treasure hunt for the "gems" of Franciscan values embedded in Laudato Si.
3. Draw your attention to actions proposed by Pope Francis in LS that seem to me to be ideally suited for Franciscans to undertake today.

The Most Franciscan Encyclical Ever!

I would point to several features to justify this assertion.

First, Francis and Franciscans are held up as authorities and examples—more than in any prior papal encyclical. St. Francis is promoted as an example for Christian living today, in the 21st century. The encyclical is named after his Canticle of the Creatures. Francis is referenced in nine of the 246 paragraphs (see paragraphs 1, 10, 11, 12, 66, 87, 91, 125, 219). In paragraph 10, Pope Francis wrote: "He (St. Francis) loved, and was deeply loved for his joy, his generous self-giving, his openheartedness. He was a mystic and a pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself." Francis is presented an example par excellence of Integral ecology, a concept introduced and emphasized in Laudato Si. This concept is a contemporary expression of a classic

Franciscan philosophy of nature, of the relationship between God, humanity, and nature. Integral ecology means developing – and living out!—a relational and holistic worldview.

A most famous Franciscan theologian, Bonaventure is given prominence. Laudato Si paragraph 239 describes Bonaventure's vision of the Holy Trinity as divine communion, and how all of created reality reflects this Trinitarian structure of reality.

Second, care for the poor and care for the Earth are presented as interrelated, together, necessarily and always. Again, from paragraph 10: "He (Francis) shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace." This approach is not new in the Church, but it is presented more forcefully and concretely in this encyclical. It is not really accurate to say this is "the environmental encyclical." Yes, Laudato Si emphasizes that theme, but when we use the word "environment" in the U.S. we generally assume that does not include questions of human wellbeing or social justice. Laudato Si integrates all of these themes.

The poor suffer the most from environmental degradation, and any solution to our environmental problems requires special attention to helping them exit poverty. Laudato Si is fully compatible with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), passed at the U.N. General Assembly in September 2015. The SDGs orient the work of governments and large institutions toward environmental protection and economic development, built upon the reality that the poor suffer the most from environmental problems and can contribute to environmental solutions if they can find exits from extreme poverty. In fact, I recommend you read the 17 SDGs side by side with Laudato Si. The Pope is very clearly engaging in a dialogue with the United Nations.

Third, Laudato Si uses a Franciscan approach to doing ethics, exemplified by the following points:

Creation is morally significant. Nature has dignity and value. These are not uniquely Franciscan ideas, but our tradition has emphasized them.

1. Laudato Si does not start with abstract ideas or ideals but with reality. Chapter one is an environmental science primer. It describes what is.

2. Laudato Si emphasizes virtue ethics, specifically ecological virtue ethics (see paragraphs 88 and 216). It proposes we adopt a global consciousness and an ecological responsibility.

3. Laudato Si proposes an ethic of care. This means living in relationship with others, and practicing respect for the dignity of all. This is an approach to living the moral life that is not "law following." Rather, it challenges us to live out loving relationship of the common good of everyone and all creation.

Taken together, these three points substantiate my claim that this is the most Franciscan papal encyclical ever.

Franciscan values embedded in this encyclical that the pope is calling everyone to live in the 21st century

The points in the section above provide the clearest evidence of this encyclical's Franciscan character. The encyclical offers a vision for human beings living together in harmony with each other and with creation. It does not claim that it is Franciscan, nor does it instruct us about Franciscan spirituality per se. However, there are many Franciscan spirituality themes, Franciscan values, embedded in it. As you read and study *Laudato Si*, I encourage you to go on a "treasure hunt" for these "Franciscan gems." Read these Franciscan gems within the context of global Catholicism. Remember that the Pope is speaking to everyone, all around the world. So as you identify these Franciscan values, recognize that they may differ from U.S. conventional environmentalism or conventional U.S. Catholic thought.

First, direct experience of God in nature is good. Our Franciscan sources have many descriptions of Francis' experience of God in creation. In chapter six, *Laudato Si* advocates ecological spirituality. Note that some of our Protestant brothers and sisters would be suspicious of this.

Second, humanity's relationship with the Earth should be characterized by love, gratitude, praise, worship and appreciation of beauty. These are values that Franciscans aspire to live out—and they are presented to all Christians. Note that many of our conventional environmentalist friends don't approach creation with these values.

Third, the common good is global. Ecological common good means good for everyone and everything everywhere! The term "common good" is mentioned 22 times. *Laudato Si* proposes collaborative approaches, worked out in dialogue between many different sectors of society, to pursue a vision of protecting the planet and human flourishing. Paragraph 164 reads: "An interdependent world not only makes us more conscious of the negative effects of certain lifestyles and models of production and consumption which affect us all; more importantly, it motivates us to ensure that solutions are proposed from a global perspective, and not simply to defend the interests of a few countries. Interdependence obliges us to think of one world with a common plan." Note that many Americans are deeply suspicious of the U.N. and other international institutions, but not so the Vatican. "American exceptionalism" is incompatible with a Franciscan worldview and *Laudato Si*.

Fourth, efforts for economic justice and environmental protection have to work hand in hand. The U.N. SDGs express this vision very clearly, in contemporary terms. However, the Franciscan tradition has long held that care for the poor and care for creation should go together, always.

Fifth, we are called to recognize beauty as a path to God. *Laudato Si* presents love of beauty as a spiritual practice. St. Augustine claimed that beauty is a name for God, and many Franciscans throughout history have sought the face of God through natural beauty (See Mary Beth Ingham, C.S.J., *Rejoicing in the Works of the Lord: Beauty in the Franciscan Tradition*. St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2009). Francis spent considerable time in hermitages, practicing contemplation surrounded by natural beauty. Bonaventure described Francis thus: In beauty, he saw beauty itself. *Laudato Si* mentions the spiritual dimension of beauty 26 times, which in Latin is known as *via pulchritudinis*. I have never heard anyone outside the Franciscan movement even notice this theme in this encyclical. If this dimension of *Laudato Si* is receive the attention it deserves, it



will require us, as Franciscan men and women, to speak about this theme.

Sixth, we are called to ecological conversion (see paragraph 216). Since we are brothers and sisters of penance, we should be particularly alert to this dimension of our vocation as Franciscans. Paragraph 220 reads: "an ecological conversion can inspire us to greater creativity and enthusiasm in resolving the world's problems and in offering ourselves to God 'as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable.'" Penance is not a stance that inspires dread in us, but rather, joy! For we Franciscans know that it leads us in to greater intimacy with God.

Living the Spirituality of *Laudato Si*

What does ecological conversion look like? For Franciscans, it means living out the values of *Laudato Si* in our own lives with our local fraternities. But it also means giving witness to these in local, national and global communities through:

1. Prayer
2. Dialogues
3. Education
4. Ecological virtue

Laudato Si gives us lots of examples. Unlike most other papal encyclicals written for theologians and philosophers with advanced degrees, *Laudato Si* aims to speak to a global popular audience. It is written with an engaging style. In fact, it proposes so many specific actions that are difficult to live out that we may wish it were more abstract and theoretical! This section highlights a few recommended actions and then suggests how to live them out with your local fraternities.

First, we are called to live out an ecological spirituality, ecological conversion and prayer. We are invited to grow in awareness of other creatures and their needs, and to act in such a way that reflects that other creatures reflect God. Chapters two and six explain how Sacred Scripture, reflection on the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, Mary as Queen of Creation, and the sacraments can help us live an ecological spirituality.

Second, *Laudato Si* proposes a whole series of dialogues about the direction of humanity and its relationship with nature. Do not understand these dialogues as talk only. Recall Jorge Bergoglio's



training in Ignatian spirituality. Rather, think of these dialogues as a shared practice of discernment that leads to bold action.

One of these dialogues would be conducted at the global scale, about energy, climate, and sustainable development. Pope Francis retains his faith in diplomacy even in the face of repeated political failures in crafting a climate treaty. He is in favor of treaties, but not naïve enough to believe that they alone are sufficient. He calls for a global energy transition to begin immediately. These dialogues would be geopolitical, and result in a common plan, and this would require a world political authority. Note that Popes have been advocating more coordinated actions through the United Nations since John XXIII wrote *Pacem in Terris* in 1963.

Dialogue should also take place at the national and regional scales. These might better be understood as national and regional sustainability initiatives. Here are some specific recommended themes:

1. Renewable energy coops
2. New forms of industrial ecology, with greater emphasis on energy efficiency
3. Removing from the market products that are energy inefficient or polluting, perhaps by boycotts
4. Improving public transport systems
5. Improving building technologies to make them more sustainable
6. Political activity to foster all these kinds of sustainable practices
7. Dialogue with other religions, religious leaders
8. New models of economic development, such as social entrepreneurship.

Laudato Si calls for more investment in agriculture to support small farmers and protect the Earth. It calls for infrastructure, market access, irrigation systems, and sustainable agriculture techniques. From paragraph 180: "New forms of cooperation and community organization to defend small producers and preserve local ecosystems from destruction. Truly much can be done!"

Third, Laudato Si calls for more and better education. This vision of education for social transformation is much broader than classroom activities. It should take place in schools, homes, communities, catechesis, and the media. It should result in "a new lifestyle," one that is moderate, sober, and ecological. This kind of education should help us escape from consumerism, selfishness, hyper-individualism. Ecological education should provide ethical formation, and foster ecological virtue ethics. Ecological education should guide us in moving out from ourselves toward "the other," should foster self-transcendence.

Fourth, consider the practice of ecological virtue. Laudato Si challenges us to make alternative, specific lifestyle choices, such as: avoiding plastic and paper, reducing energy and water usage, separating refuse, cooking only what can be eaten, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or carpooling, and planting trees (see paragraph 211).

If you discuss these in your local fraternity, consider how you might link the above actions with long-established categories of Secular Franciscan life: work and economic justice; family life and education; civic life and advocacy; and direct action (getting one's hands dirty with practical projects). Franciscan fraternities can be great places for initiating dialogues, but the conversation should not end there. These dialogues should go public, in keeping with the intended audiences of Laudato Si. I would like to challenge fraternities to devise activities that engage youth. The themes of this encyclical are ideal for being able to present Franciscan values to a new generation.

Conclusion: What is Ours to Do in This Franciscan moment

Was part of your response to Laudato Si: "It's about time!" Even if you did not say that in public? That was part of mine. The Franciscan tradition has valued creation for its 800+ year history. Like me, some of you have been advocating for Franciscans to engage with environmental issues for some years. Last year, I was complaining to one of my brothers, Bill Short, O.F.M., that although I love Laudato Si and all it contains, many people are falling over with surprise for its message. I have been writing and speaking about some these themes for some 20 years! "Ah," he said, "but you do not have a white hat." That is true, and I do not want one. I want the current Pope to keep his job!

All the more reason for Franciscans to seize this Franciscan moment in the Church! This is an occasion for joy, but also a challenge to us, as a Franciscan family, to raise our voice. I am convinced that the future of Franciscan life—religious or lay—looks a lot less like the Little Flowers of St. Francis and a lot more like the spirituality of Laudato Si. May we live it!



Keith Douglass Warner, O.F.M., is a practical social ethicist in the Franciscan tradition. He has an MA in Spirituality from the Franciscan School of Theology and a PhD in Environmental Studies at UC Santa Cruz. He is currently the Director of Education and Action Research at the Center for Science, Technology, and Society at Santa Clara University, where he directs a fellowship in social entrepreneurship.



Select Retreats

- December 30– January 1
New Year's Retreat: Did You Miss What Just Happened? with Fr. Patrick Foley & Br. Michael Minton, OFM
- January 27–29
Franciscan Spirituality: Performing Ordinary Things in Extraordinary Ways with Fr. Joe Chinnici, OFM
- February 10-12
Valentine's Retreat for Married Couples with Fr. Rusty Shaughnessy, OFM and Richard & Karla Obernesser
- March 10–12
LifeShift: Work & the Christian Journey with Thomas Bachhuber & Jim Briggs
- April 13–16
Holy Week Retreat with friars and staff of San Damiano



Hermitage Experience

San Damiano has 2 new apartments available for Franciscans for \$300/week.

For more information or to register, call or go to our website

710 Highland Dr.; Danville, CA 925-837-9141

Visit us at www.sandamiano.org and on Facebook