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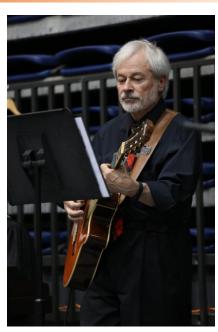
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Into Retirement



Jean-François Godet-Calogeras, professor of Theology and Franciscan Studies at St. Bonaventure University, has recently announced his retirement from teaching after a long and successful career as a philologist, Franciscan researcher and specialist in Clare studies. He has taught generations of students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels in classes, seminars and workshops around the world. Jean-François will continue as managing ed-

itor of our academic journal, *Franciscan Studies*, with Dr. Joshua Benson, chair of the department of Theology and Franciscan Studies, serving as assistant director. The President of St. Bonaventure University, Dr. Dennis DePerro, has awarded Jean-François the title of "Professor Emeritus."

At Jean François' "retirement party" in the Hall of Fame Room at St. Bonaventure University, Fr. David Couturier, Executive Director of the Franciscan Institute and publisher of Franciscan Studies and Franciscan Connections-The Cord, offered the following citation to honor Dr. Godet-Calogeras:

In Honor of Dr. Jean-François Godet-Calogeras

At the end of her masterful new book on St. Clare of Assisi, the eminent scholar Cathy Mooney, rejects "the great woman" approach to the study of St. Clare. It's the one that pulls Clare out of her context and relationships and makes her a distinct, exceptional, and unique woman above and beyond others.

Instead, she proposes that we always "bring to the fore the complex nexus of actors surrounding her."

I would say that the best way to approach Jean François is not only as the "great man" that he is, but in the context of the "complex nexus of actors and actresses" that have always surrounded him. Athena, for sure, his amazing friends here in Olean and Allegany, not least of which is our former colleague, Dr. Chuck Walker, all his colleagues and students here at the University, but the whole network of people around the world who consider Jean François an exceptional mentor, a wise guide, a perceptive scholar and, most of all, a dear friend and compassionate brother.

The best way to transition with you as you begin your well-deserved retirement is with a blessing that comes from Clare of Assisi:

Live without fear;
Your creator has made you holy;
Has always protected you;
And Loves you as a mother.
Go in peace to follow the good road
And may God's blessing be with you always. Amen.



Franciscan Connections: The Cord-A Spiritual Review



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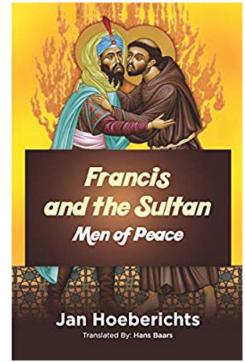
"For this is a reminder, an admonition, an exhortation and my testament which I leave to you..."

By Michael F. Cusato, OFM

A Review of Jan Hoeberichts' Final Work, Francis and the Sultan: Men of Peace

hese are the words dictated by Francis of Assisi as he was preparing himself to leave the earth, a few days before his death in 1226. In some respects, they can similarly be ascribed to Jan Hoeberichts, Dutch historian, to characterize his final book, written in Dutch and recently translated into English: Francis and the Sultan: Men of Peace. No one had done more in the English language, since the early 1980s, to bring the encounter of Francis with al-Malik al-Kamil in August 1219 outside Damietta to the forefront of Franciscan history than had Jan, prior to his unexpected passing on 4 January 2014. Beginning with his ground-breaking volume, Francis and Islam, written in 1994 and first published in English in 1997, Jan Hoeberichts had left us, at the time of his passing, with four interlocking volumes in which he used this famous encounter as the lens through which to read and understand the spirituality of the saint of Assisi. His final volume represents both a summation of the strands of material found in these his other books but now brought into a magisterial synthesis and spiritual deepening in this one. It is indeed his *Testament*.

In his prologue, Jan tells us that he believed he needed to take stock of the recent scholarship done on the encounter since the publication of his first volume on the subject: most notably but not exclusively the monographs of Paul Moses (on the encounter) and John Tolan (on the use and abuse of the encounter across the ages), as well as what has appeared in learned journals and other venues. Then, in the first four chapters, he surveys, from his own perspective, the early years of the fraternity, including the writing of the Early Rule. Although not the most successful section of this new work – such surveys have been done far better, more comprehensively, and with much greater supporting detail - it provides him with the opportunity to emphasize three themes which had become paramount to him for a proper understanding of the minorite charism. First of all, Hoeberichts eschews a detailed examination of the content of chapter 7 and its expansions in chapters 8 and 9 (central for scholars like Flood and myself), to place the emphasis, rather, on chapter 14: the sending of the friars out on mission. But the missionary discourse (cited from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke), emphasizes that these forays into the world were specifically missions of peace. Our author then couples this oft-overlooked emphasis with



the hagiographical accounts of the friars' proclamation of peace throughout the communes - and the curious, befuddled reactions it evinced in their listeners. Indeed, so inured in the grasping for material prosperity and the violent plundering often needed to secure were those people of their own time who could not grasp the evangelical

3

nature of this call to a conversion of life. This theme of the pursuit of peace will be the one persistent and fundamental thread of his final book - hence, its subtitle - now brought front and center into the Franciscan story. A second theme: the decision of the friars "to be submissive and subject to all." Drawn from the First Letter of Peter, this fundamental posture is not so much an attitude of interior humility as it is the pledge to remain at the service of all others in a ministry of quiet presence among them rather than – as the hagiographers would prefer to emphasize – a ministry of preaching with words. To put it somewhat crudely: our author contrasts what is essentially a ministry exercised by clerics at select times (public preaching) with that which every friar can and should be engaged in at all times (presence among). It is, after all, a propositum vitae. And third: the upheaval of the value-system of Francis and passed on, as much as possible, to his followers is indelibly rooted in his own encounter among lepers. This encounter obliged him thereafter to view the world and all reality through the eyes of those who have been marginalized into invisibility by the Church and society. Henceforth, since every creature has come from the loving hand of God, all are to be recognized, without exception, as possessing an innate and sacred dignity.

The next two chapters – five and six – cover ground previously plowed to great effect in his previous volumes:



the three attempts of Francis to "go among the Muslims." Of course, it was only the third attempt in 1219 – to go to the East and to Damietta - that was successful. Those familiar with Jan's previous writings on these efforts will recognize most of the content here. Perhaps, one exception to be noted is his additional material on the life of al-Kamil himself. For here, we are now able to integrate into the overall picture of the event: the intricate politics of his family lineage, the territories apportioned to al-Kamil's various brothers and – what is especially intriguing – al-Kamil's association with Richard I Lionheart and his being knighted by the latter in 1192 (p. 98), allowing favorable terms for the retention of Acre by the Christian army. Most would not be aware of his exposure to such western figures and how such interactions may have been formative in shaping al-Kamil's approach to another westerner... from Assisi. In brief, the themes lifted up by Hoeberichts in the early chapters of his volume – the hunger for peace and fraternity among all God's creatures; a willingness to place himself at the service of others; the eschewing of noisy and confrontational proclamation in favor of a quiet fraternal presence; and the honoring of the dignity of God's presence within every human person he might encounter, even the one defined by the Church as the "enemy," the "adversary," and the "infidel" – all now would come to maturity and fruition during Francis' experience in the Levant. For, like the leper, all were innate temples of the presence of God. Moreover, his own experience in Damietta and the news received from Morocco about the execution of the five friars who boldly denounced the religion and the prophet in that land converged to prompt an additional insertion in the Rule of the way that the friars ought to "go among the Muslims." Such reflection resulted in the first paragraphs of the innovative chapter 16 added to the Early Rule in the wake of the events in the East.

Hoeberichts is particularly keen in this volume to underscore both the open nature of Francis' attitude in going to the East and how the encounter at Damietta thoroughly transformed him for the rest of his life. This reviewer believes that the first matter (his motivations) is actually more complex and nuanced than Hoeberichts would have us believe. Francis was indeed in the midst of rethinking the script about Islam and Muslims which he had received through the Church during his upbringing. However, it was only once he was on site and afterwards that he could reflect on his own (largely positive) experiences among them and allow the seed planted within him during his encounter with lepers to become more fully realized. On this latter issue – the post-Damietta transformation of Francis - Jan is both insightful and original, confronting the hagiographical assumptions – and usually our own as well – that it was Francis who had something to teach Muslims and not the other way around. Indeed, this was the real "success" of the 1219 mission: the radical re-assessment in Francis about his pre-conceived ideas about "the infidels." Far from reinforc-

ing the trope that such people were "unbelievers," Francis discovered – quite to the contrary – a whole people dedicated to praying regularly and fervently. Although I would not go as far as to insist that Francis left Damietta with a much more positive image of "Islam," I think it is necessary to insist that he left there with a more positive appreciation of the Muslims he met.

Although the seventh chapter – on the Franciscan and non-Franciscan sources shedding light on the events of the sojourn in the East – reads somewhat turgidly since it's not entirely original nor well integrated into the flow of the volume, it is an important element of the book because it brings to the fore the cultural matrix which Christians (and, for their part, Muslims as well) brought to bear on their "read" of the Other. These western constructs – taught in schools, proclaimed from the pulpits, and passed on in hagiographical topoi – created negative attitudes towards the Other within the listener, which were extraordinarily hard to surmount. Although the words may seem harsh, there is great truth in the term Jan uses to describe these constructs: religious propaganda. Any fair assessment of the crusade materials of the time must note the heavy ideological caste of these writings. Or, to put it more kindly: such constructs are a way for any given religious tradition to bring its teaching to bear on such matters. Hence, my preference for the term "cultural matrix" to describe the same thing. Indeed, seeing the dynamic in this light, helps us understand why the friars themselves had such difficulty in accepting and carrying forward Francis' radical vision of the Muslim-as-brother (and sister) in the years after his death. Conversely, seen in this light, we can appreciate how Francis was unique (counter-cultural) in his own day and instructive for our own, given our own cultural matrix vis-à-vis Muslims (and others).

Perhaps the most original part of the final work of Jan Hoeberichts – at least to this reviewer – was his treatment of some of Francis' most original insights that are found in his writings towards the end of the saint's life. This occurs most notably in two sets of writings: the Letter to the Minister and a phrase which we find sprinkled across several of his later letters. As to the second, Hoeberichts points out that there are several instances in Francis' writings where he uses a most unusual, if not unique, phrase: "the most holy names and written words" of the Lord. Our author can find no parallel in the West at this time and he believes it is rooted both in the extraordinary care expended by Muslims on their holy books as well as the enumeration of the names of the attributes of God, as reflected in his own Praises of God. As to the second insight: Francis had been forced to confront the fact that his experience in the East did not culminate in the conversion of the sultan (or anyone else for that matter). However open-minded he may have been, Francis certainly believed in the centrality of Jesus Christ in matters of faith and sought, in his own gentle way, to testify to this before the sultan. But they left



empty-handed in this regard. Reflecting on this, Francis – according to Hoeberichts – came to an important insight: conversion of heart occurs only in God's good time and grace. God always remains sovereign; human beings are merely channels of God's grace. And this was precisely the "lesson" he was passing on to the minister who had been assailed both verbally and probably physically by another brother or brothers. His counsel was that one must, at some point, bow to God's mysterious grace at work within all of us. The connection here is stunning and original: perhaps the gem of the volume.

The epilogue brings us to our contemporary world and demonstrates how Francis' vision of a peaceful world is being set in place by a variety of Franciscan entities: all enflamed, in their own way, by the recovery of a deeper understanding of the encounter of 1219. Although these pages could have been much more succinct and summary, it is good to realize that such ventures exist in our own day and have been moderately successful.

There is, to my mind, one glaring omission in this new treatment of the encounter and its broader contexts: the place of the Chartula in the overall picture of Francis' post-Damietta years. True enough, the author gives appropriate space to the resonances between the 99 Beautiful Names and Francis' own Praises of God (on the recto or front side of the parchment). It is the important testimony on the verso (back) side – the figure sketched by Francis

himself possibly of the sultan confessing the cross of Christ - which has not been integrated into the picture. (He may have been unfamiliar with my own writings on the matter; but Kathy Warren's work was not unknown to him).

While we are grateful now to have an English translation of the Dutch original, the text could have used the input of a native English speaker for greater fluidity and precision. Additionally, the typesetting of the text – to use an older term – is quite spotty. A new edition would benefit from a closer look at the formatting, lest it distract the reader from the scholarly depth of the work and weaken its overall credibility.

That said, this is a wonderful volume for the synthesis it offers us: the pinnacle of a lifetime of research and reflection on a seminal and heretofore muted event in early Franciscan history. It is filled with penetrating insights and trenchant observations by a master in the field. The former Franciscan has shown himself, once again, to have remained to his last days most profoundly Franciscan. This is Jan's personal testimony – a witness of faith – that became his own Testament to all of us.



Michael F. Cusato, O.F.M., is a Franciscan friar and priest in the Sacred Heart Province of Friars Minor (St. Louis, MO). A former director of the Franciscan Institute and dean of its School of Franciscan Studies at St. Bonaventure University, he is currently an independent scholar living in Washington D.C.

As we were going to press for this issue of Franciscan Connections, Franciscan Institute Publications was undergoing negotiations for the printing of an updated version of Hoebericht's Francis and the Sultan: Men of Peace that will be more accessible to an American audience. The publication will be available in the Fall of 2020. This would not be possible without the support of Fidelis Hoeberichts, Mary DeCruz, Sr. Kathy Warren and Fr. Michael Cusato. We are honored to be involved in Jan's final work, creating opportunities for a new audience.

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SAN DAMIANO RETREAT



To Be or Not To Be a Mystic: That is the Question Silent Retreat with Sr. Ishpriya RSCJ (6/2-6/7)

Poetry and Scripture: Radical Hope Women Religious Retreat with Sr. Patricia Bruno OP (6/16-21)

The Biblical Dimensions of Radical Hope with Fr. Tom Bonacci CP (7/12-7/14)

Becoming a Mystic in Today's World

5-Day Silent Contemplative Retreat with Sr. Celeste Crine OSF & Fr. Rusty Shaughnessy OFM (7/22-27)

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Franciscan Connections: The Cord-A Spiritual Review

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A Journey Through Faith and Art

By Kevin Hamzik

rt is found in all aspects of life and one of the biggest parts of art is the inspiration that artists use to create their works. While it is important to look at the works of other artists for inspiration (I myself love the works of Michelangelo and Vincent van Gogh), I find myself looking towards my faith as the inspiration for my works. Faith and spirituality play a huge role in my life. With faith and spirituality being a constant struggle in one's life, there is much you can show with it. I try to cre-

ate a sense of faith and spirituality through my work, something that we often only see in words. I came up with three phrases that have helped me along my spiritual journey while tying them to my life experiences and my artwork.

The first phrase comes from the biblical book of Psalms: "I will fear no evil for you are with me." This phrase is, for me, the most basic of the three and shows that we have no reason to fear any sort of evil in life because God is always with us. Evil is a powerful force in our world. Through social media and news outlets, we encounter evil, even if indirectly. God's quidance is always available to us and will lead us away from evil as long as we open ourselves up to it.

My first time in Italy and Europe was when I went on pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi around Christmas in

2017. It was there that I first experienced this sense of fearing no evil. I encountered Michelangelo's Pieta, the grand architecture of the many churches in the cities, and the beautiful frescos that line the walls of the Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi. Along with this, I learned a lot more about Saint Francis through being able to walk where he did a very long time ago. Saint Francis is someone who experienced a lot of pain and grief in his life but was still able to turn to God and be filled with his love and peace. Through God, he was able to experience a new sense of calling in life, as I did when I decided to join the Franciscan Order.

It was these experiences in Rome and Assisi that gave me inspiration for two of my pieces, Mandala and Conversion. Mandala is my own design of a rose window, which can be found in churches all over the world. Rose windows tell a story. My design tells the story of the church's call to com-

> munity and worship. Conversion is a piece that speaks of the struggle of Francis with

poverty and my connection to his conversion. Francis, at the beginning of his life, was very keen on finding glory. He wanted to be a famous knight that fought for his city and be seen as a hero. As time grew on, Francis realized he was not being called to that life, but being called by God to repair the church of San Damiano. I experienced this sort of conversion through my artwork. At the beginning of my time at Saint Bonaventure University, I really wanted to design cars. I always thought it would be cool to design something that is used by people every day, and it would be amazing to see something I designed being driven on the road. However, I soon started to realize that this was not bringing me the same peace that it once had. So, I turned to the one thing in life that had al-

ways brought me peace: my faith. Conversion is the middle piece in a series of spiral-type pieces, symbolizing the love and peace of God entering you and overcoming your inner

The second phrase comes from the prayer of Saint Francis: "it is in giving that we receive." Growing up, I remember that a big thing was receiving gifts from people.









Whether it was a birthday or a holiday, I focused on what I could ask for. It is nice to get things, but as I started to grow up, I realized that the greatest gift one could give is yourself. The greatest gift one could receive is love. The love of God is the most important. It is through the giving of ourselves that we let people see who we really are, we let God's love flow through us and into the lives of others. In

return, we receive the love that we long for and we change the world. It is through God's love and by giving ourselves that we can make the world a much better place.

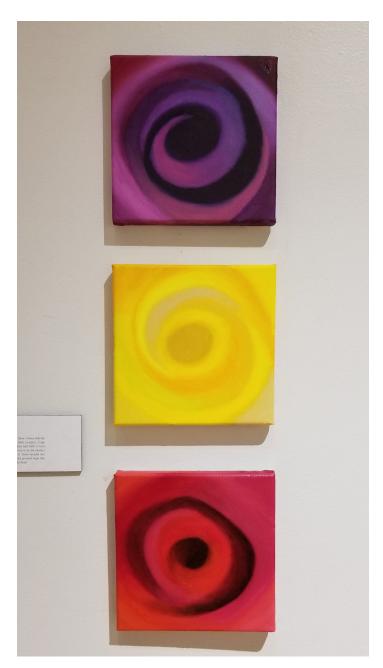
The first time I experienced this notion of giving yourself, was when I went on my high school mission trips to Higuey, Dominican Republic. Faith and spirituality were early struggles in my life, and at this point, I was at a low point in mine. I felt lost and alone. I was not sure what I wanted to study in school. I learned about the trips through school, and because I felt a deep sense of calling to go and serve, I decided to go. These trips were life changing for me; I was surrounded by a huge sense of faith and love that I had never experienced before. I came to realize how much people around the world suffered. I realized also how the world we live in is so obsessed with greed that the people who can help the most do not. I learnt how much a little can do, and just how far the smallest amount of faith can go.

These trips brought me new friendships, especially one with a man named Lorenzo. Lorenzo is a carpenter and artist who lives with his family in one of the villages that I worked in the Dominican Republic. Lorenzo and I became great friends; we talked about life, faith, and art, and he showed me how much of a role art and faith can play in one's life. Seeing how happy his artwork made not only him but the other people in the community inspired me to keep making art and to be a man of great faith.

My pieces *Reliquary* and *the Good News* are both inspired by my trips to the Dominican Republic. *Reliquary* is symbolic of the cases that hold the great relics of our faith all around the world. I shaped my *Reliquary* in the shape of a cross, as it is the important symbol of our faith. The necklace that hangs inside the cross represents the necklace that Lorenzo made and gave me the last time I saw him, a small token of our friendship. *The Good News* is made up of spiral pieces from my *Conversion* work. These pieces







Him must be worth three days." We must always have faith in God, and yet when we are in our most uncertain and lost times our faith is as great as the faith that Apostles, Mary, and others had in the three days that Jesus was dead. In their times of greatest need, they did not run from their faith; they stayed with it and believed that Jesus would rise. I've always felt a deep connection to the Apostles, as they, along with Saint Francis, show that you can be an imperfect person and still be chosen by God. Thomas was a doubter; Matthew was a tax collector; Peter denied Jesus three times on his way to his crucifixion and the most grand church sits on top of his tomb. The Apostles show us that God loves us for our imperfections and can still choose us to do great things in this world.

My pieces *Pentecost* and *The Virgin* are inspired by the lives of the Apostles and Mary. *Pentecost* is symbolic of the Holy Spirit entering the Apostles on that fateful day, with the dove, the red, and the flames all symbolizing the Holy Spirit. The twelve candles are symbolic of the Apostles, and the colors on them fade to represent the Holy Spirit entering into them and conquering their darkness. *The Virgin* is three abstract roses that symbolize the three perfect virtues that Mary showed in her life. The purple symbolizes her perfect faith in God when she decided to be the mother of Jesus; the yellow symbolizes her perfect hope that Jesus would rise from the dead; and the red symbolizes the perfect love that she had for all of those around her.

Outside of family and friends, my faith and my art are the biggest parts of my life. My experiences and artwork tell a story. The ordinary can change your life. God's love can also transform it. May your words and actions turn darkness into shining rainbows of color and light. God Bless.

represent how we share the love of God with each other, and how that love changes the lives of those around us. We choose to change the lives of those around us by letting the love of God flow through and out of us.

The third and final phrase is one that I struggled to find the origins of. I must have read it in a book, "our faith in



Kevin Hamzik, from Broadview Heights, Ohio, recently graduated from St. Bonaventure University with a degree in Visual Arts. He is entering the postulantcy program of the Holy Name Province of the Franciscans. For more information about works/pieces, email Kevin at khamart11@gmail.com.



Church Drama - Theater and Theology

By Erik Lenhart, OFM Cap. and Moira A. Luthin

he dramatic arts have long served as a means of allowing an audience to experience transcendence. The Theatre of Dionysus Eleuthereus, the first known theatre in the world, was built in the sixth century BC specifically to celebrate the Dionysia, a series of theatrical performances dedicated to the god Dionysius. The works of Sophocles, Euripides, Aeschylus, and other cornerstones of Western drama can be traced to this celebration. Celebrating religious traditions through the art of theatre has persisted throughout history and remains an active and powerful conduit of the Christian tradition. In the thirteenth century, the early Franciscan Friars were especially is reflected in Book III of The Confessions, in which St. Augustine condemns his own theatre-going youth.1 His argument against attending performances, however, addresses the way in which the audience passively felt the actor's emotions rather than the content of theatrical work. In his recent apostolic exhortation to young people, Christus Vivit, Pope Francis highlights another aspect of Augustine's thought on music, which can be a means to develop faith, beseeching his congregations to:

Sing, but continue on your journey. Do not grow lazy, but sing to make the way more enjoyable.

> Sing, but keep going... If you make progress, you will continue your journey, but be sure that your progress is in virtue, true faith and right living. Sing then, and keep walkinq.2

Slowly, by introducing living tableaux into liturgies, Christians began to embrace the theatrical arts as a way to teach and demonstrate the Mysteries of Faith. These performance pieces helped highlight the living drama of Christianity and gradually became elaborate dramas called "mys-

tery plays" based on Biblical texts. Similarly, the location of these performances moved from churches and church yards into public market places where vernacular elements were supplemented. Additionally, the earliest directors and producers of the performances were likely monks. Concerned that these performances would distract from the celebration of the sacred, Innocent III banned clerics from



adept at developing the performance arts to bolster their preaching. Through the example of St. Francis of Assisi, Franciscans were instrumental in strengthening the bond between theater and liturgy in a way that proved memorable and meaningful for their audiences. Today, this connection can be revived and taken up again to transform passive audiences into active congregations.

Towards the end of the Roman Empire, many influential Christians rejected the theatre because it represented the aspects of Roman culture they rejected: namely, celebrations of Dionysius/Bacchus, the Greco-Roman patron of both the theatre and wine known for debauchery, acts of mischief, and generally un-Christian things. This attitude

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¹ I was captivated by theatrical shows. They were full of representations of my own miseries and fueled my fire. Why is it that a person should wish to experience suffering by watching grievous and traffic events that he himself would not wish to endure? Nevertheless he wants to suffer the pain given by beings a spectator of these sufferings, and the pain itself is his pleasure. (Confessions Book III, ii (2), trans. Henry Chadwick, 35 ² Sermo 256, 3: PL 38, 1193.



participating in staged events in 1210.³ This ban motivated communities to build vernacular theatrical guilds, staging productions based on biblical tales and on stories of saints' lives which they would put on tour for surrounding villages to enjoy.

St. Francis of Assisi was renowned for his love of beauty and pleasure. At a young age, he became a devotee of the poetic tradition of the troubadours. Even before his conversion, he showed great sensitivity to the beauty of the world. After his conversion and during the development of the Friars Minor, Francis continued to write hymns and poems in the Provencal and Umbrian dialects rather than in Latin. His most notable work, the *Canticle of the Creatures*, is one of the earliest pieces of literature written in an Italian dialect. Francis invited the friars to use popular melodies for transmitting sacred songs. For instance, Thomas of Celano, an early biographer of Francis, recalls the *Salutation of Virtues*, a poem that extolls the Christian virtues, whose authorship he credits to Francis. The piece is composed in the manner of a medieval troubadour greeting each virtue



as a genteel lady:

10

Hail, Queen Wisdom! May the Lord protect You, with Your Sister, holy pure Simplicity!

Lady holy Poverty, may the Lord protect You, with Your Sister, holy Humility!

Lady holy Charity, may the Lord protect You, with Your Sister, holy Obedience.

Most holy Virtues, may the Lord protect all of You from Whom You come and proceed.4

In addition to his unusual but effective preaching style, Francis also further modeled the power of drama in his recreation of the Nativity at Greccio. In Bonaventure's account of Francis' life, the multitudes witnessed the transformation of a crowded and poorly ventilated cave into a vision

³ Letellier, Robert Ignatius, *The Bible in Music*, (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), 3.

of the Incarnation, the mystery upon which the Christian faith centers:

It happened in the third year before his death, that in order to excite the inhabitants of Greccio to commemorate the nativity of the Infant Jesus with great devotion, [St. Francis] determined to keep it with all possible solemnity; and lest he should be accused of lightness or novelty, he asked and obtained the permission of the sovereign Pontiff. Then he prepared a manger, and brought hay, and an ox and an ass to the place appointed.

The brethren were summoned, the people ran together, the forest resounded with their voices, and that venerable night was made glorious by many and brilliant lights and sonorous psalms of praise.⁵

Bonaventure explicitly states Pope Honorius III's approval of the scene, making it clear that this secular display of the nativity was encouraged by the greater Church, which furthered sacred theater in a secular setting. This demonstration at Greccio, complete with animals, was memorable and allowed spectators to experience the humbling nature of Christ's birth. By engaging all the senses, crèches became overwhelmingly popular and were adapted into nativity scenes and plays that continue to flourish to this day. Francis' meditation on the Incarnation bears fruit and illustrates the porous boundaries between the sacred and mundane.

The early Order of Friars Minor continued to embrace the trend of mystery, morality, and miracle plays throughout Italy. Early annals of Teatro Religioso are filled with plays authored by the friars. St. Bonaventure noted that the Dramatic Arts alone combine both consolation and amusement "to teach and to delight." Bonaventure further elevates theatrica as the art that can be a speculum (mirror) "of the divine revelation in the same manner as Scripture or nature."8 To reach the mostly illiterate laity in entertaining and engaging ways, the friars used dramatic sermons to communicate Gospel stories, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the corporal works of mercy.9 The Franciscans developed and recorded these sermones semidrammaticos, reflecting a trend of dramatic miming, poetry, and stage directions. 10 Their method of preaching was a type of "theo-tainment" that bolstered the order's exponential growth of membership and reputation during the last years of Francis' life.

The Franciscans of the thirteenth century can still speak to us today and model engaging catechesis. Last summer, Capuchin Youth & Family Ministries (CYFM) in Garrison,

⁴ Francis of Assisi - The Saint: Early Documents, vol. 1: Early Documents edited by Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, William J. Short.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Natalino Sapegno, ed. *Poeti Minori del Trecento* (Milan, 1953), 1014.

⁷ Reductione artium, 50.

⁸ Franciscan Spirituality and the Rise of Early English Drama, 25.

⁹ Ibid.

¹º De Bartholomaeis, *Le Origini* 374-75.





New York debuted a new event called Catholic Literature & Arts Summer Program (CLASP), which is a Catholic theater camp that creates and performs new musicals. When discussing this endeavor with colleagues, many theater veterans were shocked that we would attempt to rehearse and perform a new musical in less than week. I accepted their concerns, however, I remained wildly optimistic about CLASP; our team's true mission was not simply to create a great theatrical performance, but to help the young participants along the path to sanctity through the theatre. For the mind of the Franciscan, everything can be path to Christ. On August 3, 2018 CLASP debuted SOLANUS: Blessed in America, which centers on the life of Blessed Solanus Casey, OFM Cap. In the months since CLASP, I have been delighted to observe the teenage and grade school participants still humming and singing the songs. Together, the songs' catchiness and the desire to revisit them reflect a principle of good liturgy which recognizes the singing of the opening hymn as a way to unite people in one heart and mind within the first moments of Mass.

While working with the CLASPers over the summer, I was struck by the many ecclesial dimensions of theatre, in which everyone is part of something greater than themselves. As St. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians, "There is one



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body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body. It is the same with Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12). Recognizing their common goal was to tell a story of faith, the CLASPers instantly appreciated that everyone's job was significant to the production of the play. It was a true gift to help create a visible and audible symbol of the Body of Christ. The audience appreciated the efforts made in the design of set and costumes, lighting and sound, as well as the efforts of the performers and musicians. When asked why I focus specifically on musical theatre, I am reminded of a wise professor from my seminary days who memorably told my class, "No one ever leaves Mass humming the homily." In Scripture, the psalms and canticles were used to help inform, teach, and elevate. Catechists, especially those that work with youth like the early Franciscans, would do well to involve young people in music and theater to engage the word of God and transmit the faith.

Catholic parishes and schools have a great opportunity in their production of musicals. Selecting a school or parish musical should be a theological statement made with prayer and reflection. Young people will remember the music and lyrics they learn in shows, which should be worthy of memory and should inspire, delight, educate, and form people into saints.



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A Franciscan Approach to the Miracles of Christ

By Earl Meyer, OFM. Cap.

t. Francis of Assisi was overwhelmed with the humanity of Christ. The humility of the divine Son of God in condescending to our frail human condition could bring him to tears. How would Francis reconcile the meekness of Christ with his miracles? How were those spectacular feats accomplished with humility? St. Paul offers this guiding principle for Franciscan christology: "Jesus did not deem equality with God something to be exploited" (Phil 2:6).

The gospel miracles have confounded many. Thomas Jefferson did not believe in the miracles of Christ so he wrote a gospel without them: *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*, often referred to as *The Jefferson Bible*. Leo Tolstoy also wrote his own account of the life of Christ, *The Gospel in Brief*, which he proclaimed as the pure teachings of Christ uncontaminated by the miracle stories.

In our scientific age, the miracles of Christ can be St. Paul's stumbling block. It is often because of the miracle narratives that modern thinkers deny the credibility of the gospels and ignore the message of Christ. The miraculous is unacceptable to rationalists who mock these "fairy tales" of the gospels. Their basic argument is circular: since miracles cannot happen, they did not occur in the life of Christ. That is, of course, the classic fallacy of *petitio principii*, assuming the answer to the point in question.

Miracles and the Modern Mind

It is not only the feisty atheist but often the faithful Christian who finds the gospel miracles difficult to reconcile with scientific knowledge. If we are to help sincere people avoid this stumbling block, we must present these stories with correct theology. The gospel miracles offer an opportunity to clarify the divinity and especially the humanity of Christ so valued in the Franciscan tradition.

In the second volume of *A Marginal Jew*, John Meier addresses the question of "miracles and the modern mind." He defines a miracle as an extraordinary observable event that no natural power can perform which is unexplainable by natural causes but only by an act of God. Meier then refutes the absolute claim of many in academia that miracles are impossible, demonstrating that it is essentially an open question. He cites a 1989 Gallup Poll which found that 82 percent of Americans polled believed that "even today, miracles are performed by the power of God." Recent

¹ John P. Meier, A Marginal Jew, vol II, Doubleday, New York, 1994, 509-518

polls offer similar data.³ The common assertion of many academics that educated Americans cannot believe in miracles is, he concludes, a myth.

Meier analyzes thirty-seven miracle stories recorded in the gospels. Of those narratives, twenty are healings, seven are exorcisms, seven are nature miracles, and three are raising the dead to life. He evaluates nine of those as non-historical, nine as lacking sufficient evidence for a judgement, and nineteen as based in historical reality. His judgement is not that a miracle, an exceptional historical event unexplainable by natural laws but only by divine intervention, had actually occurred but only that those who witnessed and recorded the historical event considered it to be miraculous.

In this limited perspective, atheists may deny divine intervention in historical events but they must always be open to an objective review of the factual data. Christians who regard the gospel accounts as substantially historical are then faced with the daunting challenge of explaining to our science imbued culture the causality of the miracles accepted by the church. Simply put, what power produced the miracles of Christ?

Source of Miraculous Power

Many Christians would respond that Christ performed miracles by exerting his divine power. It may seem self-evident to devout believers that Christ as a divine person could perform miracles. But that is neither sound theology nor the Franciscan perspective. Catholic christology is more nuanced.

The Council of Chalcedon, in defining that Christ had a human and a divine nature in one divine person, also taught that the two natures cannot be confused.

Our Lord Jesus Christ: the same perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, the same truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and a body; consubstantial with the Father as regards his divinity, and the same consubstantial with us as regards his humanity; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, acknowledged in two natures which undergo no confusion, no change, no division, no

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² George Gallup, Jr. The People's Religion, New York: Macmillan

^{1989, 58}

³ Pew Research Center, May 2017, reported 79% of Americans believe in miracles.

⁴ Ibid, 967-970



separation; at no point was the difference between the natures taken away through the union, but rather the property of both natures is preserved and comes together into a single person and a single subsistent being.⁵

The historical person Jesus of Nazareth was a divine person who had assumed a human nature. While living in that humble reality, as distinct from the risen Christ, he submitted to the limitations of our human condition. As St. Francis demonstrated at Greccio, Christ incarnate *in the flesh* was truly human, sharing our frailty. His was not a human facade over a divine nature which would rescue him in difficult situations.

The ultimate lesson of the humanity of Christ is found in the Paschal Mystery, the death and the resurrection of Jesus. The gospels do not say that Jesus raised himself from the dead. A key passage in Mark reads: "You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He has been raised. He is not here" (Mk 16:6). The verb in the original greek text, egerthe, is passive indicating that God raised up Jesus. The passive voice means that the subject was acted upon, not the source of the action. Many other scripture verses convey the message that "He was raised" (Rm 4:24; 6:4; 8:11; 1 Cor 6:14; Gal 1:1; Col 2:12; Acts: 2:24; 3:15;4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30).

The following thesis may surprise some devout believers: Jesus of Nazareth did not of himself perform miracles. He did so by asking God the Father for His divine intervention through the power of the Holy Spirit. While it is true that all persons of the Trinity share in the action of any one, actions are still proper to each person. It was only by his relationship to God the Father and the Holy Spirit that Jesus can be said to have performed miracles. In the historical reality of the gospel stories, Jesus of Nazareth was a divine person who had condescended to be confined in the human nature he assumed: "Though he was in the form of God, Christ did not deem equality with God something to be exploited" (Phil 2:6).

Karl Rahner, in a significant essay entitled "Current Problems in Christology," discerned among the devout a "crypto-monophysitism" that emphasized the divinity of Christ to the virtual exclusion of his full humanity.⁶ Such misplaced piety is inconsistent with the Franciscan heritage. The Letter to the Hebrews helps to clarify the two distinct natures of Christ; "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15), and, "In the days when he was in the flesh, Jesus offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to God who was able to save him from death, and he was

heard because of his reverence" (Heb 5:7-9).

Gospel Miracle Narratives

A careful reading of those gospel stories that scholars accept as historical events, John Meier in The Marginal Jew lists nineteen, will clarify our thesis. Consider first the exorcisms. In the healing of the boy possessed by a demon the father begs him, "If you can do anything have compassion and help us." The response of Christ is telling: "If you can! Everything is possible to the one who has faith" (Mk 9:23). That pericope concludes with these words of Christ: "This kind can come out only through prayer" (Mk 9:29). When the Syrophoenician woman asked Christ to cast out a demon from her daughter, he responded to her humble expression of faith, "Woman, great is your faith. Let it be done for you as you wish" (Mt 15:28, Mk 7:29). These accounts indicate that there was more than Christ himself acting alone to accomplish these wonders. Prayer and faith were also essential ingredients.

The multiplication of loaves, which is recorded in each of the gospels, is generally accepted by scholars as historical. The accounts of the feeding of the five thousand in Matthew, Mark, and Luke include this significant sentence where Christ is imploring another power: "Taking the five loaves and two fish, and *looking up to heaven*..." (Mt 14:19; Mk 6:41; Lk 9:16 8:1). This liturgical gesture was an *epiclesis*, a calling down of the Holy Spirit.

Many healing miracles reveal a further aspect to this thesis that Jesus of Nazareth did not act alone but rather asked God the Father through the power of the Spirit for divine intervention. He often did this by inspiring others to such a faith that Christ says explicitly that it was their faith that saved them.

Consider these illustrations. When the blind man Bartimaeus was cured, Jesus said to him, "Go, your faith has healed you" (Mk 10:52, Lk 18:42). Christ said to the sinful woman who washed his feet, "Your faith has saved you, go in peace" (Lk 7:50). The woman suffering from a hemorrhage was told, "Courage Daughter, your faith has saved you" (Mt 9:22, Lk 8:48). The centurion who asked that his slave be cured was told, "I have never seen such faith in

Israel." "As you have believed, let it be done for you" (Mt 8:10,13, Lk 7:9). The blind men who asked for sight were told, "Let it be done according to your faith" (Mt 9:29). These events, as those in which Jesus himself implored the Father, are still the miracles of Christ since the crucial element was that he inspired the faith that brought the power of the Spirit through the intervention of God the Father.

The gospels include three miraculous accounts of raising the dead (Mk 5:21; Lk 7:11; Jn 11:1). In the story of the daughter of the synagogue official, Jairus, the words of Christ to him are, "Do not be afraid. Just have faith" (Mk 5:36, Lk 8:50). When the widow's son at Nain had been restored to life, the remark of the crowd was, "God has visit-

 $^{^{\}rm 5}$ Denzinger-Schoenmetzer, Enchiridion Symbolorum 1965, Council of Chalcedon n. 301

⁶ Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol I. Darton, Longman and Todd; second edition 1965, cf "Current Problems in Christology."



ed his people" (Lk 7:16). In the narrative of Lazarus being called from the tomb, Martha said to Jesus, "I am know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you" (Jn 11:22).

There are a few narratives in the gospels where Christ appears to perform a miracle using the power of his divine nature directly. For example, the exorcism in which Christ commanded, "Quiet! Come out of him!" (Mk 1:25), the cleansing of the leper, "I do will it. Be made clean." (Mt 8:3) or the curing of the deaf man with a speech impediments, "Ephphatha!" (Be opened!) (Mk 7:34) Yet one may rightly ask whether these words of Christ are simple commands or rather dramatic prayers to the Father for divine intervention over evil and personal harm. Such narratives are relatively few and the ambiguity is more readily resolved by the other miracles where Christ explicitly implores the Father to respond to his faith and that of the petitioner.

Gospel Miracles and the Kingdom of God

Fortunately, we have a statement by Christ himself regarding the basis of his miraculous deeds. When the Pharisees insisted that it was by Beelzebul the prince of demons that he cast out demons, Christ responded, "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God is upon you" (Mt 12:28). The gospel of Luke uses the variation, "...by the finger of God that I cast out demons..." (Lk 11:20). That expression, "the finger of God," is taken from the third plague in the story of the Exodus (Ex 8:19). Luke here likens the power of God that rescued his people from their slavery in Egypt to the freeing from the power of evil by the exorcisms of Jesus. And both as manifestations of the kingdom of God.

Whether expressed as the "Spirit of God" or the "finger of God," it is clear that the demons were cast out by a power beyond the human condition of Jesus of Nazareth. God was revealing himself and the vitality of his kingdom in the exorcisms and the other miracles of Christ. The kingdom of God is an eschatological concept of the power of God which is now acting in this world as a foretaste of its fullness in eternal life. And so we pray, "Thy kingdom come."

Pope Saint John Paul II offered this thought on the gospel miracles of Christ: "The 'power from on high' (Lk. 24:49), which is God Himself, is above the entire natural order. It directs this order and at the same time it makes known that through this order and superior to its human destiny is the kingdom of God. Christ's miracles are signs of this kingdom."⁷

Christian Faith in the Gospel Miracles

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Miraculous events will logically be denied by those who do not believe in a divinity. Atheists and rationalists are free to reject the gospel miracles of Christ as non-historical. Believers are equally free to believe that these wondrous

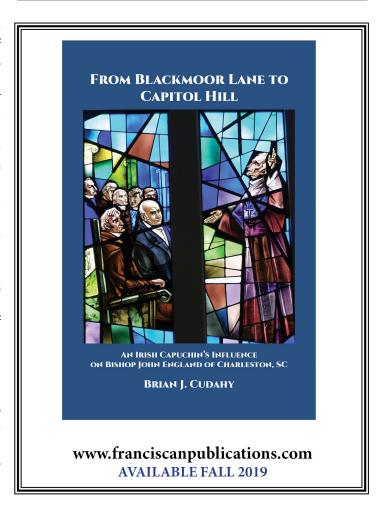
⁷Pope John Paul II, General Audience, January 13, 1988.

deeds of Christ were truly miraculous. However, the faithful must be clear as to what power performed the gospel miracles if they are to dialogue effectively with those who find the miraculous untenable. A presentation of these miracles in sound harmony with the two natures of Christ will clarify the belief of the faithful and may lessen the stumbling block for unbelievers.

Miracles require a divine intervention. The gospel miracles were acts of God the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit responding to the trust of Jesus and the faith he inspired in his followers. The human and divine natures in the one divine person of Jesus Christ are not to be confused. Jesus of Nazareth *in the flesh*, as distinct from the risen Christ, did not have recourse to the divine power of the Son of God. This was integral to the humility of his human condition so precious to St. Francis. St. Paul has offered this benchmark for Franciscan christology: "Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not deem equality with God something to be exploited" (Phil 2:6).



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A Model for Psychological Healing: Angela of Foligno and Contemporary Models of Clinical Counseling

By Mary Elizabeth Toler

he recorded life of fourteenth century mystical saint, Angela of Foligno, illuminates an important, viable path for the modern journey towards psychological health and well-being. In contrast to contemporary psychological models that emphasize the alleviation of negative emotions and dysfunctional symptoms, Angela's mystical journey reminds us that wholeness is not contingent on the alleviation of symptoms and suffering. Furthermore, Angela demonstrates that, for some, the path towards healing and wholeness is a spiritual path that is geared primarily towards right relationship with God.

The insights that emerge from Angela's recorded life not only prompt us to broaden our perspective on the nature of healing and wholeness, but they also help address the question of what other perspectives and dynamics need to be considered and included in a counseling practice that seeks to integrate spirituality and religion. Angela, and other premodern mystics like her, can offer important clues for critically constructing a therapeutic framework that honors and includes the ethical and teleological norms of faith and spirituality. Consequently, using the recorded life and mystical experiences of Angela of Foligno, this essay will highlight, challenge, and expand current perspectives of integrating spirituality and religion into the counseling process. By allowing Angela to speak first and formatively to the discipline of psychology, which is a clear shift in the typical pattern of engagement, I hope to illuminate a therapeutic venture that can begin to own its inherent and explicit spiritual nature and loosen its over-valued insistence on the alleviation of symptoms as evidence of success.

Specifically, by considering Angela's recorded life and experiences, this article will invite therapeutic and counseling paradigms that integrate religion and spirituality to consider three possibilities. First, in contrast to the notion that integrating religion and spirituality into counseling is an activity that is defined by and serves the norms of psychological health and well-being, Angela demonstrates that, for some, the path towards healing is a spiritual path that is geared primarily towards right relationship with God. Second, in contrast to positive counseling outcomes and alleviation of symptoms that strongly influence the rationale for integrating religion and spirituality into the counseling process, Angela's life shows that healing and wholeness is not contingent on the alleviation of symptoms and/or suffering. Finally, Angela's mystical experiences will challenge current psychological models of religious coping by suggesting that positive religious coping may not always be associated with health and well-being.

Engaging the Life of Angela of Foligno

There are, of course, pitfalls to avoid and methodological issues to consider when placing a medieval Christian mystic like Angela into dialogue with contemporary psychological models. Catherine Mooney in her article, "Teaching Medieval Mysticism," deftly captures the heart of these pitfalls and issues with a question: "how [do we] relate to the theological notions and spiritualities of men and women who inhabited cultures so radically distinct from those of the modern and post-modern periods?" How do we relate, indeed, especially in light of the fact that medieval figures are so often, "dismissed as superstitious, credulous, barbaric, or primitive when compared to our own 'civilized' cultures"?

The approach to connect seriously with and make sense of medieval mystics like Angela frequently begins with an application of contemporary psychological categories. In this approach, at best, saints and mystics are understood narrowly through the lens of a contemporary category; at worst, they are reduced and categorized as psychotic, mentally unstable, or deviant. Overall, this approach typically leaves no room for Angela or other mystics like her to speak from their own historical contexts and offer challenges and formative insights to contemporary psychological categories.³

In this project, with the help of David Tracy's Revised Correlational Methodology, I will broaden this one-dimensional application approach. By placing Angela as both experience and text in a more mutual, critical conversation with current psychological models and categories, I will engage Angela's experience as one that can speak back to, inform, and shape the current paradigm of integrating religion and psychology into the therapeutic and counseling

¹Catherine M. Mooney, "Interdiscipinary in Teaching Medieval Mysticism: The Case of Angela of Foligno," *Horizons* 34;1 (2007), 54.

² Ibid.

³ Mooney's article is a good example of this applicationist approach. Though she engages Angela more holistically through an inter-disciplinary perspective, she still fails to consider how Angela and her experience also might challenge medieval and contemporary paradigms and presuppositions. Consequently, Angela remains a mere reflection of the historical and social contexts in which she is situated.

⁴ For a full overview of Tracy's method, see his book, *Blessed rage for order: the new pluralism in theology*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996.



process.

Normally, this revised correlational methodology assumes a mutual, two-way engagement between two distinct disciplines. In Tracy's framework, the paradigms of counseling/ psychology and the experience and tradition of Angela are viewed as two distinct entities as understood through their respective social and historical contexts. Then they are placed in conversation where both are ultimately challenged and changed in formative ways. However, because of space and time limitations and because psychology is usually the discipline that is applied to Angela without Angela being able to speak back equally, this article only will engage Angela's formative challenge to psychological paradigms that attempt to integrate religion and spirituality into the counseling process.

The Turn Toward Relationship with God: A Spiritual Journey and Penitential Path

Angela of Foligno (1248-1309) was born in Foligno, Italy, a city close to Assisi in the region of Umbria. She was reared in a rather affluent family, married around the age of twenty, and had an unknown number of children. In the midst of living a typical, Italian, medieval life as a wife, mother, and care-giver to her mother, it appears that Angela also recalled a hedonistic, "loose and unconscious" life. At around thirty-seven years old, Angela suffered a trauma

or crisis that evolved into an intense religious conversion. Fearing that she would be damned to hell, Angela acknowledged her sins and wept profusely. This conversion led her to abandon her family, join a popular, wide-spread, religious movement where clerics and laypersons sought to emulate Christ and the life of the apostles through voluntary poverty, preaching or exhorting one another, and performing acts of penance.⁶

A significant aspect of her religious conversion was Angela's turn to the Franciscans. In fact, Francis of Assisi (b.1181-d.1226) himself became a central, inspirational figure for Angela. Francis appeared in a number of her recorded visions and was Angela's model who informed her life with meaning and pattern along "the path of Gospel perfection."⁷

Scholars frame Angela's conversion and subsequent

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experiences as a penitential path and spiritual journey and place her in the tradition of saints who demonstrate a path towards union with God. Angela's story is contained in a work that is simply known as the Book. The Book is comprised of two parts: the Memorial and the Instructions. Angela's Memorial was written sometime between 1291-1297 and is autobiographical in nature. Because Angela probably could not write, it was dictated to and written by a Franciscan scribe and confessor, known only as Brother A, at his insistence, after witnessing one of her numinous experiences at the entrance to the basilica of St. Francis in Assisi. Memorial was composed specifically to tell Angela's story of conversion and the events that led her to the "penitential path." It also outlines the "thirty steps" of her spiritual journey and highlights the special, supernatural aspects of her spiritual odyssey. Because it was dictated to the friar, Brother A, who had an interest in understanding and promoting her as a holy woman, the work is also punctuated by Brother A's own observations and his understanding of her actions.8

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⁵ Paul Lachance, "The Mystical Journey of Angela of Foligno," *Vox Benedictina* 4:1 (1987), accessed September 5, 2017, https://monastic-matrix.osu.edu/commentaria/mystical-journey-angela-foligno.

⁶ Darleen Pryds, *Women of the Streets: Early Franciscan Women and their Mendicant Vocation* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2010), 7, 35-36

⁷ Lachance.

^{*}Darleen Pryds, Women of the Streets: Early Franciscan Women and their Mendicant Vocation (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2010), 7:-37.



The second part of the book, known as the Instructions, is a collection of letters and personal reflections by unknown secretaries wishing to convey Angela's teachings. These letters reveal descriptions of her intense physical experiences, offer concrete advice, and highlight her role as a spiritual mother.9 While Angela's journey falls within the medieval rhythm and framework of purgation, illumination, and union, it "must not be understood as [moving in] distinctive and successive stages...; rather [it must be seen] as dominant notes of inter-lapping moments which occur throughout Angela's spiritual ascension" in viewing her spiritual journey. 10 The image of the spiral is more appropriate to describe Angela's spiritual journey and her alternations between darkness and light; "the oscillations - sometimes great and sometimes small - between moments of rapturous visions and those of deep contrition, doubt and desolation."11

Angela's journey towards holiness and union with God ultimately is defined by her mystical experiences. For example, once at a crossing on the road to Assisi, she experienced an acute vision in which she saw the created universe resplendent with God's presence and herself as if one with it. Afterwards, an intense feeling of Christ's presence accompanied her as she proceeded to the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi. While she knelt before a stained-glass window depicting St. Francis set within Christ, Angela heard Christ telling her:

Thus I will hold you closely; and much more so than can be imagined with the eyes of the body. For now is the hour my temple, my delight, when I will fulfill what I told you; for as to this consolation it will depart from you; but I will never depart from you; but I will never depart from you, if you love me.¹³

If the penitential path towards sanctity and union with God is how we frame Angela's response and engagement of her familial, emotional and physical struggles, then at least two points emerge. First, the traumatic crisis that hit Angela around age thirty-seven is a clear demarcation in her search for healing and turn towards God. Second, the primary concern for Angela is her salvation and her relationship with God. These two realities offer stark messages to the current, predominant psychological paradigms that primarily view religion and spirituality as therapeutic tools

⁹ Ibid.

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that promote emotional and psychological health and well-being, encourage meaning making, and enhance positive outcomes in counseling.

Angela's life and experiences are glaring reminders that, especially for overtly spiritual and religious clients who show up in contemporary counseling rooms, traumatic life events, stress, and suffering are realities that often leave them emotionally and psychologically discouraged, disoriented, and distraught in the context of their relationship with God. Consequently, psychological and emotional health may be important goals of treatment, but only as they pertain to restoring and/or discovering a new relationship and understanding of God.

Virginia Todd Holeman, in her own clinical work with Christian clients, notes how survivors of rape or other unjust physical/emotional traumas wonder where God was in the midst of their violations. They struggle with wanting to forgive their perpetrators, but, at the same time, cannot. They wonder if God will reject them if they cannot forgive. For abused spouses contemplating divorce, they want to obey their perceptions of God's commandments, but they also cannot tolerate the abuse they are suffering. In short, these clients are "agonizing over a disconnection between their assumptions of [God] ...and their present painful circumstances."14 Furthermore, for Holeman, these clients are experiencing a kind of "theological disequilibrium or a theological cognitive dissonance."15 They are not just seeking alleviation of their pain; these clients are seeking to reestablish a connection with God.

My own clinical work bears Holeman's points. For example, when I was a pastoral counselor in a psychiatric facility, I remember working with a thirty-five year old, Euro-American, Catholic female who became promiscuous while suffering from a manic episode. The fallout from her uncontrollable episodes included her husband asking for a divorce and the loss of custody of her children. As a devout Catholic woman, who understood her vocation in terms of being a wife and a mother, the stress from these consequences were too much to bear. She became fixated on her failure, felt alienated from God, and desperately wanted to reconnect with God. Most of our work focused on the extreme grief of her loss, self-forgiveness, the love and mercy of God, and discovering new avenues of vocation and divine connection.

The experience of Angela, as well as the above contemporary examples, invites an expansion of existing models of integrating religion and spirituality into the counseling process. Instead of a focus that primarily views religion and spirituality as therapeutic tools to promote emotional and psychological health and well-being, encourage meaning making, and enhance positive outcomes in counseling,

¹⁰ Lachance.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Angela Folignio, *Memorial* in Ludget Thier, o.f.m. and Abele Calufetti, o.f.m., *Il Libro della Beata Angela da Foligno* (Grottoferrata-Rome, Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventuræ ad Claras Aquas, 1985). Translated by Paul Lachance, "The Mystical Journey of Angela of Foligno," *Vox Benedictina* 4, no. 1 (1987), accessed September 5, 2017, https://monasticmatrix.osu.edu/commentaria/mystical-journey-angela-foligno

¹⁴ Virginia Todd Holeman, *Theology for Better Counseling: Trinitarian Reflections for Healing and Formation* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2012), 11.

¹⁵ Ibid.



relational aspects of a client's connection with God should be equally attended to and cultivated. Currently, the field encourages counselors and therapists to attend to a client's relationship with God by acknowledging the limits and scope of practice. In other words, if a client wants to actively talk about his/her relationship with God, then referrals are offered to priests, pastors, rabbis, imams, and other spiritual leaders. ¹⁶ Counselors are not trained to handle material relating to the development of faith and a relationship with God. Furthermore, this particular kind of material clearly crosses "the line of professional responsibility from the mental health arena to the religious field." ¹⁷

As Angela and others throughout history demonstrate, transcending this limited approach is paramount. If the discipline of psychology and the field of counseling desire to integrate religion and spirituality into the counseling process, then practices must be fostered that create a holistic and inclusive therapeutic environment. These clinicians must become theologically reflective counselors, actively trained in the aspects of self-reflection and counseling that will cultivate a person's spiritual journey.

Healing and Wholeness

While the *Memorial*'s overarching theme is holiness and union with God, one feature of Angela's own on-going physical and emotional pain and suffering is also significant. In fact, the thirty steps of her spiritual journey that are outlined in *Memorial* speak continually of her spiritual growth and movement towards union with God, but do not offer clarity as to whether she ever achieved authentic resolution of the issues of guilt, shame, doubt, temptations, or other issues that continually plagued her.¹⁸

In fact, Paul Lachance comments that, after appearing to achieve peaceful integration, "nothing prepares us for the unexpected swing back and plunge into the swirling whirlpool of darkness with which the sixth supplementary step begins." This storm, this "horrible darkness" that Angela experiences and elucidates is a darkness that devastated her physically, emotionally and spiritually. According to Lachance, the only comparison that came to her mind to describe her state of desolation was that of "a man hanged by the neck who, with His hands tied behind him and His eyes blindfolded, remains dangling from the gallows and yet lives, with no help, no support, no remedy." 20

In addition to the physical, emotional and spiritual suffering that is prevalent throughout her spiritual journey, Catherine Mooney outlines several of Angela's experiences that seem to qualify and fit contemporary definitions of distressing psychological symptoms. Mooney notes that Angela appears to suffer from flashbacks, which clinically are defined as "a psychological phenomenon in which an individual has a sudden, usually powerful, re-experiencing of a past experience or elements of a past experience."21 The term is used particularly when the memory is recalled involuntarily and/or when it is so intense that the person relives the experience. An example of Angela's flashbacks comes in step ten. After she experienced the wounded God, Angela was given an "astonishing remembrance of [all] her sins," recalling that it was she who had "wounded God afresh."22

Angela herself came to understand that these periods of doubt, temptation, persecution and despair were of value and meaning as vehicles for her growth and development. According to Lachance, "Suffering thus quickened Angela's desire and became a means of expression and expansion. The more deeply she shared in its reality the more certain she became that the divine life was present within her and that suffering is a necessary companion of love. It was the thread with which her joys were woven."²³

Framing Angela's persistent physical and emotional suffering as vehicles for her spiritual expansion, challenges contemporary psychological and counseling frameworks that myopically choose to emphasize positive outcomes and symptom reduction. A foundational premise that partially undergirds the emphasis on positive outcomes and symptom reduction in counseling is based on a modern, Western, medical model of treatment. Treatment, including treatment of trauma, centers primarily on the alleviation of symptoms and return to pre-morbid levels of functioning. ²⁴ In other words, if Angela were to show up in a modern clinical setting, the goal of counseling would be to alleviate her chronic symptoms of depression, doubt, fear, and quilt.

However, returning to a "pre-morbid" state of functioning cannot always be the overall goal for treatment because for many this is not possible. To illustrate this point, I return to the clinical example I offered earlier of the young Catholic wife and mother who lost her husband and her children as a result of her promiscuous behavior while in a manic state. Prior to her losses, she had been energetic, optimistic, and filled with hope. After her losses, she became depressed, guilt-ridden, and full of fear and doubt

¹⁶ Gary W. Hartz, *Spirituality and Mental Health: Clinical Implications* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 40.

¹⁷ Ibid, 41.

¹⁸ Mooney, 6o.

¹⁹ Lachance.

²⁰ Angela Folignio, *Memorial* in Ludget Thier, OFM and Abele Calufetti, OFM, *Il Libro della Beata Angela da Foligno* (Grottoferrata-Rome, Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventuræ ad Claras Aquas, 1985). Translated by Paul Lachance, "The Mystical Journey of Angela of Foligno," *Vox Benedictina* 4:1 (1987), accessed September 5, 2017, https://mo-

nasticmatrix.osu.edu/commentaria/mystical-journey-angela-foligno.

²¹ Brewin, Gregory, Lipton and Burgess, "Intrusive Images in Psychological Disorders: Characteristics, Neural Mechanisms, and Treatment Implications". *Psychological Review*. 117:1 (2010), 210-232.

²² Mooney,.61.

²³ Lachance.

²⁴ Mary Beth Werdel and Robert J. Wicks. *Primer on Posttraumatic Growth: An Introduction and Guide*. (Hoboken: Wiley, 2012), 4-5.

•

about God. With time and a lot of treatment, she recovered some semblance of hope and trust in God's love for her, but her depression and guilt never fully subsided. Much like Angela, my client's bouts of despair waxed and waned throughout the three years that I knew her. She learned to move forward, build a new life and reconnect with God, but her emotional demons were never far away.

I also think of the many clients I have worked with who are diagnosed with schizophrenia and suffer from intense hallucinations, paranoia, and delusions. More often than not, these horrible symptoms never go away. At best, many clients learn how to live with and manage the symptoms of their illness in a way that helps them reconnect with the world and life. The expectation that symptoms will recede or disappear is simply not always warranted, even with the

proper medications.

Put simply, assuming positive outcomes and symptom alleviation not an accurate depiction of the healing process and fails to account adequately for new, adaptive living and the existential reality that one is forever changed by experiences of suffering. pastoral clinicians Mary Beth Werdel Robert and

J. Wicks observe, the journey of healing and growth is a delicate balancing act. Honoring, processing, and sitting with the unspeakable pain of suffering must be balanced with exploring and acknowledging growth and newfound meaning. Furthermore, this delicate balancing act can only be achieved by striving to find and hold a middle path of treatment where the goal is to cultivate an "openness and awareness to the process of growth in clients, with no preconceived expectations or needs for clients to undergo the experience [of growth and symptom reduction]."²⁵

Angela's salvation, healing, and wholeness are realities that are achieved in the midst of great chronic emotional, physical, and spiritual suffering. Her holiness and union with God are not states where suffering is ultimately tran-

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scended; guilt, doubt, and fear continue to exist. Seemingly, Angela, never returns to her "pre-conversion" level of functioning. Perhaps, then, in the end, the message is clear: integrating religion and spirituality into counseling should not be so focused on positive mental health outcomes and symptom alleviation. Symptoms and suffering, no matter how persistent and chronic, can be vehicles for meaning and spiritual growth.

Angela and Religious Coping

Ken Pargament presents a model for evaluating religious coping in clients.²⁶ His model has become a seminal assessment tool in the field of religious and spiritual inte-

gration. essence of his theory is that all individuals have a basic framework for understanding life, spoken unspoken, that influences the way they react to stressful events. This basic framework, or orienting system, as Pargament names it, is used during difficult times, and individuals either find it to be "help or a hindrance the cop-

ing process."²⁷ In other words, the definition of coping is framed in terms of how stress is either positively or negatively buffered.

Pargament outlines positive and negative means of religious coping. Positive means include religion seen as a channel of support and benevolence. God, religious leaders, and fellow congregants are all seen as allies in overcoming difficulties. On the other side of the coin, Pargament describes negative means of religious coping. Negative religious coping is when individuals perceive God to be punishing or abandoning and themselves as inherently bad and/or worthless. From a negative religious coping perspective, a

²⁶ Ken Pargament, *The Psychology of Religion and Coping*, (New York: Guilford Press), 1997.

²⁷ Ibid, 100.

²⁵ Ibid, xvi.

person may feel alienated or in conflict with God, religious leaders, or fellow congregants.²⁸

Pargament calls these negative means "religious red flags." To be clear, Pargament states that religious "red flags [are] not designed to be definitive indicators of problems; rather they [are] meant to...[highlight] statements that signal the need for further religious exploration."²⁹Yet, he also highlights the empirical evidence that points to a definite association between positive religious coping and better outcomes in mental and physical health.

From a religious coping perspective, the religious beliefs and practices of Angela raise plenty of "red flags" and seem to fall neatly in the category of negative religious coping. Her insistence on penance and pain, as well as her intense engagement of the suffering of Christ, certainly do not mitigate her emotional, physical, and mental health. If anything, her insistence of penance and pain would appear, at points, to exacerbate her suffering and inability to function. Throughout her spiritual journey, as part of the imitation of Christ, Angela suffered an experiential vison of "a living crucifixion" and was severely pre-occupied with replicating his sufferings in her own life.30 Furthermore, some of her rapturous visions produced great physical and mental anguish. "The fire of the love of God in my heart became so intense that if I heard anyone speak about God, I would scream...Also, whenever I saw the passion of the Christ depicted, I could hardly bear it and I would come down with a fever and fall sick."31

Angela's desire for union with God is predicated on very particular beliefs about herself as a human being. As a woman living in the fourteenth century, Angela would have been operating from the overall anthropological framework of the medieval Roman Catholic Church. Through sermons and pastoral relationships, Angela would have understood herself, first and foremost, as a depraved sinner in need of redemption. Worries about salvation, punishment for sin and how to be cleansed from it were forceful drivers for her. Furthermore, as Mooney states, "Angela's continual flashbacks to her pre-conversion life, her visions of demons accusing her of wrongdoing, or Christ showing her the wounds she helped to inflict...are part and parcel of a medieval anthropology."32 Angela's beliefs and concomitant religious practices could certainly fall into "negative" religious coping" because it is clear that these beliefs did not necessarily appease her existential anxiety. If anything, at times, her beliefs about herself and the practices that arose from those beliefs exacerbated her anxiety, quilt, fear, and doubt.

Angela's apparent "negative religious coping" brings

into focus crucial contemporary methodological questions. Should religious coping primarily be understood from a psychological perspective and measured in terms of health and well-being? Is there room in the counseling endeavor to embrace a religious response that operates from a framework that values personal suffering and sacrifice in service to meaning and communion with God? Or is this ultimately another conflict between the norms and goals of psychology and religion?

Consider the story of a client named Joshua profiled by psychologist Russell Shorto. After his second year of college, Joshua experienced a psychotic break and began exhibiting signs of schizophrenia. At first his hallucinations were very spiritual in nature and produced feelings of extreme euphoria and a sense of connection, but then the "bliss" soon took on a harsher side. Ideas of reference and extreme paranoia seeped into his life. Eventually, Joshua was able to function. Antipsychotics treated his symptoms effectively and eventually he was able to get on with his life.³³

Joshua's encounter with mental illness, however, did not remain a thing of the past. After the illness itself subsided, Joshua decided not to let go of the experience. Even though there was a great deal of horror and neurological chaos involved in the illness, there also was a "profound bliss and experience of being one with God and the universe." Joshua believes, like many others like him, that his mental illness pushed him into a state of spiritual awareness.³⁴

Negative religious coping, beliefs, practices and symptoms that appear to exacerbate suffering and pain, can be central to the discovery and experience of God and defy categories of well-being. My own clinical experience bears this out, though in less drastic forms. When working with a 25-year-old Caucasian man in the midst of his first encounter with schizophrenia, I was repeatedly struck by the meaning and spiritual connection he derived from his tortuous symptoms. At times, he would seek to replicate and induce the symptoms so that he could experience some kind of connection with God. The clinician in me cringed at the thought of this practice and noted its dysfunction. The minister and theologian in me understood the craving for connection and relationship with God and the call to find it. On the one hand, my client seemed to choose his mental illness, and, on the other, he seemed to choose a path to God.

Furthermore, like Angela, in the realm of religious coping and beliefs, my Catholic client was also driven by the deep-seated belief that he was a sinner who was in need of redemption. Worries about salvation, punishment for sin and how to be cleansed from it also were forceful drivers

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²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid, 375.

³⁰ Mooney, 70

³¹ Angela Foligno, *Memorial* as found in Catherine M. Mooney, "Interdiscipinary in Teaching Medieval Mysticism: The Case of Angela of Foligno," *Horizons* 34:1 (2007), 64.

³² Mooney, 66.

³³ Russell Shorto, *Saints and Madmen: How Pioneering Psychiatrists Are Creating a New Science of the Soul.* (New York: Owl Books, 1999), 12-13.

³⁴ Shorto, 12-13.



for her. In the context of religious coping, these beliefs and practices would qualify as negative religious coping. My client's beliefs about himself fueled his anxiety, quilt, and intense religious practices. Yet, like Angela, these beliefs are the primary vehicles that lead his desire for connection with God.

If Angela, or anyone like her teaches anything, she teaches that the path to God is often a tortuous road that does not serve the interests of physical, emotional, or mental well-being. The question then becomes, is there room in the counseling framework to expand the notions of religious coping? Can beliefs and practices that appear from the psychological perspective to be negative, have value in the realms of both religion and psychology?

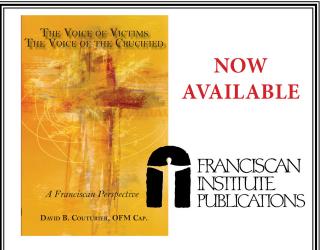
Conclusion

By examining the life and experiences of Angela of Foligno and juxtaposing them with contemporary clinical counseling models that attempt to integrate religion and spirituality, I hope I have illustrated at least two essential points. First and foremost, I hope I have respectfully illustrated the critical and formative value of Angela of Foligno. This fourteenth century saint, though a product of her own historical context, offers a unique critical lens to models of religious and spiritual integration in the context of counseling. Angela's recorded life offers important clues to expanding these models and creating a more holistic approach to the therapeutic enterprise.

Second, I hope my engagement with Angela has illustrated the existence of the competing values and norms between the disciplines of religion/spirituality and psychology in a way that fosters complement rather than competition. In other words, I hope I have broadened the scope of religious and spiritual integration models to include aspects of spiritual development. As these two disciplines continue to open themselves to each other, it is vital that each also continues to critically engage one other in order to broaden their respective discipline's ontological, pedagogical, or whatever you choose above parameters when appropriately needed.



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The Education of Business Leaders and the Centrality of the Poor in the Social Teachings of Pope Francis

By David B. Couturier, OFM. Cap.

hen Pope Francis was elected Pontiff at the conclave of 2013, the Cardinal seated next to him in the Sistine Chapel turned to him with a critical piece of advice. The cardinal told him to "remember the poor." Francis reports that it was at that moment that he understood his papal call and realized what he needed to do. He decided to name himself after St. Francis of Assisi and to focus his sights on building what he called a "poor church for the poor."

It is obvious that the vocation of a pope is to remember the poor, but is it the ethical responsibility of a business leader to do so? It might seem odd and maybe even a gross non sequitur to expect business people to worry about the poor at work. Their task is complicated enough – to build companies, to turn a profit, and to satisfy shareholders without having to be concerned and responsible in some way for society's most vulnerable. That's the work of priests and politicians, not the task of people in business who have enough trouble managing scare resources, high taxes, and ever-widening regulations. Didn't Milton Friedman put a full stop to moral speculations about the ethical obligations of business leaders, when he famously said:

There is one and only one **social responsibility** of business – to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud.³

With all due respect to the Friedman doctrine, Catholic social teaching opens up a different line of thought about the social and ethical responsibilities of business leaders, especially in our more complex and complicated era of globalization. It issues a challenge to business leaders to revisit their calling as a noble one with *two foci*, not one: to maximize profit, for sure, and also to engage purpose for the common good of all. Pope Francis thus begins with the understanding of business as more than a job. He sees it as

¹ This article is being published simultaneously by *Franciscan Connections* and *Educatio Catolica*, the journal of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome.

more ennobling than the category that "career" suggests. He argues that business is a vocation, when he writes:

Business is a vocation, and a noble vocation, provided that those engaged in it see themselves challenged by a greater meaning in life; this will enable them truly to serve the common good by striving to increase the goods of this world and to make them more accessible to all.⁴

Thus, business leaders cannot but focus on the needs of the human person, the whole human person, and engage the salient and critical questions of:

- what is good for humanity,
- what is the ultimate dignity of the human person at home and at work,
- what is good and sustainable for the earth
- how does business play its ever-increasing and central part in the human enterprise, while avoiding every type of reductionism?

It is with these ideas and questions in mind that Pope Francis links the task of business with the reality of poverty, which he judges to be widening, deepening and becoming more exclusionary, even in the hands of capitalism, which has done much to lift whole segments of the poor out of the most extreme forms of world poverty. The concept of exclusion (especially of youth and the elderly in the world of work) is not simply a new emphasis in the social teachings of the Church. Pope Francis has made it a new lens by which to understand our current global situation. As Robert McElroy recently wrote:

The concept of exclusion that Pope Francis deploys is broader than marginalization; it is reflective of the interwoven deprivations that do not merely banish entire populations to the margins of society but exclude them entirely. In Pope Francis' memorable terminology, such people are victims of a

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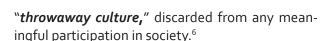


² "Pope Francis wants 'poor church for the poor," BBC News (March 16, 2013), accessed at: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-21812545.

³ Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962) and "A Friedman Doctrine," *New York Times* (September 13, 1970).

⁴ Evangelii Gaudium (November 24, 2013), number 203.

⁵ For an analysis of income inequality, cf. Anthony B. Atkinson, *Inequality: What Can Be Done* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); For another analysis of the exclusionary nature of contemporary economy, cf. the work of Nobel Economic Prize Winner, Joseph E. Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality. How Today's Divided Society endangers our Future* (New York: WW Norton and Co., 2013).



This linkage of poverty with business is not new. A corporate interest in poverty goes all the way back to the start of the Industrial Revolution in America.

In the 19th century, founders of major corporations invested in "company villages" and various social programs with a view toward the well-being of their workers. From Lowell, Massachusetts in 1823, considered the first company town in America, to Hershey, Pennsylvania in 1909, to Amazon's Menlo Park, CA today, company towns have served as a way for companies to demonstrate corporate interest in meeting the housing, social, entertainment, physical and even spiritual needs of their employees, while keeping trade unions at bay.7 These massive construction projects, at their best, were able to stanch or, at the least, contain extreme forms of regional poverty. For example, Francis Cabot Lowell, who founded Lowell, MA, in the 1820s to house his textile mills, had visited Manchester, England, to see the conditions of workers at the height of England's Industrial Revolution. He was struck by what he called the "great corruption of the highest and lowest classes" and set upon the task of creating a more utopian ideal of the American city for workers. He returned to Lowell to build supervised boardinghouses for the young women he recruited to work in his factories, providing them with pianos and libraries, and mandatory church services. Milton Hershey, the chocolate king, built his factory and company town in Pennsylvania on a similar utopian ideal to avoid the low wages, dangerous working conditions, poor housing, filth, and poverty that had plaqued other urban centers as America lurched forward into its Industrial Revolution.8

The decades after the Second World War saw a waning of corporate interest in poverty reduction as poverty began to be seen as the prime responsibility of governments. This withdrawal from a corporate conscience regarding poverty occurred simultaneously with the development of our more "financialized economy," an economy directed at revenue, profiting from speculation, service to shareholders rather than customers and stakeholders. The profit-generation potential in a more globalized economy became, in some places, a corporate "race to the bottom," as companies learned quickly how to exploit rather than help developing countries because of their low wages, minimal safety thresholds and lower regulatory structures. This has led to a rise in dangerous and deadly factory conditions, child

⁶ Robert W. McElroy, "Pope Francis brings a new lens to poverty, peace and the planet," *America* (April 23, 2018), accessed at: https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2018/04/23/pope-francis-brings-new-lens-poverty-peace-and-planet.

slave labor and human trafficking, even among some of America's largest corporate supply-chains.⁹

As Mary Ellen Boyle and Janet Boguslaw argue in their study, "Business, Poverty, and Corporate Citizenship," poverty reduction is "arguably in business's best interests," and yet "poverty reduction per se has been avoided and/ or euphemized by businesses and corporate citizenship advocates, until recently." Business scholars are reaching a consensus that ignoring persistent poverty, whether in developed or developing countries, will necessarily undermine efforts to achieve global security, peace and stability – the foundational elements for a positive and productive work climate. Two factors play into the avoidance of a corporate responsibility toward global poverty reduction: (a) the dynamics of an economy of extraction and (b) the globalization of indifference.

Extraction and Indifference

Increasingly, we are living, as Walter Brueggemann suggests, in an economy of extraction "whereby concentrated power serves to extract wealth from vulnerable people in order to transfer it to the more powerful. That extraction is accomplished by predatory if legal means of tax arrangements, credit and loan stipulations, high interest rates, and cheap labor."11 What is needed is a new politics of inclusion that "include(s) people under a great tent of social unity" with "... an economics that follows suit, living wages that work for families and health care that is affordable and accessible to all... and (an) economic map that is socially more fair and allows for creativity, agency, social interaction, a culture of family first and work in the service of life (not the other way around) and a lifestyle that does not put the human person in bondage or the planet in peril."12

But, this economics and politics of inclusion is jeopardized by what Pope Francis has called a "globalization of indifference, which he described soon after his election when at Lampedusa, the arrival point for migrant boats from North Africa and the site of numerous tragic deaths, he said:

The culture of comfort, which makes us think only of ourselves, makes us insensitive to the cries of other people, makes us live in soap bubbles which, however lovely, are insubstantial; they offer a

⁷ Hardy Green, *The Company Town: The Industrial Eden and Satanic Mills that Shaped the American Economy* (New York: Basic Books, 2010) and Oliver J. Dinius and Angela Vergara, eds. *Company Towns in the Americas: Landscape, Power and Working Class Communities* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011).

⁸ Nancy F. Koehn, "Working (and Living) the Company Way," NY Times (November 6, 2010).

⁹ See "Consumer's Dark Side: Human Trafficking," in David B. Couturier, *Franciscans and their Finances: Economics in a Disenchanted World* (Franciscan Institute Publications, 2015), 35-45.

¹⁰ Mary Ellen Boyle and Janet Boguslaw, "Business, Poverty and Corporate Citizenship: Naming the Issues and Framing Solutions," *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship* 26 (Summer, 2007), 101-120.

¹¹ Walter Brueggemann, *Money and Possessions* (Louisville, KY: John Wesley Knox Press, 2016), xx.

¹² David B. Couturier, "From an Economy of Extraction to an Economy of Inclusion," *Franciscan Connections* 67:4 (Winter, 2017), 30.





fleeting and empty illusion which results in indifference to others; indeed, it even leads to the globalization of indifference. In this globalized world, we have fallen into the globalization of indifference. We have become used to the suffering of others: it doesn't affect me; it doesn't concern me; it's none of my business!13

Because globalization itself is the compression of diversity and involves the unprecedented volume and velocity of change "at the speed of light, at the click of the mouse, in every sector of our lives (cultural, financial, legal, psychological, social and religious) simultaneously, without filters and without mediation, faster than we can process or sometimes even acknowledge,"14 we are in danger of various forms of social indifference. These include violent and paranoid forms of alienation, polarization and tribalism, as well as more passive forms of indifference: overload, compassion fatigue, an escape into individualism and the development of tenuous attachments, especially among working class men. 15

Business Leaders and the Poor: Eight Principles

From the social teaching of Pope Francis, we can extract eight principles by which to help business leaders remember the poor and their responsibilities toward poverty reduction in the world.

Good Business is a vocation. 1.

We have already seen and noted the importance of this first principle. The good business leader sees herself as part of the great enterprise of human development for global peace and well-being, the shalom or kinship between God, humanity and creation through the journey of time and space in and for our common home, as Pope Francis describes it in his social encyclical, Laudato Si: On Care for our Common Home.¹⁶ And that vocation includes a partnership with the poor. In an address to the participants of the Fortune+Time Global Forum held in Rome in December of 2016, the Pope called on the world's most powerful people to work toward a more inclusive and equitable economic model that is built not just for the poor, but, more importantly, with the poor. The Pope reminded business leaders, "The marginalized want to make their rightful contribution to their local communities and broader society,

working class men, see: Kathryn Edin, Timothy Nelson, Andrew Cherlin, and Robert Francis, "The Tenuous Attachments of Working Class Men," in Journal of Economic Perspectives 33:2 (Spring 2019), 211-218.

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¹³ Pope Francis, Homily at Lampedusa (July 8, 2013): http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/ 2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130708_omelia-lampedusa.html; Valentina Napolitano, "The Globalization of Indifference: On Pope Francis, Migration and Global Acedia," in D. Rudnyckyj and F. Osella, eds. Religion and the Morality of the Market: Anthropological Perspectives (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 263-284.

¹⁴ David B. Couturier, "The Globalization of Indifference and the Franciscan Imagination," *Franciscan Connections* 65:1 (March 2015), 17.

¹⁵ Amy Chua studies the developing phenomenon of political tribalisms in her book, Political Tribes: Group Instinct and the Fate of Nations (New York: Penguin Books, 2018). For the growing disengagement of

¹⁶ Pope Francis, Laudato Si: On Care for our Common Home accessed at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html



and to benefit from the resources and development too often reserved for the few."¹⁷The Pope offered that a critical dimension of the business leader's vocation today is not simply to remember the poor, but the empower them.

2. Good Business exists for profit and purpose.

In an interview recently with Guido Gentili, editor-in-chief of Italy's top financial newspaper, Il Sole 24 Ore, Pope Francis indicated that the blind pursuit of profit cannot any longer be a company's sole motive of operation. He said, "The sole pursuit of profit no longer guarantees the existence of a business," because promoting human dignity benefits both people and the company, because, he said, the good of both "go hand in hand."18 The Pope outlined what the Church considers to be what I might call the key purpose indicators of ethical businesses today. Besides putting people and families first, the Pope offers the communal purpose of business: "the distribution and taking part in the wealth that has been produced; the integration of businesses in a local area; corporate social responsibility; employee benefit plans; equal pay for men and women; proper work-life balance; respecting the environment; recognizing people are more important than machines; acknowledging a just salary; and the ability to innovate."19

To arrive at the proper ethical balance between profit and purpose, the Pope has called for "a new humanism" in the world of work that respects human dignity and "and does not look just at profit or the demands of production."²⁰

Few in the business world have described the dual focus of contemporary business (profit and purpose) better than Paul Polam, the former chief executive officer of consumer goods giant, *Unilever*, when he challenged Milton Friedman's profit dictum, in this way:

I don't think our fiduciary duty is to put shareholders first. I say the opposite. What we firmly believe is that if we focus our company on improving the lives of the world's citizens and come up with genuine sustainable solutions, we are more in synch

with consumers and society and ultimately this will result in good shareholder returns.

Why would you invest in a company which is out of synch with the needs of society, that does not take its social compliance in its supply chain seriously, that does not think about the costs of externalities, or of its negative impacts on society?²¹

Polman positioned *Unilever* as a responsible business by developing an ambitious ten year *Sustainable Living Plan* that builds on the expectation that half of all consumers already buy or want to buy with environmental sustainability as a key indicator of profit and purpose. Well into this new business model, *Unilever* has lowered its costs by eliminating waste, reducing the use of energy and natural resources, creating efficiencies at home and future-proofing its global supply chains against the negative effects of climate change, all the while meeting and exceeding analysts and market expectations for growth and reliability. Polman, newly retired from *Unilever*, defended his gamble on sustainability:

Sustainability isn't just the right thing to do, it is essential to drive business growth. It is very simple: stronger alignment of business with societal interest and planning for the long-term is the only way to guarantee sustained success and longevity, for our business, and for our planet. This is the core premise of the Better Business, Better World report of the Business & Sustainable Development Commission (BSDC), which clearly showed that it is in companies own "enlightened self-interest" to make markets work for a sustainable and inclusive future. If we help harness markets – and all the financial, human and innovative capital they represent – to deliver the world we want, it comes with a minimum \$12 trillion opportunity and the creation of 380 million more jobs. It's worth going for.²²

Good Business contributes to the material and spiritual well-being of people and the world.

It is no longer enough for business people simply to follow the ethical legal minimalism of "don't cheat, lie and deceive." The range of ethical standards for business leaders goes beyond the personal and interpersonal and reaches to the structural and societal.²³ Thus, a growing number

¹⁷ Ines Can Martin, "The Pope tells CEOs: If you want to help the poor empower them," *Crux* (December 3, 2016).

¹⁸ Carol Glatz, "What's good for workers is good for business, pope tells financial paper," *Crux* (September 8, 2018), accessed at: https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2018/09/08/whats-good-for-workers-is-good-for-business-pope-tells-financial-paper/.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ "Unilever's Paul Polman: Challenging the Corporate Status Quo," The Guardian (April 24, 2012) accessed at: https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/paul-polman-unilever-sustainable-living-plan

²² Dan Schawbel, "Unilever's Paul Polman: Why Today's Leaders need to Commit to a Purpose," Forbes (November 21, 2017) accessed at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/danschawbel/2017/11/21/paul-polman-why-todays-leaders-need-to-commit-to-a-purpose/#78f4dod21276

²³ David B. Couturier, *The Four Conversions: A Spirituality of Transformation*, 2nd ed. (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications,



of business leaders recognize that the company of the future must reach beyond legal compliance, philanthropy and even sporadic efforts at corporate social responsibility. Companies must make a positive contribution to larger sustainable and societal goals that include their stand and their efforts with regard to poverty. Several large companies have already begun to make explicit their commitment to poverty reduction in the world, indicating how poverty reduction makes good business sense. Three examples will help clarify this.

Oil company British Petroleum: "Our primary means of making a positive impact on poverty is through aligning our own operations with local people's needs. (...) We can sell affordable products that enable people to improve their standard of living, including motor and heating fuels. (....) Energy is a major factor in lifting people out of poverty. (...)"

Bank HSBC: 'Supporting microfinance is one of the ways in which financial institutions can support the UN Millennium Development Goal of eradicating extreme poverty."

Consumer electronics firm Matsushita [now Panasonic]: "At present, the world has a large number of people living in poverty and needs a level of economic growth sufficient to raise their standard of living. At the same time we must not be allowed to damage the environment (...). We are thus faced with the problem of combining economic growth and environmental conservation. (...) Enterprises around the world are now under pressure to put in place sustainable business models that will allow the two to be combined."²⁴

4. Good Business produces good goods.

Cardinal Peter Turkson, appointed by Pope Francis to be Prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Development, notes that the great challenge as well as the great opportunity for business today is to attend to the needs of the world, producing goods that are "substantively good with services that truly serve." He challenges business people to see opportunities that provide for otherwise deprived and underserved populations of the world. He has made clear that we do not eliminate poverty by eliminating the poor; we do it by investing in

2017).

the poor.25

Good Business pursues the common good.

The Vatican Dicastery for Integral Human Development has published an important book on the Vocation of the Business Leader. It calls on business leaders to be even more attentive to the common goods that businesses are called to steward honestly and justly. In a section on "the common good," we read the following:

Business is inherently other-centered: a business coordinates people's gifts, talents, energies and skills to serve the needs of others. This in turn supports the development of the people who do the work. The tasks they perform in common generate the goods and services needed by a healthy community. "The business leader is not a speculator, but essentially an innovator. The speculator makes it his goal to maximize profit; for him, business is merely a means to an end, and that end is profit. For the speculator, building roads and establishing hospitals or schools is not the goal, but merely a means to the goal of maximum profit. It should be immediately clear that the speculator is not the model of business leader that the Church holds up as an agent and builder of the common good". Rather, the Christian business leader serves the common good by creating goods that are truly good and services that truly serve. The goods and services that businesses produce should meet authentic human needs, so they include not only things with clear social value—such as lifesaving medical devices, microfinance, education, social investment, fair trade products, renewable energy, artistic enterprises, health care, or affordable housing—but also anything that genuinely contributes to human development and fulfilment while caring for our common home. These range from simple products, such as bolts, tables and fabrics, to complex systems such as waste removal, roads and transportation; to "green businesses" and other sustainable enterprises, especially in areas affected by ecological disasters; and to the transfer of technology to assist communities to adapt to changing natural conditions.²⁶

By way of example, Tesco, a British multinational groceries and general merchandise retail company, the third largest retailer in the world, speaks to goal 4 and goal 5 with what it calls its "three big ambitions":

- i. To lead in reducing food waste globally;
- ii. To improve health and through this help to tackle the global obesity crisis;

²⁴ Rob van Tulder, "The Role of Business in Poverty Reduction: Towards a Sustainable Corporate Story?" (Geneva: United Nations Research Institution for Social Development, November, 2008) accessed at: http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCFg/%28httpAuxPages%29/340A393D6E02EE97C12575E0002A6C62/\$file/WEBvanTullI.pdf.

²⁵ "Cardinal Turkson on Human Rights," *Zenit* (March 5, 2014) accessed at: https://zenit.org/articles/cardinal-turkson-on-human-rights/

²⁶ Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, *The Vocation of the Business Leader: A Reflection* (Rome, September, 2018), 43.



iii. To create new opportunities for millions of young people around the world.²⁷

The goods produced and developed touch the highest and most common of goods for individuals and society alike.

6. Good Business respects human dignity.

The platform on which all positive economic change rests, according to Pope Francis, is the commitment to the inviolable dignity of each and every person. In a letter to the 2018 World Economic Forum, Pope Francis encouraged global delegates to the forum to promote economic models that would create the proper conditions for the human person to thrive. He outlined the challenges:

The recurring financial instabilities have brought new problems and serious challenges that governments must confront, such as the growth of unemployment, the increase in various forms of poverty, the widening of socio-economic gaps and new forms of slavery, often rooted in situations of conflict, migration and various social problems.

In this context, it is vital to safeguard the dignity of the human person, in particular by offering to all people real opportunities for integral human development and by implementing economic policies that favor the family.²⁸

The Pope continued,

We cannot remain silent in the face of the suffering of millions of people whose dignity is wounded, nor can we continue to move forward as if the spread of poverty and injustice had no cause.

The Pope told the leaders gathered at the event that it is a "moral imperative" to create inclusive conditions that benefit the good of society, rather than furthering self-centered individualism.²⁹

Pope Francis indicated that it is by rejecting the "throwaway" culture that leaders can build a better future, by "increasing the quality of productivity, creating new jobs, respecting labor laws, fighting against public and private

corruption and promoting social justice, together with the fair and equitable sharing of profits."

The Holy Father also encouraged "wise discernment" for world leaders, asking them to support authentic values that will foster the prosperity of all.

7. Good Business provides good work.

There are two dimensions to Pope Francis' teaching on "good work." First, businesses make a contribution to the community by fostering the special dignity of human work. This means that the conditions under which people work must meet the threshold that honors the dignity of the women and men who contribute their time, talent, energy and creativity to the enterprise of profit and production. Degrading, dangerous and substandard work conditions are no longer acceptable. Second, businesses must embrace subsidiarity, providing opportunities for employees to exercise their gifts as they contribute to the mission of the organization. Good work remembers that the poor, with their gifts, talents, energy and potential, are always the *subject of work* and not its object.

Good Business provides good wealth.

And, lastly, good business with its ethical leaders provides good wealth, first by a proper stewardship of the resources available – taking good care of capital resources, human resources and environmental resources. Good businesses and ethical leaders produce "good wealth" by properly managing the interdependent and mutually reinforcing resources of an institution – capital, human and environmental. Good business provides good wealth and is also just when it allocates the benefits derived from business to all involved and all who participate in production, ensuring a fair share of the fruits of labor to all stakeholders: employees, customers, investors, suppliers and the community.

The Franciscan Ethical Leader

I would be remiss if I did not include the model of ethical education we use at St. Bonaventure University. Significant work has been done in recent years by St. Bonaventure University's Franciscan Institute to retrieve the seminal work of our early Franciscan economic scholars, such as Peter of John Olivi and Luca Piacioli. For example, the Franciscan Institute hosted an international conference in 2015 at St. Bonaventure University on the economic thought of Peter of John Olivi, hosting such eminent scholars as Sylvain Piron, David Flood, David Burr, Timothy Johnson, Warren Lewis, among others.³⁰ The work on principles of Francis-

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²⁷ Mária Holienčinová, Ingrida Sedliaková, Ľudmila Nagyová,, "Application of the Concept of Corporate Social Responsibility in Activities of Food Chains in Slovakia," accessed at: https://spu.fem.uniag.sk/mvd2o14/proceedings/articles/Holiencinova.pdf

²⁸ Pope Francis, "To Professor Klaus Schwab, Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum," (Davos, January 22, 2018) accessed at: https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/01/the-pope-s-announcement-to-wef18/.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ The proceedings are found in *Franciscan Studies* 74 (2016).



The	e Franciscan Ethical Leader	Characteristic
1.	Builds a community not a company.	Because people are called to live in free and self-
		giving relationships.
2.	Creates an atmosphere of creativity and	Because the Franciscan vision promotes a
	freedom.	stewardship-kinship model of the earth, not one of
		domination
3.	Treats each person with profound respect.	Because each person is an image of God and reflects
		the creativity of God in an individualized way.
4.	Supports diversity, inclusion and	Because the Franciscan vision is universal and
	promotion of human rights	inclusive of all creation.
5.	Promotes empathy, mutual support,	Because the Franciscan vision recognizes the need for
	positive change and advances strategies	people to grow, develop and learn and recognizes the
	of recovery and development.	problem of human contingency.
6.	Promotes high standards of transparency,	Because the Franciscan vision values community and
	accountability, dialogue, participation and	recognizes fallibility.
	solidarity.	
7.	Seeks the community's input/wisdom	Because the aim of all choices is not just private
	when making decisions.	interest, but the common good (fraternity)
8.	Promotes the ultimate good of all	Because the Franciscan vision is committed to the
	individuals in the institution and the	beauty of all creation.
	ultimate good of the earth through good	
	ecological management	
9.	Is self-reflective, self-aware, self-	Because motivations go beyond reward and status.
	disciplined and empathic.	
10.	Practices servant leadership.	Because the Franciscan vision manages the polarities
		of modern life – the institutional and the charismatic,
		the universal and the particular, the past and the future,
		the act and the person.
11.	Constantly develops personally,	Because the Franciscan vision is a virtuous enterprise
	interpersonally, religiously, politically.	in anticipation of the Reign of God for all.

can ethical leadership at St. Bonaventure University profits from this high-powered scholarship and is also inspired by developments in a fraternal economic model being constructed both in the United States and in Europe and by a revised moral vision being worked out by still other Franciscan scholars around the world.31 Thus we see a convergence of efforts being made by medieval historians, contemporary moral theologians and organizational specialists with hearts and minds attuned to one another's work.

This work in applied Franciscan studies provides a new lens and a new methodology for addressing the ethical concerns of business leaders seeking a more compassionate and less individualistic and aggressive model of economics today. A list of characteristics of the Franciscan ethical leader will give shape to this new concern.

Conclusion

Those who read Pope Francis understand that he has focused a significant amount of attention during the years of his pontificate on the questions of peace, poverty and the future of the planet. But, he has done so with not only a distinct emphasis but also a significantly new lens. Once again, as Robert McElroy explains:

> The starting point to answering these [social] questions lies in recognizing that the relationship between the social teachings of Pope Francis and his predecessors is not, fundamentally, one of continuity or discontinuity. Rather, the relationship that Pope Francis' teachings on poverty, peace and the environment have with the tradition he inherited is one of fundamental continuity but refracted through a strikingly new lens.

a Disenchanted World (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2015) and Thomas Nairn, ed. The Franciscan Moral Vision (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2013).



³¹ David B. Couturier, Franciscans and their Finances: Economics in



This new lens reflects in a fundamental way the experience of the church in *Latin America*. Critics of Pope Francis point to this as a limitation, a bias that prevents the pope from seeing the central issues of *economic justice*, *war and peace* and the *environment* in the context of the universal church. But St. John Paul II certainly enriched key aspects of Catholic social teaching from a perspective profoundly rooted in the experience of the Eastern European church under communism. Contemporary critics of Pope Francis voice no objection to that regional and historical perspective.³²

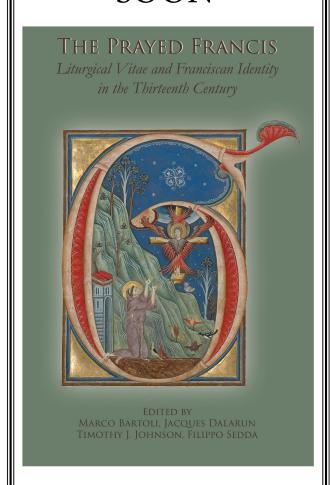
In the end, Pope Francis requires a closer look because his social teaching is creative, imaginative and eminently responsive to conditions on the corporate ground. Pope Francis uses a new method in continuity with Catholic social tradition to challenge business leaders on the question of their role with regard to the poor in the world. He approaches the themes of poverty reduction and corporate social responsibility through the lens of exclusion and seeks a reform of economic systems that "internalize profits while externalizing costs," the logic of today's dangerous economy of extraction.³³ Business leaders are called upon to build a new economy of inclusion that joins profit and purpose for the good of all with care for our common home.



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³² McElroy, op. cit. above.

COMING SOON



The Prayed Francis
Liturgical Vitae and Franciscan
Identityin the Thirteenth Century
Edited by
Marco Bartoli, Jacques Dalarun,
Timothy J. Johnson
and Filippo Sedda

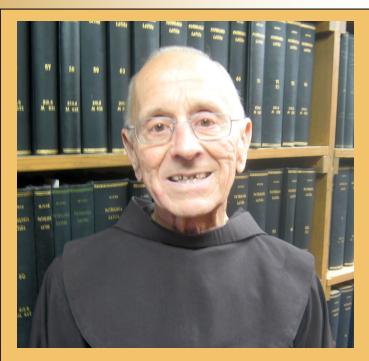


www.franciscanpublications.com

³³ Stan Chu Ilo, "Poverty and Economic Justice in Pope Francis," International Bulletin of Mission Research 43:1 (2019); Joseph E. Sitglitz, The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers our Future (New York: WW. Norton and Co., 2013).



The Chasm Between the Infinity of God and the Twenty-Firstcentury Interreligious Dialogues



The Franciscan Institute has lost a great scholar, friend and brother. Father Kenan Osborne, OFM, who was active in teaching and Franciscan theological scholarship over many years, passed away on April 19, 2019. He was 88 years old. Father Kenan was a professor at the Franciscan School of Theology and the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA., from 1968 to 2009. He served also the president of the Catholic Theological Union and was a member of the national board of the American Academy of Religion. His many publications have focused on sacramental theology, on the relationship of Christian theology and post-modern philosophy, on the history of Franciscan philosophy and theology, and from 1990 to 2013 he was invited on ten occasions to give lectures in academic institutions throughout Asia.

Father Kenan wrote several articles for our academic journal, Franciscan Studies, and for our general magazine, The Cord/Franciscan Connections. His last book, The Infinity of God and a Finite World. A Franciscan Approach, was published recently by Franciscan Institute Publications (www.franciscanpublications.com).

We reproduce the conclusion from that important work in tribute to one of America's pre-eminent Franciscan scholars.

David B. Couturier OFM. Cap. Executive Director of the Franciscan Institute

n this volume, I have reflected on the infinite God and on current ecumenical and interreligious discussions. I have done so in a cautious and limited way. I have limited my theological investigation on infinity primarily to the writings of Roman Catholic theologians and church leaders. I am sure that I could have cited Anglican and Protestant theologians as well. More than likely Jewish and Islamic theologians have written lengthy presentations on the infinity of Yahweh and the infinity of Allah. Nonetheless, I hope that this "Roman Catholic" presentation on the infinity of God will find its value in interreligious conferences.

My own theological thinking has been influenced in a strong way by the Franciscan approach. It has also been influenced by post-modern philosophy and by ecumenism multi-culturalism. Nonetheless, I have consistently emphasized one foundational question:

If God is infinite, can any religious group claim that it alone has the only true understanding of God?

It is not my intention to offer any final answers. Rather, I am simply indicating that in the twenty-first century ecumenical and interreligious gatherings, as well as individual religions including the Roman Catholic Church, cannot avoid the issue of God's infinity.

If the above question eventually appears in the agenda of these interreligious and ecumenical groups, the major reaction could easily be a defense of one's religious position. However, the infinity of God knows no limits even though diverse religions have established such limits. What was written in the early church and in the Middle Ages on the infinity of God should not be discarded, for the theological writings were formed during a time when Christianity was both becoming dominant and was dominant in the European world. These medieval theologians focused on certain issues which needed to be central on the issue of divine infinity. The most divisive issue in the discussion above on divine infinity by Alexander, Bonaventure, Thomas Aguinas and Scotus is this: is the infinity of God an attribute of God or is the infinity of God an essential aspect of God? Alexander, Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas focused on attribution, but here and there in their writings the infinity of God was also viewed as an essential aspect of God. The theological question on divine infinity became a major issue due, in part, to the re-discovered works of Aristotle which included long passages on infinity. These medieval scholars had lit-

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THE INFINITY OF GOD

AND A FINITE WORLD

A FRANCISCAN APPROACH

KENAN B. OSBORNE, OFM

tle to no theological backgrounds in the Catholic teaching, since in the first twelve centuries, as we have seen, the infinity of God was mentioned here and there, but the infinity of God prior to the thirteenth century had never been theologically explained by Catholic authors. Therefore, one cannot blame the medieval scholars move back and forth vis-à-vis the infinity of God. Is the infinity of God only an attribute or is the infinity of God a major factor in God's essence. They tried to explain this situation as best they could. In today's world, we will also face the issue of God's infinity as part of God's essence or as part of one's descrip-

tion of God. In the Catholic Church, no official stance has ever been made on this dividing issue.

We live in a totally different atmosphere, and contemporary theologians in the Roman Catholic Church and also in the many Christian Communities need to explore the relationship of their denomination's theology of God alongside the theological meaning today of the word infinite. These theologians cannot present an answer which limits infinity. It must be an answer that takes into account that the infinite God cannot be totally known. I have used the phrase: a glimpse of the beauty of God as a possible human way of appreciating the infinite God.

In the opening preface of this book, I mentioned that Franciscan spirituality, philosophy, and theology are based on the gospel and on Francis of Assisi. In the Fran-

ciscan tradition, the presence of God throughout the created world is a foundational position. The *Canticle of Creatures*, composed by Francis of Assisi, begins in a strong way.

Most High, all-powerful Lord, Yours are the praises, the glory, and the honor, and all blessing,

To you alone Most High do they belong, and no human is worthy to mention Your name.¹

Leclerc, in his volume, *The Canticle of Creatures: Symbols of Union*, makes the following comment:

 $^{\mbox{\tiny 1}}$ See "Canticle of the Creatures," Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, vol. I.

At this point, the movement toward the Most High is jarred by self –awareness: "No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce your name." This is not a phrase intended merely for edification or tossed out in passing. It expresses a basic attitude of innermost poverty before the transcendent God. No praise, however sublime, can manifest the mystery of God. Francis is aware of this and accepts it.²

In the Canticle, Francis realizes that God cannot be

known directly and therefore he turns to the created world of Brother Sun, Sister Moon, and Sister Stars.

Francis now turns to creatures. ... Since he cannot name the Transcendent One, he will name things and sing the praises of this world. ... The visible universe will be his path of praise, his path toward the Sacred.³

Francis saw God in brother son and sister moon, brother wind and sister water. He also saw God in brother leper and sister rejected. In the entire created world, Francis catches a glimpse of God, a reflection of God, or an indication of God. For Francis of Assisi, God is a mystery and we are only able to realize God's presence in our contemplation of our world and of ourselves. We are unable to know God in a direct way: "No praise, however sub-

lime, can manifest the mystery of God. Francis is aware of this and accepts it." 4

In a more philosophical way, Bonaventure expressed Francis' view of God's world when he wrote:

The creation of the world is a kind of book in which the Trinity shines forth, is represented and found as the fabricator of the universe in three modes of expression, namely, in the modes of vestige, image, and similitude, such that the reason for the vestige

and similitude, such that the reason for the vestige



² See Eloi Leclerc, *The Canticle of Creatures: Symbols of Union*, 29.

³ Ibid., 29-30.

⁴ Ibid., 29



is found in all creation, the reason for the image is found in intelligent creatures or rational spirits alone, and the reason for similitude is found in the Godlike only.⁵

Every non-human element in our world offers us a vestige of God. In every human being there is an image of God. In holy men and women – and today these might be men and women in all religious groups, we find a similitude of God. In both Francis and Bonaventure, God is found in every part of the created world, and yet God remains infinite and what we see of God is but a glimpse. Scotus' position that God's existence is infinite and God's essence is infinite leads us to a similar conclusion. In a very clear way, Johannes Freyer described Scotus position on infinity:

God is, as it were, the "I am," and the "I am the one who is present," the first and the highest and fullest principle of being as infinite mind and infinite will. On the basis of his being, God is the creative cause, the first and all-encompassing source and end-cause of all being. This unending being is an absolute and perfect being, which is present in God as a characteristic of his nature. ... His infinity it not a divine attribute, but a formal and constitutive element of his divine being.⁶

In Scotus, as in Francis, Bonaventure, and Scotus, God is infinite and no human mind can comprehend an infinite. My hope for the future of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue is that the infinity of God will become a major theme in their agendas.

Franciscan Transitions Into Eternal Life



r. Vicki Masterpaul, OSF, Allegany an Franciscan, passed into eternal life on April 15, 2019, after a sudden illness. A nurse, formator and regional minister of her community for many years, she served occasionally as an editor, proofreader and author for this publication during her years at the Motherhouse in Allegany, New York.

She was a gentle inspiration to all who met her and a powerful advocate for the brother/sisterhood relationship that characterizes the Franciscan charism.

In 2014, she authored a short piece, "God gave me Sisters – and Brothers, Too," in anticipation of the Provincial Chapter of the Holy Name Province of Friars Minor. She concluded her work with the following:

In closing, allow me to go back in time briefly to Francis and Clare of Assisi, where I believe this bonding had its roots. There are as many opinions regarding the intimacy between Francis and Clare as there are biographers. I am convinced that the foundation of their deep affection and respect for one another was their clearly common vision, i.e. their love of God and strong commitment to the gospel way of life which they, in turn, passed on to the brothers and sisters who joined them.

It is evident in the early writings that Francis felt the friars and Poor Clares should be mutually supportive of one another both in matters of spiritual instruction, as well as in times of celebration or tribulation. Clare was granite-like in her resolve to remain faithful to Francis's wishes even in the face of disappointing hierarchical disapproval. She insisted, to the end of her days, that the sisters and the brothers were meant to be connected in the ways Francis had spelled out.

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⁵ Bonaventure, Breviloquium, in S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia, 230.

⁶ Johannes Freyer, *Homo Viator: Der Mensch im Lichte der Heilsgeschichte*, 60.