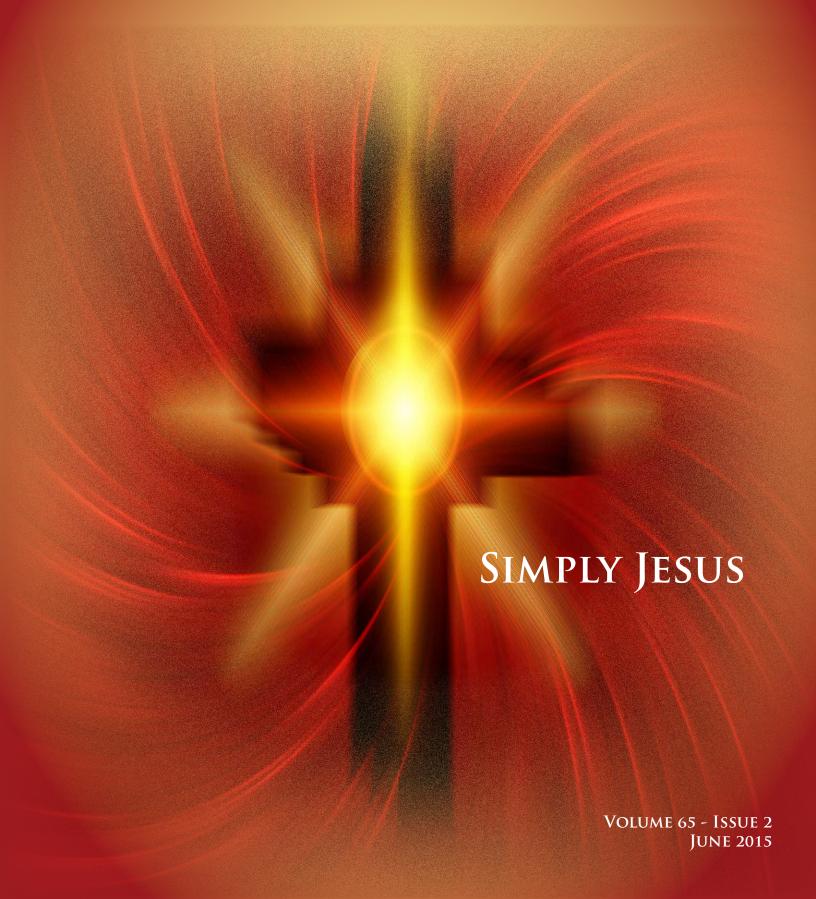
FRANCISCAN CONNECTIONS: THE CORD - A SPIRITUAL REVIEW





Franciscan Connections: The Cord - A Spiritual Review

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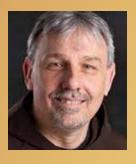
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CONNECTIONS EDITORIAL



David B. Couturier, OFM Cap., is the Executive Director for Franciscan Connections. He is the Dean of the School of Franciscan Studies at St. Bonaventure University and Director of the Franciscan Institute.

In his latest book, Simply Good News, New Testament scholar N.T. Wright suggests that many Christians look to Jesus for good advice on how to live, how to pray, how to be a better person, husband or wife. They

want advice on how to avoid Hell and how to get to Heaven, and they find it. But in the process, they lose sight of the central, indeed critical, core of what Jesus offers: not good advice but good news.

Jesus came to announce the good news that history was changing, God was taking charge, death had been destroyed, and humankind had entered a new age under the new covenant of love and mercy, all because of the death and resurrection of the Lord.

This edition of Franciscan Connections explores images of Jesus in the Franciscan tradition. Dr. Joshua Benson offers an insightful look at the way St. Bonaventure's new understanding of Jesus' suffering revolutionizes his view of the leadership he is about to take up. Dr. Jean-Francois Godet-Calogeras provides a connection between Francis' view of Christ and its application to business today, while his wife, Athena, looks at images of Francis and Clare and how it impacts health care advocacy. Michael Calabria, OFM, introduces us into conversation about the image of Jesus in the Qu'ran and the Islamic tradition. Franciscan iconographer, Robert Lenz OFM, explains how barbed wire in his image of the Christ of Maryknoll confronts us with a "sense of Christ as an anonymous one in our midst."

There is an ordinary but shocking intimacy in the life of St. Francis, a truth that Darleen Pryds tells meaningfully in her intriguing look at Lady Jacopa. St. Francis would have been trained in his childhood with a majestic, apocalyptic, and, at times, frightening image of a judging and all-powerful mighty God. His conversion turns him and his followers to a Christ intimately connected to the lowly and vulnerable aspects of life, with emphasis on the infancy of Christ and his incredible bodily sufferings.

Kevin Cooley, a member of our editorial team, provides a bold and incisive look at a modern form of Franciscan iconography, Roy Gasnick OFM's, Francis: Brother of the Universe. Celebrating its 35th anniversary, this comic book evangelized a generation with a visual illustration technique reminiscent of Franciscanism's earliest medium of education: the visual panel. Cooley masterfully provokes readers with a final question – "what fresh re-imaginings of religious narratives would come forth from an acceptance of storytelling forms that are traditionally ignored?"

Our articles, art and poetry provide a spiritual review of these central Franciscan themes. Good summertime reading!

Peace and all good,

Fr. Dave



Marcus Jones is the Managing Editor for Franciscan Connections. He received a dual Bachelor of Art's degree in Philosophy and Theology and a Master of Art's degree in English Literature from St. Bonaventure University. His research interests are focused on the formation of self throughout Sixteenth Century English literature.

Hello, and welcome to the second issue of *Franciscan Connections*. We are extremely glad that you have chosen to take time out of your busy schedule to pick up this issue entitled "Simply Jesus." Our editorial team decided to focus this issue on Franciscan perspectives of Jesus Christ because we feel that they have something unique and exciting to offer the twenty-first century.

When some people today think of Jesus, they envision a Christ who comes to atone for the disobedience of humankind against the majesty of God. The focus is very much on sin. Franciscans strike a different note. Franciscans focus on the love that God has for us and recognize that Jesus came as the Father's greatest gift.

St. Bonaventure has a positive way of viewing Jesus. As Sr. Ilia Delio writes, "For Bonaventure ... a world without Christ is an incomplete world. The whole Creation is made for Christ. In short, the primary reason for the Incarnation is related not to the 'forgiveness of sin' but to the completion of Creation in its relationship to God" ("Revisiting The Franciscan Doctrine of Christ," 14-5).

The Franciscan heritage is filled with unique and wonderful ways to rethink our relationship to Christ and to the world, and we hope that these depictions will help you, the reader, to begin seeing the world in a different light.

Pace e bene,

Marcue

EDITORIAL TEAM



Brett Keegan is the Science and Education Editor for Franciscan Connections. He received a Bachelor's degree in philosophy and a Master's degree in English from St. Bonaventure University. This fall, he will begin PhD work in Composition and Cultural Rhetoric at Syracuse University. His research interests include digital and environemental rhetoric. He also likes playing video games, cooking, and learning about space.

Kelsey Donnelly is the Literature and In Focus Editor for Franciscan Connections. She received a Bachelor's degree in English Literature from Elmira College, and a Master's degree in the same field from St. Bonaventure University. Kelsey's research interests are focused on eighteenth century British romantic literature.





Bryan Jackson is the Design Editor for Franciscan Connections. He graduated from St. Bonaventure University in 2012 with a Bachelor of Art's degree in Journalism and Mass Communication. He is currently pursuing a Master's degree in English from the same university. His research interests include travel and the formation of self. In addition to his academic work, Bryan enjoys cooking, camping, and gardening.

Angela Kim is the Business Editor for Franciscan Connections. She received a Bachelor of Art's degree in English from St. Bonaventure University with a minor in Women Studies. She is currently a Teaching and Learning Fellow at St. Bonaventure University, where she is working toward her Master of Arts in English. She enjoys reading Kurt Vonnegut books as well as walking her Husky, Mowgli, and her Shiba Inu, Minka.





Kevin Cooley is the Poetry, Healthcare, and Deputy Editor for Franciscan Connections. He received a dual Bachelor of Art's degree in English and Sociology from St. Bonaventure University. He is currently a Teaching and Learning Fellow at St. Bonaventure University, where he is working toward his Master of Arts in English. He hopes to research experimental comics and indie videogames in his future work.

Bri Roberts is the Arts Editor for Franciscan Connections. She received a Bachelor of Art's degree in Classical Languages from St. Bonaventure University. She is currently applying to graduate programs in Classical Literature. Her research interests include the Homeric epic, Attic tragedy, gender studies, and reception studies.





Natalie Wasek is the Social Media Coordinator for Franciscan Connections. She is currently pursuing a degree in Accounting and International Business from St. Bonaventure University. She enjoys reading and writing poetry.

FRANCISCAN

International News

Fathers Zbigniew Strzalkowski and Michal Tomaszek (Polish Conventuals) and Alessandro Dordi (a diocesan priest from Bergamo) will be beatified on December 5 in the Diocese of Chimbote, Peru, where they served. All three were murdered by Shining Path guerrillas in August 1991. Their martyrdoms were recognized last February 3, the same day that Archbishop Oscar Romero was officially recognized as a martyr.

The Ministers General of the First Order and the TOR friars have issued a letter in view of the upcoming eighth centenary of the Pardon of Assisi (2016) and the fifth centenary of Pope Leo X's "Bull of Union" (2017). They are proposing a Synod of the Franciscan Families as part of a four-year itinerary (2015-18) for these anniversaries. Each year will include an international event in Assisi.

The International Franciscan Conference TOR has chosen "Responsibility for all God's Creation" as the theme of its Propositum publication in 2015.

The possibility of a single Franciscan university in Rome was discussed on March 30 by the Ministers General of the First Order and the TOR, their respective Secretaries General for Formation, the rector of the Pontifical University Antonianum, the dean of its Institute of Spirituality and the dean of the Seraphicum Pontifical Faculty. For the present, participants agreed to greater academic collaboration.

At **francis35.org**, visitors can find reflections on the 35th anniversary of St.

John Paul II proclaiming Francis of Assisi as the patron of ecology. The site (launched March 22, 2015) has prayers, resources, and other information in 12 languages (Arabic, German, English, Spanish, French, Croatian, Indonesian, Italian, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, and Swahili). This project was created by Romans VI, a group of JPIC directors for the Secular Franciscans, ICF-TOR, Capuchins, Conventuals and Friars Minor.

In January, Father Jean—Bertin Nadonye Ndongo, OFM Cap was appointed bishop of Lolo, Democratic Republic of Congo. Previously a general definitor for the Capuchins, he had served as provincial minister in the DRC.

Memoria y Profecía: La Familia Franciscana en Puerto Rico by Alfonzo Guzman Alfaro, OFM was recently copublished by Publicaciones Gaviota (Colombia) and the Academy of American Franciscan History. The book describes the work of the Friars Minor, the Capuchins, and the Secular Franciscans from 1512 to the present.

Roberto González Nieves, OFM has been archbishop of San Juan since 1999. To date, a total of six Friars Minor and one Capuchin are among the 34 members of religious orders who have served as bishops in Puerto Rico.

Key websites

www.ifc.tor.org
www.ofm.org
www.ofmconv.net
www.ofmcap.org
www.franciscanfriarstor.org

ROUNDTABLE

National News

Mary Beth Ingham, CSJ, Joseph Chinnici, OFM and Thomas Nairm, OFM are presenters for "Responding to God's Love, a Franciscan Moral Vision," the theme of the Franciscan Federation's June 19-22 conference in Indianapolis. They will address the approaches of Bonaventure and Duns Scotus in particular.

In March, John Stowe, OFM Conv was appointed bishop of Lexington, KY. Bishop-elect Stowe was previously vicar provincial of Our Lady of Consolation Province and rector of the Basilica and National Shine of Our Lady of Consolation in Carey, OH. He had also been vicar general and chancellor of the Diocese of El Paso.

Tina S. Holland, PhD was inaugurated at the fourth president of Our Lady of the Lake College in Baton Rouge, LA last February.

The website of the Western American Capuchin Province (www.beafriar.com) includes live links to five province ministries, to the five other Capuchin provinces in the US, to the Capuchins in Ireland, Australia, and Canada.

Sr. Lisa Zmuda, FSPA has coordinated the production of 22 DVDs for the Commission on the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition. Entire set with printed guides is \$260.00 (plus s/h). Single DVDs range from \$10 to \$20 and include contributions from Bill Short, Zachary Hayes, Mary Beth Ingham, Ilia Delio, Kenan Osborne, Michael Blastic, Ed Coughlin. These items can be seen at ruahmedia.org.

At **franciscantradition.org**, there are free video clips of talks by Josh Benson, PhD,

Capuchin Regis Armstrong and Friars Minor Bill Short, Dominic Monti, and Greg Friedman.

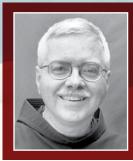
Thomas Nairn, OFM (Sacred Heart Province) has been appointed ecclesiastical advisor of the International Catholic Committee of Nurses and Medico-Social Assistants (CICIAMS), founded in 1933. It works with the Pontifical Council of the Laity and the Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers. It belongs to the World Health Organization and is represented on UN committees dealing with health.

St. Bonaventure University will offer online courses in Franciscan Philosophy and Theology at the graduate or undergraduate level. Jean-Francois Godet-Calogeras, PhD will teach the writings of Francis and Clare (fall 2015) and Anthony Murphy, PhD will teach Franciscan philosophy (spring 2016).

"The Franciscan Courage to Venture: A Symposium on Preparing Outstanding Leaders for the Modern World" will be held at Marian University in Indianapolis, IN (June 7-9, 2016), sponsored by the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities.

Key websites

www.franfed.org www.escofm.org franciscancollegesuniversities.org



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

Images of Jesus:

Divine Transcendence, Modern Streets

Interview Conducted by Brett Keegan

How long have you been creating icons?

I have been creating icons for 47 years. Thirty-seven years ago, I served as an apprentice to a master iconographer in a Greek Orthodox monastery. My professional life as an iconographer began three years later.

What led you into this craft?

Despite a German last name, my family originally came from the Crimean area of Imperial Russia. We came to this country at the turn of the last century and encountered a fierce wave of anti-immigrant sentiment. Externally, we adapted to "American" culture, exchanging Orthodoxy for Catholicism and English for Russian. Within our home, we kept alive our stories and the religious values of our ancestors. Those stories and the beauty of my Grandmother's icons led me to use my artistic ability to make icons myself.

How does iconography inform your religious and spiritual experience as a Franciscan?

I am now 68 years old and have painted icons most of my life. I can honestly say that iconography is the main expression of my spirituality. It arises from my contemplative prayer, as well as informing that prayer. It is the way I share the fruits of my prayer with the world—the way I evangelize, to use a Franciscan term.

Franciscan life is a balanced mix of deep contemplative prayer and work among people to spread the Gospel. Most friars and sisters work with words, preaching and teaching. I work silently, for the most part, creating images whose message will last for centuries.

What are some important elements to keep in mind when viewing icons?

Icons had their counterpart in the West until the early Renaissance. Romanesque painting is basically a primitive form of icon. Icons, like most ancient religious art, try to depict the reality that lies behind our mundane daily lives, reality as God sees it. To do this, they use various arbitrary means such as anatomical distortions, "reverse" perspective, and light that seems to shine from within subjects. Unlike Western paintings that invite their audience to enter emotionally the story they tell, icons are designed to move outwards into their audience. They represent the Kingdom of God, which we await and which is somehow already among us. Their outward movement expresses this now-and-not-yet quality of Christian eschatology.

Tell me about your icon Christ of Maryknoll.

The Christ of Maryknoll was originally painted for immigrants entering the United States illegally from Mexico. The barbed wire represented the international border that kept them out. The sense of Christ as an anonymous one in our midst, Christ abiding in the stranger, the neighbor, the leper, is based on Gospel passages such as Matthew 25 and Pauline theology of the Mystical Body of Christ. It presents a deep aspect of Franciscan spirituality, finding its roots in St. Francis' experience with the leper he kissed before his conversion. It also resonates with current Catholic phenomenology, as found in the writings of Jean-Luc Marion.

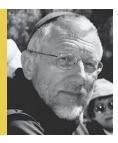
As the icon began to develop, I realized the barbed wire had a more startling significance. There is no way to know which side Christ is on. Does the barrier keep him out, or is it we who are imprisoned? What do our fences accomplish in life? How do our fences cut us off from God? These questions arise from the visual symbol and are an example of prayer with an icon. Unlike purely intellectual concepts, these responses are enfleshed in a visceral response to someone gazing back at us.

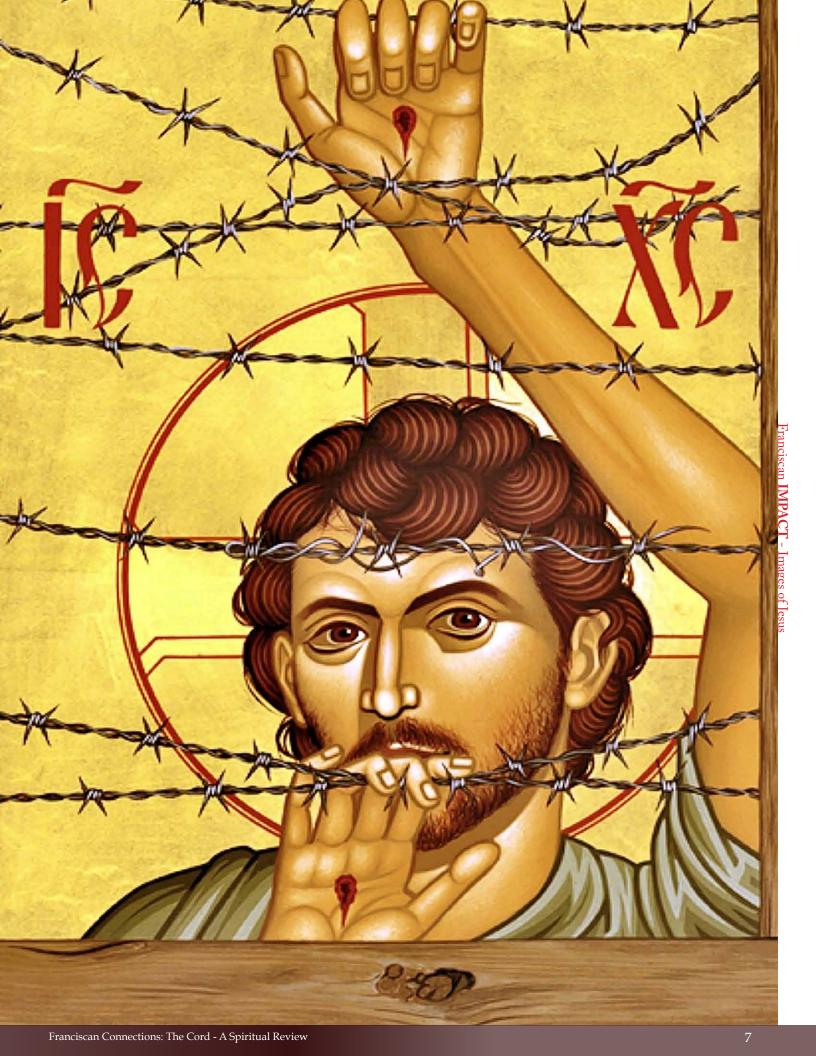
Moreover, different people have used the image in many ways in the past 15 years. Its most recent use has been in connection with Israeli checkpoints in West Bank territories. The image is first of all a devotional symbol, inviting us to prayer. Secondarily, it packs a political punch—just as everything in the Gospels must. It reflects the Franciscan mix of contemplation and action!

How have others viewed your work?

My work as a Franciscan iconographer draws criticism from many sides, but especially from the Eastern Orthodox and from Byzantine Catholics. My critics accuse me of a political agenda in my work. It is part of the Franciscan genius to recognize God in our midst—the implications of the Incarnation. Unlike the more ancient monastic Orders, we take our contemplation into the marketplace. There we encounter Christ with many faces, especially in the poor and marginalized. We struggle to feed that Christ, to give him drink, to visit him in prison, to heal him when he is sick. A Franciscan icon must always reflect the struggles of the marketplace, for Emmanuel, God-made-flesh, has chosen to dwell there. The challenge of the Franciscan iconographer is to show the transcendence of the divine face we find on modern streets.

Robert Lentz, OFM, is a Franciscan friar whose innovative icons are known throughout the world. He is a member of the Holy Name Province and is stationed at Holy Name College in Silver Spring, Maryland. In addition to painting, he teaches apprentices, writes, and conducts workshops on art and spirituality throughout the United States. His icons reflect his experiences among the poor in this country and in the Third World, as well as his Franciscan and Russian roots.





Images of Jesus: Francis

The Word of the Father

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). The prologue of John's Gospel presents Jesus as the Word (Logos) of the Father. The Word has both identity with and distinction from God, and all things were created through him. This Word "became flesh and lived [literally, "pitched his tent"] among us" (1:14). He came from the bosom of the Father to make the Father known (1:18). "The Prologue to the Fourth Gospel is the fullest and clearest statement of incarnational Christology in the New Testament."

The Incarnation of the Word of the Father lies at the heart of the spirituality of Francis of Assisi. He begins the Second Letter to All the Faithful:

I decided to offer you in this letter and message the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Word of the Father ... The most high Father made known from heaven through His holy angel Gabriel this Word of the Father – so worthy, so holy and glorious – in the womb of the holy and glorious Virgin Mary, from whose womb he received the flesh of our humanity and frailty. Though he was rich, He wished ... to choose poverty in the world beyond all else.²

For Francis, the incarnate Word was the gift to us from the Father's overflowing love. The Word of the Father abandoned his heavenly riches to clothe himself in human poverty. This divine humility is the manifestation of God's love. In his writings Francis is rather restrained in recalling Jesus' earthly life, but he loves to consider the simple fact of the Incarnation and is overwhelmed by the humility of God.³

When Francis speaks of the Word of the Father now given to us in the Eucharist, he speaks in a similar way:

Behold, each day He humbles Himself as when he came from the royal throne into the Virgin's womb; each day He himself comes to us, appearing humbly; each day He comes down from the bosom of the Father (John 1:18) upon the altar in the hands of a priest.⁴

For Francis, the Eucharist is a continuation of the Incarnation itself and reveals the same "sublime humility" and "humble sublimity." His devotion to the Eucharist impels him to cry out: "Brothers, look at the humility of God."⁵

Francis makes one other reference to the Word of the Father in a text that we might miss if we are unaware of its rich medieval

background. In the Later Rule, he says:

I admonish and exhort those brothers that when they preach, their language be well considered and chaste ... announcing [to the people] vices and virtues ... with brevity, because our Lord when on earth kept his words brief ⁶

On the surface, this sounds like an exhortation to give short homilies! While there is undoubtedly truth in this, there is much more operating here. The Latin original says, "quia verbum abbreviatum fecit Dominus super terram," literally, "because the Lord made an abbreviated [shortened] word upon earth." The phrase is ambiguous: who is the Lord, and what is the word?

If "the Lord" is Jesus, then the "abbreviated word" in his preaching would be the commandment of love of God and of others which sums up all the Law and Prophets (Mt 22:36-39) and his "new commandment" to "love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34).

But the phrase, "the Lord made an abbreviated word," has a rich background in the spiritual writings of the Middle Ages.⁷ Most often "the Lord" is God the Father, and the "word" is Jesus. This is developed by the spiritual writers in two ways. First, in the Old Testament, God spoke many words (verba multa), but in the New, God spoke one Word (verbum unum), the Word of the Father. So in relationship to the Old Testament, Jesus is the "abbreviated word."

The second understanding reflects a deeper Christological meaning also rooted in the Prologue of John. The Word is present with God for all eternity; he is "in the bosom of the Father" (John 1:18). But when the Word became flesh in the womb of Mary and was born in Bethlehem, the Word gave up his heavenly condition (Phil. 2:6-11) and "abbreviated/shortened" himself, even to the size of a baby in a stable. Thus, in the Incarnation itself, "the Lord made an abbreviated word." The humility and poverty of this "shortened Word" lie at the center of the spirituality of Francis.

Excerpted from *The Franciscan Vision and the Gospel of John* Vol. 4 of *The Franciscan Heritage Series* (2012) by Michael D. Guinan, O.F.M.

Background photo by Zachary Domes



Michael D. Guinan, OFM, PhD, is a Franciscan priest and a Professor of Old Testament, Semitic Languages and Biblical Spirituality at the Franciscan School of Theology in Oceanside, CA. He has published ten books, several pamphlets and many articles in publications such as The New Jerome Biblical Commentary, The Collegeville Bible Commentary, and The Message of Biblical Spirituality series. He has taught the Old Testament, Hebrew and Aramaic languages, and biblical spirituality at St. Bonaventure University,

St. Patrick's Seminary and the Franciscan Seminary in Manila.

6 LR 9:3, FA:ED 1, 105

7 Henri De Lubac, SJ, Exégèse Médiévale: Les Quatres Sens de L'Ecriture, Seconde Partie I (Paris: Aubier, 1961), 181-97; Manns, "Exegeta," 219-20; "François d'Assise et l'Ecriture," 504-505.

¹ Kysar, Maverick Gospel, 34. We will take a closer look at the Prologue in Part Four below.

^{2 2} LtF 3-5, FA:ED 1, 45-46. Here he also alludes to Luke 1-2 and 2 Cor. 8:9. 3 Nguyen, devotes a whole chapter (chapter 3) to developing these ideas (*The Teacher*, 91-110).

⁴ Adm 1:16-18, FA:ED 1, 129. Here Francis probably depends on John as mediated to him through the liturgy; see Karris, The Admonitions, 30.

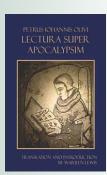
⁵ LtOrd 27-28. FA:ED 1, 118. Nguyen, The Teacher, 106, 108, 159-64. In analyzing Admonition 1 (on the Eucharist), Nguyen sees a "decisive" Johannine influence (pages 163-64); Karris, The Admonitions, 40-41, is more cautious in this regard.

NEW TITLES SUMMER 2015



The Admonitions of St. Francis of AssisiBy Robert J. Karris
\$39.95

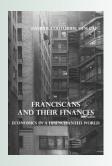
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Images of Jesus: Bonaventure

TO HEAL.

ur images of Jesus change over time. I don't mean that they change absolutely, but rather that they grow in depth or that the images of Jesus we do have begin to influence one another in new ways. If we take seriously that Jesus is a person with whom we have a relationship, then a measure of an authentic relationship would be that it grows. If my relationship with my daughter Gwendolyn always remains focused on her as a baby born two months premature, we'll never grow to face the challenges of her aged years!

I will always carry an image of Jesus in my mind from the church where I grew up. There was a very large crucifix on the back wall that seemed to fill the apse of our small church. It was life-like, but not gory, and showed the Spirit coming down upon Jesus at his death, rather than his spirit rushing away. I can see his gaunt body, the visible ribs, the wound in his side and his head tilted in death. All that hardship, but here comes the Spirit rushing upon Him. I knew as a little boy that this man had done something extraordinary on that cross, even if I didn't really know what it was. Since that time, other images of Jesus have impacted me, but none more than the image of Christ resurrected.

It's comforting to know that I share this experience of changing and deepening images of Jesus with the saints. Francis and Bonaventure perceived Jesus differently as their lives changed because they were living in relationship with Christ. I think Bonaventure's image of Jesus changed because of Francis. We might pause over that. The communion of the saints is real. It must be possible that someone's authentic following of Christ becomes a source of understanding Christ IF YOU MAKE YOURSELF and how to follow Him. If this is VULNERABLE, YOU'LL BE not true, we rob the communion of saints, and ultimately we rob WOUNDED. IF YOU CAN'T RISK Christ of his humanity and di-WOUNDS, YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE vinity. If we think that someone living the Christian life cannot impact our Christian life, then we are saying there is nothing about Christ to imitate. We are saying that Christ didn't live

a real life and that his record in Scripture is not illuminated for us in worship. We would also be saying that Christ cannot give us help through Grace, through Sacrament, or contact with those who live and have lived in the Spirit.

A new vision of who Jesus is emerged for Bonaventure at La Verna. For one with a Franciscan imagination, this is so predictable that it is almost unbelievable. But we know it's true because Bonaventure tells us so. He begins his classic text, the Journey of the Mind to God, by recounting the circumstances of its writing. Two years after having left a job as a theology professor at Europe's top university to become the new head of a sprawling order, Bonaventure went to La Verna to look for peace. Peace is what anyone wants in a new and difficult job! The need for peace is even more substantial if you're a leader whose decisions can be doubted,

whose motives can be questioned, and who might long for a time when he was 'just' a professor. Bonaventure was traveling to friary after friary in those days. La Verna was well out of the way. Only a small group of friars resided there. It was cold, austere high-up, and quiet. Bonaventure wanted to set his mind at peace so he began to think of paths for meditation. A new path opened up before him: the image of Francis at La Verna having a vision of the crucified man and Seraph and receiving the wounds of the stigmata. This enlivened Bonaventure's mind to the point where he wrote an enduring classic of Western Christian literature. In the process of meditating and writing, Bonaventure's vision of Christ changed. In his earlier academic works, Bonaventure thought consistently of an almost cosmic Christ. Christ is the source and Master of all knowledge through whom we are created and through whose incarnation and passion we are saved, who completes the world by uniting in Himself all of reality—the created and uncreated. The cross is present to Bonaventure's mind, of course, but primarily in terms of redemption. But a change happens. While Bonaventure was perhaps still a professor he wrote the *Breviloquium* (c. 1257). There Bonaventure invokes Christ as uncreated, incarnate, and inspired Word, an apparently unique theological structure. But by the time of the Collations on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit (c. 1268) the structure changes. There he includes crucified Word in the triad. I think Bonaventure's remembrance of Francis at La Verna and the composition of the Journey compelled him to give the cross an ever more central place in his thought. We see the beginnings of

this in some key phrases of the Journey, where the arms of the Crucified embrace the whole

> that there is no entrance into the journey without "the most burning love of the Crucified." When the Journey ends in chapter seven, Bonaventure imagines us as "Israelites" crossing the Red Sea of this world to the Father, and the staff in our hands is the cross. The Christian life is not marked by Christ or Incarnate Wisdom, but by the Crucified.

text. In the prologue Bonaventure says

Did the image of Francis receiving those painful marks only give Bonaventure a way to think about his own suffering? Was it that he looked at Francis and thought "life is toughit's so tough that when God wants to give you something goodhe makes you suffer for it-God rewards you with pain"? No. Bonaventure saw in Francis the person who pours himself out for another, the person Bonaventure was being challenged to become as Minister General. Pouring oneself out often means suffering, but not out of a desire for pain or abuse. It is a desire to imitate the Lord of Glory, whose glory is shone in gentleness and suffering, not power and pomp. The stigmata isn't medieval gore, it's a sign of who we become when we grasp the significance of who Christ is and how he comes to us—in humility, poverty, abandonment, and love. Francis encountered this Lord who makes Himself subject to

all in everyday situations, and saw Him especially in the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, Jesus simply offers Himself to us and for us. He doesn't put limits on our access to Him. When we pray the liturgy, He comes; when we use His words, He comes; He offers Himself to us and does not restrict us from coming, though if we consider the mystery, we rightly limit ourselves. Anyone who would ponder the Lord deeply in his Eucharistic humility, where in our service to God He comes to do us service, will begin to think that this is just how we should be to everyone. And behold, the wounds appear. If you make yourself vulnerable, you'll be wounded. If you can't risk wounds, you may not be able to heal.

I saw this myself once. Our third child had a rare genetic disorder: trisomy 13. We found this out only months into the pregnancy. It could have meant many things: that she would die in the womb, that she would only live for a few minutes, or that she would live for years needing constant care. I watched as my wife carried her with joy and sorrow, and how she dedicated her own life to the briefest of lives. Our daughter was an active, responsive baby in the womb, and we all relished the time we had with her. When we found that she had passed in the womb, I watched as my wife struggled to deliver her. My wife's body was unresponsive, her

spirit weak. The doctors didn't want to use more aggressive medicines. I prayed to my daughter who had already passed on. I told her that her mother had one last good thing to do for her, one last way to show her love: to bring her body into this world. I told my daughter that she could help. In a short time, my daughter's poor body, bereft of life, met us. We held the only sign we had of her life and we prayed and cried.

We had decided on her name long before that moment. My wife wanted a martyr's name. I remembered a martyr from the liturgy, whose name means resurrection.

We named her Anastasia.



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Finding the Divine

Iconism and Iconography in Francis: Brother of the Universe

Between the Lines

want to spend my life trying new things, and finding new ways of seeing and doing old things."

These are the words of a young St. Francis in Fr. Roy Gasnick's, OFM, and Mary Jo Duffy's Francis:

Brother of the Universe, the cooperative brainchild of Marvel Comics and the Franciscan Order. The comic's success would prompt Marvel to print biographies of Mother Theresa and John Paul II.

In a comic daring enough to approach a religious topic, a

1 Roy Gasnick and Mary Jo Duffy, Francis: Brother of the Universe (Chicago: Marvel, 1980), 7.

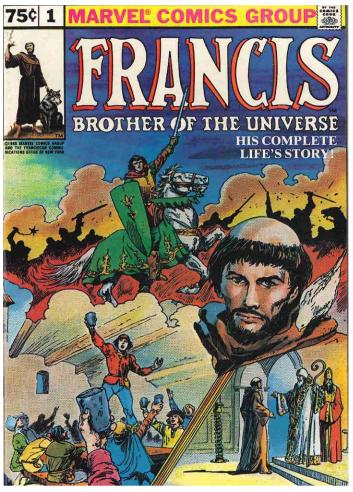


FIGURE 1

By Kevin Cooley

drastic departure from the medium's stereotypical content, a reader cannot help but wonder if Francis' words speak to the comics form as a mode of religious expression just as much as they signify his plans to rebuild the church and found a new religious order.

It is not a stretch to imagine that Francis refers to both comics and religion here. Both fields have a fascination with "icons," a term I use to refer to visual images that allude to complicated concepts.

Scott McCloud, author of *Understanding Comics*, defines an icon in broad strokes "to mean any image used to represent a person, place, thing or idea." For theorists like McCloud, however, an "image used to represent a person, place, thing or idea" is not limited to our traditional sense of the term "image," but includes any visual stimulus that takes on a meaning other than the sum of the shapes it is made of." This broadens our sense of what an icon is to include speech bubbles, the frames of panels, and even the written letters that make words themselves.

Considered a foundational comics work, it would be no exaggeration to call McCloud's *Understanding Comics* the Bible—or perhaps more appropriately, the Catechism—of comics studies. The real Catechism, however, in what may seem to be a bit of a surprise to some, finds a wealth of common ground with *Understanding Comics*' definition of an icon: "Christian iconography expresses in images the same Gospel message that Scripture communicates by words. Image and word illuminate each other." Both definitions see the icon, including written text and pictures, as a signifier that challenges us to conceive of a greater and more abstract concept than it can contain pictorially.

This conceptual fusion between the theistic icon and cartoonish icon has not gone unnoticed by the Franciscan tradition. Thirteenth century sequential images of St. Clare's life in *tavola* form were traditionally used to help illiterate Christians understand critical episodes from the saint's life story. A more recent example would be cartoonist Fred McCarthy's, OFS 1957-1989 cartoon *Brother Juniper*, the chronicle of a naïve and good-natured friar, to an audience of 15,000,000 readers in over 100

² Scott McCloud, Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art (New York: Harper-Collins Publishing, 1994), 27.

³ Ibid

⁴ Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), 300.

^{5 &}quot;Saint Clare of Assisi," Domestic Church, 2010, accessed April 7, 2015, http://www.domestic-church.com/CONTENT.DCC/19980701/SAINTS/ST_CLARE.HTM.

newspapers.⁶ And even more recently, St. Anthony Messenger Press's 2008 graphic biography of Francis and Jay Stoeckl's 2013 graphic narrative *Saint Francis and Brother Duck* continue this relationship between comics and the Franciscan tradition.⁷

There is one Franciscan comic. however, that stands out in both its wide readership and willingness to embrace the potential of the comics form. January of 2015 marked the 35th anniversary of Francis: Brother of the *Universe*, the world's highest selling biography of Francis' life. Mark Di-Fruscio's "Saints and Superheroes: The Brief Union of Marvel Comics and the Catholic Church" (2009) has already covered the external story behind the unconventional comic's conception and creation brilliantly, but I find that the internal happenings of Francis: Brother of the Universe can lead us to an equally fruitful conversation that has yet to begin.8 In a way that is made possible by the choice of comics as its mode of presentation, Francis: Brother of the Universe champions a Franciscan tradition of peace, simplicity, and intimacy with God through the complementary comics and religious understandings of iconism.

The most immediate Franciscan icon we experience in reading "Francis" is, perhaps unsurprisingly, the iconic depiction of Francis himself on the volume's front cover, as seen in Figure 1. This icon of Francis is not delivered as a lone figure, but juxtaposed against key episodes of his life, defying a unified chronology in favor of an abstract construction of Francis' identity through the reader's mental association of these key scenes with the icon of Francis. Hillary Chute's point that nonfictional comics can "express life stories, especially traumatic ones, powerfully" could absolutely be used to describe Francis here.9 The scene makes "literal the presence of the past by disrupting spatial and temporal conventions to overlay...past and present,"





FIGURE 2

as Chute notes that biographical comics can do. Each of these three episodes—the young Francis in a tavern, the eager militant Francis heading off to war, and the wise, simple Francis who seeks an audience with the pope—is plucked from time and arranged spatially around the locus point of the iconic Francis as we know him.

My conversation with Fr. Roy has led me to believe that the spatially inventive, and to use his description of comics: "action-oriented," cover was constructed deliberately to achieve this effect and to prepare us for the paradox of Francis' different identities. 10 We begin in media res, with Francis at his weakest moment, praying to God on Mt. La Verna to provide guidance and save his fracturing order. "I want to emphasize that Francis had problems with the order and had problems with the church," Fr. Roy said. "It was almost a crisis, and that was a crisis moment for him. I wanted to show him at these weak moments."11 In an introductory note to his 1979 rough outline to the comic, Gasnick likened St. Francis' situation to another, more conventional comic book hero: "During his conversion process, Francis has the deep, dark, introspective torments that Pete [Peter Parker] often has...Francis' turning into a saint is like Pete's turning into Spiderman-except that for Francis, it's forever."12 From

the comic's very early stages, it seems that Gasnick wanted to put the life of Francis in conversation with typical superhero tropes; the cover's montage of active, identity-formative scenes and the origin story style opening being just a few of them. Gasnick went so far as to veto Marvel legend Stan Lee's attempts to replace the montage cover with what Gasnick called a "very devotional"13 alternate cover image. "It would have ruined the comic book if he had his say," said Gasnick. "They [the Marvel Staff] actually cheered me because I was the only person to override Stan Lee."14

While Gasnick's triumph here can definitely inform our reading of the comic, lending too much credit

to authorial intent can cloud our understanding of what work the comic is actually doing, or, to put it somewhat differently, the work that readers are doing with it. Comics are often said to lend readers more interpretive agency than many other modes through their use of blank space. The spaces between panels, commonly called "gutters" or "the gutter," invite a reader to conceive of their own idea of how two very different neighboring images could form a coherent story. Iconism guides our Franciscan experience of Francis most simply in its depictions of the brutal realities of military violence, but it can only do so in conjunction with the reader's imagination in the gutter. In the gutter between the two panels in Figure 2, a young reader can easily distinguish their own version of the gap between



FIGURE 3

the socially construed notions and brutal reality of war, a lesson Francis will learn himself during his grueling captivity in the Perugian jail and in his subsequent

⁶ Dennis Frank, "The Brother Juniper Collection," The Friedsam Library, April 4, 2012, accessed April 6, 2015, http://web.sbu.edu/friedsam/archives/Juniper/brother_juniper_.htm.

⁷ Justin Lang and Miguel Berzosa, Francis of Assisi (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2008); Jay Stoeckl, Francis and Brother Duck (Brewster: Paraclete Press, 2013).

⁸ Mark DiFruscio, "Saints and Superheroes: The Brief Union of Marvel Comics and the Catholic Church," *Back Issue*, December, 2009, 61-69. 9 Hillary Chute, "Comics Form and Narrating Lives," *Profession*, no. 1 (2011): 109.

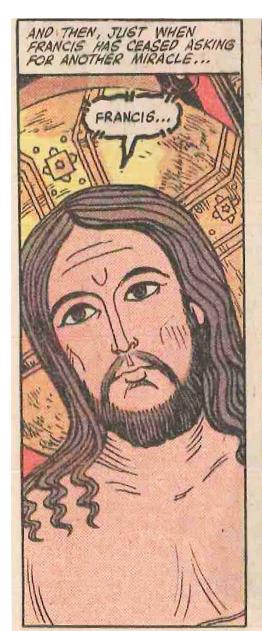
¹⁰ Roy Gasnick, interview by Kevin Cooley, February 12, 2015.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Roy Gasnick, "Francis: Brother of the Universe: Plot, Script and Scenario" (unpublished working paper, Friedsam Memorial Library Archives' *The Gasnick Collection*, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, 1979), 1. Typewritten paper document.

¹³ Gasnick, Interview by Cooley.

¹⁴ Ibid.



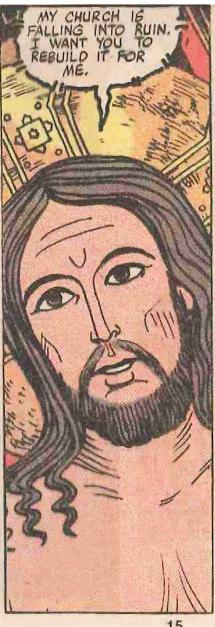


FIGURE 4

sickness.¹⁵ In an unintentionally Franciscan manner, we must conceive of a comic as the dynamic and unified sum of all its diverse parts, not as a chronological set of isolated images. The first panel's cartoonish Francis invites reader identification, while the rigorously detailed soldier of the second panel discourages it. While Francis' naïve desire for war makes him both the object of the reader's gaze and the vessel of the reader's experience in the first panel, his absence in the next panel cements the reader's identification with him, as readers can see the brutal reality of war as Francis might have. This reader-shaped meaning is the rule rather than the exception: the

15 Gasnick and Duffy, Francis: Brother of the Universe, 3.

next panel-to-panel transition, which is lent more negotiable space for imaginative reading by a page turn, depicts Francis kneeling over a dead knight, a scene an early, penciled layout of the comic aptly nicknamed "Francis Sees Knights Become Dead Knights." The cartoon style, itself a technique that uses the unreal to envision the real, already prompts a reader-imagined staging of the scene at hand (in this instance, Francis mourning a fallen comrade) and does so in a way that a photograph would not. The gutter complicates

our experience of comics here by opening a multiplicity of roads to read by. But in that complication there is an intimacy: the reader working within the bounds of the world created for them in order to make meaning happen.

Francis: Brother of the Universe does not only attack the glorification of war through the pictorial icon, but also through the written word as an icon with abstract, pictorial connotations. The idle proclamations of Francis' eager fellow soldiers, as can be seen in Figure 3, are presented in the same bloated and cartoonish textual onomatopoeia that a superhero's punch might be captured with in a more stereotypical comic.¹⁷ This borrowing of style playfully mocks the young Francis' misinformed and militant aspirations to knighthood, as it is the only human dialogue the comic presents with this particular visual technique. The technique is, however, used to imitate other non-communicative sounds in iconic form. When Clare rejects the young, revelrous Francis' offer to a night on the town by slamming her windows shut, the sound of the slam is indicated in these same bloated letters reserved for the presentation of sounds in a medium that cannot reproduce sound. 18 It as if the soldiers' cries for war were bursts of pure sound with no language-driven meaning, just like Clare's slamming of the window, or the smack of, say, Batman's gloved fist on flesh. Through this visual jab at Francis' early conception of militaristic pride, we are duly prepared for the fully realized Francis to treat injuries rather than inflict them, and for his ultimate condemnation of the crusades as a "senseless war."19

Of all the playful iconism of *Francis: Brother of the Universe,* there is no iconic depiction that dwells so effectively in this space between the abstractness of the cartoon and the devotional mysticism of the religious icon as Francis' vision of the San Damiano cross.²⁰ The scene (Figure 4) undoubtedly fulfills Darby Orcutt's maxim that "the inherent iconicity and narrativity of both the format and subject matter of religiously oriented comics" should drive a reader's thematic understanding of religious comics.²¹ The cross itself is a cartoon-

¹⁶ Mary Jo Duffy, Marie Severin and John Buscema, (reproduction of unpublished comics draft, Friedsam Memorial Library Archives' *The Gasnick Collection*, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, 1979), 4. Reproduction of illustrations and handwritten marginalia in pencil on paper.

¹⁷ Gasnick and Duffy, Francis: Brother of the Universe,

¹⁸ Ibid, 7.

¹⁹ Ibid, 29.

²⁰ Ibid, 15.

²¹ Darby Orcutt, "Comics and Religion: Theoretical Connections," in *Graven Images: Religion in Comic*

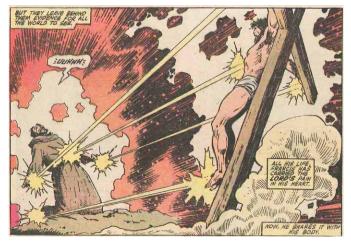


FIGURE 5

ish icon (in the sense that it is an abstract picture that does not attempt a photographic realism) in reality. The comics' version of the icon undergoes a double-filter of cartooning, so that the comic book character version of Francis reads the San Damiano cross as an icon in his world. In the San Damiano cross, we find a perfect fusion of both the comics icon and the religious icon, blending the two until they are indistinguishable, if, that is, they ever were distinguishable. We view the iconic cartoon Francis and bring our concept of him to life in our minds, just as Francis reads the iconic Christ and develops a sense of Christ's being. And yet, as always, it is in the spatial gutter between these two panels depicting the San Damiano Christ where meaning is made of these icons. The reader is not forced to imagine the majestically bizarre concept of the talking cross in any specific way, only prodded by the infinite possibilities of how, to use Fr. Roy's word from our interview, this "private" conversation plays out. 22 And all of these possibilities lie in the gutter. Douglas Rushkoff, author of the graphic narrative Testament, claims that this forging of meaning in the gutter is "the closest thing in comics to transubstantiation" and that it happens "in the unseen crack between two discreet moments."23 As always, the spatial techniques of the gutter work in cooperation with the iconic techniques of the illustrated narrative. Although Francis' reception of the stigmata (Figure 5), another real-life icon seen through a double-filter in the comic, is undoubtedly the emotional climax of the story, I would nominate a much tinier visual cue as the comic's most appealing Franciscan icon: a simple quotation mark.²⁴ The quotation mark is, however, applied in a manner that is not simple at all. Bypassing the distinction between a pictorial and a linguistic character, the speech balloon in Figure 4 (which represents the voice of the San Damiano cross) is punctured on all sides by quotation marks. A reader could see this as the omnipotence of God's word manifested in an icon or an assertion that all human voices carry the presence of God in them. Or, they could challenge my assumption that these are quotation marks and create a new reading that treats these paired lines as equals signs or general interruptions meant to make us feel as unfamiliar with this mode of communication as Francis surely does. We can only study what we have in front of

Books and Graphic Novels, ed. A. David Lewis and Christine Hoff Kraemer (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 104.

us; it is impossible to determine how these quotation marks or the gutter that makes the Christ of San Damiano appear to move are to be definitively read, assuming, of course, such a thing as a definitive reading is even possible. What we can do is appreciate how this plurality of individual readings imitates a "silent" or "private prayer," as Gasnick called the scene, to the greatest extent that any narrative could hope to do.²⁵

The creative output of Francis: Brother of the Universe is a challenge to the Franciscan community to match Francis' fervor for "finding new ways of seeing and doing old things." The comic concludes most appropriately with a list of Franciscan endeavors that do exactly this: from Francis' ideas of Christmas caroling and a live-nativity "Greccio" ceremony, to an exploration of "Francis of the Guns" and a tribute to the historians, artists and poets who help to reinvent Francis into an eternal, earthly life in addition to his eternal spiritual one.²⁶ Exploring the space where the convergence of religious and cartoon icons happens is one way to begin "making all things new," in the spirit of Revelation 21:5. And if we do intend to make all things new, Francis: Brother of the Universe gives us the chance to start by inviting us into two very fruitful discussions: what sort of comics could exist if comics were concerned with stories that are unconventional to the medium, and what fresh re-imaginings of religious narratives would come forth from an acceptance of storytelling forms that are traditionally ignored? We must work to answer these questions, and there is still much work to be done.

²⁶ Gasnick and Duffy, Francis: Brother of the Universe, 43, 48.



²² Gasnick, Interview by Cooley.

²³ Douglas Rushkoff, "Foreword: Looking for God in the Gutter," in *Graven Images: Religion in Comic Books and Graphic Novels*, ed. A. David Lewis and Christine Hoff Kraemer (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), ix. 24 Gasnick and Duffy, *Francis: Brother of the Universe*, 38.

²⁵ Gasnick, Interview by Cooley.

IN THE CLASSROOM

Francis: Brother of the Universe

By Bri Roberts

The original promotional material for *Francis: Brother of the Universe* calls the comic "ideal for parish and school use." Although some might consider comics more of a leisure-time-only activity, Fr. Roy Gasnick's work continues to be an informational and fun narrative of Saint Francis' life, told in a format that children will eagerly consume both in and outside the classroom. Here are a few activities and reflection questions to help bring the inspiring comic into your classroom:

Suggested Activities:

1. Each member of the class can choose a saint to do a research project on. The final product should be a comic book mock up: each frame page should be planned, if not a final product



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- (hey—comic books are very work intensive!). Each student should explain what parts of the saint's life they chose to include and why they thought each part was important in the context of knowing the saint's life and work.
- 2. After reviewing the life of Francis, choose a section to go over with the class in a group discussion. Scan a copy of the section and put it in a PowerPoint, but make sure you have blocked out the speech bubbles' text. Have the students discuss what is happening and what each character is saying in a guided discussion.

Some Questions for Review:

- 1. What did you notice about God's speech bubbles? How can we capture something like "God" in art forms? Review and discuss how God has been presented in different media and how that impacts your personal view of what God is.
- 2. How did the format of a comic book impact the telling of Francis' story? Look at a biography of Francis and compare the details chosen to be included in both the biography and *Francis: Brother of the Universe.*
- 3. What did you think of the compromise Francis must make with his brothers? Is there a way to be Franciscan without living life exactly like Saint Francis did? What does it mean to be a Franciscan?
- 4. What did you think about Francis' encounter with the Muslim Sultan? In what ways did they create a dialogue between two warring groups? How can you incorporate this message of open conversation into your everyday life?
- 5. Why did Francis preach to the birds? What does this tell you about his character?
- 6. Why do you think the comic made Clare know Francis as an ostentatious boy? What role did she play in Francis' life, both in the comic and in reality?

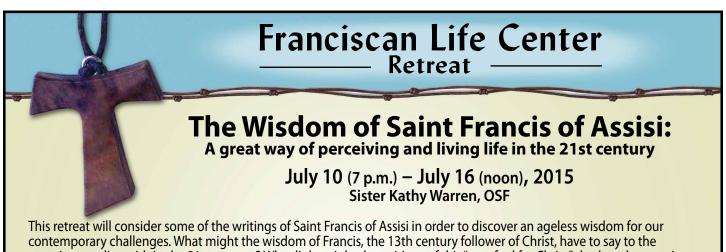
What we're reading

Park, Dabney. "Dante and the Donation of Constantine," Dante Studies 130 (2012): 67-161.

Dabney Park reviews what Dante says about the Donation of Constantine in the Divine Comedy, the Convivio, the Letters, and the Monarchia, concluding that Dante believed that the Donation was a guardianship that could be revoked by the emperor if the popes did not use it for Christ's poor. He offered two reasons for this position: the emperor could not give away any part of the empire; and the church was not disposed to received temporal power and authority because the form of the church was the life of Christ and the apostles, who lived in poverty. While the important concept of dominium may have been borrowed from St. Bonaventure, none of the Franciscans of Dante's day agreed with him that the Donation of Constantine started the decline and corruption of the church.

Park, Dabney. "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: What Dante Says about Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, Matthew of Acquasparta, and Ubertino da Casale," Dante Studies 132 (2014): 267-312.

Dabney Park reviews the influence on Dante of four Franciscans: Bonaventure, Matthew of Acquasparta, Ubertino da Casale, and Peter of John Olivi. The article focuses on the difficult passage in Paradiso 12.112-32, where Dante mentions the first three Friars Minor. Park dispels the commonly-held idea that Dante has Bonaventure forge a via media between the relaxed life of the Community and the excessively strict life upon with the Spirituals insisted. Instead he shows that Bonaventure himself always held to arcta paupertas. Dante's Bonaventure dismisses Matthew for becoming mired in the sewer of papal politics and Ubertino for leaving the order to join the Benedictines in 1317. Dante here supports Olivi's radical idea of usus pauper.



contemporary challenges. What might the wisdom of Francis, the 13th century follower of Christ, have to say to the questions we live with in the 21st century? What light might the writings of this "new fool for Christ" shed on the pressing issues of our lives today – as family members, community members and global citizens? How does this soldier turned peacemaker speak to the challenges confronting our world today? We invite you to join us as we seek the timeless insights of Saint Francis and apply that wisdom to our daily lives here in this time and place in history.

Sister Kathy Warren is a member of the Rochester (Minnesota) Franciscans. Kathy is the author of *Daring to Cross the Threshold: Francis of Assisi Encounters Sultan Malek al-Kamil* (2003), the result of her Master's Thesis from the Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University. She holds a Doctor of Ministry degree from the Graduate Theological Foundation (South Bend, Ind.). She is currently a member of her congregational "Franciscan Life in Mission" office and engages in retreats and enrichment opportunities regarding the Franciscan charism.

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"A Sign for All People:" Jesus in the Qur'an and Islamic Tradition

By Michael Calabria, OFM





ccording to classical Muslim accounts, two years after the Prophet Muhammad began to publicly preach the worship of the one God to the people of Mecca, Muslims were enduring such hardships and persecutions at the hands of the (polytheistic) Quryash, Mecca's principal tribe, that Muhammad encouraged them to flee to Abyssinia and seek refuge with the Christian king (*Negus*) of Abyssinia. When the Negus asked the Muslim refugees what was the revelation that had been given to them, Ja'far, the designated spokesman of the group, repeated for him verses of the Qur'an that had been revealed to Muhammad shortly before their departure:

Recall in the Book (the story of) Mary, when she withdrew from her people to an eastern place. And she screened herself off from them. Then We sent to her Our Spirit which appeared to her as a real man. She said: "I take refuge from you in the Most Merciful, if you are God-fearing." He said: "I am a messenger of your Lord (to announce): 'I will give to you a pure son." She said: "How can I have a son when no man has touched me, and I have not been unchaste?" He said: "So be it. Your Lord says: 'It is easy for Me, so We will make him a sign for humanity and a Mercy from Us. It is thus a matter decreed." (Surat Maryam 19.16-21)¹

Undoubtedly impressed by the similarity of these words to the annunciation as related in Luke's Gospel, the Negus granted them asylum. The Quryash, however, had pursued the Muslims to Abyssinia and accused them before the Negus of spreading lies about Jesus. When the Negus asked the Muslims what is it that they said about Jesus, Ja'far answered: "We say of him what our Prophet has taught us: he [Jesus] is God's servant, His messenger, His Spirit and His Word that He has breathed into Mary, the Holy Virgin."² Picking up a small stick from the ground, the Negus said to Ja'far that the difference between what the Muslims and the Christians believed about Jesus did not exceed the length of the stick. Their safety in his realm was thus assured while the Quraysh were dismissed. For all the polemics Christian authors would write against Islam in subsequent centuries, it is ironic that it was specifically Islamic Christology that had saved the early Muslim community from annihilation. This article provides a brief overview to Islamic Christology as found in the Qur'an and Islamic tradition.3

Islam's foundational principle of the oneness of God (tawhid) does not allow for an incarnation such as described in the Christian tradition—i.e. God's divinity cannot be "shared" (sharika) by anyone, and thus God cannot have a "son" in a literal sense. Yet, as Muslim scholar Mahmoud Ayoub has observed: Islam "denies the divinity of Christ, but without denying his special humanity." Islam holds that

^{1.} My translations from the Qur'an are based on those in 'Abdullah Yūsuf 'Alī's *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an*, 10th ed. (Beltsville: Amana, 1999).

² As related by Tariq Ramadan in: *In the Footsteps of the Prophet* (Oxford: University Press, 2007), 61. Cf. Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*, 2nd ed. (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2006), 86.

³ The literature on Jesus in Islam is quite vast. For an extensive bibliography, see: Oddbjørn Leirvik, *Images of Jesus Christ in Islam*, 2nd ed. (London: Continuum,2010), 271-285, and more recent works cited in this article.

⁴ Mahmoud Ayoub, "Toward an Islamic Christology II: the death of Jesus, Reality or Delusion – a Study of the Death of Jesus in *Tafsīr* Literature," in: *A Muslim View of Christianity: Essays on Dialogue by Mahmoud Ayoub*, Irfan A. Omar, ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2007), 159.

God communicates His will to humanity by means of exceptional individuals who are designated prophets (Ar. sing., $nab\bar{\imath}$). Some of these prophets are also called "messengers" (sing., $ras\bar{\imath}\iota$) because they are the bearers of a new revelation or represent a significant change within an existing faith community. Jesus (or ' $\bar{I}s\bar{\imath}$ as he is called in the Qur'an) is such a messenger, bearing the Gospel ($In\bar{\jmath}\iota$) to his people as Moses had borne the Torah, and Muhammad the Qur'an.

In the Qur'an, Jesus is referred to some twenty-five times, most frequently as "Jesus, son of Mary" (Isā ibn Maryam). Although Jesus is not alone in being called God's prophet (19.30), messenger (3.49), and servant (19.30), as well as "one of those nearest to God" (3.45), he does bear other distinctions that are entirely unique to him. Frequently in the Qur'an, the name of Jesus is prefaced with al-Masīb—"the Messiah" (Gr. Christos), although the precise significance of this term in the Qur'an goes unexplained. Some Arabic lexicographers have explained that, like the Hebrew term, it signifies Jesus being anointed as prophet, or that he was "anointed" with God's blessing (19:31). Others held that masīh signified Jesus as the one who touches because he laid hands on the sick and healed them.⁵ Indeed the Qur'an does refer to Jesus' miracles of healing the blind and the leper, and raising the dead (5.110).⁶ Jesus is also uniquely called God's Word (or a "Word from God") in the Qur'an (3.45, 4.171). This does not mean, however, that Jesus is understood as the pre-existent Logos of John's Gospel, but rather the "Word" signifies the manner in which he was brought into existence in Mary's womb—i.e. through God's creative utterance 'Be!' (3.47). The Qur'an thus draws a parallel between Jesus and Adam since both were brought to life though God's command (3.59). Jesus is also referred to as "a spirit" (rūh) from God (4.171). Like masīh, this distinction goes without explanation, and the phrase has given rise to much discussion and debate; but like "God's Word" it seems to point to Jesus' conception through God's direct action without the agency of a human father:7 "We breathed into her (Mary) of Our Spirit, and We made her and her son a Sign for all people." (21.91). The Qur'an also speaks of Jesus being "strengthened with the Holy Spirit" (2.87, 2.253, 5.110) which is evocative of Jesus' baptism as related in Matt. 3.16/Luke 3.22. Jesus' mission as given in the Qur'an is a simple one:

I have come to you with wisdom and to make clear to you some matters about which you differ. So be conscious of God (*ataqū*) and follow me, for God is my Lord and your Lord. So serve Him; this is a straight path. (43.63-64)

Perhaps the greatest difference in what Christians and Muslims believe about Jesus concerns the Crucifixion. It is only mentioned once in the Qur'an among all the references to Jesus, but

not within the context of Jesus' life and mission. The reference appears in a section of the fourth *sūra* (*al-Nisā'*), which recounts the disobedience of the Israelites at Sinai, their betrayal of the Covenant, their rejection of God's prophets, and their accusations (of adultery) against Mary. The text continues:

They said: 'We killed Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of God. But they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him but it was made to appear to them... They did not kill him, for God raised him to Himself, and God is All-Mighty and All-Wise. (4.157-8)

Although these verses are somewhat ambiguous from a grammatical and syntactical perspective, over the centuries the majority of Muslim exegetes have understood them quite literally, i.e. that Jesus did not die on the Cross but was raised bodily to heaven by God,8 with perhaps someone else crucified in his place. Others, including a group of Ismā'īli-Shi'i philosophers of the tenth-eleventh centuries CE known as the Ihkwān al-Safā' ("The Brethren of Purity"), the philosopher and mystic Abū Hāmid al-Ghazzālī (1058-1111), as well as some modern Muslim scholars have rejected this interpretation. Instead of denying the actual historical crucifixion of Jesus, they understand the verses to signify, as Mahmoud Ayoub suggests, "a denial of the power of human beings to vanquish and destroy the divine Word, which is forever victorious."10 That is, Jesus—God's Messenger, Spirit and Word—was not defeated in death but lives eternally. The verses, Ayoub says "constitute an accusation or judgment against the human sin of pride and ignorance,"11 the very charges levied against the Children of Israel in the preceding and subsequent verses.

Although in Islam Jesus does not have a "salvific" role in the Christian sense of an expiatory sacrifice on the Cross for the sins of humanity, in the opinion of many Muslims theologians and exegetes, Jesus does have an *eschatological* role. This is based on the interpretation of 43.61 in the Qur'an: "And he will be a sign for the Hour. Therefore have no doubt about it and follow me. This is the straight path." Many understand these words to refer to Jesus' return in the End Time when he will defeat the Anti-Christ (al-Dajjāl) and establish peace and justice on the earth. ¹² Many believe that Jesus' descent from the heavens will occur in Damascus. To this day, the southwest minaret in the Umayyad Mosque is called the "Jesus minaret" as it is regarded as the precise location of his return (ill.).

In addition to the references to Jesus in the Qur'an, there are several hundred sayings attributed to him and stories about him, many of which find parallels in biblical and extra-biblical sources.¹³

⁵ Robinson, Neal. "Jesus." Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an. General Editor: Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Georgetown University, Washington DC. Brill Online, 2015. Reference. Georgetown University. 13 March 2015 http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-the-quran/jesus-EQCOM_00099 6 Many more miracles attributed to Jesus are described in the ahadīth, literary texts (e.g. "The Stories of the Prophets") and histories such as al-Tabarī's Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk. For an English translation, see: The History of al-Tabarī: Volume IV: the Ancient Kingdoms, Moshe Perlmann, trans. (Albany: State University of New York, 1987), 112-125.

⁷ al-Zamaksharī, al-Kashshāf (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 2008), v.1, 456; Mahmoud Ayoub, "Jesus the Son of God: a Study of the Terms Ibn and Walad in the Qur'an and Tafsīr Tradition," in: A Muslim View of Christianity: Essays on Dialogue by Mahmoud Ayoub, 129.

⁸ Both Christians and Muslims regard the Chapel of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem as the place from which Jesus was raised to heaven. 9 For a complete discussion of this issue, see Todd Lawson's *The Crucifixion and the Qur'an: a Study in the History of Muslim Thought* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009). For a more extensive study of the *Ikbān al-Safā*', see Ian. R. Netton's *Muslim Neoplatonists: an Introduction to the Thought of the Brethren of Purity* (London: Routledge, 2003)

¹⁰ Ayoub, "Toward an Islamic Christology II: the death of Jesus, Reality or Delusion – a Study of the Death of Jesus in *Tafsīr Literature*," in: *A Muslim View of Christianity: Essays on Dialogue by Mahmoud Ayoub*, 176.

¹² For a complete treatment of Jesus' eschatological role in Islam, see Zeki Sarito-prak's *Islam's Jesus* (Gainesville: University of Florida, 2014).

¹³ The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature, Tarif Khalidi, ed. and trans. (Cambridge: Harvard, 2001).

Mention must also be made of the sūfīs, the mystics of the Islamic tradition who hold Jesus in particular esteem as a paragon of holy wisdom, spiritual poverty and purity. The great sūfī Shaykh Ibn al-ʿArabī (1165-1240 CE) wrote: "I have had many meetings with him in vision, and at his hands I turned (to God)... He ordered me to practice renunciation and detachment." In words that echo those of St. Francis in his conclusion to the Letter to the Faithful, the great Persian sūfī Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (1207-1273 CE) wrote: "The body is like Mary. Every one of us has a Jesus within him, but until the pangs manifest in us our Jesus is not born."

Christ Jesus, son of the Virgin Mary, God's Prophet, Messenger and Servant; God's Word and Spirit, God's Mercy, who healed the sick and the blind, and raised the dead; the one raised by God and the one who will come again; the spiritual guide of mystics and contemplatives. A Sign for all people. Peace be upon him.



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Cover photo: Isaiah's Vision (21.7) of Jesus riding a donkey and Muhammad riding a camel al-Biruni, al-Athhar al-Baqiyya 'an al-Qurun al-Khaliyya (Chronology of Ancient Nations), Ottoman lands, ca. 1560. (Bibliothèque nationale de France).



The Umayyad Mosque in Damascus and the so-called "Jesus minaret," which some Muslims claim marks the location of Jesus' return to earth in the End Time. Photo by *Michael Calabria*

¹⁴ Javad Nurbakhsh, *Jesus in the Eyes of the Sufis*, Terry Graham et al. trans. (London: Nimatullahi, 1983).

¹⁵ Stephen Hirtenstein, *The Unlimited Mercifier: the Spiritual Life and Thought of Ibn Arab*ī (Oxford: Anqa, 1999), 53.

^{16 &}quot;We are... [Jesus'] mothers when we carry Him in our heart and body through love and a pure and sincere conscience; and give Him birth through a holy activity, which must shine before others by example." http://www.vatican.va/spirit/documents/spirit_20020203_lettera-fedeli-2_en.html

¹⁷ John Renard, All the King's Falcons: Rumi on Prophets and Revelation (Albany: SUNY, 1994), 95.

POETRY CORNER THOMAS CAREY, SSF

Original Sin

There is an object in my future, sailing towards me through time, our coordinates etched in the mind of the world. My list is pregnant with danger: "meet Linda" "snow boots." Yesterday my middle digit met the razored lid of the cat food can. I know something was laughing. So much happens without incident, yet the world knows its malevolence. Accident crouches between a tree and a bush, his pockets lined with bags of oil, mouth filled with carpet nails. I remember my cousin's finger between the blades of his lawn mower, and the man strangling on the electric window-glass of his Thunderbird. The union of object and hasty intention, a danse macabre of mind and matter. Japanese mystics are right: Don't move. I was at the hospital waiting for sutures when I cracked my head on a low-slung beam, an architectural nicety constructed more than thirty years ago, waiting for me.

Franciscan Poets:

Jongleur de Dieu

The Franciscan iconographer, Robert Lentz, OFM, has written that "Holy foolishness weaves through Judaeo-Christian spirituality like a brilliantly colored thread, tying the prophets of ancient Israel to Dorothy Day and other saints of our time... Holy foolishness, at its heart, is a prophetic path. It names the lifeless idols we worship in place of the living God--things like our possessions, our social status, and anything else we use to prop up our egos." Lentz says that Francis of Assisi, having once admired the joyous troubadours of southern France, decided to call his first band of brothers "jongleurs," those who would sing and do somersaults in holy foolishness, out of love for God.

Franciscan poets stand in this long line of sacred jongleurs, naming our idols, teasing our possessions, and kicking away the props that shield our fragile egos. Br. Tom Carey has been practicing this fine art of holy foolishness throughout his life as an Anglican Franciscan in the tough neighborhoods of Brooklyn and Los Angeles. A savvy and sometimes raw poet in Greenwich Village before his conversion, he brought his street smarts and artistic brilliance to the Bushwick section of Brooklyn after his vows, brazen enough to start a very successful summer poetry project for kids, teaching them verbal somersaults as holy foolishness and ways to God.

The last photo of Br. Tom to make headlines was of him being arrested in his habit, protesting Wal-Mart's unfair labor practices. Poet, prophet, jongleur de Dieu.



Thomas Carey, SSF, is an Anglican Franciscan and Vicar of the Church of the Epiphany, the oldest continuous Episcopal Church in the Diocese of LA and the cradle of the Latino rights movement in LA and beyond. Fr. Carey is a person of multiple talents, having graduated from Columbia University with a degree in Spanish, followed by 13 years of teaching theater to inner city children and poetry for the NYC Public Schools. He

became a brother of the Society of St. Francis in 1988, serving within the order in multiple roles, and after graduating from Church Divinity School of the Pacific (Berkeley, CA) in 2002, as deacon and priest at St. Patrick's, Deer Park, NY and Church of the Redeemer, Astoria, Queens, NY. He is the author of two published books: a collection of poems called Desire (1997 Painted Leaf Press) and a novel of Mexico, entitled Small Crimes (Blazevox Books, 2011).

Franciscan Connections featured photographer 7 a c fo a con 1 D a con a c

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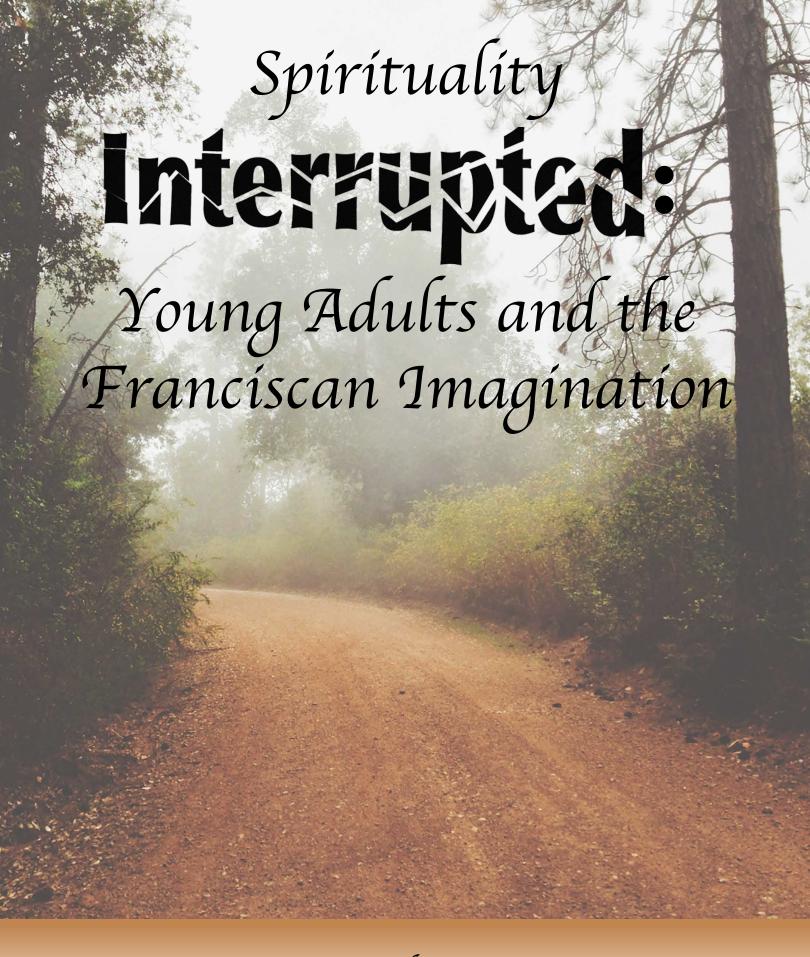


Photo by Zachary Domes

By David B. Couturier, OFM. Cap.



illions of young adults are leaving their experiences of church behind in what is arguably the largest disengagement from religion in history. Research shows that upwards of 60-80% of all teenagers who have been involved in our religious education programs, attended church on a regular basis, and been participants in our church service projects will be out of religion for good by the time they are thirty years of age. ²

The standard trope that young adults leave religion only to find their way back when they grow up, get married and have children of their own reveals itself today as an old and unfounded myth. Christianity is in danger of losing a whole new generation of passionate, well-educated, and deeply optimistic young adults, largely because we don't understand and pay very little attention to how they think about themselves, their world, their future and our God. Older Christians make the fundamental mistake in thinking that they are really "just like us," only just a bit more technologically savvy and committed to Facebook and their iPads. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Emerging adults are not only different from previous generations, they are, as the cable television entrepreneur Bob Buford, said – "discontinuously different than anything we have seen before." This is so because this is the first generation that is experiencing the unprecedented volume and velocity of change across multiple platforms of life – technological, scientific, social, cultural, political, psychological and religious. And they experience these changes immediately. They do not need nor do they use "mediators" to explain the diversity they encounter, the information they process, and the data they collect. Theirs is a world of the "immediacy of unmediated differences" for the first time in history.

The Secular Imagination of Young Adults

The world of young adults today is exciting and provocative. Young adults are open to unlimited channels of information across every sector of life. Not long ago the mysteries of human life were mediated, interpreted, and explained through the symbolic lenses of religion and tradition. Today experiences are sifted through the stark strains of what we might call the secular imagination.

Discussing at length the origins of this secular imagination in his masterful tome, *The Secular Age*, the philosopher Charles Taylor argues that "secularity" is not just a net reduction in religious or practice in the

Young adults inherit a world where God is no longer plausible in the increasingly encroaching public sphere. The self that was once "porous" to the grand, relational interdependent scheme of created life is now buffered, enclosed and encapsulated in the privacy and autonomy of the self. It is not simply that church and state have been separated. It is that the divine has been exiled from the meaning structure of individuals, families, society and the universe. Religious thought and mediation no longer has an air of inevitability to them. Nature is no longer the "book of creation," by which we read the truth, beauty and goodness of a omniscient God. Nature has been reduced to matter and stuff and humankind takes its place on the landfill of life, destined to nullity and negation as the inevitable price of mortality in a decidedly finite world.

According to this defining secular script, humanity has "come of age," freed at last and forever from the debilitating and demeaning myths of sacred literature. This "coming of age" story replaces the religious narrations of creation, fall, redemption and renewal. Communion is replaced by autonomy and humankind is disembedded from society, the cosmos and the common good.

The price of this "great disembedding" is enormous. Researchers in the field of family psychology now warn that we are embarking on a time of "postfamilialism,' when increasing numbers of couples no longer see the need for or aspire to parenting or the formal bonds of marriage of any kind.⁵ The planet itself, in this framework, loses its status as the "great mother," nurturing and sustaining human life. Stripped of its transcendent significant, the cosmos is opened to endless commercialization, becoming nothing more than "stuff" to be bought and sold. In this vein, as well, the common good losing all currency, since the objective loses its footing and is replaced by an endless reiteration of wants and needs over truths. The common ground is replaced by a parking lot of private and competing interests, with nothing and no one authorized to adjudicate differences.

This disenchanted world comes with a price for young adults trying to negotiate life, love, intimacy,

¹ David Kinnaman, You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving Church and Rethinking Faith (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books,

² This is the research done by the Barna Group and discussed in *You Lost Me*, ibid., and David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007).

3 Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, p. 37.

West, but a change the very conditions of belief.⁴ That is, the secularism that has taken hold of culture and the preferred world of young adults today is a world where the very existence of God is in question, where the over-all coherence of the world is denied, and the potential for any objective truth or ultimate purpose is placed in doubt, if not altogether rejected. What emerges as the framework of thought and action is human life in a "disenchanted world," a world that has been stripped of transcendence and where reference to God is denied and disabled across more and more sectors of life.

⁴ Charles Taylor, A Secular Age (2007).

⁵ Joel Kotkin, *The Rise of Post–Familialism: Humanity's Future?* (Singapore, 2012), accessed at: http://www.joelkotkin.com/sites/default/files/The%20Rise%20of%20Post-Familialism%20%28ISBN9789810738976%29.pdf.

work and family.

Kinnaman speaks to an imagination of Millennials and Mosaics that is troubled in three ways: undifferentiated access, non-specific alienation and a cynical ambivalence of authority. Millennials have been sold a new theory of human and social development, one whereby happiness and wholeness are derived by an untried modality of self-invention for the sake of self-sufficiency. It is this imagination of self-invention and self-sufficiency that preoccupies the mind and heart of increasing numbers of young adults, as they negotiate the new economy as "digital natives." It is an horizon of expectations that rests precariously on the platform of an "ontology of violence," as John Milbanks describes it.

Can religion offer anything helpful and hopeful to this new condition? It is hard to imagine how religion can find an entrance point, given that it is religion itself that has been advertised as "the" problem from which humanity must free itself. The research from the Barna group details the distrust and disappointment that Millennials have with the whole of enterprise of religion in general and Christianity, in particular. They have determined that Christianity is overprotective, shallow, repressive, exclusive, hypocritical, regressive, and arrogant in the face of a progressive and scientific agenda. Who can speak in the face of this?

Religion faces an uphill battle because it has tried to beat the Enlightenment's project of absolute certitude with the very tools of the Enlightenment, delivering dogmas, creeds, and catechisms in a display and a hope that a Scholastically-framed "hierarchy of truths" would quench humanity's hunger for the solidity of certainty. This scholastic project has failed to attract the Millennial generation, both up with a "hermeneutic of suspicion" and a deep distrust of mega-narratives of any kind. Are we then doomed to watch this generation pass into a post-Christian era?

Perhaps what is needed is to turn from the arena of creeds to study the very architecture of belief itself. That is, we need to consider the idea that perhaps a "religious imagination" and a "Franciscan imagination" might engage the hearts and souls of a new generation, if it can be proven that our Franciscan imagination is a more redemptive and palliative frame and fit by which to engage the challenges of Millennial life than the "ontology of violence," to which young adults have been assigned.

A Religious Imagination

To speak of a religious "imagination" is to posit a unique perspective or point of view regarding the meaning of God and the purpose of one's life. By "imagination" we mean a "worldview," a stance, perspective or horizon of mind and heart regarding the central mysteries of one's life. Greeley once said that religion is "imagination before it's anything else." He defined religious imagination as one's "picture" of God and the "metaphorical narrative of God's relationship with the world and the self as part of the world."

One's religious imagination expresses one's deepest assumptions about how God is present in the world, whether in closeness to or in distance from the world and the self. One's

religious imagination is expressed in the narrative by which one structures one's life and shapes one's choices and decisions. That is to say, there comes a moment in every person's life, mysterious as it may be, when an individual settles on the "story" that accounts for one's life. Individuals choose, however unconsciously, how they will recount their lives to themselves and to others. This "story" offers an explanation of and an entrance to the perspective one takes on one's experiences and, indeed, on one's life as a whole. It is the horizon from which one looks out at one's world. It is one's "horizon of expectations."

Robert M. Doran has suggested that one's horizon has to do with "one's field of vision" and its limits. "... (A) horizon is the limit of one's field of vision (and)... the limit of what one knows and is interested in." He goes on to say that "(w)hat lies beyond the horizon is not only what one does not know but what one has no desire to know or what you don't even know exists to be known."

One's religious imagination, therefore, expresses the range and scale of one's perspective, one's "horizon of expectations" and one's field of vision regarding what one cares (and does not care) to know about oneself, the world and God. Religious imagination speaks to the length and the limits of one's field of vision. It is the specific story we tell ourselves about ourselves and our world. A few initial examples from psychology might situate us.

In the narcissistic imagination, for example, the individual makes himself/herself the "center of all universes," the point of every story and event, however remote. The hysterical personality makes himself/herself "special" and "noticeable" in everything he/she says, does or thinks. The depressed individual sees the dark cloud and shaded lining in every situation of his life and the paranoid individual writes the ominous and the dangerous into every dialogue and encounter she engages. These narratives of the mind are the "constructions of the imagination" and point to the meaning one gives to one's life in all its experiences and encounters. Meaning and intention are critical to the work of the religious imagination.

Individuals craft their stories, but how and why? Why do some individuals allow the story of their lives to become a tragedy? Why is the plot line of their lives allowed to devolve into a story of catastrophe rather than courage? Why, even with the help of grace, do some individuals continue to mean "meanness" when they interact with others? Why do some people signal suspicion in everything they or others do and why do others present the logic of the "outcast" in every dialogue they have?

On the other hand, how do some individuals rise above depressing scripts and write themselves a narrative of holiness and wholeness? How is their imagination formed by kindness and compassion, by hope and happiness? How do they arrive at a consistent narrative of goodness over a lifetime, without the excursions of ambivalence that often interrupt the even flow of a whole and healthy personal narration? We will address these questions after we have examined the elements of a "Franciscan imagination."

⁶ Garrett Green, *Imagining God: Theology and the Religious Imagination* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1989); Michael P. Gallagher, "Image and Faith," *The Way* (1984), p. 115-123.

⁷ Andrew Greeley, *The Catholic Imagination* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), p. 45; Greeley, *The Religious Imagination* (New York: William H. Sadlier, 1981).

⁸ For a theological analysis of the significance of story and narrative, cf. John Navone, SJ, *Towards a Theology of Story* (London: St. Pauls Publication, 1977) and *Seeking God in Story* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006).

⁹ Robert M. Doran, "What does Bernard Lonergan Mean by Conversion," (2011), accessed: http://www.lonerganresource.com/pdf/lectures/What%20Does%20 Bernard%20Lonergan%20Mean%20by%20Conversion.pdf.

¹⁰ David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination* (New York: Crossroads Publishing, 1998).

A Franciscan Imagination

If a religious imagination is a particular "field of vision" from which one looks out upon one's world and interprets its meaning and significance, what then is a "Franciscan imagination?" What are its elements? What are its "picture" of God and its "metaphorical narrative" of God's relationship to the world and the self as part of that world? To answer these questions, we must turn to the recent work of Franciscan scholars.¹¹

In his article, "A Franciscan Language for the 21st Century," Franciscan scholar, William Short OFM, reminds us that the Franciscan imagination is a deep theological "language" from a tradition that spans centuries, a language that is, at one and the same time, Trinitarian, incarnational and mystical in nature. ¹² The Franciscan imagination is rooted in a positive understanding of God as good, indeed a God that we might say is good, all good, supremely good, all the time and to everyone. This positive view of God is rooted in an experience of the Trinity as a communion of persons.

The goodness of God is "self-diffusive," that is, it emanates from the "perfect generosity" that is the Father who is understood as a "fons plenitudo." The Father is a "fountain-fullness" of inspiration, creativity, ingenuity, love and compassion that spill out eternally within the Trinitarian relations itself and temporally into the world. With this cascade of bounteousness, creation is a vestige of God's goodness and persons relate positively to God as "image and likeness." ¹³

The Franciscan imagination pulsates with an understanding and experience of the Son as "perfect receptivity." The generosity of the Father is expressed in the giving of Himself totally and lovingly to the Son who perfectly receives all that He is from the Father. The Son is the Logos (the Word) of the Father. He is the "image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation" (Colossians 1:15). The Son is the "Art of the Father," the pattern, mold, and exemplar by which all things are fashioned and created. The Son is the foundation of all that is thought and all that is created. "In Him, everything came into being" (Colossians 1:16).

The Spirit is the bond of love that exists between the Father and the Son. Within the Trinity, the Spirit "performs" as the seal of kindness that unites the generosity of the Father and the receptivity of the Son. The Spirit functions in the world as seal, memory and unifier, bonding Christians to one another in baptism and binding them with the power and force of their communion with Father and the Son. The Spirit reminds Christians of all that Christ has taught and is the power by which our union with Christ to the Father is effected in sacrament (epiclesis).

One might say that the Son is the Father's "Imagination pro nobis." The Son is the Father's view of the world and the

Father's horizon of expectation for the future of humankind. The Incarnation reveals that the Father does not see the world and humankind apart from the "Beloved Son." "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

The Franciscan imagination is captivated by the humility of God, the bending low of the Almighty in order to raise us up to God's divine image (kenosis). The Admonitions of Francis explore this sentiment:

Consider, O human being, in what great excellence the Lord placed on you, for He created and formed you to the image of his beloved Son according to the body and to His likeness according to the Spirit.¹⁴

Because of humankind's creation according to the image of the "beloved Son," Short reminds us, the Franciscan imagination will always profoundly appreciate the human person's dignity before God and will ever seek to protect his/her position in the world against all threats of injustice. This "attention to the human," according to Short, is characteristic of Franciscan thought throughout the Middle Ages, and translates into an emphasis on human freedom, the dignity of the human person and the primacy of free will. Therefore, the Franciscan imagination accentuates the positive potential inherent in every human person because of their innate relationship with and in the Incarnate Word. 15

Short goes on to extend this positive view of goodness to the created world. All of creation is touched and blessed by the coming of the Christ and this advent creates a "new equality" not simply among men and women, but, indeed, with and among all creatures. Because of Christ's coming, all men and women must consider themselves "brothers" and "sisters" to one another under the good and loving Father of all. But, beyond that, because of Christ's Incarnation, his becoming enfleshed in creation itself, all creatures become part of the great family of God. And it is in the *Canticle of Creatures* that Francis of Assisi sings of the universe as a great and interdependent network of mutuality. He sings of the earth as our "mother" and of the sun as our "brother" and the moon as our "sister." Short reflects on this ecological mysticism of Francis—

Beginning with that profound, poetic intuition of Francis, Franciscan scholars like Bonaventure at the University of Paris began to spell out its implications: everything was made through the Word; all was created in the Word. And in Christ that Word took on flesh, that is, the creative divine Word took on the form of physical matter, embodied, 'incarnate.'¹⁶

The Franciscan imagination, therefore, is a non-dualistic imagination. It is an imagination of mutuality and interdependence. It is an imagination of coincidence, the coincidence of opposites.¹⁷

¹¹ Our work is influenced by the thought of E. Cousins, I. Delio, W. Short, M. Cusato, J. Rathschmidt, D. Flood, R. Armstrong, W. Hellman, M. Carney, among others.

¹² William Short, "A Franciscan Language for the 21st Century," in *A Franciscan Perspective on Higher Education The AFCU Journal: A Franciscan Perspective on Higher Education.* Volume I.1 (2004): 1-9; also: http://www.fst.edu/pdf_fst/franciscanLanguage21stCentury.pdf., see also the work of

Ilia Delio, OSF, "Franciscan Theology, Identity and Community," in Kathleen A. Warren, ed., Franciscan Identity and Postmodern Culture, Washington Theological Union Symposium Papers 2002 (Franciscan Institute, 2003), 13–33.

¹³ Ewert H. Cousins, ""Harmony in Nature and Man, " in George P. McLean and Hugo Meynell, eds. *Person and God.* (International Society for Metaphysics and University Press of America, 1988).

¹⁴ Regis Amstrong, Francis of Assisi – The Founder: Early Documents (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2000), p. 131.

¹⁵ Dawn Nothwehr, *The Franciscan View of the Human Person: Some Central Elements.* The Franciscan Heritage Series, Vol. 3. (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2005).

¹⁶ Short, op.cit.

¹⁷ Ewert H. Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1978).

It sees no inherent or necessary division between science and religion, soul and body, spirit and matter. Christ, in His coming, has invested matter with an eternal significance, such that the universe can never be reduced to mere "matter"; it means more than "stuff." In the Franciscan imagination, the universe in all its profound mystery is "creation." And creation, from its smallest creature to its largest, pulsates with the vibrancy of an ingenious God who remains deeply in love with the world.¹⁸

William Short adds a third dimension to the Franciscan imagination, "community is divine." By that he proposes the God who is one in nature and three in persons. That is, God lives as a "communion of persons."

We, however, live in a time that celebrates autonomy and privacy. We live in an era that exults in the isolation and independence of the individual. We have inherited the Enlightenment "dogma" of the rugged individual who celebrates his self-sufficiency and her absolute

independence. We promote the primacy of the atomized and isolated self.

The Franciscan tradition, on the other hand, while celebrating the individual and his/her rights never isolates the person from the communion that is God. Because goodness is, as we have said above, "self-diffusive" (i.e., generous), the Franciscan imagination is profoundly cooperative and collaborative. It sees humanity as already in a great and meaningful dialogue with the divine. It sees all of creation as if in a great dance (a "perichoresis") of native praise and worship of the Trinity understood as a "free communion of persons without domination or deprivation." 19

The Franciscan imagination, therefore, does not need to diminish or negate individuality to be in the service of communion. It celebrates both unity and difference. The Trinitarian view of the world looks to the "individual-in-relation" as the most perfect expression of humanity's potential. The human person lives out his/her "image and likeness" to God most perfectly in communion with God, creation and humanity as a "self for others" not as an inverted "self for itself." ²⁰

In this way, the Franciscan imagination is one that is communicative, generous, dialogical, and cooperative, seeing the potential for enrichment in every encounter, because the Franciscan is ready to meet the "adventum" of the Word Incarnate, whose "enfleshment" and embodiment in the world continues to radiate until the end of time.

Christ as the Center of the Franciscan Imagination

Two further insights by William Short add to the expression of the Franciscan imagination: "Christ as the Heart of Reality" and "Generosity, the Poverty of God."

We have already mentioned the "positive" view that Franciscans take of their world. It is not that Franciscans are blithely unaware or stubbornly ignorant of the world's tragedies and its profound sins. Quite the opposite! Franciscans are deeply aware and meditate constantly on the sinful condition of the world. What sets the Franciscan imagination apart is its appreciation for the lengths to which God's love will go to save humankind from its fallen condition. The Incarnation is the evidence of how much God loves humankind and wishes to join in its mysteries and tragedies. The Franciscan imagination is captivated by the *misericordia* (the mercy) of God.

Rather than focusing all of its attention on sin, the Franciscan imagination delights in the love of God that has been made manifest in the primacy of Christ. That is, Franciscans are enthralled with the view that Christ is the center of all reality. Christ is at the center of our

imagination.

that all things emerge from Him, in that He is the pattern on which and by which all things are created and are sustained in being. All things are created for Him and all things find their meaning and purpose in Him. This applies as much to the human person as it does to the world.

He is the focus of all that is. We

Franciscans realize that the world has a defining purpose. Unlike the post-modern imagination of suspicion and deconstruction, Franciscans realize that the world is already defined by the truth, beauty and goodness, which is the Christ. We cannot look upon the world apart from Christ. We cannot imagine the universe outside of the "Beloved Son." Jesus Christ is the origin of creation. He is its original purpose, meaning, and hope. But, Jesus Christ is also its end. The arc of

Christ's radiance and rule over creation extends across all time and space. He is the Alpha and the Omega of all things. It was Teilhard de Chardin who gave expression to the Christogenetic future of the universe.²¹

The world, according to Franciscans, is not spinning out of reason's control. Its destiny is not inevitable chaos and corruption. As Short reminds us, it was John Duns Scotus in the 14th century, who asked, "Would Christ have come if Adam had not sinned?" And the Franciscan answer is a profound "Yes." Christ would have come to us, if Adam had not sinned. It is always in the nature of the Father to be generous and the Father's generosity is never separated from the Son's receptivity. Therefore, it was always the intention of the Father to give us His greatest gift, the Son. Sin only changed the circumstances of that gift. It never was its reason. What this means is that "sin" is not the defining principle of creation. Jesus is the definition of creation. Jesus is the meaning and purpose of the universe and everything and everyone in it.

It is because of this theological insight that the Franciscan

¹⁸ Cf. Keith Douglas Warner, OFM, Knowledge for Love: Franciscan Science as the Pursuit of Wisdom (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2012). 19 David B. Couturier, The Four Conversions: A Spirituality of Transformation (South Bend, IN: Victoria Press, 2008), p. 82. 20 Ibid., p. 74.

²¹ Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Harper, 1949); George Martelet, *Teilhard de Chardin: Prophete d'un Christ toujours plus grands* (Paris: Lessius, 2005).

imagination vibrates with joy, wonder and awe. It is for that reason as well that the Franciscan imagination is missionary-in-nature. That is, it is because of joy that Franciscans see themselves as empowered and emboldened to help return fallen nature to its exalted and original dignity. The Franciscan imagination exists to remind the world of its fraternal relation to God, to creation and to one another, because Christ has become our brother. Therefore, the Franciscan focus, as Short reminds us, "is not on 'fighting sin,' but on giving life."

This "giving life" is most eloquently expressed in terms of Franciscan poverty understood as generosity.²² So much of modern thought and, indeed, most of today's economic thinking is based on a primordial view of God as "stingy" and the world as in a state of insufficiency. Where postmodernism's imagination stresses scarcity and emptiness, the Franciscan imagination is suffused with abundance thinking. We are imbued with the generosity of God, most eloquently expressed in the giving of the Christ. Therefore, the Franciscan imagination pulsates with possibility thinking, always ready to find new and creative ways to solve problems, committed to humankind's ability to realize God's beloved future in the Christ. That is why the Franciscan imagination is creative, inventive, and forward-looking. That is why our Franciscan imagination conceives of the pursuit of science beyond the stark empirical terms of a "trust in numbers," as Theodore M. Porter requires.²³ Rather, the Franciscan imagination pursues science as an exercise in wisdom and as "knowledge for love."24

The Franciscan imagination is not naïve idealism or piein-the-sky Pollyanish-thinking. It is rooted in a Christ-based confidence that, as Julian of Norwich once stated, "all will be well; all will be very well," not on our account or by our means, but by the positive work and the redemptive love of the Christ, whose immediacy and intimacy Franciscans exult in.

The Franciscan Imagination – a New Ethical Space

The Franciscan imagination is centered on the goodness of God and the communion of persons and, indeed, all creation as an expression of the primacy of Christ. He is the originating and terminal end of creation as the Incarnate Word.

As a result of his conversion, Francis of Assisi created a "fraternity" that would express and sustain this "community of equals" in the Church and in society. We remember that Francis grew up in a time of incredible violence and amazing greed, a time of deep social division between "the majores" who owned the mechanisms of government, both civil and ecclesiastical, and the vast majority of folk who made up the class of "minores," who served the interests of the dominant and dominating class. It was Francis' adolescent dream to become a knight for the honor and glory of Assisi in its pursuit of wealth and status. He accepted as fact and fate the social divisions that wracked his time. He simply imitated his father's desire to break into the ranks of the "majores" and benefit from the "new wealth" emerging from recentlybrokered trade routes.

Francis' experience of war broke his spirit and his adolescent

dreams of glory. The fantasy of war was not, he came to learn, the reality of war. Having been taken prisoner of war and having languished in prison for more than a year, the Francis finally ransomed by his father returned home a broken and disillusioned man. The "crisis of his conversion" had begun.²⁵

Francis no longer accepted the norms of social division that were required both in society and in the church. The war had exposed the implications and consequences of the greed and violence that convulsed his contemporaries. Francis saw firsthand its impact on the poor. The fate of Assisi's lepers was his prime example and foundational experience of the savage nature of the social inequity of his time. Francis' kissing of the leper was his first attempt to resolve the crisis of "inequity" that Francis had discovered after the Battle of Collestrada. But, it was not his last.

Francis' rejection of the commercial interests of his father and town, dramatized in his nakedness in the public square before the Bishop and his family, was a rejection of the social imagination he had received from his family and society, an imagination consumed by financial greed and the inhumane violence that would protect that greed.

Francis finally re-crafted his religious imagination only after the "Lord gave (him) brothers." Up to that moment, his religious imagination had remained inchoate and incomplete, shifting hither and yon, as a quasi-hermit repairing churches. Only when followers came to join him did Francis become convinced that the Lord was calling him to create a "fraternity" of equal brothers.

Joseph Chinnici, OFM., in his book, When Values Collide, demonstrates the social and religious experiment contained in Francis' construction of fraternity:

> The religious order of the followers of Francis originated in the space between these two different conceptions and practices of how to order power in both the Church and the society, one side pushing for order through the assertion or traditional hierarchies, the other side pushing for order through the assertion of the authority of the people.²⁶

The fraternal imagination to which Francis forms his brothers exists at the intersection point between hierarchy and community, in the ethical space that unites both the "majores" and the "minores" in a civility of equal discourse. It is, as Chinnici informs us, a "relational space of both/and," one in which neither side is excluded and both of which are included in a common brother/ sisterhood, designed in mutual charity and profound humility.

Francis created fraternities where one's previous majority or minority status in Assisi society counted for nothing. In the Franciscan imagination or "horizon of expectations," the 'minores' do not live to placate the needs of the 'majores' nor are the 'majores' simply the recipients of the servitude of the 'minores.' Francis establishes a society of strict egalitarianism, rejecting titles, programs or policies of dominance. Francis rejects the "paternalism" of traditional hierarchies and introduces images of the maternal to reinforce the nurturing compassion that should

²² It is for that reason that Franciscans do not conceive of poverty as primarily an "ascetical task." Cf. David B. Couturier, The Fraternal Economy: A Pastoral Psychology of Franciscan Economics (South Bend, IN: Cloverdale Books, 2007), p.

²³ Theodore M. Porter, Trust in Numbers: In Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

²⁴ Keith Douglas Warner, op. cit.

²⁵ For an understanding of the various stages of conversion, cf. Lewis R. Rambo, Understanding Religious Conversion. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993). 26 Joseph Chinnici, When Values Collide: The Catholic Church, Sexual Abuse and the Challenge of Leadership (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2010). Chinnici makes a powerful case for the new "ethical space" that Franciscanism creates.

replace the communal violence and the personal objectifications of others based on class status.

Francis does not need to reject hierarchy as many of his and subsequent generations do in the pursuit of greater equality and justice. He incorporates it into his imagination of mutual charity. In this way, Francis need not reject the inclusion of priests into his fraternity. But, priests must cede their preoccupation with privilege. What Francis did was void Franciscan priesthood of its clerical obsession with status and position. And Francis does this in a brilliant recasting of priesthood's relation to the Eucharist.²⁷

Francis sheds a new light on priesthood in the fraternity by conceiving of it as a sacrament and practice of humble service, in fact the act of God's most humble service of humanity. The Eucharist was for Francis the clearest and most direct symbol of divine kenosis, God's self-emptying and God's poverty. It was evidence enough for Francis that God's majesty was most perfectly expressed in God's humility. And it was the Eucharist that created, sustained and protected the ethical space of humility, equality and mutual service that was *fraternitas*.

In this way, *fraternitas* was more than a religious intention and a pious symbol. It was an "imaginative act" that required social action and a "new evangelization." It required new structures, as Chinnici reminds us –

The fraternitas consciously set up structures and spaces of exchange stressing not relationships of dominance and subordination in the areas of knowledge, positional power, and wealth, but horizontal relationships of mutual care and promotion.²⁸

At the same time, the *fraternal imagination* to which friars were being converted also revealed a deep "problem" in the human spirit, a troubling threat to any chance at true and lasting peace within and between us – the will to possession and dominance:

Because of the inherent tensions between the hierarchical and communal dimensions, its clerical and lay membership, its noble and commoner participants, the give and take of fraternitas underscored a basic human experience: In the deeper crevices of the human heart there resided not simply the desire to love and be loved, to belong to a fraternitas of distinctive equals, but also the drive toward the private possession of power and its use for personal aggrandizement and social domination.²⁹

Here is the deep insight at the root of a Franciscan "conversion of imagination." It is the recognition that, alongside the desire to belong to a community of equals, there remains another drive toward the private possession of a power to dominate the other. Along with the desire for collaboration, cooperation and mutual charity, there remains an often hidden, just below the surface, desire to be privileged. In the deep recesses of the heart, there is a motivation not only to learn "the mind of Christ," but a desire to

27 Augustine Thompson, Francis of Assisi: A New Biography (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012).

make a profit on Christ, to take advantage of Christ by securing a space above and beyond "the other" of another class, race or social standing. And what is worse, this desire to profit on Christ will often come by way of violence, the violence of "acquisitive desire" and "mimetic rivalry" 30

Francis understood the awful connection between possessions, power and violence. By way of example, Francis violently rejected the use of coins by his brothers. It wasn't because Francis had a quaint or quirky obsession with coinage. Far from it, Francis had instead a deep awareness of how coins signaled positional power for the people of his day and an automatic reference point by which to locate a person on the hierarchical scale of social importance and leverage.³¹

Francis did not want his brothers to assume any of the artificial levers of power and privilege. He knew that coins were not simply the method for transacting commerce. They were the way that men and women of his day transferred influence and consideration and conferred access and membership within society and, sadly, even within the Church. He also knew that violence was the way that society protected its wealth and its scale of social advantage and privilege. Francis instead proposed an imagination of equality, interdependence, goodness, humility and peace and one freed from the greed, violence, pride and privileges of his day.

Developing a Franciscan Imagination

How then does one develop a Franciscan imagination? Clearly, it is neither easy nor automatic. Developing a Franciscan imagination is an act of "conversion" and a "dialectical" shift in one's "horizon of expectations" that involves a total re-orientation of one's life and a fundamental re-casting of one's primary symbols of "value and power."

Religious conversion is a "complicated and multi-layered process of religious change, which involves the total re-orientation and transformation of one's life."³³ As such, the Franciscan imagination is achieved in a critical confrontation with one's previously formed "narrative of oneself." It is arrived at by calling into question the paradigm that framed one's previous life. Conversion is a withdrawal from the unsatisfying things to which one has been accustomed and attached and, in many ways, becomes a "withdrawal from our withdrawals," challenging the ways we have isolated ourselves (and justified these isolations) from God, from neighbor, from church, family and society.

The Franciscan imagination is a "shock" to the prevailing political, social and even ecclesial imaginations of the day.³⁴ In our time, the Franciscan imagination of goodness and mutual humility shocks the imaginations of reason, suspicion, illusion and consumption that control the discourse of the moment.³⁵ The Franciscan fraternal imagination shocks and calls into question the

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Rene' Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1979)

³¹ Giacomo Todeschini, Franciscan Wealth: From Voluntary Poverty to Market Society (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2009).
32 James W. Fowler, Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian: Adult Development and Christian Faith. (San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers, 1999), p. 115.
33 Dong Young Kim, Understanding Religious Conversion: The Case of St. Augustine (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012), p. 2.

³⁴ This notion of "founder shock" is developed in David B. Couturier, "A Spirituality of Refounding," in Gerald A. Arbuckle and David L. Fleming, eds. Religious Life: Rebirth through Conversion (New York: Alba House, 1990).

35 Michael M. Maguire, The Conversion of Imagination: From Pascal through Rousseau to Tocqueville (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

limits of horizon that modern economics imposes on us, as modern capitalism and aggressive consumerism reduce all transcendent desires to commercial ones, substituting the "infinity of goods" for the "infinity of God."³⁶

What we have before us is a new generation of young adults whose faith has been interrupted by an alternative world-view and frame of understanding, one premised on a disenchanted world without God and without objectives values. The "secular" framework is so much more than the emptying out of churches, mosques and synagogues and it is so much more than the world as it always was, except for the gnatty talk of God, once and awhile.

The secular world that Millennials have inherited excises the "good life," as it has been known. It is not value neutral and it is not a zone of "neutral rationality." It is an alternative vision with serious consequences for life and its meaning, the planet and its future, humanity and its solidarity.

Millennials are choosing the secular frame because they have been convinced that it is the only possible pathway to freedom. Unfortunately, behind the curtain of consumerism and materialism is a preoccupying ontology of violence and a presumption of infinite regression to aggression.

The strategy of intensified creedal information has not worked because it presumes an architecture of belief that has already been dismantled. It assumes a worldview and an horizon of expectations

36 David B. Couturier, *The Fraternal Economy: A Pastoral Psychology of Franciscan Economics* (South Bend, IN: Cloverdale Books, 2007).

that have already been dismissed. Incarnation cannot be defended; Eucharist cannot be recommended if the fundamental structures of generosity and receptivity have been taken apart.

The creedal language is an indecipherable grammar for young adults, unless and until their undeniable narrative of secularity is put into serious question.

Young adults have to be shown how the narrative of secularity deprives them of the very meaning for which they hunger. They need to see the implications and consequences of the non-neutral rationality of secularity they have been given for dogma. They must experience the shock between the prevailing narrative of their disenchanted world and the worldview implicit in Christianity itself. The godless world of inevitable scarcity that lies deep within the commercial world to which they have been sacrificed must be placed in contest with the enchanted world of abundance that is the inheritance of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

The Franciscan imagination is one such alternative narrative that addresses the great mysteries of life – is there a God, is there is a purpose to life, why is there evil, will we ever find peace, can humanity find unity amidst its differences, is there life after death?

These great mysteries do not disappear. But, they can be and are being submerged in the commercial frenzy of our times. The Franciscan imagination reveals the great mysteries in their architectonic wholeness. And it remains a positive and progressive portal by which young adults can enter the sanctoral space whereby individuals and communities can find "the peace that passes all



Fraternitas Builders: The Franciscan Movement and Business World By Jean-François Godet-Calogeras, PhD

oets have their own particular way of viewing reality. In his meditation on Francis of Assisi written a couple of decades ago, French poet Christian Bobin offers an unusual look at history: "In the thirteenth century, there are the merchants, the priests, and the soldiers. In the twentieth century, all that is left is the merchants. They are in their shops like priests in their churches. They are in their factories like soldiers in their barracks. They spread in the world through the power of their images. We find these on the walls, on the screens, in the newspapers." So much for poetry as sweet and romantic imagery! Actually, poetry has long been a powerful way to protest and rebel against an unjust, dominant paradigm, using images, symbols, allegories, or parables. As we can see in the gospels, proclaiming the reign of God and God's justice against the kind of kingdom and justice the Jewish people were experiencing under Roman occupation was a good part of Jesus' teachings. What about Francis and Clare in early thirteenth century Assisi?

The world in which Francis and Clare grew up was a world divided by power and wealth, violence and greed. On one side was the old class: the nobility and those families who owned the land and whatever was on it, including the peasants. The land they owned was their wealth. The people living on the land had to work it and provide victuals and other goods for the landlord and his family. But things changed in the decades preceding Francis and Clare. Thanks to a relative stability, the population increased, which created a need for more food and goods. To respond to that need, invention of new tools and development of new technologies—thanks in good part to the monks—increased the production dramatically to the point where it generated a surplus of goods. That economic boom translated into successful commercial activities. The cities and their marketplaces became

the centers of activity. The merchants introduced a major change in trading: money. The old bartering system had become impractical. Now everything would have a price in coins. The new monetary system made the fortune of the merchants. With their new wealth, they now wanted their freedom from the landlords to acquire more wealth and more power. In Assisi at the turn of the 13th century, the clash between nobility and business class was first violent. The merchants kicked the noble families out of the city. But after a bloody battle, the landlords came back. Finally, in 1210 the two cut a deal for the peace and harmony of the city (*pro bono pacis et concordie*). Everybody who could afford it could be free citizen of the commune of Assisi. But what about those who could not?

Francis and Clare witnessed those events. They experienced them from opposite sides: Francis was the son of a successful businessman; Clare was a member of a noble family. Francis took part in the armed conflict; Clare spent years in exile. They should never have met, but they did because they were both looking for something else, for another kind of commerce, a truly healthy commerce (*salutare commercium*). And they found their inspiration in the teachings and deeds of Jesus. Francis decided to walk in the footprints of Jesus. Clare decided to become an image of Jesus. While land owners and business people were negotiating their community of things, Francis, Clare and their companions developed a network of brothers and sisters, a *fraternitas*. Instead of the arrogance of power, they chose humility. Instead of the greed of wealth, they chose poverty. They decided to "follow the humility and the poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ."

They owned nothing and had nothing to sell, so they did something: they worked. Work is fundamental in Franciscan life. It is a consequence of one's conversion from self-centered aggrandizement to the building of a just world, God's kingdom. First of all, the Franciscan notion of work is not an individualistic matter, but has to do with relationship. In the Franciscan world,

¹ Christian Bobin, *The Very Lowly*, Boston-London: New Seeds, 2006, p. 105.

work is service. Franciscans want to work for others. Moreover, they do not want to be at the top, but at the foundation, to serve everyone. They want to do good work with their skills. Working is the ordinary way to make their living and to provide for their needs. They focus on people's needs and are extremely cautious with money and its potential dangers.

The early Franciscans considered work as a grace, even though the painful aspects of work would traditionally make people look at it as a curse. But the early Franciscan documents obviously reflect a positive vision of work that contrasted sharply with the reality of work for many—then and now. What are the facets of such a positive vision? Where did it come from?

The first Franciscans were in control of their work: they decided what they would or would not do and accept or not accept. They also focused on the human aspects of work rather than on the material ones. Working is serving the other. Working is using one's skills and tools. Working is doing and making something to benefit another. To use a phrase common to today's progressives, they "put people before profits."

Francis and Clare and their brothers and sisters involved themselves, "faithfully and devotedly." They were loyal and serious workers people could count on. They liked what they did. They also wanted very much to be in touch with the fruit of their labor, and were aware of unjust wages. When workers simply accept money for their work, they agree to be alienated, dispossessed from the fruit of their labor, and left with a currency whose worth they do not control. The laborer is then left with sweat, while the fruit of that labor becomes the capital someone else owns. Such a situation is unjust. The early Franciscans understood it, refused it absolutely, and laid down their own way. They wanted to work; they were not parasites. Their bread would come from their sweat, their activity, and not from somebody else's. Even when they went begging because they were in need, they still were actors and not victims. They were servants but not slaves. They had a sense of the dignity of the workers as well as of the real price of their labor.

The early Franciscans led an alternative way of life and offered an alternative way of working. They were out of the system, and yet working within it. How could they dare, and how were they able to do so when the commune of Assisi was so powerful? The answer is in what they were. They were not a collection of individuals having something in common, whatever it might be: a name, a habit, a rule, a house. They were forming a *fraternitas*, a fraternity, which in the Middle Ages was a rather clear structure.

A *fraternitas* is not a virtue, but a group of human beings that have voluntarily promised to be bonded as brothers and sisters, to hold their resources in common and to have a common task. A *fraternitas* includes men and women, lay people and clergy,

and the members are equal and interdependent. It is basically a democratic, horizontal structure, as opposed to an *ordo*, an order that is definitely hierarchical, vertical. For that reason, it is easily understandable that the fraternities were not well seen or accepted by the powerful of the world, including the Roman Church.

In his writings, Francis always uses the word fraternitas to designate the movement he started. After him, the word fraternitas disappears from the early Franciscan documents, except in Thomas of Celano's first life of Francis (no. 38), that dates from 1228. There we find a very strange sentence. Talking about the Franciscan movement, Brother Thomas has Francis saying: "I want this fraternitas to be called Order of the Lesser Brothers — Friars Minor." At the time Celano was writing, the original fraternitas was officially called in the Church Ordo Fratrum Minorum, Order of Friars Minor. In having Francis say that he wants the fraternity to be called an order, Celano intended to justify the dramatic change. However, to people who are aware of the fundamental differences between a fraternitas and an order, the sentence does not make sense, because the two realities are incompatible. To use modern terminology, it is like saying today: I want this union to be called a corporation.

From the early Franciscan documents we know that Francis and Clare and the early brothers and sisters consciously left the system, the establishment of this world that was based on greed and profit, to create their own alternative based on service and human relations. Where do we stand today in a world that combines, more than ever, individualism and greed, and who do we stand with? Are we serving and working for justice and for peace? Are we building a *fraternitas*?



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everal months ago, a physician friend of mine asked me to speak to his class in public health at Northwestern University School of Medicine in Chicago. My immediate response was negative: I am not a public health care professional, I demurred. He refuted my objections and assured me that I would not have to prepare a lecture, but simply answer his questions about my experience within a relaxed class atmosphere. Given our long friendship, our health care advocacy efforts in Chicago, and the fact that I would not have to churn out a lengthy tome, I agreed.

I had made a good decision, for the weeks prior to that Chicago class nudged me to reflect on my more than three decades of involvement in health care justice, for which I'm grateful. Because I am a born organizer (a gift and a curse), I've sorted my memories into three stages: Franciscan inspiration, movement building, and today's work—stages that are, at the same time, chronologically distinct and essentially integrated.

Franciscan Inspiration

Franciscanism and Chicago are intrinsically bound for me. In the late 70s, I was living in Uptown, a racially diverse, economically depressed area on the north side of Chicago and teaching high school biology and other sciences at Prologue, an alternative high school, to teenagers who had dropped out or had been pushed out of the public school system. My students' lives reflected their neighborhood: tough, damaged, but amazingly resilient. It was, however, during a weekly discussion group on the early Franciscan movement that my life and work in Uptown and Francis and Clare's centuries-old understanding of life and service finally coalesced. I think that was true for the other Franciscans in our group, as several of us eventually initiated a Franciscan review called Haversack. We wanted to make the link between Franciscan history and today's world, and we accomplished this by annually bringing our readers together around some issue of social justice that connected the two.

In 1980, we chose health care as the issue for our conference. Health care was an evident need in our neighborhood: for-profit clinics were popping up all over,; drug-related deaths were escalating; neighbors walked—or limped—with swollen limbs, smiled with gaps where teeth should have been, talked to non-existent people, and filled the Emergency Room of the local hospital with a myriad of ailments. We also knew that in our country close to one out of every five persons remained without health insurance— a terrible distinction that set us apart from all other industrialized democracies where universal health care was a right.

During that Haversack conference on health care, we listened

to the early Franciscan experience, heard horror stories reports, and analyses of today's health care system, and discussed national solutions as well as local actions. We shared our conference through Haversack, from which the following excerpt from its conclusion is pertinent:

Franciscans today readily mention Francis and the leper. In recent years, the two have become our romantic trope of social concern. Fortunately, we have no lepers in the country. We have hosts of afflicted people in dire need of care, however. Just as Assisians could not see the lepers as Francis did, so do we in the country refuse to recognize the structural injustice done the marginal and rejected of today. If we Franciscans like the thought of Francis and the leper, we can join his community by refusing the exclusions intrinsic to health care in the United States (Haversack, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1981).

In the remaining years of my life in Chicago, I did what I could with others similarly committed to bringing about a transformation of our national health care system.

Fast-forward fifteen years to Cleveland, Ohio.

Movement Building

An ambitious national health plan or single-payer model, in which the government was the payer, where individuals could choose their providers, and where insurance companies were, for the most part, obsolete was off the political table.

We had seen no grand sweep of the system that left too many out, cost too much, and covered too little. There had been "tweaks" to the system. After the demise of the universal health care plan initiated by the Clintons in the early 90s and demolished by the insurance lobby - some of you may remember the Harry and Louise scare tactic television ads - a State Children's Health Insurance Program emerged, which benefited tens of thousands of low-income kids (our legislature has recently extended that plan for the next two years). Managed care came into vogue that promised to cut costs and coordinate care, and it did for a while; but when profits plateaued or dipped, costs crept up.

I asked myself: what could I do to improve the health care of my millions of brothers and sisters, and with whom? I had my

¹ We did not know at the time that there is indeed leprosy in the United States. See http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1010536 (accessed 2 April 2015).



answer in 2000, when an opportunity for action emerged around the cost of prescription drugs. Pharmaceutical companies had been reaping billions in profits while uninsured or underinsured Americans, whose health relied on prescribed medications, had to empty slim savings, go without basic necessities, or forgo refilling their prescriptions. A small number took advantage of organized bus trips to pharmacies in Canada where they could purchase lower-priced drugs. I traveled with a bus arranged by Sherrod Brown, then a state senator, now in the U.S. Senate. I remember one passenger on the return trip whose treatment for breast cancer required that she take Tamoxifen daily for five years, exclaiming about the price difference: in Ohio she had to pay \$100 per month for he medication; in Canada that same prescription cost her only \$10 - well worth the trip!

In 2000, the Cleveland AFL-CIO, and the Universal Health Care Action Network of Ohio (a state advocacy and educational group which I had organized a few years earlier and where I now worked) joined forces to tackle the pharmaceutical behemoth and lessen its financial yoke on Americans. Reflecting on our efforts four years later, John Gallo, a co-worker and union leader of the campaign in Cleveland, noted:

Back in the year 2000, few people in Ohio believed a prescription drug bill with real benefits could be passed, not with a right-wing controlled State legislature..., and unfriendly governor, a weak Democratic Party and a drug industry ready to spend \$16 million to prevent such a bill.

Three years later, the people won a major victory. Last month, the Ohio Legislature, voting 94-1 in the House and 32-1 in the Senate, passed into law "Ohio's Best Rx," which was signed by Gov. Bob Taft on Dec. 18. The drug industry's lobbyists, the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturing Association (PhR-MA), lobbied in favor of the bill.

How could such a "miracle" happen? Only through hard work, building a coalition involving thousands of people and having a clear goal.

We worked hard during those three intensive years of the campaign: building the movement, changing tactics, overcoming roadblocks strewn by PhRMA's minions, but I found it exhilarating. People all over our state were taking to the streets to get neigh-

bors to sign a petition to reduce prescription costs and later to sign on to a ballot initiative for the same. At least 1,000 people worked the counties, people talked with people, and with the organizations to which they belonged, and groups joined in. A coalition was born and grew to 300 organizations, including every union, nearly every religious denomination, numerous state and community organizations, and some seventy local governments.

You can imagine the spirit generated by such unified focus, mutual support, and collective effort. Long hours, setbacks from lawyers employed by the pharmaceutical industry, and dwindling funds could not extinguish it. We had a people's movement, and that made all the difference.

Sometimes when I read about Francis or Clare of Assisi, I think back to those years in Cleveland and I am convinced that we wouldn't have a Franciscan movement if it hadn't been for all those men and women who journeyed with them to live by the Gospel: brothers and sisters who offered their insights, who supported, ca-joled, corrected, and sometimes wept in frustration or in joy. They built a movement, and that too made all the difference.

Today's Work

It is now 2015, and although the rate of the uninsured has dropped from 23.3 percent in 1980 to 13.4 percent in the present, some 42 million sisters and brothers in our country still lack quality and affordable health care. Despite many positive effects of the Affordable Care Act, profit remains integral to the system and continues to restrain any radical change. Moreover, in New York's Cattaraugus County where I now live, the ratio of primary care doctors to patients remains at more than 2,000:1; mortality rate is among the worst in the state; and smoking and obesity—along with their related diseases—are on the rise. Concerned health care organizations and a consortium call the Healthy Livable Communities for All try to stem the negative tide. For the past seven years I've chaired a local grassroots coalition in rural Allegany and Olean, New York. With our vision fixed on truly universal health care, we are doing what we can to address local health care problems as well as still push for a national solution. On July 30, 2015 we will celebrate Medicare's fiftieth birthday in style, and we will trumpet its expansion: Medicare for All or Single-Payer.

A truly national solution will happen when the people come together to demand it. I want to be part of that movement.

Francis' Journey with Disease

n summary, the signs and symptoms of St. Francis, as understood in the light of both medieval medical thought and modern medical knowledge, and the evidence provided by paleopathological and paleoepidemiological data suggest that St. Francis suffered from clinically significant leprosy of the borderline or tuberculoid form. This diagnosis gives a more satisfactory account of his illness than any other disease considered, although all efforts to arrive at a diagnosis for St. Francis must be interpreted tentatively because of the uncertainty inherent in the data from which such medical conclusions are drawn.

The implications of proposing that St. Francis was a leper are significant... Francis can be seen as one who became profoundly Christlike in his transformation into the very outcast and suffering Christ he embraced as a leper. His stigmata can be understood as the wounds of a man who became a leper precisely because of his love of the Crucified Leper. Such wounds are quite genuinely, as Celano has written, "a remarkable memorial of Him who in pouring forth both blood and water from that same place reconciled the world to His Father." (1C 113).

Excerpted from "The Diagnosis of St. Francis: Evidence for Leprosy," *Franciscan Studies 47: XXV* (1987) by Jo-Anne Schatzlein, OSF, RN, MA, and Daniel P. Sulmasy, MD, PhD.



Francis, in fact, was gravely sick and dving for a long time: From the September 1224 vision of the Crucified Christ until October of 1226, his health continually deteriorated. Early in 1225 he got worse and Cardinal Hugolino ordered him to get treatment, as did Brother Elias, but he waited until the weather would be conducive to treatment. He was so sick and had so much pain in his eyes that he lay there for more than fifty days, scarcely able to rest or sleep, and the mice ran all over him and would not let him sleep. Francis finally got to Rieti where he waited until summer to be cauterized, from the jaw to the evebrow of the weaker eve, but this did not help him at all. Similarly, another doctor pierced both his ears, but to no avail. "His...veins [were] opened, poultices applied, and drops poured into his eyes. Yet he had no improvement but kept getting steadily worse." "Six months before the day of his death, he was staying in Siena for treatment of his eye disease. But then all the rest of his body started to show signs of serious illness. His stomach had been destroyed, and his liver was failing. He was vomiting a lot of blood, so much that he seemed close to death. ... Then the swelling began in his abdomen, his legs, and his feet. His stomach became so weak that he could hardly eat any food at all." One evening, "He vomited up blood all night until morning. When his companions saw him already almost dying from weakness and from the pain of his illness, they said to him with great sorrow and flowing tears: Father, what shall we do? Bless us and the rest of your brothers. In addition, leave your brothers some remembrance of your will, so that, if the Lord wants to call you away from this world, your brothers may always keep it in their memory and say: 'Our father left these words to his sons and brothers at his death." Thinking he was about to die, Francis wrote the Testament Written in Siena. "In the spring of 1226 Elias came to Siena and made preparations for Francis to be carried to Assisi so that he could die at the Portiuncula." Francis was gravely sick and dying, at least from early 1225. When the friars in Rieti ask him for something by which to remember him, this is surely not the first time he has thought about preparing to meet Sister Death. It is surely not the first time he has thought about leaving a testament to the friars.

Excerpted from "Francis of Assisi's *Testament*: A Counter-Proposal to Kajetan Esser," *Franciscan Studies* 72 (2014) by Mark Weaver

Franciscan Beginnings: The Mayo Clinic

By Kelsey Donnelly

he story of the Mayo Clinic, the beginning of which is outlined in Sr. Ellen Whelan's book The Sisters' Story: Saint Marys Hospital-Mayo Clinic 1889-1939, begins on August 21, 1883 in Rochester, Minnesota. On this warm summer day, a tornado surged through Rochester, destroying parts of the community. As Whelan describes the devastation: "Lower Town was a shambles. Houses were blown off their foundations, trees were ripped bare of leaves, and blades of grass pierced tree trunks like needles. Dead livestock littered the countryside, and the slaughterhouse was in ruins." Volunteers quickly assembled to assist those affected by the tornado. Dr. W.W. Mayo and his sons treated the injured. Sisters from the nearby Academy of Our Lady of Lourdes ventured to the most devastated areas to offer their help. Surrounding towns donated money, food, and clothing to the people of Rochester. In the months following, houses were rebuilt, and Rochester began to recover.

In the tornado's aftermath, Mother Alfred Moes, O.S.F. of The Academy of Our Lady of Lourdes, proposed to Dr. Mayo her idea to build a hospital in Rochester. Mother Alfred had been proactive in aiding those affected by the tornado, but she recognized Rochester's need for a large medical facility. According to Whelan's book, when Mother Alfred told Dr. Mayo of her plan, he responded, "that the erection of a hospital was a difficult undertaking and required a great deal of money, and moreover we had no assurance of its success even after a great deal of time and money had been put into it." ² Mother Alfred, however, remained optimistic and persistent. With the help of the Sisters, Mother Alfred eventually raised enough money to build the hospital that she envisioned.

Construction of the hospital began in August of 1888, and was officially opened as Saint Marys Hospital in the fall of 1889. As Whelan writes, "When the question arose whether Saint Marys Hospital was intended for Catholics only, Mother Alfred made the Sisters' position clear: 'the cause of suffering humanity knows no religion and no sex; the charity of the Sisters of St. Francis is as broad as their religion." Additionally, Whelan notes:

Saint Marys Hospital was neither a charity asylum for the poor nor a nursing home for the wealthy. At a time when it was almost unknown for a hospital to serve both paying patients and charity cases, Saint Marys Hospital received all persons. The policy of admitting all persons and giving them equal care was important to the Doctors Mayo and the Sisters of Saint Francis. For the Sisters, care for each person, particularly for the poor, was at the heart of the gospel they espoused. The Mayos, probably motivated more by humanitarian sympathies, demonstrated unqualified respect and care for each patient.⁴

While Mother Alfred eventually left Rochester in 1890, subsequently relinquishing her charge of Saint Marys, the hospital continued in her vision. Saint Marys retained their relationship with the Mayo family, which continued together into the twentieth century. The twentieth century brought economic hardships and the deaths of both Dr. Charles Mayo and his brother, Dr. William Mayo, each of whom played a contributing factor in the hospital's beginnings. Yet, Saint Marys continued to expand and adapt to the changing times, adding more beds and more laboratories when needed. In fact, in "1986, Mayo Clinic, Rochester Methodist Hospital and Saint Marys Hospital integrated their operations under one governing board to more efficiently serve the needs of Mayo patients." Today, Saint Marys Hospital and Rochester Methodist Hospital operate together "to better reflect Mayo's integrated hospital practice."

The history of the Mayo Clinic and Saint Marys Hospital is particularly important when considering the ideas of community and Franciscan values in the twenty-first century. It is easy to get swept up in our modern world where our sense of community has been altered by technology. Many people today would rather belong to virtual communities and correspond with people who live across the country rather than with neighbors who live down the street. What we have forgotten is the importance of physical communities, and the story of the beginnings of Saint Marys Hospital and the Mayo Clinic reminds us of this importance. Mother Alfred was inspired to open a hospital when the community in Rochester, Minnesota was destroyed by a tornado. She opened Saint Marys to better serve the medical needs of that community. However, she never would have reached her goal if it had not been for the support she received from the surrounding communities.

With the opening of Saint Marys, however, Mother Alfred also created another, albeit smaller, community within the hospital itself. This community was unique for its time, dedicated to caring for anyone in need. As Whelan constantly reminds us, "Franciscan hospitality was the rule at Saint Marys Hospital, regardless of religion, race, or poverty or wealth." 7 These principles may make sense in our modern world, but it is important to realize that these were unique concepts at the end of the nineteenth century. This speaks to the constancy of the Franciscan mindset and to the Franciscan's dedication to core values. To Mother Alfred, the Sisters of The Academy of Our Lady of Lourdes, and the Mayo family, the "cornerstone of the foundation [of Saint Marys Hospital] was their shared commitment to serve suffering humanity." Today, the Mayo Clinic continues to operate according to these values, evident by its sustained commitment to its patients, retaining that sense of community to which Mother Alfred was dedicated.

¹ Sister Ellen Whelan, O.S.F., *The Sisters' Story: Saint Marys Hospital-Mayo Clinic* 1889-1939 (Rochester: Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, 2002), 41.

² Whelan, The Sisters' Story, 44.

³ Whelan, The Sisters' Story, 49.

⁴ Whelan, The Sisters' Story, 49-50.

⁵ Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research "History of Mayo Clinic Hospital, Saint Marys Campus," Mayo Clinic, 2015, accessed April 18, 2015, http://www.mayoclinic.org/patient-visitor-guide/minnesota/clinic-hospital-buildings/mayo-clinic-hospital-saint-marys-campus/history

⁶ Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research "History of Mayo Clinic Hospital, Saint Marys Campus," Mayo Clinic, 2015, accessed April 18, 2015.

⁷ Whelan, The Sisters' Story, 100.

⁸ Whelan, The Sisters' Story, 57.



The Spirituality of Presence: The Story of Jacopa and Francis

By Darleen Pryds, PhD

his article begins with a public confession. A few years ago, I was asked to write a book about lay Franciscan women, and I completely forgot to include the woman who is arguably the most important lay Franciscan in the tradition: Lady Jacopa dei Settesoli (sometimes spelled Jacoba). I forgot to include her because at the time of my writing that book, I didn't think of Jacopa often, nor did I think much of her. She was, in my mind, the woman who baked almond cookies for Francis. I had reduced her significance to a cookie-baker.

Now, I like cookies as much as most people. I have fond memories of baking cookies with my grandmother when I was a child, so I did not think Jacopa's contributions were completely insignificant. The problem was that I had reduced her role in the Franciscan tradition to a position of quaintness, a position I maintained until I started volunteering at a hospice. Once I witnessed what fellow volunteers offered the dying by their presence at the bedside, and once I understood what the dying could teach me about life when I sat with them, I came to appreciate the real significance of Jacopa's role in the Franciscan tradition: against all the rules and customs of propriety, she chose to be present.

According to five hagiographies of Francis, all linked to his early companions, we know that Francis requested that Jacopa come to be with him as he was reaching the end of his life. The story is told as a miracle: just as a messenger was leaving the friary in Assisi to send for Jacopa in Rome, she miraculously appeared at the door, having understood in a moment of prayer that she would be needed by Francis' side. Only one account, Thomas of Celano's, includes the quaint exchange between Francis and a nervous friar

who was acting as the porter. Concerned that women were not allowed in the friary, the friar asked Francis what he should do with her standing at the threshold. Francis is reported to have said, "Open the doors and bring her in. The decree about women is not to be observed for Brother Jacopa" (EDFA, II, 418).

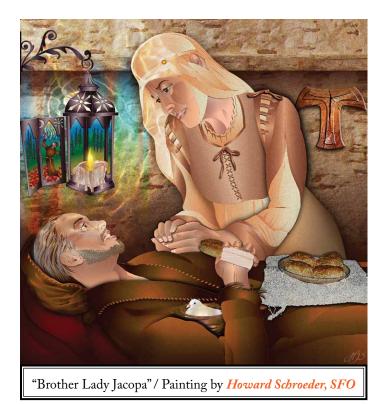
The five accounts of Jacopa's deathbed visit do not offer great detail as to what she did or how she attended to Francis. We know that she brought him things that would be needed, such as a pillow, a cloth, candles, incense, and of course, the ingredients for almond cookies. But knowing how women served at the bedside of the dying in the Middle Ages and today, we can imagine that she soothed him by wiping his feverish forehead with a wet cloth; she comforted him by placing a pillow under his head; she burned incense to cover up the smell in his room; and she likely bathed him, keeping him clean and as comfortable as possible. We can surmise these tender acts from what she brought with her from Rome.

From our own personal experiences, we might surmise even deeper acts of compassion. She likely held his hand or stroked his arm to offer him comfort. She may have cradled his head and offered him drops of water to ease his parched mouth and lips. And no doubt she prayed. Some of her prayers may have been silent; others she may have sung or spoken out loud. She likely also attended to the friars who were anxiously witnessing the passing of their founder. To alleviate their stress, Jacopa may have gently embraced them or simply put her arm around them, comforting them in their uneasiness. Together they probably broke up these moments of concern and hours of boredom by sharing favorite stories of Francis in order to pass the time as he lay dying.

All of these gestures are such unremarkable tasks and expressions of faith that they mostly went unrecorded, yet she was the one Francis called to be by his side. She was the one Francis knew could provide this care and comfort. She was the one Francis knew loved him with such faith that she could be present to him and to his friars as he passed from this life.

Why is it that Lady Jacopa is so often forgotten? And why is it her name is rarely known outside of the Franciscan family today?

¹ Thomas of Celano's Treatise on Miracles (c.1253); the stories of Brother Leo and Francis' early associates assembled into what is known as the Assisi Compilation (1240s-1260); Bernard de Bessa's De Laudibus Beati Francisci (1277-1283); Mirror of Perfection (believed to have been written in the hand of Brother Leo, one of Francis' closest companions); The Deeds of the Blessed Francis and his Companions written by Ugolino Boniscambi of Montegiorgio 1328-1337 (which was subsequently reedited into the Little Flowers of Saint Francis after 1337).



There are plenty of reasons this lay woman is forgotten today. In fact, there was a concerted effort by early hagiographers to not include her in their accounts of Francis' death. Thomas of Celano, who penned the first Life of Francis at the request of Pope Gregory IX in 1228 and his second Life at the request of the order's General Minister in 1245-7, only included the story of Jacopa in his treatise on the miracles of Francis written around 1253. Even more damaging to the story's fate was Bonaventure's account. As minister general of the order, Bonaventure wrote with administrative concerns when he was commissioned by the order's General Chapter in 1260 to write a definitive account of Francis's life. The order had already fallen into internal conflicts and had become subject to external criticisms. It is likely that as the shrewd administrator he was, Bonaventure used the opportunity to write the authoritative Life of Francis with an eye toward bolstering stability and uniformity in the order. In Bonaventure's account, Francis dies without any reference to the small acts of kindness and care Jacopa is said to have offered. Instead, Francis's death is a clerical liturgy among a clerical fraternity.

As an administrator of a growing order that had already attracted admirers and detractors, Bonaventure was understandably committed to protecting the order's reputation. Widespread knowledge of the presence of a lay woman attending the order's founder at his death could seem inappropriate. Just as precarious, the story could potentially encourage friars to cultivate special

friendships with laywomen which could lead to widespread scandal. So from an administrator's perspective, the story of Jacopa and Francis was risky.

But from a different perspective, the story of Jacopa and Francis poignantly reveals a central feature of what makes Franciscan spirituality unique: the humility of presence.

Both Francis and Jacopa offer poignant lessons of humble presence through this story. As the founder of the order, Francis knew very well women were not allowed in the friary. But in his final days, he did not make an idol out of rules, nor did he make an idol out of the virtue of obedience to those rules. He was humble enough to know that authentic faith takes precedence over customs of social propriety. The relationship of faith that he shared with Jacopa was so deep, he wanted her to be close to him as he left this life. Once she was present, Francis allowed her to serve him and tend to his physical needs to ease his transition from this life.

Similarly, Jacopa, a woman of great political power and wealth, also entered the friary with complete humility to serve Francis as if he were her own son. The two were present to one another—the friar and the lay woman—in those final days and hours of Francis' life.

What would happen to our understanding of Franciscan spirituality if we remembered the story told by his followers of Francis requesting his dear friend and companion in faith, Jacopa, a devout lay woman to be at his side as he was dying? What idols about gender and clericalism could be examined and possibly dissolved if we reflected on this story of Francis and Jacopa? And most importantly, where would we each find ourselves called to be present if we embraced this model of humility and presence illustrated in this story of Francis' dying and Jacopa's care?

The story of Jacopa at Francis' deathbed is rich with possibility since it offers Francis' final teachings: become humble so as to be really present to one another. In that presence with one another, there is an even greater presence: Christ. But first, we need to be present to one another.



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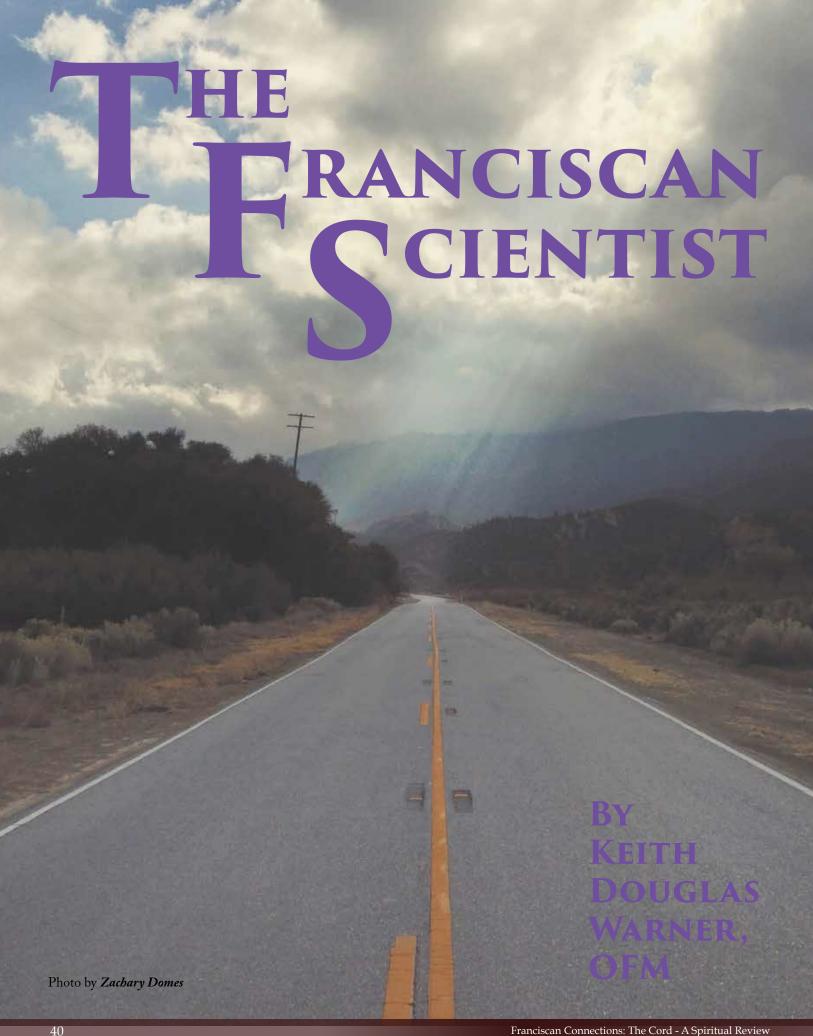


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riar Roger Bacon was the Franciscan who made the greatest contribution to the development of modern science. He made substantial contributions to the way medieval Europe thought about light and the earth, and how to justify knowledge.1 He articulated the conceptual foundation for modern day experimental science using the intellectual tools of his day. He has been called the first scientist, but Aristotle is more deserving of the term.² Rather, Roger Bacon was the medieval scientist who developed methods of justifying knowledge that led to the scientific revolution.³ At first glance, Roger's scientific research might seem a mismatch with Franciscan religious life, yet from another perspective, Roger's investigations into the natural world were fully consistent with Francis's belief in the goodness of creation. For Roger, like Bartholomew and Bonaventure, understanding nature is inherently good because through it, we come to know greater knowledge and love of God. Roger is the best-known member of the Oxford Franciscan School, a community of friar-scholars whose investigation of nature was integral to their Franciscan vocation.4

Franciscan friars arrived in England in 1224, without any material resources, and shortly afterword, some of them moved to Oxford. As young men began to join the fraternity, the friars attached themselves to the growing University of Oxford, where they encountered a leading figure in efforts to use the Aristotelian paradigm to advance medieval science: Robert Grosseteste. Here the original goal of providing a Franciscan education took root within a medieval university that was famous for its commitment to investigating the natural world. For Roger, investigating light, the Earth, and mathematics was a religious activity. While Francis expressed his love for creation and its elements through song, the Oxford Franciscans expressed this through their scientific investigations.

Roger Bacon advanced medieval science in three fundamental areas. First, he made important contributions to the scientific study of light, vision, ener-

1 Jeremiah Hackett, "Roger Bacon and the Sciences: Introduction," in Roger Bacon and the Sciences: Commemorative Essays, ed. Jeremiah Hackett (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1997). 2 Brian Clegg, The First Scientist: A Life of Roger Bacon (New York: Carroll & Graff Publishers, 2003). The claim of "first scientist" is problematic for many reasons, including the tendency toward hagiographic accounts of early scientists. 3 Many details of his life have been clouded by subsequent polemical debates unrelated to him as a historical person. See Amanda Power, "A Mirror for Every Age: The Reputation of Roger Bacon," English Historical Review 121, 492 (2006): 657-92. 4 With the exception of Andrew G. Little's scholarship, few studies have considered how Roger's Franciscan identity might have influenced his work. See Andrew G. Little, The Grey Friars in Oxford (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891); Andrew G. Little, Studies in English Franciscan History (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1916); A.G. Little, "The Franciscan School at Oxford in the 13th Century." Archivum Franciscanum Historicum 19 (1926): 803-74.

gy, and the physical processes of change in nature.⁵ Second, he described the Earth and the heavens using mathematics and maps, and has been called the Father of Modern Geography.⁶ However, Roger Bacon is best known for his insistence on testing the claims of others with evidence. He did not propose the scientific method, but he did lead medieval science closer to modern science than any other natural philosopher.⁷

 $[\ldots]$

Light, Earth, and Method

Roger wrote the *Opus Majus* for Pope Clement VI as an appeal to fund his program in natural philosophy and science. Roger was convinced these were essential to reform and defend Christianity. An enormous handwritten document of some half a million words, the *Opus Majus* captures the breadth of subjects that Roger thought essential. It provided an impressive synthesis of existing knowledge in philosophy, languages, mathematics, theology, ethics, the science of light, geography, and methods for investigating natural phenomena.

Roger contributed three key ideas to medieval science which would become essential features in modern science. First, he insisted on the importance of direct observation and argument from evidence. He did this in an era when most natural philosophers restated the opinions from ancient and recent scholars, known as argument form authority. Second, he demonstrated the importance of quantitative reasoning, using applied mathematics and geometry. Roger had a very strong mathematical orientation, and the Opus Majus is filled with geometrical diagrams and arguments. Third, he argued the importance of testing the claims of others, at times using technological instruments, to justify knowledge. Roger used the Latin term scientia experimentalis, but as will be seen below, he did not mean a scientific experiment in the modern sense.

It was from Robert Grosseste that Roger Bacon learned a love of light. For them, light meant more than it does for us. Light is how God created the world. Light is at the heart of creation itself. Light connected the human eye with the rest of creation. For them, light itself was a creative force and by studying its behavior in the world, they could come to understand God and God's actions in a deeper way. Roger expressed his love of light thus:

⁵ Jeremiah Hackett, "Roger Bacon: His Life, Career and Works," in *Roger Bacon and the Sciences: Commemorative Essays*, ed. Jeremiah Hackett (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 12.

⁶ This honorific title, from E.G.R. Taylor, "Compendium Cosmographiae: A Text-Book of Columbus," Scottish Geographical Magazine 47 (1931), is exaggerated, but has an element of truth, according to David Woodward and Herbert M. Howe, "Roger Bacon on Geography and Cartography," in Roger Bacon and the Sciences, ed. Jeremiah Hackett (Leiden: Brill, 1997). 7 Clegg, The First Scientist: A Life of Roger Bacon.

wIf the consideration just mentioned [mathematics] is noble and pleasing, the one in hand is far more pleasing, since we take especial delight in vision, and light and color have a special beauty beyond the other things that are brought to our senses, and not only does beauty shine forth but also [optics and light] bring benefits and answer to a great need. ... It is possible that some other science may be more useful, but no other science has so much sweetness and beauty of utility. Therefore, it is the flower of the whole philosophy and through it, and now without it, can the other sciences be known.⁸

Light was God in operation: the visible universe was light or the product of light; it was visible through the operation of light; it was intellectually graspable because the intellect too operated through light, and proper knowledge was illumination. Light was completely central to Roger's view of wisdom and how it was acquired.

Roger investigated light's reflection and refraction using geometric analysis and crude prisms, lenses, and mirrors. He used geometry to explain why straight sticks appeared to curve in water. His research into rainbows is the clearest example of what he meant by *scientia experimentalis*. He argued that claims by prior authorities should be tested with direct observation and measurement, which is what he did. He used prisms to generate small rainbows, and measured the behavior of light to explain their effects. He used geometry to accurately determine the maximum measured height of a natural rainbow in the sky at fourty-two degrees, and was the first ever to do so. He described the workings of a telescope, and apparently had the materials to create a crude prototype, although there is no evidence that he actually did.⁹

Understanding the eye and its behavior was essential to understanding light. Roger used geometry to describe the anatomy of the human eye and the behavior of light within it. He described what we know as the retina, the cornea, and the optic nerves. He did not conduct a dissection, but he applied his skills in geometry to existing knowledge of the eye. ¹⁰

Roger's understanding of light and the eye is fundamentally different from ours today. He followed the ancient belief that light originates in the eye and radiates out to make perception possible, and then returns to the perceived by the eye. For Roger, light was a unifying theory of matter: how it was created and how it changed through time, and how it linked human beings to the created world. Late medieval scientists, influenced by Roger's work, understood light to multiply as it moved through space. Four centuries later, Christiaan Huygens would develop the wave theory of light which supplanted Roger's ideas. In twenty-first century terms, Roger was pursuing the character of energy of the dynamics of change within the physical universe, and was moved to do so by religious aspirations.

8 Opus Majus, part 5, distinction 1, chapter 1, transl. Clegg, 58-59.

Roger applied mathematics and geometry to investigate the Earth and sky. Greek philosophers had understood the Earth as a sphere as far back as 500 BCE, but a few early Fathers of the Church, interpreting some Biblical passages literally, described the Earth as a flat disc. Most medieval natural philosophers understood the Earth as a sphere. ¹² To justify this assertion, Roger wrote:

We know by experience that he who is at the top of the mast can see the port more quickly than a man on the deck of the ship. Therefore it remains that something hinders the vision of the man on the deck of the ship. But there can be nothing but the swelling of the sphere of water.¹³

In a flat world, the man on the deck would see the port at the same time as the one at the top of the ship mast. The curvature of the Earth obscured his vision, but the man up the mast could see over this to land. Thus, the earth must be a sphere.

Roger is considered the father of modern cartography because he applied mathematics to the creation of maps. He devised the most sophisticated approach to plotting location on them of the medieval era. Prior maps were artistic or allegorical representations of the Earth.¹⁴ Roger called for a more systematic approach to mapping the world with contemporary technologies (astrolabe and compass) and geometry.¹⁵ He devised a terrestrial coordinate system with latitude and longitude lines. His mathematical reasoning about the problems of representing a spherical Earth on flat paper laid the conceptual formation for modern map projections. Roger did not actually create a map projection, but his method of plotting points and locating them within a coordinate system was a remarkable innovation for his time in scientifically representing geographic space. Relative to other medieval scholars interested in geography, Roger was more interested in the practical value of knowing the Earth. For example, he drew from the eyewitness accounts of Franciscan Friar William of Rubruck's travels to the Khan, the leader of the Tartars. William had traveled by land 1253-5 to a region near present day Mongolia as an ambassador for Louis IX, King of France.¹⁶ William was one of several friars who undertook diplomatic missions during this period. Roger apparently met him in person, and they shared a Franciscan orientation toward mission, a curiosity about distant lands, and a commitment to understanding other people who were an armed threat to Christian Europe. He proposed that Asia could be reached by sailing west using his terrestrial coordinate system.¹⁷

He applied mathematics to calculating the position of the stars and movement of comets. He proposed an explanation for why stars twinkle. He described climatic zones, and how they influenced the people who lived in them. He conceived several innovative technologies: a device for humans to explore the bottom of the sea, a flying machine, and a self powered carriage for land travel. He did little more than identify these ideas, and it would

⁹ David C. Lindberg, "Roger Bacon on Light, Vision, and the Universal Emanation of Force," in *Roger Bacon and the Sciences*, ed. Jeremiah Hackett (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 270; Clegg, the *First Scientist: a Life of Roger Bacon*, 44, 48, 199.

¹⁰ Lindberg, "Roger Bacon on Light, Vision, and the Universal Emanation of Force," 256.

¹¹ Lindberg, "Roger Bacon on Light ...," 260 ff.

¹² Clegg, The First Scientist: A Life of Roger Bacon, 155.

¹³ Roger Bacon, *Opus Majus*, part 4, distinction 4, chapter 10. See discussion in Clegg, 156.

¹⁴ Navigation charts were somewhat more sophisticated in that they relied upon the use of compass and referenced the stars; Roger contributed cosmography, or mapping of the stars, as well. Clegg, *The First Scientist: A Life of Roger Bacon*, 157.

¹⁵ Woodward and Howe, "Roger Bacon on Geography and Cartography," 220.

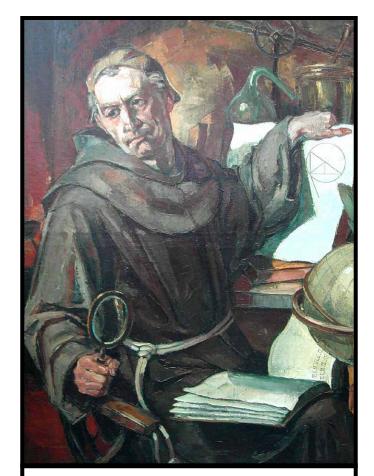
¹⁶ Louis IX is the co-patron of the Secular Franciscan Order.

¹⁷ Woodward and Howe, "Roger Bacon on Geography and Cartography," 202, and Clegg, *The First Scientist: A Life of Roger Bacon*, 158-60.

take more than six centuries before these technologies could be successfully engineered. 18

Roger articulated three reasons to expand geographical knowledge. First, it leads to an understanding of the infinite heavens. To be interested in heaven requires one to understand the Earth and to map the universe, a field known as cosmography. Second, the Bible is full of geographic features; thus location, space, and geography are essential to understanding the Bible. His third reason distinguishes Roger from his contemporaries. He insisted upon a systematic, mathematical way of mapping the location of places for the practical needs of the government, to understand history and to predict from whence the threats to Christianity were likely to come.¹⁹ Roger appealed to Pope Clement IV to recognize and financially support more research into the systematic knowledge of the Earth, for the good of the Church.20 The Opus Majus was a proposal for funding research to advance this scientific field, although there is no evidence that the Pope ever read it. For all his work in light, vision, and geography, Roger Bacon is best known for laying the foundation for the modern scientific method. Other medieval scientists deployed observation and mathematics, but it is Roger who clearly articulated the importance of testing the factual claims of others using direct observation and measurement. Roger advocated scientia experimentalis, and demonstrated what he meant through his research into light. This term has been translated into "experimental science," but this is not accurate. Roger does not describe a modern understanding of a scientific experiment, with a hypothesis and conclusion. What Roger meant is probably best conveyed as "the experience of observation to test the claims of others." Roger made systematic observations of natural phenomena, which he described carefully in his writings. He critiqued the common medieval practice of mimicking what others had merely claimed to be true, which is exactly what Bartholomew the Englishman had done in On the Properties of Things. Roger Bacon advanced medieval science by articulating a more rigorous approach to the justification of knowledge, and thus laid the conceptual foundation for the modern scientific method.

The *Opus Majus* conveys Roger's epistemology, his understanding of how we are to create new knowledge, and why we should do this in particular ways.²¹ Roger applied his philosophy of knowledge to the improvement of teaching. He argued that Aristotelian science should be used by theologians to create a more vital moral philosophy and theology. He believed there were serious deficiencies in the educational system of the time, and that this hindered the work of the Church.²² Roger was especially concerned with the reform of theological education for preachers, which he thought



Painting originally commissioned for Holy Name College. Photo courtesy of *Keith Warner*

should include science.²³ Roger Bacon believed that the study of geometry and light was essential to the pursuit of wisdom. He believed that deficient studies had lead to deficient preaching, and to the corruption of society. Thus, by reforming education, one would reform Christianity.²⁴ Roger's vision of learning and science reflects a certain Franciscan idealism. Even though he did not use mystical or passionate language, Roger Bacon's life and work show how, in the Franciscan tradition, knowledge is for love.

Excerpted from Knowledge for Love: Franciscan Science as the Pursuit of Wisdom Vol. 8 of The Franciscan Heritage Series (2012) by Keith Douglas Warner, O.F.M.

²³ Timothy J. Johnson, "Preaching Precedes Theology: Roger Bacon on the Failure of Mendicant Education," *Franciscan Studies* 68 (2010): 83-97.
24 Lindberg, "Roger Bacon on Light, Vision, and the Universal Emanation of Force."



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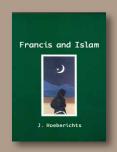
¹⁸ Clegg, The First Scientist: A Life of Roger Bacon, 42 ff.

¹⁹ Woodward and Howe, "Roger Bacon on Geography and Cartography," 204. 20 David Woodward, "Roger Bacon's Terrestrial Coordinate System," *Annals of the*

Association of American Geographers 80, no. 1 (1990): 117. 21 Hackett, "Roger Bacon on the Classification of the Sciences," 59.

²² Roger was very critical of his contemporaries who did not see things the same way. One late medieval source describes Roger Bacon as being "condemned" between 1277 and 1279 by Jerome of Ascoli, the General minister of the Franciscan Friars, "on account of certain suspected novelties." Some believe he was imprisoned by the friars. However, this has been effectively disproved by recent scholarship. The source reporting his condemnation is *The Chronicle of Twenty-Four Generals*, written a century after the events described. See David C. Lindberg, "Introduction," in *Roger Bacon's Philosophy of Nature: A Critical Edition of Multiplicatione Specierum and De Speculis Comburentibus* (South Bend: St. Augustines Press, 1998), especially discussion on pages xxv-xxvi, in which Lindberg argues that Roger's imprisonment described in *The Chronicle of Twenty-four Generals* is highly suspect.

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