

## The Spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi

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"La spiritualità di san Francesco d'Assisi"

*Francesco d'Assisi nell'ottavo centenario della nascita*

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Between 1961 and 1962, in *Studi Medievali*, revived under the impetus of Gustavo Vinay, an interesting exchange took place. Beginning with the need to clarify the meaning and content of the term "spirituality," it grew into an all-out discussion on the question of spirituality itself and its concrete historical manifestations, touching also upon the question of the methodology for doing the history of spirituality. Among the distinguished participants in the discussion, I am pleased to mention Father Jean Leclercq and Gustavo Vinay himself. Although no conclusion was reached, everyone came away convinced of the complexity and depth of the question.<sup>1</sup>

I am quite aware of all this as I begin speaking about the spirituality of Francis of Assisi, precisely because I have begun by re-examining that discussion, which for my purpose I have rearranged, distinguishing the various forms in which this spirituality may express itself and become concrete, in order to serve the various levels of culture in which it is manifest.<sup>2</sup>

First of all, then, without wishing to take up the former discussion, having already emphasized its importance, we must ask ourselves where and how we may study the spirituality of Francis of Assisi. We begin by stating that, in any case, we are not dealing with a cultivated spirituality, one which flows from theological knowledge and meditation. Rather, it emerges from Francis's intense interior reflection both on and through the things around him, as well as through and from his reading of the Bible, though with the inevitable limitations of reading based on the letter of the text more than on its mystical and allegorical interpretations.

Having said this, we must recall that we are fortunate to have a series of Francis's writings where, according to the custom of the time, it is possible to perceive the intervening hand of scribes, secretaries, and even editorial additions. Nevertheless, we can find in them, immediately and directly, the spirit of Francis himself. We mention three which undoubtedly have come forth without intermediaries. These are the Praises of God (to which must

be joined the Blessing for Brother Leo), the note addressed to Leo himself, and finally the Canticle of Brother Sun. They differ from one another in importance, from the powerful cosmic and lyric breath of the Canticle to the folklike simplicity of the blessing. But in their roots they are a genuine expression of the religious sense and intensity of human relationships of which Francis was capable. Next in its immediacy is the Testament – in its own words: “a remembrance, an admonition, an exhortation, and . . . testament.” It was left to the brothers precisely as a model for their lives and a synthesis of spirituality, containing as it does an entire life-experience, set down as an example and, in certain aspects, a symbolic guide for the brothers then as well as those of the eight centuries which have ensued.<sup>3</sup>

We shall mention the other writings only occasionally. They are without doubt valid and very important, but in our opinion, we can see in them the interventions of collaborators. These are texts which are at certain levels and aspects “official.” Obviously, however, they are of great importance, inasmuch as, along with those mentioned above, they provide the possibility of grasping the subjective moment, Francis’s own particular consciousness of spirituality which he imparted to others.<sup>4</sup>

Here, then, we shall present, the moment of Francis’s conversion as the primary fact and the profound source of everything that will follow. As he himself indicates, and as has been said many times, this moment was not the experience of poverty, but rather the meeting with the leper. From this we can immediately draw a conclusion to point the way for us, one which seems of decisive importance. Francis felt that the starting point of his conversion and reversal of values was his realization of the existential fact of the human condition as common to each person, and that over each person loomed the possibility of an identical fate. By the fact that there is one leper, we are all lepers, and we are not exempt from the duty to feel as he feels, because any of us could be that leper. From this flows another conclusion, no less significant, so much so that Thomas of Celano in the *First Life* skillfully manages to present it as miraculous. The leper’s condition, like that of many others at the margins of society, is not solely a fact of the human condition. It is also the condition which draws us closest to Christ, the incarnate God, who in His coming upon earth did not choose to be among the powerful or great ones, but wanted instead to live in the most modest human condition, even to the point of the humiliation and suffering of the cross. Francis experienced fully what Paul had expressed so concisely: “He emptied himself unto death, even to death on the cross.”

This is also confirmed by those who were close to Francis in some way. In one of the memoirs sent to of Crescentius of Jesi in 1246, there is the striking little anecdote, recounted by someone who must have been an eyewitness, in which Francis, having met a friend who was weeping over

the sufferings of Christ, joined him in weeping, surprised that all people were not mindful of the pain of the cross which Christ had accepted and taken upon Himself for the love of mankind.<sup>5</sup> According to Francis, the human condition must be that of those who suffer most, for that is what Christ chose. Furthermore, it is that which draws us close, not to the few who are fortunate, but to the majority who are unfortunate, poor, suffering – those whom society rejects. From this awareness of the human condition comes Francis's boundless love for people, from those dearest and closest to him like Brother Leo or Brother Ricerio, to the unknown man passing by and trembling from the cold to whom Francis gave his cloak, saying that he [Francis] had to return it to him. We today are able to understand how he, being voluntarily poor, was rich. Whatever he might have, he could not make use of it if another, one truly poor, did not have it. Indeed, he must return that which he had received as a loan and which was not his.<sup>6</sup>

Permit me to mention briefly – later we shall speak at greater length – that these sentiments are very evident among Francis's writings in the two texts pertaining to Brother Leo, *The Praises of God* together with the blessing, as well as the note in which he comforts him and invites him to come to him, if he should still feel anxious and disturbed. *The Praises of God* and the blessing, precious testimony of Francis himself as well as the genuineness of his stigmata, demonstrates completely Francis's understanding and compassion for Leo. The latter is anxious and feels the need for comfort from his father and teacher in order to combat his temptations. And so Brother Leo receives that most remarkable piece of parchment, which he folded many times, carrying it in his tunic until his death, as a defense against all temptation. Especially moving is the little drawing, traced in Francis's own hand, of a skull representing Calvary, with a Tau cross above, always a sign of salvation and a reminder of the Crucified. Then, in large letters: "May the Lord bless you, Brother Leo." We have here a rather complex series of popular religious elements, but the note is of special interest to us here for our understanding of Francis's desire to help someone in a spiritual crisis. In another of these crises, perhaps following an animated conversation as they were walking along, there is the second testimony, in which Francis addresses Leo "as a mother." It is worth noting that the phrase here is "as a mother," and not, as would have been more natural for the head of an order, "as a father." And we must quote the final words: "If you wish to come to me, Leo, come!" Here we can sense the beating of a fraternal heart, open to the love of God and people.<sup>7</sup>

As we were saying, it is a love for the poorest and most unfortunate people – those who through their social condition and the circumstances of their life are in a state of poverty and wretchedness. He feels close to them out of love, not from some masochistic desire, as some who do not understand sanctity persist in saying, despite their claim to know

psychology and psychiatry. We refer here to the primitive version of that episode found in the Fioretti concerning perfect joy, but which has a rather different formulation and development in the earlier version, which has been brought to light by Kajetan Esser:

[Brother Leonard] related, in the same place [the Portiuncula], that one day at Saint Mary the blessed Saint Francis called Brother Leo and said: "Brother Leo, write!" He answered: "I'm ready." "Write," [Francis] said, "what true joy is:

"A messenger comes and says that all the masters in Paris have come into the Order; write: this is not true joy. Or that all the prelates beyond the mountains [have entered the Order], as well as the archbishops and bishops; or, that the king of France and the king of England [have entered the Order]; write: this is not true joy. Again, that my brothers have gone to the nonbelievers and converted all of them to the faith; again, that I have so much grace from God that I heal the sick and perform many miracles: I tell you that true joy does not consist in any of these things.

"What then is true joy?

"I return from Perugia and arrive here in the dead of night; and it is winter time, muddy and so cold that icicles have formed on the edges of my habit and keep striking my legs, and blood flows from such wounds. And all covered with mud and cold, I come to the gate and after I have knocked and called for some time, a brother comes and asks: 'Who are you?' I answer: 'Brother Francis.' And he says: 'Go away; this is not a proper hour for going about; you may not come in.' And when I insist, he answers: 'Go away, you are a simple and a stupid person; we are so many and we have no need of you. You are certainly not coming to us at this hour!' And I stand again at the door and say: 'For the love of God, take me in tonight.' And he answers: 'I will not. Go to the Crosiers' place and ask there.' I tell you this: If I had patience and did not become upset, there would be true joy in this and true virtue and the salvation of the soul" (trans. Regis Armstrong).<sup>8</sup>

It is precisely the conclusion of this episode which throws light on its deep meaning. Perfect joy does not consist in being mistreated, but in patiently accepting the condition of marginalization and rejection, even when it comes from those to whom we ought to feel more close, such as our own brothers. The more we are rejected by others, the closer we are to Christ. As we are rejected by others, our marginalization, our misfortune, and our uncertainty about existence are inevitably accompanied by poverty. But at this point I would like to emphasize – it is almost obvious after what has been said so far – that poverty has no value in and of itself, but only inasmuch as it is a renunciation of what one has, so as to be able to give it to others. It is the rejection of whatever might give rise to attraction, companionship, diversion, and most of all readmission into a society at whose margins one has chosen to live, so as to be ever closer to the unfortunate.

For Francis, the substance of poverty is more than an economic state or condition in life. It is a psychological and human reality; one is poor insofar as one renounces everything. But as mentioned above, there arises here a

distinction which was to torment Francis. As a man voluntarily poor, his poverty brought freedom and joy. However, perfect joy is something quite different. Francis understood this distinction and suffered on account of it, even while seeking as much as possible to live in the condition of a truly poor person. What is more, he so greatly desired and appreciated the poverty he had chosen that he, the son of a rich merchant, in fact a rich merchant himself, did not hide his genuine disgust for money. Thus, poverty as a reality of one's condition in life must be carefully distinguished from the notion of the Waldensians. But that is another topic.

This subjective moment in Francis's spirituality, this conviction, brought to maturity through a deep spiritual travail, is not expressed in writings or theoretical works. Instead, Francis chooses to present himself publicly as a witness. He was living in an age that was not without its strong rejections, its profound differences between what was said and what was done. The Cathari were very skilled in taking advantage of this. But at the same time strong protests were coming from Anthony of Lisbon or Lambert-le-Bègue. Thus Francis, while he was preaching penance and singing the praises of God, wished to be a living example of sharing and presence alongside the unfortunate and the poor. If he could not be poor in the real social sense of the term, he could at least be an example as one who desired and sought to be poor.<sup>9</sup>

We can at this point synthesize all these aspects of his spirituality around a single pole, as if converging in one single direction: a love for men and women modeled on that of Christ-crucified, the incarnate God who came to earth to be poor among the poor. As he says in chapter 6 of the Approved Rule of 1223, "the Lord made Himself poor for us in this world." Through a positive view of suffering, misery, and marginalization as the concrete situation of Christ's life and of his love, Francis regained a positive outlook on existence and on the universe, totally at odds with that of the Cathari of his time. Suffering and the human condition have their positive aspect, which fits into a cosmic positive outlook. God's love for humanity, expressed through the Incarnation and death on the cross, becomes, with an equally positive outlook, the beauty of creation as exalted and sung in the Canticle of Brother Sun. Here the universe is no longer seen simply in its spiritual manifestation, but in its physical, visual, grandeur and beauty.

It is worth emphasizing that just as Francis would read and live the Gospel in its literalness, seldom indulging in the tendency to allegorize, so also the universe was never experienced symbolically, but in its natural reality, which, precisely because it is natural, expresses the grandeur and power of God. Thus Brother Fire praises God, because he is the one who lights up the earth in the darkness of night and is "beautiful and playful and robust and strong." And yet Francis had to feel his terrible sting when he underwent his painful cauterization. We may also mention "our Sister

Mother Earth," where the contrast between the earth, both mother and sister, draws us to a Christian sense of the unity of the human race in the universe, but also recalls the eternity of the earth, our fertile mother, as people throughout the Mediterranean world have experienced her for thousands of years.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, we are faced with a concept of cosmic reality as something positive because it is God's creation, which as such gives praise to God. From the universe we pass directly to men and women. We cannot help noticing that the plant and animal kingdoms are completely absent from the *Canticum*, while from men and women we can come to praise God only through peace and through death. Francis, a sad witness to the terrible hatred among the "parties" of the communes, beginning with his own Assisi, extols peace as the moment when God's will is realized on earth. By obedience to the will of God, we escape the second death, whereas nothing can preserve us from "our Sister Bodily Death." At the end of his life, Francis, well aware of his imminent death, looks into her face and recognizes there a sister, whose presence contributes to the praise and grandeur of God. Furthermore, this is the moment for the supreme decision between the happiness of paradise and the second death, that which takes us away from God.

Having tried to indicate the essential characteristics of Francis's spirituality, we might be surprised at this point to notice the absence of the animal world, precisely that element which a long literary and artistic tradition tends to consider one of the saint's most characteristic traits. A clarification is necessary here. In his works Francis speaks of animals much less than the hagiographic tradition would have us believe. There appears to be no mention of them in his writings, while they are definitely mentioned in one of the memoirs of his companions. There, speaking of Christmas, Francis says that if he could see the emperor, he would seek an edict by which everyone would have an abundance of food on that blessed day. First of all he remembers the larks, then the ox and the ass, while noting that "all the poor ought to be fed lavishly by the rich."

Once again, the emphasis is interesting. This is an act of love. Yet between God the creator and the physical universe, animal and human, Francis sees a center which is Christ-incarnate. However, as we have already mentioned, the Christ whom he emphasizes and whom he humbly and subtly proposes to all his brothers and sisters, is Jesus, grasped in His living immediacy. And so were "invented" the crib of Greccio and the other things relating to the humanity of Christ, in order to feel Him suffering on the cross as any man might suffer, and to portray His terrible agony. To do this, Francis and those who came after him drew on all the richness of expression found in religious poetry.<sup>11</sup>

Profoundly connected with Francis's Christ-centered spirituality was his

total, humble, and devout reverence for the Eucharist. He experienced the consecrated Host as something which accomplished and made real the presence of Christ living on earth among His people. In a most extraordinary way, the Eucharist actualizes the union between the incarnate God, Savior and Redeemer, and the sinful human being who is undeserving of even the least good thing, yet who has the supreme blessing of seeing with his own eyes Christ as He is in the Eucharistic Bread. It is a subject to which Francis returns many times, drawing from it consequences of special significance in the area of spirituality. In his writings, he says that we must preserve it with the greatest respect, showing toward it in every possible way a devotion that is both an acknowledgment of love and an expression of gratitude. Furthermore, it constitutes that which basically characterizes in an extraordinary manner the charismatic power of the priest. Therefore, Francis exhorts the brothers (and this confirms the impression that Francis did not intend an order of priests) to respect priests, for they alone can consecrate the Body of our Lord. This respect is extended to all the other powers with which the priest is endowed, such as the care of souls and everything connected with it, especially preaching.

In this series of ideas, the placement of a long paragraph in the Testament becomes perfectly logical. It seems to be an interruption of the opening autobiographical section. In reality it can and perhaps must be interpreted as a confirmation of Francis's intention to remain at the margins of a society in which the priest is the fulcrum and essential reference point precisely because he has the power to consecrate the host, making it truly the divine presence in our midst.

Francis's obedience to the church is to be understood in the same key, for he saw the church as more than a juridic pyramid with the pope at its summit. The church for him was a spiritual and charismatic reality, in which the pope held the first place more by reason of interior holiness than by reason of worldly, juridic power. This is especially evident if we consider the first sentence of the Earlier Rule, in which Francis promises obedience to Innocent III, proposing to carry out "the life of the Gospel of Jesus Christ." This also explains Francis's singular devotion to church buildings, because they are the places where the Body of Christ is preserved, and where the church lives in and through the faithful, and are a locus for the exercise of the charismatic priestly powers. This also explains Francis's deep fidelity to the hierarchy, understood as the priesthood, whose office is supremely actualized in the celebration of the Eucharist. This ecclesiological concept, which needs a deeper exploration than is possible in this necessarily brief treatment, allows Francis to go completely beyond the polemics, whether heretical or not, regarding the power of the priest which, being of divine origin, does not allow any human restrictions.<sup>12</sup>

There emerges from this outline of the central themes of St. Francis's

spirituality not a theology but rather a human sensibility which leads Christianity back to the very heart of revelation without the need for intellectual intermediaries. This is very clear in the few lines of the letter to St. Anthony, where theological learning is definitely made subordinate to the soul's spiritual life. There certainly is in Francis no preconceived hostility toward learning, but rather the feeling which would be expressed seventy years later by Jacopone da Todi: "In sorrow and grief I see Paris demolish Assisi." If our picture so far presents us, as we said at the beginning, with the subjective spirituality of St. Francis, it is no less important to mention very briefly how it was objectively received by his contemporaries.<sup>13</sup>

We shall not dwell on the sneers and mockery of the people of Assisi or of Francis's own brother, nor shall we stress the uncertainties and perplexities which were his. However, in his first followers we observe a complete and total adherence, which we can feel vibrating above all in the joy which always animated the fraternity. Indeed, the term "brother" (and soon after "sister"), for Francis of Assisi and those who first came to him, must not be understood according to the current usage of religious communities, but rather restored to its original meaning. We should not forget that Francis publicly declared himself to be no longer the son of Peter Bernardone but of "our Father in heaven." For this reason, all other people were always and everywhere brothers and sisters. That this was a deep and genuine sentiment is shown by the fact that the first community was called a *fraternity*, emphasizing their refusal to enter one of the already-existing *orders*, as they explained to the cardinals and pope right from the beginning. We have not always appreciated the statement made by Bernard of Quintavalle at Florence, when he and his companions said that they were "penitents from the city of Assisi."<sup>14</sup>

Francis did not hesitate to say in his Testament that he knew very well that he had founded and given expression to something completely new. And so there arose, not by accident, a series of misinterpretations. Perhaps the first and most significant was that of the cardinals who had no confidence in him, maintaining that the ideal of life he proposed was unworkable. If we are to believe Thomas of Celano's account, it took a rebuke from the cardinal of Saints John and Paul to overcome these difficulties. Moreover, we should not really be surprised that five or six years later in 1216, when Jacques de Vitry would come to know the first Franciscan communities, he would associate them with the life of the primitive church, and that he would fail to see anything that was especially original about them.<sup>15</sup>

Yet there was this originality, and it was really present, if we just recall that jewel of Franciscan spirituality, which we believe is very close to Francis's time: The *Sacrum Commercium*. Here the saint's life-experience is



transposed into terms taken from chivalry. Just as a knight will go through many adventures in order to reach his lady, so also Francis, in order to find his Lady Poverty. Here we find developed a point which very probably goes back to Francis himself and to some of the expressive manifestations of his "preaching."

One fact intuitively leads us to believe this. All the sources tell us that Francis spoke French. Thus in some way he was acquainted with the French poems of chivalry, with their portrayal of knights facing countless obstacles and risks for the love of their lady. Since none of the sources directly and immediately close to Francis speak of it, I would certainly not hypothesize that Francis knew the poems of Chrétien de Troyes. However, it should be noted that in the Legend of Perugia and in the so-called *Intentio Regulae* Francis compares his brothers to "knights of the Round Table who conceal themselves in deserted and remote places." The same texts speak of the Emperor Charles, of "Roland, Oliver, and all paladins and brave men."

At the same time, we find expressed here one of the means by which Francis was able to reach and strike the popular imagination, and from these gestures we go back to Francis himself, from the "new fool" to the knight in search of Lady Poverty. And it is significant that alongside the great banquets which triumphantly concluded the dangerous and spectacular exploits of the knights, we find the poor meal of Francis with his knights of the Round Table and Lady Poverty, who is amazed to be honored and welcomed so triumphantly, even though the banquet table is missing and the food and drink are reduced to bread and water.<sup>16</sup> In any case, this reception of Francis's spirituality must be referred back to a "popular" psychology and culture.

To this image must be contrasted the one which was being developed within the order, under the pressure of a variety of reasons. The first and most important was to explain Francis, removing him from the molds and typecasting of a "holy founder of an order," something which occurred even in the First Life of Thomas of Celano. Francis was seen from different perspectives, related but not identical; both originated from a specific theological culture. The first was that of Francis as "another Christ"; the other, of Francis as the angel of the sixth seal.<sup>17</sup>

These two aspects have been frequently discussed in recent years, and so I shall just mention them. The first aspect is connected with the revelation of Francis's stigmata and to his life, which was inspired by the example of Christ, from the moment of his conversion onward. The second aspect was developed under the influence of the eschatology of the thirteenth century, which I made a study of many years ago.<sup>18</sup> As we conclude, it seems more important to mention that while the order, because of Francis and his part in the plan of divine providence, was being introduced at every level of

western Christendom, at the same time a more tender and intense religious sentiment was being spread, as Peter John Olivi would emphasize at the end of the thirteenth century with a few well-chosen words. And so we must raise the question: How did the spirituality of Francis become Franciscan spirituality?

First we must consider the gradual formation and development of the image of Francis himself, which was never to be that of a wonderworking saint but a concrete example of a life so Christlike that it would gradually lose its human strength; but, we immediately add, never completely eliminating it. It was not so much the prelates of the order as the brothers and the faithful who would see to this, by collecting, reworking, and transforming the information and traditions about him, in Latin as well as in the various vernaculars. In this way Francis would become one of the dominant figures in the spirituality of his age. The intellectual giants among his brothers, Alexander of Hales, John Peckham, and Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, would propose theological topics and questions, all the way from the divine-human nature of Christ to poverty itself. However, at the popular level he remained the saint who rediscovered and extolled the beauty of creation, the sanctity of life, and the joy of existence, even amid the greatest sufferings – joy even in sorrow. In this way, as perhaps no one else, he contributed through his order to the elimination of the Catharist heresy, while his poverty and that of his brothers effectively resisted the pauperism and preaching of the Waldensians and animated western Christianity.

Besides these more prominent and, I would say, more well-known aspects, there are others worth recalling here, other often-forgotten expressions of Franciscan spirituality. First and most important, directly related to Francis himself, is the humanity of Christ, already mentioned, which here we shall examine under the aspect of its diffusion in the life of the Church. Francis, we recall, was the “inventor” of the crib, or at least the one who fully understood the importance of Christ’s birth in poverty. But the poverty of Christ was bound up with His humanity. Moreover, just as the twelfth century brought about a more intense and affective participation in the sufferings of Christ, so Francis probed more deeply into their full meaning through a participation that was not intellectual but spiritual and from the heart. Finally, there was the Eucharist, which he regarded as the divine presence directly available to our human sight.

These are the main themes of Francis and his spirituality, to which, along with the practice of poverty, Franciscans have witnessed to in the life of the church. Without needing to go into the controversies which divided the order from the second half of the thirteenth century on, we would prefer to indicate their historical importance. Francis set himself up as a stumbling block for his order, insofar as he set his own life and example against all

decadence, all relaxation, all risk of crisis. It was not as an abstract series of norms, but rather as the concrete expression of an intensely-lived spirituality. In this, all Franciscanism is a perennial returning to Francis, in order to find new strength for its development and process of becoming. For anyone who considers the history of the Friars Minor, the interior troubles themselves which characterize it are a sign of the leaven which Francis released in the church, and which after eight centuries continues to work, raising individual consciences as well as for the life of the church herself.

#### Notes

1. In this paper I would like to remember first of all three persons from the Catholic University [of Milan] connected in various ways with the history and spirit of Francis of Assisi. The first is Agostino Gemelli, O.F.M., who in his works recalls the historical figure of the saint as both father and spiritual teacher, along with his ecclesial influence. The second is Maria Sticco, who with typical Franciscan humility and reticence, and with love, understanding and delicacy, produced two important spiritual sketches of Francis of Assisi and Bernardine of Siena. The third is Ezio Franceschini, who many times during his long teaching career returned to Francis of Assisi and the Franciscan sources with a variety of new ideas, provoking new studies and enriching the *Collana Francescana* which Agostino Gemelli had founded. In memory of the two, who are now deceased, I wish to dedicate these pages to Ezio Franceschini with deep respect and devotion. With regard to the discussion about spirituality, I refer to Gustavo Vinay, "Spiritualità: Invito a una discussione," *Studi Medievali*, 2 (1961):705-9; Jean Leclercq, "Spiritualitas", idem, 3 (1962):279-96.
2. I purposely refrain from giving a general bibliography on Francis of Assisi. It would not be satisfactory even if it were limited to the more important works. I mention only Ephrem Longpré, *François d'Assise et son expérience spirituelle* (Paris, 1966), which takes up and adds to the entry in the *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, to which I would add the bibliography of Lorenzo Di Fonzo, at the entry by Lorenzo Di Fonzo and Alfonzo Pompei, "Francesco da Assisi," in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, vol. 5, coll. 1131-1150. For a biography of Francis of Assisi, see Raoul Manselli, *Francis of Assisi* (Chicago, 1988, trans. Paul Duggan), and idem, *Nos qui cum eo fuimus: Contributo alla questione francescana* (Rome, 1980), which in part make up for the footnotes which are lacking in the above-mentioned biography.
3. For the relationship between culture and popular religion, see my *La religion populaire au Moyen Age: Problèmes de méthode et d'histoire* (Montréal - Paris, 1975), Conférence Albert-Le-Grand 1973. Regarding the writings of Francis, see Kajetan Esser, *Opuscula des hl. Franziskus von Assisi*, Neue textkritische Edition (Grottaferrata [Rome, 1976], Spicilegium Bonaventurianum XIII), where the texts to which I refer can be found. [See Armstrong and Brady, *Francis and Clare*.]
4. For the other Latin works of St. Francis, see N. Scivoletto, "Problemi di lingua e di stile degli scritti latini di san Francesco," in *Francesco d'Assisi e francescanesimo dal 1216 al 1226* (Assisi, 1977), pp. 101-24.
5. Regarding Francis's conversion, I refer to what has been said in Manselli, *St. Francis*, pp. 33-94. Regarding Francis weeping over the redemptive death of Christ on the cross, see idem, *Nos qui cum eo fuimus*, pp. 232-36.