Initiation into the Franciscan Life in the Light of the Rule and Other Early Sources OCTAVIAN SCHMUCKI, O.F.M.CAP.

"Iniziazione alla vita francescana alla luce della Regola ad altre fonti primitive"

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1. Admission to the Fraternity

As far as I know, the first time that the word "initiation" appears in an official church document is in the Decree of the Church's Missionary Activity of the Second Vatican Council, which speaks of the "Sacraments of Christian Initiation" (no. 14). The council stresses the fact that "the catechumenate is not a mere expounding of doctrine and precepts but a training period for the whole Christian life. It is an apprenticeship of appropriate length, during which disciples are joined to Christ, their Teacher." "Initiation" means a "beginning, an entrance into new life."1

There is no problem in applying these concepts to entrance into the life of a religious order. A person assuming the Franciscan life cannot do it in one step but must pass through successive stages. Every step taken by a candidate "leads to a further one, in a dynamic acceleration toward greater pefection."2

The second chapters of both the Earlier Rule of 1221 and the Approved Rule of 1223 list the following levels of initiation: (1) Admission to the

fraternity, (2) novitiate, (3) profession.3

It may help to preface my commentary with the Latin text of the Approved Rule of 1223 entitled: "De his qui volunt vitam istam accipere, et qualiter recipi debeant" ("Those who wish to embrace this life and how they are to be received"). St. Francis ordains:

Si qui voluerint hanc vitam accipere et venerint ad fratres nostros, mittant eos ad suos ministros provinciales, quibus solummodo et non aliis recipiendi fratres licentia concedatur. Ministri vero diligenter examinent eos de fide catholica et ecclesiasticis sacramentis. Et si haec omnia credant et velint ea fideliter confiteri et usque ad finem If there are any who wish to accept this life and come to our brothers, let them send them to the ministers provincial, to whom and to no other is permission granted for receiving brothers. The ministers should diligently examine them concerning the Catholic faith and the Sacraments of the church. And if they believe all these things

firmiter observare et uxores non habent, vel, si habent, et iam monasterium intraverint uxores vel licentiam eis dederint auctoritate diocesani episcopi, voto continentiae iam emisso, et illius sint aetatis uxores, quod non possit de eis oriri suspicio, dicant illis verbum sancti Evangelii (Matt. 19:21) quod vadant et vendant omnia sua et studeant pauperibus erogare. Quod si facere non potuerint, sufficit eis bona voluntas. Et caveant fratres et eorum ministri, ne solliciti sint de rebus suis temporalibus, ut libere faciant de rebus suis quidquid Dominus inspiraverit eis. Si tamen consilium requiratur, licentiam habeant ministri mittendi eos ad aliquos Deum timentes quorum consilio bona sua pauperibus erogentur. Postea concedant eis pannos probationis, videlicet duas tunicas sine caputio et cingulum et braccas et caparonem usque ad cingulum, nisi eisdem ministris aliud secundum Deum aliquando videatur. Finito vero anno probationis, recipiantur ad obedientiam promittentes vitam istam semper et regulam observare.4

and are willing to profess them faithfully and observe them steadfastly to the end; and (if) they have no wives, or if they have wives (who) have already taken a vow of continence and are of such age that suspicion cannot be raised about them (and who) have already entered a monastery or have given their husbands permission by authority of the bishop of the diocese, let the ministers speak to them the words of the holy Gospel (Matt. 19:21) that they should go and sell all that belongs to them and strive to give it to the poor. If they cannot do this, their good will suffices. And let the brothers and their ministers beware not to become solicitous over their temporal affairs, so that they may freely dispose of their goods as the Lord may inspire them. But if they stand in need of counsel, the ministers may have permission to send them to some God fearing persons who may advise them how they should give what they have to the poor. Then they may be given the clothes of probation, namely, two tunics without a hood, the cord, short trousers, and a little cape reaching to the cord, unless at some time it seems (proper) to the same ministers before God to make other provisions. When the year of probation is ended, let them be received into obedience, whereby they promise to observe this rule and life always.4

The Earlier Rule of 1221, however, states:

Si quis divina inspiratione volens accipere hanc vitam venerit ad nostros fratres, benigne recipiatur ab eis. Quodsi fuerit firmus accipere vitam nostram, multum caveant sibi fratres, ne de suis temporalibus negotiis se intromittant, sed ad suum ministrum quam citius possunt, eum representent. Minister vero benigne ipsum recipiat et confortet et vitae nostrae tenorem sibi diligenter exponat. Quo facto, praedictus, si vult et potest spiritualiter sine impedimento, omnia sua vendant et ca

If anyone desiring by divine inspiration to accept this life should come to our brothers, let him be received by them with kindness. And if he is determined to accept our life, the brothers should take care not to become involved in his temporal affairs; but let them present him to their minister as quickly as possible. The minister on his part should receive him with kindness and encourage and explain to him the tenor of our life. When this has been done, the aforesaid person if he wishes and is able to do so

omnia pauperibus studeat erogare. Caveant sibi fratres et minister fratrum quod de negotiis suis nullo modo intromittant se; neque recipiant aliquam pecuniam neque per se neque per interpositam personam. Si tamen indigent, alia necessaria corporis praeter pecuniam recipere possunt fratres causa necessitatis sicut alii pauperes. Et cum reversus fuerit, minister concedat ei pannos probationis usque ad annum, scilicet duas tunicas sine caputio et cingulum et braccas et caparonem usque ad cingulum. Finito vero anno et termino probationis recipiatur ad obedientiam.⁵

spiritually and without any impediment should sell all his possessions and strive to give them to the poor. The brothers and the minister of the brothers should take care not to become involved in any way in his temporal affairs; nor should they accept any money either themselves or through an intermediary. However, if they are in need, the brothers can accept instead of money other things needed for the body like other poor people. And when he has returned, let the minister give him the clothes of probation for a whole year, namely, two tunics without a hood, a cord and trousers, and a small cape reaching to the cord. When the year and term of probation has ended, let him be received into obedience.5

(a) Special Calling to the Franciscan Life

Even a hasty perusal of the second chapters of both Rules will show the extraordinary significance the Poverello attaches to the idea of *life*. Reception into the Franciscan fraternity does not entail imposing on the candidate a system of doctrines or the observance of the minutiae of some legislative code. Entrance into the order means rather taking on oneself

freely, and assimilating constantly, an evangelical life-style.6

We are struck by the emphasis placed on divine inspiration especially in the Earlier Rule.7 To understand its precise meaning we have to consult parallel passages in the writings. We must call to mind above all Francis's description of his own vocation as found in the Testament: "The Lord granted me, brother Francis, to begin to do penance in this way: While I was in sin it seemed very bitter to me to see lepers. And the Lord Himself led me among them and I had pity upon them."8 Francis adds with reference to another phase of his conversion: "And after the Lord gave me brothers, no one showed me what I should do, but the most high Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the form of the holy Gospel." In this same document, drawn up in the last year of his life, he appears to assume the role of lawgiver, no less than that of the Gospel writers, as when he admonishes: "But as the Lord gave me to speak and to write the Rule and these words simply and purely, so shall you understand them simply and without gloss and observe them with (their) holy manner of working until the end.

Although we do not find "divine inspiration" expressly mentioned in these texts, we find the concept here. God, the most high and infinitely

good, stirs up and guides every moment and every step of the penitent. This interpretation is evident in the Form of Life for St. Clare, where he writes to the Poor Ladies of San Damiano: "Since by divine inspiration you have made yourselves daughters and servants of the most high king and heavenly Father, and taken the Holy Spirit as your spouse, choosing to live according to the perfection of the holy Gospel." This is an especially instructive passage for understanding the meaning the saint attaches to the word "inspiration." In the second chapter of the Earlier Rule and in the fragment of the Proto-Rule for the nuns at San Damiano, "inspiration" is the same as a charism for a vocation to a life "according to the perfection of the holy Gospel" as it was progressively revealed to the Poverello. The reference to the third Person of the blessed Trinity is evident from the term "inspiration" and the image of mystical marriage with the Holy Spirit. He is the real "promoter" of Franciscan vocations.

In addition to the writings, we have the testimony of the early biographers, which confirms the idea of God as the "inspirer" and leader of every call to the Franciscan life. The vivid and authentic description of Bernard of Quintavalle's conversion is outstanding. 10 The fellowtownsmen of the Poverello "had often given the blessed father hospitality, and, having had the experience of his life and conduct and having been refreshed by the fragrance of his holiness, he began to reflect seriously and then decided to embrace the way of salvation. He noticed how he had spent the nights in prayer, sleeping very little, and praising the Lord and His ever glorious mother full of admiring thought: 'Truly this man is a man of God'. He therefore hastened to sell all his goods and gave the proceeds to the poor, not to his relatives. . . . Having done this, he was invested with the

habit and shared the life of St. Francis" (1Cel 24).

Entering the Franciscan life supposes, therefore, a special divine calling in addition to one's call to be a Christian. It is a particular gift by which God leads a soul by means of providential encounters or other events by which a divine plan is gradually unfolded. It implies, too, an enlightenment of the mind and a supernatural moving of the will of a candidate, enabling him to embrace the Franciscan life of brotherhood. We must note, however, that Francis did not expect that the call will be manifested by extraordinary signs or happenings. His lively faith led the Poverello to discern the hand of God in every circumstance of life which could encourage one to enter the order.11

Even though Francis places such stress on a divine calling, he does not, for all that, rule out his own duty and that of his friars to promote vocations. This role is also emphasized by the author of the Exposition of the Rule (either John of Peckham or St. Bonaventure - authorship is disputed).12 The commentator cites the example of Jesus calling His disciples. That the seraphic father himself manifested his interest and

obligation to stir up vocations is evident in the case of Brother Pacifico, the "King of Verses" (2Cel 106). Francis met him at the monastery of the sister penitents, the future Poor Clares of San Salvatore di Colpersito, where Pacifico "had come to the house of one of his relatives in the company of many friends." The Poverello preached in that place on the vanity of the world and directed his words towards him "who showed great signs of affecting vanity." "Pierced by the sword of God, Pacifico, not yet a friar, answered: 'What is needed is deeds, not talk'. Blessed Francis said to him: 'What do you wish me to do?' He answered: 'I want you to give me your habit.'" Celano's description of the rest of this episode is too well known to need repetition here.

All the early friars felt an obligation to propagate the order. The Legend

of the Three Companions speaks of it:

Many people, seeing how the brothers rejoiced in the midst of trials and tribulations, how zealous they were in prayer and how they did not accept money like other people nor keep it when it was given them and how they really loved one another, became convinced that the brothers were true disciples of Jesus Christ, and with remorse in their hearts they came to ask the brothers' pardon for having hurt and insulted them. The brothers forgave them gladly, saying: "The Lord forgives you," and gently admonished them concerning their salvation. Some asked to be received as companions, and because the brothers were few, Francis had authorized all six of them to accept new recruits, and with these they all returned to St. Mary of the Angels (L3S).

The uncompromising life-style of Francis's early followers had no need of great eloquence to attract numerous candidates to the fraternity. It took only the evidence of their fraternal charity to convince others of the genuineness and beauty of the evangelical ideal that permeated the life of these wandering brothers of penance. During the first stage of the fraternity's growth, any friar had the right to accept postulants and present them to Francis to be received "to obedience," that is, to profession.¹⁴

With so many defections from religious life after the Second Vatican Council, we might find some consolation in remembering that even Francis had to face the problem of infidelity to the evangelical life. Thomas of Celano records his feelings, which were not much different from those which the present superiors of the Franciscan fraternity experience:

Francis was greatly consoled by the visitations of the Lord which assured him that the foundations of his order would always remain unshaken. It was also promised him that without a doubt the number of those who would fall away would be replaced by the substitution of others who would be chosen. Once when he was disturbed over bad examples, and thus distressed gave himself over to prayer, he received this rebuke from the Lord: "Why are you disturbed, little man? Did I not place you over my order as its shepherd, and now you do not know that I am its chief protector. I chose you, a simple man, for this task, that what I would do in you would be imitated by the rest . . . I have called. I will preserve and feed, and I will choose others to make up for those that leave, so

that if a replacement is not born, I will cause him to be born. Do not be disturbed, therefore, but work out your salvation, for though the order be reduced to only three, it will by my grace remain unshaken." From then on Francis would say that the very great multitude of imperfect friars would be overcome by the virtues of one saintly brother, as the thickest darkness is penetrated by even a single ray of light (2Cel 158).

It may come as a surprise to find that even in the heroic age of the Franciscan fraternity Celano's account probably refers to the final years of the saint's life when it describes how the infidelity of so many friars to their commitment and how the lack of new vocations threatened to reduce the order's numbers to such an extent that there was a danger of imminent extinction. We need this message of realism and Christian optimism as it shines forth in the metaphor of the rays of the sun dissipating the thickest darkness. The strength of the order does not depend on numbers. Today we cannot escape a certain hang-up about statistics, which obviously have nothing to do with evangelical authenticity. Anyone who really believes in divine providence, and is determined to live this ideal faithfully has every right to hope that in the not-too-distant future the losses brought about by defections and the shortage of vocations will be made up.

Even though the saint's sermon as recorded by Thomas of Celano (2Cel 157) refers to a specific biographical and psychological situation, it contains points that are meaningful today: "There will come a time when the order so beloved by God will be spoken ill of because of bad example, so much so that it will be ashamed to show itself in public. But those who enter the order at that time will be led only by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and flesh and blood will put no stain upon them and they will indeed be blessed by the Lord."

One important idea is that of the "action of the Holy Spirit," raising up vocations at a time when many social and cultural pressures make entrance into the order not particularly appealing, even though paradoxically our founder enjoys greater esteem and veneration than ever before.¹⁵ Our contemporaries are turned off by the increasing number of elderly friars, a lack of respect for religious life and the priesthood, by certain scandals blown out of all proportion by the media, by the loss of first fervor on the part of many religious, by the problem of religious identity and by the weakened evangelical and apostolic presence in the modern world and church.

(b) Testing Vocations

A preliminary investigation of a vocation concerns all the friars without exception. A candidate, who on his own initiative or by invitation crosses the threshold of one of our friaries, "shall be welcomed courteously and with that charity which is kind," according to St. Paul (1 Cor. 13:4). The

friars should be "affable and most kind." Even though not stated in the Earlier Rule, the friars should express their interest by calling the applicant's attention to the requirements of Franciscan life. The Earlier Rule sums them up in its first chapter: "The rule and life of these brothers is this: to live in obedience, in chastity, and without anything of their own, and to follow the teaching and the footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ." 17

When the friars notice the beginnings of a divine vocation, they should test above all the strength of the candidate's resolve. The adjective firmus ("strong") and its adjectival form firmiter ("strongly") are found twenty-six times in the writings, ¹⁸ showing that the one using it is aware of its precise meaning. Francis judged the solidity of a vocation in terms of the generosity with which an aspirant responded to the divine call, and the constancy with which he followed it through. When the friars detected signs of a genuine vocation in a postulant, they were to present him without delay to the minister provincial without getting involved in any way in his possible inheritance. Strangely enough this stage of the preliminary examination is mentioned only in the Earlier Rule. Probably the urgent need for condensing the text meant sacrificing an element which might be considered opportune especially in our time.

Both Rules reserve the final testing of the validity of a vocation to the minister provincial. The Earlier Rule spells out his duties more in terms of pastoral advice than in legal norms. The minister is to receive the candidate with fatherly kindness (benigne). He should encourage him in undertaking this important commitment (confortet) and explain to him, accurately and in detail, the life of the Gospel (diligenter exponat). In a few well-chosen words the Poverello invests the minister provincial with duties of the greatest importance. In his mind one of the principal obligations of the minister is to verify and protect the aspirant's vocation. Here, too, we notice some striking differences between the two Rules. In the Earlier Rule the pastoral role of the minister is stressed, whereas in the final redaction

his juridical functions are more clearly spelled out.19

(c) Proof of Catholic Faith

Once right motivation and strength of a vocation have been ascertained, the minister, personally, must carry out another weighty investigation. According to the *Earlier Rule*, he is to make sure that the aspirant's faith is genuine and without reservations. The examination to be conducted by the minister in this basic area of Christian life must include not only the principal mysteries of faith but also the Sacraments of the church.

His insistence on this probe must be viewed in the light of the historical background of the order's inception. At the time there were heretical practitioners of poverty, whose poor, itinerant way of life resembled that of

the Franciscans. The neo-Manichaeanism of the Cathari and the neo-Donatism of the Waldenses posed a tri-pronged threat to the Catholic faith. St. Francis, the "Catholic man" par excellence, 20 insisted that his fraternity be preserved from any heretical charismatism of the Cathari and the Waldenses. An absolute requirement for anyone aspiring to join the Franciscan Order was that at the time of his admission he firmly believe in all the articles of the faith, and that he conform to them consistently

throughout his life and that he speak and act according to them.

Which articles of the faith concerned Francis most? There can be no doubt that they were the following: the most holy Trinity: God who in His paternal kindness created all things, sustains them in being and permeates them with His presence; the Incarnation of the Son of God, who was born of the Virgin Mary, died on the cross out of His infinite love for the human race, who, after His glorious Ascension into heaven acts as our intercessor, is truly and perpetually present on earth in the Eucharist and who, at the end of time, will come to judge all men; the Holy Spirit, the minister general of the order (2Cel 193); and finally the "holy, catholic and apostolic church" (see Earlier Rule II 28) under the supreme authority of the pope, with the bishops and priests to whom alone is committed the mystery of the Eucharist. There can be no question that, in the eyes of the Poverello, faith in the Eucharist was the very touchstone of the true Catholic faith.²¹

One might imagine perhaps that the very heavy emphasis placed on orthodoxy in the *Approved Rule of 1223* was the work of the Roman curia. But we need only read chapter 19 of the *Earlier Rule* to realize that Francis had the same concern at least from the time of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215). The nineteenth chapter states: "All the brothers must be Catholics, (and) live and speak in a Catholic manner. But if any of them has strayed from the Catholic faith and life, in word or in deed, and has not amended his ways, he should be completely expelled from our fraternity."

Social and cultural conditions have radically changed after almost eight centuries. Nevertheless, a verification of the faith of candidates is not superfluous today. In fact, I for one believe that it is more important than ever. The only great change is the method employed by the minister general or his delegate in carrying it out. There should be no question, of course, of any kind of stiff inquisition, but it remains essential to explore tactfully the attitude of the candidate toward the Catholic faith and the

degree of good will and maturity which accompany it.22

(d) Investigation of the Freedom from Matrimonial Bonds

The duties of the minister are not limited to the above-mentioned inquiries. With a style that betrays the mind and hand of a professional canonist (perhaps Cardinal Hugolino da Sagni), the Approved Rule of 1223

incorporates the provisions of the church law of the time concerning freedom of candidates. According to the general norms they must be unmarried. However, provision is made for those who, though married, wish to enter the fraternity. Men who have been validly married and consummated their union may be admitted provided that their wives (1) have given their consent for their husbands to enter, (2) have themselves taken the vow of perfect chastity in the hands of the local ordinary, and (3) are of an age and character that preclude any prudent fear of their violating their commitment to continence.²³

There is no need to dwell further on a regulation that has been superseded by the Code of Canon Law (c. 643, 2). I feel it important, however, to say a few words about checking the emotional maturity of the postulant before he is allowed to make a total commitment of himself to God in order to forestall the risk of his having second thoughts, even shortly after profession. Obviously there must be a realistic appraisal of "sufficient psychological and emotional maturity" on the part of those who plan to lead a life of perfect chastity. In special cases the help of experts may be indicated (c. 642). I would insist on an inquiry into any previous emotional involvements, especially in the case of adults and "second career" vocations which are becoming more frequent. In the past, shortcut methods used by those responsible for opening or closing the door to candidates have been one of the reasons for predictable moral ship-wrecks.^{23a}

Even St. Francis was not spared the sad experience of witnessing the spiritual failure of some of his brothers, as we learn from a rather severe judgment which probably stems from some time before 1215: "If any brother at the instigation of the devil commit a sin of fornication, he should be deprived of the habit, which he has lost through his wickedness, and he should put it aside completely, and be totally expelled from the order. And afterwards let him do penance for his sins" (Earlier Rule XIII).²⁴

(e) The Respective Roles of the Minister General and Ministers Provincial in Accepting New Friars

This topic, formerly the topic of considerable debate, has no practical importance today. It is only a matter of historical interest. However, in an age of advanced and perhaps too hasty decentralization, I think it appropriate to present the principal aspects of the question and to reflect on the relationship between the center and the periphery of the order in handling vocations. In the past, it was a question of who, in virtue of the Approved Rule of 1223, had the right to admit postulants. The Earlier Rule left no doubt. The ministers, that is, the general and the provincials, were empowered to conduct the prescribed investigation.

The legislation of the Approved Rule of 1223 is quite different. We read: "Let them (our friars) send them (the candidates) to the ministers provincial, to whom and to no other is permission granted for receiving brothers." In other words, the minister general must delegate the faculty to receive candidates to the ministers provincial and to them alone.

Before we discuss subsequent historical and juridical developments, it is interesting to observe how Francis himself acted. When the fraternity started (about 1220), he reserved to himself the right to receive friars. The Assisi Collection (less correctly called the Legend of Perugia) records: "In the days when no one was allowed to come and share the life of the brothers without the permission of blessed Francis, the son of a resident of Lucca, who was a noble in the eyes of the world, came in search of him along with other companions who wanted to enter the order." The passage seems to indicate that the event occurred in 1216 or 1217.26 We know from the Mirror of Perfection that even in 1220 "all the brothers used to come (to the Portiuncula) because no one was received into the order except at St. Mary's." These sources, which are certainly reliable, show the importance the seraphic father attached to the reception of the friars. However, when the order was divided into provinces (1217), there was need to delegate this responsibility to the ministers provincial. The former centralization seems

to have prevailed only in the Italian peninsula.27

There can be some question about the Approved Rule of 1223, which held that the minister general retained the ordinary faculty for admitting candidates, although perforce he had to delegate this power to the provincials. In any case, confusion arose about the meaning of a text which certainly was not very clear. As a result, in 1230 the order petitioned Pope Gregory IX for an authentic interpretation. In his Bull Quo Elongati (28 September 1230) the pope clearly reaffirmed the meaning given above, adding: "to whom (the provincials) the minister general may both grant and deny the above-mentioned permission." It follows logically that the provincials could not subdelegate this faculty, not even to their vicars provincial.28 Serious difficulties in applying the regulation compelled the same pope in 1241 to grant provincials, when absent from their provinces, the right to entrust this duty to other qualified friars.29 It was typical of an ever-increasing legalism that the Twenty-four Masters30 felt duty-bound to express their reservations about this "relaxation" of regular observance as contained in the Approved Rule of 1223. This was, in fact, the first instance of the Rule being adapted to meet new circumstances.

The question still remains as to why the Approved Rule of 1223, unlike preceding legislation, limited the power of the provincials. As far as I know, we have no data from the sources to explain the problem. It cannot be said that centralism was foreign to the thinking of the saint, who reserved authority in the matter of vocations to the head of the order, while the

provincials, who at that time were appointed by himself, shared it only as

his delegates.31

Another question is: Who was responsible for drawing up the legal wording of a text which betrays the hand of a canonist? Probably Hugolino. The reasons for such strong emphasis on central authority can no doubt be found in the very nature of the primitive Franciscan fraternity. A community without a fixed abode, with hardly any juridical structure, enjoying great evangelical liberty, needed to be firmly united to "the head of the order" (*Earlier Rule*, Prologue). In special cases the highest superior had to have the right to deny a province the faculty to receive new members if it had lost the purity of the faith or of the evangelical life.

Besides this authority to intervene in extreme cases, the minister general always had the obligation to do his utmost to promote vocations.³² The minister general, together with his definitory, had to take care that a lifestyle conformable to that of the seraphic father was transmitted to the houses of formation, and that the Franciscan spirit was substantially the same in all places. Just as the Franciscan fraternity could be governed by only one head, so its body, into which candidates were to be incorporated,

had to be animated by the same spirit.33

The indispensable role of the ministers provincial is not thereby diminished. "Because of the office" they are in charge of vocations in their respective jurisdictions. The first expounder of the Rule, Hugo of Digne (d. 1255)³⁴ conjured up a thought-provoking image. He calls them (the provincials) the "door for those entering the order." If they take their duty as guardians to the portals of the provincial fraternity seriously, they must acquire a direct and adequate knowledge of the candidates, even if they should delegate especially trained friars to assist them in carrying out the necessary investigations. They could certainly have problems of conscience whenever a heavy work load or the extent of their territory habitually interefere with this duty. In such cases he should assign an office that is beyond his capacity to another, or take steps to bring external structures into line with the spiritual needs of the province.

(f) Renunciation of Temporal Goods

When he has finished his investigation, the minister must undertake one final task, that of informing the candidate. He is to put to him the counsel which Jesus put to the rich young man: "If you wish to be perfect, go, take what you possess and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me" (Matt. 19:21; Mark 10:21; Luke 18:22, 12:33).³⁵

For a better understanding of the biographical background of the prescriptions of the Earlier Rule we must recall the circumstances

surrounding the vocations of Brothers Bernard of Quintavalle and Peter of Catania as recorded in the Legend of the Three Companions. Impressed by the example of the evangelical life of the recently converted Francis, Bernard invited him to his home. After that memorable night during which the merchant carefully observed his guest and became convinced of his evangelical authenticity, he said:

If a man receives few or many possessions from God, and, having enjoyed them for a number of years, now no longer wishes to retain them, what would be the best thing for him to do?" Blessed Francis answered that in that case it were better for the man to give back to God what he had received. To which Master Bernard rejoined: "Then, brother, I will give all my worldly goods to the poor for the love of God who gave them to me, according as you may think best." And blessed Francis said to him: "Early tomorrow we will go to church and as the Lord taught His disciples we will learn from the book of the Gospel what to do."

Therefore, they arose early, and with another man named Peter, who also wished to join them, they went to the Church of St. Nicholas near the main square of the city. They went in to pray, but being simple men, they did not know how to find the passage in the Gospel telling of the renunciation of the world. Therefore, they be ought God that He would show them His will the first time they opened the book. When their prayer was ended, blessed Francis, kneeling before the altar, took the closed book, opened it, and saw written: "If you wish to be perfect, go sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven" (Matt. 19:21). At this, blessed Francis gave thanks to God with great joy; but because of his devotion to the blessed Trinity, he desired a threefold confirmation of the words and opened the book of the Gospels a second and third time. At the second opening he read: "Take nothing for your journey" (Luke 9:3), and at the third: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself" (Matt. 16:24). Each time he opened the book, blessed Francis gave thanks to God for His threefold confirmation of the resolution and desire which he had long held in his heart, and he said to the aforementioned Bernard and Peter: "O brothers, this is our life and rule and the life and rule of all those who may wish to join us. Go, therefore, and act on what you have heard" (L3S 28-29).36

Of course it is not possible to comment here at length on this passage, which is so basic for an understanding of the beginnings of the Franciscan fraternity as well as for grasping the insights which gave it birth. The Three Companions' story is certainly credible not only because of the Gospel answers which are also found in the Earlier Rule, but also because of the very simplicity of the narrative itself describing the threefold consultation of the Bible after the manner of the so-called "lots of the Apostles." With boundless trust in the spiritual presence of God in His word, and in His providence, the Poverello opens three times at random the missal of the parochial Church of St. Nicholas, whose crypt presently houses the Museo Romano. The Three Companions further narrate that the three texts from Matthew 19:21 and Luke 9:3 and 9:33 were the basis of that "life according to the model of the holy Gospel" of which the saint speaks in his

Of the three Gospel passages, the counsel to distribute one's entire

possessions to the poor had immediate and spectacular consequences for Brother Bernard, who had lived in very comfortable circumstances. "His conversion to God served as a model for all who were to come after him," notes Celano (1Cel 24). The two disciples not only stripped themselves completely of their property out of love for the poor Christ but they set the pattern for the reception of all future candidates, as the seraphic father himself says in his Testament: "And those who embraced this life gave all

With this heroic gesture of trust in God, the first brothers proved the sincerity of their adoption of the Gospel way of life. They irrevocably shook off all bonds which tied them to earthly goods, and thereby took a great leap forward to the true liberty of the children of God. It was precisely the same situation in which Francis had found himself when in the spring of 1206 he handed back to his father, Peter Bernardone, not only his money but even his clothing and renounced any future inheritance. Deprived of all things and born to a new life, he cried out: "Hitherto I have called Peter Bernardone my father. But from the moment that I decided to serve God, I return to him the money about which he was so perturbed and all the clothing I have from him. Henceforth I can say: 'Our Father who art in heaven', and no longer 'My father Peter Bernardone.'"

There is another factor to be considered. By stripping himself of all worldly goods and giving them to the poor, the Friar Minor not only affirms his boundless trust in God's goodness who provides for the needs of the poor with special kindness, but he attempts to restore his property to "the great almoner" from whom "after sin occurred, all is received as alms" (2Cel 77). He wishes, moreover, to glorify God with all his being and to possess Him who "alone is perfect good, all good, the true and supreme good" (RegNB XXIII).

The fulfillment of the evangelical counsel to "renounce all things" admits of one exception: "When this has been done (that is, after the minister provincial has explained the meaning of the life), the aforesaid person (the candidate), if he wishes and is able to do so spiritually and without any impediment, should sell all his possessions and strive to give them all to the poor." The key to an understanding of this somewhat obscure passage is to be found in the adverb "spiritually." To have a "spiritual" intention means to be open to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and to be generous in putting it into practice. Francis has in mind the typical case of John the Simple (2Cel 190), who came from a family so lacking in earthly possessions that it was unthinkable to give away anything at all. Once he showed his complete willingness to give up whatever possessions he might have had, Francis accepted him into the ranks of his sons because he was poor both materially and spiritually. The Approved Rule of 1223 states very clearly the obligation to renounce material things, although it omits the

significant word "spiritually." It reads: "They should go and sell all that belongs to them and strive to give it to the poor. If they cannot do this,

their good will suffices."41

One who wishes to join the Gospel brotherhood must, if possible, distribute all his goods to the poor, and not to his relatives. It is enough to read the story of the saint's violent reaction when he encountered a candidate from the Marches who was not able to overcome his attachment to his family and earned the not-very-flattering sobriquet of "Brother Fly" (AsC 20). To become a true Friar Minor it was necessary to conquer even the ties of blood. Evangelical perfection requires that anyone aspiring to it overcome all disordered affections, including excessive love for relatives, and thus leave oneself open to the fullness of divine love. The true Friar Minor is a man who is "spiritual," totally "divested" in all respects, not the least with regard to himself. One who is nominally committed to evangelical perfection but enriches his relatives is a "carnal" man and is like a "fly," lazy and pesky, since he lives off the labors of others.42

In the Earlier Rule the Poverello included the fraternity as a possible recipient of a candidate's goods (RegNB II): "If they (the friars) are in need, the brothers can accept instead of money other things needed for the body, like other poor people." Probably because of abuses, Francis is silent about this case in his Approved Rule of 1223. The postulants are to distribute their possessions with complete liberty among the poor, as the Lord shall deign to enlighten them. If they lack experience and have difficulty in choosing beneficiaries, they may consult the minister provincial who shall send them to some capable layman distinguished for honesty to give guidance. The saint strongly insists that the friars are not to offer their services as

counselors or middlemen for this charitable undertaking.

At the present time this stage of renunciation, for obvious reasons, is deferred to a later date. However, the Franciscan concept of most high poverty is still valid and the novice must learn its spiritual implications and legal obligations.43

The centuries-old history of the order has taught us to shun even the slightest attempt to influence the decision of friars preparing for the definitive renunciation they make when they take perpetual vows.

(g) No One Should Be Accepted Contrary to the Form and the Prescription of the Holy Church

This regulation (RegNB 2) sums up all that has been said so far about admission to the order. It is not my purpose to assemble here all the canonical legislation that had to be kept in mind by the minister provincial at the time of St. Francis for validly and licitly accepting a candidate.44 It would be of mere historical interest since church law has changed radically in the ensuing centuries. Today those entrusted with the important duty of promoting vocations have heeded the prescriptions of the new Code, 45 our 1982 Constitutions, 46 and the suggestions of the Fourth Plenary Council of the Order held in Rome in 1981. 47

I feel that it is extremely important to follow ecclesiastical law in this matter conscientiously, especially because of the bonds which link St. Francis and his fraternity to the Holy See. 48 Our Catholic sense, the "spirit of holy prayer and devotion to which all temporal things ought to be subservient" (RegNB 5), poverty, fraternity and minority, our concern for the spiritual health of the order, are pledges of lasting blessings, no less in the area of vocations. The following passage from Angelus of Clareno may help sum up what we have said and provide material for personal and communal reflection:

When the friars asked Francis to encourage a man who showed little evidence of conversion to enter the order, he answered them: "It is not up to you or me, brothers, to persuade someone to take up our life. It is our responsibility to preach penance to everyone by the example of our actions and words, and to draw all to the love and worship of Christ and the hatred and contempt of the world. It belongs to the Lord Himself, who alone knows what is good for men, to choose and call to this life those whom He has made worthy of it, and to whom He has given the grace to take it up and persevere in it. Therefore, He who sowed the order wants us to leave its government, growth and continuation completely to Him." 49

We should also thank the Lord for every young man who knocks at the door of our houses. This was the spirit of the early friars, as Thomas of Celano tells us: "There was indeed at that time great rejoicing and special joy among St. Francis and his friars whenever one of the faithful, no matter who he might be or of what rank, rich or poor, noble or commoner, despised or esteemed, prudent or unlettered, cleric or lay, led by the spirit of God, came to put on the habit of our holy order" (1Cel 31).

2. The Novitiate or Year of Probation

It is amazing how simply Francis speaks about the novitiate in both the Earlier Rule and the Approved Rule.⁵⁰ The legislator says nothing about the place where the candidate is to spend his year of probation, and, what is even more surprising, says not a word about the person to whom the minister provincial should assign the responsibility for the novices and their formation.

(a) The Year of Probation

(1) At the beginning of the Franciscan fraternity, up to 1220, the candidates immediately promised to observe the "Rule and life" of the Friars Minor (RegNB I) without spending a year of probation. Thereupon they were paired with confreres who had some experience of living the life

and traveled two-by-two across the roads of Italy and the rest of Europe, proclaiming penance and peace. Despite the charismatic foresight of the Poverello, it was inevitable that together with many friars of heroic sanctity a number of immature and unsuited individuals infiltrated the fraternity. Already in 1220, Jacques de Vitry,51 a great admirer of the order and a keen observer of the contemporary religious scene, remarked in a letter from Damietta: "I feel that this institute harbors a serious danger, because it sends forth its members two-by-two all over the world, and not only the perfect but also the young and immature who should be kept under control and tested for a time under monastic discipline."

No wonder, then, that during the long absence of Francis in the Middle East (1219-29), the peace of the fraternity was gravely threatened. The two vicars whom Francis had chosen as his delegates while he was away introduced certain monastic practices.⁵² The centrifugal forces that were set loose brought about a situation that called for immediate and decisive action. To clear up one part of the problem, Pope Honorius III, most likely at the suggestion of Cardinal Hugolino, issued a Bull Cum secundum consilium on 22 September 1220, which appeared to address the problems

presented by Jacques de Vitry:

The wise man teaches us not to undertake anything without forethought, lest we have to regret it later on. So it is important that anyone proposing to undertake a more perfect life look before he leaps, that is, take prudent stock of his own resources lest, God forbid, he should aspire to things above his strength, and his steps waver and turn backward, and he turns out to be an insipid pillar of salt because he did not know how to season the sacrifice of himself, which he meant to offer to God, with the salt of wisdom. Just as a wise man becomes stale should be lacking in fervor, so the fervent man will be covered with confusion if he lacks wisdom. For this reason practically all religious institutes wisely ordain that those who propose to enter a life of regular observance first make trial of it for a certain time and be tested so that they will not later have reason to repent their decision and be justly accused of levity.

Therefore, by these presents, we forbid the admission of anyone into your order who has not first completed a year of probation. And once he has made profession, let no friar dare leave your order, and no one is to receive anyone who has left it. We further forbid any of you to go wandering about clad in the habit of your order without obedience, corrupting the purity of your poverty. If anyone should presume to do this, you have the authority to

punish him with ecclesiastical censures, until he repent. . . . "53

Traces of the monastic novitiate can be found in the oldest forms of religious life. It was introduced in the east by St. Basil and in the west by St. Benedict.54 But it remained for the Council of Trent to enact general legislation prescribing the manner and length of time novices had to spend in the year of probation.55 Innocent III, in a letter to the archbishop of Pisa, decreed that "the time of probation, which the holy fathers intended both for the benefit of the novice and of the community, so that he might try out promoting vocations have heeded the prescriptions of the new Code, 45 our 1982 Constitutions, 46 and the suggestions of the Fourth Plenary Council of the Order held in Rome in 1981. 47

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the rigor of the life and the monastic community might observe his behavior," could be terminated before the legally prescribed time had elapsed if the novice pronounced his vows in the hands of the legitimate superior.56 In 1244, however, Innocent IV amplified the norms of his predecessor with the Bull Non solum. In it he forbade the Friars Minor and the Dominicans "under pain of excommunication" to "admit anyone to profession who had not spent a year of probation, something that had been wisely introduced to support human weakness."57 Contrary to the opinion of many scholars, a full year of novitiate was not considered indispensable for the validity of profession, but it was held to be necessary for incorporation in the order. And it should be remembered that at that time there existed tacit profession which took place ipso facto if a novice was clothed with the habit of the professed religious.58

After this historical digression, we return to the Bull of Honorius III. According to the papal decree, the Order of Friar Minor was obliged to introduce a year of probation so that the candidates might have an opportunity to discover whether they were capable of observing the Franciscan way of life for the rest of their days. This length of time would normally be adequate for the community to judge the suitability of the novice. Before making a total dedication to God by profession, the candidates could test the stability of their vocation and measure their

capabilities against the burden of regular observance.59

There is not the slightest evidence in the early sources to support the hypothesis, still repeated even by Catholic scholars, that Francis believed that the establishment of a novitiate by papal decree had been forced upon him against his will.60 While the introduction of this monastic practice necessarily curbed the charismatic freedom of the evangelical fraternity, the Poverello, far from rejecting the pope's decision, made it his own by incorporating it in his Earlier Rule.61

(2) Even before the Bull Cum secundum consilium, Francis had given some thought to the formation of the newly professed. As I pointed out elsewhere, the Portiuncula, the motherhouse of the order, was the place where candidates went to be received into the community.62 We learn from the Compilation of Perugia (incorrectly called the Legend of Perugia) that it was very likely the vicar general Peter of Catania, who died at an early age on 6 March 1221,63 who built a "little house for the local friars where they could rest and pray the Divine Office." The large number of new recruits who flocked there had no place to rest and say the Divine Office.

Thomas of Celano (2Cel 18ff) furnishes us with some interesting details about the eremitic life-style observed there. Allowing for some idealization

and exaggeration, we find a basically trustworthy account.64

The seraphic father, already seriously ill, gave his vicar general, Elias, specific directions concerning the formation of the novices:

It is my wish that the friars always show the greatest reverence and devotion to the house of Santa Maria della Portiuncula as our first brothers did, to whom the house was given. This place is holy, and they respected its sacredness by continual prayer, day and night, and by perpetual silence. If they spoke after the time prescribed for silence, they discoursed with the greatest devotion and elevation of mind on what pertained to the praise of God and the salvation of souls. If someone happened to utter idle or unbecoming words – a rare occurrence – he was quickly corrected by one of the others. They chastized their bodies by fasting and many vigils, endured much cold and nakedness and worked with their hands. To avoid idleness they would often go and help poor people in the fields, sometimes accepting a crust of bread for the love of God. With these and other virtues they sanctified themselves and the Portiuncula. Other brothers followed the same manner of life for a long time, though with less austerity (no. 9).

Later on, the seraphic father had to bewail a loss of religious fervor and spiritual discipline. He blamed this on the growing number of friars and lay persons who congregated at the Marian sanctuary. After this bitter admission, he went on to offer some earnest advice:

I wish, therefore, that Santa Maria della Portiuncula be placed directly under the authority of the minister general, that he might watch over it with the greatest care and solicitude, especially by establishing a good and holy community there. Let clerics be chosen from among the most virtuous and exemplary in the order, skilled in the recitation of the Divine Office, so that both lay people and the friars may listen to it with lively and joyful devotion. There shall be lay brothers to assist them, and these too are to be selected from among the holiest, well-balanced and virtuous friars.

I wish, further, that no other friar, no matter who he may be, should enter this place except the minister general and the friars who attend on him. The brothers living there are not to speak with anyone, but only with the friars who assist them and with the minister when he comes on visitation.

It is also my wish that the lay brothers do not bring in any gossip or news of the world, which is no profit for souls. For the same reason I wish that no outsiders enter the place, so that the friars may more easily preserve their purity and holiness. And let no vain words be uttered in that place. Let it remain totally pure and holy, rejoicing in the hymns and praises of the Lord.... I wish that Santa Maria della Portiuncula should be the mirror and blessing of the entire order, and be a lampstand before the throne of God and the Blessed Virgin. And so may the Lord have mercy on the faults and failings of the friars, and always protect His little plant, our order (no. 10).

As we have tried to show elsewhere,⁶⁵ the life-style of the early friars at the Portiuncula was strictly eremitic. All permanent residents, both novices and professed, strove mightily "not to extinguish the spirit of prayer and devotion, to which all temporal things ought to be subservient" (RegB V). To safeguard the spirit of continual prayer, they had to shun the noise of the world and recollect all their senses for divine praises, faithfully observing the prescribed periods of silence and avoiding all useless conversation, so harmful to spiritual progress. And since centuries of monastic experience has shown⁶⁶ that idleness inevitably hinders spiritual

fervor, the friars worked with their hands to support themselves and to help the poor. Extraordinary, rigorous penance – an aspect of the Franciscan charism which historical studies often overlook – characterized the life of the friars. Its purpose was to bring the body under the control of the spirit and lead the whole man to a generous service of God.⁶⁷

Consequently it was an eminently contemplative experience which naturally overflowed in apostolic witness and fraternal charity.⁶⁸ Those first novices were not formed with bookish theories but in the dynamic process of a lived experience. It is significant that this initiation took place at the Portiuncula under the maternal protection of our Lady assumed into heaven,⁶⁹ who kept in her heart what was so marvelously fulfilled in Christ her Son (see Luke 2:51).

The sources mention two classes of friars – clerics and lay brothers – united in one fraternity, though playing distinct roles. Without undertaking a lengthy study of the constitutional and social relationship between early Franciscan clerics and lay brothers, we must note that it differed greatly from that of the monastic orders of the time. In the latter, the lay brothers (monachus/famulus conversus) were assigned exclusively to manual labor. They constituted a group apart in the monastic family. The Franciscan fraternity, from the very start, entailed a sharing of life on an equal basis. It was a society with no barriers to separate the members, a true family wherein differences of social status, degree of education (literate – illiterate), ecclesiastical position (lay – clerical), liturgical functions (Divine Office and Eucharist), rank in the community (minister and subject), were all integrated in one evangelical brotherhood.⁷⁰ The two groups were received into the order and made their novitiate sand profession in the same manner (see RegNB II 1–10; RegB II 1–11).

This identity of ideals and life-style of the two groups of friars generally kept the community free of tensions like the one related by the Three Companions about a lay brother novice stationed at the Portiuncula. In this proto-novitiate the unnamed brother "who was able to read the Psalter, though not very well" (LP 70) had obtained permission from the vicar general, Elias of Assisi (or Cortona), to keep a book for his personal use. The incident certainly took place after the papal approval of the Approved Rule of 1223. We know this because it is a question of a personal Psalter. The Earlier Rule allowed lay brothers "who were able to read the Psalter, to have one," a concession which was revoked in 1223. The Approved Rule prescribed the Office of the Pater Noster for all lay

brothers, including the literate.71

The anonymous brother who, though he could hardly read, wanted a Psalter for his own personal use, was typical of a whole generation of friars who, in time of widespread illiteracy, was trying to climb the social ladder through education. Despite the explicit statement of the Approved Rule by

which Francis tried to halt this dangerous trend, Brother Elias had granted the brother the privilege of having a Psalter. Now he wanted to have this concession confirmed by the authority of Francis himself. The Poverello answered indirectly, citing the examples of Charlemagne, Orlando and Oliver, who had died as holy martyrs fighting for the faith of Christ. "Now there are many who want to receive honor and glory simply by recalling their mighty deeds" (*LP 72*). In metaphorical language Francis was telling him that knowledge easily becomes a pretext for empty talk, a flight from the demands of the Gospel and pursuit of a higher social status.

"As Francis was sitting before the fire warming himself, this novice brought up the matter of the Psalter. Francis replied: 'Once you have a Psalter, you will want a Breviary. With your Breviary you will take your seat like a prelate and give orders to your brothers: "You there, bring me my Breviary." Having said this, the saint, deeply moved, took some ashes and sprinkled them on his head and said: 'I am the Breviary! I am the Breviary!' And while he repeated these words, he kept rubbing his head.

The novice turned pale and felt deeply ashamed" (LP 73).

This is not the place to recount the series of dialogues between the persistent novice and the saint. It is not hard to discern the powerful pressure brought by a whole class of friars. On the other hand, a number of clues show how little regard Francis had for education within his fraternity.⁷² The sprinkling of ashes, of course, must be seen in the context of Ash Wednesday. "It signified death and an awareness of the nothingness of the creature." It was "a public acknowledgment of the spiritual misery to which sin had reduced man."⁷³ The words he uttered during this penitential ritual: "I am the Breviary!" are somewhat difficult to understand. Taken in conjunction with his actions, their meaning seems to be: "Look at me, brother, who am a living compendium of our Gospel calling!"⁷⁴ This explanation is reinforced by other statements in which he manifested a keen awareness of his charismatic leadership: "... Oportet me esse formam et exemplum omnium fratrum (I must be the model and example for all the friars)."⁷⁵

(3) If the Marian sanctuary of the Portiuncula was the first house and authentic model for every novitiate, St. Francis must be looked upon as the first and peerless master of novices. Elsewhere I have tried to prove that the saint in the first years of the community personally received all aspirants to the life of the Friars Minor and functioned as master of novices, certainly for his first companions and probably for many others as well. Solid evidence for this view can be found in a series of incidents taken collectively and individually from the Vita Prima of Thomas of Celano. It is noteworthy how often the biographer writes: "The blessed Father Francis, each day filled more and more with the grace of the Holy Spirit, took it

upon himself to form, with great diligence and love, his new sons, teaching them with new doctrines how to walk uprightly and steadfastly along the way of holy poverty and blessed simplicity" (1Cel 26).

Elsewhere he adds: "He taught them to combat vice and to mortify the desires of the body, to keep their external senses pure, for through them death enters the soul" (1Cel 43). He rounds out the picture: "He always strove for holy simplicity and would not allow the limitations of space to stand in the way of expanding the spirit. He wrote the names of the friars on the beams of their hut (at Rivotorto) so that each one could find his own spot for prayer and rest, and that the narrowness of the place might not hinder recollection of mind" (1Cel 44).

Speaking of the apostolic journeys of the group and their return to Assisi, Celano continues: "Then they related the benefits received from the most merciful Lord and asked and humbly received corrections and penance from the blessed father for their faults of negligence and ingratitude. They always acted this way when they returned to him. They did not conceal even the slightest thoughts and involuntary movements of their souls, and after doing all things commanded them (see Luke 17:10) they looked upon themselves as useless servants. And indeed purity of heart was so profound among this first group of the blessed Francis's disciples that while able to achieve useful, holy and upright deeds, they were incapable of taking any vain satisfaction in them. Then the blessed Francis would embrace his sons with intense love and speak to them about his plans and what the Lord had revealed to him" (1Cel 30).

The following biographical passage strikes me as very significant:

At that time (in the beginning of the order) the friars begged him insistently to teach them to pray. Conducting themselves with great spiritual simplicity, they did not yet know how to pray the Divine Office. He told them: "When you pray, say 'Our Father' and 'We adore you, O Christ, in all your churches throughout the world and we bless you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.' "78 And these disciples of the devout master tried to observe this diligently, because they were anxious to carry out not only his fraternal advice and commands, but even his most secret wishes if they were able to discern them in any way.

Indeed, the blessed father taught them that true obedience looks to unspoken no less than to spoken words, to wishes no less than to commands. Thus: "If a subject, even before he hears the words of his superior, divines his intention he should obey promptly and carry out his will when indicated by the slightest sign." Every time they passed a church, or even espied it from a distance, faithful to Francis's exhortation, they bowed in its direction and submissive in body and mind adored the Almighty, saying: "We adore you, O Christ, here and in all churches." And what was no less admirable, they did the same whenever they chanced to see a cross or anything shaped like a cross lying on the ground, on a wall, in the trees or bushes" (1Cel 45).

To round out this summary of Francis's intense activity as master of novices and spiritual director of the early friars, we offer this quotation

which reveals a little-known aspect of the Poverello. Up to now scholars have not given it much attention: "The most blessed Francis returned corporally to his friars (after he had gone to Assisi to preach in the cathedral) from whom he was never absent in spirit. Filled with a holy curiosity to know the spirit of his sons, he scrutinized the conduct of each one of them and allowed no fault to go unpunished, if he discovered even the slightest deviation from what was right. He first attended to internal failings, then to external, and finally he removed all occasions which

usually lead to sin" (1Cel 51).

Since it is impossible at this time to conduct an in-depth study of all the texts relating to the formation of the first members of the order, we shall content ourselves with concentrating on some salient points.79 it is surprising to see with what care and constancy Francis molded his sons. Though not a priest, he did not hesitate to cross the threshold of their consciences. Although he was of the same age as some of his followers, or even younger than some, he came across as their father and spiritual leader.80 He showed a constant and deep concern for their purity and liberty of spirit, for silence, an indispensable milieu for prayer, for evangelical simplicity, poverty, obedience and fraternal charity. In a word, the goal of this "first Franciscan school" (1Cel 30) was to lead the friars to a thorough assimilation of the evangelical way of life. A complete initiation in the spirit and practice of prayer was certainly an outstanding feature of this formation.

According to Francis, the task of the novices was to travel the road of what we express by the biblical term "penance - metanoia."81 Just as the Lord gave Brother Francis the grace to begin to do penance because he overcame his innate egoism by embracing and serving the lepers whom he saw as living images of Christ-crucified (Test), so all the friars had to learn to overcome selfishness through a deep-rooted love of God and their brethren, especially for brothers who were suffering, disinherited or marginated.82 We gather all this from a text of the Earlier Rule, which very likely dates back to a time prior to 1215. "And (all the friars) should rejoice when they find themselves among lowly and despised persons, among the poor and weak and sick and lepers and roadside beggars."83

The following account by the Three Companions is very interesting: "From the time of his conversion, like a wise architect with God's help he established himself and his house, that is, his order, on solid rock, namely, on the great humility and poverty of the Son of God, and he called it the Order of Friars Minor. And when his friars began to grow in number, he wished that they dwell in the lazarettos to serve the lepers. At that time, when nobles and commoners alike applied for admission, they were told among other things that they had to serve the lepers and take up residence

in the lazarettos" (LP 102).

Those who were initiated into the Franciscan way of life expressed more and more in their lives that which the Sacrament of penance signifies and effects. The Poverello stresses this in his eighteenth Admonition: "Blessed that servant who always remains under the rod of correction. The faithful and prudent servant (see Matt. 24:45) is the one who does not put off expiating all his sins, interiorly through contrition and exteriorly through confession and genuine atonement."

According to the saint, penance does not consist solely in an interior conversion but includes all the elements of sacramental confession. The fundamental principle of this school of repentance is expressed in the fifth Admonition: "The daily carrying of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

I have frequently quoted from the Admonitions and I believe that the twenty-eight exhortations transmit to us, in all their purity, the intentions and ideals most dear to the heart of the Poverello,84 that they represent a faithful blueprint for Franciscan formation. They tell of our duty to imitate Jesus Christ, especially the crucified Savior;85 of Francis's deep faith in the eucharistic presence, 86 where in the sacred Bread He remains with His faithful people to the end of the world (I 58); of the respect due to the clerics of the Roman church,87 even when they are public sinners (XXVI 67); of the unremitting effort to free oneself from one's own will;88 of mortifying the body so that it may not become one's enemy by causing sin (X 62); of perfect obedience when a man places himself unreservedly in the hands of his superior;89 of genuine humility which glories only in one's own weakness;90 of that true poverty of spirit by which one "hates himself and loves those who strike him on the cheek";91 of the purity of heart of those who despise earthly things, long for what is heavenly and never cease to adore with a pure heart and mind, and gaze upon the Lord God, living and true;92 of the unfeigned charity of those who are not downcast by injustice which an enemy may inflict on them,93 who is not irritated or disturbed by anything (XI 62), who does not wish to receive from his neighbor more than he himself is willing to give to the Lord (XVII 64), and who bears up with his neighbor as far as his frailty will permit (XVIII 64); and finally of discretion, which guards the secrets of the Lord and does not betray them to men in the hope of being well thought of.94

If any novice master would fail to explain to his young conferes the spirit and ultimate goals of St. Francis and the characteristic traits of the Franciscan Order (see Vat. II, *Perf. car.* no. 2b) he would be neglecting the principal duty of his office. This totally evangelical and eminently apostolic life is revealed more clearly than anywhere else in the twentieth Admonition: "Blessed is that religious who finds joy and gladness only in holy conversations and in out the works of the Lord, and thereby leads men to the Lord in joy and gladness."

Here we should explain how the two portraits presented in certain

passages of Thomas of Celano and the more panoramic view given in the Admonitions agree, at least partially, and complement one another. Both portray Francis as a spiritual master and guide as he shapes the image of the true Friar Minor according to the Gospel model. A particular preference for the virtues and ideals of Jesus Christ, the universal brother and servant of the friars, emerges. Finally the great insistence with which Francis promotes the process of interiorization is evident. Poverty and interior purity, kindness and gentleness are the traits that lie at the very heart of the Franciscan charism.

(4) The first piece of legislation dealing with the year of probation to appear after the death of St. Francis is to be found in the Constitutiones Narbonenses, in which St. Bonaventure in 1260 summarized previous capitular decrees. The first regulation reads:

In order that the novices might be better formed, we wish that in each custody the minister designate one house, or two, if one is not sufficient, to which all the novices of the custody shall be assigned until the time of their profession.

A devout and prudent friar shall be appointed to train them and he shall teach them to confess purely and frequently, to pray ardently, to conduct themselves decently, to obey humbly, to preserve purity of heart and body, to be zealous for most holy poverty and to aspire to the summit of perfection.

And in order that they may have the time for the above, and for learning the Divine Office, they shall not engage in any studies during the time of probation, nor be promoted to sacred orders, nor hear confessions, if they be priests, nor to have their own textbooks. If they should bring in such with them, they shall place them in the care of the guardian. They may, however, occupy themselves in devout reading under the guidance of their master.

During the novitiate they are not to speak with any lay person or religious of another order without permission, and then in the company of another friar who shall be assigned to them. They shall not receive or send letters, or anything else, without special permission.⁹⁷

A close look at this text reveals a notable increase in monastic elements. Given the vast extent of the provinces and the problems of travel and communication, at least one house of novitiate is prescribed, 98 which will assure a more efficient formation program under the watchful eyes of the minister provincial and the custos.99 The friar responsible for formation is given the monastic title of master. He must be qualified for his sensitive task above all by piety and prudence. What is of special interest is the way in which the goals of the novitiate year are outlined. Under the guidance of the master, the novices learn to confess their sins frequently and sincerely, to pray fervently, to behave in a manner conformable with their vocation and above all to cultivate an intense desire for perfection through the practice of the three evangelical counsels.100 Special stress is laid on learning the Divine Office, a good part of which had to be memorized.101

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goals, they are forbidden to take up philosophical or theological studies, or to read books on these subjects. Nor could they receive holy orders, or, in the case of priests, hear confessions. They were allowed, however, to read spiritual works under the prudent supervision of the master. The regulations affecting the association of the novices with outsiders reflect medieval thinking. The Constitutiones Narbonenses exalt the spirit of prayer as the first priority of the novitiate year, something that is in perfect accord with the mind of St. Francis and a goal which retains its validity in our own times as well.

It is quite another question whether these statutes, which were to have such a controversial history, paid sufficient attention to other elements of the Franciscan charism. The danger of a certain assimilation with the monastic orders of the time is apparent. Even though St. Bonaventure emphasized the uniqueness of Franciscan poverty – he calls it "most sacred" and includes it in the triad of evangelical counsels – there is lack of that interior dimension of the evangelical ideal as outlined by St. Francis.

One more qualification of the Franciscan novice master should be noted. He was to be a priest, appointed to his important office by the minister provincial. The novices were committed exclusively to his care. It was his duty to teach and explain the Rule and train them in the discipline of the order, instruct them how to pray, especially how to chant the psalms and to watch over their conduct. He was to correct and punish them. He was to be at the service of the novices at all times and provide for all their material and spiritual needs. He was likewise their confessor. The role of the novice master as described by Father Germain Lesage was typical of all the orders of the time.

Among the Franciscans he was an older brother concerned with the spiritual development of his younger siblings. He guided them in the way of Franciscan life more by a living and empirical initiation than with theory. In his dealings with the novices, young men not permanently committed to the community, he also acted as the mother of the family. Otherwise his functions would be narrowly delineated by juridical norms. He enjoyed a certain flexibility in his role which, however, entailed the danger of some personalism and authoritarianism.¹⁰³

The Council of Vienne (1311–12) introduced some changes in terminology." A competent instructor shall be appointed who shall teach the novices to pray the Divine Office and practice regular observance." The passage of time brought to light the harmful effects of an excessively passive educational system which was definitely not calculated to stimulate any personal initiative or sense of responsibility among the candidates. On the other hand, the rapid falling off of regular observance soon compelled the superiors of the order to erect a barrier between the novices and the rest of the community, to prevent their being contaminated by prevailing trends.

It was an artificial categorizing which carried with it the obvious risk of institutional hypocrisy. Many novices resigned themselves to the rigorous discipline of the year of probation, buoyed up by the awareness that they

would soon be free of it. 105

To get a clearer idea of the religious climate of the novitiates in the last half of the thirteenth century, we must consult the Regula novitiorum, drawn up by St. Bonaventure, 106 and the larger work entitled De exterioris et interioris hominis compositione secundum triplicem statum incipientium, proficientium et perfectorum libri tres, which was certainly not the work of St. Bonaventure but of David of Augsburg, 107 and finally the famous Speculum disciplinae ad novitios. The latter has been attributed, but without solid evidence, to the Seraphic Doctor. It is almost certainly the work of his secretary, Bernard of Besse, who died between 1300 and 1304.108 The modern reader will discern in these writings a spiritual atmosphere far removed from the evangelical simplicity which brightens the writings of St. Francis. Constant harping on external practices and endless quotations from patristic and monastic sources make it difficult to appreciate a text that must be considered only partially Franciscan. 109

In accordance with the prescriptions of the Second Vatican Council, a thoroughgoing program for updating religious structures was undertaken which included religious orders and their novitiates. Modern novitiate formation allows a wider scope for the development of individual personality, personal charisms and creativity, coupled with a sense of personal responsibility. If I am not mistaken, this new but largely undefined approach deemphasizes the active role of the novice master.

In any case, the example of St. Francis as educator and spiritual director should give rise to serious reflection. In an age when the young mature in a milieu of consumerism and hedonism, we cannot assume that candidates for the order have developed a spirit of self-denial.110 One of the most challenging tasks of the novice master will be to arouse in his his novices a spirit of generosity and stability which lie at the very heart of religious life and guarantee the successful attainment of its goals. One area particularly appropriate for developing unselfishness among the candidates would be the loving service of the sick and elderly friars. Given the progressive aging of our provinces, it is essential that the novices be prepared for this very important duty. The spiritual director must play a dominant role in this ministry which today, as in the past, has been left too much to the initiative of the individual friar.¹¹¹ In my opinion we have a long way to go if we are to save our young friars from the temptation to set up unrealistic goals for themselves and attempt to climb a mountain without skilled and experienced guides. may pado uslugan to the anillal biggs add superiors of the order to creet a barrier between the novicer and the res

(b) Clothing of the Novitiate

In the second chapter of both Rules, Francis speaks of the special clothing the minister provincials are to give the novices. ¹¹² In the Approved Rule he uses the plural *postea concedant* which must refer to the superiors who admit the candidates. The term *pannus* does not mean just any kind of fabric but a woolen cloth which from the very beginning was the material used to make the Franciscan habit. ¹¹³ The "clothes of probation" were introduced into the order in 1220 when Honorius III established the novitiate. There can be no doubt that from that time on, the clothing of the novices, as probationers, was distinct from that of the professed.

The reason why Francis prescribed two different habits was a *presumptio juris* that if a novice requested and was granted the habit of the professed, he thereby implicitly made his religious profession with all the canonical obligations attached to it.¹¹⁴ Very likely it was Cardinal Hugolino or some other canonical lawyer who called the saint's attention to this possibility. Significantly it was Pope Gregory IX who, in 1231, was to abolish this type of automatic profession which had given rise to so much confusion.¹¹⁵

Both Rules specify that the novices' habit was to consist of "duas tunicas sine cappuccio, et cingulum et braccas et caparonem usque ad cingulum (two tunics without the hood, a cincture and drawers and a caparone reaching to the waist)." With the loving solicitude of a mother, Francis granted the novices two woolen tunics. One was an undergarment, a kind of shirt, worn next to the skin. 116 The other, an outer garment, was a long robe reaching to the feet, bound around the waist with a cincture but without a cowl or hood. 117 They were also given drawers to cover the lower body and legs, reaching to the knees. 118

The distinctive sign of the Franciscan novice was the "caparone reaching to the waist." "Caparone" was an uncommon word and meant a piece of cloth that covered either the head or upper part of the body to the waist. In choosing this additional article of clothing, Francis seems to have in mind the special condition of one who has recently left the world and has not yet become accustomed to the rigors of Franciscan life. 119

The Approved Rule leaves it to the prudent judgment of the ministers provincial to change the distinctive garb of the novitiate. Such changes were soon made. St. Bonaventure (or John of Peckham) state that in their time the caparone was given to only a few, because it had become a sign of ostentation. ¹²⁰ Angelus of Clareno suggests another reason. The friars felt that it was unbecoming to impose an emblem of probation on learned and mature men, some of whom were priests. ¹²¹

This attitude explains why the caparone or *capucium probationis* could be prescribed as a punishment for a professed friar guilty of sins or violations of the Rule.¹²² However, some provinces maintained the custom of distinct

habits for the novices and professed. Sometimes the difference was indicated by a cowl unattached to the habit to which were sewn two small

pieces of cloth resembling wings.123

We have no information concerning the rite of investiture used at the time of St. Francis. We might, however, recall that decisive moment when Francis heard the Gospel of the sending of the Apostles and "removed the shoes from his feet, put aside his staff, limited himself to one tunic, and girt himself with a rope instead of a belt" (1Cel 22). It is hard to say whether the Poverello used any formal rite when he invested Brother Giles with the habit. 124 St. Clare's biographer writes: "In front of the altar of our lady in the Portiuncula she received the garb of holy penance" (LC 8). Apart from one detail about St. Francis himself cutting her hair, we have no description of the ceremony.

Haymo of Faversham (d. 1243), minister general and indefatigable editor of the chronicles of the order and various liturgical manuals, makes no mention of investiture in his 1243 Ceremoniale nor in his Ordinationes

divini officii.125

So far as we can ascertain, the minister general Gerald Odo of Chateauroux (d. 1349) was the first to prescribe a special ceremony for the investiture of a Franciscan novice. In the Constitutiones generales of the general chapter held in Perpignan in 1331, he drew up a rite marked by a distinct monastic flavor. ¹²⁶ It included a special blessing of the novitiate habit: "O Lord Jesus Christ, who being in the form of God, deigned to take the form of a servant and become like to man and was in habit found as man for our salvation, we humbly beseech you that you bless this habit of our order, made in the form of a cross to remind us of your Passion, so that your servant N. who receives this garb of penance for the clothing of his body may, by imitating you, put on the most perfect example of all perfection. Who lives and reigns. . . . "127

It would be tempting to conclude this study of early Franciscan institutions with a prayer. But perhaps it would be better simply to offer a few thoughts that might serve as a starting point for reflection for

individuals or groups:

1. While welcoming new brothers with great joy, lively hope and fraternal charity, we must be aware of their special status as probationers – men who are trying to understand the true nature of the Franciscan fraternity and to learn what is expected of them. We must realize that they must be

led step by step into a new life-style.

2. It is a psychologically and pedagogically sound practice, reinforced by the age-old experience of the order, to entrust one skilled and experienced friar with the delicate task of introducing the novices to a practical knowledge and living experience of the ideals of the order.

Through daily association and understanding of the unique personality of each novice, he must judge whether he is capable of making a definite commitment to this manner of life. I feel that it is impossible for a number of individuals to share this responsibility.

3. In saying this, I by no means wish to exclude the help of other friars, like the assistant novice master and friars with specialized skills. And the support of the entire novitiate fraternity¹²⁸ is indispensable. All its members are expected to cooperate in an active and positive manner in realizing the objectives of the year of probation. They would be at fault if they were to oppose or gainsay the work of the novice master.

4. Several times in the course of this essay I have underlined the unique role of the spiritual director. The novitiate house must be a womb of life, not of spiritual abortions, for every province of the order.

5. I find it a very fruitful and provocative idea to think of the novitiate as a spiritual pilgrimage of penance-metanoia, through a total acceptance of the New Testament, and as a kind of sacrament of penance and reconciliation.¹²⁹

6. The opuscule De sex alis seraphim contains a passage which admirably sums up the aim of the novitiate year, and indeed of our very calling to the Franciscan life: "The superior must strive above all to form those entrusted to his care in the likeness of Christ (Christiformes), that is, to imprint on them the life and teachings of Christ, so that they not only turn to Him in their hearts, but imitate Him in their conduct." 130

Notes

- 1. See A. Nocent, in Nuovo dizionario di Liturgia, s.v. "Iniziazione cristiana," hereafter cited as Diz. Lit. The present article supplements my study: "De initiatione in vitam franciscanam luce Regulae aliorumque primaevorum fontium," in Lau 12 (1971):169-97, 241-64. The following had previously used the word "initiation" with reference to entrance into the Franciscan Order: J. Memry, Manual de iniciación progresiva a la vida religiosa: Postulantado y noviciado (Saragossa, 1960); F. Cocking, "Ontwikkeling van het initiatiejaar bij de minderbroeders," in Franc. Leven 49 (1966):196-208; Th. Matura, "Note sui problemi di iniziazione alla vita francescana," in Studi Franc. 67 (1970):479-85.
- 2. A. Nocent, Diz. Lit., s.v. "Iniziazione cristiana."
- 3. I shall treat of the novitiate in a future number. For a discussion of profession in the Franciscan Order, I refer the reader to the following: L. Hertling, "Die professio der Kleriker und die Entstehung der drei Geluebde," in Zschr. Kath. Theol. 56 (1932):148–74. See CF 6 (1936):294ff; I. Zeiger, "Professio in manus," in Acta Congressus Iuridici Internationalis III (Rome, 1936), pp. 187–202; O. Schmucki, O.F.M.Cap., "Die heilige Profess eine zweite Taufe: Historisch-theologische Erwaegungen zu einer Stelle unserer Konstitutionen," St. Fidelis (Lucerne) 48 (1961):105–24, 207–20. See BibFranc XII 1141; Lazaro Iriarte, O.F.M.Cap., "Il rito della professione nell'Ordine francescano," in Studi Franc. 66 (1969):245–68; BibFranc XIII 1520; F. Costa, Il nuovo Rituale della professione francescana: Linee strutturali e contenuto teologico (Rome,

- 1982); CF 53 (1983):154ff; Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione, s.v. "Professione," hereafter cited as Diz. Ist. di Perf. See also M. Auge, "Professione religiosa," in Diz. Lit., s.v. "Professione religiosa," with extensive bibliography. See also n. 1 above, and n. 17 below.
- 4. Opuscula sancti Patris Francisci Assisiensis, ed. K. Esser, O.F.M., (Rome, 1978), pp. 227ff. See also Esser's commentaries: "'Melius catholice observemus': Esposizione della Regola francescana alla luce degli Scritti e della parole di san Francesco," in Introduzione alla Regola francescana, Contributi et studi sulla Regola di S. Francesco a cura dei Frati Minori tedeschi (Milan, 1969), pp. 107–221; BibFranc XIII 307, especially nos. 122–28; K. Esser, "La Regola definitiva dei Frati Minori alla luce delle indagini piu recenti," in Documenta di vita francescana, Raccolti da K. Esser e E. Grau (Milan, 1972), pp. 31–98, hereafter cited as "La Regola definitiva." See also BibFranc XIII 306, especially nos. 58–61; M. Conti, Lettura biblica della Regola francescana (Rome, 1977), especially 184–190; BibFranc XIV 289.
- Opuscula, ed. Esser, n. 4. See especially D. Flood, W. van Dijk, and Th. Matura, La nascita di un carisma: Una lettura della prima Regola di san Francesco (Milan, 1976), especially p. 73; BibFranc XIV 308.
- 6. For the important role of "life" and its meaning for Francis, see especially K. Esser, "La Regola definitiva," pp. 54–57. On the question of the admission of novices in general and special legislation, see Fabianus ab Aldeaseca, "De admissione novitiorum" (Vallisoleti, 1951), with important bibliographical additions by Isidoro de Villapaderna, in CF 23 (1953):371–73. See also A. Boni, De admissione ad novitiatum in legislatione Ordinis Fratrum Minorum (Rome, 1958), hereafter cited as De admis ad novit., (fondamentale: BibFranc XII 1258); A. Diez, in Diz. Ist di Perf., s.v. "Ammissione in religione."
- 7. As far as I know, the first to stress the importance of this concept in the exercise of Franciscan authority and obedience was K. Esser. See *BibFranc* X 295, 318ff; O. van Asseldonk, "Spirito Santo, spirito, spirituale," in *Dizionario francescano*, s.v. "Spiritualitá, hereafter cited as *Diz franc*. See also R. Bartolini, *Spirito del Signore*: Francesco di Assisi guida all'esperienza dello Spirito Santo (Assisi, 1982), especially p. 345a. See also my article in *CF*, 54 (1984):175–77. See also C. B. Del Zotto, in *Diz franc.*, s.v. "Ispirazione, segno, sogno, rivelazione."
- 8. San Francesco d'Assisi: Gli scritti, ed. M. D'Alatri (Rome, 1982), p. 146.
- 9. See O. van Asseldonk, in Diz. franc., s.v. "Spirito Santo."
- For this first companion of the Poverello, see the late-lamented outstanding student of Franciscan matters, R. Manselli, in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, s.v. "Bernardo da Quintavalle." See also *BibFranc* XIII 615.
- 11. About the concept of God guiding each step, see my article: "La visione di Dio nell pietá di san Francesco di Assisi," in ItFranc, 57 (1982):196-232; L. Izzo, Dio nell'esperienza personale di Francesco d'Assisi secondo il suo "Testamento," pp. 233-62.
- 12. St. Bonaventure, Expositio, chap. 2, no. 2, Opera Omnia, vol. 8 (Quaracchi Ad Claras Aquas, 1898), 397b: "Et venerint ad Fratres nostros. Non hoc dicitur, quasi non liceat Fratribus non venientes exhortationibus praevenire, cum et ipse Dominus, homines ad discipulatum suum recipiens, plures corporali vocatione praevenisse legatur." On the disputed authorship, see B. Distelbrink, Bonaventurae scripta, authentica, dubia vel spuria, critice recensita (Rome, 1975), pp. 47-48, where he tends to favor St. Bonaventure, whereas I. Brady inclines to John of Peckham: "The Writings of Saint Bonaventure regarding the Franciscan Order," in MisFran 75 (1975):89-112.
- 13. A.G. Little, "Description of a Franciscan Manuscript formerly in the Phillipps Library now in the possession of A.G. Little," in CF 1 (1914):93. For Fra Pacifico, the King of Verses, see CF 34 (1964):258ff; R. Brown, "Appendix 7: Companions," in O. Englebert,

Saint Francis of Assisi, a biography (Chicago, 1965), Appendix 7: Companions, p. 437; C. van de Laar, CF-BibFranc, 1931-70, index (Rome, 1972), p. 452b.

14. See K. Esser, *Origini e valori autentici dell'Ordine dei Frati Minori*, trans. G.D. Foiandelli (Milan, 1972), p. 129. See the bibliography mentioned in n. 3 above and in n. 17 below.

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- 23. For a further explanation see F. Feltz, De coniugum admissione in religionem (Rome, 1941); CF 13 (1943):435-37; Fabianus de Aldeaseca, "De admissione novitiorum," in
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- 24. See chap. 13. See also L. Izzo, in *Diz. franc.*, s.v. "Castitá, purezza," together with the studied mentioned there at the end of the article.
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- 26. See O. Schmucki, "Les maladies de saint François d'Assisi avant sa stigmatisation," in Medicine nei secoli (Rome, 1972) 9, 18–56, especially 24–27, 49–50 (note).
- 27. See D. Mandic, De legislatione antiqua Ordinis Fratrum Minorum, vol. 1: Legislatio franciscana ab an. 1210-21 (Mostar, 1924), p. 90, n. 1. For the development of the office of minister provincial, see M. Plasschaert, "De origine officii superioris provincialis," in Ephem. Theol. Lov., 34 (1958):330-56; B. Koltner, De iuribus ministri provincialis in Ordine Fratrum Minorum usque ad annum 1517 (Rome, 1961); K. Esser, Origine e valori autentici dell'Ordine dei Frati Minori, pp. 74-93, passim. For an overview see G. Tamburino, in Diz. Ist di Perf., s.v. "Provincia."
- 28. See H. Grundmann, "Die Bulle 'Quo elongati' Papst Gregors IX," in AFH 54 (1961):24, lines 119-28. This critical edition, still the best, is also found in the collection: Ausgewaehlte Aufsaetze. Teil I: Religioese Bewegungen (Stuttgart, 1976), pp. 222-42. See F. Elizondo, "Bullae 'Quo elongati' Gregorii IX et 'Ordinem vestrum' Innocentii IV: De duabus primis Regulae Franciscanae authenticis declarationibus," in Lau 3 (1962):349-94.
- 29. "Bulla 'Gloriantibus vobis," in *Bullarium Franciscanum*, vol. 1 (Rome, 1759), 298a: "Nos devotionis vestrae precibus inclinati, ut singuli vestrum (i.e. the ministers provincial) in provinciis sibi commissis in absentia sua de consilio peritorum Fratrum suae sollicitudini commissorum, non obstante praefato statuto Regulae super receptione talium, aliquibus ex fratribus ad hoc idoneis vices suas committere valeant; vobis auctoritate praesentium concedimus facultatem."
- 30. Alexander of Hales (d. 1245), Giovanni da Rupella (d. 1245), Robert de la Bassee (d. after 1254), Odo Rigaldi (d. 1275). See L. Oliger, Expositio quattuor Magistrorum super Regulam Fratrum Minorum, 1241-42, (Rome, 1950), p. 130: "Insuper non videtur securum aliquibus Fratribus recedere ab intentione Regulae quam voverunt, obtentu alicuius privilegii impetrati, quoniam insuper consimili modo timent, in posterum corrumpi Regulae veritatem. Nam sicut ab intentione Regulae receditur in praesenti capitulo, obtentu privilegii impetrati, et hoc propter evidentem utilitatem in hoc casu, dispensatione Apostolica suffragante, ita propter manifestam, quae alicubi videbitur, necessitatem vel utilitatem, poterunt privilegia contra alios articulos Regulae impetrari." For this and other explanations of the Rule, see F. Elizondo, "Doctrinales Regulae franciscanae expositiones usque ad annum 1517," in Lau 2 (1961):449-92, hereafter cited as "Doctrinales expositiones."
- 31. See A. Boni, *De admis. ad novit.*, pp. 36, 38. On this topic see, but with some caution, A. Quaglia, "Il centralismo dell'Ordine francescano," in *Studi Franc.* 46 (1949):110-15.
- See also BibFranc IX 1322ff, with bibliography.

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quaeras quare sic artavit (Francis) cum etiam tunc facile fuerit advertere quod in posterum expediret ministros super hoc ampliorem potestatem habere, ad noc triplex ratio datur. Prima est ut omnibus pateret clarius quod Generalis est omnium pastor et ostiarius immediatus et quod sibi summe subici debent. Secunda est ut ex hoc clarius patesceret quam discretam et examinatam et quam puram receptionem intrantium voluit esse. Nic mirum, quia tota Ordinis propagatio ex hoc pendet. Et si radix est vitiata vix erit quin rami totius vitae sequentis sint vitiati. Tertia est quod, quia Ordo in summa egestate et circa tempora multiformium tentationum statuebatur, expediens fuit quod provisio universalis numeri fratrum a supreme capite fortius dependeret." See F. Elizondo, "Doctrinales expositiones," pp. 473ff.

33. While affirming this principle of unity, I have no wish to rule out a legitimate pluriformity which accompanies the implantation of the order among various ethnic groups and which is adapted to the formation of young men from various cultures. See the directions given by the Fourth Plenary Council of the Order (see n. 15 above), nos. 23 and 48, 130ff and 148, and the bibliography. Less emphasis is given to the absolute necessity of substantial uniformity of the Franciscan charism which must be incorporated in an appropriate manner. Otherwise we shall run the very real risk of our being divided into as many different religious orders as there are nations in which

we are established.

34. Expositio Hugonis de Digna super Regulam Fratrum Minorum, chap. 2; D. Flood, Hugh of Digne's Rule Commentary, p. 98: "In hac (materia) enim secundum regulam et statuta circa recipiendorum conditiones multa est diligentia et inquisitio adhibenda, ut merito tum propter discretionem tum etiam propter auctoritatem ministris provincialibus reservetur, qui sunt ianua ingredientium Ordinem debentque attentissime in personis commisso sibi Ordini providere." See also F. Elizondo, "Doctrinales expositiones," pp. 463ff. For the life of the author see A. Sisto, Figure del primo francescanesimo in Provenza: Ugo e Douceline di Digne (Florence, 1971).

35. For an exegetical commentary on this passage see the following studies by two confreres: S. Legasse, L'appel du riche (Mk. 10,17-31 et paralleles) Contribution a l'etude des fondements scripturaires del'etat religieux (Paris, 1966), and W. Egger, Nachfolge als Weg zum Leben: Chancen neuerer exegetischer Methoden dargelegt an Mk. 10,17-31 (Klosterneuburg, 1979), especially chapter 3, pp. 237-84, where the author shows the influence this Gospel had on Francis, maintaining, with some exaggeration, that it is the biblical text which is the basis of the Franciscan charism. See also BibFranc XIV

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36. L3S 28. See my article "La 'forma di vita'," pp. 349-52. To the bibliography given in the notes, especially n. 20 above, add: E.G. Garrison, Studies in the history of medieval Italian painting, vol. 4, nos. 3-4, 235-418, illus. As I learned from L. Gallant, "L'Evangeliaire de saint Francois d'Assise: Quelques remarques a partir du contexte liturgique et franciscain," in CF 54 (1984):241-60, especially pp. 248ff, n. 50, Garrison's work is somewhat unreliable in his treatment of the historical nexus between the "Missale plenarium" of Baltimore and the "sortes Apostolorum" in the Church of St. Nicholas. Personally I am not convinced by the objections offered, since the three Gospel texts are found at the beginning of the respective page and column of the manuscript. This is a detail that can hardly be ascribed to pure chance. See finally B. van Leeuwen, "Het evanglieboek van deNicolaus-kerk in Assisi," in Franc Leven 66 (1983):14-23, 5. illus.

37. See my article "La 'forma di vita'," p. 350, n. 19.

38. Test 14. See n. 4 above: K. Esser, Opuscula, p. 310: "Et postquam Dominus dedit mihi de fratribus, nemo ostendebat mihi quid deberem facere, sed ipse Altissimus revelavit mihi, quod deberem vivere secundum formam sancti Evangelii." This statement of

Francis himself refutes the account of *Anonymus Perusinus*, nos. 10ff. See L. Di Fonzo in *MisFran* 72 (1972):439ff, where we read that the three visitors asked the priest: "Domine, ostendas nobis Evangelium Domini Nostri Iesu Christi" (pp. 439ff). See my article, "La 'forma di vita'," p. 351, n. 24.

39. L3S 20. See also 1Cel 14ff, and 2Cel 12. See also L. Di Fonzo, "Per la cronologia di S. Francesco: Gli anni 1182–1212," in MisFran 82 (1982):63–72. For the spiritual meaning of Francis's total divestment before Bishop Guido II, see my articles: "Das Leiden Christi im Leben des hl. Franziskus von Assisi," in CF 30 (1960):356–58, and "Franciscus 'Dei Laudator et cultor': De orationis vi ac frequentia in eius cum scriptis tum rebus gestis," in Lau 10 (1969):181ff. For a more general summary see G. Cremascoli, "Exire de saeculo": Esame di alcuni testi di spiritualita benedettina e francescana (secc. XIII-XIV) (Rome, 1982).

- 40. RegNB II 4. See n. 4 above: K. Esser, Opuscula, p. 244. For the concept spiritualis see the bibliography given in CF 54 (1984) and O. van Asseldonk, in Diz. franc., s.v. "Spirito Santo."
- 41. RegNB II 5ff. See n. 4 above: K. Esser, Opuscula, pp. 227ff.
- 42. See 2Cel 75. See also C. Cargnoni, in Diz. franc., s.v. "Ozio."
- 43. Obviously it is not possible in this place to list all the studies on Franciscan poverty that have been published in recent years. I have referred to some of them in my review: "De quibusdam commentariis circa paupertatem franciscanam nuper in lucem editis," in CF 32 (1962):445-60. See also I. Schlauri, "Saint François et la Bible: Essai bibliographique de sa spiritualité evangelique," in CF 40 (1970):365-437, especially pp. 405-10. See also BibFranc XIII 761-80; K. Esser, "Mysterium paupertatis (L'Ideale della povertá in S. Francesco d'Assisi)," in Esser, Temi spirituali (Milan, 1981), pp. 67-91; L. Iriarte, "La 'altisima pobreza' franciscana," in EF 68 (1967):5-47. For a juridical viewpoint see Crescentius a Jesi, "De renuntiatione bonorum," in AnalOFMCap 71 (1955):127-31a.
- 44. Besides Fabianus de Aldeaseca, De admissione novitiorum (see n. 6 above), see A. Sartori, "L'etá d'ingresso di noviziato e di professione nell'Ordine dei Frati Minori Conventuali nel corso dei secoli," in Bollettino della Provincia (Patavina dei FF. MM. Conv.) 32 (1962), genn. apr., 91–107, and the other articles mentioned in n. 6 above.
- 45. That is, cc. 641-45 (De admissione in novitiatum). Among the numerous comentaries are the following: D.J. Andres, *Il diritto dei religiosi: Commento al Codice* (Rome, 1984); G. Accornero, "Gli Istituti religiosi (can. 607-709), Novita Motivazioni Significato," in *Apollinaris* 56 (1983):541-59; "I religiosi e il nuovo Codice di Diritto Canonico," *Atti della XXIII Assemblea CISM Collevalenza 8-11 Nov. 1983* (Rome, 1984).
- 46. See Constitutiones Fratrum Minorum Cappuccinorum una cum Regula et Testamento sancti Francisci (Rome, 1982), nos. 17–21, 29–32 ("Receptione ad vitam nostram").
- 47. Especially in nos. 61-66, as in n. 15 above, 158-161, 227-28.
- 48. We read in the final Rule: Brother Francis promises obedience and reverence to our Lord Pope Honorius and his successors canonically elected and to the Roman Church. And the other friars are obliged to obey brother Francis and his successors." A similar text is found in the prologue to the first Rule. Although there is no question here of a special vow, as with the Jesuits, we must recognize a bond of vital importance for the Franciscan Order. Times of more or less open or veiled rebellion and disobedience toward the ecclesiastical authorities have also been times of decadence for the Order. There is such a wealth of material on Francis's ecclesial sense that it is possible here to mention only the most outstanding: C. Van de Laar, CFBibFranc, index (Rome, 1972), p. 211ff; BibFranc XII 458-60, and XIII 695-98, and XIV 1040-57; CF 53 (1983):319, a special edition of Ant 57 (1982) with several articles on this topic, and pp. 340ff, a brief review by myself. See the articles mentioned in my study: "La 'forma di vita'," p. 364,

n. 49; T. Szabom, in Diz. franc., s.v. "Chiesa." On the specific character of this bond see J. G. Gerhartz, 'Insuper promitto': Die feierlichen Sondergeluebde katholischer Orden (Rome, 1966), pp. 232-47 (BibFranc XIII 1914). See also B. Belluco, in Ant 43 (1968):138-40. On the origin of this promise, from that made to the pope by the bishops of the Roman area, see M. Maccarrone, "Innocenzo III e la vita religiosa," in Studi su Innocenzo III (Padua, 1972), pp.221-37, especially pp. 300-5.

 ExpoC, chap. 2; L. Oliger (Quaracchi Ad Claras Aquas, 1912), p. 50. See F. Elizondo, "Doctrinales expositiones," pp. 481ff. For Angelo's personality and many-sided activity see L. von Auw, Angelo Clareno et les Spirituels italiens (Rome, 1979) (BibFranc

XIV 4496)

50. The Latin texts of the Earlier and Approved Rules are indicated at the beginning of

Part I of this essay.

51. For the Latin text, see R.B.C. Huygens, Lettres de Jacques de Vitry (1160/70-1240), évèque de Saint-Jean-d'Acre, ed. critique (Leiden, 1960), pp. 131ff. See Pia Gemelli, "Giacomo da Vitry e le origini del movemento francescano," in Aevum, 39 (1965):474-95; K. Elm, "Die Entwicklung des Franziskanerordens zwischen dem ersten und letzten Zeugnis des Jakob von Vitry," in "Francesco d'Assisi e francescanesimo dal 1216 al 1226," Atti del IV convegno internazionale, Assisi, 15-17 ottobre 1976 (Assisi, 1977), pp. 193-233.

52. Giordano da Giano makes reference to it in Jor 11. See C. Schmitt, "I vicari dell Ordine francescano da Pietro Cattani a frate Elia," in "Francesco d'Assisi e francescanesimo dal 1216 al 1226," Atti del IV Convegno internazionale, Assisi, 15-17 ottobre 1976,

pp. 235-63, especially pp. 238-41.

53. The Latin text can be found in Bullarium Francescanum, ed. J.H. Sbaraglia, vol. 1 (Rome, 1759). For an interesting commentary, see S. Di Mattia, "La bolla 'Cum secundum consilium' di Onorio III," in Annali della Libera Università della Tuscia, Anno Accademico 1973-74, Anno V, vols. 3-4, 15, pp. Bull. Franc., vol. 14, no. 1706.

54. For the history of the novitiate, see R. Bakalarczyk, De novitiatu, Dissertatio ... (Washington, 1927), pp. 9-37; I. Chmiel, De Magistro novitiorum, Dissertatio historico-iuridica (Turin, 1953), pp. 7-25; L. Remignon, "Le noviciat dans l'ancien droit," in Rev. Droit Canon, 4 (1954):193-97 (on the meaning of annus probationis); A. Boni, De admissione ad novitiatum in legislatione Ordinis Fratrum Minorum (Rome, 1958), pp. 5-8; J. Leclercq, A. Boni, R. Hostie, Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione, s.v. "Noviziato"; G. Lesage, Diz Ist. di Perf., s.v. "Maestro dei novizi." See also n. 97 below.

 Concilium Tridentinum, sessio 25; De regularibus, c. 15; Conciliorum oecumenicorum decreta, ed. J. Alberito et al. (Rome, 1962), p. 757.

56. Epist. Ad Apost. Sedem, in PL 214, 429ff, especially 430a.

57. "Const. Non solum," in Bull. Franc, vol. 1, pp. 342b - 343 especially 343ac.

58. As A. Boni shows in De admissione, p. 8. See n. 114 below.

59. This concept is expressed in the Bull Cum consilium in clear and elegant style: "Expedit cuilibet excelsioris viae propositum aggressuro, ut praecedant palpebrae gressus suos, vires videlicet proprias discretionis moderamine metiendo ... quare paene in omni Religionis est Ordine provide institutum, ut regulares observantias susceepturi certo tempore ipsas probent et probentur in eis; ne sit locus de cetero poenitudini, quam non potest levitatis occasio excusare," in Bull. Franc., vol. 1, p. 6ab.

60. Thus, for example, P. Zerbo, "San Francesco d'Assisi e la Chiesa Romana," in Francesco d'Assisi nell'ottavo centenario della nascita, Presentazione di G. Lazzati (Milan, 1982), pp. 75-103, especially pp. 84-87, where he discusses Francis's resignation as minister

general.

61. RegNB II 8-10: Opuscula sancti Patris Francisci Assisiensis, ed. C. Esser (Rome, 1978), pp. 244ff (hereafter cited as Opuscula): "Et cum (candidatus) reversus fuerit, minister

concedat ei pannos probationis usque ad annum, scilicet duas tunicas sine caputio et cingulum. Finito vero anno et termino probationis recipiatur ad obedientiam. Postea non licebit ei ad aliam religionem accedere neque 'extra obedientiam evagari' iuxta mandatum domini papae. . . ." See. K. Esser, Origini e valori autentici dell'Ordine dei Frati Minori, transl. G.D. Foiadelli (Milan, 1972), pp. 185ff. "A decisive step was taken toward a more solid organization and a more definite institutionalization. The former freedom to move about freely had to yield to stricter control based on ecclesiastical discipline" (p. 186).

- 62. See Iniziazione alla vita francescana, vol. 1, 5, p. 40, hereafter cited as Iniziazione.
- 63. See C. Schmitt, "Il vicari," pp. 244-46, especially p. 246.
- 64. See my article: "Mentis silentium: Il programma contemplativo nell'Ordine francescano primitivo," in Lau, 14 (1973):177-222, especially pp. 178-83.
- 65. Besides the article mentioned above, see O. Schmucki, Luogo di preghiera. Eremo. Solitudine. Concetti e realizzazioni in san Francesco d'Assisi, in F.S. Toppi (et al.), Le case di preghiera nella storia e spiritualità francescana (Naples, 1978), pp. 29–59. There is no indication of this kind of eremitic life in L. Canonici, in Dizionario francescano. Spiritualità, s.v. "Porziuncola, santuario." On the other hand, see F. Olgiati, in Dizionario, Indice analitico-tematico, s.vv. Eremo, Vita eremitica, Contemplazione, and Silenzio. It lacks a bibliography, however.
- 66. Schmucki, "Mentis silentium," pp. 209-15; C. Cargnoni, in *Diz. franc.*, s.vv. Ozio, Pigrigzia, Frate mosca, Formica, Accidia, and Mormorazione, with large bibliography; V. Redondo, "El trabajo manual en san Francisco de Asís," in *EF*, 84 (1983):85-120.
- 67. See R. Pazzelli, in *Diz. franc.*, s.vv. Penitenza and Mortificazione. See also G. Iammarrone, in *Diz. franc.*, s.vv. Corpo and Carne.
- 68. See my article: "Spiritus orationis et actionis humanae compositio ad mentem S. Francisci Assisiensis," in Lau, 23 (1982):376-403, with the works mentioned in the footnotes. See also BibFranc XIV 1118-60, and E. Mariani, in Diz. franc., s.vv. Preghiera, Orazione, and Pregare.
- 69. See Hilarius a Wingene (Pyfferoen), "S. Franciscus et S. Maria de Angelis ad Portiunculam," in Lau, 10 (1969):329-52 (BibFranc XII 573); L. Canonici, La Porziuncola: Storia del santuario del "perdono" (Assisi, 1970). For a study of the Marian atmosphere in which the formation of the first novices took place, see the summary by A. Pompei, in Diz. franc., s.vv. Maria, Madonna, Madre, and Immacolata; however, I believe that any attempt to read the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception into the documents is hindsight-history, as I have pointed out in CF 53 (1983):341ff.
- 70. For lay brothers in monastic orders prior to the time of Francis, see J. Dubois, in Diz. Ist. di Perf., s.v. "Converso," especially p. 110 and the bibliography. For our own order, see among others: Alessandro da Ripabottoni, I fratelli laici nel primo Ordine Francescano (Rome, 1956). See also CF, 28 (1958):113ff; K. Esser, Der Laie im ursprünglichen Minderbrüderorden (Munich, 1965); A. Ghinato, La figura del Fratello francescano nella storia dell'Ordine (Rome, 1968): BibFranc XIII 1921; L. Landini, The causes of the clericalization of the Order of Friars Minor 1209-1260 in the light of early Franciscan sources (Chicago, 1968): see CF, 39 (1969):198-200; J. Micó, "Los hermanos laicos en la evolución de la fraternidad primitiva," in Estud. Franc., 77 (1976):19-64.
- 71. See RegNB III. See O. Schmucki, Preghiera liturgica secondo l'esempio e l'insgenamento di san Francesco d'Assisi (Rome, 1980), p. 3-16 (especially pp. 15ff, bibliography).
- 72. For an explanation of this episode, see L. Casutt, L'eredità di S. Francesco: Riesame della sua spiritualità (Rome, 1952), pp. 197, n. 36. For the Poverello's attitude toward science, see D. Berg, Armut und Wissenschaft: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Studienwesens der Bettelorden im 13. Jahrhundert (Düsseldorf, 1977); see reviews in BibFranc XIV 1607. K. Esser treats the problem from a different angle, perhaps too positively, in his

"Studium und Wissenschaft im Geiste des hl. Franziskus von Assisi," in Wiss. Weish., 39 (1976):26-41.

73. See S. Rosso, in Nuovo dizionario di Liturgia, s.v. "Elementi naturali," 427-48, especially 438 and 447 (n. 36) and the bibliography. For Francis, see R. Manselli, "Il gesto come predicazione per san Francesco," in CF, 51 (1981):5-16.

74. An attempt to understand the Poverello's words suggested by L. Casutt. See also my article, "Spiritus orationis," pp. 396-400, especially p. 398, n. 59 (bibliography).

75. R. Manselli discusses this expression on various occasions, e.g. in his work: Nos qui cum eo fuimus: Contributo alla questione francescana (Rome, 1980), pp. 256-65. See especially J.-F. Godet and G. Maileux, Legenda seu Compilatio Perusina, Speculum Perfectionis. Concordance, Index, Listes de fréquence, Tables comparatives (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1978), 151 (forma), 135ff (exemplum).

76. Given the large number of studies of unequal historical and critical merit about Francis as the educator of his friars, I shall list them in an appendix to this article.

77. See Iniziazione, vol. I, 5.

78. See Text 5. For a historical and religious explanation of this prayer, read especially L. Lehmann, Tiefe und Weite: Der universale Grundzug in den Gebeten des Franziskus von Assisi (Werl in Westphalia, 1984), pp. 51-58, which also lists and evaluates the

preceding bibliography.

79. Francis's remarkable skill as teacher is admirably expressed in R.B. Brooke's Scripta Leonis, Rufini et Angeli, sociorum S. Francisci (Oxford, 1970), p. 22: "That the picture of him which emerges is so vivid is partly the result of Francis's exceptional gifts as a teacher. The Franciscan ideal was a simple one, to live by the Gospel text. The problem was how to present it. Francis taught in parables, by example, by exaggeration and paradox, by dramatization. He used the literature of the day, the Chansons de Geste and the Arthurian cycle ..., and projected his vision of poverty in the language of romance and chivalry. He tried to sanctify song and strumming of the guitar by composing songs to God in the vernacular. ... He was a subtle, self-conscious, imaginative teacher." There is a very comprehensive article by Olgiati in Diz. Franc., Indice analitico-tematico, s.vv. Maestro and Guida.

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81. Besides the article mentioned in n. 67 above, see especially S. Verhey, Der Mensch unter der Herrschaft Gottes: Versuch einer Theologie des Menschen nach dem hl. Franziskus von Assisi (Düsseldorf, 1960), passim (look in the index under Busse). See also BibFranc

XII 404.

82. See Manselli, Nos qui cum eo fuimus, pp. 265-70 ("Francis among the suffering,

marginated and poor"). See nn. 88 and 93 below.

83. RegNB IX. See also my article, "Linee fondamentali della 'forma vitae' nell'esperienza di san Francesco," in Lettura biblico-teologica delle fonti francescane, eds. G. Cardaropoli and M. Conti (Rome, 1979), pp. 183-231, especially pp. 212ff.

84. I listed the principal studies on the Ammonizioni in my article "La forma di vita

secondo il Vangelo' gradatamente scoperta da S. Francesco d'Assisi," in ItFran, 59 (1984):359, n. 40. See also BibFranc XIV 268-82, with its series of comments on the individual Admonitions. Our confreres S. Verhey and B. Leeuwen have a number of commentaries in Franc. Leven, 64 (1981):42-45 (Adm X), pp. 140-46 (Adm XXVI), pp. 250-54 (Adm XX), pp. 262-68 (Adm XII); 66 (1983):82-85 (Adm XIII), pp. 138-42 (Adm XIV), pp. 158-68 (Adm XI), pp. 231-34 (Adm XVII); 67 (1984):43-48 (Adm XVI), and also Franciscus van Assisi, 19 (1982):6-11 (Adm XXIV). See also G. Lauriola, "La Personalità di Francesco d'Assisi nelle sue 'Admonitiones'," in ItFran, 57 (1982):115-30. A few of the articles mentioned here can be found in M. Conti, in Diz. franc., s.vv. Ammonizione and Esortazione; A.M. Stuart, "An analysis of the Admonitiones of Francis of Assisi," in The Cord, 34 (984):167-73. Finally we must mention a commentary aimed at a wider audience by B. Campagnola, Francesco diacono di Dio per la Chiesa e le sue ammonizioni (Ascolo, 1984), pp. 64-186.

85. Adm V. See A. Pompei, in Diz. franc., s.vv. Gesú Cristo, Cristocentrismo, Regalità,

86. Adm I. See my commentary, "L'annuncio del mistero eucaristico di S. Francesco esempio per la pietà e predicazione eucaristica dei suoi figli," in "L'Eucarestia nella Teologia contemporanea e nella predicazione," Convegno tenuto a Cremona il 16-17-18 febbraio 1976, compiled from Atti dei Frati Minori Cappuccini, della Provincia di S. Carlo in Lombardia, vol. 15, no. 1, genn. marz. 1976 (Milan, 1976), pp. 5-19. See also

R. Falsini, in Diz. franc., s.v. Eucaristia. 87. See the bibliography in CF-BibFranc, index, 212b (Franciscus de Assisi); BibFranc XII

88. See Adm II 58, and the bibliography given in n. 67 above. See also K. Esser, "L'insegnamento di san Francesco sul rinnegamento di sé," in Temi spirituali (Milan,

89. See Adm III 59, and K. Esser "Impegno alla libertà (L'obbedienza secondo S. Francesco d'Assisi)", in Temi spirituali, pp. 93-118; S. López, in Diz. Franc., s.vv. Obbedienza, Comando, Autorità. But for a bibliography, see BibFranc XIV 1185-90.

90. See Adm V 60, and C. Cargnoni, in Diz. Franc., s.vv. Umiltà and Umiliazione, with

91. See Adm XIV 63, and K. Esser, "Mysterium paupertatis (L'ideale della povertà in S. Francesco d'Assisi)", in Temi spirituali, pp. 67-91. 92. See Adm XVI 64, and K. Esser, "Libertà di amare (Castità e verginità nell'ideale di S. Francesco d'Assisi)", in Temi spirituali, pp. 119-37; L. Izzo, in Diz franc., s.vv. Castità

and Purezza, with a good bibliography. 93. See Adm IX., and L. Temperini, in Diz. franc., s.vv. Amore di Dio and Amore del prossimo. For bibliography, see L. Schlauri, "Saint François et la Bible: Essai bibliographique de sa spiritualité évangélique," in CF, 40 (1970):365-437, especially

94. Adm XXVII. For bibliography, see n. 80 above.

96. For a quick look at the development of the statutes of the Franciscan Order, see Thomas of Eccleston, L'insediamento dei Frati Minori in Inghilterra, conversazione V, no. 17. "The friars of those early days, possessing the first fruits of the spirit, served the Lord, not compelled by human laws, but according to the free inclination of their religious spirit, satisfied with just the Rule and a very few statutes which were issued in the same year that the Rule was approved. And this was the first constitution which St. Francis drew up after the promulgation of the Approved Rule, as frate Alberto da Pisa said . . . that the friars were not to take their meals with seculars, unless it be for a few mouthfuls of meat in accordance with the words of the Gospel (see Luke 10:8), "Studium und Wissenschaft im Geiste des hl. Franziskus von Assisi," in Wiss. Weish., 39 (1976):26-41.

73. See S. Rosso, in Nuovo dizionario di Liturgia, s.v. "Elementi naturali," 427-48, especially 438 and 447 (n. 36) and the bibliography. For Francis, see R. Manselli, "Il gesto come predicazione per san Francesco," in CF, 51 (1981):5-16.

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because he had heard that the friars were becoming gluttonous." On the other hand, among the reasons for the misgovernment of the order by frate Elia, as Salimbene de Adam notes (Cronica, no. 24), "was the fact that throughout his regime there wre no general constitutions of the order. It is by means of the constitutions that the observance of the Rule is maintained, the order administered, common life is preserved, and so many good things are brought about." For the whole historical evolution and St. Bonaventure's work in collecting and editing, see E. Wagner, Historia Constitutionum generalium Ordinis Fratrum Minorum (Rome, 1954), pp. 38-46, and R.B. Brooks, Early Franciscan government: Elias to Bonaventure (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 210-85 (The Constitutions of 1239-60).

97. "Constitutiones generales Ordinis Fratrum Minorum editae et confirmatae in Capitulo generali apud Narbonam a. D. 1260, decima iunii, tempore rev. P. Fr. Bonaventurae," rubr. I, nos. 7-10, M. Bihl, in AFH, 34 (1941):40. See I. Chmiel, De Magistro novitiorum, pp. 27ff; A. Boni, De admissione, pp. 43-45, 78-81. See also Diz. Ist. di Perf., s.v. "Novizi"; P.D.M. Bertinato, De religiosa iuventutis institutione in Ordine Fratrum Minorum, (Rome, 1954); see CF, 25 (1955):434-36. Also by the same author see "Riflessioni sull'antica legislazione dell'Ordine," in Vita Minorum, 25 (1954):73-76 (BibFranc XI 1400; "Il Maestro dei novizi: Riflessioni sull'antica legislazione

dell'Ordine," Vita Minorum, 26 (1954):73-76 (BibFranc XI 1403).

98. See L. Pellegrini, Insediamenti Francescani nell'Italia dei Duecento (Rome, 1984), together with Carta insediamenti francescani dell'Italia dei secoli XIII - XIV, pp. 1220-

99. For the role of the custos in the second stage of the order's development, see R.A. Jara, De custodis officio in Ordine Fratrum Minorum usque ad annum 1517 (Rome, 1965); BibFranc XIII 1904.

100. J.G. Bougerol, in Diz. franc., s.v. "Desiderio." See C. Surian, Elementi per una teologia del desiderio e spiritualità di san Francesco d'Assisi (Rome, 1973) (BibFranc XIV 860); A. Blasucci, in Diz. franc., s.v. "Perfezione."

101. Schmucki, "La forma di vita," pp. 345ff.

102. See Lesage, Diz. Ist. di Perf., s.v. "Maestro dei novizi."

103. P.D. Bertinato, "Il Maestro dei novizi," Vita Minorum, 25 (1954):108.

104. Decretum 14, "Ne in agro dominico," in Conciliorum oecumenicorum decreta, p. 347. See P.D. Bertinato, De religiosa iuventutis institutione, pp. 62, 80.

105. Bertinato, De religiosa iuventutis institutione, "principi-base," pp. 66-68. For a further development of ecclesiastical legislation, see especially I. Chmiel, De Magistro

novitiorum, pp. 41-54.

106. See Opera omnia, vol. 8 (Quaracchi Ad Claras Aquas, 1898), pp. 475-90. For the date and other details, see B. Distelbrink, Bonaventurae scripta, authentica, dubia vel spiria, critice recensita (Rome, 1975), p. 52. See also J.G. Bougerol, Bibliographia Bonaventuriana (c. 1850-1973). (S. Bonaventura 1274-1974, V), (Assisi, 1974), p. 694b (indices).

107. Ed. Quaracchi Ad Claras Aquas, 1899, pp. 1-378. See Distelbrink, Bonaventurae scripta, 110s, with bibliography. See also K. Ruh, in Die Deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon, s.v. "David von Augsburg," with bibliography.

108. As found in the Opera omnia of St. Bonaventure, vol. 8, pp. 583-622. See Bonaventurae

scripta, pp. 193ff, with bibliography.

109. See F. Bernarello's attempt to present a broad picture, La formazione religiosa secondo la primitiva scuola francescana (Rome, 1961): CF 33 (1963):109ff. See also B. Madariaga (Zarauz, 1943): Arch. Ibero-Amer., II ép. 3 (1943) 128ff; idem, "La pedagogía franciscana y el actual momento pedagógico," in Verdad y Vida, 4 (1946):177-219, 361-404; E. Bettoni, La pedagogía francescana (Rome, 1967): CF, 38 (1968):437ff.

- 110. It is interesting to note that two German journalists have recently conducted a poll of individuals of diverse social standing and ideologies on the question of learning how to deny oneself: H. Schwan and W. Filmer, Verzichten lernen (Frankfurt, Verlag Ullstein, 1984), in Christ in der Gegenwart, 37 (1985):22c.
- 111. See Constitutiones Fratrum Minorum Capuccinorum una cum Regula et Testamento sancti Francisci (Rome, 1982), where it is recommended in no. 106, 4. The word was not used by the Quarto Consiglio Plenario (Rome (Italia), 2-31 March, "Formazione (Orientamenti)," in I Cappuccini si rinnovano: Conclusione dei quattro Consigli Plenari dell'Ordine (Rome, 1982), pp. 113-74. See B. Giordani and A. Mercatali, La direzione spirituale come incontro di aiuto (Brescia Rome, 1984). See also FrFr, 51 (1984):231-33.
- 112. RegNB II 8: Opuscula p. 244: "When the postulant returns, the minister should clothe him as a novice for a year, giving him two tunics without a hood, a cord and drawers, and a caparone reaching to the word." RegB: "Then they shall give him the clothes of probation, namely, two tunics without the hood, and the cord, and drawers and the caparone reaching to the cord, unless it should seem good to the minister, before God, to act otherwise."
- 113. See A. Blaise, Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs du Moyen-Age Lexicon Latinitatis medii aevi praesertim ad res ecclesiasticas investigandas pertinens (Turnhout, 1975), p. 650b. See some passages and the bibliography in my article, "Das Leiden Christi im Leben des hl. Franziskus von Assisi," in CF, 30 (1960):353-56. M. Auge's monograph, L'abito religioso: Studio storico e psico-sociologico dell'abbigliamento religioso (Rome, 1977) has a number of questionable statements. See CF, 48 (1978):198ff.
- 114. See, for example, Bartolomeo da Pisa, "De conformitate vitae B. Francisci ad vitam Domini Jesu," in AF, vol. 4, p. 390. See also A. Boni, De admissione, p. 8. W.N. Frey discusses the whole story of tacit profession in The Act of Religious Profession: A brief historical Synopsis and Commentary (Washington, 1931), pp. 23–26.
- 115. Gregorio IX, "Const. 'Quia nonnullos'," in Bullarium Romanum, vol. 3, p. 453, or in Enchiridion de statibus perfectionis (Rome, 1949), vol. 1, pp. 23, no. 53.
- 116. See A. Forcellini, Totius Latinitatis lexicon, vol. 4, pp. 558ff.
- 117. C.D. Du Cange and G.A.L. Henschel, Glossarium mediae et infimae Latinitatis, s.v. "Tunica monachorum." Bonaventure (or John of Peckham), "Expos.," c. 2, no. 10: Opera omnia, vol. 8, p. 400b: "... Necessarium vestimentum beatus Franciscus in duas divisit, in una intelligens exteriorem amictum, ut Fratres cappa (vel vestis species, quae olim caracalla/cuculla ... dicta: Edd., 400b, n. 7) tegantur, in alia intelligens omne corpori manifeste necessarium vestimentum." Idem, no. 11, p. 400b: "Hoc cingulum finiculus est, quia sacci funibus cingi solent."
- 118. Du Cange and Henschel, Glossarium: "femoralia, vestis species qua crura teguntur..."
 (p. 751c).
- 119. Ibid: "... Tegmen, cuculla, ita dicta tanquam brevior capa, quae majori capae supersternitur" (p. 122a). D. Mandić has collected the Franciscan texts in his De Legislatione antiqua Ordinis Fratrum Minorum: I. Legislatio franciscana ab an. 1210-1221 (Mostar, 1924), p. 88, n. 5, where he describes this garment: "Caparo seu cuculla vestis brevior caputiata, caput et humeros cooperiebat, antiquitus communissima monachis formae tamen diversae."
- 120. "Expos.," c. 2, no. 11, Op. om., vol. 8, pp. 400ff.
- 121. Expositio Regulae Fratrum Minorum, chap. 2, ed. L. Oliger (Quaracchi Ad Claras Aquas, 1912), p. 61. A similar prescription is found in the Statuta et definitiones provinciae Aquitaniae saec. XIII, chap. 1, no. 3: M. Bihl, AFH, 7 (1914):470: "Habitus etiam noviciorum detur omnibus, praeterquam personis personatum habentibus vel sacerdotibus vel baccalauriis in alia scientia vel alias personae cui secundum Deum videretur habitus (of the professed) concedendus."
- 122. 2Cel 154: Salimbene de Adam, Cronica: G. Scalia I (Bari, 1966), pp. 149ff; Const.

Narbonenses, rubr. VII: De correctionibus delinquentibus, nos. 3-6: M. Bihl, in AFH, 34 (1941):83. For the shape of the capucium probationis, see R.H. Huber, A documented History of the Franciscan Order (1182-1517) (Milwaukee – Washington, 1944), p. 678: "This caputium probationis was a sort of round collar (or bib) detachable from the tunic, and covering the chest (orbicularis pars ad pectus pendens)." He does not indicate his source.

123. See Expositio Petri Johannis Olivi super Regulam Fratrum Minorum, chap. 2: D. Flood, Peter Olivi's Rule and Commentary: Edition and presentation (Wiesbaden, 1972), p. 120: "Congrue in hoc distinguuntur ab habitu professorum, quia per divisionem caparonis a corpore tunicae congrue designatur quod nondum sunt corpori religionis aut eorum praelatis immobiliter assuti. Per alias etiam caputii instar caputii pastorum seu laicorum de monachis conversorum, designatur initiatio conversionis eorum cum libertate revolandi ad exteriora."

124. See Leo of Assisi (?), Vita B. fr. Aegidii, no. 2: R. B. Brooke, Scripta Leonis, Rufini et Angeli, p. 322: "Et in eodem die induit eum B. Franciscus; postquam vero indutus fuit, tanto exhilaratus est gaudio, quod tam pauperculo indumento tegeretur, quod lingua et corde exprimere non valeret."

125. See S.J.P. van Dijk and J.H. Walker, The Origins of the modern Roman Liturgy: The Liturgy of the Papal Court and the Franciscan Order in the thirteenth Century (Westminster - London, 1960), pp. 314-18; Sources of the Modern Roman Liturgy: The Ordinals by Haymo of Faversham and related Documents, 1243-1307, ed. S.J.P. van Dijk, vols. 1-2 (Leiden, 1963); see BibFranc XII 1090.

126. See (Arnauld de Sarrat) "Chronica XXIV Ministrorum generalium," in AF, vol. 3,

127. "Const. gen. Capituli Perpiniani," chap. 4, no. 9: S. Mencherini, in AFH, 2 (1900):284:

"... Pia quidem ordinatione statuimus, ut omnes cordas et habitus, quos portare debemus, praelati nostri Ordinis secundum antiquam consuetudinem benedicant, maxime tamen et indefectibiliter hoc volumus et praecipimus observari, quando et ubi primitus ad Ordinem nostrum venientibus conceditur habitus noviciorum." For the benediction formula, see idem, pp. 598ff; the prayer is found on page 598. For the custom of conferring a new name at the time of clothing – only partly observed – see G.M. Pou y Marti, "Cambiamento di nome dei religiosi del nostro Ordine," in Vita Minorum, 21 (1950):215–18 (BibFranc IX 1326).

128. See, for example, O. van Asseldonk, La maturazione della vocazione nella fraternità francescana, in AA. VV., La vocazione per la Chiesa di oggi: Studio interdisciplinare, by B. Giordani and M. Conti (Rome, 1979), pp. 261-70.

129. It is not my purpose to treat the novitiate program in detail. There have been many articles published in recent years. Read the directives of the Fourth Plenary Council, 1981. Also G. Roth, "Die franziskanische Erziehung und Gestaltung des Noviziates," in Die sechste Tagung franziskanischer Geistesgemeinschaft auf süddeutschem Raum (Dillingen, 1961), pp. 5-17 (BibFranc XII 1139): Lazaro de Aspurz (Iriarte), "Il noviziato oggi," in ItFran, 43 (1968):193-207; C. Gneo, "Identità, cappuccina," in ItFran, 55 (1980):403-18; Th. Matura, "La formación franciscana hoy: valores centrales y temas de actualidad," in Sellectiones de Franciscanismo, 13 (1984):181-96. See also C. Gneo, Educazione religiosa attuale nei documenti del Magistero (Rome, 1973); Gneo, Educazione alla libertà (1981); Gneo, Educazione al dialogo (Rome, 1980) - topics especially important for current discussion.

130. Traditionally ascribed to St. Bonaventure, *De sex alis Seraphim*, V, 9, in *Op. om.*, vol. 8, p. 132ab, but its authenticity has been questioned by I. Grady, "The writings of Saint Bonaventure regarding the Franciscan Order," in *MisFran*, 75 (1975):89-112, especially pp. 105ff. There can be no doubt, however, that it is the work of a Franciscan writer.

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[Note: The original of this bibliography was in chronological order. We have taken the liberty to print it in alphabetical order. - Editor]

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