

Francis's Two Letters to the Custodes: Proposals for Christian-Islamic Ecumenism in Praising God

LEONHARD LEHMANN O.F.M.CAP.

"Die beiden Briefe des hl. Franziskus an die Kustoden: Ansätze für
eine christlich-islamische Ökumene im Loben Gottes"

Translated by Ignatius McCormick, O.F.M.Cap.

Francis's two Rules and his Testament have always aroused more interest than his letters. This is especially true for the two Letters to the Custodes, which are, in fact, not very well known. The second one was recognized for the first time in the latest critical edition of the *Opuscula Francisci*¹ and has since undergone new translations.

In this article, we shall present the two Letters to the Custodes as they appear in the Latin edition of Kajetan Esser, who also gave them their titles. Since the second letter is more of a codicil and contains little that is new, we shall treat it briefly, as a kind of confirmation of the first letter, for that in fact is what it really is, nothing more nor less.

Our principal interest is in the important first letter. The fact that it has survived in only one manuscript has raised some doubts about its authenticity.² The objections, however, are groundless, since the second letter makes reference to the first. Moreover, Francis's authorship is supported by internal evidence, as Esser has shown³ and as this essay will further demonstrate. Now that we have a critical edition of the letter, we are in a position to study its structure, the elements that are peculiar to it, and what it has in common with other writings of the saint.

Textual analysis provides a clearer understanding of the purposes Francis had in mind in writing it and what concerns he particularly emphasized. We believe that we can find in these letters an inchoate message for all Christians, common to both Islam and Christianity. The ecumenical thrust of the letters is all the more credible, since it stems from Francis's famous journey to the Saracens and his encounter with Sultan Al-Malik al-Kamil, something unheard-of at the time. The ideals expressed in the letters, however, reach far beyond what we know of his meeting with the Sultan. It is this factor that makes them so interesting.

I. First Letter to the Custodes

We present the wording of the letter with the sentence-sequence as given in Esser's edition. The body of the letter is subdivided for reasons which will appear to be logical if we take into consideration the text in its entirety and in its several parts.

Epistola ad Custodes (IEpCus)

First Letter to the Custodes

1. Universis custodibus fratrum minorum, ad quos litterae istae pervenerint, frater Franciscus in Domino Deo vester servus et parvulus, salutem cum novis signis caeli et terrae, quae magna et heaven excellentissima sunt apud Deum et a multis religiosis et aliis hominibus minima reputantur.
2. Rogo vos plus quam de me ipso, quatenus, cum decet et videritis expedire, clericis humiliter supplicetis, quod sanctissimum corpus et sanguinem Domini nostri Jesu Christi et sancta nomina et verba eius scripta, quae sanctificant corpus, super omnia debeant venerari.
3. Calices, corporalia, ornamenta altaris et omnia, quae pertinent ad sacrificium, pretiosa habere debeant.
4. Et si in aliquo loco sanctissimum corpus Domini fuerit pauperrime collocatum, iuxta mandatum Ecclesiae in loco pretioso ab eis ponatur et consignetur et cum magna veneratione portetur et cum discretione aliis ministretur.
5. Nomina etiam et verba Domini scripta, ubicumque inveniantur in locis immundis, colligantur et in loco honesto debeant collocari.
6. Et in omni praedicatione, quam facitis, de poenitentia populum moneatis, et quod nemo potest salvari, nisi qui recipit sanctissimum corpus et sanguinem Domini (cfr. Jo 6:54).
7. Et, quando a sacerdote sacrificatur super altare et in aliqua parte portatur, omnes gentes flexis genibus reddant laudes,
1. To all the custodes of the Friars Minor who receive this letter, Brother Francis, your poor worthless servant in God, sends greetings, with new portents in heaven and on earth, which are very significant in the eyes of God, but are disregarded by the majority of people, including religious.
2. With everything I am capable of and more, I beg you to ask the clergy with all humility, when it is called for and you think expedient, to have the greatest possible reverence for the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, together with His holy name and the writings which contain the words which consecrate His body.
3. They should set the greatest value, too, on chalices, corporals, and all the ornaments of the altar that are related to the holy sacrifice.
4. If the Body of our Lord has been left in a poverty-stricken place, they should put it somewhere that is properly prepared for it, according to church law, so that it will be kept safe. They should carry it about with the greatest reverence.
5. If the name of God or the writings that contain His words are found lying in the dust, they should be picked up and put in a suitable place.
6. In all your sermons you shall tell the people of the need to do penance, impressing on them that no one can be saved unless he receives the Body and Blood of our Lord.
7. When the priest is offering sacrifice on the altars, or the Blessed Sacrament is being carried about, everyone should kneel down

gloriam et honorem Domino Deo vivo et vero.

8. Et de laude eius ita omnibus gentibus annuntietis et praedicetis, ut omni hora et quando pulsantur campanae semper ab universo populo omnipotenti Deo laudes et gratiae referantur per totam terram.

9. Et, ad quoscumque fratres meos custodes pervenerit hoc scriptum et exemplaverint et apud se habuerint et pro fratribus, qui habent officium praedicationis et custodiam fratrum, fecerint exemplaria et omnia, quae continentur in hoc scripto, praedicaverint usque in finem, sciant se habere benedictionem Domini De et meam.

10. Et ista sint eis per veram et sanctam obedientiam. Amen.

and give praise, glory and honor to our Lord and God, living and true.

8. When you are preaching, too, tell the people about the glory that is due to Him, so that at every hour and when the bells are rung, thanks and praise may be offered to almighty God by everyone all over the world.

9. My friars and custodes who receives this letter can be sure that they have God's blessing and mine if they copy and keep it, and have copies made for the friars who are devoted to preaching or are superiors, and if they preach all that is contained in it to the last.

10. These directions should be regarded by them as true commands of holy obedience. Amen.⁴

A. Structure and Unity of the Letter

1. Its Parts

On the basis of language and content, the letter can be divided into three parts. Part One has all the characteristics of a typical introduction. After a charming but somewhat mysterious greeting, it states the occasion for writing the letter: neglect of the significant "portents in heaven and on earth by many religious and other people as well."

Verses 2-8 comprise the body of the letter. The writer now goes over to the first person singular. The pronouns *vos* and *me* refer to the writer and the recipients of the letter. In his introduction, Francis laments a certain lack. This must be remedied through corrective measures. Herein lies the main theme of the letter. Although he directly addresses the custodes, he has two other groups in mind. This leads to further division of the main part of the letter into two segments, the second of which is again divided into two parts.

In verses 2-5, the custodes are told to appeal in all humility to the clergy, in order to honor and diligently care for the Eucharist and the word of God. Verses 6-8 concentrate on all the people. Here the custodes are charged to carry out the writer's wishes not by entreating (*supplicare*) but through preaching. In verses 6-8 the key word is preaching, which should center on two topics: (a) penance (verses 6-7) and (b) praise (verse 8).⁵ The use of parallels in this section should not be overlooked. We should take note, too, of the use of connectives and contrasts.

Heading: "Et in omni praedicatione, quam facitis."

Theme: De poenitentia

The custodes: Admonish.

The people: Reception of Holy Communion; reverence; genuflecting; praise.

Theme: De laude

The custodes: Proclaim and preach.

The people: Praise and thanks to God every hour at the sound of the bell.

Parallelism is exemplified in the use of *et... et*; *de poenitentia... de laude*; and *moneatis... annuntietis et praedicetis* (second person plural subjunctive).

The exhortation and preaching of the custodes should be met with a docile attitude on the part of the people. The appeal is made to all: *nemo... nisi*; *omnes gentes*; *ab universo populo... per totam terram*.

Verse 8 is linked to 7 by the word *et* and *vivus et verus*, and also through the repetition of the words *laudes* (twice) and *omnes gentes*.

Verses 2-5 and 6-8 are linked to 2-8 by:

- the *et* that leads from one part to the other;
- the succession of words like *quod*, *si*, *ubicumque* and *quando*.
- the identical verb form (second person plural) which is placed at the beginning of verses 2, 6, and 8;
- the idea of oral communication, which is expressed by all these verbs;
- the direct appeal to the custodes, who are the immediate recipients of the body of the letter.

The conclusion of the letter (verses 9-10) begins with another *et* which links it with the preceding verse. Here the custodes are not addressed by the you-form, but in the third person - "they" should. There is no further mention of the Eucharist and the praise of God, but of the letter itself, which becomes the object of the final exhortation: *hoc scriptum, in hoc scripto*.

To sum up, we have: (a) a greeting, in the first verse; (b) the body of the letter, in verses 2-8, in which Francis addresses the custodes: "clericis supplicetis, quod corpus et sanguinis... nomina et verba... super omnia debeant venerari;... in omni praedicatione, quam facitis;... de poenitentia populum moneatis...; de laude... omnibus gentibus annuntietis et praedicetis, ut...; (c) the conclusion: Importance of the letter and its promulgation.

2. Consistency of Style and Content

Now that we have given an outline of the text, we can study the letter in the light of criteria which show it to be a unified whole. Such are the I-You

form, sentence linkage, the pleading tone of the letter, and its consistent train of thought. Nor must we overlook its frequent couplings and use of contrast.

(a) *The I-You Form, Typical of This Letter*

While the I-You form is completely lacking in the so-called Letter to the Clergy, the First Letter to the Custodes provides a perfect example of one individual speaking to another, or several others. Francis uses this form to speak to his brothers. Although he is the person speaking throughout the text, he does not, for all that, thrust himself forward. After greeting the custodes as their worthless servant, he used the I-form only once, in verse 5. "Mine" and "me" occur three times (5, 2, 9). Otherwise he expresses his wishes in the passive voice or couches them in a form of request: "You should," "You ought to." A whole series of "You shoulds" follow the introductory "I beg you." This direct form of address is good evidence for accepting the text as a genuine letter. The introduction, too, shows that it is indeed a letter, since unlike his message to the clergy, it definitely identifies itself as such (*istae litterae*) and expressly mentions the writer and the recipients.

(b) *The Use of et to Join Sentences*

As in the Testament, the most certainly authentic of all Francis's writings, the First Letter to the Custodes makes frequent use of the conjunction *et* to join sentences. Ten of them begin with *et*. One other has the conjunction *etiam*. H. Boehmer saw here a convincing proof of the genuineness of the letter.⁶

(c) *Word Pairing and Phrase Sequences*

The word *et* is employed in the body of the letter as well as in the introduction. Word pairing occurs frequently, thus:

Verse 1: *vester servus et parvulus ... caeli et terrae ... magna et excellentissima ... a multis religiosis et aliis hominibus ...*

Verse 2: *corpus et sanguinem ... nomina et verba ...*

Verse 4: *ponatur et consignetur et cum magna veneratione portetur et cum discretione aliis ministretur.*

Verse 5: *nomina et verba ... colligantur et ... collocari.*

Verses 6-7: *et quod ... corpus et sanguinem ... et quando ... et in aliqua parte ... laudes, gloriam et honorem ... Deo vivo et vero.*

Verse 8: *annuntietis et praedicetis ... omni hora et quando ... laudes et gratiae ...*

Verse 9: *pervenerit ... et exemplaverint et ... habuerint et ... fecerint exemplari et omnia ... praedicaverint; officium ... et custodiam; benedictionem ... Dei et meam.*

Verse 10: *veram et sanctam obedientiam.*

Word pairing often lends a certain rhythm to the text. Two such word pairings are found in verse 1 in the principal and the dependent clauses. Verse 2 has another. In verse 4 the parallelism is expressed with substantives: *Cum veneratione - cum discretione*. A double predicate completes the two subjects in verse 5.

Doubling is found in verses 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9 through a succession of clauses united by *et*. The series culminates with no less than seven *ets* in verse 9. We may say of the entire letter: Its style is marked by the repetition of the copula linking sentences. The writer reaches a crescendo in his range of expressions.

(d) *Contrasts*

The letter does not make frequent use of contrasts. Whenever they occur they are consistent in content and even in wording with those found in other writings of the saint – further evidence of its authenticity.

The only contrast found in verse 6 (*nemo . . . nisi qui*) stresses the reception of Holy Communion as a necessary means of salvation, as Francis did in his Second Letter to All the Faithful: "Nemo salvari potest nisi per sancta verba et sanguinem Domini."⁷ The contrast in verse 5 repeats word for word one that is found in his Letter to the Clergy: "... in locis immundis . . . loco honesto."⁸

His lament over the lack of appreciation for the Eucharist finds eloquent expression in the use of contrast: "quae magna et excellentissima sunt apud Deum et a multis religiosis et aliis hominibus minima reputantur."

In some of his letters Francis enjoins the recipients to carry out what he has written and warns about the judgment awaiting those who neglect to do so. He writes to the rulers of the people: "If you fail to do this, know that you will have to render an account before our Lord and God Jesus Christ on the day of judgment."⁹

This do-or-else theme is expressed negatively and positively in his warning to the clergy. There are threats and promises. "All clerics are obliged to observe all this above all else unto the end. And those who do not, must know that they will have to render an account on the day of judgment before our Lord Jesus Christ. And those who copy this letter so that it might be better observed must know that they are blessed by the Lord our God."¹⁰

The Letter to the Custodes contains no such threat. The exhortation is expressed positively: He who complies must know that he is blessed by God and Francis. It would appear that Francis does not speak to the superiors of the order as forcefully as he does to the diocesan clergy. At any rate, this lack of contrast sets the style of the letter apart from his admonition to the clergy, a difference all the more striking since the content of both texts is very similar.

(e) *The Pleading Tone of the Letter*

Another distinctive stylistic feature of the letter is its frequent use of the hortatory or optative subjunctive. Of the thirty-nine predicates in the main and subordinate clauses, sixteen are in the subjunctive mood, which gives the letter a pleading tone: "I beg you earnestly, as if I were asking for myself, that you ..." (verse 2). The use of the imperative or hortatory moods of the verb carries this urgent note throughout the letter. Sometimes his plea approximates a command: *debeant* (verses 2, 3, 5). Like the introduction, the close is an appeal to obedience: "Et ista sint eis per veram et sanctam obedientiam. Amen" (verse 10). And of course the fulfillment of his wishes is accompanied by a promise of blessings (verse 9).

(f) *A Consistent Whole*

Any text takes on the nature of a consistent whole through a logical development of one or more themes. In the divisions of the First Letter to the Custodes we can see what unites the various parts, and what divides them. The body of the letter is taken up principally with the Eucharistic theme (verses 2-7) and subordinately with that of *laudes*. Both themes coalesce in the proclamation that the clergy are to "honor the Body and Blood, names and words of the Lord," and that it is God the Lord to whom belongs praise. In verses 2-6 Christ is called *Dominus*. In verse 7 *Dominus* refers to God, and in verse 8, only *Deus* is mentioned.

In addition to the aforementioned, we find in *Dominus Deus* another unifying phrase. Here we encounter a concept that pervades the entire text. *Dominus Deus* stands at both the beginning and close of the letter. It is a phrase that clamps the text together, that links the introduction with the body and conclusion. In the body of the letter, at the end of verse 7, the Pauline *Deo et vero* follows *Domino*, a phrase taken from 1 Thessalonians 1:9 or from the Roman Canon, an addition that is important for an understanding of Francis's image of God. Moreover, the appellation, whether derived from Scripture or the liturgy, constitutes another solid argument for the authenticity of the letter, because Francis used the phrase *Domino Deo vivo et vero* also in the Christmas psalm of his Office of the Passion; and at the end of every psalm he praises "the Lord, the living and true God." It appears, too, in Francis's handwritten *Praises of God* from La Verna, which is still preserved: "You are the Good, every Good, the highest Good, the Lord, the living and true God."¹¹

From these parallelisms it is easy to recognize Francis as the author of the Letter to the Custodes. He refers everything to the Lord; He is for him the permanent, living reality.

The expression "Lord" also forms a link between the introduction and the body of the letter. The *super omnia debeant venerari* (verse 2) is set over

against *minima reputantur* (verse 1). The *super omnia*, so typical of Francis, also bears witness to the authenticity of the letter.

The body and conclusion of the letter are further joined by the word "preach" (verses 6, 8, 9).

In addition to the examples we have already presented, further support for the unity of the letter and its authorship is to be found in the fact that the introduction and conclusion have a similar ring.

1. Universis custodibus fratrum minorum, ad quos litterae istae pervenerint, frater Franciscus in Domino Deo vester servus et parvulus . . .	9. Et, and quosque fratres meos custodes pervenerit hoc scriptum . . . habere benedic- tionem Domini Dei et meam.
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Francis liked to speak to all the custodes from time to time. In the beginning and conclusion of the letter he speaks of himself as being in close contact with *Dominus Deus*. The two sentences are similar in wording, and they have five *ets* in verse 1, and six in verse 9.

That the First Letter to the Custodes concentrates on a single theme and develops it thoroughly becomes evident when we examine the persons mentioned in the text. Francis laments in the beginning of the letter that "the new signs in heaven and on earth" are disregarded "a multis religiosis et aliis hominibus" (verse 1). Under *religiosi* the custodes have to look first of all at themselves. They are addressed in terms of their responsibility for their subjects and their mission to the clergy and the people. They are first of all asked to lead the clergy in reverence for the Eucharist, and then to preach to all people. The *alii homines* are to be reached through the clergy and their preaching. These groups are mentioned again in the body of the letter (verses 2, 4, 6, 7, 8).

3. Deductions

Two conclusions can be drawn from what we have said:

(a) *The Letter Is Not an Artificial Patchwork*

Ever since its discovery around the turn of the century, the First Letter to the Custodes has often been looked upon as a compilation from the other letters, because themes from the latter often recur in it, at least in part. J. Cambell has some reservations about the present textual structure. He does not believe that Francis wrote the salutation. He lists the First Letter to the Custodes among the "écrits dont l'authenticité est douteuse, au moins sous leur forme actuelle"¹² ("writings of doubtful authenticity, at least in their present form").

Two years later he went further and placed the letter among the writings "dont l'existence même doit être mise en doute"¹³ ("writings whose very existence is questionable"). Since the Volterra manuscript presents the

letter as a summary of the Letter to All the Faithful, and since the First Letter to the Custodes manifests many similarities with the Letter to the Clergy and the Letter to the Rulers of the People, Cambell concludes that it is only a digest of the others and labels it a "riddle."¹⁴

A careful analysis, however, should have made it clear that both in form and content the text has its own distinctive identity. There is no variation of style. The same words and sentence structure recur in all three parts. A consistent line of thought pervades it like a refrain. As for the contested introduction, we must note that the opening sentence not only has the identical style and wording as the body of the letter, but names the very persons mentioned in the verses that follow. The fact that Francis calls himself *vester servus et parvulus* is another argument in favor of the authenticity of the salutation. he gives himself the same title in the Testament and in his other letters.¹⁵

There is need to clarify one more expression in the opening sentence, one which many readers find strange in the mouth of Francis of Assisi.

(b) "*The New Signs in Heaven and on Earth*" Are the Eucharist and the *Salât*, the Daily Prayer of the Muslims

If the introduction and body of the letter are similar, as we have shown, there remains a further question: Does the body of the letter shed any light on the mysterious *nova signa caeli et terrae* of the opening sentence? Esser admits that he did not succeed in clarifying the expression. He thought it might be a rebuttal of Cathari teaching on the Eucharist.¹⁶ Cambell thinks that it betrays a Joachimite influence.¹⁷ Esser finds this conclusion a bit farfetched and leaves the question open.¹⁸

We may find a solution within the text itself. A number of clues indicate that verses 6-8 form a complete unit. Preaching penance, the reception of Holy Communion and Eucharistic devotion are closely connected with a song of praise to which the faithful are to be summoned by the ringing of a bell. Francis passes from one theme to the other with a simple "and" and evidently does not see preaching about public worship as "an entirely distinct topic."¹⁹ We must not be too anxious to separate what Francis has put together. He wished the custodes to preach how, at the sound of the bell, praise and thanksgiving were to be shown to the Lord present in the Eucharist. There is no doubt that the text gives priority to devotion to the Eucharist, but it immediately moves on to the second theme: public worship. Since the text unites the two topics so closely, it is our belief that the "new signs" are not limited to the Eucharist. They include a public call to prayer.

Students of the letter agree that Francis's appeal was influenced by the Muslim rite of *salât* which he observed in the Near East.²⁰ Is it not interesting that for Francis the call of the muezzin seemed to be a new sign

between heaven and earth? – a sign that, like the Eucharist, was little respected by religious and lay people. For Francis, God's presence was not restricted to the Sacraments. He experienced the divine presence in all things. We cannot rule out the possibility that he saw the Islamic *salât* as one of the "new signs of heaven and earth."

Our supposition gains additional support from his Letter to the Rulers of the People, which is closely associated in time and content with the Letter to the Custodes. The former does not speak of bells summoning the people to prayer, but of a messenger, or rather of a sign: "Et tantum honorem in populo vobis commissio Domino conferatis, ut quolibet sero annuntietur per nuntium vel per aliud signum, quo omnipotenti Domino Deo ab universo populo laudes et gratiae referantur."²¹ The wording is similar to that found in the Letter to the Custodes, only that the latter replaces the generic "sign" with "bells."

Except for the Letter to the Rulers of the People and the First Letter to the Custodes, the word *signum* appears only in the Testament of Siena.²² This unusual choice of the word reinforces our belief that the Letter to the Custodes uses it in the same sense as the Letter to the Rulers of the People. While the later uses it in the singular, the Letter to the Custodes has the plural *signa*, since the writer is thinking about the Eucharist as well as the *salât*. In the introduction to the First Letter to the Custodes, the "new signs" is the keynote, developed through a close association of the Eucharist with the call to prayer – another proof that the letter is far from being a jigsaw puzzle.

The combination "heaven and earth" is likewise characteristic of Francis's style. In the Letter to the Custodes it has reference to the Eucharist. It occurs again in his Letter to the Entire Order: "... ut omnem honorem ... exhibeatis sanctissimo corpori et sanguini Domini nostri Jesu Christi, in quo quae in caelis et quae in terris sunt, pacificata sunt."²³

The two words often appear in the psalms of the Office of the Passion. The psalmist uses them to embrace the entire universe.²⁴ We find them again in Francis's paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer,²⁵ and in his prayer before each hour of the Office.²⁶ The image of "heaven and earth" is consonant with Francis's way of thinking. It comes as no surprise that he frequently addresses God as "sanctissime Pater, Rex caeli et terrae."²⁷

Cambell's unfounded assumption that there is a Joachimite influence in the "new signs in heaven and on earth" is thereby refuted. The expression is Francis's own, and is explained by his experience of the Muslim *salât* and his yearning for a Eucharistic revival. Once the unity of the letter's structure is established, we can discuss the *nova signa*. They stand as title and leitmotiv at the head of the letter, which then proceeds to treat of the "Body and Blood, name and words of the Lord, and the praise of God" (*de laude*).²⁸

B. Problems of Content

1. The Recipients

(a) *The Immediate Recipients: All Superiors*

The salutation clearly indicates the writer and recipients of the letter. The latter are singled out and addressed en masse – *universis custodibus*. They are mentioned again at the close of the letter (verse 9). The word “custodes” occurs only twice in the letter, but each time with a modifier which applies it to an entire group. Who are these custodes?

During the lifetime of Francis, the word *custos* was not yet used to designate one who administered a subdivision of a province, later to be known as a custody. The *Regula bullata* does not anticipate the later hierarchy of administration and does not accord a *custos* a clearly defined area of authority.²⁹ In the Rule for Hermitages, too, it is used in a rather generic sense.³⁰

The Letter to the Custodes also evidences this broad use of the word. Francis recruits all the superiors of the order to serve as the advance troops of his Eucharistic campaign.³¹ The circumstances of the times led him to send his message to all the superiors of the order, who in his time were comprised in the term *custodes*,³² which meant the widest possible gamut of administrators. He desired that his letter be copied for the brothers “qui habent officium praedicationis et custodiam fratrum” (verse 9). The letter is therefore addressed to “all superiors and preachers of the order,” a definite group but a very extensive one.

Francis obliges them to observe all that is contained in the letter (verse 9). He considers it so important that it must be proclaimed to the very end of time.³³ To emphasize its obligation further, he makes it a matter of obedience, convinced that anyone who observes it lives in “true and holy obedience” (verse 10). Francis could not play this trump card for the clergy, since they were not his subjects. When he speaks to his own followers, however, he does not hesitate to invoke obedience to accomplish his goal.

(b) *The Wider Circle of Recipients - The Clergy*

The immediate addressees of the letter are all those who exercise any administrative function in the order. But even though the message is meant for members of the order, it does not limit itself to strictly internal affairs. It reaches out farther. Besides the custodes, the introduction mentions “many religious and other people.” Whatever might be meant by *religiosi*, the writer obviously had in mind both monks and other devout individuals beyond the pale of his order. Otherwise he would have simply addressed the *fratres*,³⁴ as he did in the Rule and Testament. We can conclude that *religiosi* includes, in ever widening circles, custodes – many religious – other people.

Religiosi then has a broader connotation than custodes. It definitely includes all those subject to the custodes. In a certain sense it includes the clergy insofar as they are to be the primary object of the custodes' concern (verses 2-5).

Other religious leaders were aware of the contemporary crisis in Eucharistic devotion. Francis began his reform at the center: the clergy. The custodes are to ask of the clergy what Francis asked of themselves, orally and in writing. Whether he was recalling some unpleasant experiences, or simply out of a desire to avoid offending the diocesan clergy,³⁵ Francis speaks *humiliter* and adds *cum decet et videritis expedire* (verse 2). The superiors are not to give the appearance of issuing orders. They should appeal to the clergy with all modesty, and then only when it is appropriate to do so. We can discern here two opposing thrusts. On the one hand, Francis's love for the Eucharist impells him to take action. On the other, he restrains these advance troops of his Eucharistic campaign who might otherwise invade the territory of the diocesan clergy and do more harm than good.

His earnest appeal to the custodes, and his concomitant charge that they act with humility and reserve, show how conscious he was that his mission had nothing to do with blind fanaticism.

(c) *The Widest Circle of Recipients: All People and Nations*

The people constitute the next group for the apostolic efforts of the custodes. If their spiritual care for the clergy is the object of his *supplicare*, their apostolate among the people is *praedicatio*.

In all their discourses, the superiors must urge the people to do penance and impress on them the necessity of receiving Holy Communion to save their souls. Penance and the sacramental life of the church are closely associated. Francis opposes the views of some religious movements that considered the practice of penance to be more important than the reception of the Sacraments, and under the pretext of a more austere life alienated themselves from the church and her liturgy.³⁶ Francis's insistence that penance should be part of every sermon³⁷ indicates that he looked upon penance as embracing the totality of the Christian way of life. "To preach penance" is the burden of the second part of the letter. All other directives are subordinate to this all-encompassing theme.³⁸

The preaching of penance and his exhortation to receive Holy Communion is directed to all. Francis believed that no one could be saved without the Eucharist.³⁹ Preaching goes beyond the clergy and reaches out to the people. When we read *populus* in verse 6 and *omnes gentes* in verse 7, we must think of all the people the custodes could touch. Later, in verse 8, there is no longer question of any limitation. Francis says expressly: "Et de laude eius ita omnibus gentibus annuntietis et praedicetis, ut omni hora et

quando pulsantur campanae semper ab universo populo omnipotenti Deo laudes et gratiae referantur per totam terram" (verse 8).

Here we can discern a wider scope. *Ab universo populo* is complemented by *per totam terram*. The addition is not tautological. It brings out the universal intention of the writer, that thanks be given to almighty God by all the inhabitants of the earth. Francis envisages a practice meant to endure for all times and to be disseminated among all people. The *Regula non bullata* shows that Francis's broad vision of all nations was not something new.⁴⁰ The passage is reminiscent of Jesus' commission to the Apostles, sending them out to preach "to all nations."⁴¹ The custodes are not to limit their preaching of the divine praises (*de laude eius*) to the people of their immediate surroundings but to carry it to the peoples of the entire world. Francis entrusts his custodes and preachers with a universal mission transcending all national boundaries.

2. A Bridge between Muslim and Christian

One result of my lengthy research on the Letters to the Custodes is a conviction that we must pay close attention to Francis's use of words like *omnia*, *universus*, *totus*, *semper*, and so forth. They appear frequently in his prayers. He often inserts them into fixed formulas such as the psalms, or a liturgical prayer (e.g. *Adoramus te*) in order to give them a universal scope.⁴²

Universals pile one on another in his Letters to the Custodes. All this emphasis on togetherness leaves us with the impression that the writer was trying to drive home something that the custodes were not accustomed to hear. What lay behind this manner of speech? Was it a desire to express something new and important?

Bertrand Cornet offers a tentative explanation. Francis was searching for something like the *salât* for the people of Europe.⁴³ Internal criticism of the words and concepts supports this idea. The repetition of "from every people on the face of the earth" indicates the world-encompassing view of the writer. He is thinking of an ancient, worldwide practice called the *salât*, the prayer which every adult Muslim is obliged to say five times a day.

The ceremony of *salât* is a combination of bodily postures and minutely ritualized prayer. The seventeen parts which constitute the complete *salsalât* must be meticulously carried out. First of all one must face toward Mecca (*qibla*). Every mosque has a niche (*mihrab*) facing in that direction. Still standing, he expresses his intention to perform a specific *salât*, e.g. the one for noon. It is important that the intention be clearly stated. Next he raises his arms to shoulder-height and pronounces the formula "Allah is great" (*allâh akbar*). This is called *takbir* and its purpose is to prepare the mind for prayer and consecration (*ihrâm*) – to put aside all distractions. He thereupon drops his hands, grasps his left wrist with his right hand and recites the opening sura of the Koran. He bows (*rukû*) until his palms touch his knees, then straightens up again. Next follows the prostration (*sugûd*) during which he

kneels down and touches the ground first with his hands and then with his forehead. Once more he resumes a kneeling posture with his hands on his thighs. The prostration is then repeated. These introductory postures are called the obeisance (*rak'a*). Each *salât* consists of a specified number of *rak'as*. One must remain motionless during each position of the *rak'a* and pray the *Allah akbar* as he passes from one to the other. After completing the prescribed number of prostrations, he remains in a kneeling position and makes his profession of faith (*tasahud*, or *sahâda*). He invokes a blessing on the Prophet and all the other faithful present, turning his head first to the right and then to the left. This concludes the ritual (*ihram*). A special official (the muezzin) calls out the hours of prayer (*adân*) from the minaret of the mosque.⁴⁴

When, in his Letter to the Rulers of the People, Francis speaks of a herald who would call the people to prayer, the similarity to the muezzin is striking. He proposes the same idea in slightly different terms in the Letter to the Custodes:

First Letter to the Custodes

When you preach, tell the people about the glory that is due to Him, so that at every hour and when the bells are rung thanks may be offered to almighty God by everyone all over the world.

Letter to the Rulers

Every evening at a signal given by a herald, or in some other way, praise and thanks should be given to the Lord God Almighty by all the people.

Both letters have the same goal in mind. They are addressed to important "multiplicators." The superiors and preachers of the order are to explain the sign and its purpose to all the people. The rulers of the city-states ought to adopt the Muslim custom and incorporate it in their statutes. The ultimate goal is the praise of God rising up from "all the peoples of the earth."

Francis felt compelled to proclaim this idea of a joint Muslim and Christian praise of God loud and clear, because such an ecumenical witness, a sign of uniting two hostile religions in prayer, was unheard-of and even unthinkable for people accustomed to preaching of crusades and whose minds were filled with hatred of Islam.

In his Letter to the Custodes, Francis's enthusiasm drove him to the rather impractical resolution to stir up praise and thanksgiving to heaven "at every hour" from all people. Even supposing that by "every hour" he meant only the canonical hours of the Divine Office, or the five Islamic periods of prayer, his plan could hardly be carried out by everyone. Consequently, Francis pared down his request to the rulers to a more realistic goal. He would have a time of prayer proclaimed only each evening by a herald, who would be the counterpart of the Islamic muezzin. His ultimate aim, nevertheless, was common prayer arising from all the people of the earth.

Francis was so interested in a *salât*-like sign because it would be a novelty for Christian Europe. The Angelus bell was still unknown in his

day, though it comes to mind when we read the First Letter to the Custodes and the Letter to the Rulers of the People.⁴⁵ In many places a signal was given at the approach of darkness (the curfew), but it had no particular religious significance.⁴⁶ Europe did not provide the incentive for Francis's idea.⁴⁷ At any rate we find no indications in his early writings. It is true that after the promulgation of the *Regula non bullata* every Friar Minor was obligated to preach praise and penance,⁴⁸ but there is no mention of preaching *about* praise, that is, about any sign calling people to praise God.

We can therefore rightly assume that it was his third missionary journey to the East (1219–20)⁴⁹ that gave Francis the idea of a public call to prayer.⁵⁰ The worldwide scope of his plan can be understood against his experiences there. It was there that Francis saw the Muslims, at the call of the muezzin, kneel down, bow toward Mecca and pray to Allah the Almighty. The sight made such a deep impression on him that he himself would often add gestures to his prayers.⁵¹

In a world bent on conquest, he felt in the cry of the muezzin and the prayer-response of the faithful an omen of something that might unite the two warring factions of the human race. Henceforth his custodes and preachers who had already traveled to many parts of the East and West⁵² would promote a call to prayer like that of the Muslims *per totam terram* as an international institution. The wandering preachers would call mankind to the praise of God wherever they found themselves. Francis's letter gave them an additional missionary commitment.

Francis's call for all people to praise God must be seen in the context of the crusaders' siege of Damietta. He had crossed the seas "in an ardent longing for martyrdom,"⁵³ and would have no part in the mutual slaughter of Muslim and Christian. He dreaded to behold with his own eyes the defeat of the Christians, which he had foretold (August 29, 1219).

His desire to meet the sultan was in total accord with the spirit of the Gospel. "That Francis was there and actually spoke with him cannot be doubted, especially since, as Louis Massignon has shown, and more recently Francesco Gabrieli, a certain witness to the saint's presence can be found in the biography of an Egyptian theologian and jurist, Fakhr ad-din Fârisî, famous in his time as spiritual director of al-Kamil. In his biography, mention is made of a discussion with a certain Christian monk, held in the presence of the sultan. The circumstances are such that they can refer only to Francis."⁵⁴

These words of the renowned historian Manselli remove all doubt about the historicity of Francis's meeting with the sultan, even though a further question remains whether the Islamic source identifies Francis as the "Christian monk," as R. Manselli, F. De Beer, and especially Basetti-Sani maintain.⁵⁵

There is considerably more evidence for the meeting from Christian sources. The accounts of Thomas of Celano and Bonaventure⁵⁶ are in general agreement with Jacques de Vitry, who also describes Francis's meeting with the sultan, whom he labels, with some exaggeration, as *bestia crudelis*. This friend of the friars, who was bishop of Acre, extolls the defencelessness and courage of the man from Assisi. With burning zeal for God's cause, Francis, unarmed, dared to approach the sultan to preach the word of God. His efforts enjoyed modest success, since the Muslim ruler sent back the fearless preacher unharmed and even asked him to pray that it might be revealed to him which of the faiths was the most pleasing to God.⁵⁷

In all these circumstances, Francis presented himself not as a warrior, or partisan of any faction, but simply as a Christian. When the Saracen sentinels challenged him, he gave the simple answer: *Ego Christianus sum*.⁵⁸ Bonaventure writes: "Francis, the servant of God, boldly replied that he was not sent by men, but by the most high God."⁵⁹

Although Celano, Bonaventure, and Jacques de Vitry are unanimous in affirming that Francis went to the camp of the Saracens and met the sultan, it would appear that the significance of his action for future missionary methods based solely on the witness of word and example escaped the first two writers.

Thomas of Celano does not conclude from the Christian defeat and the behavior of Francis that a crusade of arms was senseless, but only: "If victory is to be hoped for from on high, battles must be entrusted to the Spirit of God."⁶⁰

With Bonaventure, Celano posits martyrdom as the principal motive of Francis's missionary journey.⁶¹ Celano believed that his unsuccessful attempt to convert the sultan must be explained by the fact that the Lord was sparing the saint for the "privilege of a unique grace," the stigmatization.⁶² For Bonaventure, the stigmatization was a vicarious martyrdom, or an extraordinary seal on his desire for martyrdom.⁶³

The biographers seem to miss the point that the unarmed pilgrim, dressed like the Islamic Sufi ascetics,⁶⁴ had succeeded on another plane, that of giving witness, without condemning his fellowman, of profession his faith without political or military involvement, of preaching his beliefs without self-righteousness, of tolerance without compromising his principles. Francis's evangelical method was not without results. The sultan listened to him attentively and even afforded him hospitality for several days, as Jacques de Vitry testifies:⁶⁵

The accounts relate that his evangelical life, his courtesy and gentleness, made a deep impression on the sultan and his court. More important than his conversation with the sultan, of which our knowledge is very meager, more important than his criticism of the crusade was Francis's willingness to risk his life to bring the good news of salvation in

Christ, who established peace through the blood of the cross. Seen in this light, Francis's meeting with the sultan transcends time and was to be a fruitful reminder for the entire missionary apostolate of the church, and especially of the Friars Minor. The manner in which Francis met with the sultan served as an inspiration for a new attitude of Christians towards Muslims.⁶⁶ His friendly approach represented no useless attempt at conversion, but a victory over the crusader-mentality⁶⁷ and a presage of Christian Islamic rapprochement.⁶⁸

Keeping in mind Francis's remarkable encounter with the Islamic world, we can understand how his appeal for a call to prayer, sent out to all peoples, was meant to serve as a step toward better understanding between Islam and Christianity. While this cannot be proved directly from the letter, it is in harmony with the thinking of the Founder of Modern Missions.⁶⁹

3. Reverence for the Eucharist "Above All Things"

The First Letter to the Custodes is bi-polar. It transcends Christianity and every other religion and can be called a universal summoning of all peoples. It also speaks to the members of the church and pleads for a deepening of the sacramental life. In addition to his worldwide missionary vision, to unite all peoples of the earth in prayer at specified times, Francis speaks of a mission within the body of the church. He is very concerned with expanding and intensifying reverence for the Eucharist. His custodes are to repeat to the clergy what he had already expressed in his letter to them. They should reverence the Eucharist *super omnia*.

Francis kept this priority to the very end of his life. He employs almost the identical wording in his Testament, where he attaches the greatest importance to reverence for the Eucharist: "Et haec sanctissima mysteria super omnia volo honorari, venerari et in locis pretiosis collocari."⁷⁰

In his admonition, Francis makes the clergy aware of the practical details to be observed in reverencing the Eucharist. Now he reminds them again, through his custodes: "They should set the greatest value, too, on chalices, corporals, and all the ornaments of the altar that are related to the holy Sacrifice."⁷¹

He already made reference to the chalice and corporals in his Letter to the Clergy. Instead of altar cloths, he speaks now of appurtenances of the altar in general. He adds: "Et omnia quae pertinent ad sacrificium." Here, more clearly than in the admonition to the clergy, we can see how he extends Eucharistic devotion to everything in any way associated with the Mass.

The same appears from the precise instructions he gives to the people. While in his admonition to the clergy he urges them not to carry the Blessed Sacrament abroad in a careless manner, and not to give it to all indiscriminately, he now writes: "When the priest is offering sacrifice at the

altar or the Blessed Sacrament is being carried about, everyone should kneel down and give praise, glory and honor to our Lord and God, living and true."⁷²

In both writings Francis gets down to concrete details. He gives practical instructions. Among the directions he gives to the people, genuflection requires special mention. At the same time it was not yet the general custom to genuflect before the Blessed Sacrament. Even Honorius III in his encyclical *Sane cum olim*, of November 22, 1219, prescribed only a bow at the elevation of the Host.⁷³

While the Letter to the Custodes clearly echoes the mind of the pope, Francis goes beyond the official practice of his time. Again he was likely influenced by his experience in the Near East. He asks that all the people bend the knee, not only at the consecration of the Mass but whenever they meet the Blessed Sacrament being carried about. In his time the genuflection was not customary even for the priests after the consecration. This reverence before the Blessed Sacrament first appears in the fourteenth century and was later incorporated into the rubrics of the Roman Missal.⁷⁴ No doubt Francis took his cue from the New Testament (e.g. Philippians 1:10) or from Islamic usage rather than from the contemporary church.

Both in his Letter to the Clergy and in his First Letter to the Custodes, Francis speaks of another devotional practice: honoring the name and words of the Lord.⁷⁵ In addition to reverence for the word which confects the Sacrament, in his Letter to the Custodes he adds genuflection as a sign of respect for the Sacrament itself. Francis went beyond the wishes of the pope as expressed in *Sane cum olim* and proposed signs which eventually won worldwide acceptance.

If Francis and his followers really preached what was written in the Letter to the Custodes, they must have brought about a profound renewal of Eucharistic devotion.

4. *Belief in the One Almighty God as the Basis for Ecumenism*

What is the relationship between the two focal points in the letter? What elements are common to the external and internal mission undertaken by Francis? Why does he stress devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, expand it and preach it? Why did he long for a supranational call to prayer?

Francis himself tells us the ultimate goal of all his wishes: That the Lord be praised. To the Lord be praise, glory, honor and thanks through devotion to the Eucharist and through a worldwide call to prayer. His mission, both within the church and outside it, finds its synthesis in God. His idea of uniting all peoples in worldwide praise of God has its roots in his belief in the "Lord, the living and true God" (verse 7), whom he longed to see worshiped as the "Almighty One."

Divine omnipotence is the bridge on which Christian and Muslim can

meet. Islam worships Allah as the great and almighty one. Perhaps Francis's peaceful presence in Damietta and his preaching to the sultan were supported not only by the Gospel message but by an awareness that Muslims as well as Christians adored a transcendent God.

Wars of religion must be an offense to the Almighty. It comes as no surprise to learn that from that time on Francis issues a resounding call for praise of the Almighty.⁷⁶ In his letters to the custodes and to the rulers, he expresses his longing for a universal call to prayer so that "praise and thanksgiving might be offered to the almighty God by all people."⁷⁷

It is against this background that the *omnipotens* begins to take color and shape. Since God is almighty, He transcends all races, peoples and times. All human differences are meaningless. All men can, and ought, always and everywhere, to worship the one almighty God. Praise and thanks to God must span the globe.

Francis's deportment in the presence of the sultan shows that this universality is founded on faith in the transcendence, omnipotence and oneness of God. His appeal is to God alone. He proclaims himself God's messenger. He is not a member of any political or ecclesiastical party. His mind fixed solely on God, he moves back and forth between the two hostile camps. He is a free man among his fellow humans, whatever might be their social rank or religious beliefs.

In this sense he too is a pilgrim of the absolute.⁷⁸ His encounter with Sultan al-Kamil was a nonsectarian approach, and it wound up with some degree of success, which we are only now beginning to understand.⁷⁹ H. Mislin calls the conversation in the Muslim camp "an ecumenical encounter." Francis was a genuine and loyal Catholic, but one not encumbered by a crusade-mentality.⁸⁰ There on the banks of the Nile in the year 1219, thoughts of conquest meant nothing for Francis. We are tempted to think that in the sultan's tent the ideal of an all-encompassing catholicity dawned on Francis. He experienced human friendliness, a friendliness devoid of any fanaticism, that was not conditioned by specific dogmas or any rigid profession of faith. The sultan's 'Pray for me' must have echoed in Francis's mind for a long time.⁸⁰

Francis believed in one true God, who is God of all peoples, even of non-Christians. His attitude, which we would now call ecumenical, was based on a belief in one Lord. His faith-oriented contemplation of a "living and true God" opened his eyes to the religious values of other peoples. His spirit of tolerance and his non-participation in a violent conquest of the holy places did not imply indifferentism. He strove only to achieve a goal that corresponded with his ideal of divine worship and which could erect a bridge between Muslims and Christians. And he bade his custodes to announce and proclaim to all peoples the message he understood and accepted for himself.

II. The Second Letter to the Custodes

We need not spend much time discussing the Second Letter to the Custodes, since it adds little to the content of the first letter, but only serves to reiterate it. It also confirms our view that Francis of Assisi was marshalling a well-ordered campaign.

Epistola II ad Custodes

Second Letter to the Custodes

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Universis custodibus fratrum minorum, ad quos istae litterae pervenerint, frater Franciscus, minimus servorum Dei salutem et sanctam pacem in Domino. 2. Scitote, quod in conspectu Dei sunt quaedam res nimis altae et sublimes, quae aliquando reputantur inter homines pro vilibus et abiectis; 3. et aliae sunt carae et spectabiles inter homines, quae coram Deo tenentur pro vilissimis et abiectis. 4. Rogo vos coram Domino Deo nostro, quantum possum, quod litteras illas, quae tractant de sanctissimo corpore et sanguine Domini nostri, detis episcopis et aliis clericis; 5. et memoria retineatis, quae super his vobis commendavimus. 6. Aliarum litterarum, quas vobis mitto, ut eas detis potestatibus, consulibus et rectoribus, et in quibus continetur, ut publicentur per populos et plateas Dei laudes, facite statim multa exemplaria, 7. et cum magna diligentia eas porrigite illis, quibus debeant dari.⁸¹ | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brother Francis, the least of the servants of God, wishes all the custodes who receive this letter, salvation and holy peace in the Lord. 2. Know that some things which are noble and exalted in the sight of God are looked upon by men as mean and despicable. 3. And other things which men prize as worthwhile and precious are mean and despicable in the eyes of God. 4. I beg you before the Lord our God, with all the strength of which I am capable, that you transmit this letter, which treats of the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord, to the bishops and other clerics; 5. and keep in mind those things which we have entrusted to you. 6. And as soon as possible have many copies made of the other letters which I send you, which you are to give to the mayors, consuls and rulers, in which it is stated that the praises of God should be proclaimed among all people in public places, 7. and be careful to give them to those who should receive them.⁸² |
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What Esser entitled the Second Letter to the Custodes (*EpCust II*) was published for the first time in our century in his *Opuscula Francisci* (1976). The original Latin text has been lost. The historian of the order, Luke Wadding, knew it only in a Spanish translation. He retranslated it into Latin and incorporated it in his edition of the opuscula.⁸³ Naturally it lost something stylistically as a result of this double translation. Moreover, since Wadding's is the only version that has come down to us, some scholars have removed the second letter from the canon of authentic Franciscan letters.⁸⁴ Cambell rejects it as a typical apocryphal work and feels that any further discussion is fruitless.⁸⁵

Together with Sabatier and Goetz, Esser was able to come up with convincing evidence for the authenticity of the text, with some reservations: "Content and train of thought derive from Francis. In its written form it has undergone some alterations."⁸⁶

There is no problem in assigning the content to Francis. Even in its present (perhaps altered) form, we find turns of speech reminiscent of the saint's other writings.

From the letter itself it is evident that the writer meant it to be a kind of postscript to his Letter to the Rulers of the People. He grasps the opportunity to remind the custodes of his former letter to them and their responsibility to pass on his message to the clergy. Consequently this Second Letter to the Custodes is an important witness for the authenticity of the three letters it mentions. The all bear a similar message. From the Second Letter to the Custodes it would seem that they were written in the following chronological order: Letter to the Clergy, First Letter to the Custodes, Letter to the Rulers of the People, and Second Letter to the Custodes. Like the other letters, the second to the custodes must have been written around 1220.⁸⁷

The Second Letter to the Custodes repeats the message of the first. Francis is aware that he has been called and given the responsibility to promote devotion to the Eucharist among the clergy and the people, and to introduce a public call to prayer. To carry out this mission, he makes use of the custodes and preachers of his fraternity. In the first letter he makes an earnest appeal, reinforced by a reference to obedience and a promise of blessings, to disseminate his message by both written and spoken word. In the second, he once more reminds the superiors of their responsibility. As in the first letter, he addresses them corporately: *Universis custodibus*. Included are all the superiors of the order.

Despite the urgency of the message and the somewhat didactic style of the letter, Francis stops short of issuing any formal command. He beseeches, but he beseeches earnestly, as he does in the first letter:

First letter, verse 2: "Rogo vos plus quam de me ipso." Second letter, verse 4: "Rogo vos coram Domino Deo nostro, quantum possum."

As in the first letter, he calls upon God, who brings together the writer and the recipients. God is the witness for what Francis is asking, and for its implementation by the custodes. Francis now includes the bishops among the recipients: "Detis episcopis et aliis clericis" (verse 4).

The contents of the Letter to the Rulers of the People are to be made public: "Ut publicentur per populos et plateas Dei laudes."

In order to make the contents known as quickly as possible, he adds: "Facite statim multa exemplaria, et cum magna diligentia eas porrigite illis, quibus debeant dari" (verses 6-7).

This urgent tone shows the importance Francis attached to a sign that

would be the counterpart of the Islamic *salât*. The custodes are to proceed without delay to make many copies of his Letter to the Rulers of the People and circulate them with the greatest diligence. All public officials should be made aware of Francis's intention to have the praises of God form part of the daily program in every city. The First Letter to the Custodes would lead us to translate *per populos et plateas* in all-encompassing terms: "among all people and in public places" (verse 6).

Since this letter is a sort of appendix to the first, Francis does not oblige the recipients, as he does in the other letters, to carry it on their persons, to have copies made, or to meditate on its contents. It is understandable that it aroused no great interest, and that we know of it almost by accident, thanks to Luke Wadding.

The second letter makes no reference to divine judgment or any promise of a blessing. For all that, Francis makes it abundantly clear what great importance he attaches to the three letters whose publication he entrusted to the custodes. He sets about his task in such a determined manner that like Sabatier we can speak of a veritable propaganda machine, a well-organized campaign on behalf of the Eucharist and the praises of God.⁸⁸

The papal document *Sane cum olim* hoped to bring about a renewal of Eucharistic devotion "ut apud omnes fides et devotio augeatur."⁸⁹ Now Francis looks for ways and means to realize the goal set by the Holy Father, and even to surpass it among clergy and religious, indeed among all people. The term "Eucharistic crusade" aptly describes his purpose and strategy.⁹⁰ And Francis wished to popularize a prayer akin to the Islamic *salât* and have it observed by all (*per populos et plateas*). The praises of God should ring out, not only in church edifices but throughout the world, God's vast cathedral.

Recapitulation

The first part of this essay presented sufficient evidence for the authenticity and unity of the First Letter to the Custodes. In structure and in style, it is a consistent whole and not a patchwork put together from other sources. There is the typical I-You form, the typical linking of sentences with "and," word pairing, and contrasts. It sketches the broad purpose of Franciscan living.

To understand the contents of the letter, we must see it against the background of Francis's third missionary journey, and its goals both within and outside the church. Francis extends to all the people this exhortation to the clergy to reverence the Eucharist, and expresses his desire to promote a Christian counterpart to the *salât*. His ultimate goal is a worldwide hymn of praise to God arising from all peoples, the worship of the one almighty Being everywhere on the earth.

Francis envisions an adoration of the Almighty to be shared by Christians and Muslims. He proclaims, loud and clear, the hitherto unheard-of and untried idea of common public prayer. That is why he repeats so many variations of the theme: "omnes gentes . . . semper ab universo populo . . . per totam terram."

God, whose immensity transcends the bounds of both Christian and Muslim faiths, is ultimately the reason why Francis dedicates himself to promoting his crusade of praise and adoration.

Early in his career he would join himself, at the sight of a cross, with all the churches of the world in the prayer and worship found in the New Testament.⁹¹ Now in this letter, he makes an appeal for a worldwide praise of God.

The First Letter to the Custodes traces the wide scope of Francis's dynamic missionary activity. He feels called to reform the church; he publishes his wishes through the superiors of the order and pushes for the realization of his two great projects: a greater appreciation of and reverence for the Eucharist, and the establishment of official times and signals for public prayer. His call reaches out to the entire human race, far beyond a peace mission limited to Italy. His appeal is for an ecumenical sign that would unite all the peoples of the earth, and lead them to the worship of the one almighty God. This sign would be one small step toward the realization of his ideal of universal peace and to an eventual reconciliation between East and West.⁹²

Even though historians record no practical results of Francis's initiative, his plan is still a valid one, and dialog with Muslims is an important ministry for us Franciscans.

Notes

1. Kajetan Esser, *Die Opuscula des hl. Franziskus von Assisi*, new ed., (Grottaferrata, 1976); rev. ed. *Opuscula Sancti Patris Francisci Assisiensis* (Grottaferrata, 1978), hereafter cited as *OP*.
2. W. Goetz, *Die Quellen zur Geschichte des hl. Franz von Assisi*, kritische Untersuchung (Gotha, 1904), p. 27; Jacques Cambell, "Les écrits de saint François d'Assise devant la critique," in *FSien* 36 (1954):82-109, 205-64, hereafter cited as "Le écrits."
3. Esser, *OP*, pp. 167-71; *ibid.*, *Studien zu den Opuscula des hl. Franziskus von Assisi*, edd. E. Kurten and I. de Villapadierna (Rome, 1973), pp. 318-19, hereafter cited as *Studien*.
4. Latin in *OP*, pp. 101-4; English in *St. Francis, Omnibus of Sources*, ed. Marion A. Habig, O.F.M., 3d ed. (Chicago, 1973).
5. In *OP*, pp. 102-3, verses 2-8 are not divided. Consequently the use of v. 6 as a heading is not clear. The reader would see that 6b and 7 form part of the theme *de penitentia* if Esser had adopted the suggestion of S.J.P. van Dijk, O.F.M., "Ursprung und Inhalt der franziskanische Liturgie des 13 Jahrhunderts," in *FSien* 51 (1969):86-198 regarding punctuation: "et quod . . . et quando . . . et in aliqua parte." Esser makes two sentences out of this enumeration. Moreover, he gives no explanation for his choice of punctuation.

6. H. Boehmer, *Analekten zur Geschichte des Franciscus von Assisi* (Tübingen – Leipzig), 1904, vol. 29.
7. *IIpFid* 34 (OP, p. 120). He bases its necessity on negative as well as positive quotations from the Gospel. *IIpFid* 23 (OP, p. 118): "Qui non manducat carnem suam et non bibit sanguinem suum (see John 6:55, 57), non potest introire in regnum Dei" (John 3:5). *Adm* 1 11 (OP, p. 61): "Qui manducat carnem meam et bibit sanguinem meum, habet vitam aeternam" (see John 6:55). *RegNB* XX 5 (OP, p. 277): "Thus, being repentant and having confessed their sins, let them receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ with great humility and reverence, remembering what the Lord said: He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has everlasting life (see John 6:55), and Do this in memory of me" (see Luke 22:19). See Kajetan Esser, "Missarum sacramenta: Die Eucharistielehre des hl. Franziskus von Assisi," in *Wiss. Weish.* 23 (1960):82–108, hereafter cited as "Missarum sacramenta."
8. *EpCus* 5; *EpCler* 12 (OP, pp. 98–100). More precious than the Lord's names and words, the Body of Christ must be reserved in *loco pretioso* if ever it should be found in a very poor (*pauperrime*) place (v. 4). As in his Letter to the Clergy, Francis makes a distinction between the reverence due to the word of God and to the Eucharist. Instead of *illicite* as in the Letter to the Clergy, he now uses the stronger term *pauperrime*. Francis manifests a striking difference in his concept of poverty. The friars are to practice absolute poverty in their own lives, but nothing is too costly for the Lord. See *Test* 11.
9. *EpRect* 8 (OP, p. 153).
10. *IIpCler* 13–15 (OP, p. 98).
11. *OffPas* XV 1, oratio; *LaudDei* 3 (OP, pp. 219, 194, 90).
12. Cambell, "Les écrits," pp. 250, 255–56.
13. *Ibid.*, "Ecrits et paroles de s. François d'après les Opuscules de Wadding," in *FSien* 48 (1965):73–104, esp. p. 88.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 89: "Nous pensons être déjà indulgent en classant ce puzzle parmi les écrits douteux" ("We think we have been rather lenient in classifying this puzzle among the doubtful writings"). Esser has proved that Cambell's puzzle theory is utterly groundless. He has shown that the text of the letter as found in the Volterra Manuscript is not a summary of the Letter to All the Faithful but an independent document. See "Ein Vorläufer der 'Epistola ad fideles' des hl. Franziskus von Assisi" (Cod. 225 of the Guarnacci Library of Volterra), in *FSien* 45 (1975):5–37.
15. *Test* 41; *IIpFid* 1, 2, 87; *EpMin* 9; *EpRect* 1 (OP, pp. 316, 114–15, 127, 133, 152). Medieval writers adopted this profession of humility from ancient authors. Francis, however, had so thoroughly incorporated a lowly estimation of self in his other writings and total behavior that for him it was no mere formality. See E.R. Curtius, *Europäische Litteratur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Bern, 1954), pp. 93–95. See also L. Lehmann, "Der Mensch Franziskus im Licht seiner Briefe," in *Wiss. Weish.*, 46 (1983):108–38, esp. pp. 114–17.
16. Esser, "Missarum sacramenta," p. 87, n. 32; A. Vicinelli, *Gli scritti di Francesco d'Assisi e i Fioretti* (Verona, 1955), p. 163, n. 1. He sees an allusion to the mystery of the Eucharist. See also Damien Vorreux, O.F.M. – Théophile Desbonnets, O.F.M., *Saint François d'Assise: Documents, écrits et premières biographies* (Paris, 1968), p. 144, n. 1: "A rather odd expression – unusual at any rate."
17. Cambell, "Les écrits," p. 255: "La formule d'adresse nous semble quelque peu joachimite." He says the same in "Ecrits et paroles," p. 89.
18. Esser, OP, p. 171.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 167, n. 2.
20. Though not mentioning *salât*, probably the first one to see an Islamic influence was Ottokar Bonmann, O.F.M., *Die Schriften des hl. Franziskus von Assisi* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1940), pp. 100–1. Others follow Bertrand Cornet, O.F.M., "Le 'De reverentia

- Corporis Domini', Exhortation et lettre de S. François," in *EF*, n. s. 6 (1955):167-80; 7 (1956):20-35, 155-71; 8 (1957):35-58, hereafter cited as "Le 'De Reverentia.'" See also Esser, *Studien*, pp. 318ff.
21. *EpRect* 7; *OP*, p. 153. See L. Lehmann, "Der Brief des hl. Franziskus an die Lenker der Völker," Aufbau und missionarische Anliegen, in *Lau* 25 (1984):287-324, hereafter cited as "Der Brief des hl. Franziskus."
 22. *TestS* 3 (*OP*, p. 324): "ut in signum memoriae meae benedictionis et mei testamenti semper diligant se ad invicem."
 23. *EpOrd* 12-13 (*OP*, p. 140). See Col. 1:20.
 24. *OffPas*, ps. 7:4; ps. 14:6; ps. 15, 9 (*OP*, pp. 204, 208, 218, 221).
 25. *ExPat* 5 (*OP*, p. 159). See Matt. 6:10.
 26. *LaudHor* 7-8 (*OP*, p. 186). See ps. 68:35.
 27. This form of address, taken from John 17:11 and Matt. 11:25, is found in ps. 1:5 and ps. 14:1 of his Office of the Passion. Also in *LaudDei* 2 and in *RegNB* XXIII 1.
 28. The *De Laude* motif reminds one of the Islamic call to prayer. See Cornet, "Le 'De reverentia,'" p. 170: "This rite was already known as *laus*."
 29. The *RegNB* VIII seems to apply it to both the minister general and minister provincial: "Et si aliquando tempore appareret universitati ministrorum provincialium et custodum, praedictum ministrum non esse sufficientem ad servitium . . . teneantur praedicti fratres . . . alium sibi eligere minstrum in custodem" (*OP*, pp. 233-34). *QuatMag* also reads *custos* as applicable to any minister (ed. Oligier, [Rome, 1950], pp. 146, 161).
 30. *RegEr* 9 (*OP*, p. 298): "Et isti filii non loquantur cum aliqua persona nisi cum matribus suis et cum ministro et custode suo." For the distinction between the office of custodian and that of the minister provincial, whereby the custodian governed a part of a province as his custody, already discernible in the opuscula and later more clearly defined, see H. Holzapfel, *Geschichte des Franziskanerordens* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1909), pp. 193-96. R.J. Jara maintains that even in the *RegB* VIII, and even more so in the other opuscula, *custos* and *minister provincialis* designated two distinct offices: *De Custodis Officio in Ordine Fratrum Minorum usque ad annum 1517*, Studi e Testi Francescani, 20 (Rome, 1965), pp. 20-39. For an opposing view see E. Flood, in *Wiss. Weish.* 31 (1968):206-8. From the later *EpOrd* "it is obvious that even in 1226 Francis had no relish for clearly defined juridical offices" (p. 208).
 31. For a further study of the origins of this expression, see L. Lehmann, "Der Brief des hl. Franziskus," pp. 308-10.
 32. Esser, *Studien*, p. 292. See Cambell, "Les écrits," p. 256: "A letter to all the custodes means to all the superiors."
 33. For the twofold meaning of *usque in finem* ("the end of one's life and the end of the world"), see L. Lehmann, *Der Mensch Franziskus im Licht seiner Briefe*, p. 118. See also A. Rotzetter, *Die Funktion der franziskanischen Bewegung in der Kirche* (Schwyz, 1977), p. 108.
 34. The same holds for the introduction to *II EpFid*, where he has in mind either devout Christians in general or members of religious orders.
 35. Francis wished to include similar prescriptions for honoring the Eucharist in his Rule. See *LP*, 108, ed. M. Bigaroni, "Compilatio Assisiensis," dagli *Scritti di fr. Leone e Compagni su S. Francesco d'Assisi* (Assisi, 1975), pp. 332-34. See also L. Iriarte, "Lo que san Francisco hubiera decir in la regla," in *Estudios Franc.* 77 (1976):375-91.
 36. See Kajetan Esser, "Die religiösen Bewegungen des Hochmittelalters und Franziskus von Assisi," in *Festgabe Josef Lortz*, vol. 2 (Baden-Baden, 1958), pp. 287-315, esp. p. 312. See also the short essay by J. Le Goff, "Franz von Assisi zwischen den Erneuerungsbewegungen und den Belastungen der feudalen Welt," in *Concilium* 17 (1981):688-95.
 37. The mission to pagans is therefore only an extension of the preaching of penance, but

- under different circumstances. See K. Elm, "Franz von Assisi: Busspredigt oder Heidenmissionen?" in "Espansione del Francescanesimo tra Occidente e Oriente nel secolo XIII," *Atti del VI Convegno Internazionale* (Assisi, 1979), pp. 69–103, with copious bibliography. See also A. Rotzetter, "Die missionarische Dimension des franziskanischen Charismas," in *FSien* 66 (1984):82–90.
38. The whole theme of *de poenitentia* must be preserved in translation. "Admonishing to penance" does not exhaust its content.
 39. See n. 7 above. See also Esser, *Missarum sacramenta*, pp. 88–89.
 40. *RegNB* XXIII 7: "Omnes populos, gentes, tribus et linguas, omnes nationes et omnes homines ubicumque terrarum." "Gentes," which comes between "populos" and "tribus et linguas" has an ethnic connotation. See L. Lehmann, "'Gratias agimus tibi': Structure and content of Chapter 23 of the Regula non bullata," in *Lau* 23 (1982):312–75.
 41. Matt. 18:18–20. Christ's mission to the Apostles was to carry the word to all people.
 42. L. Lehmann, *Tiefe und Weite*, the universal character of the prayers of Francis of Assisi (Werl in Westphalia, 1984). See also L. Hardick, in *Theol. Revue* 81 (1985):159–60.
 43. Cornet, "Le 'De reverentia,'" 7 (1956):170.
 44. H.L. Gottschalk, "Der Islam, seine Entstehung, Entwicklung und Lehre," in *Christus und die Religionen der Erde*, Handbuch der Religionsgeschichte, ed. F. König, vol. 3 (Freiburg, 1956), pp. 45–46. See U. Tworuschka, *Die vielen Namen Gottes*, Weltreligionen heute (Gütersloh, 1985), p. 36.
 45. The evening Angelus is mentioned for the first time in 1307. In 1327 Pope John XXII granted an indulgence to those who prayed three Hail Marys at the ringing of the bell. The morning Angelus originated in Parma in 1317, and the noonday at Prague in 1386. See Th. Schnitzler, "Angelus läuten," in *LThK*, vol. 1 (Freiburg, 1957), 542. The origin of the Angelus, however, must be assigned an earlier date, and credit is rightly given to the Friar Minor Benedict Sinigardi (d. 1282). See D. Cresi, *Il beato Benedetto Sinigardi d'Arezzo e l'origine del "Angelus Domini"* (Florence, 1958); R. Ducouret, *Dire l'Angelus* (Paris, 1960). The General Chapter at Pisa in 1263 opened the way for the Angelus: "Eodem vero anno fuit Pisis generale capitulum celebratum, in quo . . . statutum fuit . . . quod fratres in sermonibus populum inducerent, ut in Completorio, pulsante campana, beatam Mariam aliquibus vicibus salutarent, quia aliquorum solemnium est opinio, quod illa hora ipsa fuit per Angelum salutata" ("Chronica XXIV Generalium O. Min.," in *AF*, vol. 3 (1897), p. 329).
 46. According to Cornet, "Le 'De reverentia,'" p. 170, this signal was called *couvre-feu* (hence the English word curfew). See K. Beitzl, "Glocke," in *LThK*, vol. 4 (Freiburg, 1960), 962–65.
 47. Prayer at the ringing of bells, which Francis hoped for, can be taken as a presage for the Angelus, even though it was not Marian in theme, but directed to the Almighty. Esser agrees, with some reservations, with Cornet's view that Francis was "if not the originator, at least the first to propagate this devotion" (*OP*, p. 274, n. 20). Certainly Francis's urgent plea was "the prelude to the sound of the Ave Maria" (A. Vicinelli, *Gli scritti*, p. 161).
 48. *RegNB* XXI (*OP*, p. 277): "Et hanc vel talem exhortationem et laudem omnes fratres mei, quandocumque placuerit eis, annuntiare possunt inter quoscumque homines cum benedictione Dei."
 49. See H. Fischer, *Der hl. Franziskus von Assisi während der Jahre 1219–1221*, A chronological, historical study (Freiburg – Schweiz, 1907); O. Schmucki, "Das Leiden Christi im Leben des hl. Franziskus von Assisi," in *CF* 30 (1960):353–397. Other dates are given by Raoul Manselli in *Franziskus – der solidarische Bruder* (Zurich, 1984), p. 230: "At least between May 9, 1218 and August 29, 1219 – more than a year." He does not say how he arrived at this reckoning. The sources generally hold that "Francis was in the Holy Land after the Pentecost Chapter of 1219." See D. Berg, "Kreuzzugsbewegung

- und Propagatio Fidei. Das Problem der Franziskanermission im 13. Jh. und das Bild von der islamischen Welt in der zeitgenössischen Ordenshistoriographie," in *Orientalische Kultur und Europäisches Mittelalter*, Misc. Med. 17, ed. A. Zimmerman (Berlin - New York, 1985), pp. 59-76, esp. p. 62.
50. For a short description of the three journeys, a list of sources and other references, see D. Berg, "Kreuzzugsbewegung und Propagatio Fidei," pp. 60-65; L. Lehmann, "Prinzipien franziskanischer Mission nach den frühen Quellen," in *Lau* 26 (1985):311-60.
51. See Lehmann, *Tiefe und Weite*, pp. 51-58.
52. See John R. Moorman, "L'espansione francescana dal 1216 al 1226," in "Francesco d'Assisi e Francescanesimo dal 1216-1226," *Atti del IV Convegno Internazionale* (Assisi, 1977), pp. 265-77.
53. 2Cel 30. See LM IX 8: Francis undertook the journey "because the fire of love drove him on to seek martyrdom." See also *Franziskus, Engel des 6. Siegels*, Sein Leben nach den Schriften des hl. Bonaventura, ed. Sophronius Clasen, O.F.M. (Werl, 1962), p. 335.
54. Manselli, *Franziskus*, p. 229; L. Massignon, "La mubâhala de Medine," in *Scripta minora*, vol. 1 (Beirut, 1963), pp. 550-67; F. Gabrieli, "San Francesco e l'Oriente islamico," in *Espansione*, pp. 106-22, n. 37; W. Roncaglia, "Fonte Arabo-musulmana su San Francesco in Oriente," in *Studi Franc.* 55 (1958):258-59.
55. Francis De Beer, *François que disait-on de toi?* (Paris, 1977), pp. 99-102; De Beer, "Der hl. Franziskus und der Islam," in *Concilium* 17 (1981):696-705; Giulio Basetti-Sani, *L'Islam e Francesco d'Assisi*, La missione profetica per il dialogo (Florence, 1975), pp. 165-73; Basetti-Sani, "San Francesco e il mondo musulmano," in *FrFr* (1982):241-49.
56. 1Cel 56-57 (Grau, pp. 120-23); LM IX 8, and LMin III 9 (Clasen, pp. 335, 455); LP 77 (Bigaroni p. 214). See L. Lemmens, "De s. Francisco praedicante coram Sultano Aegypti," in *AFH* 19 (1926):559-78. See also A. Matanić, "Del viaggio di San Francesco in Oriente nel 1219-20," in *Studi e ricerche Franciscane* 5 (1976):245-58.
57. Jacques de Vitry, *Historia Occidentalis*, chap. 32; *The Historia Occidentalis of Jacques de Vitry*, ed. J.F. Hinnebusch (Freiburg - Schweiz, 1972), pp. 158-63. For some corrections in the Latin text, see S. Gieben, in *CF* 44 (1974):222ff. At about the time of this event, early in 1220, Jacques de Vitry wrote in a letter: "Magister vero illorum (i.e. Francis) qui ordinem illum instituit, cum venisset in exercitum nostrum, zelo fidei accensus ad exercitum hostium nostrorum pertransire non timuit et cum aliquot diebus Sarracenis verbum dei praedicasset, modicum profecit. Soldanus autem, rex Egypti, ab eo secreto petiit ut pro se domino supplicaret quatenus religioni, que magis deo placeret, divinitus inspiratus adhereret." See R.B.C. Huygens, *Lettres de Jacques de Vitry*, Edition critique (Leiden, 1960), pp. 131-32. See also Manselli, *Franziskus*, pp. 323-26.
58. De Vitry, *Hist. Occid.*, chap. 32, ed. Hinnebusch, p. 162.
59. Bonaventure, LM IX 8 (Clasen, p. 336).
60. 2Cel 30 (Grau, p. 256). See De Beer, *François*, p. 75.
61. See O. Schmucki, *Leiden Christi*, p. 373, esp. n. 136. Matanić, in "Del viaggio di San Francesco," pp. 254-57, inclines to the opinion of Angelus of Clareno, who gives the following reasons for Francis's third missionary journey: (1) Peregrinatio ad visitandum loca sancta, (2) ad Christi fidem infidelibus praecandum, (3) ad promerendum martyrii coronam. With some others, Matanić considers it probable that the pilgrim from Assisi visited the holy places ("Del Viaggio di San Francesco," p. 252). On the other hand, O. Schmucki, in *Leiden Christi*, pp. 373-76, admits "at best, only some probability."
62. 1Cel 57 (Grau, p. 123).
63. LM IX 9 (Clasen, p. 338).
64. The Sufi, or Subyya, members of an ascetic movement, went about clothed in a coarse habit girt with a cord. They begged for their daily sustenance. See O. Schmucki, *Leiden Christi*, p. 371, n. 133; De Beer, *François*, p. 80. See also Berg, "Kreuzzugsbewegung," p. 63, n. 21.

65. *Hist. Occid.*, chap. 32, ed. Hinnebusch, p. 162: "Quem cum ante ipsum pertraxissent, videns cum bestia crudelis, in aspectu viri dei in mansuetudine conversa, per dies aliquot ipsum sibi et suis Christi fidem predicantem attendissime audit." The initiative for the missionary journey came to Francis from the Gospel itself. His ideal of knighthood might have played a part, too. See De Beer, *François*, pp. 67-74; J.-H. Dalmais, in *Dict. Spirit.* s.v. Evangelisation et Missions jusqu'au 15^e siècle: "For Francis of Assisi, the call to announce the Gospel to the infidels seems to have been aroused in a climate where knightly adventure in the milieu of a crusade was coupled with the desire of martyrdom."
66. L. Thier, "Der Friede erwächst aus der Armut," in *Wiss. Weish.* 39 (1976):108-22, esp. p. 121.
67. The crusade was a profession of faith; the war against the unbeliever was a holy war; killing a Muslim was no crime – it was a good deed. See De Beer, *François*, p. 70. What was important was not the salvation of the Saracens but the reconquest of the holy places. See A. Rotzetter, *Die Funktion*, p. 165. A. Mockler believes that Francis was at first very much captivated by the crusader-mentality and that the climax of his life was to share in the crusade, though he later suffered disillusionment and had a change of heart (*Francis of Assisi: The Wandering Years* [Oxford, 1976], especially pp. 229-54). A look into the mentality of the time can be had in M. Ott – Meimberg's study: *Kreuzzugsepos oder Staatsroman?* (Zurich – Munich, 1980), with bibliography.
68. For a tradition of this event among modern Arabs, see G. Beireyer, "Il Poverello ha conquistato il suo secolo e i secoli successivi," in *Francesco d'Assisi nel 750^{mo} della morte* (Jerusalem, 1976), pp. 251-62. See F. Gabrieli, "San Francesco e l'Oriente islamico," in *Espansione del francescanesimo*, pp. 106-22. For the influence of the meeting on German art and literature, see W. Einhorn, "Franziskus und der 'edle Heide,'" in *Text und Bild, Aspekte des Zusammenwirkens zweier Künste in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, edd. Ch. Meier – U. Ruberg (Wiesbaden, 1980), pp. 630-47. See also *Die Holzschnitte des Wolf Traut zur 'Legend des heyligen vatters Francisci' nach Bonaventura* (Nürnberg, 1512), illustrated in *FSien* 60 (1978):1-24.
69. Matanić, "Del viaggio di San Francesco," p. 256. Esser, *Das missionarische Anliegen*, p. 18: "There can be no doubt that Francis, who wished for no crusades, sought to win the unbelievers for Christ and thereby introduced a new era in the missionary history of the Church." See also Elm, *Busspredigt oder Heidenmission*, pp. 87-88. Berg, in "Kreuzzugbewegung," p. 64, does not ignore "the efficacy of traditional missions despite the innovative approach of the Poverello."
70. *Test* 11 (OP, p. 309).
71. *IEpCus* 3 (OP, p. 103).
72. *IEpCus* 7 (OP, p. 103).
73. Esser, *Studien*, pp. 309-10: "Sacerdos vero quilibet frequenter doceat plebem suam ut cum in celebratione missarum elevatur hostia salutaris, quilibet reverenter se inclinet, idem faciens cum ipsam portat presbyter ad infirmum."
74. A.G. Martimort, *La Chiesa in preghiera*, Introduzione alla Liturgia (Rome, 1966), 2nd. ed., p. 447. J.A. Jungmann, *Missarum Sollemnia*, vol. 2 (Freiburg, 1958), p. 258: "Heinrich von Hessen (d. 1397) is the first to mention 'a short genuflection on one knee before the Eucharist after the words of Consecration', as customary with many priests. ... The genuflection has been prescribed in Roman Missals since 1498." Francis may have been influenced by monastic customs. The famous *Consuetudines* of Cluny, drawn up by Ulrich in 1080, prescribe a genuflection before receiving Holy Communion. See PL 149, 721b. See also the reference by Peter of Cluny (d. 1156) in PL 189. Only later did the custom become common among the people. See Jungmann, *Missarum Sollemnia*, p. 458.
75. *EpCler* 12 (OP, pp. 98, 100). See *IEpCus* 5 (OP, p. 103): "Nomina etiam et verba

- Domini scripta, ubicumque inveniuntur in locis immundis, colligantur et in loco honesto debeant collocari." See Esser, *OP*, p. 171.
76. *II EpFid* 61-62; *RegNB* XXIII 1, 9-11; *LaudDei* 2.6. See also *OP*, pp. 124, 287, 291-93, especially pp. 90-91. See also De Beer, *François*, pp. 99-106.
 77. *IEpCus* 8 (*OP*, p. 103): "Omnipotenti Deo laudes et gratiae referantur per totam terram." *EpRect* 7 (*OP*, p. 153): "Quo omnipotenti Domino Deo ab universo populo laudes et gratiae referantur."
 78. Yves Congar, O.P., *Le Pelerin de l'absolu*. The expression is taken from the autobiography of Leon Bloy (1846-1917). See O. Schmucki, "Linee fondamentali della 'Forma Vitae' nell'esperienza di San Francesco," in *Lettura biblico-teologica delle Fonti Francescane* (Rome, 1979), pp. 183-231, especially p. 208.
 79. De Beer, *François*, pp. 77-78. See also his *Der hl. Franziskus und der Islam*, pp. 696-705; R.J. Burns, "Christian-Islamic Confrontation in the West," in *American Historical Review* 76 (1971):1386-1434; R. Riccardi, "Ecumenismo di san Francesco," in *ItFran* 44 (1969):246-511; E. Jungclaussen, *Der unverbrauchte Heilige*. For Francis's ecumenical significance see *Una Sancta* 31 (1976):180-87. Neither author relies on the Letter to the Custodes.
 80. H. Mislin - S. Latour, *Franziskus: Der ökumenisch-ökologische Revolutionär* (Starnberger See - Bodensee, 1982), p. 138.
 81. *OP*, pp. 105-6.
 82. The English text is the translator's.
 83. *B.P. Francisci Assisiatis Opuscula*, Nunc primum collecta, tribus Tomis distincta, notis et commentariis asceticis illustrata per Fr. Lucam Waddingum (Antwerp, 1623), p. 54.
 84. L. Lemmens, *Opuscula sancti patris Francisci Assisiensis* (Quaracchi ad Claras Aquas, 1904), p. 179: "Ex idiomate hispanico sunt translatae, earumque forma primigenia deest." H. Boehmer, in *Analecta*, does not refer to the letter.
 85. Cambell, "Ecrits et paroles," 88-89, especially p. 91: "Nous avons dit plus haut tout le mal que nous en pensons" ("We have already expressed all that we consider unfavorable about it").
 86. Esser, *OP*, p. 173; idem, *Studien*, pp. 189-291. See Goetz, *Quellen*, p. 27; P. Sabatier, "Examen de quelques travaux récents sur les Opuscules de saint François," in *Opuscules de critique historique*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1904), p. 154.
 87. Esser, *Studien*, pp. 321-23 (*OP*, p. 175).
 88. Sabatier, "Examen," pp. 156-57; Cornet, "Le 'De reverentia,'" p. 21: "François mène campagne, et il entend que ses fils mènent campagne, dans un but bien précis: la réforme des croyances et des coutumes suivant les nécessités de son temps et les directives de l'Eglise" ("Francis leads a campaign, and he wishes that his sons lead a campaign, for a very precise goal: reform of beliefs and practices according to the needs of the times and the directives of the church").
 89. In Esser, *Studien*, p. 310.
 90. Cornet, "Le 'De reverentia,'" pp. 35-58; O. Schmucki, "Linee fondamentali," p. 195. See also n. 31 above.
 91. *Test* 53 (*OP*, p. 308). See L. Lehmann, "Franziskanische Weltfrömmigkeit," in *Weltfrömmigkeit*, ed. Zottl, Grundlagen, Traditionen, Zeugnisse (Eichstadt - Vienna, 1985), pp. 109-26, esp. pp. 117-18.
 92. *ICel* 57 (Grau, pp. 122-23). See A. Rotzetter, "Kreuzzugskritik und Ablehnung der Feudalordnung in der Gefolgschaft des Franziskus von Assisi," in *Wiss. Weish.* 35 (1972):121-37. For a comprehensive account see E. Stickel, *Der Fall von Akkon*, Untersuchungen zum Abklingen des Kreuzzugsgedenkens im 13. Jahrhundert. Arbeiten aus dem Historischen Seminar der Universität Zürich (Frankfurt - Main, 1975).