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St. Bonaventure and the Clericalization of the Friars Minor

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The problem of the clericalization of the Friars Minor was dealt with in a thesis by Father Lawrence Landini, which was quite thorough in its study of the historical development.* However, when we speak of Bonaventure and the Friars Minor, the problem of the clericalization of the friars cannot be completely settled unless it is discussed against the background of the medieval church in the thirteenth century.

In this century, as a consequence of the founding of the Franciscan and Dominican Orders and the conflict between the regulars and the secular clergy at the University of Paris, we find a church in the

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* We shall forego giving a complete set of footnotes and limit ourselves to indicating the essential works which have influenced our research. The book about the clericalization of the Friars Minor to which we refer is L.C. Landini, *The Causes of the Clericalization of the Order of Friars Minor 1209–1260 in the Light of Early Franciscan Sources* (Chicago, 1968). Concerning the thirteenth century religious movements, two books by Raoul Manselli still remain the fundamental references: *Problemi ecclesiologici della seconda metà del XIII secolo* (Viterbo, 1972), and *La 'Lectura super Apocalipsim' di Pietro di Giovanni Olivi*. Ricerche sull'escatologismo medioevale (Rome, 1955).
Regarding St. Francis, it is sufficient to refer to *S. Francesco nella ricerca storica degli ultimi ottanta anni* (Todi, 1971). The early Franciscan movement is discussed in a different way from that in which it is approached here in Kajetan Esser, *Origins of the Franciscan Order*, trans. Aiden Daly and Trina Lynch, Franciscan Herald Press (Chicago, 1970).
Regarding the history of early Franciscan times, the following is still useful: Gratien de Paris, *Histoire de l'origine et du développement de l'Ordre des Fréres Mineurs* (Paris, 1926). We might add: H. Moorman, *History of the Franciscan Order from Its Origins to the Year 1515* (Oxford, 1968).
J.G. Bougerol gives a very extensive and systematic bibliography concerning Bonaventure in *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson, 1964).
We mention a few works helpful to our purpose, which were published before and after Bougerol's book, such as J. Ratzinger, *The Theology of History of St. Bonaventure*, trans. Zachary Hayes, O.F.M. (Chicago, 1971); S. Clasen, *Franciskus, Engel des sechsten Siegels*. Sein Leben nach den Schriften des hl. Bonaventura (Werl in Westphalia, 1962), with special attention to the *Einführung* on pp. 17–248. See also H.F. Schalück's *Armut und Heil*, Eine Untersuchung über den Armutsgedanken in der Theologie Bonaventuras (Munich–Paderborn–Vienna, 1971). One can find an extensive bibliography in all these volumes.

process of change. It was changing from a clerical community, in which monks carried out their own personal pursuit of perfection without engaging in pastoral ministry, into another kind of church. In this new church the clerics were assisted in their work of instructing the people and eventually in pastoral care, first of all by the Dominicans, who by definition were also clerics; and then by the Franciscans, whose original work was chiefly that of giving example and encouragement to do penance, but which gradually became also spiritual assistance to the faithful, and even pastoral care. Of equal historical significance is the fact that their assistance to the diocesan clergy was carried out in direct dependence on papal authority and independently of local bishops.

Therefore, we must look not only at the institutional aspects of this transformation, but also at the concrete impression that this made upon the minds and hearts of the faithful of the thirteenth century. We shall then become more aware of how different the church was before and after the appearance of the mendicant orders. The Friars Minor played an important historical role in this transformation.

It is well to remember that as far as Francis was concerned, in the beginning the Friars Minor were a fraternity that aimed at being a true example of apostolic life through poverty, humility, chastity and obedience to the Roman pontiff, not after the manner of the church of Jerusalem, but according to the example given directly by Christ and the Apostles in the Gospel. The Franciscan *Rule* deliberately notes that the friars "are to preach by their deeds." Certainly the ministry of the word was important to them, but giving example, understood as actively practicing the imitation of Christ among the faithful, was even more important. As we know, the fraternity could not help but welcome even clerics into its ranks. Still, it wove itself into the fabric of contemporary society with a minimum of pastoral concerns. These concerns, however, increased as time went on. It was thus that the problem of the clericalization of the Friars Minor was born. The problem was this: In origin and by definition the Friars Minor were not necessarily clerics. What was more, they were seemingly lay by preference. More and more they began to receive sacred orders and to complete the necessary philosophical and theological studies. Therefore, we must ask what pressure was the church under in the thirteenth century that caused this clericalization, and what was the implication of this clericalization for the Franciscan Order itself, for the church, and finally for the faithful. At the heart of this matter is Bonaventure. His personality and work played a specific role in this process of clericalization, and it is important that we emphasize his involvement.

The first problem, then, is the phenomenon of clericalization – its origin. For an answer we must examine not only Franciscan aspects of the question, but also the contemporary thinking of the church and popes at the beginning of and during the course of the thirteenth century. As Father Giles Meerssemann and Kurt Victor Selge point out, Innocent III (like Alexander III) was keenly sensitive to the importance of the religious movements that originated among the people. Because of this, Innocent tried to understand them, to interpret them, and to lead them back within the boundaries of the church, which, for him, was a hierarchically structured society, with its summit in Rome, where the pope and the college of cardinals resided. This great pontiff remained unmoved by strong anti-Roman outbursts, whether they came from wandering clerics and goliard poets, or from men who would later be members of the college of cardinals itself, such as Jacques de Vitry. In fact, his concept of papal authority was too strong, as he demonstrated in regard to the succession of Henry VI, in his relationships with various rulers of the day (we have to think only of John Lackland), by his intervention in southern France with his crusade against the Albigensians, and finally by his concept of the pope as vicar of Christ to whom all other authority owed respect and obedience.

If we examine all the roots of this concept of papal authority, we see that they must be traced back to a juridical outlook, which in no way detracted from Innocent III's personal piety, but which gave a theocratic character to his concept. Such a concept was diametrically opposed to the opinion held within the empire that, basing itself on Justinian's Code, was being formulated in contemporary civil law, while the church's concept was being articulated in Canon Law. Each side tried to justify its position against the other in a dispute that involved ideas rather than weapons, but, for all that, was none the less heated.

Faced with this formulation of papal power in precise, if not exclusively, juridical terms, two other concepts of the church began to emerge among thirteenth-century Christians.

One, which we shall just mention, is the so-called spiritual church, which Joachim of Fiore had envisaged as "The Church of the Third Age, and precisely the "Church of the Holy Spirit." This was subsequently developed and enlarged in various directions especially among members of the Franciscan movement. Distinct from this concept of the Church of the Spirit, yet influenced by it, was that which we shall call the Church of the Faithful. This is the concept of the church as it was imagined and longed for by the faithful on every side, arising out of their own need for a religious entity that dispensed salvation and was concerned about the humble—a church that was near to them, and

which they could experience as their direct intermediary with Christ and eternal salvation.

To eliminate any confusion, we want to point out that by the expression "Church of the Faithful" we are not referring to heretical movements, but rather to that vast, profound and intense phenomenon of religious disquiet which pervaded Europe from the beginning of the eleventh century onwards, which seemed to constitute one of the most significant (and in some ways disconcerting) aspects of religious piety at this time. It was a ferment of various endeavors. Some people, such as the Humiliati, belonged to workers' movements. There were movements combining poverty and popular preaching, such as the Waldensians. Some remained heretics; others came back into the church, such as Durandus of Hesse and Bernard Prim and their followers, the Poor Catholics. As we have already noted, Innocent III understood the importance of these phenomena and sought to protect them in many ways, especially against the authority of the bishops. The latter authority was often short-sighted and, because it operated within a limited locality, was unable to appreciate phenomena that actually extended beyond the borders of a parish or diocese.

It is no accident that St. Dominic, in establishing his order, had to organize it as an order of canons following the *Rule* of St. Augustine. It is no less significant that for many years (between 1209/1210 and 1221) the Friars Minor were tolerated by the church but not officially recognized. The *Earlier Rule* had only verbal approval. In my opinion, this was not due only to St. Francis's innate mistrust of privileges given by the Roman Church, whatever the reasons for seeking them. The situation becomes clarified in all its complexity if we recall the well- known passage of Jacques de Vitry, in which he describes how tragic the condition of the church in Milan was. The only ones who opposed the heretics there were those whom he calls *Paterini* (actually the *Humiliati*). Nor does he omit mention of how dreadful the condition of the curia at Perugia was. In that city his only consolation was the presence of the Friars Minor, and he has left us a beautiful, if hasty, sketch of their life in the year 1216.

It seems to me that we find in the words of Jacques de Vitry the recognition of a difficult and complex situation, in which the inadequateness of the clerical, hierarchical structure of the church to deal with the demands and the restlessness of the faithful was evident. Evident also was the inability or, perhaps, the impossibility of the church, using her usual means, to resolve the difficulties confronting her. All of this is confirmed as well by Innocent III's well-known dream (the one in which the saint holds up the crumbling Lateran on his shoulders) with a clarity that is already a historical interpretation of

the providential origin of the two orders: the Franciscan and the Dominican.

It was because of this situation that the need arose for someone to assist the clergy. The Dominicans were already doing this. However, their assistance was not sufficient, because their specific characteristic was to be a learned order that tended to restrict their influence to the university class or the ruling class. They were, however, less able to relate to the people, who held them in suspicion and at times were violently hostile. On the other hand, it was a trait of the Franciscans to be able to associate with the more humble, social and economic groups. This was a result of their residing in urban locations, where the population was more dense and less well-off economically.

The tendency was to confine the Franciscans and Dominicans within the already existing organizational forms in the church. This had already succeeded in the twelfth century with the orthodox wandering preachers, who all ended up as monks or founders of monasteries, so that many of their fervent initiatives were diffused.

It should be stated that the popes, on the one hand, and St. Francis and St. Dominic and their followers on the other, did not repeat the mistake of the previous century. Although it had certainly eliminated some difficult personages and obviated some of the risks of heresy, it did not succeed in overcoming the restlessness that those preachers expressed and which promptly reappeared in Dominic Guzman, and even more so in St. Francis.

Especially in the case of the Franciscans there was a need to find a new way of inserting them into the reality of the church. This seemed to be necessary, in order to eliminate all danger of sliding into heresy. Actually this danger did not exist, but the popes and the curia were understandably fearful of it, considering that Francis of Assisi had no theological formation and he spoke a language very different from that of the clerics. Urging the Franciscans toward becoming clerics meant giving them a theological formation and a sound preparation for preaching and the care of souls.

Both the Franciscans and Dominicans were well aware of this, as is evident by the famous circular letter issued jointly by John of Parma and Humbert de Romans in the middle of the thirteenth century. We have no hesitation in recognizing the hand of John of Parma in this letter. It vindicated the pastoral importance of the two orders and the function which they were already carrying out within the church. Keep in mind that both orders, but especially the Franciscans, had been persuaded by the clerics and the well educated who had already entered the order, to want to perform these useful functions in the church. This initial acceptance of responsibility gave rise to a more urgent call

for clericalization. The more the new orders, especially the Franciscans, were seen as invaluable collaborators [of the clergy], the greater the pressure upon them to become clerics. This pressure became even stronger as the church gradually became aware of the formidable force she had at her disposal to break up, or at least in some way, control the diocesan establishment.

This policy was complex and varied with respect to the Dominicans and Franciscans, just as it was with respect to other popular religious movements of the day. We have only to recall that at this time the Humiliati underwent a profound change in their essential character, when their organizational structure was turned upside down. At the beginning, the workers, who were married or single, had constituted the leaders in the order, whereas the clerics simply exercised the role of spiritual advisors or chaplains. Now the former leaders were reduced to the position of lay persons united together to fulfill a religious need. Only clerics became leaders of the community. Thus, they were able to adapt the activity of the Humiliati to the purposes of the church, taking away from the Humiliati any real initiative.

The clericalization of the Friars Minor was a similar process, but less dramatic and violent. Certainly it was an attempt to eliminate all risk of heresy, as we have said, and to smooth over future difficulties with bishops and clerics. However, it was also an attempt to counterbalance the order against the bishops and clerics, as well as against any other power which might arise against the pope. From this point of view, the activity of the Franciscans and Dominicans in southern Italy against Frederick II after his second excommunication in 1239 is extremely significant, since the various bishops had remained completely unopposed to Frederick and had accepted his authority.

Nevertheless, these Dominicans and Franciscans had long been regarded as outsiders. It was not coincidental that the bishops at the Second Council of Lyon extracted from the pope a decree which, although it preserved the Franciscans and Dominicans (primarily through the efforts of St. Bonaventure), marked the end of the popular religious initiatives. It precipitated a crisis of rejection and suspicion on the part of the hierarchy, who did not always understand the needs of the faithful. Thus the Apostolici, the Saccati, the Frati Pii, and other lesser foundations were vigorously suppressed.

This background (which also includes the Cathari and Waldensians, who were still conspicuously active), helps us to understand how and why the clericalization of the Franciscans began and took hold. But how was this clericalization actualized within the Franciscan Order? How could the order change so profoundly from within?

We have already seen that the church, because of its internal needs, tended to see itself as a church of clerics. Hence, those who were not monks were expected to become clerics. Precisely because of this, a conflict was developing in the Franciscan Order during the difficult period between the death of St. Francis and the close of the generalate of Brother Elias. We are supplied with information on this subject by a chronicler, Salimbene de Adam, who has not always been fully utilized or appreciated as a witness of the history of his order. In his *Book of Prelates*, which is contained in full in his *Chronicle*, he directs a number of criticisms against Brother Elias as minister general. Among other things, he mentions that one of Brother Elias's faults had been precisely that of favoring the lay friars over clerics. Obviously we are not discussing this evidence with regard to its judgment on Elias, but we can take it as certain that he favored the lay element rather than the clerical element within the order. It is no less certain that in doing so he carried out one of the directives of the holy founder himself.

Indeed, the historical circumstances of the church at that time were impelling the order to make some kind of decision regarding the two roads opening up before it. The order had to choose whether to become definitively a religious order (which inevitably implied a transformation into a complex of friars who would be almost all clerics), or to remain a religious movement of lay people among lay people, in total obedience to the church, operating as an internal stimulus within contemporary society by example and penitential preaching.

It is necessary to remember that many clerics had also joined Francis's fraternity, side by side with lay brothers. These clerics had been a help in discerning what was essential to Francis's preaching. They had contributed to the discussions concerning the meaning and value of Francis's poverty. They had thought it through and had embellished and transformed in certain ways the original concept of Franciscan poverty: It was to be understood as the intense desire to imitate Christ crucified, not as the desire to be wretched through the cold rejection of all human values. For Franciscan poverty, after all, is not a desire to be needy, but an inner richness which, therefore, is able to reject every other kind of wealth and material comfort as unnecessary. In view of this situation created by clerics in the fraternity, the presence of an Anthony of Padua, who lived the spirit of Francis intensely, became extremely important. Anthony affirmed that Francis wanted to be an example and stimulus in the life of the church and felt the obligation to assist, sustain, and correct the clergy even through criticism. In some ways Alexander of Hales and the Four Commentators on the *Rule* did the same thing, but they were attempting to clarify the essential nature of the order. They represent another step toward

the conception of the Franciscan movement as a formally and definitively constituted religious order. But the decisive turn in this direction came with Gregory IX's Bull *Quo elongati*, which actually indicated a road inevitably leading toward clericalization. The Bull imposed the possibility of papal intervention in the internal affairs of the order, something which Francis had resolutely wanted to avoid when he said in the *Testament* that the friars were not to seek privileges of the Roman curia. It seems to me that the final step in this direction can be recognized in the presence of the Franciscans in Paris, and in the setting up of a Franciscan chair in the complex of the University of Paris.

After the dismissal of Elias, the process of clericalization went ahead without interruption. Thomas of Celano seems to attest to this in his first and second biographies, in which the lay character of the early Franciscan fraternity, though not passed over in silence, is not emphasized. As far as this biographer is concerned, we might say that this transformation within the order was something he considered to be incontestable, and certainly not something that gave any cause for concern when viewed in comparison with the original ideals of the holy founder.

Nevertheless, the demand for a Franciscanism that would not become an order like all others was still alive—therefore one that would not be shaped by the process of clericalization into one of the preceding forms of religious life, which though worthy of respect, were not Franciscan. This demand seems to have been bolstered by a new ferment—Joachimism—which gave to Franciscanism a different historical understanding of its own importance and function within the church. This influence actually ended up questioning the meaning of clericalization and attempted to impose some limits, if not to the fact of the clericalization of Franciscanism, at least to the spirit with which this process should be taking place within the church.

The insertion of Franciscanism into the framework and historical perspective of Joachimism occurred in several places: in Tuscany, when the abbot of the Florentine monastery of Camaiore fled to Pisa with some books written by the Abbot Joachim; also in southern France with Hugo of Digne. The last and most important occurred at Paris with Gerard of Borgo San Donnino and gave rise to the most bitter and dogged disputes. However, setting Franciscanism within this Joachimist framework gives to St. Francis, the Franciscan movement and to the historical events that marked the development of the order itself a greater significance than has appeared up to now.

On the one hand, the portrait of Francis as another Christ (*alter Christus*) continued to develop. This image applied more to him person-

ally and to the vicissitudes of his life than to the fraternity that he had founded. But while this development was occurring, the Joachimist historical perspective was furnishing the Franciscan movement with a soteriological backdrop and an ecclesial role of new depth and dimension. Hence the Franciscan movement became the witness and proof of a decisive turning point in the history of Christian redemption. It appeared as the indispensable guide to the salvation of the faithful in the face of the uncertainties of life.

It is significant that, while confronting this vast responsibility, Franciscanism recognized the importance and complementarity of the Dominican Order. Hence the clericalization of the Friars Minor, whether the Franciscans were fully aware of it or not, took place in a social milieu different from but complementary to that of the Friars Preachers. The latter were essentially clerics and destined from the very beginning to work not among the masses but among the lay and ecclesiastical ruling classes. In this context we must emphasize the importance of the previously mentioned circular letter, which was signed by Humbert de Romans, master general of the Dominicans, and by John of Parma, minister general of the Franciscans. Even more important to me is that this circular is certainly from the pen of John of Parma. The model of church and the concept of church history expressed in that circular were not in any way connected to the thinking and education of Humbert de Romans, but corresponded completely to the thoughts and subsequent conduct of John of Parma. Also, the ideas contained in the circular letter did not crop again in subsequent writings of the master general of the Dominicans.

Even though we have only Salimbene as a witness, we must not ignore the importance of Hugo of Digne. Hugo, while in southern France and later at the court of King Louis IX and before the pope and cardinals, did not dispute or reject the clericalization of the Franciscans that had already taken place. Nevertheless, he was very careful to point out those responsibilities that were proper to Franciscans and that were quite different from those of the other clerics and of anyone else who lived and worked in the world or at the curia. In other words, as far as the friar from Provence was concerned, becoming clerics in no way dispensed from the ideal commitment of the Friars Minor. Indeed, it demanded a more firm adherence to the ideal of Franciscan poverty.

During the struggles of the Franciscan Order, everything was changing within the church itself. Honorius III and his predecessor Innocent III had acknowledged the importance of popular movements. Honorius's successor Gregory IX, as we have noted with regard to the Bull *Quo elongati*, began to direct these popular movements toward traditional forms of religious life. The situation became more complex

with Innocent IV. His views on the papacy and its importance to Christian life have been described well by Friedrich Kempf. This pope wavered in his judgment of the Franciscans, the Dominicans, and other orders originating from the people, as became apparent in the Bull *Etsi animarum*. He viewed ecclesiastical organization essentially in legal terms as a structure of hierarchical relationships regulated by law, leaving little room for the original inspirations of the popular movements, especially of the Franciscans.

Also we must remember that the political system of the empire was designed according to the legal style of Rome as outlined in civil law taught at Bologna. The pope adopted his stance to counterbalance that system with another juridical system, which was also expressed in legal formulae, whose principles had arisen within the church itself since the days of the Apostles and the Fathers. Just as in the area of civil law the Bolognese jurists were forced to deal with the new juridical realities of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in terms of the ancient Roman law, so too the new religious realities were framed and resolved in terms of the ancient formulations of the church's juridical structure. This was necessary particularly after the death of Frederick II, both with regard to policies toward the empire then and, later, during the long interregnum, as well as toward the French monarchy and the House of Anjou in southern Italy. On the other hand, this very setting itself up as a juridical organization with its own autonomous existence was an increasingly unavoidable effect of the *libertas ecclesiae* ("the freedom of the church"), even though it set in motion a sequence of events that would end necessarily with the Bull *Unam sanctam* of Boniface VIII and his conflict with Philip the Fair and, later, with the conflict between John XXII and Louis of Bavaria.

How did the Franciscan Order react in the face of the juridical structuring of the church, and at same time, of an ever continuing and systematic clericalization? How did the great mass of friars react, who in different ways and at different levels had accepted the Joachimist version of history? The concern quickly manifested itself. It was already evident in Anthony of Padua; however, we cannot go into that here. As we have mentioned, it was already present in the life of St. Francis, when he asked that privileges not be sought from the Roman church. Nevertheless, precisely this Joachimist spirit provided the most powerful ammunition against the growing juridical spirit of the curia, especially with its concepts of a new order (*ordo novus*) and a spiritual church (*ecclesia spiritualis*). The two new mendicant orders, but especially the Franciscans, gained importance and preeminence on the basis of these concepts. Francis in particular, as "another Christ," emerged as the one who brought back into the church and fully actual-

ized the Gospel spirit, by living out a poverty which was that of Christ, and which alone brought back into the church a spirit of humility, of poverty, and of rejection of earthly power. The latter also included a decisive refusal to enter into the juridical world of the church, with its canonically defined hierarchic functions, although it did not reject in any way the hierarchy as such. This concept gave rise to a controversy over the presence of law in the life of the church. The church was accused of abandoning the Gospel in order to follow the decretals, an accusation that found its loftiest proponent in Dante Alighieri, both in his letters and in his *Divine Comedy*. The church, inasmuch as it is a community of faithful who follow Christ, can take its inspiration only from the Gospel, and therefore is placed above any juridical spirit that binds souls instead of bringing them closer to Christ. Among those Friars Minor who wanted "to observe the *Rule* spiritually," various shades of opinion arose regarding the juridical nature of the church. In the middle of the thirteenth century, these friars were the more numerous, the more active, and had clearer ideas and objectives as they formed themselves into groups with various leanings. Historians, often with a certain arbitrariness, lump these groups together under the common title of rigorists or Spirituals. What was the attitude of these friars in regard to the clericalization of the order? It can be pointed out immediately that in principle they were not hostile to clericalization. Rather, insofar as they wanted to engage in pastoral ministry among the faithful, they cherished the priesthood and did not reject education. By way of example it is enough to recall Hugo of Digne, in his dealings with the merchants of Hyères, and Gerard of Borgo S. Donnino, who did his writing in the university city of Paris.

What characterized these friars was their determined avoidance of any involvement in the juridical apparatus that was crushing the church. Consequently, they refused to accept offices within the clerical hierarchy. While John of Parma was minister general of the order, we do not hear of any Spirituals accepting curial or episcopal offices, at least up to the end of the thirteenth century. The cases of Louis of Toulouse and his teacher Peter Scarrier (who became a bishop only in 1309) are only apparent exceptions, since indications are that they were forced to bow to a stronger will than their own. What we know of Louis of Toulouse certainly indicates a painful division between his heart and his assignment.

What was the attitude of the faithful with regard to these matters? In this case as in others which concern popular religion, we are forced to rely on clues. Much information is supplied by one historian, Salimbene. All the clues agree in suggesting that while the faithful accepted the hierarchy, they did not fail to note the difficulties which

arose from the slow but progressive change in the nature of the church. In their own spontaneous and autonomous way, they developed forms of religious and spiritual life that tended to be unregulated by (if not actually independent of) the juridically constituted church.

One has to think only of the numerous complaints that were leveled against the mendicant orders all over Europe because they broke down the boundaries of parish and even diocesan life. We recall the groups of faithful that gathered around Hugo of Digne and other Franciscans. We recall the various movements that sprang up around the mendicant orders, from the so-called Third Orders to the Flagellants and confraternities, to the numerous fraternities that invigorated religious life after the Franciscans, from the Frati Saccati to the Frati Pii and to the many other communities that came together later in the great Augustinian unification.

With this profound renewal of religious life in mind, we can now ask in more detail the question central to our study: What was Bonaventure's position? Where did he stand in this process of development within the Franciscan Order and the church? Here it is helpful to mention briefly an essential preliminary fact: his election.

He succeeded John of Parma, who in addition to the problems stemming from his Joachimism, was a rigorist. John had resisted pressure from the curia, which wished the order to become more deeply involved in the hierarchical structure of the church and become an even more effective instrument in achieving the aims of the church. This seems to be the reason for his disagreements with Alexander IV, in which the problem of Joachimism and the conflicts at the University of Paris seemed to be merely external symptoms of a deeper antithesis. Indeed, the most serious problem was John of Parma's desire to mold the order according to his personal aspirations, which he regarded as identical to those of the founder. His unannounced inspections, his living with the friars in different European friaries, and his desire to be personally responsible for everyone and everything, can be explained only as his desire to intervene directly. According to John of Parma, the order certainly had to be dependent upon and obedient to the pope, but with an autonomy in which the general was the only one responsible. The general alone was answerable to the pope as the sole intermediary between the friars and the supreme authority in the church. Furthermore, in the *Earlier Rule* it was St. Francis who promised obedience personally to the pope and his successors. But the order had to obey the minister general with total obedience, the kind for which Francis wished to serve as an example when he placed himself in dependence upon a superior. Now a different relationship with the pope was needed because of the clericalization of the order, its involvement in the struc-

tures of the religious and cultural life of the day and its pastoral activity, especially because of the problems that arose from the clash between the secular and regular professors.

If some monks could be dependent on the Apostolic See directly, escaping from the jurisdiction of the local ordinary, why could not the Franciscans be withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the bishops and the pope, in order to depend solely upon the minister general in a hierarchical structure of provincials and guardians that had become more fully developed during this time?

Thus only by considering the historical background which we have tried to sketch can we understand clearly the pressures that were brought to bear upon John of Parma to resign, the long opposition on the part of the friars to the selection of a new minister general, and finally the election of Bonaventure.

After this long delay by the friars, Bonaventure was elected minister general because he was well known to John of Parma and satisfied the requirements of the pope. His nomination by John of Parma was the final act on John's part of an obedience that had begun with his resignation. In his opinion, Bonaventure was the man who was best suited to address new initiatives and the demands of the papacy, while maintaining Franciscan tradition as much as possible.

Bonaventure was relatively young when elected; he was forty-two years old. It is probable, or at least there are some clues that indicate that he had reservations about his election, since he knew well the difficulties that would face him. His hesitation to plunge into his new office is evident in his first circular letter to the brothers three months after his election. At least one sentence is very important. He wrote: "(I intend) neither to lay down new laws nor impose obligations, nor assign or place heavy burdens upon others." By this he intended to indicate a fairly conservative policy, while on the other hand rejecting any futuristic tendencies. While he affirmed the usefulness of the order to the church, he also clarified the extent of this usefulness. This is shown most clearly by his short work *Quare fratres praedicent*, which emphasizes that pastoral activity is neither the prime nor essential responsibility of the friars. Instead the friars are reinforcements to help the work of the clergy. Bonaventure states: "Franciscans are like the fishermen in the second boat—those whom the fishermen in the first boat call when the catch is too much for the net." Thus the Franciscans are clerics and become clerics to assist the clergy, but not to be a substitute for them nor to supplant them in their work. In this way an extremely important point emerged. It changed profoundly the original Franciscan spirit in relation to the new situation which occurred in the church in the second half of the thirteenth century. St. Bonaventure

understood this, and he realized all its consequences. Let us take a specific example, such as the work of the friars. Francis admonished explicitly in the Rule: "Let the brothers live by their work." He considered begging and the alms of the faithful as extreme measures when work was not sufficient. The situation completely changed with Bonaventure. He deliberately revived ordinances which came from Cistercian tradition, especially from St. Bernard. Francis conceived of work as essential to the friars, to make their life share the daily uncertainty of the poor in a medieval city. Bonaventure replaced that by a concept of work as a form of asceticism, as the monks had understood it. The support of the friars was to be provided by the faithful, for whom the friars had undertaken pastoral activity, even though this was only as a help to the clergy.

This is a twelfth-century idea that reappears in Bonaventure: the real work of the friars is pastoral activity. His eloquence in developing this idea is equaled only by certain pages of the *Epistola ad fratres Montis Dei*, by William of St.-Thierry. Obviously the meaning of begging also changed. Since the Friar Minor had his own work, which was providing for the souls of the faithful, asking alms became the normal manner of support. The friars accepted this with all the risks it implied, but also with the assurances provided by a world that at the time of Bonaventure was still almost completely religious-minded. Begging went back to being an ascetical exercise, for the friars were forced to have faith in providence, and to practice the virtue of humility more conscientiously, as was clearly stated in the *Expositio super regulam*.

Of no less importance was the Bull *Felicis recordationis*, by Alexander IV on October 16, 1257. It placed the Franciscans and the Templars on the same footing, authorizing both orders to receive legacies even in cash.

On the other hand, in all this Bonaventure remained consistent in accepting the qualitative leap which had already been partly accomplished before him when the Franciscans commenced the process of clericalization. He knew well that Francis's original fraternity was united in humility, exemplary in its way of life, and capable of preaching more through poverty and penance than by words. And he certainly knew the difference between that kind of a fraternity and the order of which he was the head, which was regulated by a rule which was a juridic act, and subject to revision and transformation by papal decisions and Bulls. Nevertheless, it is absolutely clear that Bonaventure did not hesitate in his choice. Of the two possibilities, he chose the course the order had taken, leaving aside forever any return to the original fraternity.

In this way the clericalization, which for the most part Bonaventure found already achieved, was developed and finalized by him, and fully incorporated into a well-defined hierarchical and juridical system. As shown especially in his famous *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, Bonaventure did not relinquish his concept of Franciscanism as a providential force willed by God for the salvation of the church. He stressed the importance of this even by not speaking about the order's complementarity with the Dominicans, which John of Parma had accepted and clearly expressed. However, Bonaventure accentuated the involvement of the Franciscans in the framework of the hierarchical church by portraying their providential role. The Franciscan Order had for the most part become a clerical order, so that it could be more involved in the hierarchy of the church. Bonaventure's acceptance of the cardinalate and bishopric confirms this (he was Cardinal Bishop of Albano). It was also the inevitable conclusion of the process of clericalization, and it demonstrated at the same time the new importance of the order within the church. If, in the face of danger of attacks from the clergy and bishops on the eve of the Second Council of Lyons, the Dominicans and Franciscans had to align themselves somewhat hastily within the framework of the hierarchy, Bonaventure, more than Humbert of Romans, was the guarantor of this alignment. If the council subsequently decreed the suppression of those orders that had not joined approved institutes (*religiones adprobatae*), it is significant that thanks to Bonaventure, the Franciscans and Dominicans emerged unharmed from an attack that in substance had been directed specifically at them.

This means that the work of Bonaventure in completing the clericalization of the order marked a real turning point in Franciscan history, an irreversible about-face, initiating a historical development with many new facets.

When the history of the Franciscan houses has been written more clearly and completely, what will emerge, I believe, will be the greater certainty that Bonaventure, more so than Elias, undertook the construction of large friaries, in proportion to the growth of the number of the friars; and of large churches, because of the increased affluence of the faithful. As a result, hermitages and small friaries which dotted the countryside were discouraged and then abandoned, even though they were only a short distance from the city. Hence, in view of the needs of the order, a completely new policy was developed for the reception and selection of friars. The passionate attachment to an ideal of poverty was set aside, while emphasis was placed on the need to provide for those who carried out the purposes of the order. One passage is of special interest: "We do not purposely accept those who are of no use.... Furthermore, there may be some friars, however unlearned and sim-

ple, who are so devout in prayer, lead such a strict life, and are so edifying to people that they produce as much fruit by their example alone as others do by word and example. In this case the excellence of their life compensates for their lack of learned words." This passage seems to clarify the policy regarding the recruitment of friars. It also helps us to understand Bonaventure's interest in studies, which clearly have a place within the framework of the clericalization of the order and in the formation of clerics to equip them to carry out completely the functions assigned them by the hierarchy.

Let it be stated clearly that Francis's fraternity had come to an end, while another fraternity, not less valid or important but different, was beginning. It would bring profoundly new elements with it. It would evoke reactions which were strong and obstinate. The friars would have to be clerics and engage in studies for preaching and the care of souls. The day of a simple exhortation to penance was gone. Finally, the friars would have to get involved in combating heresy. With the generalate of Bonaventure in 1254, the Inquisition, which had originally been in the hands of the Dominicans in Italy, and which was tenaciously opposed by the lower classes, would pass into the hands of the Franciscans. They certainly managed to carry it on with less cruelty, but with no less intransigence.

Through all this, attachment to poverty remained the link with the founder, though not the only link. Hence, the exasperation of the rigorists and the emergence of ever more clearly defined Spiritualist groups attest to this last remaining link with St. Francis. The judgment of some Spirituals against Bonaventure and the loyalty of others, such as Olivi, stemmed precisely from the way in which they understood poverty in relation to Bonaventure. Thus the saint is presented not only as the turning point in a historical process, but also as a "living sign of contradiction." Such is the destiny of the great personalities of history.