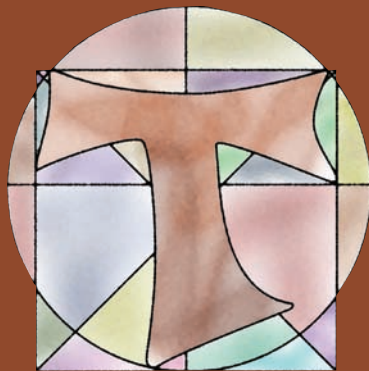
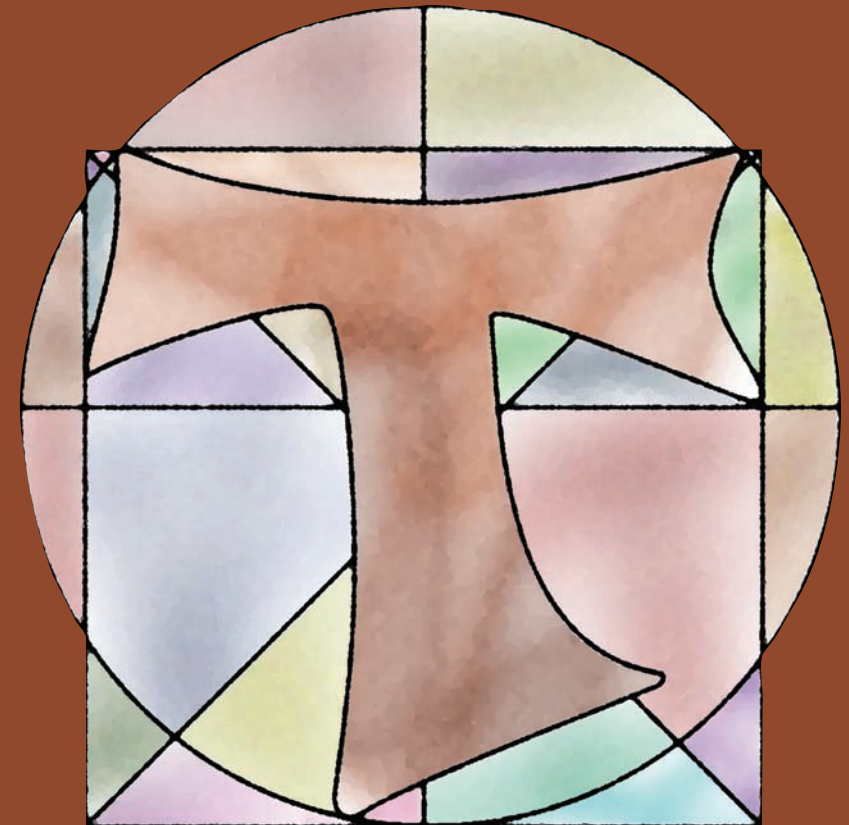


The AFCU Journal:  
A FRANCISCAN PERSPECTIVE  
ON HIGHER EDUCATION

January 2008 / Volume 5, Number 1



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## The AFCU Journal: A Franciscan Perspective on Higher Education

### History and Mission

On October 3, 2001, the Board of Directors of the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities approved a proposal for an annual journal to feature the peer reviewed research and writings of faculty and administrators of their institutions. The purposes of the AFCU journal are:

- To strengthen the vision of Catholic higher education in the Franciscan tradition
- To connect all the discrete disciplines to a Franciscan philosophy and heritage
- To encourage an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach to research and reflection from the Franciscan school of today
- To provide motivation for reflection on the breadth and depth of scholarship emanating from Franciscan institutions of higher learning.

It is hoped that this publication will offer an incentive to faculty and staff to reflect upon the distinct character of a Franciscan institution of higher education.

The publication of the journal is guided by a small editorial board and assisted by contact persons within each of the AFCU institutions. The views expressed in the articles are attributed to the authors and not to the member institutions. Permission to reprint articles should be directed to: *Editor, The AFCU Journal, Neumann College, One Neumann Drive, Aston, PA 19014.*

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**Poetry Editor:** Murray Bodo, OFM with the assistance of Barbara Wuest.

**Book Review Editor:** Kevin Godfrey

Assistance with this issue was provided by the following Neumann College personnel: Sr. Mary Kathryn Dougherty and Sr. Margaret Oman.

### Submission of Manuscripts

Faculty, staff, and administrators from AFCU institutions and related organizations are invited to submit articles related to the Franciscan perspective on higher education. Articles should be approximately 3,000 to 7,000 words in length. Shorter articles describing unique programs and “best practices,” book reviews, and original poems are also welcome. When citing Franciscan sources, please consult *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*. For specific directions for preparation and transmittal of manuscripts, please contact: Editor, The AFCU Journal, Neumann College, One Neumann Drive, Aston, PA 19014 or hutchisp@neumann.edu. Articles and poems will be reviewed and selected by the AFCU editorial board.



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# **The AFCU Journal:**

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## From the Chair

Dear friends in Franciscan higher education,

It's my honor to introduce this latest and expanded volume of the 2008 *AFCU Journal*. Thanks to all of the authors who have invested their precious time and rich talent to contribute to the contents of this issue of *The Journal*. It is our hope that the materials shared here will be useful to many and will serve to inspire all of you to further even more the great work being done at all the Franciscan colleges and universities across the country. Each one of you, our readers, is needed to bring the Catholic Franciscan tradition to our students and to our world.

Sometimes in Franciscan higher education we tend to use phrases like "Franciscan heritage" and "Franciscan values"; thus, I am pleased to see Kenan Osborne's article focusing on the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition. Students are often surprised, pleasantly or not, that Franciscanism is rich intellectual and philosophical fodder, and we must not shortchange our students on the many opportunities both inside and outside the classroom that this provides.

I am especially appreciative of the Best Practices articles which focus on the integration of our Franciscan tradition and values into the curriculum. It seems that increasingly our respective student bodies have little understanding of the Franciscan heritage and values, and thus we must take this integration to new levels so that we do not lose this hallmark of Franciscan higher education. In the end, I know our students are pleasantly surprised by what they learn! Thanks for sharing your insights and best practices with us.

Each year, in addition to providing copies of *The AFCU Journal* to the faculty and staff at the University of Saint Francis, I also provide copies to each member of our Board of Trustees and to the sisters who serve on the Provincial Council of the Sisters of Saint Francis of Perpetual Adoration. This publication is one of many excellent resources which help to further educate our University leaders regarding our Franciscan tradition. I am excited to provide these individuals with this issue, which will provide them with much rich material to consider and discuss.

I hope to see many of you at the *AFCU 2008 Franciscan Symposium* being planned for June 5–7, 2008 at Alvernia College in Reading, PA. This gathering will give us the opportunity to meet face to face to enrich, even more, our work in Franciscan higher education.

With best wishes for a new year filled with rich expressions of our Franciscan tradition,

Sister M. Elise Kriss, OSF  
Chair, AFCU Board of Directors  
President, University of Saint Francis, IN



## From the Editor

In January 2004, we introduced the first issue of *The AFCU Journal: A Franciscan Perspective on Higher Education*. As we present this 5th issue of the journal, we re-echo the words shared on that occasion: “Although this should be a time of joy, news reports speak of war, threats of terrorism, and tragic natural disasters.” To that, we can add: an increased urgency about the need to care for our mother Earth. It is worth repeating that “in times such as these . . . the vision and values, the alternative worldview, of Francis and Clare of Assisi are most needed.” Again we pray that our Franciscan colleges and universities will develop appropriate strategies to bring the “Franciscan message of hope, compassion, and peace to our world” through our ministry of higher education. Many of the contributors to this issue of the AFCU journal are doing just that through their scholarship, faculty development efforts, and teaching.

We are grateful to Kenan Osborne, OFM who accepted our invitation to synthesize his presentation of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition from the first volume of the Franciscan Heritage Series. Although we recognized the challenges of our request, Dr. Osborne has far surpassed our hopes! In his own words, his essay “indicates the meaning of the phrase *The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition*, and highlights its merits historically and also points out that this tradition has much to offer the globalized and multi-cultural world of today.” We believe that Dr. Osborne’s article has the potential for use as a development tool with faculty and staff of our institutions. Hopefully, his comparison of the philosophical, theological, and spiritual visions of the Dominican and Franciscan traditions will also be helpful for teaching purposes. Moreover, his essay challenges all of the AFCU institutions to a deeper understanding of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition as “a bridge between the Christian faith and contemporary science, social thought, and multi-cultural appreciation.” May we be worthy of this challenge!

The articles in this issue represent diversity in terms of disciplines and institutions. Dr. Timothy Johnson, familiar to many students of the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, draws upon the richness of the Franciscan worldview to consider contemporary culture and religion. He explores film (Gibson’s *Passion of the Christ*), contemporary media (*South Park*), and Girard’s theory of violence and religion in light of Franciscan spirituality. His thought-provoking essay closes with a challenge so desperately needed today, to “proclaim an end to violence and persecution.” Accepting Paul Tillich’s recommendation that philosophy should recover the early Franciscan ontological approach to the Mystery of God, John Perry develops the thesis that we possess within ourselves an awareness of the Good God. This awareness leads to an attraction to the Good and the Beautiful in all of Creation and to a deepening capacity for love and friendship with God and with other human beings.

James Houck shares implications of his investigation of the type of presence students in a pastoral counseling program bring to the therapeutic relationship and the fit between their personality traits and the philosophy of the program and the core values of one institution. A student's question about the difference in teacher education at a Catholic Franciscan institution led Joseph Gillespie to compare Francis of Assisi and the Russian constructivist educational psychologist Lev Vygotsky, suggesting both men as models for future teachers.

Responding to a call from the organizers of the 41st International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, MI, scholars offered presentations on Bonaventure's Doctrine of Illumination, the centrality of beauty in the Franciscan tradition and the implications for the 21st century liberal arts curriculum, and the integration of the thinking of Bonaventure into undergraduate philosophy courses. Dr. Lance Richey summarizes these presentations. One of the Kalamazoo presenters, John Mizzoni, sharing his conference paper, establishes linkages between Plato's theory of Forms and his Allegory of the Cave and Bonaventure's theory of exemplars and his *Journey of the Mind to God*. He then demonstrates how professors teaching introductory philosophy courses can integrate the Franciscan tradition.

The recognition that they could not market their college to the broader community unless they could clearly articulate their identity, mission, and values led Sisters Barbara Vano and Ann Carmen Barone to develop a process which generated tremendous energy and a sense of community at Lourdes College. The process they present offers insights and ideas for staff development at other institutions. Sr. Mary Evelyn Govert shares a description of the Franciscan charism which grounded her institution's development of a Strategic Plan in the hope that it may benefit others who seek to understand and operationalize the tradition. Similarly, Sr. Anita Holzmer delineates a process which has enabled her institution to maximize the potential of the Assisi Pilgrimage to transform student participants and to enrich the broader campus community.

Three contributors to this issue offer practical ways to integrate the Franciscan tradition into the curriculum. Mathematics teachers should appreciate the concrete applications of the Franciscan tradition and values into courses in statistics, data analysis, geometry, and a Senior Math Seminar. A veteran Math teacher, Sr. Barbara Reynolds has discovered that her attempts to infuse "something Franciscan" into math classes has resulted in deeper student learning. Students report that "the Franciscan assignments have helped them to make connections so that the course material is more meaningful in their lives." Sr. Elaine Martin recounts a

similar experience as she explores with students the Franciscan values of peacemaking, care for the environment, and reverence for all in a core course on Exploring Diversity. According to Dr. James Norton, first year studies programs are fast becoming standard practice on college campuses. Marian College's Freshman Studies Program incorporates the inquiries of Franciscan scholars such as John Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, and Roger Bacon to encourage students to explore questions such as "Who am I? Why am I here? How will the here-and-now prepare me for the future?" Designed as the beginning of a process which will guide student reflection all along their college journey, the course aims to develop students who will be "knowledgeable, conscientious, socially engaged, and skilled citizens and leaders."

Institutions which are attempting to integrate academic service learning into their programs will find the article on *Franciscan-based Service Learning* both enlightening and challenging. Charles Coate and Todd Palmer describe how attempts by members of the Business faculty of St. Bonaventure University to educate themselves on the meaning of the Franciscan tradition and values led to a consensus that "service learning was an area in which . . . faith based constructs could most readily be incorporated." The evolution of the SIFE Bahamas experience as the center piece of a multi-faceted, multi-disciplinary service learning program is a fascinating story of a model which has the potential for replication on other campuses.

We continue our focus on AFCU institutions with an introduction of the newest members of the organization, Our Lady of the Lake and Villa Maria Colleges. Once again, Dr. Kevin Godfrey presents the manner in which AFCU institutions are promoting *service to others* which he believes can be "a contemporary catalyst for institutional reform and educational transformation" to the benefit of all the "people of the earth, the earth itself and all it contains, and the entire created order." The next issue of the journal will complete the story of *service to others* with profiles of Franciscan University of Steubenville, University of Saint Francis (Fort Wayne), Madonna University, and Quincy University.

Reflecting the Franciscan focus on Beauty, we offer poems by Greg Friedman, OFM, Sr. Felicity Dorsett, and Helen Ruggieri, grateful as always to Barbara Wuest and Murray Bodo, OFM for their expertise in receiving and reviewing poems.

We are confident that our Book Review section, edited by Kevin Godfrey, will assist readers in selecting texts and media for personal and classroom use. We thank Michael Blastic, Sr. Felicity Dorsett, and John Mizzoni for their contributions.

During this past year, Franciscan Colleges and Universities lost three friends and supporters.

Dr. Peter Christensen is deeply missed by his colleagues at Cardinal Stritch University. As readers of the AFCU journal, we have all benefitted from Dr. Christensen's scholarly analysis of Francis and Film. Barbara Wuest provides a glimpse into this gentle scholar in her remembrance.

Pilgrims to Assisi, both staff and students, have been saddened by the death of Don Aldo Brunacci. Michael Chiariello shares a warm personal reflection on this great humanitarian and dear brother.

Editorial Board member, Earl Madary of Viterbo University, contributed to the discussions which led to this issue of the AFCU journal. We offer sympathy and prayers to his family and the entire Viterbo University community.

In closing, we thank the contact persons and presidents of the AFCU institutions for encouraging faculty, administrators, and staff members to contribute articles. We hope that the scholarship and practical ideas presented in this issue will enhance efforts to strengthen our identity and missions as Catholic institutions in the Franciscan tradition.

Patricia Hutchison, OSF  
Chair, Editorial Board

# **The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition: What Is It? Why Is It Important?**

**KENAN B. OSBORNE, OFM**

**kosborne@fst.edu**

**The Franciscan School of Theology / Graduate Theological Union  
Berkeley, California**

Participants in a planning meeting for the June 2008 AFCU conference noted that in spite of all that has been published, many Franciscan faculty members still pose the question: What is the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition? To help the readers of the AFCU Journal, the board requested that Kenan Osborne prepare an article summarizing his CFIT book, *The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition: Tracing Its Origins and Identifying Its Central Components* (New York: The Franciscan Institute, 2003). The following is his presentation.

**F**rom 1950 to the present, there has been a geometric rise in publications on the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition. The lengthy bibliography in Johannes Freyer's volume, *Homo Viator: Der Mensch im Lichte der Heilsgeschichte*, offers — even to those who do not read German — a marvelous source of material on contemporary Franciscan theology and philosophy.<sup>1</sup> This recent interest in Franciscan studies includes the establishment of the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities as well as the *AFCU Journal* itself. The growth of Franciscan literature in the past half-century has carefully delineated the basic elements in the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition.

In the following pages, I will move beyond a summary of my volume, *The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition*. My goal for this essay is this: I will indicate in a succinct way what the Franciscan Tradition basically includes and why this tradition is important for Christian education in the contemporary globalized and multicultural world. Hopefully, the readers of the *AFCU Journal* will gain a clearer insight regarding the Franciscan tradition itself and will develop ways in which this tradition can benefit the educational goals of our Franciscan colleges and universities. I have divided the material as follows:

1. The meaning of “tradition” when applied to the theological world of the Western Church.
2. The meaning of “intellectual” when applied to a theological tradition in the Western Church.
3. Key issues in the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition.
4. Spiritual vision and academic theology.
5. The value of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition for today's globalized and multi-cultural world.

## 1. THE MEANING OF “TRADITION” WHEN APPLIED TO THE THEOLOGICAL WORLD OF THE WESTERN CHURCH

Our first task is to describe in a clear way the meaning of the term “tradition” when it is applied to the intellectual aspect of our Christian heritage. Both in the Western Church and in the Orthodox-Syriac Churches there exist a variety of intellectual traditions. All of these distinct traditions have a unique validity, and none of them can be seen as a benchmark for the others. In other words, there are many Christian intellectual traditions, all of which have equal value.

Even though my focus in this essay is on three major Western traditions, the rich intellectual traditions in the Eastern Churches must also be kept in mind. These major traditions in Orthodox theology and philosophy offer us new and different aspects of our common faith. Vladimir Lossky’s volume, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*,<sup>2</sup> and the volume by Deirdre Carabine, *The Unknown God: Negative Theology in the Platonic Tradition*,<sup>3</sup> enrich us with a wealth of insights into the various Eastern Churches’ approach to theological thought. The Eastern traditions are a vital and equal part of the Christian theological heritage.

Every intellectual tradition, religious or non-religious, stems from an historical process. As an historical process, it is difficult to pinpoint the actual inception of an intellectual tradition. Usually, there is no major “event” which gives rise to such a tradition. Rather, small steps are taken by various scholars which slowly coalesce into a perceptible and distinct inter-relationship. If there is, finally, an acceptance by a wider society, these inter-related issues gradually become a tradition. It takes many years and sometimes even several centuries for a tradition to develop through this three-fold historical process. The Christian Churches of the West, Anglican, Orthodox, Protestant, and Roman Catholic, have all experienced this kind of three-fold historical process for their respective theological, liturgical, canonical, and catechetical positions.

In the Western Christian world, there are basically three major intellectual traditions which have had enormous influence on Western Christian theology: namely, the Augustinian tradition, the Thomistic tradition, and the Franciscan tradition. There are also some minor traditions but these three major theological traditions have dominated western Christianity from the fifth century to the twenty-first century.

Although Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Francis of Assisi provide the names for these three traditions, each of the traditions began far earlier than the life and times of Augustine, Thomas, and Francis. Naturally, today each religious group — the Augustinians, the Dominicans and the Franciscans — is happy to maintain the names of their respective founders, but in actuality all three traditions have deep roots in the sacred scriptures, in the Fathers and theologians of the early church, and in differing approaches to philosophical traditions through which the three groups

articulate their respective theological positions. Let us consider each of these three western intellectual traditions in some detail.

### **The History of the Augustinian Tradition**

The historical beginnings of the Augustinian tradition have philosophical roots in Plato, the neo-Platonists, and Plotinus. Since Augustine was not conversant in either Hebrew or Greek, Augustine's writings depended heavily on the then-current Latin translations of the sacred scriptures and early Greek Christian writers. Thus, any theological influence by either the Old and New Testament or the early Greek Fathers of the Church came to him in Latin translations.

On the Latin side itself, the more extensive theological roots of Augustine's thought are the writings of Tertullian, Cyprian of Carthage, Ambrose of Milan and the *Ambrosiaster*.<sup>4</sup> With these philosophical, scriptural, and theological roots, Augustine's writings can be seen as the foremost and earliest western synthesis of earlier Latin theological positions.

However, Augustine's writings do not form a "systematic theology" which meets our current standards. Historically, systematic theology, for example a "summa" of all theology, began only in the twelfth century.<sup>5</sup> Rather, Augustine's writings, though a synthesis of sort, were occasioned more often than not by the burning issues of his own day, such as Donatism, Pelagianism, and the destruction of Rome by Alaric in 410. In other words, Augustine's theology was, in a strong way, crisis-centered, which is a different form of theology than that found in the theological systematic syntheses of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Moreover, one cannot speak of an Augustinian tradition during the lifetime of Augustine himself. He certainly had his share of theological followers both during his lifetime and immediately following his death, but these followers did not immediately constitute a "theological tradition." They were simply a group of people sharing in an inter-relational way the theological insights of Augustine (the second stage of the above-mentioned three-fold process).

Slowly, from the sixth century to the eleventh century, Benedictine monks in particular provided Western Christianity with the Augustinian tradition. These monks preserved copies of his writings in their libraries, and, as the monastic schools developed, the theological teaching in these schools centered more and more on the positions of Augustine. The eighth-century revival of learning, which was sponsored by Charlemagne (742-814) and Alcuin (730-804), forcefully energized the process of an Augustinian intellectual tradition. More important in this developing process, however, were the works of Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109), Anselm of Laon (d. 1117), Peter Lombard (ca. 1100-1160), Peter Abelard (1079-1142), and Richard of St. Victor (ca. 1090-1141). In the monastic schools of the early Middle Ages and in the Carolingian Reformation, a church-wide Augustinian tradition clearly came into being. By the



eleventh century and throughout the twelfth century there existed throughout the West a powerful Augustinian intellectual tradition.

*... the Augustinian  
Intellectual Tradition  
has been a major  
gift to the Western  
Churches — Anglican,  
Protestant and Catholic.*

From the twelfth century down to today, this Augustinian tradition has continued to be vital in the western churches. In 1256, Pope Alexander IV united many small groups of hermits and penitential communities, which followed in diverse ways the Augustinian rule. This coalescence of Augustinian religious groups is known as the “Grand Union.” Canonically this new grouping of Augustinian religious men is called the Order of Hermits of St. Augustine. By the beginning of the fourteenth century, members of this Augustinian Order had thriving foundations throughout Europe. In the Augustinian Order, education was a primary apostolate, and in the first constitutions of the Order, the writings of Augustine were established as the primary theological source for their houses of study. Thus, through their commitment to Augustine’s theology and through their intense activity in educational circles, the Augustinian tradition continued to grow and was clearly accepted in the Western Church as a major “theological intellectual tradition.”<sup>6</sup>

In the Protestant world, Martin Luther and John Calvin cite Augustine more than any other source with the exception of the Holy Scriptures. The Augustinianism of Luther and Calvin is still part of today’s Protestant theological enterprise. At the Council of Trent, when the bishops took issue with the teaching of Luther and Calvin, they were very careful not to contradict Augustine’s views. The bishops could not anathematize Augustine, even when they were anathematizing Luther and Calvin. In the middle of the twentieth century, a rebirth of Augustine took place. Leaders of this renewal were Henri de Lubac, Peter Brown, Henry Chadwick, Romano Guardini, and Frederik van der Meer.<sup>7</sup> From all of these historical indications, one can only conclude that the Augustinian Intellectual Tradition has been a major gift to the Western Churches — Anglican, Protestant and Catholic.

### **History of the Thomistic and the Franciscan Intellectual Traditions**

Both the Thomistic and the Franciscan Intellectual Traditions have deep roots in the Augustinian tradition, but each of these two traditions has altered the flow of Latin theology in very different ways than that found in Augustine. These new ways eventually became two different forms of the Western Intellectual Tradition.

A major basis for the emergence of such alternative traditions arose in the twelfth century when systematic theology itself first appeared. Marcia Colish in her two-volume work, *Peter Lombard*, writes the following:



To be sure, a huge amount of theology had been written before his [Peter Lombard's] time. Latin theology from the patristic period onward had produced a large number of genres of theological literature. . . . But, before the twelfth century, no Latin theologian had developed a full-scale theological system, with a place for everything and everything in its place.<sup>8</sup>

It was the development of systematic theology in the twelfth century which provided both the Dominicans and the Franciscans with a basis for new theological traditions. Although Augustine played a major role in each of these new traditions, the specific manner in which the Dominicans, Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, on the one hand, and the Franciscan scholars, Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, and John Duns Scotus, on the other hand, formulated their full-scale theological systems with a place for everything and everything in its place, differed immensely. Thus, two new theological syntheses began to develop in the thirteenth century. These two new formulations of Christian theology were systematic in ways which went far beyond the Augustinian tradition.

Other profound factors beyond the beginning of systematic theology entered the scene. First of all, Latin translations of the writings of Aristotle and the Latin translations of Islamic Commentaries on Aristotle (Alfarabi, Avicenna and Averroës) began to influence Western theology.<sup>9</sup> Other than the two Latin translations of Aristotle's *Categories* and *On Interpretation*, which had been made by Boethius in the sixth-century, the western scholarly world had no access whatsoever to Aristotle's other writings. Few medieval scholars were able to read Greek texts. Suddenly, in the eleventh century a deluge of Aristotelian literature translated into Latin began to change western theology. Major proponents of this Aristotelian change were, for the Dominicans, Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, and, for the Franciscans, John Peckham, Robert Grosseteste, and Alexander of Hales.

During the twelfth century, Thomas Aquinas became a leading Dominican professor at the University of Paris and at the University of Bonn. In the same century, Bonaventure became a major Franciscan professor at the University of Paris, and John Duns Scotus a leading Franciscan professor at the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Paris and Cologne. Their influence went beyond the members of their religious communities and affected many students at these institutions. However, during the lifetimes of these scholars, one cannot speak of either a Thomistic or a Franciscan Intellectual Tradition. All of these scholars had followers, but in their lifetime and in the decades after their death, it was still too early to call the common thought of such followers an Intellectual Theological Tradition. Similar to the Augustinian tradition, these two new historical processes came to be acknowledged as an intellectual tradition decades after their death.

Let us consider in some detail the historical processes which developed the Thomistic Intellectual Tradition and then turn to the historical processes which developed the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition.

### **The Thomistic Intellectual Tradition**

In 1279, the General Chapter of the Dominican Order prohibited any attacks by Dominicans themselves on the teaching of Thomas Aquinas. In 1309, legislation was made by which all teaching in Dominican houses of study was to be done in accordance with the writings of Thomas Aquinas. The theology of Thomas Aquinas became the norm within the Dominican Order. Through this kind of legislation, an internal Thomistic tradition gradually took hold. It should be noted, however, that from the thirteenth century onward there were many Thomisms, that is, there was a *variety of interpretations* regarding the writings of Thomas within the Dominican Order itself.

A Church-wide acceptance of Thomism began to take place during the Renaissance. Three extremely prominent Dominican scholars were involved in this process: Thomas de Vio Cardinal Cajetan (1469-1534), Francesco Silvestri Ferrarensis (1474-1528), and Francisco de Vitoria (1486-1546). Francisco de Vitoria held the chair in metaphysics at the University of Salamanca. He wrote commentaries on the *Summa theologiae* and substituted the *Summa* of St. Thomas for the *Commentary on the Sentences* as the primary text for university studies in theology. Francisco de Vitoria was succeeded by several distinguished Spanish Thomists: Melchior Cano (1509-1560), Domingo Soto (1494-1560), and Domingo Bañez (1528-1604). These three Dominicans were very influential both at and after the Council of Trent.

In the late 1500s the Jesuits legislated that the writings of Thomas Aquinas were to be considered the theological basis for their houses of study. Three outstanding Jesuit scholars promoted the Thomistic Intellectual Tradition: Francisco Toledo (1533-1596), Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), and Peter Canisius (1521-1597). In 1548, the Jesuit Order formally and officially made a major part of its mission the running and staffing of schools. Through these schools, the Jesuits spread the Thomistic Intellectual Tradition throughout Europe and in their missionary endeavors into other sections of the world as well.

In the 1600s, the Spanish Discalced Carmelites at the University of Salamanca produced the *Cursus Theologicus Summam d. Thomas Complectens*. Its major authors were Antonio de la Madre de Dios (d. ca. 1640), Domingo de Santa Teresa (d. 1654), and Juan de la Asunción (d. 1701). In the same century, the Discalced Carmelites at Alcalá de Henares produced the *Cursus Artium*, which contained a philosophical curriculum based on the positions of Thomas Aquinas. This philosophical volume as well as the *Cursus Theologicus* became text books at the University of Alcalá and at other European universities as well. These texts further enhanced the wider influence of the Thomistic Intellectual Tradition.

The encyclical of Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris* (1879), enjoined Aquinas' thought on all theological students of the Western Roman Catholic Church. This legislation produced a major clash between the Franciscans and the Dominicans. Pierre Jaccard in his lengthy essay, "*La Renaissance de la Pensée Franciscaine*," provides a detailed account of the efforts made by Dominicans and Franciscans in the wake of this encyclical.<sup>10</sup> The history of these efforts includes details which violate respect for diversity. The infighting between Dominican and Franciscan friars at times became less than Christian. Jaccard, though favoring the Franciscans, does not hesitate to point out their disrespect for the Thomistic endeavors, just as he points out the disrespect of the Dominicans for the Franciscan approach to theological thought.

The Thomistic Intellectual Tradition has played a major role in Western Catholic thought, particularly since the Renaissance and Reformation. Even though there have been a variety of Thomisms and Neo-Thomisms, the influence of Thomas Aquinas has been of major importance to the entire Western Church from the sixteenth century onwards.

There was, however, one lengthy period of discontinuity, and this period affected both the Thomistic and the Franciscan Intellectual Traditions. The writings of René Descartes (1596-1650), Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) created a major change in European and North American universities, particularly in the departments of philosophy. The courses in philosophy at these universities began to move directly from a study of classical philosophy — Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero — to a study of Descartes, Hobbes, and Kant. Little by little, these departments simply ignored the entire scholastic period. Scholasticism came to be seen as a misuse of philosophy by theologians.<sup>11</sup> By the end of the 1700s, scholasticism had disappeared from the now-secularized universities of Europe. Catholic seminaries, of course, continued to teach scholastic theology and philosophy, but these institutions were generally isolated from the major universities. Seminary life with its scholastic philosophy and theology became insular and church-centered.

Small beginnings to reestablish the validity of scholastic philosophy began to appear in the late 1800s, but it was only in the middle of the 1900s that the Euro-American world began to reappraise medieval philosophy and therefore theology. Antonie Vos, in his volume, *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus*, devotes an entire chapter to the history of this historical obscurity and its final reappearance.<sup>12</sup> From the mid-1900s onward, there has been a steady revival of interest in scholastic thought by university faculties of philosophy and religious studies.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition**

The development of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition was also a product of an historical process. The roots of this tradition began prior to Francis and Clare, just as the roots of the Augustinian tradition and

the Thomistic tradition preceded both Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. These roots are the Sacred Scriptures, the writings both of the Fathers of the Church and of early Christian theologians, and the Graeco-Roman philosophies, but especially Platonism and Aristotelianism. Similar to the Thomistic tradition, the Franciscan tradition has deep Augustinian roots, but as systematic theology developed in the twelfth century and the writings of Aristotle became more and more influential in the thirteenth century, the Franciscans under the guidance of Bonaventure and Scotus developed a theo-philosophical synthesis quite different from that of Thomas. George Marcil in his essay, "The Franciscan School through the Centuries," provides us with a century-by-century development of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition.<sup>14</sup>

The originating activity of Franciscans at the universities of Paris and Oxford produced many major scholars throughout the thirteenth century. Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, Peter John-Olivi and John Duns Scotus stand out as the leading figures. Each of these scholars had a group of followers during his respective lifetime, but again such a group of followers does not constitute a "tradition." Their presence indicates a coalescence of thought by key people, but this coalescence cannot be considered as a major church-wide intellectual tradition. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Franciscan Order legislated that the writings of Bonaventure and John Duns Scotus were to be the central theological material in all Franciscan houses of study. Thus, an internal tradition began to take place.

The presence of Franciscan theologians as official masters at the universities of Paris, Oxford, Cambridge and Bonn, moved the influence of Franciscan theological thought beyond the limits of the Order of Friars Minor. The presence of these renowned scholars can be seen as a major part of making the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition a church-wide tradition. Marcil provides us with a list of key Franciscan professors at these universities during the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The writings of Scotus, more so than those of Bonaventure, formed the core of their university courses.

At the Council of Trent (1545-1563) the bishops and their official theologians were theologically divided. Although all the bishops respected Augustine, a large percentage of the Tridentine bishops favored Thomas Aquinas, while an equally large percentage of bishops favored John Duns Scotus. The papal legates, who were in charge of the Council, often had to intervene with the injunction: "Most reverend bishops, we are not here to settle the issues between the schools [the differences between the Franciscans and Dominicans]. We are here to judge the Reformers [Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli]." As a result, all the drafts of the Council were keenly studied by both Franciscan and Thomistic scholars, with the result that neither side could claim conciliar approval of its respective positions.<sup>15</sup>

In the seventeenth century, major developments in Scotistic studies took place. In 1633, the General Chapter of the Observant Franciscans held in Toledo voted for a new edition of Scotus' works and for a text in both philosophy and theology *ad mentem Scoti*. These conciliar decisions were made to unify the order in an intellectual way. Luke Wadding (1588-1657) produced the volumes containing the writings of Scotus. Another Franciscan, Claude Frassen (1620-1711), published both a volume on Franciscan philosophy, *Philosophica Academica*, and a four-volume work on Franciscan theology, *Scotus Academicus*. In this same century, Capuchin scholars, such as Theodore Foresti and Bartholomew Barbieri, produced theological studies *ad mentem Bonaventurae*.

The late eighteenth century and the nineteenth century were a disaster for the Observant Franciscans. Lázaro Iriarte notes that in 1762 there were 131,951 Franciscans. In 1890, there were only 23,549 Franciscans.<sup>16</sup> Almost all religious orders and communities were decimated during this same period of time. The major cause for the radical decline of religious men and women was the aftermath of the French Revolution, when religious communities were banned by the political leaders, not only in France but also in many parts of Europe.

Because of the declining number of religious men and women in both the Dominican and Franciscan Orders, there were fewer Dominican and Franciscan professors of theology and philosophy. As a result, the intellectual influence of both the Dominicans and the Franciscans plummeted to low depths throughout the Catholic Church. Only at the end of the nineteenth century did a change begin to take place.

In this essay, I will not go into detail regarding the history of the renewal of the Thomistic Intellectual Tradition.<sup>17</sup> My focus will remain on the renewal of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition. From 1882 to 1902, the Franciscans at Quarrachi, Italy, edited the critical edition of Bonaventure's works. The critical edition came out in nine large volumes. From 1891 to 1895, Louis Vivés re-edited the Wadding edition of Scotus' writings. This edition appeared in twenty-six large volumes. The subsequent critical editions of Alexander of Hales, John Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, Peter John Olivi, Adam Wodeham, Anthony of Padua, and Peter of Aureolus have provided us with a wealth of material.<sup>18</sup> Without these critical editions, a Franciscan renewal in theo-philosophical thought could not have occurred.

It was the twentieth century, however, which engendered a major renewal. The list of Franciscan scholars in the twentieth century is impressive. Since this listing is so extensive, I have placed the names in a footnote, but I have done so not to minimize the importance of these many authors. Rather, a listing of so many authors in the text of this brief essay goes beyond the page-limits for this assignment.<sup>19</sup> Other names could be added to the list, but the litany of these names clearly shows the strength of this current Franciscan renewal.

In the western world today, there are also key centers for the study of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition. In Europe, there are major centers in Bonn, Canterbury, Rome, and Utrecht. In Rome all three Franciscan Orders, the Capuchins, the Conventuals, and the Friars Minor, have centers for the study of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition. In the United States there are two major centers: the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University in New York, and the Franciscan School of Theology at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. The western hemisphere also is indebted to the Academy of Franciscan History, which offers tremendous insights into the spread of the Franciscan Tradition throughout Hispanic America.

Can we say that today the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition is a church-wide tradition? The answer is yes. Scholarship over the last 125 years has made this abundantly clear. The reception of Scotus by contemporary non-Catholic philosophers and writers is another clear statement that the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition has made and is making an enormous effect on our contemporary western world. A litany of such philosophers reads as follows: Simo Knuuttila, Antonie Vos Jaczn, Klaus Jacobi, L. Alanen, Calvin G. Normore, Egbert P. Bos, Jorge J. E. Gracia, Rega Wood, and Woos Park. Clearly, in many prominent philosophical circles, the tradition of Scotus is held in deep respect.

Since 1950, a series of International Symposia has taken place, at which the common theme was the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition. Several of these congresses have produced major literature on the Franciscan Tradition. A major symposium was the *International Congress for the Seventh Centenary in Honor of St. Bonaventure* held in Rome (Sept. 19-26, 1974) under the guidance of the Conventual Franciscan, Alfonso Pompeii.<sup>20</sup> In Paris, (Sept. 2-4, 2002), there was a *Colloquium, Duns Scot à Paris, 1302-2002*. The Acts of the Colloquium were published in 2004.<sup>21</sup> In 2006-2008, a series of symposia on Scotus were held at St. Bonaventure, New York, Canterbury, Bonn, and Strasbourg. In 2007, a major Colloquium on the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition and a Globalized, Multi-Cultural Church took place at the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, California.

Is there a strong Franciscan Intellectual Tradition? The answer is clearly affirmative. The abundance of scholarly writings, colloquia, and critical editions — all dedicated to Franciscan themes — cannot help but be seen as the basis for this affirmative reply. However, official Roman Catholic Church publications, such as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, present a statement on all aspects of Catholic teaching with no mention of any Franciscan scholar whatsoever.<sup>22</sup> The “official church” remains staunchly Thomistic.

## **2. THE MEANING OF “INTELLECTUAL” WHEN APPLIED TO A THEOLOGICAL TRADITION IN THE WESTERN CHURCH**

The word intellectual has been used in the phrase “intellectual tradi-



tion” in a somewhat arbitrary way. Simply stated, the term “intellectual” has been used to include both the philosophical and theological aspects of the three traditions. In today’s world, the use of the phrase “a theological tradition” generally means a non-philosophical tradition. Likewise, the phrase “a philosophical tradition” generally means that there is nothing religious or faith-oriented involved. To include both philosophy and theology, the term “intellectual” has been selected, but this does not mean that another and perhaps better adjective might eventually be used. The term “intellectual” includes both philosophy and theology. The three intellectual traditions of the Western Church contain not only diverse philosophical positions; they also contain diverse theological positions. Philosophical positions affect theological positions and *vice versa*.

All three traditions are based on the official teachings of the Christian Church. Catholic faith for all three is a given. The differences in the three traditions revolve around philosophical and theological positions. This aspect of the three traditions must be kept in mind when reading or analyzing any of the above traditions, since philosophical and theological differences by themselves never constitute heretical positions. The freedom of philosophical and theological thought has energized the Christian Church from its beginnings.

As regards philosophy, the Roman Catholic Church has no canonized philosophy. John Paul II, in *Fides et ratio*, has stated the matter in a crisp and definitive way

The Church has no philosophy of her own nor does she canonize any one particular philosophy in preference to others.<sup>23</sup>

The pope’s words deserve our attention. There are philosophical issues in the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition which differ radically from the philosophical issues in the Dominican Intellectual Tradition. These philosophical issues, however, impact the theology of both traditions. Philosophical differences engender richly diverse expressions of Christian theology.

An example of such philosophical differences is the following. Thomas Aquinas accepts the axiom which Aristotle had formulated in his volume, *On Interpretation*, namely:

Now that which is must needs be when it is, and that which is not must need not be when it is not.<sup>24</sup>

In this axiom, Aristotle is speaking about necessity and contingency.

- When something actually exists, it necessarily exists (*must needs be*).
- When it does not actually exist, it is only possible (*must need not be*), and therefore it is contingent.

For Aristotle, while any reality exists, it has to exist. Its very existence makes it necessary. He then states that when any reality is merely possible

— and therefore it does not exist — the possible reality is contingent. It can change. In the philosophical world, contingency means that something is changeable. A contingent reality has no necessary characteristic whatsoever. Even its own existence is not necessary.

Aristotle was trying to avoid the necessitarian absoluteness of Parmenides on the one hand and the rampant relativity of Heraclitus on the other hand. Aristotle took a middle way, advocating diachronic contingency but not synchronic contingency.

For Aristotle, diachronic contingency implies a temporal history. The word “dia” means through and the word “chronos” means time. Things can be contingent or possible at one stage, but at a different stage a possible thing can become actualized. If this happens, the reality ceases to be contingent and becomes necessary.

The word synchronic focuses on a particular stage. At one and the same time (*chronos*) there is also a union of a reality and actual existence (*syn*). If a possible reality becomes an existing reality, the possible reality can no longer be contingent. For Aristotle and Thomas, contingency and existence cannot be synchronic. If a reality exists, it can only be a necessary reality.

This may sound technical and academic, but it has major implications for one’s philosophical theology. The acceptance or non-acceptance of Aristotle’s axiom divides the Thomists and Scotists. Thomas accepted this position. Scotus rejected this philosophical position. He rejected the position that an existing, created reality necessarily exists. He did so in order to maintain the absolute freedom of God. Even though God creates the world and all that is in it, and even though all things in our world do exist, no creation and no existing thing can place a necessity on God. In other words, Scotus opted for a radical contingency of all created beings whether they are only possible or they actually exist.

In the Catholic Church today one often hears or reads that something is necessary and immutable or unchangeable. Often, the basis for this necessity and immutability is, however, not theological but philosophical. For Thomas Aquinas who accepts Aristotle’s principle, the following situations arise: since the church exists, it necessarily is; since the hierarchy exists, it necessarily is; and since the sacraments exist, they necessarily are. This argument for necessity allows its proponents to speak not only about necessity but also about immutability. If some reality necessarily is while it exists, then the necessary reality is also immutable. On this basis one can maintain the following: the structures of the church are immutable; the structure of the church hierarchy is immutable; and the basic elements of the sacraments are immutable.

However, Scotus would ask: “On what basis does this immutability arise?” The church is not God who alone is immutable. The church is a creation of God and all creatures are contingent. Why, then, can one say that the basic structures of the church, the hierarchy, and the sacraments



are immutable? The answer is not based on a matter of Christian faith nor is it based on theology. Rather, as Scotus would point out, both the necessity and the immutability of these structures is based on a philosophical axiom: when a reality exists, it necessarily and immutably exists. If one challenges this philosophical base, then the argument is simply a matter of philosophical difference, not a matter of faith or even theology.

Perhaps some theologians would counter-argue with an apparently valid theological position. God, who is immutable, has determined that these structures are necessary and immutable. To deny the necessity and immutability of these structures, one would deny what God has determined. To many Christians, this argument seems conclusive.

However, on the basis of God's infinite freedom, Scotus proposes both diachronic and synchronic contingency for all creation. In *John Duns Scotus: Contingency and Freedom: Lectura I*, 39, Vos and his co-editors state clearly the source of Scotus' position:

When we ask from what source Scotus' important discovery of synchronic contingency springs, his works reply unambiguously: from a radical reflection on the experience of God's love.<sup>25</sup>

Scotus maintains this approach in order to maintain a matter of faith, namely, that God is infinitely free. No creature whatsoever can place constraints on God. Scotus' philosophical and theological argument is God-centered, not creature-centered.

A similar view is found in Bonaventure who envisions God's own nature as a goodness which is self-diffusive. The Latin phrase for this is: *bonum est sui diffusivum*. It is this self-diffusive goodness of God by which God is God. Even more, Bonaventure notes, God is Triune because God is *sui diffusivum*. Moreover, God creates freely because God is good and *sui diffusivum*. All creation comes from the freely-given goodness of God which — because of God's nature — diffuses into creation. Creation is an absolutely free gift of an infinitely good God. Bonaventure also states that God is *Ens supremum* (the Highest Being). When Bonaventure joins *Ens supremum* to *bonum est sui diffusivum* as the ultimate characteristic of the Christian God, he is describing the ultimate nature of God. God as self-diffusive goodness is a relational Trinity who is infinitely and absolutely free. God as the Highest Being is the absolutely free Creator of all other beings. Since all creation depends totally on the free gift of God, even for its existence, a creature cannot place any constraint on God's infinite goodness, love, and freedom.<sup>26</sup> All creatures are radically contingent, unnecessary, finite, and limited.

Bonaventure's theology of Trinity differs from that of Augustine, Richard of St. Victor, and Thomas Aquinas, since he brings in the Pseudo-Dionysian or Greek understanding: *bonum est sui diffusivum*.<sup>27</sup> Without stating his case as "synchronic contingency," Bonaventure presents his theology of creation on the basis of God's infinite and self-diffusive good-

ness which cannot be necessitated. Thus all of creation is a gift of God whether it is only possible or it actually exists. It might be noted that the emphasis on the infinite freedom of a good God also provides a foundation for the Franciscan valuation of will over intellect.

Already we see that a philosophical issue can have and has had major ramifications for theological statements. Since the Catholic Church has no philosophy of its own nor has any particular philosophy ever been canonized (John Paul II), Aristotle's philosophy has no canonical status. Other philosophical positions can have a legitimate place in the Catholic Church. The use of the term, intellectual, which includes both philosophy and theology, is vitally important not only for the Franciscan Tradition, but also for the Augustinian and Thomistic Traditions as well.

In a recent volume, *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus*, Antonie Vos states clearly that in the thirteenth century theology and philosophy were not considered as two distinct sciences. He writes:

The modern metaphysical dualism separating philosophy from theology is rooted in Renaissance philosophy as far as it bases itself on a new type of *duplex ordo* ontology. . . . The most important philosophers of the Middle Ages were professional theologians.<sup>28</sup>

### 3. KEY ISSUES IN THE FRANCISCAN INTELLECTUAL TRADITION

In order to appreciate the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition, I would like to indicate key issues in which the Franciscan and Thomistic Intellectual Traditions move in different directions. The juxtaposition of these issues is not meant to show that one is better than the other. Rather, the goal is to show that there truly are major differences between these two intellectual traditions. First, I will indicate several theological issues and then I will indicate several philosophical issues. Rather than list a number of Franciscan authors, I have limited myself to two: Bonaventure and Scotus. However, other Franciscan scholars could be cited as well.<sup>29</sup>

#### **Theological Issues**

##### ***The theology of a Triune God***

**Thomas Aquinas:** The Trinitarian theology of Thomas is based on the Trinitarian theology of Augustine: memory, understanding, and will. The intellectual focus for Trinitarian thought is maintained in both Augustine and Thomas. Thomas also divided his discussion on God into two sections: the first section is on the one and unique God, while the second section (generally a hundred pages later) is on God as Trinity. Thomas' lengthy section on one unique God creates the impression that this one unique God is totally transcendent and non-relational. The structure of Thomas' presentation of the one and unique God makes it difficult to unite a Trinitarian inter-relationality to such a unique and non-relational God.

**Bonaventure:** Bonaventure, who often follows Augustine, does not do so in his presentation on the Trinity. Rather, he creatively brings into western theology a third form of Trinitarian theology based on the Greek insight that the good is self-diffusive, *bonum est sui diffusivum*. Scotus, using the concept of infinite love, moves in the same direction. Moreover, in Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Sentences*, there are only two pages devoted to the one and unique God. He then writes over 600 pages on the Trinitarian God. For Bonaventure, God in his very being is relational.

**Scotus:** For Scotus, God is being itself, love, and infinite freedom. All three constitute the very nature of God, which is relational and Trinitarian. The combination of love and freedom with being is clearly different from the theology of the one God which is presented in the first section of the *Summa* of St. Thomas.

From all of the above, it is clear that the Thomists and the Franciscans have developed a theology of a Triune God in very distinct ways. As in all theological systems, one's theology of God permeates and affects the way in which all other areas of theology — creation, Christology, pneumatology, church — are formulated. A differing theology of God creates a differing form for all other related and subaltern sections of theology.

*For the Franciscans,  
a theology of creation  
cannot be expressed  
unless it is united to the  
gift of the Incarnation  
and the sending  
of the Spirit.*

### ***The theology of creation and Christology***

**Thomas Aquinas:** In Peter Lombard's *Book of Sentences* (I, d. 14-19) the juxtaposition of creation, the sending of the Logos, and the sending of the Spirit are expressed as interrelated. Thomas, following Augustine and Anselm of Canterbury, makes a major distinction between God's act of creation and God's sending of the Logos. As far as creation is concerned, Thomas explains that there can be a "caused necessary being, or a being that depends upon something else for its nature as a necessary being."<sup>30</sup> He goes on to say that one cannot have an infinite regress of caused necessary beings, since there is need for a First Cause, namely, God.

As far as the sending of the Logos into the human nature of Jesus (the Incarnation) is concerned, Anselm Min in his volume, *Paths to the Triune God*, finds in Thomas' writings twelve reasons for the Incarnation. Six are positive which means the Incarnation was necessary to help us achieve certitude in our faith, to excite our hope for heaven, to strengthen our charity, to present us with an example of good behavior, and most importantly to bestow on us the grace of full participation in the divine nature. Six are negative: to teach us not to prefer the wiles of the devil, to prevent us from seeking our perfection in anything outside of God, to remove any presumption that we can attain salvation on our own, to condemn human pride, to liberate us from the slavery of sin, and finally to give us certainty

about the remission of sin through a visible sacrifice on the cross.<sup>31</sup> Unless men and women are freed from sin, none of these goals could be attained. In other words, for Thomas there is a major link between the sin of Adam and our own sins and the Incarnation of the Logos. Creation fell into sin; a savior was needed and that savior was Jesus, the Incarnate Word.

**Bonaventure and Scotus:** Both of these Franciscans reject the view which fundamentally unites the sending of the Logos in the Incarnation to Adam's sin. At creation itself, the sending of the Logos was already part of God's plan as was the sending of the Holy Spirit. Neither scholar teaches that the reality of human sin is God's major motive for the incarnation. Zachary Hayes writes:

It is fair to say that for Bonaventure, the meaning of Christ should never be limited to the overcoming of sin. . . . The incarnation in itself stands as the highest act of God's creative work and as the completion of the cosmic order.<sup>32</sup>

Bonaventure argues that there is really one cause of the incarnation and that is the limitless love and mercy of God. The incarnation is decreed by God for its own sake and not simply because of sin.<sup>33</sup>

Scotus, for his part, follows this Franciscan approach. Mary Elizabeth Ingham writes:

Scotus' refusal to support an explanation for the Incarnation based upon human sinfulness reflects, once again, his insistence upon human goodness as created by God as well as divine goodness and freedom for self-revelation as being. . . . The focus on the Incarnation affirms the value of contingent and created reality which extends beyond human persons to all creation.<sup>34</sup>

For the Franciscans, a theology of creation cannot be expressed unless it is united to the gift of the Incarnation and the sending of the Spirit. This is primary. That Jesus' life, death, and resurrection also reveal God's unending compassion and forgiveness is secondary.

One cannot help but note that a distinctive theology of a Trinitarian God has a domino-effect on all other parts the theological enterprise. This is true of every theological system, and both Bonaventure and Scotus continually unite their key understanding of God — being itself, love, *bonum est sui diffusivum* and infinite freedom — to their entire theological endeavor.

### **Philosophical Issues**

Let us now turn to the philosophical differences between the two traditions. Philosophical differences are always differences of opinion. No philosophical position is part of our Christian faith. Nonetheless, Thomists and Scotists differ immensely as regards key philosophical posi-

tions. Bonaventure knew Aristotle quite well, but throughout his writings he focused rather exclusively on theological issues, while Scotus often focused at length on major philosophical issues. Both Bonaventure and Scotus, however, are in agreement regarding the basic meaning of being as relational, the meaning of human nature with its privileged gift of free will, and the radical contingency of the entire created universe.

### ***The understanding of being***

All scholastic theologians made a major change in Aristotelian philosophy. Aristotle did not develop a philosophy in which God was being itself or the highest being. Secondly, Aristotle did not present God as the Creator of finite reality. The scholastic theologians, however, changed the entire system of Aristotle by designating God both as *summum esse* and God as Creator. Thus, the Aristotelianism of the scholastics is an adapted Aristotelianism. Both the Thomistic and the Franciscan philosophical traditions accept this adapted Aristotelianism. However, when they move into specific areas of Aristotle's philosophy, there are major differences. The first of these is the understanding of being itself.

**Thomas Aquinas:** Since God is the *summum esse*, there can be no univocal interaction between the Creator and the created. God is totally above all creation. In the thirteenth century, three terms were used to indicate a relationship of one reality to another:

- Univocal: There is an *epistemological* univocity, namely, when we think that two things are exactly the same. There is also a *metaphysical univocity*, namely when an existing reality has the same essence as all other realities in its class. Every human person has the same human nature. We can univocally predicate human nature to every human person in exactly the same way. Metaphysical univocity is the more important, but it is also the more controversial.
- Analogical: Analogy occurs when some particular aspect of two different things is the same, while other aspects are totally different. Often we find analogy in poetry, e.g., the stars were dancing in the heavens. They really are not dancing, but they have something akin to dancing. The word dancing is used analogously.
- Equivocal: An equivocal predication indicates that some characteristic can mean two different things. A good example is the term invaluable. Invaluable can mean that the value is so great that it cannot be specified. Invaluable can also mean that the reality has little to no value at all.

Although Thomas never presented a thorough explanation of the analogy of being, he uses analogy throughout his writings on God. He argues that God's essence and *esse* (actual existence) are one and the same and cannot be divided since God is one. Therefore, we humans can know that God exists (*esse* = actually existing), but we can never know what God truly is (essence). We simply cannot understand how essence and *esse* are

one and the same in God. For Thomas, then, we can only talk about God's essence in an analogous way.

**Scotus:** In the writings of Scotus, analogy plays an important role, especially in his development of essential orders and the polarity of finite-infinite, temporal-eternal, and contingent-necessary. In these areas, Scotus was very open to analogy. However, in the *Lectura* he states his major issue: "Unless being implies one univocal intention, theology would simply perish."<sup>35</sup> In his philosophical basis, Scotus requires one basic univocal dimension. Such a univocal dimension, however, is neither a first principle nor a first cause. Univocity is present only at the polarity of being and non-being, and it is basic for Scotus' entire enterprise.<sup>36</sup>

**Bonaventure:** Bonaventure is clearly not as philosophically oriented as Scotus. Nonetheless, in his Trinitarian writings he unites *ens supremum* with *bonum est sui diffusivum* (Supreme Being and the self-diffusive good). In making this connection, Bonaventure — though he never asserts this directly — understands being itself as relational. For Aristotle and Thomas, being itself — the highest being — cannot be relational. Bonaventure moves beyond this understanding of being.

### ***The understanding of human nature***

**Thomas Aquinas:** Following Aristotle, Thomas regards substance as the basic category of all finite being. Substance is that which can be defined with no relationship to anything else. In the case of human nature, a man or woman is essentially a rational animal. "Rational animal" is a reality which is substantially the same in every human being. We are human because we are rational animals. Thomas is less than clear when he speaks of individuals. John Wippel painstakingly moves through all of Thomas' writings on individuation. At the end of his presentation he writes: "In sum, therefore, Thomas remains faithful to his earlier view that designated

*... in the Franciscan  
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and in Franciscan  
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creature is an honoring  
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matter is to be regarded as the principle of individual for corporeal entities and that in a secondary way dimensive quantity also contributes to this."<sup>37</sup> Wippel also notes that Thomas on several occasions changed his view on the question of what constitutes an individual.

**Scotus:** More than any other scholastic writer, Scotus emphasized and analyzed individuality or *Haecceitas*. *Haecceitas* is a Latin word which Scotus popularized.

Technically, it means "thisness." *Haecceitas* however, is not the same as a principle of individuation. A principle of individuation is the very opposite of individuation. A principle focuses on something general or overarching, not something unique and personal. By using the term *Haecceitas*, Scotus emphasized the uniqueness of each and every human person which is his

or her most distinctive aspect. The most important thing about a human person is not that he or she is generically a human being. Rather, it is the fact that each and every individual is unique and special. Alan Wolter writes:

Scotus' doctrine of thisness applied to the human person would seem to invest each with a unique value as one singularly wanted and loved by God, quite apart from any trait that person shares with others or any contribution he or she might make to society. One could even say "thisness" is our personal gift from God.<sup>38</sup>

Wolter also notes that in reading Scotus one hears that it is the person rather than the nature that God desires to create. This position of Scotus is a major reason why, in the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition and in Franciscan Spirituality, the honoring of every individual creature is an honoring of one's brother and sister.

### ***The understanding of contingency and necessity***

This issue has been treated above, but I mention it again simply to indicate that it too is a major aspect of the Franciscan philosophical interpretation of reality.

A number of additional themes also provide differences between the two traditions: Bonaventure's understanding of *vestigium* and *imago* differs from that of Thomas, as does his understanding of illumination. Scotus' ethical and political presentations as well as his understanding of contingent freedom differ from those of Thomas Aquinas. Both Bonaventure and Scotus do not accept the dominance of efficient causality, and in sacramental theology they both reject Thomas' teaching on efficient instrumental causality.<sup>39</sup>

## **4. SPIRITUAL VISION AND ACADEMIC THEOLOGY**

A defining aspect of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition is its close identity with Franciscan spirituality. To indicate this inter-relationship of spirituality and academic thought in the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition, I offer the following few but important major examples. On the one hand, I will name a key issue in Francis' or Clare's spirituality, and then I will indicate key issues expressed academically from the writings of Bonaventure and Scotus.

### **Creation**

**Francis:** Francis' familial understanding of creation is found in his often repeated use of brother and sister: brother sun, sister moon, brother leper, and sister bird. For Francis, creation was a large home in which all creatures are to live as brothers and sisters to one another.



**Bonaventure:** Bonaventure's more academic approach to creation is clearly expressed in the *Hexaëmeron*: "This is the whole of our metaphysics: it is about emanation, exemplarity and consummation" (*Hex.* 2, 17). "For any person who is unable to consider how things originate, how they are led back to their end, and how God shines forth in them, is incapable of achieving true understanding" (*Hex.* 3, 2). For Bonaventure, God's own self is not only present in all creatures, God's presence is also emanating through and in all creatures. This does not mean that human beings can automatically see God's presence in creatures. God illumines our intellect and will so that we can see God's presence at least to some degree. One could use the metaphor that we are in a dark room. A number of things are present in the room, but we do not see them. God turns the light on, at least dimly, and we begin to make out what things are really in the world. Thirdly, our world is historical and temporal. It is in process, but where is it going? The light God gives us, Bonaventure writes, helps us see the goal of this created world.

**Scotus:** Scotus' more academic approach to creation is found in his teaching on *Hacceitas*, the "thisness" of every reality. More than any other thirteenth century scholar, Scotus developed a theo-philosophical understanding of human individuality. Our thisness is, of course, created by God; our created, unique and individualized thisness must be respected and honored. We may be a brother and sister (Francis's words) but we are individually a special and unique brother and sister (Scotus' emphasis).

### God Is Goodness and Love

**Francis:** In his *Praises of God*, Francis says: "All powerful, most holy, most high and supreme God: you are all good, supreme good, totally good." In the first version of the *Letter to the Faithful*, Francis writes: "Oh, how glorious it is, how holy and great, to have a Father in heaven! Oh, how holy, consoling, beautiful and wondrous it is to have such a Spouse! Oh, how holy and how loving, pleasing, humble, peaceful, sweet, lovable, and desirable above all things it is to have such a brother and such a son, our Lord Jesus Christ." For Francis, God in God's own self and in God's relationship to us is a fountain of holiness and goodness. This loving goodness is the very nature of God.

**Clare:** In the *Second Letter* to Blessed Agnes of Prague, Clare writes: "I give thanks to the Giver of grace from whom we believe every good and perfect gift proceeds" (3). In her *Third Letter* to Agnes, Clare writes: "Place your mind before the mirror of eternity! Place your soul in the brilliance of glory! Place your heart in the figure of the divine substance: And transform your whole being into the image of the Godhead Itself through contemplation! . . . Taste the sweetness which God himself has reserved from the beginning for those who love him" (12-14). For Clare, God is present to her own community and to Agnes herself through contemplating the holiness and goodness of the Good God.



**Bonaventure:** Bonaventure sees God as “Being itself” from which all other beings come. God’s very being is good and self-diffusive in an unending way. We find his position described in great length in the *Itinerarium* (V, 2, 5, and 7 and also VI, 2). Christ as the image of the Father reflects the goodness and love of the Father. His use of the terms, image and reflection, is based on his understanding of God as self-diffusive goodness.

**Scotus:** Scotus has been honored as the strongest scholastic theologian who maintains the superiority of the will (and therefore love) over the intellect. He also stresses that the Incarnate Logos is in his human nature the one who loves God with most pure love. For Scotus, creation is an expression of God’s love, since creation is intimately associated with the sending and manifestation of the Logos and the sending and manifestation of the Spirit. What Scotus writes on this issue reflects the spirituality of Francis and Clare.

These are but two examples of the relationship between Franciscan spirituality and the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition. Freyer in his work details these and other connections in a lengthy way.<sup>40</sup> In his volume, *Seguire e imitare Cristo secondo san Bonaventura*, Ambrose Nguyen van Si describes Bonaventure’s theology of God in the same way.<sup>41</sup> Mary Beth Ingham does the same for Scotus in her volume, *Scotus for Dunces*.<sup>42</sup>

## **5. THE VALUE OF THE FRANCISCAN INTELLECTUAL TRADITION FOR TODAY’S GLOBALIZED AND MULTI-CULTURAL WORLD.**

One of the most important aspects of the globalized world today is the unheard of dialogues between world religions. Christianity began in an Aramaic expression. The semitic language was the context in which a person at the time of Jesus understood the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Although written in Greek, the New Testament writings cannot be understood without some insight into a semitic way of thinking and speaking.

Only at the end of the first century and the beginning of the second century, were the followers of Jesus seen as members of a religion separate from Rabbinic Judaism. The followers of Jesus were gradually called Christians and they belonged to a specific Church. At the very same time, the majority of the followers of Jesus were no longer Jewish, but Greek-speaking and Latin-speaking. It was the Greek side which dominated, and for the first time in the church there occurred a cultural paradigmatic shift. Christians were thinking and speaking the Good News of Jesus in a foreign tongue. A new way of theologizing began, and this is seen clearly in the early writings on God as Trinity and on the Incarnation of the Word.

A second cultural paradigmatic shift took place from the sixth century through the ninth century. During this time Western Europe was occupied by roving groups from the Eastern edges of Europe. We call these people Goths, Burgundians, Visigoths, Lombards, Teutons, etc. These people brought their culture to the Christian West, and their influence was extremely strong in the areas of liturgy and canon law.

A third cultural paradigmatic shift took place in the eleventh to fifteenth centuries with the reintroduction of Aristotle into Western Christian thought. We have seen some of this above.

After these three cultural paradigmatic shifts, Western Christianity remained culturally unchallenged down to the mid-twentieth century. The missionary activity of the Anglican, Protestant, and Catholic Churches was basically an implantation of a European Church in the continents of Africa, the Western Hemisphere, and Asia. This missionary activity was called *plantatio ecclesiae*, a planting of the Euro-American church in these unchurched areas. Gothic and Norman church architecture dotted these distant areas. Local cultures were summarily dismissed and even destroyed.

However, today the globalized world has brought about a different situation. Inter-religious dialogues are taking place. In these dialogues, the non-Christian religions, some of which pre-date Christianity, have much to teach Christians. Even the documents of Vatican II, especially *Lumen gentium*, *Ad Gentes*, and *Nostra Aetate*, speak differently about non-Christian religions. Consider this passage from *Lumen gentium*:

Nevertheless, many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside its visible confines (8).

These words were carefully selected: many elements not just a few. Sanctification or holiness means pleasing to God and therefore salvific. Truth indicates that there are truths outside the structure or visible confines of the Catholic Church.

The overwhelming majority of people in the world today have a world-view or a linguistic context which is relational to the core. This relational way of thinking and living is found throughout Asia, Africa and the Native Peoples of the western hemisphere. An essentialistic way of thinking has dominated European thought since the time of Plato and Aristotle. In this vision, the objective and the subjective are kept far apart. However, in Asia, the Yin and the Yang dominate, since Asian life is relational to the core. Descartes' famous statement, "I think therefore I am," makes no sense to African, Indian, Asian, and Native American cultures. One's "I" is not locked into one's subjective "thinking and being." A human person is a relational person to the core. He/she belongs to a family, to a village, to a nation, etc.

The Franciscan inter-relational, contingent, and creational way of thinking dovetails with the globalized inter-cultural world today. In many ways, the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition can be a bridge between the Christian faith and contemporary science, social thought, and multi-cultural appreciation. This is the task for the next generation, and this challenge is especially alive in the halls and classrooms of Franciscan Colleges and Universities.

## Footnotes

- 1 Johannes B. Freyer, *Homo Viator: Der Mensch im Lichte der Heilsgeschichte* (Kevelaer: Verlag Butzon & Bercker, 2001) 390-432.
- 2 Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (London: J. Clark, 1957).
- 3 Deirdre Carabine, *The Unknown God: Negative Theology in the Platonic Tradition: Plato to Eriugena* (Louvain: Peeters Press, 1995).
- 4 The *Ambrosiaster*, a commentary on OT and NT writings, is an anonymous fourth-century document. It was Erasmus (1466-1536) who coined the name “Ambrosiaster” for this text.
- 5 Cf., Marcia Colish, *Peter Lombard* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994) v. I, 34. On the same page she writes: “The response of the twelfth century theologians to these perceived educational needs was to invent systematic theology.” Systematic theology came to mean a synthesis or “summa” of the major parts of Catholic theological study, such as a theology of the Triune God, of creation, of the Incarnation, of the sacraments, etc. In a systematic way, all of these various theological sections were united together “with a place for everything and everything in its place” *ibid.* 34.
- 6 Another strong acceptance of Augustine’s theology can be seen in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. During these centuries, theological authors began citing previous scholars to show that there were several opinions on certain theological positions. Augustine was the scholar who was cited more often than any other. Not only did these medieval authors cite Augustine, but most of them also defended Augustine’s approach whenever other cited authors differed with Augustine’s view. This theological methodology of “citing authors” or “*sic-et-non*” was extremely helpful to make the Augustinian Theological Tradition a church-wide tradition.
- 7 Cf., Henri de Lubac, *Le mystère du surnaturel* (Paris: Aubier, 1965) and *Augustinianism and Modern Theology* (London: G. Chapman, 1969); Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000 revised edition); Henry Chadwick, *Augustine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); Romano Guardini, *The Conversion of Augustine* (Chicago: Regnery, 1960); and Frederik van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1961).
- 8 Cf., Colish, *Peter Lombard*. Colish’s book offers the reader a vast insight into the theological issues of the twelfth century. When one understands the main theological concerns in the twelfth century, including the way in which Peter Lombard drew these concerns together in a systematic way, one also begins to understand why, in the thirteenth century, certain issues were treated so carefully by Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, and John Duns Scotus. Without some historical insight into the problems and issues of the twelfth century, the thirteenth century is often not appreciated as regards the intensity of various theological themes.
- 9 Cf. Salim Kemal, *The Philosophical Poetics of Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroës: The Aristotelian Reception* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).
- 10 Pierre Jaccard, “La Renaissance de la Pensée Franciscaine,” *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie*, v. XVIII (1930) 103-131 and 207-233; v. XIX-XX (1931-1932), 168-195.
- 11 For a brief description of “scholasticism,” cf. Walter Principe, “Scholasticism,” *The Harper Collins Encyclopedia of Catholicism* (New York: HarperCollins, 1989) Richard P. McBrien, Gen. Ed.; 1169. Principe indicates that scholasticism developed from the eleventh century onward as a form of theological writing which brought together a dialectical methodology, a use of biblical, patristic and early medieval authorities, and the employment of Platonic and/or Aristotelian philosophical categories.
- 12 Antonie Vos, *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006) 540-572.

- 13 Cf., Thomas O'Meara, *Thomas Aquinas Theologian* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997). In chapter 7, "Traditions, Schools, and Students," 152- 200, O'Meara traces the history of the Thomistic Intellectual Tradition in detail. On p. 156 he writes: "Thomism is a history of the influence of the religious worldview of a theologian unfolding in a family of traditions committed in different ways to the principles and insights of Thomas Aquinas' thought." The process has four periods: the age of defense (1200s to 1400s); the age of commentaries (mid-1400s to early 1600s); the age of controversies and encyclopedias (mid 1500s to early 1700s); and the recent Thomistic revival (1840 to 1960).
- 14 George Marcil, "The Franciscan School through the Centuries," *The History of Franciscan Theology* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1994) ed. Kenan B. Osborne: 311-330. This is an excellent summary of the key Franciscan intellectual events and persons in each century from the 13th century to the 20th century.
- 15 For a description of the differences among the various traditions of the Religious Orders, cf., Hubert Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, (St. Louis, Missouri: B. Herder Book Company, 1957) Eng. trans. by Ernest Graf, especially but not only pp. 56-57, 60-62, 75, 101-102, 107, and 116-120.
- 16 Lázaro Iriarte, *Franciscan History* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983) 393.
- 17 For a history of the contemporary renewal of the Thomistic Intellectual Tradition, cf. Thomas O'Meara, op. cit., chapter 5, pp. 201-243, "Thomas Aquinas Today." In this chapter, O'Meara indicates how much this tradition has enriched Roman Catholic thought in the past one 100 years.
- 18 Critical editions of medieval Franciscan texts have been produced by the Friars at Quarrachi near Florence, at Grottaferata near Rome, and at The Antonianum University in Rome itself. Other critical editions of Franciscan sources have been published by the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, New York, and by Franciscan scholars at The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC.
- 19 Parthenius Minges, Zachary van de Woestyne, Philotheus Boehner, Allan Wolter, Chrysostome Urrutibéhéty, Déodat de Basly, Charles R. S. Harris, Efreem Bettoni, Jean-François Bonnefoy, Ephrem Longpré, Carlo Bali, John Quinn, Ewert Cousins, Ignatius Brady, Jacques Guy Bougerol, Juniper Carol, Zachary Hayes, Robert Karris, Margaret Carney, Margaret Guider, Ilia Delio, Dawn Nothwehr, Mary Elizabeth Ingham, Regis Armstrong, Michael Blastic, José Merino, Francisco Fresneda, Luis Iammarrone, Juan Iammarrone, Alfonso Pompei, Bernardino de Armellada, Jacques Dalarun, David Flood, Dominic Monti, Eric Doyle, Girard Etzkorn, Gideon Gál, Wayne Hellmann, William Short, Regis Armstrong, Joseph Chinnici, Timothy Johnson, Norbert Nguyễn van Khanh and Ambrogio Nguyễn Van Si
- 20 Alfonso Pompei, ed. *Atti del Congresso Internazionale per il VII Centenario di San Bonaventura da Bagnoregio* (Naples: Typographia Larenziana, 1976).
- 21 Olivier Boulnois, Elizabeth Karger, Jean-Luc Solère, Gérard Sondag, *Duns Scot à Paris, 1302-2002* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2004).
- 22 The two references in the *Catechism* to Bonaventure focus on his spirituality and not on his theology. No citation at all is made from the writings of either John Duns Scotus, or Alexander of Hales. The *Catechism* presents a form of theology which is unyieldingly Thomistic. Even the Augustinianism in the *Catechism* is a Thomistic form of Augustinianism. In the introductory Apostolic Constitution, *Fidei Depositum*, by Pope John Paul II, we read that a *Catechism* is meant to "faithfully and systematically present the teaching of Sacred Scripture, the living Tradition in the Church, and the authentic Magisterium, as well as the spiritual heritage of the Fathers, Doctors, and saints of the Church" (n. 2). Clearly, over the past 800 years, the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition has been part of the teaching of the Doctors and saints of the Church. The reasons *why* this Franciscan "spiritual heritage" is ignored by the authors of the *Catechism* remains a mystery. *That* the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition should have been included in the *Catechism* is non-debatable.

- 23 John Paul II, *Fides et ratio*, n. 49.
- 24 Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, 9, 23. The English translation is from *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: The Modern Library Paperback Edition, 2001) Gen. Ed., Richard McKeon, "De Interpretatione" 9, 23: page 48. Eng. trans. by E. M. Edghill.
- 25 Antonie Vos Jaczn, Henri Veldhuis, A. H. Looman-Graaskamp, Eef Dekker, and N. W. den Bok, *John Duns Scotus Contingency and Freedom* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994), 27.
- 26 One might also develop this diverse argumentation by bringing in the issue of power. The church, together with its people of God and its hierarchy, has power, but this power is also contingent, and whatever is contingent can be changed. Ecclesiastical power does not have to be the way it is. Contingency also applies to the created and freely God-given power to the people of God and to its leadership.
- 27 Cf., Olegário González, *Misterio Trinitario y Existencia Humana* (Madrid: Ediciones Rialp, 1966) for a thorough discussion of Bonaventure's theology of Trinity.
- 28 Antonie Vos, *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus*, 3. For a longer explanation cf. 540-572.
- 29 I am following the methodology of Freyer. In this methodology, Freyer first cites texts from Francis and then a series of references from other major Franciscan scholars who echo the thought of Francis. Freyer is showing how the spiritual writings of Francis and the academic writings of medieval Franciscan scholars dovetail with one another.
- 30 Cf. John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 436.
- 31 Anselm Min, *Paths to the Triune God* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 79-81. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, 1, 2; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4, 54.
- 32 Hayes, "Bonaventure: Mystery of the Triune God," *The History of Franciscan Theology*: 93.
- 33 Ibid., 94; cf. Bonaventure, *III Sent.* d. 32, a. u., q. 5, ad 3.
- 34 Mary Elizabeth Ingham, "John Duns Scotus: An Integrated Vision," *The History of Franciscan Theology*: 227.
- 35 Scotus, *Lectura*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1-2: Vatican edition, v. 16, pp. 266-267.
- 36 Cf., Kenan B. Osborne, "John Duns Scotus in the Postmodern, Scientific World," *The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition* (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 2002) ed. Elise Saggau: 57-81.
- 37 Wippel, op. cit., 371. Cf. his entire section on individuation, pp.351-375.
- 38 Alan B. Wolter, *Duns Scotus' Early Oxford Lecture on Individuation* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2005) xxvii. Cf. also, Kenan Osborne, "Incarnation, Individuality and Diversity," *The Cord*, 45/3 (May-June 1995): 19-26.
- 39 In Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, book 1, chapter 2, n. 3, mention is made of four different causes: the efficient cause from which a thing comes; the formal cause which provides the thing with its specific form; the material cause which makes a thing corporeal; and the final cause or the reason why a thing exists.
- 40 Freyer, op. cit., 30-42 for citations from Francis of Assisi; 46-59 for citations from Bonaventure; and 59 to 67 for the citations from Scotus.
- 41 Ambrose Ngyên van Si, *Seguire e imitare Cristo secondo san Bonaventura* (Milan: Edizioni Biblioteca Francescana, 1995), 39-52 and 61-92.
- 42 Mary Beth Ingham, *Scotus for Dunces: An Introduction to the Subtle Doctor*, (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2003), 105-203.

# **The Hermeneutics of Hyper-violence: Gibson's Christ, Girard's Scapegoat and the Franciscan Response**

**TIMOTHY J. JOHNSON, PH.D.**

**Flagler College  
St. Augustine, FL  
JohnsonT@flagler.edu**

*But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins, Upon him was  
the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed.*

— Isaiah 53:5

## **Pedagogical Premise**

**I**nterdisciplinary approaches to contemporary culture and religion offer a unique opportunity for introducing the Franciscan worldview to undergraduate students. In a course at Flagler College entitled *Jesus in Hollywood*, a week was dedicated to examining Mel Gibson's film *The Passion of the Christ* in dialogue with sources as varied as the controversial television series *South Park* and René Girard's critical theory on mimetic sacrifice. The Franciscan worldview, with an emphasis on affectivity and peacemaking, provided the hermeneutic key for students and professor alike, who viewed *The Passion of the Christ* and struggled to move beyond a simplistic acceptance or rejection of Gibson's cinematic efforts. Given the on-going interest in culture and religion, creative interpretative efforts drawing from the richness of the Franciscan sources hold the promise of engaging undergraduate students in contemporary questions while introducing them to the Franciscan tradition.<sup>1</sup>

## **Introduction**

After a recent screening of Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, a thoughtful student asked a panel of peers what role violence played in the film. For many in attendance, the question seemed oddly out of place and the answer self-evident, since they assumed that such graphic violence was a simple reflection of first century Roman and Jewish brutality. Yet almost any college freshman in a New Testament course could delineate the difference between Gibson's protracted concentration on violence and the spare, terse Passion narratives of the canonical Gospels. Since the release of *The Passion of the Christ*, scholars as well as the general public have sought to understand why Mel Gibson chose to recount Jesus's last twelve hours with the visual vocabulary of what might be called "hyper-violence." Gibson claims the film offers an artistic, albeit emotional depiction of the sacrifice Jesus underwent for the sake of sin. Everyone, according to Gibson, thus stands before God with bloodied hands, equally guilty of the innocent Messiah's murder.



This paper approaches the *Passion of the Christ* from the perspective of constructive theology; that is to say, it locates Gibson's film within the Christian tradition with the intention of retrieval and interpretation. This approach, which is admittedly heuristic, begins by examining Gibson's proposal to evoke the affective experience of Jesus's passion through hyper-violence from the perspective of Franciscan spirituality. Rooted in identification with the suffering Jesus through Gospel meditation, this mystical tradition fosters a mimetic pattern repeated in Francis of Assisi, who after suffering the stigmata, reaches out to the needy and promotes peace among warring parties. This paper then proposes a hermeneutical avenue for an ethical appropriation of the film's message of hyper-violence within René Girard's theory of violence and religion. The result is to recognize the horrific brutality in *The Passion of the Christ* as an invitation to all Christians to renounce the spiral of violent scapegoating and dedicate themselves, in imitation of Francis of Assisi, to peace and the elimination of injustice.

### Passionate Affectivity and Franciscan Spirituality

Mel Gibson made no secret of his desire to produce a film that would elicit a forceful, emotional response from viewers. He claims *The Passion of the Christ* is “. . . contemplative in the sense that one is compelled to remember (unforget) in a spiritual way which cannot be articulated, only experienced.”<sup>2</sup> In the PAX TV Special, *The Making of the Passion of the Christ*, he stated, “I want people to understand the reality of the story. I want them to be taken through an experience. I want them to feel.”<sup>3</sup> Feel what, we might ask. The answer is the intense pain Jesus endured that gave meaning to the personal suffering Gibson underwent during a dark period of his own life. Everything, from camera angles promoting a “Jesus cam” effect to scenographic details from the visions of Catherine Emmerich, is intended to draw viewers into an affective relationship with Jesus, marked by sorrowful repentance and love. Survey results gathered after the film's opening demonstrate that Gibson achieved remarkable success among Christians, who claimed the cinematic event fostered a profoundly personal and devotional experience.<sup>4</sup>

*The Poverello, that is to say the Poor Man of Assisi, reads the passion of Jesus in his flesh as an invitation to promote healing and harmony.*

Although there are certainly parallels that can be drawn and comparisons to be made between medieval passion plays and *The Passion of the Christ*<sup>5</sup>, the legitimate religious roots of Gibson's approach are found in 13th century Franciscan spirituality, which cultivated a mimetic mysticism of the historical moment. This focus on Jesus emerges in response to Francis of Assisi's intentional identification with the earthly Christ through medi-

tation on his life and death. From the recreation of the Christmas manger scene at Greccio to the deathbed reading from the passion account in John's Gospel, Francis's intention to follow "in the footsteps" of Jesus revealed an affective intensity that men and women throughout Europe longed to experience through imitation. In *The Tree of Life*, one of Francis's followers, Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, elaborated a systemic theology of meditation encouraging a passionate union with Jesus. Here the intent is analagous to that of Gibson's efforts in *The Passion of the Christ*. Through emotional engagement, Bonaventure wants to move the reader from passive observance to active participation in the life of Jesus. At the outset of *The Tree of Life* Bonaventure writes:

*With Christ I am fixed to the cross, according to Galatians, chapter two. The true worshiper of God and disciple of Christ, who desires to conform perfectly to the Savior of all, who was crucified for him, should, above all, strive with an intent endeavor of the mind to carry about continuously, both in mind and in flesh, the cross of Christ Jesus, so he can truly feel in himself what the Apostle said above. Furthermore an affection and feeling of this kind is merited to be experienced in a vivid way only by one who, neither forgetful of the Lord's passion nor ungrateful, contemplates the labor, suffering and love of Jesus crucified, with such vividness of memory, such sharpness of intellect and such charity of will that he can truly repeat the words of the bride: A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me; he will rest between my breasts.<sup>6</sup>*

The mimetic pattern proposed by Bonaventure is ultimately transformative as evidenced in the hagiographical account of Francis's stigmata on Mount Alverna found in *The Major Life of Saint Francis*. After a bitterly painful meditation, Francis received the five wounds of the Crucified Christ on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. What follows is remarkable. Instead of remaining fixated on the violence of the event, or succumbing to morbid self-absorption or self-glorification, Francis expresses the startling desire to return to labor among the lepers and to seek out those in need. The affective aftermath of violence, the violence inflicted on Jesus and now on his own flesh, sends Francis back down the mountain into the midst of those broken in body and spirit. The brutality of innocent suffering first inflicted on Jesus, and then instantiated in Francis, never

*In his Passion, Jesus definitively unmasks the mimetic rivalries of the crowd who, like other mobs from the beginning of the world, seeks out sacrificial victims in a frenzy of bloodletting believing that murder produces peace.*



became a motive for retribution or reprisal. The *Poverello*, that is to say the Poor Man of Assisi, reads the passion of Jesus in his flesh as an invitation to promote healing and harmony.

### **The Hermeneutical Challenge of Sacred Violence**

Not only is Francis's affective identification with, and interpretative response to, the intense suffering of Christ noteworthy, it also raises the issue of how contemporary Christians might respond to Gibson's hyper-violent rendering of Jesus's sufferings in *The Passion of the Christ*. At this point, an appeal to the hermeneutical insight of René Girard offers a possible avenue for retrieval of Franciscan mysticism in the context of contemporary spirituality. This proposal suggests that although viewers of Gibson's cinematic Christ are undoubtedly moved to devotion by the vivid imagery of the suffering Jesus, the evangelical import of the film — at least for those who identify themselves as Christians — lies well beyond the pietistic, subjective individualism so often identified with Christianity in the United States.

The work of René Girard, who taught at Stanford University before retiring in 1995, stretches across several decades and academic disciplines.<sup>7</sup> Born on Christmas Day, 1923, in Avignon, France, Girard studied philosophy, paleography, culture and history before moving to the United States in 1947. After completing a doctorate in history at Indiana University, he cultivated an enduring interest in literature and literary studies at several American universities. During the Lenten Season of 1959, Girard experienced a transforming conversion to Christianity, and in an interview later entitled "The Anthropology of the Cross" described his Eucharistic encounter with Christ on Holy Thursday as both a death and resurrection experience.<sup>8</sup> Returning to literature with this new perspective, Girard turned his attention to the Christian Gospels, and particularly the Passion, as the key to understanding archaic cultures.<sup>9</sup>

René Girard admittedly lays claim to perhaps only one essential insight but this concept or, better said, mechanism is the key for understanding society, religion and culture. According to Gerard Loughlin, this *idée fixe* is the scapegoat mechanism, whereby the innocent are sacrificed. While interested in anthropology, Girard is first and foremost a literary critic, who explores the theme of mediated or mimetic desire in European novels, the texts of Sophocles, the writings of Freud, or the Scriptures.<sup>10</sup> Girard claims that all desire is triangular; people never desire directly or spontaneously, but learn to imitate the desire of others they initially admire, yet later often hate. Mimetic desire stirs up rivalry, provokes violence, and necessitates the identification of innocent scapegoats, whose unjustifiable deaths establish a period of peace that is ritually restored whenever the sacrificial murder is reenacted. This scapegoat dynamic in religion in general, and in Christianity in particular, allows for novel understandings of

Jesus's death as unmasking the violence that underlies religious practice and social control. According to Girard, the Passion reveals the God of the Suffering, the innocent victim whose death demythologizes any attempt to ascribe blame to anyone other than those who perpetrate injustice. After the death of Jesus, ". . . there will be no more victims from now on whose persecution will not eventually be recognized as unjust, for no further sacralization is possible. No more myths can be produced to cover up the fact of persecution."<sup>11</sup>

In his reading, albeit controversial, of the Passion, Girard notes a fundamental difference between the death of Jesus and the mythic tales of ancient religious sacrifices such as Remus's death at the hands of Romulus.<sup>12</sup> The violent fate of Remus is necessary for peace, yet he is not innocent. Romulus is justified to enact the foundational murder of Rome for his brother transgressed. However, unlike Remus and others like Oedipus, Jesus is without blame.<sup>13</sup> This stark narrative divergence, according to Girard, emerges early in the Jewish Scriptures which evince a concerted interest, since the murder of Abel, with the plight of the victim. This preferential option for the innocent is especially evident in the enigmatic Servant of Yahweh, whose image Gibson evokes in reference to Jesus at the beginning of his film when Isaiah 53:5 appears on the screen: "But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins, Upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed." Although traces of the primitive mythology linger in the Servant Songs under the guise of divine vengeance, it is evident that the Servant bears no guilt for the redemptive suffering he endures. His is not the end of the victims of archaic religions, whose deaths are ritualized murder intended to regain peace, but a historical event of the type that serves as the foundation of ritual action.<sup>14</sup>

Girard notes the concern of both the Jewish and Christian Scriptures for the innocent in the article *The God of the Victims*, where he sees Jesus appropriating Job's critique of retributive theology.<sup>15</sup> When Jesus states that the death of certain Galileans at the hands of Pilate had nothing to do with sin, he echoes Job's unwillingness to interpret suffering as God's rightful condemnation of the guilty. Like Job before his companions, Jesus is innocent of the charges that are brought against him throughout the Gospels. In his Passion, Jesus definitively unmasks the mimetic rivalries of the crowd who, like other mobs from the beginning of the world, seeks out sacrificial victims in a frenzy of bloodletting believing that murder produces peace. From Girard's perspective, the Passion of Jesus does not herald the final sacrifice or sacrifice for that matter, but instead, a clear denunciation of violence that unmasks the scapegoat mechanism. The death of Jesus continues the Gospel rejection of sacrifice. As Jesus said to the Pharisees in Matthew 9:13 when they insisted on ritual offerings, "Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'"<sup>16</sup>

## A Child Shall Lead Them

The reversal of the logic of violence in the Passion is followed by the replacement of mythical accounts of sacrifice with stories of unjust persecution. The martyrdom of Stephen exemplifies this refusal to legitimize brutality. Victims continue to suffer, but their status after the Gospel's proclamation is irrevocably altered. The sacralization of violence by blaming the victims must, according to Girard's analysis, yield to the recognition of their innocence. The ethical consequences are evident: Either violence itself must be renounced or the perpetrators must accept the responsibility for their actions.

Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, through the withering, relentless depiction of hyper-violence unmasks the scapegoat mechanism with visceral intensity. Regardless of what real or imagined crimes may be attributed to Jesus, the preacher from Galilee does not merit such heinous punishment. As Gibson affectively and effectively engages viewers in the mimetic violence perpetrated by Gentile and Jew alike, questions arise: Does the hyper-violence of *The Passion of the Christ* promote a mimetic self-sacrifice for others after the example of Francis of Assisi? Or does Gibson's hyper-violence demand the further sacrifice of scapegoats, real or imagined, innocent or guilty? The ethical appropriation of Gibson's cinematic project within the Christian tradition depends on what happens when the lights come back on in the theater. Given the Franciscan understanding of mimetic mysticism, emotional identification with the sufferings of Jesus in *The Passion of the Christ* serves as the basis for spiritual transformation. Feeling with Jesus can never be enough for someone like Francis of Assisi, for the encounter with the innocent Nazarene elicits the categorical renunciation of the scapegoating mechanism at every level of society. The experience of hyper-violence Gibson's project evokes could elicit a commitment to non-violence. As Orlando Todisco notes in his study on Bonaventure and Girard, the Franciscan response leads to a counter mimetic process that uncovers and uproots violence by refusing to project the culpability of evil on to others.<sup>17</sup>

*... the example of Francis's encounter with the suffering Jesus, and his subsequent efforts to promote peace among warring parties, suggests it is not impossible to imagine the renunciation of violence within Christian communities.*

Franciscan efforts to promote non-violence, both yesterday and today, go beyond the simple repetition of the Poverello's famous greeting of *Pax et Bonum*. Acting to counter the mimetic process, with the hope of turning the tide of violence, is something Francis demonstrated time and time again. Indeed in his encounter with Sultan Malek al-Kamil in Egypt, Francis offers a paradigm for peacemaking.<sup>18</sup> From a Girardian perspective,

Francis refuses to embrace the prevailing cultural biases by scapegoating the Muslim combatants and labors instead to forge an opportunity for peaceful dialogue. When ministering to lepers, he does cede to the norms of culpability and exclusion by blaming them for their physical deformities, but acts with inclusive compassion.<sup>19</sup> Instead of playing one social group against another for personal or institutional gain, he composes an additional stanza on forgiveness and peace for the *Cantic of Brother Sun* during the rivalry between church and state, and sends his brothers to sing the new lyrics in the presence of those involved in the controversy. The author of the *Assisi Compilation* writes, Francis:

... composed one verse for the *Praises*: Praised be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for Your love, and bear infirmity and tribulation. Blessed are those who endure in peace for by You, Most High, they shall be crowned. Afterwards he called one of his companions and told him: "Go to the podestà and, on my behalf, tell him to go to the bishop's residence together with the city magistrates and bring with him as many others as he can." And when the brother had gone, he said to two of his other companions: "Go and sing the *Cantic of Brother Sun* before the bishop, the podestà, and the others who are with them. I trust in the Lord that He will humble their hearts and they will make peace with each other and return to their earlier friendship and love."<sup>20</sup>

Is such a response to strife unrealistic today? Perhaps for most people, but the example of Francis's encounter with the suffering Jesus, and his subsequent efforts to promote peace among warring parties, suggests it is not impossible to imagine the renunciation of violence within Christian communities. Sadly the temptation to scapegoat endures in the wake of *The Passion of the Christ*, and in fact, is intensified by some interpretations of Gibson's film. What Girard terms as "mimetic contagion" is painfully visible in the false accusations exchanged among competing factions of Christians. In addition to utilizing conflicting interpretations of the film as a way to victimize other Christians as unorthodox, there are those who would like to scapegoat the film's director. To hear Gibson's remarks regarding the controversy generated by his cinematic project, he appears apparently ready to play the role of scapegoat. The spiral of mutual scapegoating seems inevitable due to myriad interpretations, but when Girard is challenged by violence, he is clear as to the hermeneutical options:

We hear nowadays that, behind every text and every event, there are an infinite number of interpretations, all more or less equivalent. Mimetic victimization makes the absurdity of this view manifest. Only two possible reactions to the mimetic contagion exist, and they make an enormous difference. Either we surrender and join the persecuting crowd, or we resist and

stand alone. The first way is unanimous self-deception we call mythology. The second is the road to truth followed by the Bible.<sup>21</sup>

For Christian communities who want to move along the “road to truth” beyond mutual scapegoating, the media, and in this case *Comedy Central*, offers some unexpected opportunities for creative interpretation and retrieval. Interestingly enough, while taking aim at Gibson, South Park’s *The Passion of the Jew* mirrors Girard’s theory by depicting the controversial film as leading to the renunciation of violence and the promotion of reconciliation between Jews and Christians. The story opens with Cartman, who boasts that he’s seen *The Passion of the Christ* 34 times. His haranguing of his Jewish friend Kyle, prompts Kyle to go to the cinema. Deeply affected by the violence, Kyle then goes to the synagogue to acknowledge his part in the crucifixion and implore the congregation to make a public apology to the Christians. Stunned and indeed angered by Kyle’s confession, the synagogue members march out to be met by equally angered members of the Christian community, who have been enflamed by the Nazi-inspired rhetoric of Cartman.

In the meantime, Stan and Kenny, who felt the movie “totally sucked” went out to Malibu to get their money back from Gibson. In a scene reminiscent of the Mad Max series, Gibson chases them across the country for a final encounter before the angry mob of Christians and Jews. When challenged, Gibson claims: “You can’t say the movie sucked or else you’re saying Christianity sucks.” Stan replies: “No dude, if you want to be a Christian that’s cool, but you should follow what Jesus taught instead of how he got killed. Focusing on how he got killed is what happened in the Dark Ages and it ends up with really bad results.”<sup>22</sup> Confronted with unavoidable reality of violence, and the impending possibility of mimetic contagion, both Christians and Jews in South Park decide to renounce violence.

## Conclusion

Mel Gibson’s decision to focus on how Jesus got killed in *The Passion of the Christ*, and to amplify that event with hyper-violence is admittedly dangerous as Stan says, but potentially liberating if Christian communities are willing to see such brutality as an invitation to reinterpret the death of their Messiah. As René Girard claims, the innocence of this victim uncovers the universal temptation to scapegoat, that is, to project injustice on others. As Christian communities reflect on their affective experience in the theater, this paper does not suggest that they downplay or deride the depth of their feelings. To challenge the validity of affective spirituality per se is to ignore rich traditions such as the Franciscan, which perceived in the emotions a privileged manner of union with God. Yet, the affirmation of this spirituality carries with it the concomitant challenge to proclaim an end to violence and persecution. Francis of Assisi, countless men and

women through the centuries, and even a child in *South Park*, have shown the way.

## Footnotes

- 1 An earlier version of this paper was given on April 5, 2005, at the University of Central Florida's Conference "Sacred Texts, Sacred Film? Responsible Interpretations of Scripture in Film and Popular Culture" in Orlando.
- 2 Mel Gibson, Foreword in *The Passion: Photography from the Movie The Passion of the Christ* (Icon Distributions: 2004).
- 3 *The Making of The Passion of the Christ* prod. Holly McClure, PAX Television, February, 2004. See a similar comment during Gibson's interview with Diane Sawyer at: [http://www.beliefnet.com/story/140/story\\_14044\\_2html#impact](http://www.beliefnet.com/story/140/story_14044_2html#impact). Accessed 04/01/2005.
- 4 Robert Woods, Michael Jindra, and Jason Baker, "The Audience Responds to the Passion of the Christ" in *Re-Viewing the Passion*, ed. S. Brent Plate (New York: Palgrave, 2004), 170-172.
- 5 For this comparison, see: Marvin Perry and Frederick Schweitzer, "The Medieval Passion Play Revisited" in *Re-Viewing the Passion*, 3-19.
- 6 Prol. n. 1, *Lignum vitae* in S. Bonaventurae, *Opera Omnia VIII* (Quaracchi, 1898), 68a. Translation from the Latin by Timothy J. Johnson.
- 7 René Girard, *The Girard Reader*, ed. James G. Wilson (New York: Crossroads Publishing, 2004), 1-6.
- 8 Girard, *The Girard Reader*, 285-286.
- 9 Girard, *The Girard Reader*, 262-263.
- 10 Gerard Loughlin, "René Girard (b. 1925) Introduction" in *The Postmodern God*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 96-98.
- 11 Girard, *The Girard Reader*, 171-172
- 12 Girard, *The Girard Reader*, 149.
- 13 Girard, *The Girard Reader*, 205.
- 14 Girard, *The Girard Reader*, 156-157.
- 15 René Girard, "The God of Victims" in *The Postmodern God*, 105-106.
- 16 *Girard Reader*, 178.
- 17 Orlando Todisco, *Lo stupore della ragione: Il pensare francescano e la filosofia moderna* (Padova: Edizioni Messaggero, 2003), 399.
- 18 Kathleen A. Warren, *Daring to Cross the Threshold: Francis of Assisi Encounters Sultan Malek al-Kamil* (Saint Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2003), 103-119.
- 19 Thomas of Celano, *The Life of Saint Francis*, in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 1 *The Saint*, eds. Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short (New York: New City Press, 1999), n. 17, 195.
- 20 *The Assisi Compilation in Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 2, *The Founder*, n. 84, 187.
- 21 Rene Girard, "Are the Gospels Mythical" *First Things* 62 (April 1996): 27-31, <http://www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft9604/girard.html>. Accessed 03/19/2005.
- 22 *The Passion of the Jew* dir. Matt Stone and Eric Stough, DVD Paramount Home Video, August 31, 2004.

**Retrieving and Restating the  
Early Franciscan Approach to God**  
**JOHN MICHAEL PERRY, Ph.D.**  
**Cardinal Stritch University • Milwaukee, WI**  
**[jmperry@stritch.edu](mailto:jmperry@stritch.edu)**

**Definitions Clarified**

**B**efore I begin addressing my stated topic I should clearly explain two different aspects of “experience” which my presentation will presuppose. By experience I mean our conscious awareness of either empirical or transempirical reality. Empirical reality is experienced directly through sensory perception, whereas transempirical reality is experienced indirectly through inferential reflection.

Inference must also be distinguished into its lower order and higher order kinds. Lower order inference can be verified by experimental manipulation of empirical data. Higher order inference, however, cannot be verified in this way because its experienced referent is spiritual in nature and transcends experimental manipulation (e.g., freedom of choice and God’s All-encompassing Reality.)

Instead, higher order inference is verified “experientially” by recognizing that its experienced referent is a transempirical implication of past experiences grounded in the empirical realm (e.g., with reference to freedom of choice: our past struggles with extremely difficult decisions and the breaking of addictions; with reference to God’s All-encompassing Reality: our awareness of the ultimate implications of the laws of causality and nothingness which will be explained below).

Empirical demonstration yields absolute or total “certainty” if we have adequate access to the data. Experiential verification, on the other hand, is broader and yields relative or partial “certitude” because of its inferential indirectness.

**Tillich’s Endorsement of the Early Franciscan Approach to God**

Paul Tillich has written an essay<sup>1</sup> in which he convincingly reasons that philosophy has approached the Mystery of God ineffectively since it abandoned the “ontological approach” championed by the Franciscan scholars of the thirteenth century. (Ontology is the study of the nature of Being, i.e., Being Itself and all contingent beings that participate in the Power to Be.)

The Franciscans whom Tillich primarily has in mind are Alexander of Hales (1185-1245), Bonaventure (1217-1274), and Matthew of Aquasparta (1240-1302). Alexander was the first Franciscan to hold a chair in theology at the University of Paris. Bonaventure was his disciple, and Matthew Bonaventure’s. Tillich recognizes that there are outmoded assumptions present in the expressed views of these medieval scholars. But mingled



with such dated ideas he discerns a deposit of experiential wisdom that would restore philosophical reasoning about God to its rightful ontological foundation.

These early Franciscan scholars (who primarily followed Augustine of Hippo rather than Aristotle) maintained that to adequately approach the Mystery of God we must begin “within ourselves.” For we already possess within ourselves an immediate but dim awareness of God’s Reality as the All-encompassing Ground of our finite universe and its truth, goodness, and beauty. Our initial awareness of God is an experienced implication of our minds and their operations. For example, our awareness of various degrees of perfection implies Absolute Perfection, and various degrees of truth, goodness, and beauty imply the prior reality of Absolute Truth, Goodness and Beauty, or God. This implicit awareness of God is obscure, but it can become explicit and clear through interior reflection. Our initial awareness of God and its gradual development, however, are only possible because of the “Eternal Light” or “Eternal Truth” imparted by God’s Sustaining Presence within us:

God can be contemplated . . . through a light which shines on our mind. That light is Eternal Truth since “our mind is directly created by Truth Itself.”<sup>2</sup>

This supernatural illumination enables our minds to know with certitude that God is the Absolute and Eternal Ground of all beings, or Being Itself. Only after recognizing God’s Always-presupposed Reality with the aid of divinely imparted illumination can we hope to correctly understand the contingent beings in the world. The external world abounds with indications that God is its Ultimate Cause. But these indications stand in a secondary relation to the foundational experience of immediate inner certitude about God’s Reality as Unconditional or Divine Being:

It is being which first comes into the intellect, and that being is pure act . . . But this cannot be a particular being which is limited by the presence of potency [potentiality]. . . . It follows that the being we are reaching for is Divine Being.<sup>3</sup>

God, according to the early Franciscans, is not a distant and uncertain goal Whom we hope to reach solely by reasoning with abstract concepts. Rather, God is already immediately but obscurely known to us from our inner experience as the Unconditional Being Who is the Necessary Presupposition and Ground of all contingent beings. And the certitude imparted by this already-possessioned experience prompts us to increase our knowledge of God by reflecting on beings that participate as created effects in God’s Unconditional Being.<sup>4</sup>

The ontological approach to God which begins with our dim inner awareness of God as Unconditional Being was eventually superseded by the “cosmological” approach advocated by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

and his fellow Dominicans. (Cosmology is the study of the ordered universe.) Aquinas, following Aristotle rather than Augustine, preferred to begin with the external world of physical beings and reason his way by the abstract concepts of cause and effect to the “probable” existence of God understood as the “highest” being.

This second approach to God has proven unsuccessful in Tillich’s judgment, for it has had the unintended effect of making God seem like the highest in a hierarchy of finite beings — an apologetic kind of *deus ex machina*. But God, Tillich demurs, can never be known with verifying certitude if approached from without as the “object” of abstract questioning. Instead, we must begin with our already-possessed inner awareness of God as Unconditional Being or Being Itself.

Unconditional Being is already obscurely but truly experienced within ourselves as the Absolute Presupposition of our own contingent being and the Ground of our capacity for creative questioning. This pre-conceptual certitude provides us with a secure point of departure for inferential (analogical) reasoning about God. Such certitude is not empirically demonstrable, but is experientially verifiable in essentially the same way as our certitude about our possession of freedom of choice.<sup>5</sup>

Those humans who accept the traditional proofs for God’s existence do so, not because God’s Reality can be compellingly proven or demonstrated, but because they already possess a pre-conceptual awareness of God’s Unconditional Reality which the proofs corroborate or help them to articulate. Those who reject the proofs recognize that they are not intrinsically compelling because transempirical realities by their very nature can never be proven.<sup>6</sup>

Tillich urges that we return to the foundational use of the ontological approach and then join the cosmological approach to it (which was the practice of the early Franciscans). Only if the cosmological approach builds on an experiential and ontological foundation, he contends, will it convincingly be able to verify the Unconditional Reality of God and obviate the half-blasphemous misconception that God is the highest or greatest being in the universe. Such a view, he asserts, smacks of naïve mythology and has contributed to the growth of atheism by cutting humans off from the subtle but real experiential wisdom within themselves.

### **A Suggested Development of Tillich’s Endorsement**

If we agree with Tillich that philosophy should return to the experiential wisdom of the early Franciscan School, we still must ask ourselves what form this return should take. For the view that God can be approached successfully only with the help of a “supernatural light” is patently mythological. And yet Tillich is convinced that beneath such mythological language lies a trove of wisdom that should be retrieved and restated in contemporary categories.

Tillich does not tell us, however, precisely how he would go about accomplishing this task. He only points to its necessity. In the remainder of this essay I will explain how I think the task left unfinished by Tillich can be successfully completed. My explanation will be somewhat paradoxical because I will qualify and employ a concept that Tillich himself rejects.

The historian Frederick Copelston informs us that the language of supernatural illumination used by the early Franciscans was based on pre-critical assumptions about mental activity inherited from the past. These assumptions were characteristic of the Christian Neoplatonism which they received from Augustine.<sup>7</sup> At our time in history, however, we should avail ourselves of the “practical” wisdom of a later Franciscan, William of Ockham (1287-1347) and wield his famous razor:

Hypothetical entities should not be multiplied beyond necessity.  
(*Entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem.*)

In other words, we should never explain with “more” what we can explain as well or better with “less.” If we accept Ockham’s advice, it seems reasonable to conclude at our time in history that the immediate but obscure awareness which we possess about God’s Reality does not derive from a supernatural illumination. Instead it derives from the light which our own pre-discursive or “intuitive” reason can shed on our pre-conceptual experience.

The word intuition, however, is ambiguous and its intended meaning must be clarified.<sup>8</sup> Tillich explicitly rules out the possibility that intuition might be the source of the inner illumination spoken of by the Franciscans. But in this instance Tillich stands in the tradition which stems from Immanuel Kant; he understands intuition as sensory perception prior to its conceptualization. For Tillich, accordingly, intuition is not an acceptable term for explaining non-perceptual experience. Others believe the word signifies the mind’s ability to immediately recognize “innate” ideas. A third view assumes that intuition means nothing more than a hunch.

None of these meanings is intended here. By intuition I mean the subconscious activity by which the mind arrives at a recognition without the mediation of inference (which must consciously employ language and concepts). Such pre-conceptual awareness is derived from the mind’s ability to make associations based on similarities or contiguities in our subconscious experience.

The power of intuition serves our mental life by recognizing patterns of similarity and difference that provide appropriate analogies which facilitate the inferential process. Such recognitions do not drift into consciousness by pure chance. Rather, they are discovered by pre-discursive reason in the subconscious realm of memory when it rapidly (nonverbally) scans that realm in search of connections and fitting analogues to be used in inferential problem solving.

Intuitive recognition is “immediate” in the sense that it is not con-

sciously mediated either by perceived phenomena or verbal signifiers of an inferential kind; it enters our consciousness as a recognition which possesses experiential “certitude.” In my judgment, this unmediated awareness of which our minds are capable is the experiential basis of the illumination mythically described as “Eternal Light” by the early Franciscans. They thought this light came directly from God. I am suggesting, however, that it comes from God indirectly by way of our God-given mental capacity for knowing some things intuitively. The pre-inferential associations which underlie intuitive recognition were not yet understood by the medieval Franciscans. Intuitive awareness would have seemed mysterious to them and, given their historically limited presuppositions, construable as supernatural.

### **A Contemporary Restatement of the Early Franciscan Approach to God**

With the clarifications provided above in mind, I will now attempt to restate in contemporary language what I take to be the essentially correct substance of the early Franciscan approach to God. I agree with the early Franciscans that when we begin to think about the “ultimate” implications of our existence we already possess a pre-conceptual awareness of the All-encompassing Reality Who is Unconditional Being. My restatement of their views, however, will employ concepts which move beyond the medieval philosophy which they propounded. I have supplemented my attempt to contemporize their views with ideas borrowed from Tillich, Martin Heidegger, Alfred North Whitehead, and Carl Jung. Nevertheless, I am convinced that my development of their views is essentially faithful to their intentions.

At birth we all have an inborn ability to recognize recurrent patterns of experience which are meaningful and vital for survival. From the day of our birth we begin to be obscurely but truly aware of the causal relations that are consistently and universally present in our macroscopic experience of the life-process (e.g., as infants we learned by preverbal association that our instinctive cry “caused” the mothering one to come and meet our need). Whitehead describes such pre-conceptual awareness of causality as the unconscious feeling of “causal efficacy” ineluctably experienced through our bodies.<sup>9</sup>

We also have at birth the inborn capacity to acquire language, and eventually our pre-verbal experience of causal relations can be explicitly articulated as “the law of causality” which reminds us that “Every effect has a cause.” Knowledge of the law of causality (whether verbalized or not) is essential for survival and is woven into the warp and woof of that part of our minds known as memory. Closely related to the law of causality is our awareness of “the law of nothingness.” This law is the shadow side of our awareness of the law of causality; the two laws are learned in tandem. We gradually become aware that nothing ever comes

from pure nothing. There is always someone or something already there when anything additional or new happens in our macroscopic experience. Eventually we all “feel” and “know” that

Nothing comes from absolute nothing.  
(Ex nihilo absoluto nihil fit.)

At a certain stage in our conscious development we are able to articulate this law, but we are intuitively aware of it long before we learn to state it. The presence of the word “absolute” in the formula we are considering is of crucial importance and distinguishes it from the older form of this law which Heidegger has exposed as ambiguous in his essay “What is Metaphysics?”<sup>10</sup>. The older and ambiguous form (traditionally cited in Latin) omits the word “absolute.” It is formulated as follows:

Nothing comes from nothing.  
(Ex nihilo nihil fit.)

Some traditional thinkers would argue that these two formulas are saying essentially the same thing and that the newer one employs an unnecessary term (absolute). Heidegger, however, disagrees. He reminds us that every contingent being in our world emerges from the “nothing” of potentiality in the process of becoming an actual being.<sup>11</sup> This undeniable observation clearly renders the older formula ambiguous. Something can indeed come from nothing if the nothing in question is the relative nothing of potentiality from which all finite beings are actualized. The “relative” or partial nonbeing of potentiality is quite different from absolute nonbeing which signifies sheer and total nothingness. Falling in step with Heidegger, therefore, we will work with the newer and unambiguous form of the law which includes the qualifying word “absolute.”

There is something in the very structure of our minds and their encounter with reality that results in an implicit and initially pre-conceptual awareness of the laws of nothingness and causality. This awareness is archetypal, i.e., universal in human experience (but more often subconscious and unarticulated). Our pre-conceptual awareness of these laws is rich and concrete because it derives from our immediate participation in the life-process. When experienced as abstract concepts, the laws lose the concrete immediacy which they possess in our pre-conceptual awareness. Nevertheless, they implicitly or explicitly characterize our experience of all things that happen in the universe. Our functioning reason is intuitively aware of them, and continually factors them into our understanding of all occurrences and, finally, the occurrence of the universe itself. For the universe is a vast and impressive happening which obviously did not come into being from “pure nothing.”

Implicit in our awareness of these two fundamental laws is yet another and deeper awareness: We also discern intuitively the Mysterious Reality of Unconditional Being, the Absolute Being Who is the Necessary Presupposition of mere contingent beings, and the Ultimate Source of

their power to be.<sup>12</sup> This additional awareness is the logical consequence of our experience of the two laws. Our minds are pre-conceptually aware that nothing comes from pure nothing, and that every finite being in the universe, therefore, must have an Ultimate Source in Whose Being it somehow shares (or else it would not have the power to “be”). It follows then, by analogical extension, that the entire universe must have an Originating and Sustaining Cause.

But the Unconditional Cause of the universe necessarily transcends the finite universe, for the universe could not have been brought into being by one of its own contingent parts. It is obvious, then, that its Cause cannot be one of its parts, not even the “highest” or “greatest” part (as affirmed by those who take the cosmological approach to God). To assert that God is the highest or greatest being in the universe is seriously misguided. We must remind ourselves that it is the Unconditional Reality beyond all our finite words and images for God Who is truly God. To suggest that the Transcendent Reality of God could be contained within the universe is absurd. Rather, it is the finite universe that is contained within the All-encompassing and All-sustaining Reality of God. (Nevertheless, even though God transcends and contains the universe, God is also intimately present in every part of the universe as its Originating and Sustaining Ground.)

Our experience assures us that the logically required Prior Source and Ultimate Cause of all finite beings must possess Its Power to Be in a manner that absolutely transcends finite limits. Otherwise the Ultimate Cause would be subject to contingency and the threat of nonbeing and could not Be the Eternal Source and Sustainer of our temporal universe. The Ultimate Source of our contingent universe is necessarily “Eternal” because before the universe is called into being from nonbeing time does not yet exist. Einstein assures us that time and space are not absolute as Newton assumed. Rather, time and space are finite aspects of the finite and expanding universe. They begin when the universe begins at the Big Bang. Heidegger echoes Einstein when he observes that finite beings are inseparable from time.

Accordingly, because there is no time before the universe is called into being, its Ultimate Source is necessarily Time-transcending and Eternal. Without the Unconditional Being Who transcends all limits, including temporal limits, there would be no logical means of understanding where the potentiality for our temporal universe originated and how it was initially able to be actualized. Thus it is logical (and experientially verified) to conclude with the early Franciscans that the Necessarily-presupposed Reality of Unconditional Being is the Ultimate and Eternal Reason why all finite and temporal beings exist.

We should also remind ourselves that, when used with reference to God, the word “Cause” should be understood analogically not univocally or literally. The Eternal Causal Power exercised by God has only the dim-

most conceivable similarity to the causality exercised by “caused causes” within the universe. God’s Exercise of Causality is correctly described as “transcausal,” which means that it infinitely transcends the limitations of all finite causes found within the universe. Our finite human reason is capable of only the faintest analogical recognition of the true nature of God’s Eternal Exercise of Creative Causality.

God’s Absolute and Eternal Being requires that God is necessarily without a cause and must accordingly be understood as the Uncaused Cause of the universe. God, therefore, is the Uncaused Source of all the creative potentiality which has been and is now being actualized in the universe. Positing the Absolute Reality of God as the Eternal Ground of the universe (and our own finite being) is not inventing “pie in the sky.” Instead, it is trusting our reason when it tells us we are right to be guided by the logical implications of our experience. (Additional experiential justification for the ideas about God presented above will be provided below in the last two sections.)

In pre-critical ages humans unwittingly fragmented their obscure awareness of Ultimacy by interpreting it polytheistically. Yet even the ancients were groping toward a unified view of Ultimacy when they declared mighty Zeus to be the “one” who ruled over all the other gods with final authority. And even Zeus was powerless to revoke the absolute decrees of Fate. At our time in history most humans who have been exposed to critical thinking on the road to adulthood have acquired an intuitive awareness that the universe in its entirety requires One Absolute Cause. For if there were a number of Absolute Beings, they would all be “relative” to each other, and we would have to look further for the true Absolute Who is the Ultimate Reason why all contingent beings are able to “be” and to withstand “absolute nonbeing.”

It finally becomes clear to reflecting human reason that the Always-presupposed Absolute Being is an “Absolute Abyss of Being.” The mythic abysses of popular imagination are all bottomless. But the Absolute Abyss of Being discerned by philosophical reflection as the Necessary and Eternal Source of all contingent beings is without bottom, top, sides, or any other conceivable limit whatsoever. The center of Absolute Reality is “everywhere” and Its perimeter “nowhere.”<sup>13</sup> Because Absolute Being, by definition, is primordially free from any limits or conditions, It is necessarily free from temporal limits and therefore Eternal. Logic and the implications of our experience enable us to conclude that it is not possible for Absolute Being not to Be for all eternity. They also inform us that the nature of Absolute Being is finally incomprehensible to finite human reason.

None of the statements made above about our implicit awareness or explicit knowledge of God’s Unconditional Being have been proven or demonstrated. Such an assertion would be misconceived because no adequately educated person at our time in history would believe in this “god.” Such a god would be too small to be the Absolute Abyss of Being



Who contains the entire universe within Itself. Rather, the conclusions arrived at above were verified experientially by providing assurance that our initial awareness of God and the logical unfolding of its implications are grounded in and supported by our fundamental experience of the laws of causality and nothingness.

In a manner somewhat akin to the thinking of the early Franciscans, Carl Jung states that in the depths of the “unconscious” mind (where all past learning experiences are retained and integrated) everyone is aware of the Numinous God Archetype.<sup>14</sup> And yet exposure to harsh and absurd views about God and religion during one’s formative years can drive a deep wedge of antipathy between one’s unconscious awareness of the Archetypal Mystery of God and the alienating god-talk of particular traditions, parents, or teachers. In such cases predictable aversion to belief in “god” (and the irrational demands which usually accompany it) will prevent the integration of one’s unconscious awareness of Ultimacy with one’s profoundly alienating exposure to god-talk. The outcome of this tragic misalignment is usually some form of atheism or agnosticism embraced in self-defense.

### **A Justification of My Appeal to Causality**

The reader might have wondered by now if the importance assigned above to causality and nothingness is not really an affirmation of the cosmological rather than the ontological approach to God. My response to such a legitimate question would be as follows:

The early Franciscans did not understand that the laws of causality and nothingness were subconsciously involved in the “illumination” that made possible their dim and unmediated awareness of God. They began with their (subconsciously acquired) inner experience of God as Being Itself and reflected ontologically on its implications. It was then that they “consciously” used the laws of causality and nothingness to relate their inner awareness of God to the created beings in the world. They did not realize, however, that pre-conceptual awareness of these two laws (and what they ultimately imply) was providing the experiential foundation for the unmediated certitude about the Mystery of God with which they began. What I attempted to do above was to make explicit the tacit presuppositions which made possible their “unmediated” awareness of God as the Necessarily-presupposed Ground of all beings.

### **A Further Restatement of the Franciscan Approach to God**

Our experience of certitude about God’s All-encompassing and All-sustaining Reality is so vital for correctly orienting our lives that I would like to continue the task of verifying this real but subtle certitude with a shift in perspective. This shift will enable us to further explore the shadow side of causality with the help of insights suggested by Heidegger and developed by Tillich.

In his earlier mentioned essay, “What is Metaphysics?”, Heidegger invites us to join him in reflecting on the problem of “nothing.”<sup>15</sup> Beginning

*We humans gradually become conscious of the sobering fact that all finite beings in the universe come into being from nothing and sooner or later return to nothing.*

with “nothing” may seem strange, yet I and most of my fellow students have found this approach convincing because it is firmly supported by our experience. We humans gradually become conscious of the sobering fact that all finite beings in the universe come into being from nothing and sooner or later return to nothing. This “nothing” which is bound up with our contingent being is of grave concern to us, for it confronts us with the threat of permanent nonbeing. The urgent question which occurs to us,

therefore, is whether the nonbeing we are destined to return to at death will fully terminate or instead transform our conscious existence. (Ernest Hemingway, in his well-known short story “A Clean Well Lighted Place” deals with the profoundly disturbing problem of “nothing” as experienced by a middle-aged Spanish waiter).<sup>16</sup>

It will do no good to turn to science to learn more about this undeniably important yet ambiguous “nothing” which awaits us. For Heidegger reminds us that science, because of the empirical limits it has imposed on its methodology, can tell us nothing about nothing. Instead, we must turn to philosophy (and existentializing poetry, e.g., T.S. Eliot’s “The Hollow Men”) which can range beyond the empirical in search of transempirical insights gleaned from our concrete participation in the life-process.

Philosophers have been concerned about the problem of nothing or nonbeing since the time of the ancient Greeks. Ancient Greek philosophy distinguished between absolute nonbeing (ouk on = total nothingness) and relative or partial nonbeing (me on = the potentiality from which all actual beings emerge). All the real potentiality of which we have any experience is always present in some already actually existing being. For example, before our own potentiality for existence was actualized by our parents, it resided in their gonads. If our potentiality for existence had never been actualized for some reason, we would have remained nothing more than one of the many potential children that our parents never actualized.

When we think seriously about the relative nonbeing we all return to at death, we recognize by analogical extension the theoretical possibility of an absolute nonbeing which could simultaneously annihilate all contingent beings by reducing them to total nothingness. A profound question then occurs to us: Why has absolute nothingness never swallowed all contingent beings thereby bringing the process of universal becoming to an end? If everything in our world is continually receding into “relative” nothing, what prevents the entire world from being annihilated by “absolute” nothing?

The question before us is not purely academic. It is disturbingly real because it confronts our fragile and contingent existence with the nightmarish possibility of an absolute nonbeing which could conceivably annihilate all beings along with our meaning and all our hopes. However, if we press on courageously and refuse to surrender to arid skepticism or dark despair, we can build on our inner experience and establish a secure basis for future hope.

If we trust our experience and reflect further, we are able to recognize that absolute nonbeing, while theoretically conceivable, has never been able to annihilate all existing beings. For if it had, nothing at all would be, and we would not be having this discussion about nothing. We reasonably conclude, therefore, that absolute nonbeing has never prevailed because there is an Absolute Being Who possesses the Power to Be in a way that is absolutely free from any limitations whatsoever. Absolute Being, accordingly, could never be threatened by the possibility of absolute nonbeing. The necessary absoluteness of Unconditional Being ontologically precludes and logically negates the “real” possibility of absolute nothingness. Absolute Being, therefore, is the Ultimate Reason why finite beings are able to come into being and continue to be without any real possibility of being annihilated by absolute nonbeing. God is the name used by most of us to relate ourselves to the Absolute Abyss of Being Who is the Eternal Ground of our security. Our experientially secured knowledge of God, therefore, is the source of our courage to be when we feel threatened by nonbeing in any present or future form. It is our intuitive awareness of God’s Absolute Grounding Power that justifies our right to tell a terrified child not to be afraid because “everything will be all right.”

We can be relatively or experientially certain of this conclusion because of our knowledge of the experiential validity and logical necessity of the law of nothingness (and its intrinsic connection with the law of causality). Among other things, this law assures us that all real potentiality for becoming something actual always resides in some already actually existing being (because nothing comes from pure nothing). This recognition requires that the potentiality for the entire universe must have originated in God’s Absolute Being in order for the contingent universe to have been actualized.

Furthermore, we need not fear that relative nonbeing has any power to harm or threaten us ultimately. For this form of nonbeing is an aspect of God’s Creative Purpose and is the shadow side of God’s Creative Love. Our limit-transcending design implies that God’s Love has destined us for death-transcending participation in God’s own Immortality and Joy. Why else would we who are recycled stellar debris be programmed to think about infinity and eternity and aspire to death-transcending participation in God’s Life? It seems likely that there is something immortal about the being who can think about and aspire to immortality. These (and many other) considerations indicate (but do not prove) that our Ultimate Source is also our Ultimate Aim.

The ancient belief in immortal gods and goddesses in super-human form was a pre-critical “projection” of our subconscious awareness of the ultimate implications of our spiritual design. (Spirit is the power of unlimited self-transcendence.) Our spiritual design supports this reading because it enables us to transcend limits with mathematical infinity and aspire to share in God’s everlasting Self-exploration. Our design, then, implies our destiny and reveals the infinite intention of our Designer.

## **Early Franciscan Use of Analogy to Clarify Our Initial Awareness of God**

Finally I would like to contemporize the way in which the early Franciscans used their knowledge of analogy to supplement their inner certitude of God’s Reality.<sup>17</sup> This final section of my essay will require me to explain a third law which our reason is designed to recognize and employ creatively when thinking about the answers to preliminary and ultimate questions. The developing human mind becomes aware not only of the basic laws of causality and nothingness, but also of another basic law, “the law of resemblance.”

This third law emerges in the wake of our experience of causality. It tells us that not only does every effect have a cause but also that “Every effect dimly resembles or reveals something about its cause.” Knowledge of this law justifies our analogical use of proximate causality to explain God’s Ultimate Causality. It also justifies our giving the Absolute Abyss of Being a “human face” and a “heart” filled with Tender and Unconditional Love for us. For it assures us that it is reasonable to employ personal analogies as symbols that help us to dimly and preliminarily understand our transpersonal relationship with God. The early Franciscans agreed with these conclusions:

Every effect is a sign of its cause, every exemplification is a sign of the exemplar . . . All creatures from their very nature are images and likenesses of Eternal Wisdom.<sup>18</sup>

To illustrate the law of resemblance we may imagine a trip to the beach. The footprints that we find in the wet sand resemble the feet which caused them. If we think carefully of our memories of causal experience and exercise our analogical imagination creatively, it becomes evident that all the effects we have ever experienced somehow resemble or reveal something about their cause, albeit dimly. Human footprints are obviously a poor substitute for the spirit-bearing, reasoning, and freely deciding person who caused them. But they nevertheless imply (because of everything else we have learned about reality) that they were caused by a human with two feet like our own. There are many things about the person who caused the footprints that we do not know — name, gender, age, height, weight, interests, place of birth, et cetera. But we do possess experiential certitude that another spirit-bearing being was recently in the vicinity. Our

certitude is transempirical and relative (i.e., partial and incomplete) but nevertheless real.

(A fourth law which implies essentially the same idea is “the law of prior possession.” This law states that “A cause cannot give what it does not already have.” In other words, if that reality which is effected by a cause were not already possessed in some way by that cause, the cause could not impart that reality to its effect. The reality of an effect, therefore, always tells us dimly and analogically something about the reality of its cause.)

Footprints in wet sand bring to mind Robinson Crusoe, the shipwrecked hero of Daniel Defoe’s well known novel.<sup>19</sup> Crusoe was willing to trust his experience and work with only relatively certain knowledge implied by a series of footprints he found on the beach. He trusted his experience and it rewarded him by enabling him to find the person who made the footprints. The other person (named Friday) was known initially by Crusoe only dimly and implicitly from footprints in the wet sand. But he did not sit down on the beach and wail because he had only “indirect” knowledge and merely “relative” certitude about the presence of another person on the island. He trusted his transempirical experience, undertook a search, and was able to find (and save) his future friend, Friday. He initiated his search because of his certitude that the law of resemblance — repeatedly confirmed by his experience — was trustworthy.

*If the early Franciscans were looking over my shoulder, they would probably comment at this point that God has left astonishing footprints all over the surface of the universe.*

If the early Franciscans were looking over my shoulder, they would probably comment at this point that God has left astonishing footprints all over the surface of the universe. Moreover, God left these footprints as clues so we might discover God’s Beauty, Goodness, and Wisdom, and be brought to an understanding of God’s passionate desire to save us from our fears, especially our misguided fear of God. For God is always Unconditional Love in our regard and ardently wishes to become our Friend and Lover. The early Franciscans would agree that the law of resemblance does indeed assure us that everything in the universe is an effect which dimly resembles or reveals something about its Ultimate Cause:

These things are traces in which we can see God as in a mirror.<sup>20</sup>

The seemingly endless sky prompts us to infer God’s Actual Infinity or Absolute Freedom from limits. From vast oceans and powerful electrical storms we dimly suspect something of God’s Awe-inspiring Might. From the towering granite upthrust of the Himalayas we dimly intuit God’s Eternity. From sunrises, sunsets, and immense spiraling galaxies we dimly discern God’s Boundless Beauty and Creative Wisdom. From the life-giving presence of sunlight, water, and the life-sustaining cycle of the seasons we

intuit God's Providential Love and Care. From the moral evil in the world which results when we misuse our freedom of choice we infer the enormous importance which God assigns to our freedom of choice which can finally say yes to God's offer of Friendship and Love.

We may also infer from our deep attraction to physical beauty and the ecstasy of committed sexual union something of God's Sublime Beauty and Intoxicating Love which await us at the Great Marriage between Heaven and Earth. If inferring our Creator's desire for Friendship with us on the basis of creatures meets with resistance, we may reply (with an analogical eye on the law of resemblance) that the creature who tells us most about our Creator (Who is Absolute Spirit) is a spirit-bearing human. Our human spirit, which is the source of our self-transcending consciousness, empowers us to engage freely and creatively in the spiritual activities of "knowing" and "loving" with mathematical infinity. Accordingly, the law of resemblance enables us to deduce from the design of our created spirit that God is Uncreated Spirit and is implicitly offering us the Gift of Everlasting Friendship and Love.

It is because we humans possess spiritual power that we are able to recognize the world of "others," especially other spirit-bearing beings who are like ourselves but distinct from ourselves. We are also able to recognize the Divine "Other" and respond to God's Creative Love and Goodness with love and gratitude. Living beings who do not possess the power of spiritual self-transcendence are bound to the empirical surface of reality. They have an environment to interact with in stimulus-response fashion but not a universe. They cannot recognize and marvel at the vast universe as we humans do. They lack the power to recognize God as the Unconditional Being Who has called the universe into being, and they cannot seek to establish a personal relationship with God.

*It is the universal experience of normal and healthy humans that true friendship, which is always a love relationship, is the reality in life which makes us most happy and truly fulfilled.*

God, of course, is transpersonal, not literally personal, but this truth does not mean that God cannot know, love freely, and experience joy as we can. On the contrary, it means that God (Who is Absolute Spirit) is able to do all of these things in a manner that infinitely transcends our finite limitations. Our knowledge of the law of resemblance assures us that we are able to know and love in a spiritual way because God, our Ultimate Cause, is able to Know and Love in

a Transcendently Spiritual Way. It is reasonable and permissible for us, therefore, to employ "personal" analogies or symbols to help ourselves better understand our "personal" relationship with our Creator. This practice is legitimate because our reason knows from "experience" that all effects do dimly resemble or reveal something about their cause.

As spirit-bearing beings we have the power to freely decide whether or



not to enter into friendship with another person. The gift of friendship is something freely offered that the other person is free to accept or reject. Love that is not freely given is not love, and this recognition is what makes love so highly prized. No one has to love us. If they do so, they do so freely because they find us lovable. There is a telling verse in the Song of Songs (8:12) which illustrates this truth:

If a man offered all his great wealth  
To try and buy love,  
It would be scorned as utterly nothing.

It is the universal experience of normal and healthy humans that true friendship, which is always a love relationship, is the reality in life which makes us most happy and truly fulfilled. Everything in our experience indicates that learning to freely and responsibly enter into friendship with others, especially the Divine Other, is what we humans are chiefly designed to accomplish with our lives.

All the observations above about friendship are especially true of that most special friendship called marriage, which calls for total self-giving. In his essay on friendship (*De Amicitia*), Cicero tells us that because true friends have trustingly shared the contents of their minds and hearts with each other over the years, they eventually seem to share one mind and heart. In true marriage, however, husband and wife share not only their minds and hearts but also their bodies in an ecstatic physical union designed to deepen their mutual love and produce children. The law of resemblance assures us that, in addition, all sexual unions which are expressions of genuine love and commitment have metaphysical implications that point analogically to our ultimate destiny. The ecstatic union of sexual love was also designed to kindle our desire for everlasting union with God Who is Eternal Ecstasy.

Poets have long assured us that the ecstasy of committed love (not mere orgasm) is the most sublime experience we humans are capable of while sojourning on Earth. The mystics agree and assure us that such love is a Sacred Mystery which intimates to us analogically that we are destined to be caught up finally into the Sublime Embrace of God's Love and share unendingly in the rapture of God's Self-giving. If we have wise analogical eyes with which to see, we learn more about God's Love from the marriage bed than from all the abstract treatises ever written about it. The celibate scholar (and mystic) Bonaventure concurs:

If you wonder how all this can be . . . , ask grace,  
not theology . . . , the spouse, not the philosopher.<sup>21</sup>

The only experience in this life that can teach us more about God's Gracious Love is the "Foretaste" of God's Love given to us in Mystical Union with God. (By Mystical Union with God I mean the conscious certainty of God's Unmediated Presence uniting us with Itself and commu-



nicating the Ineffable Gift of Transcendent Love, Peace and Joy. God's Self-Gift is a Foretaste of what awaits us beyond death at the Great Marriage between Heaven and Earth.)

The law of resemblance implies that we humans are capable of love and friendship because God is Unconditional and Eternal Love. Our minds can recognize, therefore, that total self-giving (which we all yearn to receive from our beloved) is the measure of Love God is freely extending to all of us and hopes to receive in return. We would not be capable of total self-giving and committed love if God, our Ultimate Source, were not already total Self-giving and Committed Love in our regard.

God, of necessity, has taken the initiative and loves us first. This insight further indicates that the desire to share Love and Friendship with us is what motivated God to create the universe and endow us with human spirit. The homely proverb, accordingly, turns out to be profoundly true. Love truly does make the world go round.

I hope that by now the reader has recognized the wisdom of the early Franciscan conviction that we should look deep within ourselves where we truly possess a subtle and priceless awareness of God's Grounding Presence. We can then proceed reflectively to illuminate the implications of God's experienced Reality with the help of the law of resemblance. Doing so will deepen our capacity for love and friendship with God while we are on our way to the Great Marriage between Heaven and Earth.

## Footnotes

- 1 Tillich, P., "The Two Types of Philosophy of Religion," in *Theology of Culture*, ed. by R.C. Kimball (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957) 10-29.
- 2 Bonaventure, *The Mind's Journey to God*, trans. by L.S. Cunningham (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1979) 71. The words quoted by Bonaventure are taken from Augustine's *De Diversis Questionibus* LXXXIII, q. 51, n. 2. in *PL.*, 40,33. Because Bonaventure is the best known of the early Franciscans, I use his more readily available *Journey* to illustrate aspects of their approach to God.
- 3 Bonaventure, *Journey*, 73
- 4 This matter will be discussed at length in the last section below.
- 5 Tillich, P., *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951-1963) I, 100-105.
- 6 Tillich, *Systematic*, 204-210. Tillich thinks that the early Franciscans are mistaken when they go beyond positing their immediate experience of God's Unconditional Being and claim that they can "prove God's existence." He protests with Kierkegaard that only contingent beings that have come forth from "nonexistence" can correctly be said to "exist." Moreover, since the Enlightenment the word "prove" has meant "to demonstrate empirically." God's Transcendent Reality, therefore, obviously cannot be proven. It can, however, be verified experientially, and that is the truth that underlies the historically conditioned claim of the early Franciscans. For a clear explanation of how Bonaventure thought that God's Reality could be proven see Copelston, F., *A History of Philosophy* (Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1962) Vol. II, Pt. I, 280-287.
- 7 Copelston, *History*, Vol. II, Pt. I, 77-81.

- 8 Rorty, R., "Intuition" in the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by P. Edwards (New York: The Macmillan Company & The Free Press, 1967) Vol. 4, 204-212; Reese W.L., "Intuition" in *The Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion* (Amherst, N.Y., Humanity Books, 1996) 345-347.
- 9 Whitehead, A.N., *Process and Reality* (New York: Harper and Rowe, Publishers, 1960) 125, 184, 255-279. In the material cited, Whitehead vigorously rebuts David Hume's skepticism about the validity of our experience of causal connections.
- 10 Heidegger, M., "What is Metaphysics?," in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. by D.F. Krell (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993) 93-100.
- 11 Heidegger, "Metaphysics?," 102-106.
- 12 Whitehead concludes that the actual infinity of creative possibilities (eternal objects) in the primordial dimension of God's Nature is the ultimate reason why the universe never runs out of the ability to sustain the advance of creative novelty. See his *Process and Reality*, 521-533.
- 13 Bonaventure expresses essentially the same view in his *Journey*: "Because [Being-Itself] . . . is all powerful it is within and without all existence and thus it is 'the intelligible sphere whose center is everywhere and without limit.' " His quotation is from Alanus de Insulis, *Theologia Regularis*, regula 7.
- 14 Jung, C.G., *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, ed. by G. Adler, M. Fordham, and H. Read (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2nd ed., 1968) Vol. 12, 14. In the material cited, Jung goes on to comment that an archetype is an imprint on the psyche, and that an imprint implies an imprinter. With customary caution, however, he states that, because he is a practitioner of "scientific" psychology, it would not be appropriate for him to speculate about the "metaphysical" implications of this imprinter.
- 15 Heidegger, "Metaphysics?," 93-96.
- 16 Hemingway, E., "A Clean Well Lighted Place," in *The Oxford Book of American Short Stories*, ed. by Joyce Carol Oates (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) 296-300.
- 17 Bonaventure devotes a chapter to this matter in his *Journey*, 45-51.
- 18 Bonaventure, *Journey*, 49.
- 19 Defoe, D., *Robinson Crusoe* (New York: Scribners, 1983).
- 20 Bonaventure, *Journey*, 45.
- 21 Bonaventure, *Journey*, 88.

# **An Initial Study on the Personality Traits Among Pastoral Counseling Students in a Catholic, Franciscan College**

**JAMES A. HOUCK, Ph.D.**  
Neumann College • Aston, PA  
houckj@neumann.edu

## **Introduction**

**V**alue-free counseling has been one of the most basic themes reinforced in counseling education. It implies that professional counselors, as well as counselors-in-training, should not impose their personal values onto clients (Sullivan & Heng, 1993). In fact, clients should be encouraged to discover and develop their own values; i.e., a set of beliefs or philosophy about how they perceive themselves, others, their work ethics, their relationship with God, etc. It is, however, the counselor's role to assist clients in assessing which values promote healthy goals and personal growth, and which values do not. When we examine this theme more closely, we discover that value-free counseling is a misnomer. In fact, there are actually a myriad of values all throughout the helping relationship (Estadt, Blanchet, & Compton, 1991). These values range from the client's belief in the need for the assistance of a professional counselor to help with personal issues, to a counselor's way of being, understanding and intervening with clients. In other words, both client and counselor bring to the therapeutic relationship a wealth of personal experiences, educational levels, woundedness, joy, disappointments, successes, present and previous relationships, and accomplishments. All of these experiences have personal values associated with them. The integrity of counseling is upheld when the counselor maintains the focus of the therapeutic relationship on the issues the client presents. Still, this is not to say that what the counselor brings to the relationship should be ignored. Moreover, the most important aspect the counselor brings to this relationship is his/her presence (Estadt, Blanchette, & Compton, 1991). Presence is a counselor's way of being with clients that can be seen by the manner in which genuineness, empathy, warmth and concern for their clients' well-being are expressed (Rogers, 1995). Clients who feel especially vulnerable because of tragic experiences need this kind of presence, as well as the time and space to be able to tell their stories in a safe and caring therapeutic relationship. This kind of presence also communicates a basic pastoral and Franciscan approach to helping others.

As an Assistant Professor and Clinical Coordinator for the Pastoral Counseling Program at Neumann College, I wanted to investigate what type of presence our students bring to the therapeutic relationship, as identified by the *Revised NEO Personality Inventory* (Costa and McCrae, 1995), and also how well their personality traits fit into the overall

philosophy of the Pastoral Counseling Program and core values of Neumann's Franciscan education. Furthermore, I hoped to explore the implications for pastoral counseling faculty and staff in terms of increased awareness of the emotional and spiritual disposition of graduate students. Finally, I anticipated that information gained in this study would assist agency supervisors in honing the clinical skills of students with appropriate integration of counseling theory and practice.

## **Franciscan Core Values**

At Neumann College, there is a distinct set of core values, which are at the heart of its Catholic Franciscan Education. These values include Integrity, Service, Love for all Creation, Excellence, and Social Responsibility/Stewardship of Resources. The College's core values flow from and relate to the Franciscan Values for Sponsored Ministries identified by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, founders and sponsors of the college. The Sponsors challenge sponsored ministries to operationalize these values in a manner appropriate to the institution. The Franciscan Values for Sponsored Ministries are: Personhood in Community; Loving Service; Ongoing Conversion; Witness to Justice, Peace and Reconciliation; and Stewardship. The development and implementation of undergraduate and graduate curriculum is driven by these core values, described below:

### ***Personhood in Community***

- The point of connectedness between and among us is the belief in one father and creator-God, who is all-loving and all-good, and a conviction that Jesus is brother to us all.
- Each person has intrinsic dignity and worth, and shares a relationship as a sister or brother with all others.
- We are challenged to consider others as equals who are mutually supportive and engaged in the common mission of continuing the healing ministry of Jesus.
- We strive to build up morale and create a community environment based on respect and integrity.

### ***Loving Service***

- Service is motivated by love and compassion; love expresses itself in service.
- Service requires balance between the physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and relational aspects of our lives.
- Francis and Clare called on people to acknowledge God in everything and to be grateful, to adore God, and to serve God by serving others.
- We are committed to provide loving, compassionate and competent service.

### ***Ongoing Conversion***

- We are called to develop right relationships with ourselves, God, one another and creation.
- Striving to be attentive to God's presence in our lives, we recognize our spiritual dimension.
- Conversion often occurs through reflection on our lives and on how God is present through the ordinary people and events that form the tapestry of our lives.
- We are invited to a deeper awareness of our gifts and limitations and to a recognition of suffering in our lives and the lives of those we serve.

### ***Witness to Justice, Peace and Reconciliation***

- We find ways to act as peacemakers.
- We address disharmonies, tensions and fractures in relationships with efforts toward reconciliation.
- We seek to ensure that services are available to all, especially those who are poor and marginalized.

### ***Stewardship***

- We are encouraged to utilize and develop our individual human resources, talents and gifts, and to assist others to develop theirs appropriately.
- We try to respond holistically to employees and clients.
- It is incumbent on us to respect and care for funds, for equipment and for supplies . . . for not wasting materials, supplies or time.

## **Graduate Studies in Pastoral Counseling**

According to Pamela Cooper-White (2004), "pastoral counseling is a distinct form of counseling in which the full resources, theoretical knowledge, and clinical methods of secular psychology and psychotherapy are brought together with pastoral theological method and practice to provide a holistic approach to psychotherapy that honors and integrates the spiritual dimension of each patient's life and experiences" (pg. 131). The strength of Neumann College's Pastoral Counseling program is its commitment to teach students in every course how to integrate the knowledge of clinical psychology along with the pastoral, theological, and spiritual components. This practice of integration is also essential when students begin their clinical training during their third and fourth year of the program. In this process students often overlook the fact that just as pastoral counseling facilitates healing and growth in the lives of their clients, it also produces the same results in them. In other words, the personal transformation of the counselor-in-training occurs as a result of the

commitment to integration of the psychological, emotional, experiential, theological and spiritual components of the program. Recognizing that the counseling relationship transforms both counselor and client, for the purpose of this study I would like to propose a more concise definition of pastoral counseling: *Pastoral Counseling is a professional and personal integration of clinical psychology, along with religious, spiritual and theological issues. This integration results in a positive life-changing transformation in both the client and pastoral counselor, as they examine issues relevant to their lives.*

## **Participants**

This study involved thirty-eight students (males: N=7, females: N=31) who were enrolled in *PCC 720 Personality* in Neumann College's Pastoral Counseling Program over the past three years. This graduate course examines human development across the life-span from a psycho-social perspective, and explores the complexity of human personality as measured by the *Revised NEO Personality Inventory* (Costa and McCrae, 1985). To achieve a better understanding of this complexity, students in the course are required to complete the *Revised NEO PI*, and then examine the possible implications their distinct personality traits have on the therapeutic relationship. Students who volunteered for the study were asked to submit their *Revised NEO PI* scores and brief demographic information (gender, age, and religious affiliation) anonymously. Student ages ranged from 26-64 years. Religious affiliation was: Catholic (N=23), Episcopalian (N=5), Lutheran (N=5), Methodist (N=3), and Other (N=2). A simple *comparison of means* study was run using the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, v. 15.0*

## **Description of the Revised NEO Personality Inventory**

The *Revised NEO PI* was selected for this study because it provides a general description of normal personality relevant to clinical, educational, vocational, and substance abuse rehabilitation situations. It consists of 240 items, with a 5-point Likert-scale rating (*Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree*). Internal consistency coefficients range from .86-.95 for domain scales and from .56-.90 for facet scales. Normative scales that determine Very High, High, Average, Low and Very Low ratings for male and female populations were based on an initial sample of 1,000 participants. For a more detailed account of the *Revised NEO-PI*, see Piedmont (1998). The five domains (factors) measured by the *Revised NEO PI* provide a general description of personality, while the facet sub-scales allow more detailed analysis. These five factors and their facet scales are described on the following pages.

### **Neuroticism (N)**

*Assesses adjustment versus emotional stability*

- Identifies the amount of negative affect individuals experience
- Identifies individuals prone to psychological distress, unrealistic ideas, excessive cravings or urges, and maladaptive coping responses

Facets include: Anxiety, Hostility, Depression, Self-Consciousness, Impulsiveness, and Vulnerability

### **Extraversion (E)**

*Assesses the quality, energy and intensity of interpersonal relationships*

- Identifies individual's need for activity, stimulation and capacity for joy
- Contrasts sociable, active, person-oriented individuals with those who are more quiet and reserved

Facets include: Warmth, Gregariousness, Assertiveness, Activity, Excitement-Seeking, and Positive Emotions

### **Openness to Experience (O)**

*Assesses the pro-active seeking and appreciation of life*

- Identifies individual's toleration for and exploration of the unfamiliar
- Contrasts curious, original, untraditional and creative individuals with those who are more conventional

Facets: Fantasy, Aesthetics, Feelings, Actions, Ideas, Values

### **Agreeableness (A)**

*Assesses the quality of one's interpersonal orientation*

- Identifies individual's perception of people along a continuum from compassion to antagonism in thoughts, feelings and actions
- Contrasts soft-hearted, trusting, forgiving, straightforward qualities with cynical, rude, vengeful, ruthless and manipulative qualities

Facets: Trust, Modesty, Compliance, Altruism, Straightforwardness, Tender-Mindedness



### Conscientiousness (C)

*Assesses the individual's degree of organization, persistence, and motivation*

- Identifies individual's goal-directed behavior
- Contrasts individuals who perceive themselves as dependable and fastidious with individuals who may be more prone to being lackadaisical

Facets: Competence, Self-Discipline, Achievement-Striving, Dutifulness, Order, Deliberation

## Characteristics of Domain Mean Scores

A comparison of the mean scores of the participants studied across the five domains and thirty facet scales focused on three significant areas. First, how did the students' overall scores on the five major personality domains compare? Second, which personality facets did students in the sample share? Third, which personality facets were unique to each male and female group? To obtain more objective results regarding personality traits, I controlled for categories of *gender, age, and religious affiliation*.

Compared to the normative scores for their respective group, both male and female pastoral counseling students in Neumann's program scored High in the Openness and Agreeableness domains (see Table 1.1).

**Table 1.1**  
**Pastoral Counseling Students' Revised NEO-PI Domain Scores**

Gender		N	E	O	A	C
male	mean	68.43	110.57	133.43	138.86	115.29
	N	7	7	7	7	7
	SD	16.102	18.55	21.38	16.80	10.11
female	mean	90.97	103.94	125.97	141.65	122.61
	N	31	31	31	31	31
	SD	27.08	23.20	18.10	12.28	23.95

Generally speaking, people who score High on the Openness domain tend to be more empathic and tolerant of other people and their viewpoints. They proactively seek and appreciate their experiences, and have a willingness to explore the unknown or unfamiliar. People who score High on the Agreeableness domain are generally understood as being fundamentally altruistic and sympathetic of others. Agreeable people also have an optimistic view of human nature. In other words, they believe people are basically honest, decent, and trustworthy.

Where the male and female pastoral counseling students differed was in their scores on the Extraversion domain. The males in the study scored higher, compared to their normative population in this domain.

The females in the study scored average when compared to their population norm. High scorers tend to be sociable and energetic, prefer large groups and are more talkative, assertive and active than people who score lower.

### Characteristics of Facet-Scale Scores

Again, male and female pastoral counseling students scores were compared to their own normative population average scores within the individual personality facets of each domain. Table 2.1 indicates that significant differences in High and Average scores were apparent for pastoral counseling students in 11 out of 30 facets.

**Table 2.1**  
**Pastoral Counseling Students' Revised NEO-PI Facet Scores**

Personality Facets		N	Mean	SD
Warmth	male	7	25.14 (H)	3.72
	female	31	23.97 (A)	3.95
Fantasy	male	7	18.57 (A)	5.47
	female	31	20.03 (H)	5.06
Aesthetics	male	7	23.57 (H)	3.55
	female	31	21.45 (H)	4.92
Feelings	male	7	23.43 (H)	4.16
	female	31	23.61 (H)	4.01
Ideas	male	7	24.71 (H)	5.31
	female	31	20.65 (A)	4.44
Values	male	7	24.29 (H)	3.04
	female	31	23.42 (H)	3.63
Straightforwardness	male	7	23.86 (H)	2.80
	female	31	23.87 (A)	4.41
Altruism	male	7	25.29 (H)	3.30
	female	31	26.06 (H)	3.18
Compliance	male	7	21.29 (H)	6.10
	female	31	20.68 (A)	4.17
Modesty	male	7	22.00 (H)	5.35
	female	31	23.58 (H)	3.88
Tender-Mindedness	male	7	23.71 (H)	3.45
	female	31	24.13 (H)	3.28

Both male and female pastoral counseling students scored High in the facets of Tender-Mindedness, Modesty, Altruism, Values, Feelings and Aesthetics. These traits indicate people who tend to possess humility, empathy, concern for the welfare of others, and compassion toward those in need. Such individuals are also deeply moved by art and music, value emotions, and more intensely experience their own emotional states.

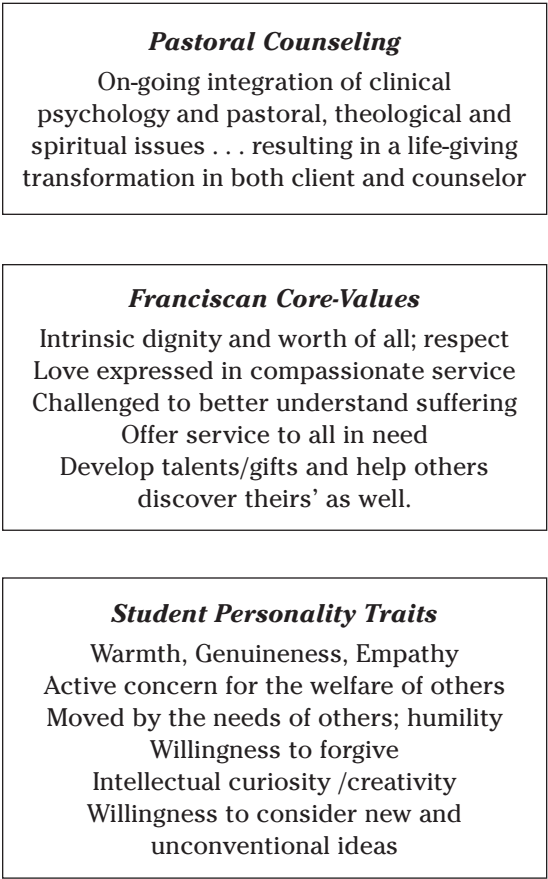
The male pastoral counseling students significantly differed from female pastoral counseling students in the traits of warmth, straightforwardness, ideas, and compliance. These scores indicate people who are affectionate, friendly, sincere, frank, and meek. They inhibit aggression, genuinely like people and easily form attachment to others; they possess an intellectual

curiosity, open-mindedness and willingness to consider new and unconventional ideas. Female pastoral counseling students significantly differed from male pastoral counseling students in the traits of fantasy. These scores indicate people who have a vivid imagination and an active fantasy life, which creates for them an interesting inner world. Such individuals also believe that imagination contributes to a rich and creative life.

**Discussion**

Data derived from this study confirm that the distinctive personality traits of the pastoral counseling students at Neumann are in harmony with both the Franciscan core-values of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia at Neumann College and the philosophy of the Pastoral Counseling program (see figure 3.1).

**Figure 3.1**



Why is such harmony evident? One such explanation might be that people who possess elevated personality traits such as warmth, empathy, a willingness to forgive, humility, etc., are more likely to be drawn toward a graduate counseling program that encourages personal and professional integration within a theological/spiritual context. Furthermore, as a distinct form of mental-health treatment, pastoral counseling embraces those in the community who have been physically, emotionally and spiritually wounded and offers them hope, healing, forgiveness, reconciliation and redemption, so that they may return to community as healed and redeemed individuals.

Despite the congruence of certain personality traits with the mission of the program, I would not recommend using the *Revised NEO PI*, as an admissions criteria, i.e., accepting only inquiring students who possess specific personality traits. I believe that practice would not be in accord with our Franciscan values. The pastoral counseling program respects the call of God in each student, and assists students in further discerning where, and for which population, they may use their counseling gifts. As mentioned above, the major emphasis of the pastoral counseling program is to promote within students the integration of personal and spiritual growth with counseling knowledge and therapeutic skills. The result of such integration is revealed in the students' awareness of their life-long learning through the unfolding of God's plan for them.

### **The Benefit of Pastoral Counseling Within the Mental Health Profession**

When students begin their clinical practicum experiences, they usually express concerns that they do not possess the requisite counseling knowledge, skills, and/or experience to offer their clients much help in their time of need. These concerns are quite natural and understandable given that pastoral counselors-in-training may have little or no previous clinical counseling experience. On the other hand, some students may have been working in helping professions for some time, and enroll in Neumann's pastoral counseling program to acquire professional training toward certification and state licensure. Yet, regardless of what students believe they lack when entering the clinical phase of their training, this study demonstrates that students possess the personality traits (e.g., warmth, empathy, humility, genuineness, willingness to forgive, etc.) that contribute to the most important component of the therapeutic relationship, namely a pastoral presence. Estadt (1991) explains that being "pastoral" in a counseling relationship means:

We communicate by our way of being: 'I care about you, and I will be present to you through this difficult time.'  
We hope the client will hear that message and an implicit deeper message: 'God cares about you, and is with you regardless of how alone and abandoned you must feel.' (p. 4)

Pastoral Counseling students who model this kind of presence in the therapeutic relationship, and who compassionately allow enough space for clients to tell their life stories, speak volumes to those who are shattered by life's cruelties (Dinkins, 2005). Accepting people where they are and recognizing the dignity and value of each person, not only exemplifies how Christ interacted with others, but also demonstrates how Pastoral Counseling students incorporate Neumann College's Franciscan core values in community mental health settings.

## **Implications for Clinical Education and Supervision**

Within the Pastoral Counseling program of Neumann College our students are exposed to diverse clinical settings that include, but are not limited to: substance abuse facilities, rehabilitation agencies, parish ministry, hospital and hospice settings, vocational and educational counseling centers, domestic violence shelters, correctional facilities, and community-based behavioral mental health counseling. For the pastoral counselor-in-training, learning to incorporate effective counseling skills with a pastoral presence requires on-going supervision to promote the acquisition of the appropriateness and timing of techniques. Counseling techniques can create "healing in the moment" for clients. Yet, the rule of thumb in counseling is that one can have all of the knowledge and skill of techniques (which are most often taught from textbooks), but not be effective unless the sacred trust is established between the counselor and client (Weiner, 1998). Nevertheless, when used appropriately, techniques can foster awareness of maladaptive perceptions and behavior, thus creating an opportunity for change. Counseling agency supervisors who recognize that students possess such a "pastoral presence," could make a more effective use of their supervision by teaching techniques that are in harmony with a pastoral approach to counseling. One such technique that works well with the pastoral presence is the "Empty-Chair" (Corey, 2005). This technique is often used with clients who have unresolved issues of loss and grief, by encouraging them to imagine a deceased loved-one sitting in an empty chair next to them. Through the gentle leading of the counselor, clients engage their loved-one in a two-way conversation, addressing unresolved feelings and perceptions of themselves and the other person. For clients struggling with faith issues that may have been challenged by loss, the pastoral counselor can be sensitive to this inner struggle because he/she faces similar issues in his/her spiritual journey.

## **Summary**

As identified by the *Revised NEO Personality Inventory* (Costa & McCrae, 1995), the personality traits of students (e.g., *warmth, genuineness, empathy, active concern for the welfare of others, being moved by the needs of others, humility, and a willingness to forgive*) in this study are

compatible with the overall philosophy of the Pastoral Counseling Program and Franciscan core values of Neumann College. From the beginning of their graduate education, students are trained to integrate personal experiences, knowledge of counseling theories and clinical skills. As noted, this commitment toward integration results in a personal and professional transformation in the students. Therefore, the three-fold combination of Neumann College's Franciscan Core Values, the training and philosophy of the Pastoral Counseling program, and the personality traits of the graduate students make for a very effective life-long learning process. Overall, the clients who benefit the most from this personal and professional integration are those whom society often considers unlovable, unreachable and untouchable. Our pastoral counseling students engage clients from all walks of life, committed to the belief that the transformational work of the Holy Spirit, is what truly sets apart Neumann College's Pastoral Counseling program from other programs that may simply offer some elective courses on religion and spirituality as a part of their counseling programs.

### **Limitations and Future Considerations**

This analysis of Neumann College's Pastoral Counseling students' personality traits was designed to be an initial study, and therefore, has a limited sample size. Nevertheless, the data provides a base-line from which to measure the types of students who may be attracted to the pastoral counseling program in the future. This study was limited specifically to students from a Catholic, Franciscan college. A possible future study might include a comparison of student personalities from non-religious based counseling programs, as well as students enrolled in a Jesuit, Augustinian, or Benedictine counseling program. Finally, as previously stated, I believe that the information gathered from the study should not be used as admission criteria to the program. Rather, the information should be used to enhance teaching and clinical experiences, evaluate curriculum, and offer specific pastoral/clinical integrative programs, seminars and workshops.

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# Francis of Assisi and Lev Vygotsky: Models for Teacher Education

JOSEPH GILLESPIE, Ed. D.  
Neumann College • Aston, PA  
gillespj@neumann.edu

“How is it different to be trained as a teacher at Neumann College? Is Neumann better than other colleges?” These questions, posed by a

*How is a student who participates in a teacher education program at a college or university steeped in the Franciscan theological and philosophical tradition different?*

Neumann College student, prompted this reflection. The obvious answer is, “Not better, but definitely different.” It is important to consider this difference. How is a student who participates in a teacher education program at a college or university steeped in the Franciscan theological and philosophical tradition different? In a Franciscan institution, there is a focus on the dignity of the individual; on respect; on Gospel values; and on service to all regardless of race, socio-economic status or religious belief.

Each person is important and irreplaceable in the Franciscan tradition. These concepts flow directly from the person and message of Francis of Assisi. Reflection on this future teacher’s questions led to a recognition of similarities between this medieval saint and one of the leading twentieth century educational constructivist theorists, Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934). This paper will compare Francis of Assisi and Lev Vygotsky and propose both men as role models for teacher education distinctively “in the Franciscan tradition.”

## The Context: Schools without “Soul”

The underlying challenge of the message of Francis for the future teacher highlights a consistent Franciscan theme — a loving respect for all of God’s creatures. “Completely absorbed in the love of God, blessed Francis perfectly discerned the goodness of God not only in his own soul, already adorned in the perfection of every virtue, but also in any creature whatever” (2MP 113, Armstrong, 2001, III, p. 362). It might be said that Francis was able to see beyond the surface into the soul, into the very essence of one’s being, into that which makes an individual who he or she is.

This ability of Francis and this reference to “soul” sends an important message to the educator trained at a school steeped in the Catholic, Franciscan Tradition. Kessler (2000) writes of the presence of soul in education. The acknowledgment of “soul” calls us to consider “not only what people say but the messages between the words — tones, gestures, the flicker of feelings across the face. Then we concentrate on what has heart

and meaning. The yearning, wonder, wisdom, fear and confusion of students become central to the curriculum” (Kessler, 2000, p. x). Indeed, the response of Francis to each person showed his connection to the sense of the soul. And it is this connection to the soul — that which gives personhood meaning — that is integral to the role of the educator.

However, despite the work of Howard Gardner who promotes the concept of “multiple intelligences” and the research of Mel Levine (2002) who challenges educators to understand that all children can succeed, classrooms are still places where students experience the pain or shame that results from having their weaknesses exposed. A vast diversity exists in today’s classrooms; it is the role of teachers to identify and respond to these differences. However, Levine (2002) contends that most schools cling to a “one-size-fits-all philosophy of education;” the result of this is that children struggle when “their learning patterns do not fit that of the school” (p. 23).

Palmer’s findings align themselves well with those of Gardner and Levine. Schools “separate head from heart” with the result being “minds that do not know how to feel and hearts that do not know how to think.” Schools “separate facts from feelings” with the result being “bloodless facts that make the world distant and remote and ignorant emotions that reduce truth to how one feels today.” Schools “separate theory from practice” with the result being “theories that have little to do with life and practice that is uninformed by understanding.” Schools “separate teaching and learning” with the result being “teachers who talk but do not listen and students who listen but do not talk” (Palmer, 1998, p. 66).

Such a view of schools is contrary to the life and message of Francis and invites, in fact demands, a different response. As we engage with the modern-day student we see our own soul, one with an underlying stream of goodness, integrity and compassion. We see the times we have been rejected. We come to acknowledge that we all need the healing presence of our God. We all need to be tended to before we are transformed. And after acknowledging these very real feelings the teacher sets upon the work of transformation. The teacher begins to wash away the loneliness and isolation, and breathe new life into the body and the soul. The teacher invites every student, especially the least attractive, to recognize that they are purposeful and useful and able to give life in return for the comfort and concern given to them. Both Francis of Assisi and Lev Vygotsky provide examples for recovering the “soul” of education.

### **Short Lives: Far-reaching Legacies**

Vygotsky has been described as “an inspiration, one from the past who tugs us into the future, one who generated enthusiasm and excitement in his continuing search for deeper understanding of the processes of teaching and learning” (Wink and Putney, 2002, p. xviii). Similarly, Francis of Assisi who lived in the 13th century continues to inspire women and

men of the 21st century. In the introduction to a recent book on Francis of Assisi, Cunningham (2004) recalls that in 1992 a special issue of *Time*

*Francis did not want his friars to become attached to learning or books or to become so overly involved in study that they had no time for prayer or people.*

magazine named Francis of Assisi as one of the 10 most inspirational figures in the second millennium. Cunningham claims that the “modern rediscovery of the Franciscan charism” (p. x) has had a profound impact on the third millennium, and in particular on the theology of creation and on a heightened awareness of the need to recognize and serve the poor.

Connections can be drawn between the life and charism of Francis and the teachings of Lev Vygotsky, connections that can be considered important to the educator who attends a school at which he or she receives a “Catholic education in the Franciscan tradition.” The influence that Francis exerted on the world is profound, especially when one considers that he lived a mere 44 years. Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist who lived only to the age of 38, seems to have had a similar influence on the fields of education and psychology. Before his early death, Vygotsky had published over 100 books and articles that have been translated into many languages. Although Francis wrote only about 150 pages total, his followers grew from a handful to more than 3,000 before his death and today number more than one million all over the world.

It is important to mention as this connection is drawn that Francis himself would most likely have balked at any association with a prominent educational theorist such as Vygotsky. Francis did not want his friars to become attached to learning or books or to become so overly involved in study that they had no time for prayer or people. In a letter dated sometime after the papal approval of the Franciscan Rule in November 1223, Francis wrote to the theologian and bishop, Anthony of Padua: “I am pleased that you teach sacred theology to the brothers providing that, as is contained in the Rule, you ‘do not extinguish the Spirit of prayer and holy devotion’ during study of this kind” (LtAnt, Armstrong, 1999, I, p. 107). It is also apparent that Francis placed great emphasis upon putting what was learned into practice, especially if this led one to live the life God intended, and if it led to a greater understanding of the kingdom of God. According to Cook (1989), in offering guidance for the authentic Franciscan life, the Friar and Scholar Bonaventure of Bagnoregio emphasized that what we learn from our experience can be considered superior to what we learn from books. In his Rule, Francis cautioned the brothers to “preach by their deeds” (ER XVII: 3, Armstrong, 1999, I, p.75). Moreover, De Aspurz (1989) speaks of the importance Francis placed on creativity, defined not as doing what others have not done or are not doing but as putting the “seal of one’s own personality on what one does, putting one’s whole self into the work, finding within one’s self the reason for one’s own

activities” (p. 215). The connections between Francis of Assisi and Lev Vygotsky are not only clear but are important for an individual who pursues his or her education at a college linked to the charism of Francis.

## A Constructivist Tradition

Vygotsky was one of the leading proponents of the constructivist theory. This theory is based on the premise that learning is a search for meaning and that by experiencing things and then reflecting on our experiences we construct our own understanding of the world in which we live. This is done through questioning, exploring, and assessing how what we have experienced connects to what we already know. The constructivist teacher encourages students to immerse themselves in the world around them and then to reflect on the experiences and to make meaning of them. The constructivist teacher guides the students through these experiences leading them from where they are to a new world of knowledge and understanding (<http://www.funderstanding.com/constructivism.cfm>). If Francis were to teach and preach today it can be argued that he would be considered a constructivist. As Carney (2005), recalling an assertion of Godet-Calogeras, writes about the ministry of the early Franciscans: “First they lived it; then they wrote about it” (p. 6). Experience preceded meaning-making.

*If Francis were to teach and preach today it can be argued that he would be considered a constructivist.*

Wink and Putney (2002) describe a student’s experience in a Vygotskian classroom: “the professor never spoke at us; he always spoke with us. He encouraged us to actively explore our thoughts and our language. As we talked and listened in his class, we didn’t realize we were using words to construct our thinking” (p. xxiii). The emphasis is on collaboration with others in the learning process; it is described as being an “active participant in one’s own learning as we talked with our friends and the professor” (p. xxiii). Vygotskian theory calls teachers to “provide models, prompts, sentence starters, coaching, and feedback when students begin new tasks” and as they grow in competence to “give less support and more opportunities for independent work.” One also comes to see that students are taught to “ask good questions and give helpful explanations” (Woolfolk, 2005, p. 57).

The *Letter to Brother Leo* provides an insight into the manner in which Francis “taught” his brothers, a method similar to that of Vygotsky. In the letter, Francis reminds Leo of conversations they had “on the road.” After encouraging Leo to think about all that they shared, Francis writes: “If, afterward, you need to come to me for counsel, I advise you thus: In whatever way it seems better to you to please the Lord God and to follow his footprint and poverty, do it with the blessing of the Lord God and my obedience. And if you need and want to come to me for the sake of your soul or for some consolation, Leo, come” (LtL 2-4, Armstrong, 1999, I, p.

122). Francis encouraged Leo to trust his own experiences and to assume responsibility for his own growth. He gave Leo permission to act and think independently.

## Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development

Perhaps the most significant contribution to the field of teaching and learning for which Vygotsky is known is his concept of the Zone of Proximal Development. Vygotsky described this zone as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.” It is the area in which the student “cannot solve the problem alone, but can be successful under the guidance of or in collaboration with others” (Woolfolk, 2005, p. 55). To Vygotsky, when individuals come to a concept that leaves them confused, puzzled, or unsure they can be led to the answer by interacting with others who can guide, prompt, and encourage them. It is an area ripe for learning, something Francis seemed to understand well.

The manner in which Vygotsky describes how learning takes place in this zone mirrors tales told about “Francis the teacher” and presents important considerations for one trained to teach in the Franciscan tradition. The tales describe how Francis encouraged the Franciscan movement in the world by igniting the fervor in the lives of those who chose first to follow.

One example from the many tales is that of Francis and Brother Leo in what is known as the tale of “Of Perfect Joy.” In response to Leo’s question, “What is perfect joy?” Francis did not respond directly. He allowed the answer to emerge from Leo himself. Francis seemed to understand the importance of reflecting on one’s own experiences and through this to construct meaning of the world in which we live. This Holy Man seemed to understand that through experience and reflection we come to understanding.

According to this story, St. Francis was walking along the road with Brother Leo. Francis made several statements to Leo, statements that told Leo what “perfect joy” was not.

Brother Leo, if it should happen that the Lesser Brothers in every land should give great example of holiness and get good edification, nonetheless write a note carefully that perfect Joy is not in that . . . O, Brother Leo, Little Lamb of God, even though a Lesser Brother may *speak with the tongue of an angel*, and knows the course of the stars and the power of the herbs, and all the treasures of the earth were revealed to him, and he knew the virtues of birds, *fish* and all animals and stones and waters, write that perfect joy is not in that. (LFl 8, Armstrong, 2001, III, 2000, pp. 579-580)

As this way of talking persisted Brother Leo finally asked, “Father, I ask you, for the sake of God, to tell me where perfect joy is.” It is here that Francis evokes an image for Leo. Through his story he enables Leo to see that if these two brothers knock at the door of Saint Mary of the Angels, “frozen from the cold and covered with mud and suffering from hunger” and are denied entrance and that they “patiently endure such insults and cruelty and abuses without becoming upset or complaining” and if they knock again and patiently endure beatings and insults, “thinking of the sufferings of the Blessed Christ,” then that is perfect joy (LFl 8, Armstrong, 2001, III, 2000, p. 580-581).

## **Transformation**

Vygotsky writes that “ultimately, education always denotes an alteration in inherited forms of behavior in the process of fostering new modes of reaction” (Vygotsky 1997, p. 7). He sees education as transformative. Ledoux (2002) affirms this view in stating, “Education must help to transform or change the person. Vygotsky seems to look at the total cultural focus of education. To change a milieu is to change people” (p. 30). These writings corroborate the perspective of Vygotsky as explained by Cole (1996), “The psychological nature of the educational process is entirely the same, our concerns must be focused only on the very mechanism involved in the formation of new reactions, whatever the ultimate benefits we hope to achieve by these reactions” (Vygotsky, as cited in Cole, 1996, p. 55).

Francis also preached to transform. While he believed in the innate goodness of every individual person, he wanted to encourage each one to be their best possible self as a reflection of God’s goodness. In this sense he did encourage transformation. His intent was to “change the person.” And his goal was to create reaction and through that reaction to create change.

Vygotsky believed strongly in engaging the imagination to promote transformation. He considered imagination to be “an active, conscious process of meaning-making . . . that forms a special unity with thinking and language that helps the person to make sense about the world” (Gajdamaschko, 2003, [http://ierg.net/seminars/vygotsky\\_2003.html](http://ierg.net/seminars/vygotsky_2003.html)). Vygotsky encouraged an individual to think of what might be possible. In working with students he would often create a story that would fit the context of what he wanted the students to learn and then would invite the students to stretch themselves to see the point. He saw stories as the only tool we have to encourage emotion. Stories, from Vygotsky’s perspective, helped people remember by making things more engaging. He believed that through stories we form images from words; these images are essential to convey meaning. Vygotsky’s goal was to transform understanding through the stories.

Francis, too, was a storyteller. Bodo (1988) a Franciscan priest, poet and author, tells us that we need not think of the stories Francis told as accurate. Rather, “these stories are real when read with spiritual eyes;

without those eyes, they seem mere fantasies, legends fabricated by the imagination" (Bodo, 1988, p. 14). The tales of Francis are significant, therefore, because they portray a man who also encouraged people to imagine. Bowers (2006) describes Francis as a "master image-maker, crafting scenes to be interpreted by those around him" (p. 30). This author further explains that Francis "did not tell people how to find God, he taught them, by example, how to see God in their lives and in the world around them. He gave them images, dramatic acts that they could imaginatively contemplate" (p. 30).

Francis respected others where they were and encouraged them to become more by inspiring them to think, to discern, to leave behind what they are and to uncover what they can be. Francis did this most clearly and significantly through example. As questions were raised he led others to discover the answers and let them see that often the answer was hidden deep within the self all the time. How like Vygotsky, a man who declared, "What the person can do in cooperation today he can do alone tomorrow. Therefore, the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it." (Hedgaard, 1990, p. 350).

## **Conclusion**

One who has been immersed in a teacher education program in a Catholic, Franciscan college or university recognizes and reverences the dignity of each individual. That person places a priority on respect for all. He/she understands and embraces Gospel values and reaches out in service, especially to the least and the marginalized. In addition, these future teachers come to see the importance of encouraging, guiding, modeling, and questioning. They observe carefully the world around them, in this case the world of their classroom. Like Vygotsky, they strive to put students in situations where they have to "reach to understand, but where support from others is also available. They allow students to learn from other students. They guide by explanations, demonstrations, and by opportunities for working with others" (Woolfolk, 2005, p. 56). In the spirit and after the example of Francis of Assisi, they are present and active for and with their students.

Wink and Putney (2002) write that Vygotsky "must have believed, 'What good is knowledge if you don't share it with others?'" (p. xix). So too, Francis of Assisi. As Delio (2002) writes, "The Franciscan intellectual tradition, therefore, cannot be confined to texts but rather must be placed in the context of life. It is a tradition that finds its deepest meaning in the human person and relationship to the world . . . Knowledge, therefore must be informed by love and expressed in action for knowledge is not an end in itself but a path to God" (p. 17). It is an understanding of and commitment to that very concept that distinguishes the student in a teacher education program at a college that identifies itself as Catholic in the Franciscan Tradition.



“How is it different to be trained as a teacher at a Franciscan college or university? Is it better?” Not better, but definitely different. Perhaps this comparison of Francis of Assisi with the constructivist theorist, Lev Vygotsky, gives some insight into that difference. Both Vygotsky, who died in 1934 at the age of 38, and Francis, who died in 1226 at the age of 44, continue to have significant influence, Vygotsky in the world of education and Francis in the world of theology and the church. Evoking imagination, using stories to teach lessons, presenting problems to be solved as opposed to information to be memorized, teaching one to think and re-think rather than only communicating information, using examples to ensure clarity and understanding, encouraging one to see beyond the “what is” to the “what could be,” these were the “pedagogical approaches” of both Vygotsky and Francis. Through these approaches each generated an enthusiasm and excitement for education and for life that continues to this day.

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# **Decentering Thomas, Recentering Francis: Teaching the Franciscan Philosophical Tradition for the 21st Century**

**LANCE BYRON RICHEY, PH. D.**  
**Cardinal Stritch University • Milwaukee, WI**  
**lbrichey@stritch.edu**

**O**n May 10, 2007, a session was organized at the 41st International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, MI under the title “Decentering Thomas, Recentering Francis: Teaching the Franciscan Philosophical Tradition for the 21st Century.” The call for papers “solicit[ed] presentations from teachers of medieval philosophy and theology focused on developing pedagogical strategies for teaching the Franciscan Philosophical Tradition (especially Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, and William Ockham) in an age when Aquinas is no longer considered the normative or supreme thinker in the medieval Christian philosophical tradition. Given the prominence of Aquinas for the Catholic philosophical tradition in particular, papers [were] especially welcome on topics which treat his thought as a counter-point to or a context for teaching Franciscan thinkers in a way that emphasizes their involvement in and centrality to the development of medieval Christian philosophy.” The goal was a session with papers focused both on pedagogical strategies and on larger theoretical and speculative issues surrounding the effective teaching of the Franciscan Philosophical Tradition, and the papers presented more than fulfilled these aims.

The presentation by Dr. Wendy Petersen Boring of Willamette University, entitled “St. Bonaventure’s ‘Doctrine of Illumination’: An Artifact of Modernity,” followed closely the theme of the session. Dr. Petersen Boring argued that the standard narrative of the history of medieval philosophy, according to which the Thomistic synthesis represents the triumph of a “scientific” philosophical method over the “mysticism” of the Augustinian-Bonaventurian tradition, is a fundamentally misleading account of the development of philosophy in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This narrative, she suggested, is really the result of a series of nineteenth- and twentieth-century debates over the nature and proper method of philosophy. In response to the Enlightenment’s denial of the possibility of any religious “knowledge” and scientific positivism’s rejection of traditional metaphysics, nineteenth-century ecclesial leaders and historians of medieval philosophy looked to Thomas Aquinas for a philosophical system that could meet contemporary scientific and epistemological standards. A side-effect of this original retrieval of Thomas was the denigration of the Franciscan tradition as unscientific and therefore non-philosophical, with the doctrine of illumination being relegated to playing the essentially mystical, murky foil character in the narratives designed to demonstrate the philosophical relevance of Thomas’ philoso-

phy. Subsequent efforts by Etienne Gilson and others in the first half of the twentieth century to defend a theory of illumination, while certainly an improvement over earlier dismissals of the Franciscan tradition, did so by resituating the old definition within a neo-Kantian philosophical context: illumination became the pre-thematic awareness of the eternal reasons which provided the foundations for metaphysics. As a result, Dr. Petersen Boring argued, these nineteenth- and twentieth-century narratives about illumination consistently obscured the real nature of the mid-thirteenth century texts, in particular the fact that both Aquinas and Bonaventure engaged in a shared epistemological enterprise of demonstrating compatibility between the Augustinian assertion that “we know all in the eternal reasons” with the Aristotelian maxim that “all knowledge proceeds from the senses.” Dr. Petersen Boring concluded that these traditional narratives about illumination, while they tell us a great deal about the evolution of modern philosophy, eclipse the real nature of Bonaventure’s texts and the Franciscan philosophical tradition in the thirteenth century.

Dr. John Mizzoni’s paper (in this issue of the *AFCU Journal*), “Intro Philosophy, Plato, and Bonaventure,” approached the problem of teaching Bonaventure from another direction. Rather than positioning his thought in relation to modern scientific worldviews, Dr. Mizzoni explored ways in which one of the most common texts for an Introduction to Philosophy course, the famous allegory of the cave in Book VII of Plato’s *Republic*, can provide a valuable foundation for teaching Bonaventure’s *The Journey of the Mind to God*. Both works describe the manner in which the mind can slowly rise up through successive levels from the sensible world of changeable individuals to the universals upon which they depend for their existence and from these to the ultimate principle of all reality. However, the differences in this journey clearly illustrate to students the transformation that the Greek philosophical tradition underwent through its encounter with Christianity. Plato identifies these universals as a realm of “forms” that somehow exist outside of the temporal order, but Bonaventure locates them in the mind of God as the ideas or exemplars according to which the created world was formed. Likewise, while Plato argues that the forms depend upon “the Good” for their existence, Bonaventure’s Christian metaphysics looks to the personal God of Genesis as the ultimate source of all created reality. When Bonaventure’s revision of the Platonic theory of forms is considered alongside his acceptance of Aristotelian hylomorphism, the complexity of his attitude towards the Greek tradition becomes clearer. His solution to these questions can serve to draw together the discussion of universals and particulars included in most introductory philosophy courses. A careful comparison of the difference and similarities between Plato and Bonaventure, Dr. Mizzoni suggested, provides an excellent method for introducing undergraduates to the Franciscan philosophical tradition as an integral part of, rather than an obscure appendix to, Western philosophy.

Finally, Dr. Oleg Bychkov of St. Bonaventure University spoke on “Franciscan Theological Aesthetics and the Twenty-First Century Liberal Arts Curriculum.” Dr. Bychkov pointed out that, while Thomas and much

*The centrality of beauty in the Franciscan tradition can, in turn, help shape and guide contemporary efforts to renew a Liberal Arts curriculum.*

of the Thomistic tradition has shown scant interest in aesthetics, Bonaventure and the Franciscan tradition have long placed the experience of beauty at the center of both their philosophical anthropology and theology. The centrality of beauty in the Franciscan tradition can, in turn, help shape and guide contemporary efforts to renew a Liberal Arts curriculum. It is hardly surprising that modern theologians such as Hans

Urs von Balthasar have looked to the Franciscan rather than Thomistic tradition in their attempts to construct a theological aesthetics, given Bonaventure’s emphasis on the existence of the forms and their importance for knowledge of reality. Unlike much of the Platonic tradition, though, Bonaventure and his Franciscan successors never allow the apprehension and contemplation of the form to obscure the importance of the individual that exemplifies it. Such a delicate balance of universality and particularity can provide a valuable framework for teaching the arts and humanities to undergraduates. An even more valuable resource for framing a Liberal Arts curriculum is Bonaventure’s insistence that the form of the incarnate Christ provides the key to understanding the human person who is created in the image and likeness of God. His incarnational approach to anthropology offers a holistic account of the person, in which the intellectual and embodied characteristics of our being are mediated through aesthetic experience. Moreover, through the incarnate Christ, the human and divine are commingled and mediated, such that human experience of God is made possible. Dr. Bychkov concluded that, in our practical and intellect-oriented world that stifles sensibility and the arts, it is very important for the twenty-first century curriculum to recover the traditional role of the artistic beauty and aesthetic experience as important parts of what it means to be human. Given this, the traditional Liberal Arts curriculum can benefit greatly by incorporating the incarnational and aesthetic elements of the Franciscan tradition.

*... in our practical and intellect-oriented world that stifles sensibility and the arts, it is very important for the twenty-first century curriculum to recover the traditional role of the artistic beauty and aesthetic experience as important parts of what it means to be human.*

A lively discussion, moderated by the session organizer, Dr. Lance Byron Richey, followed the presentations. There was broad agreement that the Franciscan tradition needs both a greater prominence in the curricula of our Franciscan colleges and universities and that the key to this is to continue creating new narratives to interpret the tradition, drawing new and pedagogically effective connections between the classics of the Franciscan tradition and the broader Western tradition, and retrieving the incarnational anthropology of the Franciscan tradition to better design programs which fulfill and integrate the fully embodied humanity of our students. Dr. Richey closed the session by congratulating the presenters on making an important contribution to these tasks.

*Presenters at the Kalamooza Conference may be reached by e-mail.*

Wendy Petersen Boring, Willamette University, Salem, OR  
wpeterse@willamette.edu

John Mizzoni, Neumann College, Aston, PA  
mizzonij@neumann.edu

Oleg Bychkov, St. Bonaventure University, Olean, NY  
obychkov@sbu.edu

# Introduction to Philosophy, Plato, and Bonaventure

JOHN MIZZONI, PH.D.

Neumann College • Aston, PA  
mizzonij@neumann.edu

The realm of the visible should be compared to the prison dwelling, and the fire inside it to the power of the sun. If you interpret the upward journey and the contemplation of things above as the upward journey of the soul to the intelligible realm, you will grasp what I surmise since you were keen to hear it . . . in the intelligible world the Form of the Good is the last to be seen, and with difficulty (Plato, 380 bce, p. 170).

And so they are without excuse who are unwilling to take notice of these things or to know, bless, and love God in them, since they are unwilling to be transported *out of darkness into the marvelous light* of God. *But thanks be to God through our Lord, Jesus Christ*, Who has transported us *out of darkness into his marvelous light*, since by these lights externally given, we are disposed to reenter the mirror of our mind, wherein shine forth divine things (Bonaventure, 1259, p. 17).

**M**etaphysics is that branch of philosophy that focuses on reality; thus, a metaphysical theory attempts to provide a picture or explanation about reality — ultimate reality. Plato's Allegory of the Cave, used to illustrate his theory of Forms, provides an intriguing picture of reality, rich in metaphysical content. In his writings, the Franciscan philosopher Bonaventure (1217-1274), also engages in metaphysics; he uses a theory known as *exemplarism* to provide an explanation, or picture, of ultimate reality. Just as Plato (427-347 bce) provides a vivid illustration of his theory, or hypothesis, about reality, with his Allegory of the Cave, which appears in his *Republic* (380 bce), Bonaventure provides a vivid illustration of *his* theory, or view, of reality in his work, *Journey of the Mind to God* (1259).

In introduction to philosophy courses and textbooks, we usually find a discussion of Plato's theory of Forms and his Allegory of the Cave. However, in these textbooks and courses there is no mention of Bonaventure's theory of exemplarism or his *Journey of the Mind to God*. Establishing linkages between the metaphysical theories of Plato and Bonaventure, allows individuals who teach introduction to philosophy and regularly discuss Plato, the Forms and the Cave, an opportunity to incorporate the Franciscan intellectual tradition into their course.

## Textbook Descriptions of Plato's Theory of Forms

Standard introduction to philosophy textbooks or anthologies include a characterization of Plato's theory of reality.<sup>1</sup> According to Plato's theory of reality (his metaphysics), all reality is composed of material things and immaterial Forms. To designate Plato's specialized meaning of the

word “Form,” the word is capitalized. A Form is an archetype; it provides the model for the material things that resemble it. With a nod to the Pythagorean influence on Plato’s thought, introductory authors frequently begin with the example of a right triangle. While there are many instances of a right triangle, there is only one Form of a right triangle. While there are many instances of cats, dogs, trees, chairs, beds, tables, shoes, etc., there is only one Form Cat, Dog, Tree, Chair, Bed, Table, Shoe, etc.

The many instances of right triangles, cats, dogs, etc., are perceived through the senses. But to recognize that there are Forms for each of the individual things we perceive around us, we cannot rely on our senses alone. We must use reason because the Forms are immaterial, non-physical, whereas the instances of the Forms that we perceive with our senses are material, physical objects.

Plato did not think we could grasp the full extent of reality by using empirical methods. In Plato’s dialogue *Phaedo*, for instance, the character Socrates describes how in his early years he had been attracted to the natural sciences, a pursuit well-known for its reliance on empirical methods. But Socrates ultimately found the natural sciences insufficient for providing satisfactory answers to the puzzles about reality that concerned him, puzzles about the immortality of the human soul, for instance (Plato, 1975, 96a5 ff). The immortality of the human soul is one of the metaphysical issues discussed in the *Phaedo*. While physical things change and go in and out of existence, Forms do not change; they are changeless. It follows that they are eternal.<sup>2</sup> In the *Phaedo*, Socrates argues that the same should be true of the human soul, for, after all, it too is nonphysical.

Philosophers have gleaned and pieced together Plato’s “theory of Forms” from several of his twenty-six dialogues. In some Platonic dialogues, the theory of Forms is presented as simply as the most reasonable hypothesis, given the puzzles we encounter in *not* admitting the existence of Forms. For instance, if we look at several geometrical shapes, how is it that we reach the conclusion that they are the same? For Plato, the most reasonable explanation is that we bring the concept “sameness” to our experience; we do not learn the concept “sameness” from the geometrical shapes we perceive with our senses. Even though several physical objects may not be the same, the concept sameness is never different, it is unchanging and perfect, eternally; it is a Form. This is also true of other concepts, such as equality, beauty, goodness, and justice.

## The Allegory of the Cave

In the Platonic dialogue *Republic*, Socrates admits that he does not have an intimate knowledge of goodness, but can offer his interlocutors a description of a derivative of the good, namely, the sun. Socrates proceeds to ask his interlocutors to imagine an underground cave in which prisoners have been chained sitting forward-facing since their birth. There is a fire burning in back of the prisoners. As objects are carried in back of them and sounds are made, shadows are thrown on the wall in front of them and



the prisoners hear the echoes of the movement happening behind them. When they have conversations with their fellow prisoners, they discuss the shadows in front of them as if they are real objects, not mere shadows. When one of the prisoners is released, he turns around to see the fire and his eyes are temporarily blinded. As he is led out of the cave, his vision is further impaired by the dark passageway. But as he is released into the broad daylight of the sun, he is again temporarily blinded and can only look down, or look at the shadows. Only with time does his eyesight adjust to the brightness around him, and the object that he can look at last of all is the sun.

Socrates explains the allegory: the difference between the shadows the prisoners see in the cave and the objects that the released prisoner sees in the daylight outside the cave is the difference for us between physical objects and Forms. Human beings are prisoners in the cave where we have been since birth. The physical objects all around us that we perceive with our five senses are really shadows, copies, of other realities (Forms), but we are largely ignorant of this fact. Like the prisoners, we often mistake appearance for reality. Escaping from the cave and making our way into the sunlight is achieving wisdom, attaining *enlightenment*.

Upon first being introduced to Plato's theory of Forms, my students see no point whatsoever in thinking that reality contains Forms and that every physical object is a copy or imitation of a Form. For them, if every physical thing is a copy of an eternally existing Form, then there could never be anything new invented by human beings, since everything humans invent is a copy of a pre-existing Form. Is there really a Form of a personal computer or an ipod that eternally existed before physical computers and ipods were invented?

In my experience, teaching Plato in a straightforward way — describing the Forms as metaphysical entities, and the theory as an answer to conceptual puzzles about types, tokens, and reference — leaves the student with an overly intellectual picture of Plato's theory of reality. Plato is a gifted literary writer and some of his literary images, such as the allegory of cave, are simply brilliant. But the literary artistry and imagery are still not enough to help the students “get it.” What helps them “get it,” and see Plato's vision, is when I place Plato's thought in a religious context and cast his theory of Forms in a theological framework (exactly what Bonaventure does). When I incorporate attributes of God into the discussion, it helps to resolve some questions students have with the Forms.

## **Bonaventure's Theory of Exemplarism**

Bonaventure does not use the term “Form,” but the term “exemplar.” Like Plato, he believes that the physical things we perceive with our senses are copies, images, of other realities, realities that are perfect and eternal. He calls those realities “exemplars.” Exemplarism is a central component of Bonaventure's metaphysics (Copleston, 1950, p. 258).

In the metaphysical theories of Plato and Bonaventure, Plato's Forms and Bonaventure's exemplars play a similar role in the physical world; they are the archetypes, categories, or original models that organize reality. The important difference between Plato's Forms and Bonaventure's exemplars is that Bonaventure holds that the exemplars are ideas from the mind of God, and in the mind of God (Delio, 2003, p. 28). While there are many cats, dogs, trees, chairs, beds, tables, shoes, etc., there is only one exemplar Cat, Dog, Tree, Chair, etc. As Copleston puts it: "[T]he doctrine of exemplarism reveals the world of creatures as standing to God in the relation of imitation to model, of *exemplatum* to *exemplar*" (Copleston, 1950, p. 291).

*When Bonaventure explains that these exemplars are actually the blueprint used by God to create reality, then we have a more satisfying explanation of why the world is arranged in the way it is — it is part of God's blueprint, or plan.*

Another author has described the difference in the following way: "Bonaventure was convinced that Plato erred when he put the Ideas in a world apart from God because it is necessary that these Ideas exist in the divine intellect. It would be more correct to say that these ideas or patterns are in God . . ." (Hoebing 2002, p. 275). Although this is surely an important difference between Plato's and Bonaventure's metaphysical theories, the very structures of the theories are so similar that I regard Bonaventure's exemplarism as a theistic version of Plato's theory of Forms.

When Bonaventure ties together Plato's theory of Forms with a theistic view of reality, he puts Forms — or exemplars — on a different footing. Whereas Plato says that Forms are eternal, perfect, unchanging, and immaterial, Bonaventure believes that God is eternal, perfect, unchanging, and immaterial. In addition, for Bonaventure, God is the *creator*, including the creator of the exemplars. The exemplars derive from God. For Bonaventure, the world proceeds from God, is created out of nothing, and is wholly dependent on God (Copleston, 1950, p. 291). In contrast, if we believe in a strictly Platonic worldview, then we have to accept the existence of Forms as simply brute facts about how reality is arranged. When Bonaventure explains that these exemplars are actually the blueprint used by God to create reality, then we have a more satisfying explanation of why the world is arranged in the way it is — it is part of God's blueprint, or plan. God, by using a multiplicity of ideas (exemplars), produces the created realm.<sup>3</sup>

From a theistic perspective, another interesting aspect of Plato's theory of Forms has to do with how the Forms are viewed as a solution to puzzles about language. For Plato, our words are ultimately derived from the Forms: again, think of the example of cat, tree, dog, etc. In some sense, these terms have always existed. The analogue of this in Bonaventure's theistic version is that the exemplars are in the Word of God (Delio, 2003,

p. 28). The divine idea is the Word of God (Hayes, 2002a, pp. 227-228). We can actually place both Bonaventure and Plato in an even older tradition. In the Hebrew Scriptures, which pre-date Plato, Yahweh creates through His word (Bratton 2002, p. 52). And the Egyptian god, Ptah, also creates by his word (Bratton, 2002, p. 64). One writer on eco-theology, Susan Power Bratton (2002), nicely sums up an ancient conception of how God's ideas relate to the framework of the created world:

. . . the wisdom literature . . . presents wisdom as preexisting before the rest of creation and as immanent in the world. God gave an order to the divine works at the very beginning and this order is separate from the activities of men. Unlike the modern who considers wisdom and knowledge to be solely the product of human endeavor, the scholars who wrote the wisdom literature considered wisdom something created by God which existed in creation, whether humans were there or not . . . If someone cares to pursue it, therefore, wisdom, the key not only to order in the universe but also the key to correct behavior or proper action before God, is available. (p. 59)

The notion of the Word of God is of special importance for Christians who believe the Word becomes flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. In cosmic Christology, the reality of a being that is begotten from the original exemplar occupies the very center of God and is part and parcel of the very structure of reality. From the perspective of exemplarism, this view would make sense since the eternal exemplars are the blueprint for reality. A cosmic Christology views the blueprint as having the unmistakable watermark of Christ, since Christ is the Word. Thus, the Christian view that the Word became flesh, leads to a cosmic Christology. "It is significant for Bonaventure," writes Zachary Hayes (2002a), "that the Christian faith proclaims not simply that God became flesh, but the Word became flesh" (p. 239). For Bonaventure, reality is a book "first written in the consciousness of God in the form of the divine Word" (Hayes, 2002b, p. 255). The following passage from Bonaventure's *Breviloquium* is extremely helpful in understanding his view of reality:

. . . the universe is like a book reflecting, representing, and describing its Maker, the Trinity, at three different levels of expression: as a trace, an image, and a likeness. The aspect of trace is found in every creature; the aspect of image, in the intellectual creatures or rational spirits; the aspect of likeness, only in those who are God-conformed. Through these successive levels, comparable to the rungs of a ladder, the human mind is designed to ascend gradually to the supreme Principle who is God. (Bonaventure, 1257, p. 104)

Bonaventure further elaborates the human mind's ascension to successive levels of reality in his *Journey of the Mind to God* (1259). Just as

Plato provides a vivid illustration of his view of reality with his Allegory of the Cave, Bonaventure provides a vivid illustration of his view of reality in *Journey of the Mind to God*. This Bonaventurian writing provides philosophy instructors with a perfect entrance into the Franciscan intellectual tradition.

## **Journey of the Mind to God**

In the short work *Journey of the Mind to God* (1259) Bonaventure describes six progressive stages of illumination, starting with sensible reality as perceived by the senses, and eventually reaching the supreme good, God. “[J]ust as God created the whole world in six days and on the seventh day rested, so man, the microcosm,” Bonaventure (1259) writes, “is led in a most ordered way, through six progressive steps of enlightenment, to the quiet of contemplation” (p. 6). In the following passage Bonaventure sums up the important distinction between the physical world of creation and the nonphysical world; in it, we can see the very same kind of division between levels of reality that Plato emphasizes in his theory of Forms:

And among things, some are vestiges, others, images; some corporeal, others, spiritual; some temporal, others, everlasting; some things are outside us, and some within. In order to arrive at the consideration of the First Principle, which is the most spiritual being and eternal and above us, we must pass through vestiges which are corporeal and temporal and outside us. (1259, p.5)

Each chapter of the *Journey* is quite brief. The first two chapters of the work describe the steps to God that begin by considering God through God’s traces, or vestiges, in the universe and the visible world (in Plato’s terms, this would be like the prisoners looking at the shadows at the cave wall in front of them). In the first stage of human understanding, we pick up only traces or vestiges of God with our five senses. By only being concerned with what is provided to our senses, however, we prevent ourselves from achieving a deeper understanding of reality. For, “he who investigates . . . sees that some things are merely corporeal,” while “God [is] purely spiritual, incorruptible, and immutable” (Bonaventure, 1259, p. 9). The person who investigates is the person who leaves the comfort and familiarity of the cave, the place where one has been born and raised. But Bonaventure’s is a Christian journey, for as he says: “we shall also be Christians passing over with Christ *from this world to the Father*” (1259, p. 8).

Bonaventure could not agree with a theory like Plato’s that countenances eternal and unchanging entities (Forms) that somehow exist independently of God. “Nothing is absolutely immutable and unlimited in time and space unless it is eternal, and everything that is eternal is either God or in God,” writes Bonaventure (1259, p. 14).

As Plato uses the example of number to initially make the case for the existence of Forms, in like manner, Bonaventure uses numbers to initially make the case for the existence of exemplars. Numerical exemplars are the first and most easily grasped exemplars. Again, Bonaventure is careful to point out that numerical exemplars are in the mind of God. Bonaventure writes:

[A]ll things are subject to number. Hence, number is the principal exemplar in the mind of the Creator, and in things, the principal vestige leading to Wisdom. And since number is most evident to all and very close to God, it leads us, by its sevenfold distinction, very close to Him; it makes Him known in all bodily and visible things when we apprehend numerical things, when we delight in numerical proportions. (1259, p. 16)

But not only are the numbers and proportions we converse with through our senses tokens of numerical exemplars, all *creatures* too, are token copies of exemplars in the mind of God:

For creatures are shadows, echoes, and pictures of that first, most powerful, most wise, and most perfect Principle, of that first eternal Source, Light, Fullness, of that first efficient, exemplary and ordering Art. They are the vestiges, images, and displays presented to us for the contuition of God . . . These creatures are exemplars. (1259, p. 16)

The third and fourth chapters describe the steps to God through considering God's image imprinted on the human mind. (In Plato's terms, this would be like becoming aware of the Forms as existing in our minds independently of the sensible objects we experience). Bonaventure describes how "the soul itself is an image of God," and the powers of the soul, memory, intelligence, will, are images of the triune God (1259, p. 19). The impediment to this level of understanding is over-reliance on our senses: "completely immersed in things of sense, the soul cannot re-enter into itself as the image of God" (1259, p. 23). Bonaventure claims that the Scriptures and theological virtues help one to become open to achieve this level of understanding.

The fifth chapter describes the steps to God through considering God as *being* (in Plato's terms, this would be like considering the very general Form Being, of which everything in creation partakes). For Bonaventure, contemplating Being itself inevitably leads to a contemplation of God, for the exemplar "being," after all, is an idea in the mind of God. Bonaventure pursues a similar theme in the sixth chapter, but there the focus is on the Good itself. He considers God as *the good* and maintains that no higher good can be thought of but the good itself.<sup>4</sup> (In Plato's terms, this would be like considering the most important Form, Good).

The seventh and final chapter of the journey describes the rest we experience when we transport our mind entirely over to contemplating

God: we bask in the contemplative light of God's presence. In this chapter Bonaventure describes how Francis of Assisi, though commonly a model of Christian moral virtue, should also be considered a model of contemplation. Bonaventure explains how a "six-winged Seraph fastened to a cross" appeared to Francis when Francis was in contemplation atop Mount Alverno, the place where Bonaventure was inspired to write the *Journey of the Mind to God* (1259, p. 38).

It is interesting that Bonaventure seeks to emphasize Francis's contemplative pursuits in addition to his moral pursuits. But it is entirely appropriate, since prayer is a form of contemplation, and being deep in prayer is tantamount to being deep in contemplation. Although in the modern mind, the contemplative philosophical life is often thought to be unworldly and not concerned with action, there is a different story to be told about the medieval and ancient conception of philosophy. Pierre Hadot, in his study of ancient philosophy, finds that in every ancient Greek school of philosophy, whether Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic, Epicurean, even Cynical and Skeptical, *philosophy* meant *the loving and seeking of wisdom*, and that wisdom was meant to bring peace to the individual who pursued it (Hadot, 2002). Each school promoted a certain way of life and a series of exercises that were designed to bring peace and wisdom to the philosophical practitioner (Hadot, 2002). When philosophy is understood as a way of life that seeks after peace and wisdom, then it makes sense that moral and speculative philosophy could combine in a given person, in this case, Francis of Assisi.<sup>5</sup>

Francis, having been signed by the Seraph with the sign of the Cross, returns to serve the lepers. The prisoner in the Allegory of the Cave who is led out of the cave, returns to serve. After someone makes it out of the cave, that person has a duty to go back down into the cave and care for, guard and educate those who remain in the cave (Plato, 380 bce, p. 172). This is a significant aspect of the allegory, and it follows from Plato's ethical theory. In philosophical terms, it means that philosophers have a duty to share their wisdom. In religious terms, it means that the religiously enlightened have a duty to share their spiritual insights; when one has been divinely inspired, one should spread the good news. Thus, although the allegory of the cave and the journey of the mind to God may seem overly speculative, they also have a moral dimension. Although at times we retreat from the world, leave the cave, and take time for prayer and contemplation, both the Platonic and Franciscan traditions entreat us to go back to the cave,

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Many interesting similarities between Plato's Allegory of the Cave and Bonaventure's *Journey of the Mind to God* have emerged so far, but there are more. Light, for instance, is a theme shared by both Bonaventure's *Journey* and Plato's allegory. As Copleston (1950) describes it, "the light-theme, so dear to the Augustinian School and going back to Plotinus and to Plato's comparison of the Idea of the Good with the sun, finds a prominent place in the philosophy of St. Bonaventure" (p. 274). Light brings us to classical theories of knowledge. The prisoners in the cave live in ignorance, while those who escape the cave have true knowledge and wisdom because they understand the true nature of reality. Bonaventure's epistemological theory is the doctrine of illumination: "[T]he doctrine of illumination traces the stages of the soul's return to God by way of contemplation of sensible creatures, of itself and finally of Perfect Being" (Copleston, 1950, p. 291). An important aspect of the doctrine is that divine action is present in order for the illumination to take place (Copleston, 1950, p. 291).

### **Other introductory philosophy ideas and arguments addressed in Bonaventure's thought**

There is other standard introduction to philosophy fare to be found in Bonaventure's writings.<sup>6</sup> Many introductory philosophy books include arguments that seek to prove the existence of God. One of these arguments is Anselm's proof for the existence of God. In chapter six of the *Journey* when Bonaventure is reflecting on the nature of the good, Bonaventure gives a version of the ontological argument for the existence of God.

Behold, therefore, and observe that the highest good is unqualifiedly that than which no greater can be thought. And this good is such that it cannot rightly be thought of as non-existing, since to exist is absolutely better than not to exist. (1259, p. 33)

This passage also provides a good opportunity to highlight something distinctive about the Franciscan intellectual tradition. It is a tradition that "finds its core and its foundation in the doctrine on the Triune God" (Osborne, 2003, p. 55). Immediately following his statement of the ontological argument, Bonaventure adds the following argument.

And this good exists in such a way that it cannot rightly be thought of unless it is thought of as triune and one. For good is said to be self-diffusive, and therefore the highest good is most self-diffusive. (1259, p. 33)

In Bonaventure's thought, there are also a few concepts that are commonly incorporated into a discussion of early modern philosophy. When Descartes (1641) discusses "the idea of God" that he has in his mind, he is echoing something from an earlier era (p. 32). The view that the idea



of God is in the mind, albeit imperfectly — a view held by Bonaventure and some other medievals — resembles Descartes' approach (Copleston, 1950, p. 256). There is a question, though, whether Bonaventure construes the soul as originally a *tabula rasa*. Copleston (1950), in describing Bonaventure's thought, claims that Bonaventure "admits the soul, in regard to knowledge of such objects, is originally a *tabula rasa*, and he has no place for innate ideas" (p. 284). Delio (2001), on the other hand, claims Bonaventure "did not believe that the soul is a *tabula rasa* waiting to receive information through the senses so that it could translate it into bits of knowledge" (p. 103). Copleston (1950) admits though, that in one sense the idea of God is "innate" for Bonaventure in that human beings are oriented toward God in desire and will and do not need the external sensible world to become aware of this orientation (p. 285).

At any rate, with regard to introduction to philosophy pedagogy, Bonaventure's use of the ontological argument, and his discussion of ideas, the mind, and knowledge, make his work relevant not only to a philosophical survey of the medieval period, but to themes in early modern philosophy, such as empiricism, the mind as a *tabula rasa*, rationalism, the doctrine of innate ideas, and Descartes' arguments for God's existence.

## Conclusion

The fact that there are close connections between Plato and Bonaventure links Bonaventure to much of western philosophy. As Whitehead (1929) remarked, "The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato" (p. 53).

Based on my experience, Bonaventure's theory of exemplarism and his *Journey of the Mind to God* are helpful in attempting to incorporate the Franciscan intellectual tradition into an introduction to philosophy course. Bonaventure's theory of exemplarism helps students grasp Plato's view more easily. Like Plato's vivid illustration of reality in the Allegory of the Cave, Bonaventure's *Journey of the Mind to God*, provides a metaphor of his view of reality. When teaching introductory philosophy, I have found it helpful to parallel Bonaventure's description of six progressive stages of illumination, starting with reality as perceived by the senses, and eventually reaching God, the supreme good, with Plato's description of how prisoners trapped in an underground cave can escape into the light of day and eventually perceive the sun. Bonaventure is a thinker who integrates faith and reason, and his contributions to Catholic philosophy afford many creative and dynamic ways to incorporate the Franciscan intellectual tradition into an introductory philosophy course.<sup>7</sup>

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## Footnotes

- 1 (Fieser & Lillegard 2002: 71-87; Fieser & Lillegard 2005: 334-7; Hallman 2003: 144-48; Kessler 2004: 376-84; Melchert 2007: 122-36; Moore & Bruder 2005: 37-61; Reeve 2003: 22-28; Solomon 2005: 69-81; Velasquez 2005: 146-52; Washburn 2003: 57-64).
- 2 The notion of changeless being reveals Parmenides' influence on Plato; while the notion of reality as in flux was emphasized by Plato's other influence, Heraclitus.
- 3 A more fine-grained account of how God produces the created realm by using a multiplicity of ideas (exemplars) is, according to Zachary Hayes, found in Bonaventure's borrowing of Augustine's doctrine of seminal reasons. "Rather than posit an immediate, direct action of God for the creation of each new form in the course of the development of created beings," writes Hayes, "Bonaventure posited the presence of forms as virtual realities in the matter from which individual beings are constituted. Thus, material reality is not inert and passive but is full of active powers virtually present from the beginning and educed into an actual diversity of beings in the course of history through the agency of specific creatures. All forms with the exception of the human soul are co-created with matter and have resided in matter virtually since the creation of the world" (Hayes, 2002a, pp. 226-7).
- 4 Although, in the *Hexameron*, Bonaventure says that Being is actually higher than Good.
- 5 In "Martin Luther King, Jr., St. Francis, and Philosophy," (forthcoming) I make the case that if we expand our conception of philosophy to include philosophy "as a way of life," then we can consider St. Francis a philosopher.
- 6 Although in this paper I have been focusing on Bonaventure and Plato, there are aspects of Aristotelian metaphysics that Bonaventure incorporates into his thought. He regularly employs Aristotle's fourfold distinction between causes, and refers to Aristotle's concept of the unmoved mover. He accepts Aristotle's hylomorphism of all creatures (Copleston, 1950, p. 271; Delio, 2003, p. 25). He follows Aristotle in maintaining that the human soul is the form of the body (Copleston, 1950, p. 279). But with regard to the human soul, Bonaventure is more Platonic and Augustinian, since he insists that the human soul is a spiritual substance, composed of spiritual form and spiritual matter (Copleston, 1950, p. 279). Even though Bonaventure uses aspects of Aristotelian metaphysics, Bonaventure traces Aristotle's errors to Aristotle's rejection of Plato's theory of Forms (Copleston, 1950, pp. 259-60). Aristotle denies both exemplarism and the doctrine of illumination (Copleston, 1950, p. 289). In terms of pedagogy for an introduction to philosophy course, the fact that Bonaventure outlines the errors of Aristotle by tracing them to Aristotle's rejection of Plato's theory of Forms provides a way of introducing Bonaventure's thought into a discussion of the differences between Plato and Aristotle. If one is discussing Plato's theory of Forms and Aristotle's rejection of it, then one can quite easily integrate Bonaventure's assessment of the debate into the discussion.
- 7 A shorter version of this paper was presented at the Forty-Second International Congress on Medieval Studies, held by The Medieval Institute at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI, May 10, 2007.

## **Franciscan Values at Lourdes College: From Conjecture to Consensus**

**BARBARA VANO, OSF**

**bvano@lourdes.edu**

**ANN CARMEN BARONE, OSF**

**acarmen@lourdes.edu**

**Lourdes College • Sylvania, OH**

**C**ould you possibly develop a concise statement of our Franciscan values, one that expresses our identity and mission, a statement that is clear and usable (we don't want to be printing this on little prayer cards that we'll find in the back of a closet in 10 years!), using a process that engages a solid cross-section of the members of the college community so that all take ownership of the statement? Oh, did we mention that we need it in six weeks?

Such was the challenge presented to the Lourdes College Office of Mission and Ministry in early February 2005. In the previous five years Lourdes had inaugurated its first lay president and had engaged in numerous discussions that focused on diversifying our non-traditional student base to include a larger percentage of full-time, traditional students; expanded our offerings to include graduate programs; and raised the possibility of transitioning from a commuter campus to one that included residential students. The college was in the midst of a branding process that would form the foundation of a new marketing campaign. One theme kept recurring in these conversations: We could not market the college to the broader Toledo community unless we could clearly articulate our identity, mission, and values. And most of us were aware that we could not express our values unless we had a clear sense of our history and our mission.

Never was there a better time to step back and ask, "What is essential to our identity?" and "Are we all on the same page?" In many ways, this young institution (founded in 1958) was experiencing what I like to call the "First Generation" syndrome. Like countless American-born children of immigrant parents the time had come to take ownership of our identity and traditions and make a commitment to continuing them because, as many said, "Sister isn't here to tell us what to do!" This was definitely a moment for education and dialogue.

### **The Process**

An initial invitation went out to the faculty and staff for a brief discussion (four different sessions were offered). A variety of resources and conversation starters were presented to the groups including a list of values and common themes that had been identified in an AFCU survey of college mission statements; a list of web sites that provided an introduction to the life of Francis and the Franciscan family; a brief summary of *the*

four Franciscan values (conversion, contemplation, poverty, and minority); the mission statements of the Sisters of St. Francis, Lourdes College, and the Franciscan Center (an entity of the college); the college vision statement from our current strategic plan; and an article by William Short entitled “A Franciscan Language for the 21st Century.” With all of this food for thought, the 29 participants who responded held lively conversations in which we attempted to gauge the campus’s familiarity with our Franciscan spirit and values, people’s knowledge about the person of Francis of Assisi and our own Sylvania

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Franciscan heritage, and each individual’s awareness of College programs and activities. The theme for the discussions was: *Take a fresh look at our being Franciscan . . . being Lourdes*. Wherever the conversations wandered, the underlying question always remained: “How can we re-focus our Franciscan imagination and mission?” We soon found that we had overestimated what we could talk about in an hour!

One comment surfaced continuously, “We need to talk about this on a college-wide level.” Since March 1st had already been scheduled as an in-service day for all faculty and staff, half of the day was dedicated to the topic. An ice-breaker activity asked people to identify the location of various artworks and distinctive architecture on campus. (As fate would have it, the prize was won by a long-standing staff member, NOT by any of the Sisters!) The group then viewed a portion of a DVD by DeWitt Jones entitled *Everyday Creativity*. A photographer for *National Geographic*, Mr. Jones’s message focuses on seeing the world with new eyes, being open to the possibilities that surround you, and recognizing that if you look for goodness and beauty in the world you *will* see it. This was followed by a whirlwind introduction to Francis and our Franciscan (and Sylvania Franciscan) tradition. Sisters were invited to share their reflections on what the college meant to them personally as a sponsored ministry. A synthesis of the earlier campus conversations was shared with the group and a list of focused questions was presented for small group discussion.

The conversation was animated and, for once, people weren’t looking at their watches wondering when the meeting would end. For veteran faculty and staff members the gathering was re-energizing. For new members of the college community, the day provided an opportunity to ask questions and, in many cases for the first time, begin to see the college as something more than just a place to work. Weeks later, employees could be seen walking around campus looking *up* and *around* as they noted new “landmarks” and the Mission and Ministry staff received several emails with questions about our history. Everyone left with food for thought, a glossary of terms, and a brief bibliography for optional further reading. They also left with

an assignment: Identify three or four words that express our institution's identity and character.

The work continued with renewed energy. The campus community received summaries of the responses from the March meeting and focus groups met once again in early April. Participants were given a final opportunity to identify key phrases. This time, however, the discussion moved to a new level as people raised a key question: What do we need to help sustain the current level of interest and awareness? Enough suggestions were raised to keep an Office of Mission and Ministry busy for the next ten years!

The discussions didn't end with faculty and staff. The Vice President for Mission and Ministry took the conversation to a meeting of the Board of Trustees, to the Administrative Council, and to the Student Services Staff. The challenge of bringing the dialogue to a commuter student population was met with the assistance of a Business Marketing class who sampled a portion of the student body. As the list of "values" grew, each conversation included the *caveat* that we are not claiming to be the sole keeper of these values. They are universal. The uniqueness comes in the way in which we configure them. One faculty member raised the marvelous analogy that most of our grandmothers had a unique recipe for spaghetti sauce. They all used basically the same ingredients, but the quantity and the process gave each one its distinctive taste and aroma.

### **Sifting and Refining the Feedback**

We asked for words and we got them. We had pages of qualities and values that were evident in the minds of our college community. Although the sorting process seemed daunting at first, the descriptors fell into five broad categories:

- Growth/ transformation/ seekers of truth/ nurturing the potential in others
- Respect/ reverence/ diversity/ tolerance
- Service/ outreach/ generosity/ gratitude
- Relationships/ community/ hospitality/ connectedness/ supportive
- Reflection/ awareness/ appreciation of beauty

Next came the seemingly elusive task of combining these results into a concise and meaningful statement. The VP for Mission and Ministry, the Campus Minister, a veteran faculty member, and a member of the Board of Trustees gathered for a brainstorming session. No one could miss the fact that the energy surrounding our campus conversations had been generated by our strong bond of community. A bit more word-smithing gave us the statement:

*Lourdes College — A Community of Learning*  
*A Community of Reverence*  
*A Community of Service*

Nothing earth-shattering, nothing that would win a Pulitzer Prize, but it seemed to capture the essence of our conversations. The statement was “piloted” with administration, the Student Government Association, and senior and new faculty and staff from a cross-section of the college. It was officially unveiled in the Fall of 2005, although the results of the campus conversations were used almost immediately as part of the branding study.

### **Beyond the Statement**

The conversations were exciting and energizing. The process was documented and could be put in a binder on a bookshelf. We had a catchy phrase that people could frame and put on their desk. The challenge now was to take the passion and the energy and ensure that it became an integral part of the college community.

Fortunately, our earlier conversations had surfaced ideas about ways to maintain the momentum. A list of suggestions, questions, and challenges was created. Over the past two years we have slowly but steadily accomplished the following:

- A Franciscan Identity component is included in the orientation for new faculty and staff;
- A Mission and Ministry page has been added to the college web site;
- “Required” follow-up gatherings have been held for employees . . . yes, people actually asked for “required” meetings;
- We have challenged ourselves to address inclusivity issues in an intentional way;
- As campus growth continues, we are consciously looking at ways to promote networking among faculty and staff;
- People are encouraged to begin meetings and gatherings with a “Mission Moment,” a phrase offered by one of our Franciscan colleagues. One of the most significant lessons learned is that you don’t have to be one of the Sisters to talk about Francis!

Most of these strategies focus on our faculty and staff. What about the students? Our commuter campus with 60% non-traditional student population makes it a challenge to gather students for any event outside of class time. We are a people on the move! That means that the best way to reach our students is through the faculty and the staff who see them on a regular basis. A brief segment on our Franciscan identity has been added to both graduate and undergraduate orientation programs. While we don’t have a specific “Freshmen Course” and the large number of transfer students makes it difficult to target the new student audience, we have identified some key 100 level courses and the Campus Minister makes a brief visit at the beginning of the semester to whet their appetites.

The values conversations ended just as the Higher Learning Commission self-study process began in the Spring of 2005. As we gathered data that



would allow us to write the self-study document and prepare for our North Central site visit in 2007, it became increasingly clear that the Spirit had been part of this process. The values statement and the on-going education had captured the creativity and imagination of the entire college community. Without any prodding from the Office of Mission and Ministry, the values statement became the underlying theme for the self-study document.

An inspiring story, but were all of the changes internal? Do you have to cross the threshold of Lourdes College before you begin to hear the message? Did anything in this process affect the *public* face of the college? Perhaps one of the most pleasant surprises was the realization of how this process had impacted our marketing department.

Conversations with members of our College Relations department provided us with a crash course in successful branding. We learned about one of the underlying principles in any branding process: Know your history and know your identity before going any further. Knowledge of the institution's mission and values are identified as two primary components of an integrated marketing plan. Successful brands most often emerge at institutions that have the courage to be who they really are and that have histories that they take pride in. Fortunately our College Relations department recognized that our values study was one of the key components of a successful branding process. It was part of the process of establishing a vision for the college and strengthening awareness of our Franciscan identity. The values study and all that resulted from it helped us to embrace our history and helped us to communicate our identity both internally and externally.

A values statement is meaningless unless it becomes an integral part of the life of an institution. Clearly this statement has resonated with all areas of the college community. The Student Government looks for ways to incorporate it in their information. It has captured the imagination of our alumni who are anxious to ensure that the statement is used to identify who we are. The values are not new to us. We just assumed that new members would understand them and catch them by osmosis. Throughout this process we realized the importance of being more intentional in introducing our history, tradition, and identity and in working to deepen that understanding. Now we have a strong common vocabulary that challenges us to take our identity and make it a lived experience in every facet of college life.

**Note:** To obtain copies of the questions which served as guides for the various segments of the process described, please contact the authors.

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# One University's Attempt to Name the Franciscan Charism in Higher Education

SR. MARY EVELYN GOVERT, OSF

University of Saint Francis • Fort Wayne IN

mgover@sf.edu

## Introduction

This paper was originally written to help colleagues within our institution understand the concept of *Franciscan Charism* which was an integral part of our Strategic Plan in 2002. That plan has subsequently been revised and in many ways we have come to greater understanding of this charism. This paper is offered as a model to help colleagues at other institutions understand this tradition.

## Meaning of Charism

Is it possible to write the *elevator speech* for the Franciscan Charism, that short, but to the point, description of what it means? The following is one attempt:

The Franciscan Charism is the gift given by God to Francis and then passed on to all who attempt to live in the Franciscan tradition. It is the gift of relating to all creation, and especially human persons, with utter respect because all is gift of God through Christ, God's first creation. This charism is a stimulus to peace-making and service for all who live and work in the Franciscan tradition.

*Charism* is a unique word for higher education; many questioned why the Strategic Planning Steering Committee in 2002 chose such a word at the core of its vision for the University of Saint Francis. In the New Testament the Greek word *charis* is used repeatedly and, when translated by the English word *grace*, comes to denote the "totality by which (humans) are made righteous" (McKenzie, 1965, p. 325).

"For if, by the transgression of one person, death came to reign through that one, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of justification come to reign in life through the one person Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:17)

In the New Testament *charis* is *grace*, God's great gift of our justification. In a Franciscan institution of higher education we recognize that the gift of which we are speaking was originally the one given by God to Saint Francis, and which is still available to us through the tradition. This paper is an attempt to describe the charism given to Francis and how this gift is related to our work as educators, carrying out this tradition.

## The Franciscan Charism

Attempting to capture the full meaning of Franciscan Charism is brash. Volumes have been written about it and there is no *one* thing that stands out as central. But there are a number of ideas which are essential for speaking of what Francis was called by God to do in the world. Throughout the writings about Francis his gifts, or charisms, were always explained as being from God. Francis saw his calling as a gift, or charism, from God. Dimensions of the Franciscan Charism include: recognition of the primacy of Christ, reverence for all creation, respect for the dignity of the human person, community, peace-making, service, compassion, and poverty and simplicity.

### *Primacy of Christ*

The Franciscan Charism is first of all *Christian*; Christ is at the center of Francis's life, yet never in isolation from God the Father and the Spirit. For Francis the God who creates is the Trinitarian God, a relational God (Osborne, 2003). These words which come from a letter to his brothers are typical of Francis: "I decided to offer you in this letter and message the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Word of the Father, and the words of the Holy Spirit, which *are spirit and life*" (2LtF3, Armstrong, 1999, I, p. 45). Imitation of Jesus consumed Francis and at the end of his life led to the stigmata, the experience of Jesus's wounds in his own body. During Francis's life this was expressed in his simple desire to imitate the life of Christ through radical poverty, the proclamation of the Gospel, and the celebration of earthy events such as the portrayal of the Christmas story with real humans and animals in a cave in Greccio. Francis shared this Christocentric focus of his vocation with Clare of Assisi. Ingrid Peterson (1993) expresses their relationship and ideal best in the following:

Their common vision is the poor, naked, crucified Christ. The vision of both Francis and Clare is expressed by Saint Paul: "Keep our eyes fixed on Jesus" (Heb. 12:2). Francis and Clare were not romantic lovers. Clare did not follow Francis. Clare followed Jesus as Francis had followed Jesus. (p. 136)

Bonaventure was the first Franciscan to expound a theology that could be called *Christocentric*. Bonaventure was aware that Jesus's coming did provide a remedy for sin, but "the Incarnation is willed for its own sake and not for the sake of any lesser sin . . . Sin is not the primary reason for the Incarnation; rather, love is" (Delio, 2001, p. 92). Scotus held that God intended the Son to become human, the Incarnation, to be King and center of the universe. According to Scotus, Jesus would have become human to unite creation to God more intimately, regardless of the sin committed by the first humans. "Scotus asks pointedly: Does Christ's predestination to grace and glory, and consequently to his position as end of all creatures

beneath him, depend on the permission of sin?" (Wolter, 1980, p. 141). Scotus's answer was a definite *No*; redemption is not the primary reason for Christ assuming human nature. This is Scotus's position of the *Primacy of Christ* and, he, with Bonaventure, developed this tradition of *Franciscan Christocentrism*. Jesus is the first of all created beings. The New Testament Letter to the Colossians stresses this preeminence of Christ as God's agent in the creation of all things:

*The bird on Francis's  
shoulder in works of  
art is but a small symbol  
of the overwhelming  
awe that he experienced  
for all of creation.*

He is the image of the invisible God,  
the firstborn of all creation.  
For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth,  
the visible and the invisible. (Col 1:15-16)

### ***Reverence for Creation***

*Amazement at God's creation* is another central element in the Franciscan Charism. The bird on Francis's shoulder in works of art is but a small symbol of the overwhelming awe that he experienced for all of creation. Later Franciscan writers would tie this back to his reverence for Christ. Jesus's union with all creation through his Incarnation led to Francis's profound reverence for all of creation. All creation is considered as being in relationship with Francis and with us. In his *Canticle of the Creatures* Francis spoke of Brother Sun and Sister Moon, Brother Wind and Sister Water, even Sister Bodily Death.

Francis lived in an age when philosophy and theology underestimated the value of the body. Although he treated his own body mercilessly, he came at the end of his life to realize that this was not necessary and that his body had served him well as the vehicle through which he experienced the created gifts of God. It was in his body, as well as his soul, that he experienced his most intimate union with God, the stigmata.

Francis did not merely write the *Canticle of the Creatures*; praise of Creation was also his way of life. It is expressed in the words of *The Divine Office of Saint Francis*:

He bade us praise as praise he did,  
For praise was ever on his lips,  
The praise of his dear Savior;  
And he invited bird and beast  
And every other creature, too,  
To praise their Lord and Maker.  
(Off 18: V, Armstrong, 1999, I, p. 338)

Even though Francis and his generation did not have the urgency in regard to the *environment* that faces us today, there is no doubt that he would have been at the forefront of the present ecological movement. In

fact, he is called the patron saint of the environment. Here we have the foundation of a value stressed by most Franciscan universities and colleges: respect for creation.

### ***Dignity of the Human Person***

Of first importance in creation is the *human person*, the point of connection between God and creation. Even though Francis called his followers to great holiness of life and observance of poverty, he allowed for the full expression of human life. Francis had brothers who were close to him as friends; Brother Leo and Brother Juniper were constant companions. Francis and Clare shared a relationship of deep affection and care. Francis's meeting with the leper, who initially repulsed him, became a major point of his conversion. Francis never wavered from his reverence of others, especially persons who were lepers, outcast, or poor. He expected that his brothers would lead a life of conversion but was compassionate with those who found the life sometimes very difficult. When a brother cried out in hunger during the night Francis brought bread and, eating first, shared a meal with him. Charity was more important than fasting. (LM 5: 7, Armstrong, 2000, II, p. 565).

Another example of his respect for persons is the designation of his order as the *Order of Friars Minor* or the Order of Lesser Brothers. In contrast to the monastic establishments of the medieval period, Francis had no levels of status within his community. All were equals. Those brothers who were placed in governance of the communities were known as *ministers*, a word coming from the Latin *to serve*. And in his dealings with those outside the community he showed great respect. When he went to meet the Sultan Malek al-Kamil at Damietta in Egypt during the Crusades, most feared that he would never leave the camp of the Sultan alive. Francis was treated harshly by the Sultan's guards who beat and insulted him. The Sultan, however, received Francis with respect and after speaking together both men realized that neither had need to *convert* the other; both knew the true God. They spent as many as twenty days sharing ideas and when Francis left, Malek al-Kamil attempted to shower him with gifts. When he realized that Francis would accept none of his worldly offerings, his esteem for Francis grew. The two men parted, not changed in their beliefs, but with heightened respect for each other (1C XX: 57, Armstrong, 1999, I, p. 231). This high respect which Francis had for each human being, which flowed from Christ's love for him, gives meaning to another value shared by Franciscan institutions: reverence for the unique dignity of each person. It also gives us a model for what most Franciscan institutions strive to achieve: growth in *diversity* and respect for all the unique cultures among us.

### ***Community***

*Community* was important to Francis, even though his followers did not live in monasteries. He called his brothers together regularly for chapters,

the most famous of which was the Pentecost Chapter of Mats in 1217, a gathering of about 5000 friars who had only rush-mats for shelter (LFI 18, Armstrong, 2001, III, p. 596). He knew that his new group needed to pray together, to share the experiences of their missions and to be renewed. Even when Francis wrote a rule for those who lived in hermitages, which was the exception to the ordinary Franciscan way of life, he wrote it so that each person would have supportive companions. Building community through true relationships is essential for all Franciscan colleges and universities.

### ***Peace-making***

*Peace-making* is a necessary component of the Franciscan Charism. Francis experienced in his own life the devastating effects of violence and conflict. He participated in the war between Assisi and neighboring Perugia, a battle for supremacy and property. He participated with his fellow Assisi citizens in murdering the established nobility at the Rocca Maggiore. Francis saw how his way of life brought dissension between him and his father, Pietro di Bernadone. He rejected violence and came to be known as a peace maker between feuding families and his own brothers. The Peace Prayer attributed to Francis, but traceable to the early twentieth century, contains a full prescription for a peace-filled way of life. Francis was aware of the struggle to maintain peace in one's heart.

A servant of God cannot know how much patience and humility he has within himself as long as he is content. When the time comes, however, when those who should make him content do the opposite, he has as much patience and humility as he has at that time and no more. (Adm XIII, Armstrong, 1999, I, p. 133)

### ***Service***

*Service* is an element often mentioned as being distinctively Franciscan. It most often appears in Francis's writings when he is speaking of the *ministers*, the leaders of the community. In his Rule when speaking of electing the person who will lead the entire order Francis states:

If, at any time, it appears . . . that the aforesaid general minister is not qualified for the service and general welfare of the brothers, let the aforesaid brothers, to whom the election is committed, be bound to elect another as custodian in the name of the Lord. (LR VIII: 4, Armstrong, 1999, I, p. 104)

Not only the ministers, but all Franciscans, were called to be of service to others after the example of Francis who never hesitated to give away his food and clothing to a person in need. His own version of the Golden Rule was "Blessed is the person who supports his neighbor in his weakness as he would want to be supported were he in a similar situation" (Adm XVIII: 1, Armstrong, 1999, I, p. 134). Service, along with peace-making, should be hallmarks of our institutions.

## **Compassion**

Francis's sense of *compassion* for all suffering creatures underlay his drive to give service. He was compassionate because he had experienced the great compassion of God. His *joy* was often exhibited at times most of us would find difficult; e.g., when he asked his brothers to rejoice while they were begging:

And you ought to go begging more willingly and with more joyful hearts than someone who is offering a hundred silver pieces in exchange for a single penny, since you are offering the love of God to those from whom you seek alms. (AC 51, Armstrong, 2000, II, p. 151)

## **Poverty and Simplicity**

Francis was blessed with the vision to see that his calling was to found a group who would live in *poverty* and *simplicity* and yet, paradoxically, possess the whole world. In the richly allegorical *The Sacred Exchange between Saint Francis and Lady Poverty*, written in the thirteenth century, Francis's vision is explained through a conversation among Francis, his brothers and Lady Poverty. Francis and the brothers share with the Lady their great simplicity of life. Lady Poverty asks for a pillow to rest after their long conversation; they give her a stone.

After enjoying a very quiet and healthy sleep, she quickly arose and asked to be shown the enclosure (cloister). Taking her to a certain hill, they showed her all the world they could see and said: "This, Lady is our enclosure." (ScEx 63, Armstrong, 1999, I, p. 553)

All of God's creation is the dwelling and concern of Franciscans.

## **Franciscan Colleges and Universities and the Franciscan Charism**

Franciscan educators have been involved in university education since the beginning of the university system in Europe, where they taught in Paris, Oxford, Cologne, Bologna and other major universities. In the thirteenth century the Franciscans posed a challenge to the bishops and priests who had been in control of the universities. Franciscans were not limited to specific dioceses and were popular with the laity because of certain privileges they believed they had received from the Pope. The Franciscans saw themselves as having a more universal mission, reaching even into non-Christian lands. They were criticized for their itinerancy (i.e., moving from place to place) and their mendicancy (i.e., living without fixed sources of income). But these were qualities that made them popular teachers and prominent in the development of the university system. The point to be remembered is that the phenomenon of Franciscans in university education is not a novel idea for the twenty-first century; its



origins went counter to traditions of the thirteenth century, challenging the Church order of that time, irritating many of the bishops and priests in whose areas they were teaching (Short, 1992).

A Franciscan university should live out the Franciscan charism in unique ways. Considering Francis's love for *all of creation*, *all of it* is fit subject for study in such a university. There is nothing in God's creation that is *un-Franciscan*. Franciscans have been eminent scientists, artists, philosophers, theologians, and scholars in almost all disciplines. We do not have to justify venturing into any area if we treat the created reality with respect for its being as part of God's creation. Zachary Hayes (1992) sees this as flowing from the dignity of humans who, on the one hand are related to God, and then to all of creation (pp. 100-101). Since all of creation is the subject matter of Franciscan education, we should see it in a holistic way, acknowledging the relationships that exist in creation. This gives us an unlimited curriculum, but a curriculum that should be rigorous, giving to each element of study the dignity which belongs to it.

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A correlative of the above is that interdisciplinary learning should be encouraged. Creation is a unique whole and to segregate study of it into unrelated parts is to do it disservice. Interdisciplinary education is also one facet helping to build up a community of learners. Franciscan universities should thrive on the community that is created, not only in the classrooms, but in the liturgical, social, residential and service life of the university. The strength of the community undergirds much of the life of the university; disjointed individuals, each seeking their own growth, will contribute less to the whole than if they are bonded into a community. The studies of theology and philosophy remain critical in the Franciscan university milieu, but not done in a confessional manner separated from other disciplines. Hayes (1992) urges that the study of theology should deal with crucial questions in today's world, dialoguing with the sciences and with world religions (p. 104). (Zachary Hayes develops these ideas further in a 2005 article in the *AFCU Journal*.)

*Ex Corde Ecclesiae* stresses that any Catholic university must be clear about its Catholic identity and mission and provide courses in Catholic theology. But it acknowledges the academic freedom of the faculty to explore issues in their areas of expertise (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae* Art. 2, 2). For Franciscans part of this exploration is to see the connection between the entire universe and its Creator. Coughlin (1992) explores the ideas of Saint Bonaventure in the thirteenth century (in *Reductione Artium ad Theologiam*) in connection with the current Church teaching in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*.

The task, therefore, of bringing the Gospel into dialogue with the various disciplines in the academy is one of the reasons why Franciscans were initially involved in university life and may give insight into why they have been continually involved in the ministry of education in a variety of ways. It is also one of the fundamental reasons why they should continue to be involved in education today. (p. 89)

The vision of Francis and Clare, when considered through the lens of this history of the Franciscan tradition in the universities should lead to certain practical outcomes. The incarnational vision of Francis, seeing Christ as the supreme creation, should lead students educated in Franciscan colleges and universities to be persons of service and peace-making, both during their formal education and in their lives. Faculty and staff should be first in setting the model. Service learning and other forms of civic engagement should flow from the all-encompassing scope of Franciscan education and the fact that Francis and Clare so loved God's creation, especially human persons.

Although written 15 years ago, Coughlin's advice to leaders in Franciscan colleges and universities remains relevant today. He encourages leaders in Franciscan institutions to

evaluate how systematically, simultaneously and experientially they are addressing the demands of a quality education in the Christian and Franciscan tradition, and whether it is an education which invites each and everyone to be conscious of their dignity, awakens their desire to search for truth while remaining open to the fount of all truth, and asks everyone to be responsible for the ways in which they use their gifts and capacity to care not only for themselves but *for the sake of others*. In this way everyone within the institution or in relationship to it will be invited into a relational experience. (1992, p. 95)

Coughlin ends with a quote from Saint Bonaventure that captures much about the true nature of Franciscan education. In this quote Bonaventure is speaking of the true nature of contemplation, the highest form of all learning. He prays that the one who studies will **not** believe that

reading is sufficient without unction,  
speculation without devotion,  
investigation without wonder,  
observation without joy,  
work without piety,  
knowledge without love,  
understanding without humility,  
endeavor without divine grace.

(Bonaventure as cited in Coughlin, 1992, p. 95)

## Conclusion

The Franciscan Charism cannot be captured. It can never be defined. It is like the philosophical dilemma of trying to find the meaning of “good,” “beauty,” “justice” and “truth.” A person knows when they have experienced that charism in the lives of those who truly live it. We can offer opportunities to learn about the theological tradition in its more technical sense and this we ought to do. But if that tradition is not revealed in the activities of the university and the lives of community members it will never be seen. And that is what folks must experience when they come to our campuses.

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# **Making the Most of the AFCU Student Pilgrimage to Assisi and Rome**

**ANITA HOLZMER, OSF**

**University of St. Francis • Fort Wayne, IN  
aholzmer@sf.edu**

## **Introduction**

**I**f a picture is worth a thousand words, an experience is inexpressible. Anyone who has made a pilgrimage to Assisi and Rome knows the truth of this statement, for the pilgrimage is a life-changing experience which cannot entirely be put into words. A type of experiential learning, the pilgrim's encounter with the spirits of Francis and Clare in the peace-filled environs of their native Umbria moves him/her to conversion of heart, and s/he begins to understand the relationship of humanity with all creation, and the need to express this understanding in generous service. Indeed, such a transformation of the human person is the goal of the Catholic-Franciscan educational endeavor at our AFCU institutions (Ingham, 2007). The experience of Franciscan pilgrimage achieves this goal as nothing else can.

In 2003 the AFCU sponsored the first Assisi-Rome pilgrimage for students of its member institutions. Students from the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne, IN began to participate in 2004. Under the skillful direction of their guides from Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs, USF students have returned with a "Franciscan fire" to make a difference, often crediting their appreciation of the pilgrimage to their preparation for it. When Franciscan Pilgrimage staffers began to comment favorably on our students' preparation and ability to enter into the experience, it occurred to me that those responsible for pilgrim preparation might be interested in our method. What follows, then, is the manner in which the University of Saint Francis prepares students for the Assisi-Rome pilgrimage, from selection process to follow-up.

## **Incentives, Eligibility and Selection**

The process of pilgrim selection, preparation and follow-up is presently under the purview of the Center for Franciscan Spirit and Life, the USF spirituality center. As director of the Center and instructor in Franciscan Studies, I am primarily responsible for student pilgrims. Two years of study in Rome and many journeys to the birthplace of Francis and Clare have given me insights into the Assisi experience which are indispensable in pilgrim preparation. My duties in this process are made considerably lighter by Jan Patterson, our director of Campus Ministry, who assists me with valuable objectivity in the selection process as well as with numerous preparatory and follow-up details. We have laid out the entire process for ourselves in a planning cycle or timeline which keeps us on task and on time.

Although the opportunity for pilgrimage is available to all students, the cost is prohibitive for most. With this in mind, the university, through the Department of Student Life, offers two \$1500 “scholarships” each year as incentives to fund about half of the cost of the pilgrimage. Students cover the rest of the expenses. Because it is desirable for students to have at least one academic year in which to begin integrating the pilgrimage experience into their own lives and also to share it with the USF community, eligibility for the scholarships is open to freshmen, sophomores and juniors only. Seniors and even recent alumni can also make the pilgrimage, but they pay for all their expenses. An additional incentive to encourage students to apply is the offering of 3 hours of undergraduate credit for the pilgrimage which is listed in the catalogue as an elective: THEO 491 Pilgrimages. We hope that grant monies can be secured in the future to fund a larger portion of the expenses, thus enabling more students to participate.

Once the pilgrimage dates are announced by the Pilgrimage Office, usually in early February, the selection process begins by advertising the pilgrimage in campus publications and flyers. We also ask faculty to suggest students who might benefit from the pilgrimage experience, and we contact these students personally, encouraging them to apply. The application process is very informal. Interested students simply make an appointment for an interview. Applicants are screened during the month of April through brief personal interviews with Jan and me, and those selected to receive scholarships are notified by May 1. By this time others interested in the pilgrimage and having the economic resources to pay for it have also been identified and interviewed.<sup>1</sup> Thus, our pilgrim roster is set before the end of the spring term.

## **Preparation**

As soon as the potential pilgrims are identified, preparation begins. Prior to the summer break I meet with the pilgrims to give them preliminary information from the Franciscan Pilgrimage Office and to assign the first of several articles (Cirino, 1997; Gagliardi, 2003). These articles will be read and discussed during the fall preparatory meetings. This preliminary session is important for setting the tone of subsequent meetings, i.e., distinguishing between a pilgrimage and a tour and placing the focus on the pilgrim’s personal spiritual connection with Francis and Clare. It also affords the students an opportunity for questions, of which there are many, especially regarding the dos and don’ts of foreign travel. During this first meeting I remind the pilgrims that they will be sharing their pilgrimage experience with the campus community upon their return. If they have not already done so, the students are encouraged to register for THEO 390 Saint Francis: Times and Charism, a fall semester course which introduces the medieval milieu, life and spirituality of Francis of Assisi and includes a brief treatment of Clare.<sup>2</sup> Because students in this course learn not only the significant events, but also the places associated with

the lives of Francis, Clare and the early Franciscans, we have found this course, as well as the readings and reflective assignments associated with it, to be the key to pilgrimage preparation.<sup>3</sup>

During June and July e-reminders are sent regarding deadlines for registration and down payment, and the importance of securing passports. In August the potential pilgrims receive several reminders about the payment deadline for their portion of the pilgrimage cost, set for two weeks prior to the payment deadline given by the Pilgrimage office, i.e., the first few days of September. This allows extra time for more urgent reminders, if necessary.

With the onset of the academic year, articles in campus publications proudly announce the identities of the student pilgrims. Their preparation

*Thus, the pilgrims  
understand that,  
although they are few  
in number, they  
represent and “carry”  
the university  
community with them  
on their journey.*

then begins in earnest with the Francis course and monthly meetings in September, October and November. During these one-hour meetings we discuss the above mentioned and other pertinent articles, and view and discuss the DVD “Assisi Pilgrimage” (Feister, 2006). We also talk about expectations — those of the pilgrims themselves and those of the pilgrimage guides. I answer any questions and give students a geographical orientation to Italy and the city of Assisi. The keeping of a pilgrimage journal

is encouraged as a way of recording events, impressions and reflections; this is particularly useful for those who take the pilgrimage for credit. Former pilgrims are invited to at least one of these preparatory meetings to share their impressions and give helpful information from the student viewpoint. This exchange is usually quite lively, as those who have gone are still enthusiastic and eager to share their experiences, as well as their pictures and memorabilia. With the approach of semester exams, the anticipation of the potential pilgrims can hardly be contained.

## **The Sending Ritual**

In order to highlight the significance of the student pilgrimage for the entire university community, we conclude the preparation with a sending ritual. This simple ceremony is incorporated into a Sunday evening Mass in the university chapel at the beginning of exam week, which is essentially the last “official” religious gathering before Christmas break. Following an explanation of the purpose of the pilgrimage, students are called by name before the Eucharistic assembly. The pilgrims receive a special blessing and are sent with the community’s prayers and the prayer intentions which the pilgrims promise to remember at the holy places they visit. Thus, the pilgrims understand that, although they are few in number, they represent and “carry” the university community with them on their journey.

## Following Up

The follow-up aspect of the pilgrimage is as important as the preparation. It is during the weeks and months after their return that the pilgrims discover that their journey is meant as much for the university community and beyond as for themselves personally. With the second semester under way, Jan and I debrief with the returning pilgrims during dinner at a local Italian restaurant, tying their Italian-Franciscan experience to their present reality. Still exhilarated by the experience, the pilgrims attempt to express the inexpressible, excitedly sharing the impact of significant events during their journey.

There are several ways in which the students then share the personal significance of their pilgrimage with the campus community. To clarify expectations regarding this sharing, the pilgrims and I have a second follow-up meeting subsequent to the Italian dinner debriefing. Two formal presentations are tied to the pilgrimage scholarships: one to the USF Board of Trustees, and one to the Board's Mission and Planning Committee. Because the returning pilgrim appearances are a portion of much longer agendas, the pilgrims must be brief and concise. Yet, we have found that the sharings are profoundly inspiring, as each one highlights a moment, situation or person(s) that was deeply touching and thus transformative for them. The pilgrims are also invited to make longer presentations (including numerous pictures in PowerPoint slides) in various classes, especially the Franciscan Studies classes, as well as to organizations and groups on campus. Finally, the pilgrims recount their experience in print via our student newspaper, *The Paw Print*, and our alumni magazine, *The Mirror*. In all of these ways, as well as by sharing informally with others, they spread the "Franciscan fire" and increase the possibility of personal transformation among their peers.

## Conclusion

Instructors often incorporate some facet of experiential learning into their courses so that content, concepts and skills can become integrated into students' thinking and behaviors. The Assisi-Rome pilgrimage is a unique experience in which students retrace the life journeys of Francis and Clare of Assisi, encountering their spirits in the places where they and other early Franciscans lived, worked and prayed. In order for students to make the most of this transformative experience they must be carefully prepared so that, in the words of the late John Denver, going to Assisi is like "coming home to a place [they've] never been before" (Denver, 1972).



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## Footnotes

- 1 During the interview students share the reasons for their desire to participate in the pilgrimage; the personal qualities that will benefit other participants and pilgrimage leaders; the manner in which they will share the pilgrimage experience with the USF community when they return; and the manner in which they will finance their share of the pilgrimage cost.
- 2 To obtain copies of the syllabi for THEO 390 and THEO 491, please contact the author.
- 3 Although not required, all student pilgrims are asked to take the course if they can fit it into their schedule. Alums and students whose schedules do not permit them to take the course are asked to audit the course via Blackboard. These names are added to the Blackboard list and students have access to course syllabus and lecture notes. They are also encouraged to purchase texts and complete the course readings.

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# **Mathematics in the Franciscan Tradition: Integrating Faith and Values into Mathematics Classes at Cardinal Stritch University**

**SR. BARBARA REYNOLDS, SDS**  
**Cardinal Stritch University • Milwaukee, WI**  
**breynolds@stritch.edu**

## **Introduction: What is Franciscan Mathematics?**

**R**ecently the faculty at Cardinal Stritch University decided to integrate our Franciscan heritage explicitly into the undergraduate experience, and to infuse selected courses in the Liberal Arts Core with the Franciscan intellectual tradition.<sup>1</sup> Beginning in academic year 2006-2007, students are required to take one course per year that is designated as “Franciscan Infused.” While it may seem natural to infuse a religious studies or philosophy course with the Franciscan tradition — perhaps by including readings by John Duns Scotus or Bonaventure — faculty in the Mathematics Department have felt somewhat challenged by this new requirement. What exactly is Franciscan mathematics? How can we bring something explicitly Franciscan into our mathematics courses without taking valuable instructional time away from the mathematical content of our courses?

## **Infusing Mathematics Courses: How I Began**

In the spring semester of 2003, I was supported by a grant from the Teagle Foundation to do study and research into how I might integrate something Franciscan into my mathematics courses. In that semester, I studied materials developed by the Franciscan Mission Office on Franciscan values and the history of the university. Realizing that one part of what we hope to accomplish with Franciscan infusion is to raise our own awareness and that of our students about the Franciscan heritage that we have at Stritch, I developed a statement about the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition that I include on my course syllabi. Over the past four years I have included a statement similar to the following one (this one is taken from one of my statistics courses) on the syllabus of each course that I teach:

### **Franciscan Intellectual Tradition**

Cardinal Stritch University is a Catholic institution of higher education, founded and sponsored by the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Francis of Assisi. While neither Saint Francis nor Saint Clare actually taught mathematics (or any other subject) in an established university, their lives do offer for us a model of cooperation, respect for diversity and inclusivity, and reverence for creation that we strive to reflect throughout the univer-

sity community. The cooperative learning environment of this classroom teaches one aspect of creating a caring community. As demonstrated in the life and work of Florence Nightingale<sup>2</sup>, statistics itself can be a tool for recognizing important human needs and for taking responsible action in our world.

This course has been designated as a course with “infused Franciscan core.” There will be a series of assignments throughout the semester in which students will be invited to look at what we can learn about people, our natural environment, and all of creation by examining and analyzing data. One of the course projects will give students an opportunity to apply the methods of this course to present and analyze data about a significant issue of social justice.

A first step toward integrating Franciscan values into the curriculum is to find ways to give explicit expression to these values in the classroom environment. Unfortunately, not all of our students come from situations where expressing compassion, respecting each person’s dignity, and making peace are part of their personal experiences. Without taking a lot of class time, I look for ways to explicitly name these values, and to make them a part of our classroom environment.

*In developing problem assignments, I try — where this is appropriate — to include problems that have applications to areas of responsible stewardship, social justice, and maintenance of good interpersonal relationships with colleagues.*

I use cooperative learning in all of my classes. To support real cooperation among the students, I am committed to working with them to build a caring community within the classroom. Students are expected to show respect, courtesy and compassion to each other. Intellectual argumentation is an integral

part of any mathematics class, and yet many students are intimidated by any kind of argument. The life experiences of some students make them feel unsafe when engaging in arguments, even if the argument is intended to be intellectual and not personal. I find that I have to show students that I am committed to fostering a classroom environment in which it is safe to engage in intellectual argument. Students need to be shown that mathematical argumentation is about ideas, not about personalities.

Mathematics requires critical thinking, and students develop increased analytical reasoning skills in each mathematics course that they take. Critical thinking skills are essential tools for taking responsible social action and working for justice. Studying mathematics fosters the development of critical thinking.

Most of my classes are taught in a classroom computer laboratory. We have a lot of computer equipment, a printer, and some special purpose

data-collection probes in the classroom. I make it clear to the students that we all need to exercise responsible stewardship within the classroom. Basically, this boils down to two classroom rules: take care of this place (the classroom and the equipment), and take care of each other. From time to time, I offer gentle reminders about these rules.

## **Examples from Particular Courses**

Students want their studies to seem relevant to their lives. They often ask, “When will I need to know this?” I have found that students want real applications of mathematics to their lives, and not merely trivial examples. In developing problem assignments, I try — where this is appropriate — to include problems that have applications to areas of responsible stewardship, social justice, and maintenance of good interpersonal relationships with colleagues. I will give some examples of this below.

In the past four years, several of my courses have been designated as Franciscan Infused. So far, the courses that I have infused with assignments that bring out particular Franciscan values are Applied Statistics, Data Analysis, Geometry, Theory of Probability & Statistics, and Senior Seminar. In each course, the Franciscan elements of the course are integrated into the content, not simply added on. My goal is to integrate Franciscan values into the problem solving and critical thinking assignments.

### ***Social Justice Values in Statistics***

When Florence Nightingale<sup>3</sup> served as a nurse during the Crimean War (1854-1856), she observed that more soldiers died from disease than from battlefield wounds. She believed that these diseases were preventable, but in those days not much was known about the importance of sanitation and the relationship of poor sanitary standards to the spread of disease. Nightingale collected and compiled data; then analyzed and presented this data to support her theories about the spread of hospital diseases. Since effective visual displays of data had not yet been developed, she developed polar-area diagrams, the precursor of our present-day pie charts, to better make her case. She made extensive use of statistical analysis in epidemiology. She established correlations between sanitation and public health. For example, she made a strong case for the importance of health care workers washing their hands between patients. As a result of her statistical analyses, better sanitary procedures were implemented, and hospital deaths decreased.

At the beginning of a statistics class — whether it is Applied Statistics, Data Analysis, or Theory of Probability & Statistics — I ask the students to find out who Florence Nightingale was. Building on what they learn about Florence Nightingale, I ask them to identify particular areas of social justice or critical human need that we might study through our own statistical investigations in this course. Then throughout the semester, I choose or develop some problems based on the topics that the students have identified.

### ***Statistics: Pie Charts and Polar-Area Diagrams***

The polar-area diagram was the precursor to the pie chart. In a pie chart, we use a circle (so that the radius is constant) and vary the size of the wedge (that is, the size of the angle) so that the area of each wedge is proportional to the data being displayed. In a polar-area diagram, the angles are constant, and the radius is varied — again, so that the areas of the wedges are proportional to the data elements. This kind of chart (pie chart or polar-area diagram) is particularly effective for presenting information when we want to show what proportion of the whole fits into each of several categories.

Most statistical software packages can be used to construct a pie chart. Sometimes students construct these charts because they are pretty, but without giving thought as to why the chart is effective or what kind of story it tells about the data. One way of getting the students to be a little more reflective about the visual representation of data is to have them construct a polar-area diagram by hand. In the spring semester 2007, I gave the students some data about causes of death in the United States. I asked them to enter the data into an Excel or Minitab worksheet, and to produce a pie chart to represent the data. Then, I asked them to construct a polar-area diagram for the same data. Since the software package does not construct polar-area diagrams, the students have to construct this diagram by hand using a compass and ruler. This slows the students down somewhat so that they have time to reflect on what the visual display of data shows, and how the relative areas communicate information about the relative sizes of the numbers being displayed.

### ***Statistics: Simpson's Paradox***

Here is an example of an assignment that I developed for my Applied Statistics class at a point when we were studying Simpson's Paradox. The week before we got to this point in the course, there had been an article in the local newspaper comparing mortality rates of several of the nursing homes in our city. I brought this article to class, and used it to talk about how the statistics we were studying is used in the world beyond our classroom. Several of the students in this class were Communication Arts majors who hoped to get into careers in public relations. So I set up the following scenario:

Suppose that you are the Director of Public Relations at Franciscan Hospital, and one morning you read an article in the local weekly paper concerning the survival rates of patients at two local hospitals, Franciscan Hospital and City Hospital. (This data and the two named hospitals are fictitious.)

	Survived	Died	Total
<b>Franciscan Hospital</b>	800	200	1000
<b>City Hospital</b>	900	100	1000

You calculate the proportion of patients at each hospital who survived and the proportion that died, and note with alarm that the survival rate at Franciscan Hospital does not compare favorably with that at City Hospital. As the Director of Public Relations at Franciscan Hospital, you are concerned about the negative publicity that this news article creates for your hospital, so you do some of your own research, and find the following additional data:

	Prognosis	Survived	Died	Total
Franciscan Hospital	Good	590	10	600
	Poor	210	190	400
City Hospital	Good	870	30	900
	Poor	30	70	100

First of all convince yourself that the data presented in the second table are consistent with the data in the newspaper article. For patients with good prognosis, compare the recovery rates at both hospitals. For patients with poor prognosis, compare the recovery rates at the two hospitals.

What the students see is that while the recovery rate overall is better at City Hospital, a completely different picture emerges when they consider the recovery rates broken out by prognosis. Both the recovery rate for patients with good prognosis and the recovery rate for patients with poor prognosis are better for patients at Franciscan Hospital. This phenomenon is not unusual in statistics, and is known as Simpson's paradox. We talk about Simpson's paradox and about what causes it, and I give them a reading assignment related to this paradox. Then I give them the following assignment:

As Director of Public Relations, you are concerned about publicity. Like Cardinal Stritch University, Franciscan Hospital strives to promote Franciscan values. You are to write a letter to the Editor of the paper. Your concern is to make people aware of how the data presented in the recent newspaper article is misleading, to present correct background information, and to explain what causes the paradox that we see in this situation. Be aware that readers of the paper may not have taken this statistics course, and have only seen the data presented in the news article that appeared a week ago. Your letter should follow the guidelines for letters to the Editor established in the local newspaper. You need to be clear and succinct so that your letter is selected to appear in next week's edition of this paper. Further, you are committed to maintaining a good relationship with your counterpart, the Director of Public Relations at City Hospital, so you want to make a case for the high quality of

health care that is offered at Franciscan Hospital without saying anything derogatory about City Hospital.

As you might imagine, this is a challenging writing assignment. Students think of statistics as a mathematics course, and they are not accustomed to having writing assignments in a mathematics class. Yet, statistics and the interpretation of data require that we consider the context of the data as well as the numerical computations. This kind of writing assignment helps to make the importance of context very clear.

### ***Data Analysis: Graphical and Numerical Presentation of Data***

When I taught Data Analysis in fall 2006, I chose fair trade merchandise and human trafficking as the social justice issues that I wanted to integrate into the class assignments. I was concerned that students would know very little about either of these issues, so I gave the students the following assignment before sending them out to look for related data.

Because this is a “Franciscan Infused” course, there will be a project on an issue or concern of social justice toward the end of the semester. This project will bring together several aspects of the course, and the topic will be around the issue of *fair trade merchandise* and *human trafficking*. By next class, I’d like for you do a little background research around the following questions:

- What is “fair trade coffee”? Are there other products that are “fair trade”? What does this mean? Why is fair trade a social justice concern?
- What is human trafficking? How prevalent is human trafficking? Why is human trafficking a social justice concern?

In the ensuing class discussion, students had many questions about both of these issues. None of the students had heard of human trafficking. Only one student was aware of fair trade; she had participated in a Spring Break service trip to Mexico the previous year, and had visited a cooperative farm that was producing fair trade products for export to the United States. In the course of this discussion, the students made the connection that fair trade creates real opportunities for employment for people in situations that put them at risk for being trafficked. In other words, trafficking is an international problem for which fair trade is a part of the solution.

About two weeks after this discussion I told the students that they were to find some real world data on either fair trade or human trafficking, and develop a statistical poster or a PowerPoint presentation on this issue. Their presentation was to include numerical and graphical summaries of the data they found, and some supporting text explaining these issues and why they are important social justice concerns.



The goal of this project is to demonstrate that you can develop *appropriate numerical and graphical displays to present information about a significant social / justice issue* — in this case, human trafficking and/or fair trade. These are very big problems with lots of possible data; you are to develop a poster or PowerPoint presentation that will introduce others to the justice concerns behind these important world issues. We will take some class time for you to share your poster or presentation with the class.

As it happened, about half of the class chose each issue. By having the students submit their presentations to me a week ahead of time, I was able to ask students whose numerical or graphical displays were not well done to correct and strengthen their presentations before the class presentations. This made it possible to focus more clearly on the topics of human trafficking and fair trade without being sidetracked by discussions about how to present data effectively.

### ***Geometry: Beauty***

In fall 2006, as I was teaching Geometry as a Franciscan Infused course for the first time, I decided to weave a series of assignments on Beauty throughout the course. In this course, students use The Geometer's Sketchpad, a computer-based dynamic geometry tool, to investigate geometric concepts visually before we discuss these ideas from a theoretical perspective. Therefore, it is important for students to develop some skill in using Sketchpad. The first assignment is to use Sketchpad to make a beautiful design, perhaps for the cover of the student's course notebook, and to submit the design to me electronically (by uploading it into their folder in the course management system that we use on our campus). Having the students submit their designs to me electronically makes it possible for me to put these together as a class demonstration. As we look at and admire each design, I ask each student to talk about what they were thinking as they created their design and why it is beautiful. Following this discussion, I make all these designs available to the class so that they can continue to enjoy each other's beautiful creations.

For the second assignment in this series, I ask each student to write a one-page reflection on "What makes your design beautiful?" This is a challenging assignment. Personally, I know when I see something that is truly beautiful, but it is not always easy to explain why it is beautiful. Beyond this, many students who choose to study mathematics enjoy number crunching and analysis, but are not comfortable with writing an essay. Again, I gather their essays into a document that we share within the class. Several weeks later, I give the students a reading on the underlying philosophy of beauty. In a recent semester I offered the following readings, and asked each student to read and report to the class on one of them:

- A very short selection (two paragraphs) from *The Life of Francis (Legenda Major)* by Bonaventure, “On the Fervor of His Love and His Desire for Martyrdom”
- “Insight into a Triangle is Insight into God,” a collection of quotes from the writings of John Duns Scotus, translated by Francis Dombrowski, O.F.M.Cap.
- “Pied Beauty: Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Scotistic View of Nature,” an article by William Short, O.F.M. which uses two of Hopkins’ poems to reflect on Scotus’ understanding of nature as a reflection of the Creator.
- “Clare of Assisi and Beauty,” an article by Janet Snyder, OSF, which talks about Clare’s deep appreciation of beauty.

Toward the end of the semester, I ask the students to use the geometric construction tools in Sketchpad to construct something beautiful. Unlike the first open-ended assignment in which the students were invited to make a beautiful drawing, this design has to use principles of mathematics to make a construction that is geometrically correct. Finally, as a culminating assignment in the last week of the course, I asked the students to write a reflection paper on Beauty in Geometry. I ask them to discuss what they have learned about beauty in this class, to include references to what they learned in the reading assignment and class discussion, and to discuss what beautiful things tell us of the Creator.

### ***Senior Seminar***

Seminar is the capstone course in the major. At the beginning of this course, I remind the students that they will be getting their degree from a Franciscan institution of higher education, and invite them to discuss what difference this has made during their years at Stritch. One of five graded assignments that are required in this course is the development of a professional portfolio. I point out to the students that this kind of professional portfolio is a tool that will help them to prepare for job interviews.

One of about a dozen items that are to be included in this portfolio is a reflection paper on Franciscan values, how their experiences at Stritch have shaped their personal values, and how they think these values might continue to touch their lives in the future. I leave the assignment fairly open and flexible. I direct the students to the university’s website, and the section on Franciscan values<sup>4</sup> and offer them a print version of this document if they prefer it.

On one occasion, a transfer student told the class that in the three semesters he had been at Stritch he had never heard of Franciscan values. I responded by observing that this was a failing on our part, as Franciscan values are a part of the fabric or the culture of the university, and that we who work at the university need to learn how to better communicate the

Franciscan heritage of the institution to all the students. There were several international students in the class that semester, and we talked about how it is better to be consciously aware of the underlying cultural values of a place even if you do not completely espouse those values. Sometimes a student has expressed concern about being graded on their personal experiences or beliefs, and I assure them that as long as their reflection paper is honest, respectful, and well written, I will not mark them down for having different beliefs. I tell them that this reflection paper is partly to give us feedback about how well we are communicating our Franciscan heritage to all of our students.

Frequently the students in Seminar invite someone from the Career Services Office as a guest speaker to talk to them about particular aspects of the job search process. This almost always leads to a discussion of possible interview questions, some of which might ask the applicant about personal values and how the applicant has expressed these values. The counselors from the Career Services Office observe that writing the reflection paper on Franciscan values for their portfolio is an excellent way to prepare to respond to interview questions related to values.

### **Student Response: Comments from End-of-Course Evaluations**

Throughout each course, I ask students for more or less continuous feedback about the course assignments. On a daily class participation form, I ask students “what did you learn by coming to class today?” As I collect any particular assignment, I often ask “Tell me what you learned from this assignment.” At mid-term after giving students an evaluation of their progress-to-date, I ask them for specific feedback about how well they feel they are achieving the course goals and objectives, and for specific suggestions about what I can do as an instructor to help them meet the course goals. Throughout the semester I am likely to modify an assignment in response to their feedback. By the end of the semester, students are aware that I am listening to their comments. As a result, I often get very specific suggestions about particular assignments on the end-of-course evaluations. The following comments (edited for spelling and grammar) are typical of student response to the Franciscan infusion assignments described in this article:

- I never knew what human trafficking was, and I’m glad I’m aware of this problem. It was a good way to use statistics in real life.
- The story of Florence Nightingale showed the influence of women in mathematics and statistics, and the caring virtues she practiced.
- Doing the Franciscan projects helped me better understand both Franciscan values and the course material.
- The Franciscan assignments made the values seem relevant to mathematics. In the future, make them in-class group assignments so that there is more dialogue between peers about these issues.

- The group work and the Franciscan assignments not only helped me learn about geometry, but also helped me grow as a person. I really enjoyed working on geometry problems with my classmates because two heads are better than one. I also believe that we learn as individuals from each other's responses.
- These beauty assignments were fun and incorporated geometry very well. I enjoyed reading the articles. They helped me make connections.
- The assignments helped me to gain a more personal understanding of what Franciscan values are and how to apply them in my personal life.
- I learned more about the Franciscan values in this course than in all of my other courses all together. I really enjoyed all the assignments. They helped me to see the world with Franciscan eyes.
- I have particularly enjoyed the infused Franciscan assignments. We have discussed these values in other classes, yet we have never applied them to real life experience such as math.

As you can see in these comments, students perceive the Franciscan assignments as reinforcing the work of the class and helping them to make connections. In one class, they were disappointed when I did not give them a chance to share their projects with each other; hence, the suggestion above that in the future the Franciscan assignments should be in-class group assignments. As an instructor, I was concerned about relating the mathematical concepts to issues related to Franciscan values; I was approaching this from the inside out — trying to relate the required content of the course outward to issues in the broader world. So I was particularly struck by the last student comment above, which reflects that student's perspective as coming from the outside in — trying to relate issues and values that she grapples with in her real life to the abstract concepts that we tend to deal with in a mathematics class.

## Conclusion

I began this paper by asking two questions:

1. What is Franciscan mathematics? Is there, or should there be something special about mathematics when it is taught in a Franciscan school?
2. How can we infuse something Franciscan explicitly into our mathematics courses without taking valuable instructional time away from the mathematical content of our courses?

I believe that I have answered these questions implicitly in this paper by giving examples of things that I have done in my classes, and reflecting on how they seemed to work. Let me now address both of these questions explicitly.

I don't think that there are any particularly Franciscan concepts in the mathematical content of the courses I teach. Yet many of the problems that appear in mathematics textbooks illustrate applications of mathematical problem-solving strategies in contexts that make it clear that the content and the skills I teach are to be used in a world where values do make a difference. Further, the students I teach are involved in situations where values do shape the way that they perceive many issues. As I have infused each course with something Franciscan, I have not found myself changing the mathematical content. Rather I have consciously made choices about applications of this content to particular problem scenarios as I have developed problems for the students to solve. The mathematical ideas are not particularly Franciscan, but the problems we choose to consider may express Franciscan values.

*The mathematical ideas are not particularly Franciscan, but the problems we choose to consider may express Franciscan values.*

Does infusing my course with something Franciscan require valuable instructional time that I should be using for covering more mathematical content? Could I cover a little more mathematics if I left out the Franciscan assignments? Since the courses in which I've infused something Franciscan are courses I've taught a number of times before this infusion, I can confidently say that I have not reduced the mathematical content or rigor of a course as I've developed the Franciscan infusion assignments. But perhaps there is another question that better addresses this concern. Instead of asking whether I cover more mathematical content with or without Franciscan infusion, the more important question is whether the students learn more mathematics. My observation of students over the several years that I have been integrating Franciscan assignments into various courses has been that the students take hold of the material with a little more enthusiasm when they are working on problems that seem to mean something in their world. In their reflections on end-of-course surveys, students say that the Franciscan assignments have helped them to make connections so that the course material is more meaningful in their lives. I am beginning to wonder whether my students are learning some things more deeply. This suggests the need to follow up the work I've been doing with some educational studies about depth of learning and retention of concepts.

Where do I go from here? Each semester I look at the courses I am assigned to teach, and choose one to infuse with Franciscan values and/or the Franciscan intellectual tradition in some way. This semester, I'm doing this in an Algebra course. Perhaps next semester, I will attempt to do something in Calculus.

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## Footnotes

- 1 See "Franciscan Values and the Core Curriculum" by Lance Richey et al, which appeared in *The AFCU Journal* in January 2007, for a full description of the new Franciscan core requirement at Cardinal Stritch University.
- 2 As far as I have been able to determine, Florence Nightingale was not associated with Franciscans either formally or informally. I simply use her life and her passion for justice as an example because on more than one occasion she effectively used statistics to make a case for social change.
- 3 Audain, Cynthia. "Florence Nightingale." Retrieved June 7, 2007 from <http://www.scottlan.edu/lriddle/women/nitegale.htm> (Also, follow the link to the discussion of the polar-area diagram.)
- 4 *Franciscan Values at Cardinal Stritch University*. <http://www.stritch.edu/index.php?page=70>, retrieved June 7, 2007

**Note:** Readers who would like more specific information on the assignments described in this article are invited to contact the author using contact information given at the beginning of this article.

## Francis of Assisi: A Model for Empowerment Leading to Peace with Justice

ELAINE MARTIN, OSF, Ph.D.

Neumann College • Aston, PA

emartin@neumann.edu

Francis and his followers were the great communicators of their age. They understood the power of word and image, sight and sound. They traveled throughout the known world to spread and inspire others with the Good News about who Christ is and what He stands for. When Francis and his cohorts entered a town, men and women, children and seniors, stopped and stared in awe at what each beheld (1C XV: 7-8, Armstrong, I, 1999, p. 215). Lively and spirited, filled with joy and good humor, these itinerant troubadours begged and cajoled, confronted and challenged, proclaiming a message of peace and forgiveness.

At Neumann College, *Exploring Diversity* is a core course required of all students, including transfers. Along with the goal of broadening understanding of diverse cultures, the course explores the Franciscan values of peacemaking, care for the environment, and reverence for all, especially the poor and marginalized. It is expected that students who complete the course will be able to “explain and demonstrate how Franciscan values are used in the service of society, especially in dealing with problems related to prejudice, cultural conflict, and the environment” (Neumann College, 2007, p. 73). The Franciscan message, of course is timeless, but when explored from a variety of learning and communication perspectives, its relevance can become more immediate and interactive.

Being a firm believer that Franciscan values are applicable to our own time, I look for ways to provide students with opportunities to make connections between Francis’s actions and their own experiences. In Francis’s day, violence, lording it over others, despising the poor and outcasts seemed to be rewarded, and so it is today. Our violent society desperately needs the values of peacemaking and respect for all. Francis lived out his conviction of the dignity of all persons and because of this, was able to promote a society in which the poor and vulnerable were respected. As a result, the people of Assisi and surrounding towns laid down their arms and began to meet each other with a greeting of peace (1C X: 23, Armstrong, 1999, I, pp. 202-203). Rather than doubting that peace is possible, individuals today can overcome a frustrating sense of paralysis by seizing their own power to change things for the better.

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Striving to relate Francis's actions to the present day, students in the diversity course explore a number of questions through readings, stories, small-group discussion, and activities. What are the parallels between Francis's actions and actions called for today? Which persons in recent times believed so strongly in justice and dignity that they have tried to change society for the better? What motivated these persons to take unimaginable risks when confronted with great obstacles? How is Francis, and how are such individuals, examples for us?

To explore parallels between Francis's actions and courageous actions of the present time, we examine the lives of a number of individuals who were empowered to the point of overcoming great obstacles and inspiring others to take action. We discuss the meaning of "empowerment" and how it includes qualities such as vision, taking risks, and thinking outside the box. Students read and analyze Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech to gain insight into the motivation that enabled King to take such great risks.

A variety of activities engage students in reflecting on the examples of individuals who changed society for the better. These experiential activities — discussion of course readings, reflecting on first-hand accounts and interviews, sharing in small groups, writing a personal reflection paper — invite students to become aware of their own dreams and to recognize their power to make a difference.

## **Course Readings**

Student consideration of course readings, usually first-hand accounts of individuals who took action to better their own situations, lays the groundwork for identifying leadership qualities and the meaning of empowerment. Students vicariously "meet" a variety of individuals: people from different parts of the world, people who struggle in the U.S., well-known people, ordinary people. Gradually, the students begin to enter into the thoughts and feelings of the characters about whom they read.

Stories about Francis, including his encounter with the Muslim Sultan Malek al-Kamil (1C XX, Armstrong, 1999, I, pp. 229-231) and his interventions on behalf of the people of Gubbio (DBF 21, Armstrong, 2001, III, pp. 601-604) provide the groundwork for considering Francis's acceptance of all, even those identified as enemies by most people of the time. Students reflect on peacemaking by considering how they might foster reconciliation among opposing groups. After pooling their insights, students discuss the principles of peacemaking which emerge from the account of Francis and the Wolf of Gubbio. Discussion is enriched by consideration of Seamus Mulholland's thesis that "It is [the] unprejudiced acceptance of the legitimacy of both sides which provides the basis for an equitable, just and peaceful settlement" (Mulholland, 1988, p. 145-146). According to Mulholland, the core of the Gubbio story is that "the wolf killed because it was hungry; because its own rights were not being met, it denied the right

of the townspeople . . . The reconciliation between wolf and people was justice itself; it establishes peace and yet it does so with equity rather than animosity” (p. 147).

In addition to stories about Francis and readings from the course text, *One World, Many Cultures*, students use the Internet to explore actions of certain groups who overcame great obstacles to effect change. Among others, students learn about Lucas Benitez who came from Mexico as a teen and showed the courage of organizing and empowering others to use peaceful protests, marches, boycotts and media attention to win dignity and justice for farm workers. Benitez and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers moved from suffering violations of their basic dignity to achieving just treatment and improved wages through ongoing efforts on behalf of justice and dignity. Upon receiving one of several awards for his efforts for justice, Benitez described how we live in two worlds:

It’s hard for us to understand in which of the two worlds we actually live — in the world where the voice of the poor is feared and protest in defense of human rights is considered the gravest of threats to public security? Or in the world where the defense of human rights is celebrated and encouraged in the pursuit of a more just and equitable society? <sup>1</sup>

The struggle on behalf of human dignity is a universal one, occurring in all parts of the world, in the past, and at present.

## **Web Search on Empowerment**

Students are eager to utilize technology to gain new knowledge about Francis’s spirit and message. For the empowerment project, students select one of the following persons: Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Jimmy Carter, or Elie Wiesel, and use recommended websites to explore and obtain insights about how “their” individual was able to change society. <sup>2</sup> The goal is in-depth thinking that goes beyond biographical data to discover personal qualities that gave certain individuals the strength to go against the “group think.” The following topics guide the students as they investigate their chosen leader:

- The person’s guiding philosophy and why they made the kinds of choices they did
- What his/her dream was and how he/she worked to make that dream a reality
- Major obstacles encountered and how he/she was able to overcome the obstacles
- The personal characteristics that seemed most important to him/her
- The advice the individual might offer to a young person who wants to make a difference.

Upon coming into class on the day the Web Search is due, students divide randomly into small groups to share what most impressed them. After small group sharing, students explore the following questions in a Round Table Format:

- What do all the persons have in common? What is similar about their dreams, their motivation, their methods?
- What is one sentence or one quote that you find especially meaningful?
- What message is relevant in today's society?
- What are the similarities between one or more of these persons and students today?

## **Reflection Paper**

All of the above activities become the building blocks leading to individual reflection. As a culminating activity, students write a reflection paper on the insights gained from researching, reporting, and listening. Students are asked to describe what touched their heart and mind, as well as to consider the relevance to their lives — the impact on their sense of self, values, or ways of thinking.

## **Student Response**

These activities require students to reflect deeply on how Francis and the persons they met in the course are relevant examples for those who seek peace with justice today. Students have identified many similarities with the persons they investigated. For example, they have named qualities such as: determination to overcome obstacles, desire to help others, and willingness to stand up for the rights of others. In their reflection papers, students have expressed the desire to imitate the “achievers” so that their efforts would not be in vain. Some students have wondered who is going to be that next great person to deal with the problem issues in today's society. They have asked: “Is it going to be me, or my brother? I will never know unless I try to be the one to make a difference. If they can make a difference, so can I.” Other students have provided examples of how they had already tried to make a difference. By learning about others who are different from themselves, students believe they now can see themselves in others' shoes. Recognizing that the struggle for peace and justice takes effort and determination, one student stated that she believes she will go down in history as a person who realized her own power to make a difference.

Experience in this Diversity course has confirmed that students become deeply engaged in their research, reflection, and discussion. I believe a number of reasons account for students' engagement. Students are free to choose the person on whom to focus. Guide questions force

students to go beyond biographical information to investigate the person's motivation. Access to primary source materials and personal interviews connects the students with the "achiever's" direct message. The major motivation, however, is the small-group interaction where students discuss with their peers the courage of the achievers and their persistent efforts to transform society into a place where all, including the most vulnerable, are treated with dignity.

## Conclusion

Francis did not accept society's tendency to treat some persons as if they were less valued than others. His example was contagious and he changed society for the better. In more recent times, Lucas Benitez, Martin Luther King, Jr. and others have taken action which restored dignity to people who previously were mistreated. At the conclusion of this course, we ask ourselves a probing question: Why and under what circumstances will we assume leadership in creating a society where each person is treated as if he/she were my brother or sister? The hope is that students learn to believe that, like Francis, King, Parks, Carter, Weisel, and Benitez, they have the power to make a significant difference.

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## Footnotes

- 1 Lucas Benitez and two other members of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers received the 2003 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award in recognition of their work fighting modern-day slavery and their leadership of the national Taco Bell boycott.
- 2 Jimmy Carter, Elie Wiesel, and Martin Luther King are Nobel Peace Laureates and their acceptance speeches have valuable insights. Valuable insights may also be gleaned from the "achievement" Website (Jimmy Carter, Elie Wiesel, and Rosa Parks are featured), especially the interview section. One of the interview questions asks "What advice would you give young people who want to achieve something in their lives, want to make a mark, have a specific dream?"

## **Curiosity in Franciscan Teaching: Freshman Studies Program at Marian College**

**JAMES NORTON, Ph.D.**

**Marian College • Indianapolis, IN**

**[jnorton@marian.edu](mailto:jnorton@marian.edu)**

**T**he Franciscan intellectual tradition values “curiosity” as a core dimension of human thinking. Curiosity is a hallmark of early Franciscan thought, including that of John Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, and Roger Bacon. Their methods of posing questions about the nature of the world from theological, philosophical, and scientific perspectives validated truth-seeking as a foundation of teaching and learning. Scotus was an “original thinker” whose questions contested dogmatic philosophy; Ockham’s “radical” inquiries opened novel views on the relation of theology to philosophy; and Bacon’s innovative investigations into natural phenomena were “a herald of the future,” influential in shaping empirical trends of the later Scientific Revolution (Copleston, 1962, pp. 170-182, 208-209). As modeled by early Franciscans, curiosity constitutes a core disposition necessary for the advancement of education, self, and society. Without curiosity, we cannot pursue knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and truth in any meaningful ways. Without curiosity, our college freshmen will find no meaningful paths through their educational experiences. The Marian College Freshman Studies Program provides intellectual gateways for new college students to increase, strengthen, and apply curiosity skills as fundamental components of educational engagement.

### **Theory and Practice**

St. Francis’s moral instruction to friars “to flee with all their might from idleness” captures the essence of modern educational theories and practices (Bonaventure, 1263/2005, p. 49). Fundamental to effective teaching and learning, curiosity counteracts complacency, compelling the intellect to “flee” from “idleness” of the mind. As teachers at a Franciscan college, we activate the moral imperative of helping students value, nurture, and apply curiosity to benefit their immediate academic goals and life-long service missions and careers. We practice the moral imperative in honor of the Franciscan tradition of asking questions and seeking truths. St. Francis’s life-transforming experience was, in fact, expressed in a question: “Lord, what will you have me do?” (Bonaventure, p. 10). Our goal, then, anchored in St. Francis’s self-interrogation, is to help students advance intellectually through question-building and arrive at ultimate questions of how to live life responsibly and meaningfully.

Marian College’s Freshman Studies Program, now in its second year, gives pedagogical expression to the moral imperative for first year students to flee from idleness through curiosity. The program is organized

around theories and practices of curiosity as a vital component for finding educational and social fulfillment and success. Education is not a noun but a verb, not a state of being but an active process of always becoming, of practicing “how to impose the right kinds of questions on unfamiliar material to find the key to understanding” (Keohane, 2006, p. 160).

Inspired by the Franciscan heritage of asking truth-seeking questions, and by Cardinal Newman’s insight in *The Idea of a University* that “all branches of knowledge are connected together” (1852/1959, p.127), we believe theories and practices of curiosity harmonize the liberal arts curriculum, extracurricular activities, and the four Marian College Franciscan values of dignity of the individual, peace and justice, reconciliation, and responsible stewardship into a holistic view of the college’s educational mission: “to be a Catholic college dedicated to excellent teaching and learning in the Franciscan and liberal arts traditions.” Curiosity acts as a harmonizing force in liberal arts studies

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because asking questions in one area inevitably leads to asking questions in another and another, creating a unified web effect of intellectual, moral, and spiritual connectedness between disparate branches of knowledge and life. To ask how one should practice dignity of the individual as a core mission-value in society, to wonder about ways one can affirm the talents and gifts of each person, for instance, should inspire classroom questions of how human dignity is represented in curricular materials, including history texts, novels, and science labs. Curiosity awakens students to discovering unifying themes in life. That which “wakes us up might be what Aristotle called ‘wonder,’ a curiosity about what something means or what something is” (Schall, 2006, p. 16). The challenge, of course, is finding and implementing effective teaching strategies for awakening students to Aristotelian “wonder” to the life-long value of curiosity.

## Course Structure

Our Freshman Studies Program geared toward awakening curiosity is structured in fifteen sections, with twelve to fifteen students and one instructor per section. Each section convenes twice weekly for half a semester and works from a common syllabus. In addition to individual section meetings, six guest speakers give presentations on subjects ranging from student organizations to campus ministry to community service with the goal of triggering students’ curiosity about campus-wide programs. On guest speaker days students come together in large lecture halls for a shared experience of listening and asking questions to gain new insights into ways of becoming more socially engaged. On other days students meet with their section instructor to engage in reading, discussion, and writing assignments prompted by questions and issues designed to stimulate sustained curiosity through critical and creative thinking

skills. For critical thinking skills we use a six-point model of Rationality, Self-Awareness, Honesty, Open-mindedness, Discipline, and Judgment ([www.criticalreading.com](http://www.criticalreading.com)). Non-critical thinking devalues curiosity and sees questions primarily as “yes” or “no” without subtleties, nuances, or creative discovery. In its 2006 on-line report on knowledge and skills sought for the 21st century workforce, the Society for Human Resource Management lists “creativity” and “innovation,” products of “curiosity,” as one of the highest dispositions employers seek. Creative thinking skills demonstrate originality, inventiveness, ability to communicate new ideas and to integrate knowledge across disciplines ([www.shrm.org](http://www.shrm.org)).

## **Educational Engagement**

To help students nurture curiosity and develop committed engagements with their education through critical and creative thinking, we set up a major course project in which each student works with teachers and in-class cohort teams to create Franciscan-oriented strategic plans that we call “Compact for Student Success.” All students create an individual Plan tailored to their own “curiosities” which they use as a guide throughout their time at Marian College. This means each student strategizes paths of inquiry toward self-fulfillment and success by laying forth a fairly comprehensive, well-researched and documented blueprint of what he or she seeks to achieve and possible means for achieving it throughout their Marian College journey. The plan proves immediately useful for sessions with academic advisors because students prepare for sessions by having already asked themselves questions and considered answers usually asked by advisors. In the long run, the plan will be phased in as an assessment feature for senior exit portfolios and seminars so that graduating students can trace and measure their growth, development, transformation, change of plans, discoveries, new visions, and the broadening of their world perspectives as they traveled from their freshman to senior year.

A unique component of the strategic plan is in the underlying thesis: “My Commitment to Curiosity.” During the course, students raise a series of questions they have about any spheres of existence (intellectual, social, spiritual, historical, futuristic etc.), and they compose directional statements for each question, articulating how they might pursue answers and widen the field of inquiry along the way. We encourage students to add questions and statements every new academic semester as a method of building and chronicling the expansion of their intellectual, social, and spiritual interests. At the end of their senior year students will identify their top ten questions, explain the kinds of journeys their questions took them on, and reflect on what they learned from their exercises in curiosity beginning their freshman year. These questions will be integrated into their senior seminars, which are capstone courses required of all seniors in their respective disciplines. In general, the course provides incoming students with instruction and guidance for maximizing their Marian



College experience. In so doing, the course urges students toward greater aspirations and persistence in the pursuit of the completion of their college degrees.

### **Curiosity in Critical and Creative Thinking**

The course begins with teachers initiating students into broad explorations of the language and culture of curiosity. The English word “curiosity” derives from the Latin “curiosus,” which means carefully inquisitive, exhibiting a desire to learn about anything. In his book *How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci*, an excellent supplementary source for first year experience programs, Michael Gelb (2004) tells us that Da Vinci placed “curiosita,” or “curiosity,” at the top of his list of seven principles for acquiring knowledge and skill. Even as a child, Da Vinci possessed “intense curiosity about the world around him” (p.49). Gelb invites readers to be like Da Vinci and “ask yourself how curious you are” (p.55). The complex cognitive process of self-reflective curiosity, of being able to question ourselves about our capacity for questioning and creating, is an exclusively human activity.

Students should learn to value curiosity as a link between disparate human endeavors, including between artistic and scientific critical and creative thinking. Isaac Asimov’s scientific conjecture, for instance, wonders if mechanical neurology will ever approximate human intelligence without possessing capabilities for exercising “curiosity.” In Asimov’s 1950 sci-fi classic *I, Robot*, the scientists Powell and Donovan are amazed at the new Q-T 1 prototype “which was the first robot who’s ever exhibited curiosity as to his own existence” (Asimov, 2005, p.58). The capacity for curiosity puts Q-T 1 on an evolutionary path frighteningly close to *homo sapiens*. For Asimov, “curiosity” proves to be a major force of cognitive energy that connects metaphysical dimensions of the human mind to the cosmos and God. Gelb’s invitation in contexts of art to “ask yourself how curious you are,” and Asimov’s conjecture on the future possibility of machines exercising curiosity about their own “existence,” provide multidisciplinary ways for us to begin open discussions with our students about curiosity as a *lingua franca*, a language and disposition common to all dimensions of human critical thought and creativity. A common language enables students to think more analytically about such issues as how modern society values or devalues human inquisitiveness. At the end of the semester, we return to the invitation for students to “ask yourself how curious you are” as a way to measure advancement and change in critical and creative thinking skills from the beginning of the course.

### **Franciscan Curiosity in Critical and Creative Thinking**

As we frame the course around curiosity, we look back to early Franciscan thinkers to explore the origins of inquisitiveness in contexts of the multifaceted tradition of Franciscan engagement with the intel-

lect, the world, and God. The integrative practice of looking back in history to seek trajectories to our contemporary concerns represents

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a version of the knowledge-connectedness that Cardinal Newman emphasized in his foundational blueprint for Catholic education in the Victorian era. Students tend to think that questioning means challenging authority. Although it can imply that, in our Freshman Studies curriculum and pedagogy the process of questioning does not serve as a route to philosophical skepticism and doubt. Rather, it has more to do with creating positive, intellectual vehicles for self-education and the pursuit of understanding

one's place in the world. To ask questions of God and creation, as early Franciscans did, is not to put God and creation on trial. Rather, it is a way to clarify our paths toward knowledge and truth.

Teachers make their own decisions concerning particular pedagogical strategies they prefer to use to introduce "Franciscan curiosity" to students in their sections. But we all agree to demonstrate question-asking methods with reference to Franciscan history. The heritage of Franciscan engagement with wonderment about the human condition in relation to cosmic creation is, of course, foreign to most first year students. Common assumptions are that St. Francis only represents an out-dated life style of "humility and quietism" (Shattuck, 1997, pp. 106-107). Medieval Franciscan friars, like Gherardino in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Man*, were entirely disconnected from the real world, dwelling in caves to follow Christ's poverty (Joyce, 1963, pp. 219-220).

We help students get beyond unflattering caricaturized assumptions about Franciscan passivity by discussing the intellectual energy and activity involved in question-asking. We use Franciscan questions as discussion points and portfolio writing prompts. A few examples suffice as classroom models. In his discourse on scientific methodology, for instance, Roger Bacon (d. 1292) asserts many times over that the truth of God's visible world can be achieved only by pursuing answers to the questions that experience raises. A path to knowing God is to know his creation through the questioning process of "experimental science," which begins in the God-given human disposition of curiosity (1266/1962, *Opus Majus*, vol. 2, p.583-632). From Baconian prompts we ask students to record in portfolios something they find curious about a natural object, and how intense observational experience activates further, more complex inquiries. An optional supplementary work relevant to examining nature is Gerard Manley Hopkins's poem "The Windhover," which is Hopkins's poetic version of Duns Scotus's doctrine of "thisness." We ask students to ask themselves if they can see a "thisness" in a natural object, if they can discern

complex patterns of a thing. Also, Hopkins shared with St. Francis a belief that the divine could be perceived in “every plant, every animal, every stone” (Raymo, 1999, pp. 131-132). To investigate the “divine,” we encourage students to articulate how, from the visible characteristics of a “natural object,” a new order of complexity arises that defies easy description.

Starting with Roger Bacon’s questions about the physical world, with which students are most familiar, we move to more unfamiliar realms of questions involving metaphysical dimensions of reality. Metaphysical inquisitiveness obviously abounds in Medieval Franciscan texts. We use, for example, Duns Scotus’s *Quodlibetal Questions* that he composed from his university lectures around 1305 to 1308. As a warm up, students are asked, what if your college teachers today gave you questions like these for your homework assignments, as Scotus did for his students in the 14th century? “In the realm of beings,” Scotus wonders, “is there some being which is actually infinite?” (Wipple, 1969, p.392). A little later he asks, “Is the existence of something infinite, such as God’s existence, a fact that is self-evident?” (p.393). In other words, the questions prompt students to wonder how the human mind grasps “infinity” by way of analogies and metaphors.

William of Ockham also approaches metaphysical knowledge by way of raising questions. He commences his discourse on God’s existence like so: “My question is this: Is the inability to perform the impossible a characteristic of God that is prior to the impossible’s inability to be made by God?” (Wippel, 1969, p.447). Here, students might ponder puzzles, paradoxes, and conundrums concerning meanings of “possible” and “impossible,” binary opposite concepts they will encounter from different integrated angles in other General Education courses. We certainly do not expect freshmen to answer heady Franciscan questions about nominalism, *a priori* forms, or other abstract issues that preoccupied medieval thinkers. Rather, our pedagogy has a more basic four-fold purpose: to explore curiosity in a variety of cultural contexts as an historical tradition; to explore curiosity as a means by which to escape the deadening “idleness” against which St. Francis warned his followers; to explore curiosity as a means for seeking after one’s own sense of truths; to explore the design of specific questions to instruct students in methods of fashioning their own questions that open up new perspectives on familiar subjects. Students record their questions in their portfolios as a kind of journal keeping for tracing critical and creative thought processes.

In the spirit of Bacon, Scotus, and Ockham, we assign students the “curiosity” task of exploring three large existential questions for more portfolio writings and class discussions:

Who am I?

Why am I here?

How will the here-and-now prepare me for the future?

Our only rule is that no one actually tries to answer the questions as though taking an exam. Instead, the questions are to open up a long-term process of philosophical self-reflection in relation to curriculum, campus resources, campus and community organizations, Franciscan values, and life. The exercise's objective is to allow students to experience and puzzle out for themselves challenges, difficulties, satisfactions, and ultimate values of weaving together abstract and concrete thoughts. Based on Newman's knowledge-connectedness theory, these questions encourage students to explore ways in which disparate parts of academic and social life are interrelated, and how apprehension of relatedness increases understanding of the life-long purposes of higher education.

An optional technique, adding another angle to the Franciscan curiosity prompts, presents inquiries posed by Gerard Manley Hopkins in four poems: "The Lantern out of Doors," "The Woodlark," "To his Watch," and "The Summer Malison." Students follow and imitate the questions, which move from curiosity about the external, objective world to questions concerning interior, subjective dimensions of the self in the world. In the first poem Hopkins employs a "lantern" metaphor to describe a moment when inquisitiveness strikes the mind: "Sometimes a lantern moves along the night. / That interests our eyes. And who goes there?" (Hopkins, 1982, p. 71). Curiosity begins when something suddenly and mysteriously appears to us dimly. We ask students to think of examples of such moments in their own lives when unexpected occurrences triggered curiosity, leading to new knowledge. In the second poem Hopkins employs a Wood Lark image to provoke curiosity about the natural world. The poet hears a hidden bird and wonders, "O where, what can that be?" (p. 176). We ask students to think of examples of such moments in their own lives when something unexpected in nature aroused wonderment, leading to new knowledge. In the third poem Hopkins moves to broader questions about the self's relation to the physical, social world: "What shall I do for the land that bred me, / Her homes and fields that folded and fed me?" (p. 195). Students can use this question as a guide for asking themselves how someday they might use their talents to repay their "land" and their "homes" for the great benefits they once received. Hopkins's fourth poem directs questions toward the self and moral roles and responsibilities in life: "But what indeed is ask'd of me?" (p. 161). This is a life-long question about human purpose, and perhaps the most important of all questions we expect our students to pursue ardently as St. Francis did when he asked, "Lord, what will you have me do?"

## Texts

To help first year students think about college life as an intellectual journey through a boundless geography of fascinating questions, we use materials from two texts that furnish foundations for our lesson plans for the semester. Our first text is James Schall's *A Student's Guide to Liberal*

*Learning*, which explores fundamental theories of liberal arts studies for students in the early stages in their academic careers. Schall frames his exploration of liberal arts learning around a question as a way to conduct students through a journey of curiosity: “What might this sort of learning be?” (Schall, 2006, p. 16). One overarching idea Schall examines is how Western culture understands and values the human persistence toward truth through inquiry. Here students increase their “curiosity” vocabulary by learning such words as “acedia”: sloth, laziness, indifference. He integrates a variation on St. Francis’s warning against “idleness.” One of the seven deadly sins of the Medieval Franciscan era, acedia was regarded as a countervailing force against the virtue of curiosity, a profound interest in and care for the world around us and within us. Another vocabulary word is “liberal,” which most students automatically identify with politics. As Schall points out, however, “liberal” derives from the Latin word for free, liberation. “Liberal arts,” then, means finding freedom from ignorance through educational engagement. Our discussion and writing assignments challenge students to think critically and creatively beyond ordinary language by exploring unusual terms like “acedia” in relation to “liberal” and “curiosity” as companion cultural values. Schall’s advice to immerse thought in new language enables students to deepen and broaden even the most basic questions about life. Using Schall’s lexicon, for instance, a question for students to wonder about is how curiosity motivates human thought and action toward “liberation” from “acedia,” and how “liberation” from “acedia” empowers self and society to discover life-transforming truths. Questions formed by language different from what students customarily use in high school enhances critical and creative thinking skills.

Our second text is Donald Clifton’s *StrengthsQuest*, a Gallup instrument that employs question-asking strategies to assist students in discovering their talents and developing their strengths in holistic ways, a kind of modern college-based version of Cardinal Newman’s nineteenth-century theory of knowledge-connectedness. *StrengthsQuest* is especially relevant to our Freshman Studies Program in a Franciscan context because it validates inquisitiveness as Medieval Franciscan thinkers had done. All students take the Gallup on-line inventory which, through a series of questions, suggests which five of the thirty-four possible strengths best fits them according to their individual answers ([www.strengthsquest.com](http://www.strengthsquest.com)). The thirty-four strengths affirm our best qualities, such as Achiever, Developer, Incluser, Learner, and so on.

Clifton’s text describes each strength in larger intellectual and social contexts. Most valuable for our purposes is that the text contains four units based on questions that show students how to employ critical and creative “strength” skills in practical ways. The first unit, “Considering Strengths When Planning Your Education” presents seven sets of “questions to help your educational planning.” The unit concludes with sugges-

tions on how to use curiosity and questions to “create a plan to achieve your desired educational outcomes” (Clifton, 2006, pp. 141-146). The second unit, “Developing Leadership Strengths in College,” also employs questions to guide students into thinking about how curiosity can serve as a pathway to leadership roles on campus (pp. 219-224). The third unit, “Becoming Your Own Best Educator and Learner,” keeps us aligned with the Franciscan heritage of curiosity by presenting students with questions to challenge their thinking about the life-long value of self-teaching (pp. 227-232). The fourth unit, “Strengths and Career Planning,” is organized around the theme of, “It’s a Question of Fit.” The unit leads students through questions concerning how they see their talents as “fitting” a variety of career opportunities (pp. 235-242). We integrate the units with our on-going discourse on curiosity, and use them as a basis for students to develop their own educational plans.

As we work with students to understand their raw, individual potential from the thirty-four strength themes in the Gallup on-line inventory, we motivate them to explore their skills (capacity to perform something well), and then to consider their strengths, their ability to provide consistently near-perfect performances. We then help students translate their strengths into academic and social activities. Data shows that students who believe they have the intellectual, social and spiritual opportunities to do at college what they feel they do best, are the most likely to finish a four-year degree. Our goal is to help students discover, through intensive curiosity exercises, what they do best. We ask them to reflect critically and creatively on their strengths in light of the Franciscan values. How can they use their talents and strengths to practice values on campus and

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in the community? Which values are they best at? How can they activate their best strengths to help themselves and others around them? Just providing students with guidance on how and why to study hard, to sharpen critical and creative thinking skills, does not ensure that students will develop sustained interest in academia. Our First Year program proposes to accomplish more than provide first-year students with pragmatic strategies for college success. It proposes to help them build a community of learners and leaders actively engaged in curiosity and collegiate life.

## Conclusion

Marian College’s Freshman Studies Program is not just trendy. Rather, it meets the needs of 21st century college students in response to pro-



found changes in modern educational and professional practices. Experts in higher education predict that within a few years virtually every college and university in the United States will have implemented some type of first year studies program as standard practice to help students make transitions from high school to college, and to give them good reasons to stay in school. Pioneers in developing these programs have shown that freshmen acclimate much more quickly and fully to academic life, and retention grows stronger, if they can take advantage of a sustained, introductory group-orientation learning experience ([www.firstyear.org](http://www.firstyear.org)).

Our program began with curiosity and a question: Can we gather resources to help develop knowledgeable, conscientious, socially engaged, and skilled citizens and leaders for the future beginning in the transitional freshman year of college? Leaders become leaders because they ask questions and seek answers. Our primary goal for the Freshman Studies Program, then, is to nurture in students the value, discipline, and disposition of exercising curiosity as central to their journey through college and life.

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# **Franciscan-based Service Learning: The Evolution of a Service Experience**

**CHARLES J. COATE, Ph.D., CPA**

**TODD S. PALMER, Ph.D., JD**

**St. Bonaventure University • St. Bonaventure, NY**

**ccoat@sbu.edu**

**tpalmer@sbu.edu**

## **Prelude**

**O**n July 9, 2007, three St. Bonaventure University (SBU) students traveled to the impoverished village of Pinder's Point, Bahamas. One week later they started a summer camp focusing on the needs of the children of Haitian immigrants and poor native Bahamians in a building that SBU students helped to renovate earlier that Spring. The building is located just twenty minutes from the popular tourist area of Port Lucaya but is really a world apart. In the mornings the SBU students conducted in-service training for camps and vacation bible schools throughout the island. In an afternoon camp running from one to five the SBU students worked with 50 primary and middle school age children. They assisted their campers with acquiring basic learning skills as well as teaching the children the basics of entrepreneurship and economics. Working with local business people, the students opened a lemonade stand in a popular tourist area that their young charges ran in teams. Each camper received a hot lunch — for many of them the only substantial meal of the day. Campers attended a series of field trips that the SBU students arranged with local business people and government officials. In the evenings the students met with local townspeople and spoke at civic organizations to procure resources for next year's camp. The bulk of the planning and fund-raising was conducted by these SBU students.

This two month long service experience was neither an isolated incident nor an aberration for SBU students. This trip was part of a long-term service learning experience coordinated through a student organization called Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE). The SBU chapter of SIFE and its sister organizations, BonaResponds and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), have made service an integral part of the SBU School of Business's identity and Franciscan mission.

## **Introduction**

Five years ago the faculty of the SBU School of Business was examining the School's mission, in particular, the role of the Franciscan heritage and tradition. Many people in our university considered a "Franciscan business school" to be an oxymoron. Yet, a number of our faculty members were convinced that we could create a service learning model in the School of Business that reflected the university's Franciscan heritage. We were not

pioneers in these matters; the links between Franciscan values and both business education and service learning have been explored and documented (see Haessly, 2006; Isakson, 2004; and Spies, 2007).

Three student service organizations emerged from this reconsideration of our Franciscan heritage and tradition: SBU Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), BonaResponds, and SBU SIFE. Today, SBU holds up these sister organizations as an exemplar of its Franciscan outreach. Each has won campus and national attention. Notable accomplishments include:

- *Hurricane relief.* In spring 2006, 287 SBU students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members, calling themselves Bonaresponds, spent spring break repairing homes in Mississippi and Louisiana. This was the second largest collegiate group in the country that provided post-Katrina relief. In 2007 this record of service continued as 70 SBU college and community members spent their Christmas and spring breaks working in hurricane devastated areas. Also in 2007 over 50 Bonaresponds members spent five weekends assisting Buffalo, NY homeowners who needed extensive home repairs because of a freak ice storm.

- *Tax Assistance.* SBU VITA involves approximately 40 students and operates each tax season. These students assist the working poor with tax preparation. In the past four years, SBU VITA members have generated over \$1,000,000 worth of tax refunds for community members. Due to the technical nature of this work, student members are primarily upper level accounting majors. This year VITA members greatly expanded its outreach efforts, staffing locations throughout the county.

- *International entrepreneurial service trips.* SBU SIFE sponsors the largest such service trip in the country. For the past four years, SIFE members have spent one week a year in San Salvador and Grand Bahamas Island. This year 50 SIFE members taught over 1,800 school children classes in entrepreneurship, conducted two weeklong after-school programs focusing on science and technology, held evening classes in computer literacy targeted at adults, and installed two computer labs with equipment solicited and repaired by SBU SIFE members. Members also painted a school and repaired individual homes still suffering from the effects of Hurricanes Francis and Wilma.

- *Pinder's Point Economic Development Zone.* Approached by the citizens of Pinder's Point and the Bahamian government, SBU SIFE has assisted in the development of a zone for the benefit of the island's poor. SIFE members assisted in the renovation of an old boys' club into a state of the art cultural and learning center. SIFE members also installed computers. Most notably SIFE members procured a gift worth \$80,000 to build a career technical center adjacent to the learning center.

- *Pinder's Point After-School Program.* Last year SIFE, working with the School of Education, started a pilot program sending SBU education majors to complete a student teaching segment in the Bahamas. All the

student teachers, who are SIFE members, ran an after-school program targeting poor children. This year SIFE members and local educators will work to keep the center open the entire academic year.

- *Local projects.* SBU SIFE members spend thousands of hours each year working with community organizations in Cattaraugus and Allegany counties, New York. SIFE members run weekly computer literacy classes for adults, transitional job training for the homeless, and financial training for soon-to-be released federal prison inmates. SIFE members provide training for students with 15 local partner schools in entrepreneurship, financial literacy, life skills and global economics.

For the purpose of this case study, we are focusing on SBU SIFE and, in particular, the central piece of the international SIFE experience, the 10 day annual trip to Grand Bahamas Island. This paper describes how that trip evolved and reflects the spirit of SBU SIFE and the Franciscan mission at St. Bonaventure University. Describing the dynamics and growth of these trips enables the authors to demonstrate the journey of SBU SIFE from “suspect” student club to the university’s primary service organization. The evolution of SBU SIFE and the SIFE experience is reflective of the need to balance and join the head and the heart (Hayes, 2005, p.17) and move toward a deeper intellectual understanding of the total Franciscan experience.

To present the SBU SIFE experience we first discuss our faculty’s efforts to learn the Franciscan tradition and convert the tradition into strategies to employ in the organization of SIFE. We then briefly overview the Bahamas service learning trips of the past four years and our reflections on key events of those trips and how those events relate to Franciscan traditions and business strategies that help determine the success of SBU SIFE. Finally, we complete the paper with a short discussion on our “Franciscan report card.”

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This paper was authored in the spirit of a quote by Jean-Francois Godet-Calogeras as noted by Sr. Margaret Carney (2005) in reference to the early Franciscans: “First they lived it; then they wrote it”(p. 6). Hence, this paper is not the classic business research paper involving quantitative data collection and statistical analysis; rather, our data comes from the living and learning experiences gained from four educational and service learning trips. We reflect upon these trips and the Franciscan tradition we study.

## **The Beginnings of SIFE in a Franciscan University**

The SBU chapter of SIFE began in the 2003-2004 academic year. At that time the SBU School of Business was undergoing accreditation and the faculty was evaluating the School’s mission, particularly the stated role of the

Franciscan heritage and tradition. We noted that the School of Business's vision and mission statements mentioned the word "Franciscan" five times. Operationalizing the Business School's statement of values was crucial in the accreditation process. Although faculty members were free to speak of the school's Franciscan heritage, the school possessed no formal programs effectively incorporating the Franciscan tradition into either curricular or co-curricular activities. A consensus developed that service learning was an area in which these faith-based constructs could most readily be incorporated.

Many business school faculty reached the conclusion that the major step in implementing Franciscan values was first to understand those values. To that end, a three year course sequence for faculty was established. The *Build with Living Stones* program was offered in year one. (See Scraba, 2007 for details on the *Build with Living Stones* program and another campus's application of this program). Two graduate level classes were offered in years two and three through the university's School of Franciscan Studies. The first course focused on the history of the Franciscan movement. The second course examined the Franciscan experience through several lenses, most notably economics. During the initial three years, 20 School of Business faculty members (approximately two in three) attended some or all of the courses. In addition, several faculty and staff from other areas of the university attended. The classes were considered by all parties to be a success. Faculty and staff learned the Franciscan stories and traditions and began to understand the culture and values the school's mission suggested that they impart to the students. Perhaps even more importantly, faculty and staff developed a common frame of reference to address the integration of the Franciscan tradition into the modern university experience.

At this same time SBU was starting the Journey Project, a five year program funded by the Lilly Foundation (see Godfrey, 2006) to facilitate vocational experiences on campuses around the country. While the definition of vocational experience was quite broad, it generally involved service appreciation and reflection. SBU student surveys related to early efforts to obtain a Lilly grant (the Journey Project) suggested that approximately one in five students would be involved in service, one in five had no interest in service, and the other three in five students were willing (but not overtly motivated) to become involved with service. Further, this three in five (or the majority of students) would be more predisposed to service with a social or experience based dimension.

Clearly, service needed to become a larger piece of the SBU educational experience. A service experience that combined education with the Franciscan tradition was needed. Adopting an idea from Hayes (2005), we were attempting to combine "religious and educational tradition" (p.10). Looking at the data, as well as our own personal experiences, we felt that we needed programs to supplement those being provided by University

Ministries. We concluded that in order to reach a larger number of students we needed to develop a new model of service learning. In essence we were developing and marketing a new product. We needed to supplement our newly learned Franciscan knowledge with our organizational (or business) theory knowledge. Fittingly as Hayes (2005) suggests in quoting Bonaventure we would need to “join charity with knowledge” (p.13)

### Simple Strategies from the Franciscan Tradition

We emerged from these classes as *Novice Franciscans* but with one major difference from most of our distant Franciscan cousins — we saw

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Franciscan heritage not from a historical or theological perspective but rather from an organizational perspective. Hence we saw Franciscan history in terms of strategies, structures, systems, staffing and skill sets. We identified five key elements that we believed, if implemented, would help us create service organizations that would be true to the Franciscan heritage of SBU. At no time did we fool ourselves into thinking that these were the five definitive Franciscan values, but they seemed like as good a start as any. The elements we focused on included: task definition and accomplishment; primacy of community; focus on relationships;

connecting task with reflection; and the need for Franciscan presence.

Our interpretations of the Franciscan experience were based on readings of the early Franciscan movement, notably the lives of Francis and Clare. Our interpretation of what is “Franciscan” was colored by our understanding of how the Franciscan community evolved over its first 150 years as well as observations of contemporary Franciscan communities. Our first three elements were based on examples such as the following:

- Franciscans are a “hands-on” people. At San Damiano Francis was commanded to “. . . repair my house. . . .” The ability to complete value-added projects in response to community needs was seen as essential in creating our service voice.
- Francis and his followers created strong communities. Within one year, Francis had attracted 11 companions. We felt that it was important that the service group, not the service trip, become the primary determinant of the group’s identity.
- Francis led his brothers as a brother, stressing a more egalitarian perspective. Likewise, we felt it essential that we recast the traditional roles of “teacher/student.” To that end

we decided that we would view the students as “partners” and act accordingly.

As we started SIFE these stories and examples provided purpose and direction. By focusing on these basic elements, we started to communicate with our students an overall vision of our service philosophy. From the beginning we sought to broaden our perspective from individual service acts to the broader service community we were creating. One of our primary examples was the founding of SBU itself; responding to the real needs of a community, friars formed a place of learning and service.

We needed to find a task or set of tasks to perform that added value to the lives of the people we served while calling upon the skill sets of our students. Our tasks needed to be broad enough to be ongoing, yet specific enough to be able to produce metrics for evaluation and control purposes. As with the earliest Franciscans, we wanted our students to have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of those we served. To make a difference, our students needed to engage others in an extended time frame. They needed to share work and goals. They needed to establish a relationship with the people of the community served.

To complete the learning cycle we wanted a reflection component in the SIFE organization. In addition to a learning experience, the reflection would provide an opportunity for spiritual growth. A formal, defined religious experience was not the goal. Rather, we envisioned a spiritual opportunity for students to complete their work or service efforts on their own terms.

To help guide us, we wanted a Franciscan presence. Therefore, we invited our friars to accompany us on the service trips. Friars provided an obvious set of intangibles by their participation. They also provided a professional level of expertise with regard to the reflection element of the trip. They could mentor the students in this critical area; an area in which we, as business professors, had no relative competence.

A final overarching concept that we adopted was a reliance on a modified form of “providence.” Francis and his followers lived an itinerant lifestyle. Following the charge of Matthew 10:9, Francis lived a life without shoes, a walking staff or money. While obviously an effective student service group could not perform without planning (and the university administration would take a dim view of leading a group of students into a foreign country with no money, etc.) faculty did decide that at some point, one could only plan so much. The element of surprise (within limits) is a key element of the SIFE service experience — it provides the confounding variable that makes true learning possible. We realized that our students could “find their own way.” We could not pre-plan an experience; we could, at best, guide or direct the experience. We would need to be flexible, not only on a day-to-day basis, but also on a strategic level.

## **Running SIFE like a Business**

We believed that SBU SIFE's success would be enhanced if the foundation of SIFE was built on basic business principles and organizational theory. We devised a three part strategy that included: thinking of the potential student volunteer first as a customer; conceptualizing SIFE as a start-up, entrepreneurial organization; and understanding our competitive advantage in terms of products and the markets we serve.

The SBU student body was our customer base. Data from the Journey Project suggested that only one in five students were currently involved in service work. While we were willing to poach a few of these students, we wanted to target recruitment efforts to the majority of the students. To do this we needed to "sell" a service organization that utilized the students' educational background, provided a unique and enjoyable experience, and had a social component. A January Bahamas service trip emerged as the perfect "hook." Such a trip would be a means to excite the students and generate interest in service. A follow-up consideration was price. Our research revealed that similar service trips often cost over \$1,000. We conducted a survey and determined that the students' "price point" was approximately \$600. We reduced costs by managing all parts of the trip internally. We also determined that students needed avenues to raise funds. Also, we would need a means to leverage student interest before and after the trip. In the Fall semester we would engage in work building up to the January trip. In the Spring semester, we worked to follow-up the Bahamas trip by managing internet projects that connected Bahamian and New York schools.

As a startup organization SIFE would need to be entrepreneurial in nature. Our goal was rapid growth in a still unknown environment, so the flexibility of an entrepreneurial organization was important. We wanted students to take ownership in projects and the initiation of projects. We wanted to be continuously changing and looking for new opportunities. We had to be willing to try new ideas and recognize when those ideas did not meet the needs of those we served. In other words, we needed to be able to adjust. We needed to listen to students and encourage the students to lead.

We also trusted Franciscan tradition here. Francis was an evangelist and would send new friars on missions soon after recruitment. We felt that placing our students in field situations, albeit more closely monitored than one managed by Francis, they would be more likely to internalize 21st century skills, such as leadership, teamwork and conflict resolution.

Finally, we realized that as our tasks changed or evolved we needed to be able to recruit faculty and staff with the talent and skills to complete those tasks. Just as the friars added unique qualities to the organization, we expected that the campus would provide persons with other qualities we would need to be successful. We recruited faculty and staff by marketing to them just as we did with the students. We ascertained faculty and



staff needs and positioned SIFE as a means of addressing these needs. Currently we have thirteen faculty and staff who serve as SIFE advisors. All advisors are from outside the School of Business.

A key concern was determining the nature of the service we were to provide. We strongly felt that service for service sake, was costly and inefficient. Instead we sought to provide “value-added” service as determined by those that we serve. Once again we utilized a marketing research model to determine the needs and possible means of meeting these needs. It has taken us several years to create relationships with enough people in Pinder’s Point to adequately assess and meet those needs. Key to our success have been successful partnerships with such parties as local churches, schools, government and the business community. Matching the strengths of our students to community opportunities and needs is essential.

### **The SIFE Bahamas Trips, the Center Piece**

The first SIFE Bahamas trip (January of 2004) was to the island of San Salvador. Our inaugural trip was mostly through happenstance — a local New York business person was lecturing an undergraduate entrepreneurship class when she mentioned that she had started a “cyber center” for the island. Students were enthralled and immediately approached the instructor requesting to go to the island to teach computer skills. Within two months the 32 class members raised nearly \$30,000 and developed programs that were implemented in the San Salvadorian primary school and cyber center. The trip saw the beginning of the “Stone Soup” program discussed below. The SBU students also performed typical service work such as painting a church. Three School of Business faculty and two friars accompanied the students.

The following year 40 students traveled to Pinder’s Point, Grand Bahamas Island. The change in venue was for two reasons: first, to better control air transportation costs by traveling to a closer island and second, to find an island with a larger population that had more of a need. Earlier that summer, hurricanes Francis and Wilma had caused significant damage to the island including the St. Vincent DePaul School, one of our hosts. SIFE projects included hurricane cleanup, maintenance, and repairs to the school and community; educational programs in the St. Vincent DePaul school and Lewis Yard School, a small public elementary school in Pinder’s Point; updates to computer labs at the St. Vincent DePaul school, the local Catholic High School, and Lewis Yard; and adult computer education classes conducted at both Catholic schools. Three School of Business faculty and two friars accompanied the students.

The third and fourth year trips returned to the Pinder’s Point location. In the third year trip 45 students were accompanied by two School of Business faculty, two School of Education faculty, and one friar (formally on the faculty of the School of Business). SIFE projects included continuing the hurricane clean-up started during the previous year and educa-

tional programs targeted at children and adults similar to the prior year. Programs continued at St. Vincent de Paul and new programs were initiated at a larger Catholic grade school, St Mary of the Sea (grades k-8).

SIFE projects in the fourth year trip to the Bahamas were similar to prior years in the schools but structured differently so that our students were much more efficient in implementing the programs. Fifty SBU SIFE members worked in nine local schools and taught over 1,800 students over the course of a week. Programs were developed for each primary grade and special programs were set up for the local high schools. Students painted the entire St. Vincent school (six buildings), renovated the boys' club building, and repaired local homes. After-school programs focusing on science and technology were held in two schools; and computer literacy classes targeting adult learners were conducted each evening. Donated computers were installed at a local school and the boys' club. SIFE members secured a donation of \$25,000 worth of tools for vocational education. One School of Business faculty, two school of Education faculty, one School of Arts and Sciences faculty, and one friar (also on the faculty of the School of Education) accompanied the students.

At the end of the week, five of the SIFE members stayed on the island for an additional seven weeks to participate in a pilot student teaching program at St. Vincent and Mary Star schools. The students also started a daily after-school program in the boys' club, now renamed the Youth Development Association (YDA). These students then procured the majority of the resources needed to start a summer camp in July 2007. In addition, two non-education students spent their spring breaks and a week in summer on the island assisting with technology issues and in the setup of the economic development zone.

## **Reflections on Key SIFE Experiences**

In the last four years over 150 students and 11 faculty members have participated in these service experiences. SBU SIFE now partners with all segments of Grand Bahamian society in order to provide services to the community and the marginalized. What started as a one-time, one-week trip has now turned into a year-round commitment by our students. We anticipate that our SBU SIFE students will spend 30 weeks per year on the island starting with the 2008 school year. "SIFE Week" has become an educational and social event on the island. What are the common themes that have made these experiences successful?

### ***Community and relationship building***

Our number one goal in starting these trips was the creation of a learning/spiritual community that reflected basic Franciscan tenets. Thus, we attempted to provide a community that simply does not exist in most modern universities. Key to this community was student empowerment. We believed that the egalitarian Christian idea was essential in producing a real, working community that would result in a truly educated individual.

Students have taken true ownership over all aspects of the SBU SIFE experience and the Bahamas service trip. Students plan and implement almost all aspects of the trip.

We also believed that such a community must be based in shared work; the members must make long-term commitments to the community. In our opinion, a short-term project does little to foster true relationships and community building. Our beliefs in community building meshed completely with our concepts concerning value-added service which by definition is almost all long-term in nature.

Likewise we have used the Bahamas service trip to build and integrate with communities outside our own. Obviously, our success in the Bahamas is totally dependent upon our students being seen as community members in the Bahamas. Just as important has been the way that our Bahamas trip has allowed our students to mesh more fully with our local New York community. We have worked diligently to bring the Bahamian experience back to our local schools. Our “Stone Soup” program connects Bahamian and Cattaraugus County, New York schools via the internet on year-long projects. In the 2007 academic year, we started our “entrepreneurial fellows” program in which two local school teachers will travel with us during our annual service trip in order to create a sister school relationship.

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Creating a true community is time consuming and filled with risks. Long-term relationships by necessity increase the risk of group conflict and may lead to group dysfunction. Our roles as faculty SIFE advisors have changed tremendously as the group has matured. In the first trips the advisors were mostly concerned with running the programs, but today the advisors are mostly charged with facilitating relationships — training our students to be leaders and team members.

### **Hardships**

Hardship is, of course, a relative term. In no way do we equate the difficulties associated with our trip with ones in Africa or South America. However, clearly the environment is more hostile than in the United States. Poverty is more extreme. Environmental degradation is more severe. In working day-to-day our students encountered problems and situations that they simply would not see in the United States.

Hardships on these trips came about as much from the environment as any intended plan. The Bahamian way of life is far less structured and convenient than in the United States. Students and faculty had less “control” on the trip. We relied on others for transportation and food. Students were deprived of their cell phones (gasp!); sleeping arrangements could be tight or Spartan. Even finding drinking water for work crews could be a challenge. At times our experience could be described by the quote of

Short (2004) “. . . it is hard for all of us at times, but we had to depend on each other more, creating a kind of interdependence that fostered a sense of community” (p. 2).

There is no doubt that a lack of resource control leads to a stronger bonding experience among group members. Another important aspect is self-imposed hardships. Like all university sponsored events, university rules had to be followed. College students are experts at bending and breaking restrictions. A major thrust of our community building efforts is for our students to realize that self-destructive behavior affects not just the individual but the community. Hence, rules and punishments are community driven, not university driven. Each year we are finding that students are more likely to follow rules and, more importantly, to act as a community in sanctioning individuals when rules are broken.

### ***Reflections***

Reflections were planned twice each day: a morning meditation and an evening reflection. These reflections provided the opportunity to build community within the entire student group. Reflections are often structured to allow each student to share their experiences of the day. By doing this all SIFE projects become the property of the group. Also the reflections give all students a voice in decisions or planning. In the early days of a trip many students were reluctant to participate verbally, but by the end of the trip their reluctance to share had vanished.

We have also seen an evolution in our reflections as students moved to “own” the reflection component as they own all other aspects of the trip. During our last two trips, students ran the reflections with the friars providing background support.

### **Finding our Calling: Building Relationships**

Two key events from the first SBU SIFE trip to San Salvador Island, Bahamas were finding our “technical” calling and the “Stone Soup” project. Both helped to define how we could interact with the Bahamian communities by building personal relationships and adding value.

Professional schools at many universities include nursing and engineering. For these schools, aligning their skill sets with an emerging or developing economy is an easier fit. For a business school where students are trained to function in a developed economy, the fit is not as easy. Providing educational service at the cyber center defined our niche; our business students were relative experts in information technology. A small team with hardware and software expertise, along with a large group of students with application knowledge related to internet and office software, could add value to numerous communities and schools in the Bahamas.

Stone Soup is a program in which a class in Cattaraugus County, NY works with a class in the Bahamas to create and market a product (for

example, a recipe book). Proceeds from this project are used as decided by the two classes. The essence of this program is that it identifies two different communities and links them together with technology and common purpose. Our students use their business expertise to guide the exercise. This is a 21st century twist of the Franciscan concept of relationship. Not only do our students establish relationships with the groups of young students, but they allow these students to share a relationship with peer students in Western New York.

We also found that we had to develop hospitality skills. During this second year trip we were, by “providence,” treated to the hospitality of the parish of St. Vincent DePaul. Our SBU community (students and staff) experienced and learned the concept of hospitality in a true Franciscan sense. This hospitality, in the words of Kyte (2004), “. . . welcomes a relationship with the whole person . . . ,” “. . . lead(s) to a life of happiness or fulfillment,” and “if we are hospitable toward one another, we enter into a genuine relationship”(p. 12).

Also, this trip illustrated the concept of Franciscan presence. Because of the deep religious faith of the Bahamian people, the presence of Franciscan friars provided immediate legitimacy for our group. As an example, the parish priest invited our friar to celebrate Mass at St. Vincent DePaul; this Mass served as a catalyst to bond our community (SBU students and staff) and the community of St. Vincent DePaul and beyond.

The experiences of the second year and the hospitality we received were not lost on us. As we returned to St. Vincent DePaul parish in the third year, we were prepared to be “good guests.” We reflected on the programs we had provided for Bahamian students: Had they really added educational value? Or had the teachers in the classroom been good hosts and accepted the interaction of their students and our students as an educational experience? We believed the education programs our students provided teaching the basics of business, economics, and local industry (tourism) were valuable. But, we were unsure. We turned to our colleagues in the School of Education for help.

School of Education faculty traveled with us and reviewed the educational requirement of the Bahamian schools. With slight modifications to the existing SIFE programs we were able to meet educational objectives of the Bahamian curriculum. We now could plan with the teachers in the Bahamas SIFE programs that added educational value according to their curriculums. Now not only were students from the Business and Education schools working together, but also faculty members collaborated.

In the fourth year we had moved from a single trip focus to the concept of continuous service and interaction. While the January trip remained a center piece, SBU SIFE’s programs had greatly expanded. Small groups of faculty or students made Fall and Spring semester trips to enhance computer labs, set up educational programs, meet with government administrators, meet with the Rotary clubs, complete student teaching field block, or partner with the Economic Development zone. We no longer think of

ourselves as working with the Bahamian communities. We are part of the community. When we travel to the Bahamas we visit and work with our friends.

No single event listed above contributed to the Franciscan character of our service experience. And it is not the same set of events that enhanced the experience for each of us. It is (was) the set of events, the events over time, the learning from these events, the remembering and retelling of these events that define our experience.

### **Franciscan Report Card**

In the past four years the students of SBU SIFE have completed thousands of hours of service working in their local schools and community. Each year a service learning immersion experience in the Bahamas has highlighted the students' efforts. Teams of SIFE students have presented at a regional competition, sweeping awards and advancing to the nationals in the last three years. As a result of their SIFE experiences, students have earned internships and employment with Fortune 500 companies that would never have interviewed them previously.

Any university president would consider this a great success story. However, we are more interested in knowing whether we passed the grade on a Franciscan level. To make this evaluation we rely on criterion proposed by Blastic (2007). Blastic discussed the early Franciscan

*The ability to connect  
with the humanity  
of others is at the  
heart of the  
Franciscan tradition.*

experience, summarizing with the words "conversion, mission and human" (p. 22). He discussed the importance of "engaging with others different than yourself" (p.23) in terms of understanding and experiencing humanity. He discussed the critical nature of deeds, encountering others, and fostering relationships. Blastic lists service learning

as an essential tool of any institution's curriculum; engaging with others in "sustained service" (p. 26). We believe SBU SIFE has met these criteria.

As business professors our first tendency when faced with determining outcomes is to create measurements and engage in gap analysis. However, a story about one of our students may best illustrate whether Blastic's criteria have been met. In November 2006, Jeff, one of our senior SIFE members, traveled to the Bahamas during Thanksgiving break to pre-plan the upcoming January trip. While there Jeff met Glenn, a Florida contractor staying in the Bahamas for experimental cancer treatment. Jeff told Glenn of SBU SIFE's mission and by the end of the evening Glenn had committed to give the group \$25,000 worth of tools for the trip. In March 2007 Jeff was back in the Bahamas working on the economic development zone when he received word that Glenn had died. Glenn's family flew Jeff, who had known him for only 4 months, to Florida to deliver the eulogy. The family then committed to building a vocational education building that will be a

key element of the Pinder's Point economic development zone. Our shared experience in the Bahamas will become Glenn's legacy.

The ability to connect with the humanity of others is at the heart of the Franciscan tradition. We believe that the service learning experience that we are pioneering has the potential to affect positively both students and those we serve. We are currently working to expand the program to have an even greater impact upon the people we serve, the university community, and the students who have taken this cause to heart.

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## **AFCU Welcomes New Members**

In the January 2005 issue of *The AFCU Journal*, editorial board member Dr. Kevin Godfrey introduced the member institutions of the Association. We are pleased at this time to welcome the newest members of the Association, Our Lady of the Lake College in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Villa Maria College in the community of Cheektowaga, just outside Buffalo, New York.

### **OUR LADY OF THE LAKE COLLEGE**

#### ***Baton Rouge, LA***

In 1923, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary established Our Lady of the Lake School of Nursing as an integral part of the new Our Lady of the Lake Sanitarium in downtown Baton Rouge. In 1960, the diploma nursing program revised its curriculum and condensed its three year program to 27 months. The already flourishing residential student body grew even larger, responding to a critical nursing shortage and the changing health needs of the community. As a result of a subsequent decline in the number of residential students and an increase in the number of non-traditional students, Our Lady of the Lake became a commuter school in the late 1970s. In 1989, the Franciscan Sisters and the medical center administrators decided to transition the diploma nursing program into an Associate Degree program in an institution of higher education. Our Lady of the Lake College of Nursing and Allied Health opened in 1990. In 1995, the college changed its name to Our Lady of the Lake College. Ten years later, the Southern Association of Colleges and Universities granted the College approval to offer graduate degrees as well as baccalaureate and associate degrees and certificates. With an undergraduate enrollment of 1936 students, Our Lady of the Lake offers degrees in nursing, health sciences, humanities, behavioral sciences, and arts and sciences. One hundred fifty graduate students pursue degrees in nursing, anesthesiology, and physician's associate.

With a holistic approach to student development, the College emphasizes academic excellence and response to the needs of society. As a Catholic institution faithful to the spirit of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Our Lady of the Lake embraces the Franciscan values of service, reverence and love for all life, joyfulness of spirit, humility, and justice.

## VILLA MARIA COLLEGE

### *Buffalo, NY*

Founded in 1961 by the Buffalo Province of the Felician Sisters and affiliated with the Catholic University of America, Villa Maria College originally served women religious. The college admitted lay women in 1965 and became co-educational in 1968. With a student population of 499, Villa Maria offers an array of services and clubs which promote growth in academic, social, cultural, and spiritual areas. Rooted in the liberal arts and Catholic Franciscan traditions, the College fosters in its students Christian values, intellectual inquiry and critical thinking, interpersonal and communication skills, information literacy, technological skills, respect for diversity, and a commitment to serving others. As part of the Villa Maria Complex Peace Site, the College has a special commitment to foster peace and expand knowledge and change behaviors regarding violence and justice. Service learning requirements and the College Food Pantry that serves students, alumni, and members of the local community reflect the Franciscan spirit of the College mission.

In Fall 2008, the College will open a student housing community, also available to students from surrounding colleges. The housing community will offer amenities such as meeting rooms, a theater, gym, fitness center and an outdoor pool. Accredited by the Middle States Association, the College offers the Associate in Arts degree with concentrations in General Studies, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Science; the Associate in Science degree with concentrations in Education Studies, Fine Arts, and Music; the Associate in Applied Science degree with concentrations in Business Management, Early Childhood Education, Graphic Design, Health Sciences, Interior Design, Jazz, Music Business, Photography, and Physical Therapy Assistant. In 2005, Villa Maria introduced the four-year Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with a major in Interior Design. The BFA degree will offer majors in Animation and Fashion Design and Merchandising in Fall 2008. The College claims a distinctive niche in the areas of applied art and music, preparing students for employment or transfer.

Please take a few moments to learn more about Our Lady of the Lake and Villa Maria through their respective websites, <http://www.ololcollege.edu/> and <http://www.villa.edu/>

## **“What Are You Serving Today?”**

### ***How AFCU Member-Schools Are Helping Students Integrate the Franciscan Ideal of Service into Their Personal and Professional Lives***

#### **Part Three**

**KEVIN GODFREY, PH.D.**  
**Alvernia College • Reading, PA**  
**Kevin.godfrey@alvernia.edu**

**T**his article is the third part of a series begun in 2005. The intention of the series is to identify how AFCU member-schools are working to assist their students to learn, understand and incorporate the Franciscan service tradition into their personal and professional lives. The project fits into the AFCU Journal's larger plan to incorporate into each publication of the journal an opportunity for readers to become familiar with the AFCU institutions, their programs, personnel and students.

Parts One and Two presented information on service at the following AFCU institutions: Alvernia College, Felician College, Hilbert College, Marian College, Saint Francis University (Loretto, PA), Cardinal Stritch University, Siena College, the University of St. Francis (Joliet, IL), Neumann College, Saint Bonaventure University, Lourdes College, Silver Lake College of the Holy Family and Viterbo University. Now, Part Three introduces the Franciscan School of Theology, Our Lady of the Lake College, Saint Francis College and Villa Maria College.<sup>1</sup>

### **FRANCISCAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**

#### ***Berkeley, California***

Preparing women and men to understand and participate in a broad concept and experience of Christian ministry that includes service to all aspects of creation is *the* signature feature of the identity and mission of the Franciscan School of Theology (FST). FST's institutional goal is articulated in a comprehensive statement of Theological Vision presented at the beginning of its *2007-2009 Catalog*:

Our theological vision is based on the Incarnation. We believe that God became human for us out of love. Following the example of St. Francis in his “Canticle of the Creatures,” we believe that all creation speaks to us of God because it was formed to reflect the face of Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> The information presented in this article was either provided by representatives from the various AFCU schools directly or taken from institutional websites. In preparing the text, every attempt was made to remain faithful to the words and language used in official printed or online documentation generated by AFCU member schools. In order to simplify the presentation here and to make it less confusing to readers, citations have generally been omitted.

Our vision of Christ includes all creation in an embrace of mutuality, equality, and respect. We seek to foster a relationship of brother and sister to each other. Our theological tradition encourages us to emphasize the unique revelation of God in each person, in every culture and in all creation, and fosters special concern for those on the margins of society and the Church.

The Franciscan School of Theology is committed to embodying Franciscan theology in a religiously and culturally diverse world. In our living, our learning, our relationships and our community, we address both the head and the heart by integrating the pastoral and academic dimensions of theological study. We offer a multicultural Christian community in which to prepare for ministry.

This theological vision expresses the Roman Catholic and Franciscan emphases on the christocentric nature of the created world, which both reveals the reality of God and which is simultaneously in need of the healing, understanding and service of people. According to this vision, FST regards service as a matter of fostering life-giving *relationships* through which all of the elements of creation are brought together in a familial bond of sisterhood and brotherhood with all other elements of creation. The recognition that the entire created order has need of service drives FST's vital purpose of preparing ministers to meet that need, as articulated in its Mission Statement:

The mission of the school is to prepare candidates for professional ministry in the Roman Catholic Church, for careers in theological education, and to provide opportunities for enhancing knowledge of Christian faith and the practice of ministry.

FST's philosophy is that education that prepares individuals for active ministry should be practical and transformational; in other words, it should assist students in concrete, practical ways to cultivate life-long values, habits and skills that will assist them in their future careers of ministry or service. Towards this end, FST offers a variety of opportunities for its students to engage in service within the local community during their education process. FST's Admissions Coordinator and its Director of Spiritual Formation work together to generate volunteer opportunities for students to participate in community outreach projects or in other efforts on behalf of social justice.

FST does not have a formal service requirement that mandates student participation in specific service-related activities; however, some individual degree programs contain service learning components. For example, a requirement for completion of the Master of Arts in Ministry for a Multicultural Church (MAMC) is completion of a Supervised Field Education component. Students within this program "are assigned to ministry placements made according to their goals in such areas as parish

work, health care or prison chaplaincy, community organizing, justice and advocacy, retreats, catechetics, campus or university ministry, Christian initiation, and educational leadership.”

One of FST’s distinctive non-academic program requirements for lay students pursuing the MAMC degree is the Lay Spiritual Formation Program. Participation in this program assists students to explore “patterns and rhythms of spiritual practice that support a person in ministry and in life . . . providing community support as participants explore spiritual growth for ministry.” One of the signature features of this program is that lay students — and any other students who wish to do so — are invited to generate a personal, intentional “Rule of Life,” which can become a point of reference to guide their spiritual lives as well as their ministry of service to others.

Persons interested in first-hand testimonials about the quality of FST theological training and preparation for ministry programs should access the “Head & Heart Video” on FST’s official website. This excellent video showcases current students and graduates of FST reflecting on their understanding of the Franciscan heritage and its relevance for their personal lives and for their service to others.

## **OUR LADY OF THE LAKE COLLEGE**

### ***Baton Rouge, Louisiana***

Our Lady of the Lake College (OLOL) in Baton Rouge, Louisiana was founded in 1923 as a nursing school. Through progressive changes over years it has become a college that confers baccalaureate and masters degrees. The mission of OLOL remains that of preparing qualified personnel to work in the field of healthcare. This preparation involves helping students to acquire both professional skills as well as a values foundation in the Roman Catholic and Franciscan traditions. The College Mission Statement emphasizes the interrelationship among the *vision of St. Francis of Assisi*, the *healing ministry of Jesus Christ* and *service* that those involved in healthcare work are called upon to contribute:

Inspired by the vision of St. Francis of Assisi and in the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, we extend the healing ministry of Jesus Christ to God’s people, especially those most in need. We call forth all who serve in this healthcare ministry, to share their gifts and talents to create a spirit of healing — with reverence and love for all of life, with joyfulness of spirit, and with humility and justice for all those entrusted to our care. We are, with God’s help, a healing and spiritual presence for each other and for the communities we are privileged to serve.

Faculty, staff and students at OLOL have traditionally been quite familiar with the notion that working in healthcare is a matter of doing service for other people. In recent years, broadening that perspective by encour-

aging more critical reflection on the meaning and nature of healthcare service has become a more prominent institutional priority. In fact, it was specifically the intention to stimulate more profound reflection on service within the healthcare traditions that was the impetus for OLOL's self-transformation from an exclusively professional school to a college that integrates professional studies and liberal arts education. Thus, beginning in 1998 OLOL added a liberal arts core to its professional studies curriculum. Now, OLOL students have the possibility of majoring in subjects traditionally associated with the Arts and Sciences as well as those traditionally associated with professional programs.

The institutional transformation described here has required no small amount of effort on the part of all constituencies on the campus. A key element in the transformation process was providing education to strategic institutional planners, campus leaders and members of the faculty so as to help them understand why liberal arts education is important for nurses to study. Among the benefits that have flowed from OLOL's integration of liberal arts and professional studies has been the opportunity to introduce the Franciscan tradition to students in more concrete and critical ways.

An effective method for achieving the desired goal of helping students to reflect critically on service has been through their participation in service learning courses. Academic service learning is a recent addition to curricular development and planning at OLOL and a Director of Service Learning has recently been appointed.

OLOL students, faculty and staff contributed significantly to disaster relief and community rebuilding in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Contributions of service included a broad range of activities such as onsite assistance — particularly medical assistance, hospitality to disaster victims who fled to Baton Rouge and providing opportunities for displaced students who wished to continue their education until they were able to return to New Orleans.

OLOL regards itself as a work in progress. The priorities of its new leadership team include expanding the College's scope of influence and helping students to ground their experience of service in critical, intellectual reflection that takes into account the lives of Jesus Christ and Francis of Assisi.

## **SAINT FRANCIS COLLEGE**

### ***Brooklyn, New York***

Although the word "service" does not technically appear in the Mission Statement of Saint Francis College (SFC), the value of serving others as an institutional priority is acknowledged when the document explains that "the Franciscan heritage and the Catholic tradition [of the College] establish a cornerstone . . . of social responsibility." While *social responsibility*

involves more than serving other people, it clearly does include service to others. A stronger and clearer statement of the College's commitment to service as a focus of teaching and learning is contained in the College Catalog's description of Campus Ministry:

Franciscan service is based on relationship with God, self, the human family, and all creation. Campus Ministry is, first of all, a presence that makes these interrelationships visible. It focuses particularly on the spiritual development of both the person and the community, which together constitute the College. It creates and enhances initiatives that promote the dignity of each person and the building of community through spiritual awareness, private prayer and public worship, social leadership, supportive collaboration and community service.

Traditionally, Campus Ministry has been the organizational center for teaching about service and for planning service opportunities at SFC. More recently, however, a transformation is occurring in which the curricular or academic dimension of the College has begun to focus more attention on its call and responsibility to provide education and critical reflection on the value of serving others. The impetus for this development started when new members of faculty and administration began to encourage greater consistency between the College's Franciscan mission and academic programming.

One of the central elements of the College's renewed commitment to educate for service has been a focus on service learning. In June 2007, SFC invited Mary Sacavage, Director of the Alvernia College Schuylkill County Center, to conduct a workshop for faculty to introduce the concept of service learning and to help begin a process for program development. As part of the effort to make service a central focus of academic affairs, SFC has also been in dialogue with other members of the AFCU to discover how Franciscan institutions of higher learning approach the challenge to introduce the Franciscan service ideal. One of the issues that is a focus of dialogue as SFC commits to service learning in the future is whether service learning courses should be included in the core curriculum or whether the service component should be the responsibility of individual academic departments.

The performance of service is not a graduation requirement for the general student population at SFC. However, for approximately 200 students who receive full educational scholarships, a commitment of fifteen hours of service per semester is required as a condition for receiving the scholarship. For scholarship students, completed service hours must be logged with the Department of Career Service. Letters of recommendation generated by Career Services for students applying for jobs or graduate programs acknowledge students' service-related activities. A question that is being discussed at SFC is whether or not to acknowledge service hours performed by scholarship students on the student's college transcript.



All students at SFC — particularly those who receive full academic scholarships — are encouraged to participate in an annual service fair where service opportunities are advertised and where students may sign up for participation in service activities. Service opportunities, including those performed within the full scholarship program, are coordinated by the Office of Campus Ministry.

## **VILLA MARIA COLLEGE**

### ***Buffalo, New York***

The institutional commitment to foster the Franciscan value of “serving others” is referenced in the Mission Statement of Villa Maria College (VMC) as the seventh of its institutional priorities:

Villa Maria College is a private, two-year, co-educational, Catholic institution founded by the Felician Sisters in the Franciscan spirit. Through career-directed programs integrated with liberal arts education and field experience, the College educates students for employment and transfer to other educational institutions.

Villa Maria College fosters in its students

- Christian values,
- intellectual inquiry and critical thinking,
- interpersonal and communication skills,
- information literacy,
- technological skills,
- respect for diversity,
- *commitment to serving others.*

Students receive opportunities to learn about the Franciscan service tradition and to participate in service opportunities in a variety of ways. To begin, participation in service-related activity is a graduation requirement for all students at VMC. The *2007-2008 College Catalog* explains the service learning requirement as follows:

Villa Maria College incorporates service learning opportunities to build positive values among students as well as leadership, interactive communication, critical thinking, analytical and professional skills. Twenty to twenty-five hours of service learning is a graduation requirement in two year programs and fifty hours is required in four year programs. Depending upon the program, the requirement is implemented within courses, the program, or as a co-curricular requirement. On- and off-campus service learning opportunities are available.

Initially conceived of by the Service Learning Committee established in 2004, the service requirement is a relatively recent addition to the College's list of graduation requirements. Prior to graduation, students must document their service as part of VMC's Institutional Outcomes Assessment, which is itself a prerequisite for graduation. This documentation requires not only that students identify what their service activity was, but also that they write an essay in which they reflect upon their service-related activity in a critical way.

As is clear from the statement above, academic courses that contain a more formalized service learning component — and are credit bearing — provide one venue for fulfilling the service requirement. Faculty members have organized service activities at local nursing homes, soup kitchens, shelters and elementary schools. A good example of a service learning opportunity that is embedded in a course is English Composition. This course provides tutoring for children at Popular Citizenship Early Childhood Center #11. As part of their course, Villa students promote among School 11 students the strengthening of skills in writing, reading and self-expression. In this setting, college students serve as role models for younger students. The experience allows Villa students to apply what they are learning at the college level to what children are learning at the elementary level. The experience also helps Villa students to test whether teaching might be a career option.

Academic service learning is a developing phenomenon at VMC. Some faculty members are at various stages of learning about the value of academic service learning and are discovering ways to integrate service opportunities into the structure of their classes.

Students may also fulfill the service requirement by participating in non-academic service learning activities. Campus Ministry is a principal connection for non-academic service learning opportunities that fulfill the graduation requirement. The *2007-2008 College Catalog* description of Campus Ministry's purpose and activities indicates that the cultivation of individual spiritual development, which Campus Ministry works to foster, has as its purpose the goal of leading people to serve others:

Motivated by the Catholic, Franciscan and Felician traditions, various opportunities are offered to help people deepen their awareness of the presence of God in themselves, in each other and in the world around them. This awareness can be strengthened through Eucharist, interfaith prayer, private prayer and meditation, retreat experiences, spiritual direction, and pastoral and vocational counseling. It is hoped that this deepened awareness of God's presence will result in the performance of various works of mercy and charity.

One of the unique service opportunities associated with Campus Ministry is an on-campus Food Pantry affiliated with the Food Bank of

Western New York. Over the past twenty-one years, the pantry has assisted students as well as other members of the local community. The food pantry assists an increasingly large number of individuals. In November 2007, it provided assistance to 1265 people and 610 families.

VMC also provides many other initiatives that offer students service learning opportunities. The *Kingstree, South Carolina Service Project* provides students with opportunities to help needy individuals and communities in Appalachia through their work at Saint Anne's Outreach Center, staffed by Felician sisters. The Physical Therapy Assistant Program offers special assistance to the Felician Sisters Health and Wellness Center. Interior Design students worked to develop a plan for a community kitchen in Buffalo's Broadway Market.

VMC is currently working to implement new service learning opportunities intended to promote community sustainability within the town of Cheektowaga, New York, where it is the only institution of higher education. A future initiative will be to institute a tutoring program with Pine Hill Elementary School. Another will be to implement a joint spring project with Cheektowaga High School to serve community needs. These programs are consistent with other outreach programs that VMC has sponsored in the past that assist the local community in a variety of important ways.

## **Concluding Remarks**

The AFCU schools profiled here are remarkable in that each one has involved itself in some way in a transformational process — either its own transformation or the transformation of others — that has been motivated by critical, institutional attention to the Franciscan value of serving others.

FST's recognition that the entire created order should be the focus of Christian ministry reshapes the boundaries of what "service to others" has come to mean and include. Who and what should be served receives significant redirection and expansion within this more complex, comprehensive theological framework. In addition, FST's focus on lay women and men specifically as ministers who should be guided by personal, intentional "Rules of Faith" sets the stage for an astonishing shift in ministerial leadership that includes greater attention to the individual conscience.

LOL, formerly a nursing school, has become a four-year college that not only provides skills for the workplace, but more intentionally than before, works to shape the personal and professional values of future generations of healthcare workers. The transformation of this entire institution from a two-year to a four-year college that includes a significant Arts and Sciences perspective is the consequence of a decision to pay critical attention to, and to foster, the Franciscan ideal of serving others.

SFC, an inner-city four-year college confronted with many struggles, has recently decided to institute academic service learning as an institutional priority. To this end, it has engaged in a program of institutional education

that has included input from other Franciscan institutions of higher learning. The idea that SFC seeks collaboration with other Franciscan educational communities is an indicator that consistency of perspective exists among Franciscans. From a practical perspective, one of the areas where it is most obvious is in the area of education for service to others. This is excellent news considering the history of diversity that has sometimes divided the Franciscan traditions.

VMC, a two-year college with some expanded four-year programs, has recently instituted a graduation requirement that obligates students not only to engage in service-related activities, but also to reflect critically on them so as to help its graduates understand and express the deeper meaning of Christian, Franciscan service to others. In addition, a new institutional priority to participate in service initiatives oriented specifically towards local community sustainability establishes a bond of interdependency between the educational community and the broader human community that the institution exists to serve.

Without intending to over simplify, what general implications can be drawn from the review of the four AFCU institutions presented in the previous pages? To begin, paying attention to the concept of serving others, a concept which is a signature expression of the Franciscan heritage, can be a contemporary catalyst for institutional reform and educational transformation at Franciscan colleges and universities. As a principle of Franciscan higher education, *service to others* is a common point of reference that Franciscan colleges and universities can build upon to create webs of communication and collaboration. The people of the earth, the earth itself and all it contains, and the entire created order could benefit from witnessing the example of Franciscans institutions of higher learning that rally collaboratively around the Gospel call to serve others.

## **Uniendum uniendi**

closer than film wrap  
ecstatic cling conjoins  
    like magnets  
    like gravity

shot through and saturated  
bounded and permeated  
    like groundwater in limestone  
    like heme inhering in blood

macraméed in DNA  
quark-blazoned God

**Felicity Dorsett, OSF  
University of Saint Francis  
Fort Wayne, IN  
fdorsett@sf.edu**

## **Le Celle de Cortona**

There in the soft and sudden dusk,  
The honeycomb of solitude  
Surprises me.  
As my guide bows low,  
Delighted to reveal this wondrous world of solitude,  
Clinging to the hill's embrace,  
A vast city of silence  
Curving into the vespersed sunset,  
Whispering Francis' dream  
Of God's impassioned grasp of love  
When we allow ourselves  
That one great risk  
To step into the only place  
Which we can never know  
With our brave and hollow certitude.

**Greg Friedman, OFM  
Cincinnati, OH**

## Poetry in Special Ed. Class

They follow Mrs. Gow:

one with a shaved head  
stitch scars a faint purple  
one looks with slanted, wide-set eyes  
over a flattened nose  
one sucks his thumb  
Down's syndrome, Down's syndrome  
another walks forward on his toes  
swaying as he goes  
another, another, another, another  
Just a visitor here, I prompt:  
let's take a trip  
to a beautiful place  
close your eyes  
what do you see?

Darkness, one replies.

Look closer, I urge  
and slowly a place is made  
flat and calm:  
sun  
tree  
flower  
dog

I spell p-r-e-t-t-y and w-a-t-e-r  
hold the paper while they print

I want to rush the letters  
out of those laborious pencils  
but I slow myself  
sip the rhythm of this world

we make our place  
they smile at me  
they follow Mrs. Gow

**Helen Ruggieri**  
**Olean, NY**  
**hruggieri@verizon.net**



## **The Last Performing Wallendas**

from a newspaper account of Angel and Steve Wallenda's final performance in Galetton, PA.

At 21 Angel has lung cancer  
the doctors say surgery is risky  
and she would have to breathe  
using oxygen tanks  
as if she lived in an underwater kingdom,  
under a heavier gravity.

Angel will perform tonight  
her farewell appearance with  
her husband, Steven, a Viet Nam vet  
who wants to call attention to the MIA's,  
to bring those missing home.

Angel and Steve will walk on air  
more graceful than mere humans;  
they will float above the crowd  
lighter than gossamer,  
brighter than spangles.

They will walk above us  
as if they were a lost species.  
as if their DNA had changed  
and made them into the future  
their cells mutating,

the world below all pale and noisy.  
In the lighted center ring  
they are what was intended.  
There are so many causes;  
they will find what they are missing

**Helen Ruggieri  
Olean, NY**

## Book Reviews

***Writings on the Spiritual Life. Works of St. Bonaventure, Volume X.* F. Edward Coughlin, intro. & notes. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2006. Pages xv +434.**

This tenth volume in the *Works of Bonaventure* series from the Franciscan Institute offers translations of the major spiritual works of the Seraphic Doctor including *The Threefold Way*, *On the Perfection of Life Addressed to the Sisters*, *On Governing the Soul*, and the *Soliloquium*. In addition to the excellent translations of these four texts by Girard Etzkorn, the volume offers four smaller but important texts of Bonaventure, translated by Etzkorn and others, which provide some other dimensions of Bonaventure's spiritual theology. All the translations are fresh and accessible even to undergraduate students.

In addition to a seventy-seven page explanatory overview to Bonaventure's anthropology, F. Edward Coughlin has provided helpful footnotes to these texts that explain particular words or expressions or elaborations on the content, and often include cross references to pertinent texts of Bonaventure. These contributions by Coughlin make the volume a very useable resource for the classroom.

Coughlin points out that the categories of medieval thought employed by Bonaventure are not always easy to understand from the point of view of our contemporary theological and spiritual context (41), and recognizes that the task of interpretation is essential to recover the richness of Bonaventure's vision. He helps immensely in this task of interpretation by clearly laying out the elements of Bonaventure's understanding of the human person created in the image of God as the context for his spirituality as developed in these four translated texts. For this, the translation of the Prologue from the *Commentary on Book II of the Sentences* provided in the appendix, is indispensable. Coughlin's introduction functions very much like a medieval *manuductio*, that is, he takes his reader by the hand both through Bonaventure's medieval vocabulary as well as through the various dimensions of his spiritual worldview. One of the apparent weaknesses of Bonaventure's language is that the human person is approached primarily using the term "soul." In various places throughout these texts Bonaventure does make reference to the embodied implications of his vision as well as to a communal dimension of spirituality (e.g., 95, 100), but this can be missed by the modern reader who does not appreciate the broader context of Bonaventure's theology, or the specific context of the text itself. Coughlin does provide the explanation of how the body functions in Bonaventure's understanding of the *imago Dei* (7-12), which is necessary in order to avoid the impression that Bonaventure unduly spiritualizes the human person.

Based on this presentation of Bonaventure's understanding of the human person, Coughlin then presents an overview of the processes at work throughout his writings. Here, Coughlin offers an insightful analysis of the role and function of hierarchy for Bonaventure, which was received through the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and subsequent commentators. The process of purgation, illumination, and perfection, somewhat foreign to contemporary approaches to spirituality, is used by Bonaventure to describe the dynamics that help a person to become Christ-like through the "enkindling of love" which these categories serve.

What Coughlin effectively accomplishes is to provide the basic information one needs to read Bonaventure's texts with understanding, so that the reader "is able to use creatively Bonaventure's teaching as a guide to discovering how grace might be at work in one's life . . ." (67). And Coughlin does this well because what he communicates in his essay is the fruit of his own experience of Bonaventure's thought in his teaching at the Franciscan Institute, as well as in the many workshops he has given around the world on these themes. His approach respects Bonaventure's teaching with an awareness of contemporary categories of thought resulting in a presentation of Bonaventure as a voice who can be used as a dialogue partner in contemporary discussion. The only lacuna in the text is the glossary of terms promised (74), but not included. This book can be used effectively in courses on Bonaventure, as well as in courses of spirituality and theological anthropology for both undergraduates and graduates. Coughlin's introductory essay itself is worth the entire cost of the book, to say nothing of the wonderful translations of Bonaventure!

*Reviewed by*  
Michael W. Blastic, OFM  
*The Franciscan Institute*  
*St. Bonaventure University, NY*

***A Franciscan View of Creation: Learning to Live in a Sacramental World.* Ilia Delio. St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2003. Paper. Pp. xvi + 56. ISBN 157659201-4. \$5.00.**

Ilia Delio's *A Franciscan View of Creation* is the second volume in The Franciscan Heritage Series. The series is sponsored by the Commission on the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition of the English-speaking Conference of the Order of Friars Minor. It is entirely appropriate that the second volume in the Franciscan Heritage series should focus on creation, since, according to Delio, the Franciscan tradition asserts that there is an "intimate relationship between Christ and creation," an "intimate link between creation and Incarnation" (pp. 41, 3).

Delio's objective is to draw attention to insights from the Franciscan tradition on the meaning of creation and the relationship of humans to creation (p. 2). After a brief introductory chapter of two and a half pages, she devotes a full chapter to Francis's view of creation, beginning with a description of his milieu, his conversion, and lastly, his mature view of creation. Delio describes how Francis came to view creation as a family, and how he saw himself as related to all aspects of the created world, even the tiny creatures. She relates how Francis's respect for creation arose out of an inner love by which creation and God were intimately united (p. 14). To illustrate how God entered into the world of creation through the Incarnation, Francis introduced the live manger scene, a visible representation of how an all-powerful creator God humbled himself in the form of an infant, in a profound act of humility.

At the end of Part Two, Delio reproduces Francis's eighteen-line poem, "Canticle of the Creatures" (p. 18). Delio then describes how, with this poem, Francis communicates his theological vision of creation. Of Francis she writes: "Through humility he realized his solidarity with all creatures. Through compassion he came to have deep feelings for the things of the earth" (p. 20). Francis had the theological insight that "he perceived the interrelatedness of creation with Christ as center" (p. 20).

In the next two chapters (Bonaventure's Theology of Creation and Scotus's Theology of Creation), Delio describes how Francis's view of creation was further developed by John of Fidenza (aka Saint Bonaventure) and Blessed John Duns Scotus.

Unlike Francis, Bonaventure (1221-1274) was a schooled theologian. Bonaventure reflected on the life of Francis, and translated Francis's vernacular theology into scholastic theology (pp. 21-22). Bonaventure maintains Francis's insight of the intimate connection between creation and the incarnation, between the everyday world of nature and the Trinity. Creation is like a river, says Bonaventure, flowing from God's infinite love.

For Bonaventure, creation is also like a beautiful song that God, an Artist-Creator, sings; or, like a cosmic symphony. Human beings can participate in the creative process by producing music, art, artifacts, and even children.

Bonaventure views creation as an orderly universe, one that is not eternal, but has been created — brought into being — through a free outpouring of the infinite love of God. A distinctive dimension of Franciscan theology of creation that Bonaventure emphasizes is the *triune* nature of the God of the Christian tradition: the view that the created world, like the Trinity, is dynamic and relational. Creation is like a mirror that reflects the Trinity, both its power and goodness. According to Delio, “For Bonaventure, the meaning of creation is summed up in the word ‘relationship.’ The basis of creation is the Trinity, a community of relationships out of which creation emerges” (p. 25).

The blueprint for creation is in the mind of God. All forms (exemplars) were created by God at the beginning of the world. Bonaventure adopted Plato’s view that everything that exists is a copy or replica based on a pattern or model. Most students of philosophy know this as Plato’s theory of Forms; the Franciscan tradition calls it, after Bonaventure, exemplarism. Bonaventure likens creation to a book that human beings can read to see various levels of God’s expression, various levels of exemplars. Creation is also sacramental: “the Word of God is expressed in the manifold variety of creation,” and thus creation is “sacramental — a symbolic world full of signs of God’s presence” (p. 29).

In a clear, direct, and well-organized writing style, Delio lays out the central concepts of Bonaventure’s view of creation: order and harmony of creation, the free aspect of God’s act of creation, the Trinitarian aspect of creation, creation as a world full of exemplars, creation as a book and mirror, and creation as sacramental.

Scotus (1265-1308), considered with Bonaventure to be one of the two main voices for the Franciscan intellectual tradition, reaffirms the intimate link between the Trinity and creation. Yet, “Scotus’s doctrine of creation is insightful and original” (p. 33). In reflecting on the intimate link between incarnation and creation, Scotus concludes that “the divine desire to become incarnate was part of the overall plan or order of intention” (p. 34). This is extremely important for Scotus, for it means that he “places the Incarnation within the context of creation and not within the context of human sin” (p. 34).

Scotus’s concept of the univocity of being, the notion that God’s being and created being are related through the one concept of being, is at once a subtle, yet bold insight. It helps to highlight God’s immanence. And it leads us to consider that “each created thing, in its own way, tells us some-

thing about God” (p. 36). Each individual item in creation is unique. Scotus uses the concept of *haecceitas* to capture this aspect of reality. *Haecceitas* is Scotus’s concept that the “thisness” of something is what makes it itself and not something else. This view not only has metaphysical and theological dimensions, but ethical dimensions as well. For Scotus, reflective of the Franciscan tradition, sees each individual as possessing dignity because of its uniqueness as an individual entity. Both Bonaventure and Scotus, according to Delio, viewed creation as the result of God’s free love; creation flows from the triune God.

In chapter five Delio identifies five themes that form a continuous thread in Francis, Bonaventure, and Scotus: “1) the goodness of creation, 2) the integral relationship between Christ and creation, 3) the sacramentality of creation, 4) the integral relationship between the human and the non-human aspects of creation, and 5) the universe as a divine milieu with Christ as center” (p. 41). Delio’s conclusion invites us to use the insights of the Franciscan tradition to reflect on our own personal relationship with creation.

The volume is short (only about fifty pages), readable, and inexpensive (only five dollars). For professors, it is perfect for complementing other course materials: it is an easy way to make a valuable addition to course readings. I have assigned it to my students as a supplement in an environmental ethics course. Environmental ethics, understood as a systematic account of the moral relationships between human beings and their natural environment, is well represented in this book. This book challenges us to think deeply about creation and our role in sustaining it. *A Franciscan View of Creation* is an excellent vehicle for conveying to a wide audience the many profound and intriguing Franciscan insights on the nature and value of creation.

*Reviewed by*  
John Mizzoni  
Neumann College  
Aston, PA

***The Virtual Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi: An Interactive, Explorable Environment with Integrated Text* (CD-ROM and Text). St. Louis: Institute of Digital Theology, Saint Louis University, 2006. ISBN 0-9791418-0-X. \$49.95 + postage, S & H.**

Long-awaited, *The Virtual Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi* is now available. This digital resource uniquely presents one of the world's most celebrated places of Christian worship, "decorated by the greatest medieval artists of their time," in Europe, including Cimabue, Giotto, and artists from Roman, German and French workshops. Much more than a mere series of photographs, the CD provides views of the upper church's interior that are not available to the gravity-bound pilgrim or tourist. Most of the interior furniture has been removed in this display. The viewer can easily glide forward or backward, fly from floor to vaulted ceiling, spin for a 360° panorama, or take a vertiginous look from the top of a column toward the floor. The focus can be a decorative motif along an arch, a particular scene, or an entire vault. These wider views show enough to clarify relationships among the images, and zooming in or out can reveal others. The highest resolution images are of the lowest register, the Francis cycle, best preserved despite earthquake damage and other vicissitudes over the centuries. Above this are two registers of scenes from the Old and New Testaments, often interrelated among themselves and the Francis scenes. Screenshots can be saved for future reference.

A *User's Guide* provides clearly-stated information: complete instructions on installing the program and navigating through the basilica, the controls and keyboard commands, and how to access the text associated with the images. This latter feature is most useful; by toggling from the image one can reveal an overlay of associated text from the Bible, from the early lives of St. Francis or other sources. The preface by J. A. Wayne Hellmann, OFM Conv., describes the project's origin as a class project which almost grew into a dissertation. A general introduction provides a detailed overview of the upper church, including historical context, chronology and a research bibliography. The description of the counterfaçade, with its four frescoes ("The Miracle of the Spring," the "Ascension," "Pentecost," and "Francis Preaching to the Birds") in chiasmic arrangement is most intriguing, as it segues from Old Testament to New: "In effect, the chiasm merges Heaven and Earth as it connects the rest of the narratives in the nave." Three appendices give helpful schemas of the artwork for the nave, the transept and the apse. One might want to print these for handy reference, instead of flipping from screen to screen.

This digital resource is designed for both individual and class use. As of this writing it is a major part of a graduate medieval seminar on *Scripture, Saints, Sacraments and Sacred Space*. The readings for the class, many by St. Bonaventure or from *The Golden Legend*, give context for the artwork,



while the artwork provides a structure for the material studied. *The Virtual Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi* will interest students of art, history, theology and medieval and Franciscan studies. At Franciscan institutions of higher education it can enhance various programs for orientation or information. Of course, since it is part of their heritage, Franciscans can utilize it in other various ways. It would make a great preparation for students or pilgrims before traveling to Assisi.

Scenes of the lower church and the tomb of St. Francis, however, are not included; and a major drawback is the lack of compatibility with Intel 8-x open-board graphics chip sets. Nonetheless, one looks forward to the next productions of the Institute of Digital Theology.

Minimum specifications for *The Virtual Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi* are: Windows 2000, XP, DirectX 9.0, Pentium 4, 1 GHz, 512 MB RAM, 64 MB Video card, 500 MB Free Space, Sound Card, 4x/1x CD/DVD Speed. The CD will work more smoothly with the recommended: Pentium 4, 2 GHz, 1 GB RAM, 128 Video Card and 32x/2x CD/DVD Speed.

*The Virtual Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi* is available at <http://digitaltheology.org>. It is also listed at Amazon.com, where it has two five-star reviews.

*Reviewed by*  
Felicity Dorsett, OSF  
University of Saint Francis  
Fort Wayne, IN  
[fdorsett@sf.edu](mailto:fdorsett@sf.edu)

*St. Louis University*  
*St. Louis, MO*

## ***In Remembrance of Peter Christensen***

*Dr. Peter Christensen, Associate Professor of English at Cardinal Stritch University died suddenly on September 3, 2007. Prior to coming to Stritch in 1995, Dr. Christensen taught at Marquette University, the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design and the University of Milwaukee. He received his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the State University of New York-Binghamton where he also earned a Masters degree in Library Science.*

Dr. Christensen was both a literary critic and a literary historian who gave presentations around the world on the literature of many countries: France, Romania, Germany, Scandinavia, Spain, America, Russia, England, Australia and others. He also published numerous scholarly articles on literature and film — well over two hundred — in various journals both here and abroad. During the summer of 2007, he participated in the NEH Summer Institute in York, England, focusing on Medieval Literature. He was interested in increasing his knowledge of this period so that he could teach the Religion and Literature course with a focus on St. Francis of Assisi and Dante. Though he did not get a chance to teach this course, he had already contributed to the field of Franciscan studies in the first two volumes of the *AFCU Journal*: “St. Francis on Film: A Bibliographical Essay, Part One” (2004) and “Part Two” (2005).

A memorial service was held at Stritch on September 25 for colleagues, students and friends to mourn the loss of not only a great scholar and teacher but also a great person. As one of his students said, Dr. Christensen was “sweet and gentle and approachable.”

Barbara Wuest  
*Cardinal Stritch University*  
*Milwaukee, WI*

## ***Let Us Not Forget Our Brother, Don Aldo Brunacci***

*Don Aldo Brunacci, Prior of the Cathedral of San Rufino, Assisi died in the early morning of February 2, 2007. Thousands of pilgrims, including students from the AFCU institutions, remember him as their host at the Casa Papa Giovanni. Women and men of faith world-wide remember him for his heroic work to save hundreds of Jews during WWII. St. Bonaventure University awarded Don Aldo an honorary degree in 2002 in recognition of his efforts on behalf of the Jewish community.*

(Composed in the days following Don Aldo's death, the following Memorial was shared with the St. Bonaventure University Community and is presented here in edited form.)

In the summer of 2002, Don Aldo encouraged St. Bonaventure to bring more students to Assisi to study their Franciscan tradition. I recalled that conversation as I led the very first class of students in the Franciscan Heritage Perugia Program to Assisi on the morning of February 2, 2007.

Several weeks earlier, my wife Judy and I had gone to Assisi to pay our respects to Don Aldo. We found him bed-ridden and weak. I informed him that I had finally brought students to Perugia and Assisi. He seemed to have a twinkle in his eye when he complimented my "progress" in learning Italian. When I asked how he was feeling, he smiled and simply replied, "Ninety-three years; ninety-three years." That was to be my last encounter with Don Aldo before his appointment with Sister Death.

I did not know that as I entered Casa Papa Giovanni on a spectacularly sunny morning a few weeks later. After the students and I had hiked up from San Damiano to Santa Chiara and then across town to a lunch appointment just a few doors from Don Aldo's, I left the group to call on him, and to inquire whether he would be strong enough to grace my class with a brief visit. Instead I walked into his wake. "E' morto!" announced Rita, his devoted assistant, as she led me to his casket in the tiny chapel by the front door. And so he was. To his distinctive bearing of strength and gentleness, now was added peace.

The funeral was the very next day at his beloved San Rufino. It was a remarkably local affair for a man who was truly a global citizen, and whose walls boasted tributes from world leaders and celebrities. The church was packed with family and Assisi neighbors, including the local boy and girl scout troop that he had once led, wearing their uniforms and holding high their hand-made wolf and bear banners. There was a tribute from the President of Italy read by Mayor Claudio Ricci, and a stirring tribute from

Assisi Bishop Msgr. Domenico Sorrentino. The bishop recalled Don Aldo as a man with a “passionate and contagious” Christianity, who “spoke with his works and many acts of charity” and “whose big heart of love broadened the horizons of hope for so many.”

But surely the most dramatic moment in the service was when a diminutive bearded man, Prof. Gustavo Reichenbach, donned a Jewish yarmulke and began to recite the mourner’s Kaddish in Aramaic. A chemistry professor at the University of Perugia, he represented the remnants of the Jewish community there, which includes some who survived because of Don Aldo’s courage.

The next day the *Corriere dell’Umbria* reported that this tribute made the Assisians even more proud of their citizenship, which seems amazing enough in the birthplace of Francis and Clare. The newspaper’s headline read, “Assisi non dimentichera’ fratello Aldo” to which I’m proud to add, “Amen. May we not forget our brother Don Aldo.”

Michael Chiariello, Ph. D.  
*St. Bonaventure University*  
*February 12, 2007*  
*Perugia, Italy*

## ***In Thanksgiving for the Life of Earl Joseph Madary (1965–2007)***

*As the AFCU journal went to press, we were saddened to learn that Earl Madary, a member of our editorial board, had passed away on Sunday, December 16, 2007. A Mass celebrating his life was held at San Damiano Chapel at Viterbo University on Wednesday, December 19.*

Earl was an influential and lively participant in the early conversations which led to the birth of the AFCU journal. Even after being diagnosed with cancer in October 2006, Earl remained an active member of the Board, gifting us with his wisdom, good humor, incredible insight, and gentle, always upbeat spirit.

A well-loved member of the faculty of Viterbo University since 1992, Earl served as Chair of the Religious Studies and Philosophy Department. The obituary posted on the Viterbo University website stated that Earl was “extraordinary in every way. He was a model servant leader, loved ecology and was a strong advocate for the environment. He embodied the principles of Catholic social teaching and lived and died in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi. Earl influenced all he touched as a teacher, a musician, and faithful witness to the Gospel.”

Earl graduated from Viterbo University in 1988 with a BA degree in Vocal Performance and Church Music. He earned an MA in Pastoral Theology from St. Mary’s University in Winona, MN, and a Doctorate of Ministry from the Graduate Theological Foundation in South Bend, IN. An accomplished musician, Earl was also a founding member of A Place of Grace Catholic Worker House in La Crosse, WI.

We at the editorial board of the AFCU Journal are grateful for the many ways that Earl touched us with his peace, goodness, and love.

We offer to his wife, Marci, his children, Rachel and Joseph, and the entire Viterbo University community, our deepest sympathy and prayers. May we faithfully extend his legacy of love, peace, justice, compassion, and good humor.

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- Francis of Assisi



## Meet Our Contributors

**Sr. Ann Carmen Barone** is a Sister of St. Francis of Sylvania, Ohio. Sr. Ann Carmen has served as Vocation Minister and has been actively involved in the liturgical life of the Diocese of Toledo, serving on several diocesan committees and assisting with music ministry at numerous area parishes. Sr. Ann Carmen currently serves as Vice President for Mission and Ministry at Lourdes College in Sylvania and as Director of Liturgy for the Sisters of St. Francis. She also serves as a member of the Board of Trustees at Franciscan Care Center, Sylvania, Ohio and at Sylvania Area Family Services. In addition, she is a member of the Toledo Diocesan Liturgical Commission. Sr. Ann Carmen holds a Master of Music degree from Bowling Green State University.

**Michael W. Blastis, O.F.M.**, is a Franciscan Friar of the Holy Name Province, New York, NY. He is an Associate Professor at The Franciscan Institute/School of Franciscan Studies, St. Bonaventure University. He teaches Graduate Courses in the School of Franciscan Studies in the area of Franciscan Hagiography, The Franciscan Theological Tradition, Franciscan Preaching, and Franciscan Philosophy. Recent publications include, "Prayer in the Writings of Francis of Assisi and the Early Brothers," in *Franciscans at Prayer*, ed. Timothy J. Johnson. The Medieval Franciscans, Vol. 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2007) 1-29; and "Clare, Human Embodiment, and the Espousal of the Poor Christ," *Magistra* 13:1 (2007) 94-116.

**Michael Chiariello** is Professor of Philosophy, and former Dean of Clare College at St. Bonaventure University. Currently, he serves as director of The Franciscan Heritage Program in Perugia, Italy. Chiariello received his Ph.D. in Philosophy from Boston University. His most recent publications include, "Bob Dylan's Truth," in Verenezze, ed., *Bob Dylan and Philosophy*, (Open Court, 2007), "Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*: Teaching the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition to Postmodern Undergraduates" in Ganze, ed., *Postscript to the Middle Ages: Teaching Medieval Studies through Umberto Eco's The Name of the Rose*. (Syracuse University Press, forthcoming), and "Building Clare College at St. Bonaventure University: The critical role of the 'Trends Study' in fostering interdisciplinary curriculum and faculty development" in *Trends in the Liberal Arts Core: Cooperative Integration Between the Humanities and the Sciences*. (ACTC, forthcoming). Michael and his wife Judith live in Franklinville, NY, but spend spring semester in Perugia where they teach in the Franciscan Heritage Program.

**Charles J. Coate, Ph.D. CPA** is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Accounting Department at St. Bonaventure University. He holds degrees from Clemson University, BS; Loyola College of Maryland, MBA; and The University of Maryland, Ph.D. He has published in a number of academic

and professional journals including *Journal of Accounting Public Policy*, *British Accounting Review*, *Management Accounting (UK)*, *Teaching Business Ethics*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, and *The CPA Journal*. Professor Coate has also accompanied students on service learning trips. In addition to SIFE trips to the Bahamas, other trips include BonaResponds Katrina relief and Pacioli Scholars St. Francis Inn.

**Sr. Felicity Dorsett** is a student in the doctoral program in Historical Theology at St. Louis University. Her major area of concentration is Medieval Historical Theology. Sr. Felicity formerly taught religion, including classes on Francis and Clare, at the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne, Indiana. She is a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration and holds a Masters degree in Franciscan Studies from the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University.

**Greg Friedman, O.F.M.**, is a Cincinnati, Ohio, native. He became a Franciscan in 1968 and was ordained in 1976. He is currently creative director in the Electronic Media Department of St. Anthony Messenger Press, where he writes and produces video projects. He also ministers at an inner-city parish in Cincinnati.

**Joseph E. Gillespie** serves as Associate Professor of Education and Dean of the Division of Education and Human Services at Neumann College in Aston, PA. He lives in Huntingdon Valley, PA with his wife, Tricia, and their 10 children. He is a graduate of Mt. St. Mary's University (Emmitsburg, MD) where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in English-Education, Temple University (Philadelphia, PA) where he earned a Master of Education degree in the Psychology of Teaching, and Widener University where he earned a degree Doctor of Education with a concentration in diagnosing and remediating reading and learning disabilities.

**Kevin Godfrey** is Associate Professor of Theology and Dean of Arts and Sciences at Alvernia College in Reading, PA. He holds a doctorate in historical theology from Saint Louis University. He teaches courses in theology, Franciscan studies, mysticism, and sacraments.

**Mary Evelyn Govert, OSF**, is a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration from Mishawaka, Indiana. She has spent more than thirty years of her ministry at University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne, Indiana teaching philosophy and theology and is now Director of Mission Effectiveness.

**Sister Anita Holzmer** is a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration (Mishawaka, IN) and has been an educator for over 30 years. Having received a diploma in Franciscan Spirituality at the Pontifical

University Antonianum in Rome, she is director of the Center for Franciscan Spirit and Life at the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne, IN, where she also teaches Franciscan Studies and Theology.

**James A. Houck, Ph.D.** is an Assistant Professor of Pastoral and Theological Studies at Neumann College. Dr. Houck is a Licensed Professional Counselor and serves as the Clinical Coordinator for the Pastoral Counseling program. He also is an ordained United Methodist minister, serving in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. His research interests include integrating religious/spiritual issues into mental health counseling, loss and bereavement, personality development, and near-death experiences.

**Timothy J. Johnson** is Associate Professor of Religion and Chairperson of the Liberal Studies Department at Flagler College. A German-American Fulbright Scholar, he holds a Doctorate in Sacred Theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy. While his primary area of expertise is the history of Christian spirituality and theology, he enjoys teaching courses as diverse as Religion and Film and Contemporary Theological Thought. Dr. Johnson is senior theology co-editor for Franciscan Studies. His most recent book is *Franciscans at Prayer* (Brill Academic, 2007).

**Elaine Martin, OSF, Ph.D.**, a Sister of St. Francis of Philadelphia, teaches international relations and diversity at Neumann College, where she is Associate Professor of Political Science. She has published several pedagogical articles in such journals as *Journal of the Middle States Council for the Social Studies*, *The ACT 101 Journal*, and *Social Studies Journal*.

**John Mizzoni, Ph.D.** is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Neumann College in Aston, PA. He specializes in moral and environmental philosophy and has published articles on metaethics, evolutionary ethics, environmental ethics, Franciscan philosophy, and teaching philosophy with music. He has presented his work at over twenty-five colleges and universities, mostly in the United States but also in Italy, the UK, Canada, and Ireland.

**James Norton, Ph.D.** is Dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Associate Professor of English at Marian College, Indianapolis. He directs the college's Centers of Learning and the Freshman Studies Program. He holds a doctorate in English Literature, specializing in Romantic, Victorian, and Modern British literary culture and Western Humanities. His particular scholarly interests are in relationships between literature, science, and theology.

For the past 40 years, **Kenan B. Osborne, ofm**, has been a Professor of Systematic Theology at the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, connected to the Graduate Theological Union. He was the editor of the volume *The History of Franciscan Theology* (Franciscan Institute Publications). He has written essays on Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, and John Duns Scotus. He has also taught courses on the theology of these three great Friars. Former President of the Catholic Theological Society of America, he received The John Courtney Murray award from the CTSA and the Franciscan Medal of Honor from the Franciscan Institute.

**Todd S. Palmer, Ph.D, JD** is an Associate Professor and director of the Entrepreneurial Values Program at St. Bonaventure University. He holds degrees from University of Mississippi, BA; University of Mississippi, JD; and the University of Georgia, PhD. He has published in *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, *Psychological Reports*, *Journal of College Student Development*, and the *Journal of Legal Studies*. Professor Palmer is cofounder of the St. Bonaventure University chapter of Students in Free Enterprise and Bonaresponds. Over the past five years, Dr. Palmer has led hundreds of students and faculty members on service learning trips in both international and domestic settings.

**John Michael Perry** is a Professor of Philosophy at Cardinal Stritch University. He lives in Port Washington, Wisconsin. He received his doctoral degree from Marquette University in 1972. He is currently writing a book entitled *Exploring Dialog and Friendship with God*.

**Sr. Barbara E. Reynolds, SDS**, has long felt the pull of her multi-faceted vocation — to study mathematics, to teach, and to religious life. She completed her Ph.D. studies in mathematics at Saint Louis University in 1979, the same year that she entered the Sisters of the Divine Savior (Salvatorians). She is Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science at Cardinal Stritch University, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She has co-authored several college-level textbooks in mathematics that integrate the use of hands-on computer explorations in a cooperative learning environment, and is editor and co-author of several books on cooperative learning in undergraduate mathematics. Participation in the annual summer research meetings of the Clavius Group, an international group of Catholic mathematicians, has helped her to integrate her commitment to religious life with her deep sense of vocation to study and teach mathematics.

**Lance Byron Richey** teaches religion and philosophy at Cardinal Stritch University, where he is Associate Professor of Religious Studies. He lives in Milwaukee with his wife, Carol, and five children. He received doctoral degrees in Philosophy (1995) and Theology (2004) from Marquette University.

**Helen Ruggieri** lives in Olean, NY along the Allegheny River. She holds an MFA from Penn State and an MA from St. Bonaventure University and teaches at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford, PA. Her book, *Glimmer Girls*, is available from Mayapple Press (1999). A reviewer said that Ruggieri's poems create a landscape in which girls practice becoming women. Her poems and memoirs have recently appeared in *Spoon River Poetry Review*, *Poetry Midwest*, *Hawaii Pacific Review*, *Cream City Review*, and in several anthologies, including: *Common Wealth: Contemporary Poets on Pennsylvania*; *Listening to Water*, *Poems of the Susquehanna*; *Illuminations: Personal Spiritual Experiences*; *Poems of St. Francis and Clare*.

**Sr. Barbara Vano** is a Sister of St. Francis of Sylvania, Ohio. Sr. Barbara has taught mathematics at the high school and college level for many years. She currently serves as Director of Campus Ministry and Service Learning and as a part-time computer analyst at Lourdes College in Sylvania. She also serves as a member of the Board of Trustees of St. Leonard, a senior residential community sponsored by the Sylvania Franciscans in Centerville, Ohio. Sr. Barbara holds an M.A. degree in Mathematics from Wayne State University in Detroit and an M.A. degree in Franciscan Studies from the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University.

**Barbara Wuest** formerly served as Chair of the English Department and Director of the Creative Writing Program at Cardinal Stritch University. She currently serves as Secretary to Religious Studies and Counseling Services. She has published several poems in various journals, including *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Wisconsin Academy Review*, *Cape Rock*, *First Things*, *Dogwood*, *Cincinnati Poetry Review*, *The Paris Review*, *Theology Today*, and *Cross Currents*. Her graduate degrees include an MA in theology from the University of San Diego and an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of California-Irvine.

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***Call for Comments, Suggestions, and Papers***

Since this is the 5th issue of the Journal, the Editorial Board has prepared a multi-faceted process for evaluation. In the next few months, we will be inviting you to participate in an on-line Survey and Focus Groups. Please contribute your voice and your wisdom to these efforts to determine how the journal can best serve your needs.

The January 2009 issue of the journal will focus on the Proceedings of the AFCU Conference which will be held at Alvernia College in Reading, PA, from June 5-7, 2008. We will be sharing guidelines for submitting manuscripts to all presenters in advance of the conference.

As always, we welcome articles, poems, book reviews, and descriptions of "best practices." Please contact the Editor before submitting any manuscript because we are in the process of revising our guidelines.

We welcome articles on any topic of interest to higher education in the Catholic Franciscan tradition. We are especially interested in receiving papers on topics not yet addressed in the journal: e.g. Nursing and Health Professions; Science; Political Science; Arts; integration of mission and values into On-line programs; Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution; Environmental Studies; Criminal Justice programs; creative use of media in orientation programs for staff and students. If you wish to discuss an idea before submitting an article, a member of the editorial board will be happy to speak with you.

