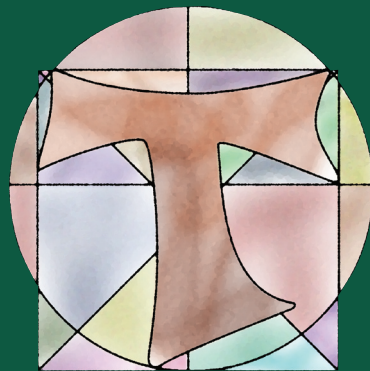
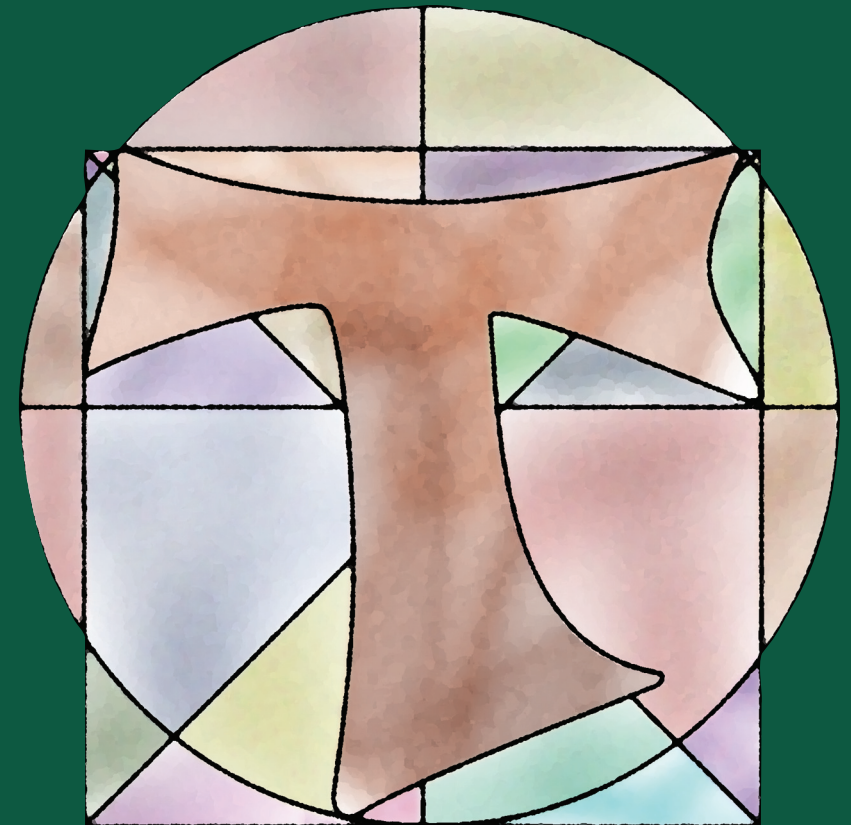


The AFCU Journal:
A FRANCISCAN PERSPECTIVE
ON HIGHER EDUCATION

January 2011/ Volume 8, 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 for 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 University, One Neumann Drive, Aston, PA 19014.*

Editorial Board: Sr. Felicity Dorsett, St. Louis University (student) and University of Saint Francis, Fort Wayne, IN; Kevin Godfrey (Executive Director, AFCU) Alvernia University; Anthony Murphy, St. Bonaventure University; Barbara Wuest, Cardinal Stritch University; Sr. Mary Ann McCarthy, Staff to Editorial Board, Neumann University; Sr. Patricia Hutchison, Chair, Neumann University.

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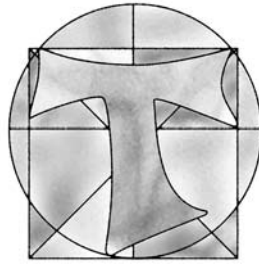
Book Review Editor: Kevin Godfrey

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. Articles describing “best practices” appear on the new AFCU website in a *Best Practices Newsletter*. 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 University, One Neumann Drive, Aston, PA 19014* or hutchisp@neumann.edu. Articles and poems will be reviewed and selected by the AFCU editorial board.

The AFCU Journal: A Franciscan Perspective on Higher Education is published annually by the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities. Each member institution receives two copies of the journal. Non-members may subscribe to the Journal for an annual rate of \$10. Additional copies of the journal may be purchased by members and non-members at the following rate:

1–49 copies	\$5.50/copy plus postage
50–99 copies	\$5.00/copy plus postage
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Franciscan
c o l l e g e s a n d u n i v e r s i t i e s

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From the Chair

Dear friends in Franciscan higher education,

It is my honor to introduce the 2011 *AFCU Journal*. My sincere thanks to all of the authors who have invested their precious time and rich talent to contribute to the contents of this year's issue. It is our hope that the materials shared here will be useful to many and will serve to inspire all of you to further the great work being done at all of 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.

The lead article in this issue is by Brother Keith Warner, OFM, Ph.D., entitled "The Incarnation Matters." Those of you who attended the biennial AFCU Symposium last June were privileged to hear Brother Keith speak on this important and timely topic, and we are pleased to have this as the lead article for the 2011 *AFCU Journal*.

Other articles in this issue cover a variety of topics including the model for today's world that is provided by St. Francis and his relationship with and view of creation; a look at the program, *God's Extravagant Love*; the model for servant leadership that we find in St. Francis; reflections on the theory and practice of art on the Franciscan campus; the importance of wonder; and an article on the distinctiveness of service in the Franciscan tradition. In addition to these articles, three poems, a book review, and an update on the new AFCU website are included in this issue.

It is my personal hope that you will make good use on your respective campuses of the rich contents of this journal. At the University of Saint Francis we provide copies to various groups including our faculty, administrators, Board of Trustees, and our Sponsor. We encourage our faculty members to not only read and discuss the journal's contents, but to also use it to inform their teaching in their various disciplines. We also make it a point to encourage our faculty members to submit articles for publication, which I trust is also done at other AFCU institutions.

My hope for each of you is that 2011 will be filled with many opportunities for expression of our Catholic Franciscan tradition. Thank you, and God bless.

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

From the Editor

With this eighth issue of the *AFCU Journal: A Franciscan Perspective on Higher Education*, we initiate an innovation which, we hope, will improve services to members of AFCU institutions. Beginning with this January 2011 issue, the annual paper publication of the AFCU journal will include a limited number of scholarly articles, poems, and book reviews. The newly revised AFCU website now includes (under the Journal tab) a *Best Practices Newsletter*. This newsletter will be published three to four times per semester. As its name implies, the *Newsletter* is a vehicle for sharing practical ideas which bring the Catholic Franciscan tradition to life on our campuses. The first issue of the newsletter features an article entitled *Autism Awareness, Academic, and Franciscan Values*. Written by Beth VanRheenen, Ph.D., associate professor of Language and Literature at Lourdes College in Sylvania, Ohio, the article poignantly describes the college's attempt to put a human and distinctively Franciscan face on autism. We hope that Dr. VanRheenen's article will encourage reflection on how Franciscan institutions can promote a compassionate understanding of persons living with autism. We also anticipate that others will be inspired to contribute their own "best practices."

Also on the new AFCU website is a "Symposium" tab. This section will become the depository for symposium papers, allowing AFCU members and others to appreciate the richness of the AFCU symposia. In the past, we have been able to publish a limited number of symposium presentations in the AFCU Journal. For example, this issue includes three keynote presentations and two breakout sessions from the 2010 symposium. However, several additional breakout sessions appear on the AFCU website.

More than 250 faculty, staff and administrators gathered at the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne, IN in June 2010. The high energy and enthusiasm of the participants confirmed appreciation for the theme *Educating for the Care of Creation: Contemporary Verses for the Care of Creation*.

Brother Keith Warner's keynote presentation, *Incarnation Matters*, introduces us to three Franciscan medieval scientists who offer insights critical for the 21st century. Brother Keith also challenges us "to incorporate ecological literacy into all Franciscan ministry, but especially higher education."

Proving that educating for the care of the environment can take many forms, Dr. Andrew Prall lead participants in one symposium breakout in a contemplative experience which resulted in a collaborative poem inspired by the *Canticle of the Creatures*. The introduction to *Franciscan Renga* offers a process which can be easily replicated.

In another symposium keynote, Dr. Esperança Camara invites us to reflect with her on a question of fundamental importance: *How does God want me (us) to relate to the natural world?* While raising critical ecological questions, Dr. Camara also gifts the reader with the grace-filled images of an art historian who has connected faith and reason, study and prayer.

"Creation and the humility of God" is one of the four components of the program *God's Extravagant Love: Reclaiming the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition*. Created in 2005, the program has been experienced by more than 3000 women and men, lay and religious, worldwide. Sr. Pat Smith provides a summary of the keynote and breakout presentations which she co-presented with Sr. Kathleen Moffatt. The program holds great potential for adaptation at Franciscan colleges and universities.

Dr. Robert Gervasi's article connected so closely with the theme of the AFCU symposium that the editorial board decided to include it in this issue. As Dr. Gervasi states, the article "interprets St. Bonaventure's account of Francis preaching to the birds not only as an embrace of creation but also as a metaphor for the goals and experience of higher learning inspired by the Holy Spirit and guided by the authority of the Christian community." The reflection is an encouragement to recognize that at the heart of a liberal arts education in the Franciscan tradition is the challenge to foster within our students true freedom and a sense of wonder!

Richard Sayers and Terence Gleeson, professors of music and theater respectively, apply the insights on beauty of Pope Benedict XVI and Sr. Mary Beth Ingham to the questions: "How can the transformative potential of beauty, as manifest in the arts, best be brought to life on a Franciscan campus? What role should the arts play on college campuses? Should they simply provide adornment and beautification, or provide opportunities for spiritual transformation?" Their commentary is at once inspirational and practical.

As Franciscan friar and theologian Daniel Horan asserts, it is inaccurate to suggest that service is the exclusive domain of Franciscan colleges and universities. Yet, service is a critical, perhaps indispensable, part of the curriculum and co-curriculum on Franciscan campuses. Brother Dan offers suggestions to ensure that service and service-learning are distinctively Franciscan and that the experience contributes to the "shaping of the next generation of young adults into integrated members of the Christian and global community."

In anticipation of the 2012 AFCU symposium which will focus on *Franciscan Leadership*, the editorial board selected for publication one of the many fine presentations on leadership in the Franciscan tradition included in the 2010 symposium. (The other articles appear on the AFCU

website.) The article by Sisters Georgia Christensen and Jean Moore integrates the spirituality of Francis of Assisi into a values-based and practical model of servant leadership. Their article provides a methodology for considering practical dilemmas from the perspective of Francis of Assisi, utilizing primary source material from the *Early Documents*.

Thanks again to the work of Murray Bodo, OFM and Barbara Wuest, our poetry editors, we have two original poems: *Seven Little Portions* by Vickie Cimprich, and *St. Joseph Cupertino and I* by Sean Edward Kinsella.

Continuing the practice of providing an update related to the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities, Executive Director Dr. Kevin Godfrey provides a description of the newly revised AFCU website. We hope that this description encourages readers to visit the site and make use of all the helpful resources available. This section also includes the announcement of the 2012 AFCU Symposium hosted by Viterbo University in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Our final selection is a review of Sr. Mary Beth Ingham's Franciscan Heritage Series book, *Rejoicing in the Works of the Lord: Beauty in the Franciscan Tradition*. In her review, Sr. Dorothy Bredehoft provides a concise summary of the book and offers recommendations for using Dr. Ingham's work on a Franciscan campus.

As always, we offer gratitude for your support and invite you to consider making a contribution to the journal or to the *Best Practices Newsletter*.

Patricia Hutchison, OSF, Ed.D.
Chair, Editorial Board

The Incarnation Matters!

Retrieving Franciscan Science for Ecological Literacy

KEITH DOUGLASS WARNER OFM, PH.D.

Pope John Paul II launched Catholic concern for the environment with *The Ecological Crisis: A Common Responsibility* (Pope John Paul II, 1990). Eleven years earlier, he had drawn attention to the environmental witness of St. Francis of Assisi when he named our founder “heavenly patron of those who promote ecology” (Pope John Paul II, 1979). In his 1990 World Day of Peace Message, he pointed to Francis as “an example of genuine and deep respect for the integrity of creation.” This ended the debate about *whether* Catholics should be concerned about the environment, and shifted the focus to *how* Catholics should express their care for creation (Warner, 2008a). Our Franciscan Family has been slow to incorporate environmental themes into our ministries in substantive ways (Warner, 2003). Why has this happened? One reason is that most of our institutions — including American Franciscan higher education — were created for different purposes, and do not have funding or programmatic incentives for environmental education. From this perspective, Franciscan environmental education would be something novel. Yet, from another vantage, Franciscan education about the natural world has helped constitute our intellectual tradition, and we could renew this, should we choose to remember it, as part of our broader retrieval efforts (Chinnici, 2002). Recommending Francis as a religious example of concern for the environment is simultaneously a traditional and novel idea. To undertake Franciscan environmental education we can draw wisdom from our tradition and weave it into this present-day knowledge to address modern needs.

In this essay I propose that we envision Franciscan environmental education as an important expression of the retrieval of our Franciscan intellectual tradition. I think of Franciscan environmental education as the shared responsibility of all members of the Franciscan family, whether in education or any other ministry; it should reflect the care Francis had for creation and link this concern with understanding our role in the natural world, and illustrate the alternative choices we could make as a human family to foster a more sustainable future.

I argue that to advance Franciscan environmental education across our curricular efforts, we should expand the scope of our retrieval effort to include Franciscan scientists, and integrate their approach to knowledge with the best environmental pedagogies, as exemplified by David Orr. I hope to demonstrate that we can retrieve elements from our tradition to formulate a theory of knowledge, and that we can partner with contemporary ways of knowing nature. I believe the Franciscan family has a special obligation and special opportunities to incorporate ecological literacy into all Franciscan ministry, but especially higher education. In so doing,

we can simultaneously enhance the Franciscan Catholic identity of our schools, and animate a new generation of students to love creation in the spirit of Francis.

This essay begins by explaining why contemporary Franciscan environmental education requires us to retrieve more than Francis. The essay then presents three Franciscan medieval scientists who devoted much

... the Incarnation provides a robust theological framework for understanding creation as religiously, philosophically and morally significant.

of their life to studying nature. It then proposes how we could integrate concern for creation with the best of contemporary environmental educational pedagogies. The essay concludes by evaluating what we can learn about a retrieval methodology by expanding the scope of knowers and knowledge to be retrieved, and by integrating that with contemporary environmental pedagogies. Although our Franciscan ministries of education tend to be economically challenged, we are rich in our religious and

intellectual resources. We draw from noble contemplative, intellectual, educational, and formational traditions. We have much to contribute to Catholic and American higher education. A common, integral institutional vision for ecological literacy could simultaneously address the needs of our world, stimulate the dreams of our students and enhance the Franciscan identity of our schools.

Retrieving Our Tradition: More than Francis, Philosophy and Theology

If we wish to create an authentically Franciscan approach to environmental education, we will have to appropriately select elements from our tradition. We will need to evaluate the breadth of what is in our tradition, select some elements to retrieve (leaving others in the past), and adeptly integrate these elements with contemporary forms of knowledge and human knowing. Francis is an inspiration, but his inspiration alone is insufficient to guide Franciscan environmental pedagogical initiatives; we can draw from other Franciscans and their intellectual contribution to our Evangelical project. Both mythos and logos — both symbolic and analytical ways of knowing — are necessary for Franciscan environmental education.

Roger Sorrell (1988) wrote an excellent analysis of Francis's attitudes toward nature (but see also Nothwehr, 2003). Francis was not an environmentalist, and did not undertake environmental education. Francis loved creation because he recognized God's handiwork in it, and he came to understand himself and all other life as God's creatures. As an itinerant contemplative and preacher, he did not leave us any coherent intellectual theory, but rather a charismatic witness of love, devotion, prayer, and

Christian discipleship. Unfortunately, Francis has usually been presented as an idiosyncratic exception to the assumption that Christianity bears an inherently ambiguous vision of nature, at best (Nash, 1991; Warner, 2011). This presentation of Francis disregards the broader Franciscan tradition he inspired.

About twenty years ago, the Franciscan retrieval project expanded its scope from Francis to include Clare, and then about a decade ago, further expanded it to include Bonaventure and Scotus. Fresh scholarly work on Francis and the spirituality of his movement offered new perspectives on these figures and their contributions. The Franciscan family today is able to more clearly perceive the influence of Francis on their vocations and intellectual work (Osborne, 2003, 2008). This fresh perspective has expanded our focus from only the individual charismatic witness of Francis to a broader intellectual framework reflecting his intuition. Some prior scholarship had presented the movement of early Friars into the university with a corruption narrative, in which the purity of Francis's primitive vision for living the Gospel is corrupted by the context of academic learning. The retrieval of the Franciscan intellectual tradition has clarified how Francis inspired his followers as a form of creative continuity through institutionalization (Blastic, 1998). This allows us to fashion a more integral Franciscan vision of God as Trinity, the Incarnation of Jesus Christ in creation, and the nature of humanity in community (Osborne, 2008). This in turn has helped us to understand the philosophical underpinnings of knowledge in our tradition. Future retrieval work will further elaborate the metaphysical, epistemological, and cosmological currents in our tradition.

Previous works have addressed the Incarnation as a lens for Franciscan environmental spirituality, theology, philosophy and ethics (Delio, 2003; Delio, Warner, & Wood, 2008; Nothwehr, 2003; Warner, 2008b, 2011). In the Incarnation, God bends low in love to reveal God's self in this material world as a human being, and our tradition proposes this as the highest, best form of divine love. In this article, I wish to draw your attention to one keyword in the Franciscan lexicon: the Incarnation (Short, 2004), and specifically to the materiality or physicality of the Incarnation. The form of the Incarnation was the Word made flesh. It was the Word not only as a concept, but rather, in material flesh. In our tradition, the Incarnation is not an abstraction, nor merely an idea about God. It is God enfleshed, in the particulars of a place and time, in the community of life. The Son of God came to us in bodily form, pointing us toward the incarnate body in material community as locus for communion with the divine. Thus, the Incarnation provides a robust theological framework for understanding creation as religiously, philosophically and morally significant.

The Matter of Nature: Three Franciscan Investigators

This section highlights the Franciscan heritage of early scientific inquiry in our tradition. I wish to complement the retrieval work already done

in theology and philosophy by emphasizing this lesser-known dimension of the Franciscan intellectual tradition. You might reasonably ask: What Franciscan tradition of scientific inquiry? The examples I present here are from our historical past: the 13th through 16th century, but I suggest we view them as expressing in their own way the love Francis had for creation. These figures are not well-known because they were not beatified or canonized. They were influential figures in their time, but are virtually unknown to the American Franciscan family today.

Bernardino de Sahagún can be considered the first anthropologist (León-Portilla, 2002) for his pioneering and extraordinary ethnographic efforts in New Spain from 1529–1590. Bartholomew the Englishman (or Bartholomeus Anglicus, c. 1200–1272) created an encyclopedia to prepare Friars to travel through their natural and social world preaching the Gospel. Roger Bacon (c. 1214–1294) was an English Friar who pioneered many philosophical ideas on which the scientific method was created. These three men can be considered proto-scientists, because their intellectual work helped lay the foundation for the emergence of modern scientific methods. They practiced medieval science using the concepts, tools and institutions of their era (Grant, 1996), to gather, organize, analyze and interpret data about society and nature. Their investigations reflect a Franciscan concern for nature, rooted in the assertion that all creation is religiously and morally significant.

Bernardino de Sahagún was a 16th Century Spanish Friar who worked in New Spain (Mesoamerica) for some six decades (León-Portilla, 2002). He came to Mesoamerica within a decade of its conquest by Spain, as part of the accompanying Franciscan missionary evangelization project.¹ Bernardino was a co-founder of the Colegio Imperial de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, near present day Mexico City, in 1533. It is noteworthy that the first European school of higher learning in the Americas was Franciscan! Bernardino drew from his humanistic education in Salamanca, Spain, to start schools for the sons of nobility. He observed that the “conversion” of Indigenous peoples was not as complete as claimed by some Europeans, including his Franciscan brothers. The evangelization project had “killed” many Indigenous religious sites and practices through physical force, but this had resulted in quite superficial conversions. Some of the Indigenous people passively consented to baptism, but most continued to practice forms of Aztec religion. He saw this as a grave pastoral problem, as well as a problem for the crown and its colonizing project. Bernardino’s observations were at times unpopular, for they ran contrary to the official story of colonial successes.

His solution? What every good academic proposes: Transform the problem into a research project! Bernardino undertook an enormous social science research project, creating what some consider to be the most important body of knowledge of Mesoamericans created by Europeans in 16th Century Mesoamerica (León-Portilla, 2002). The project resulted in a

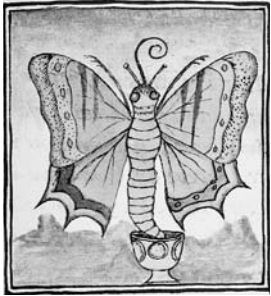
12 volume encyclopedia, *La Historia General de las Cosas de Nueva Espana*, or the General History of the Things of New Spain (also known as the Florentine Codex). He became fluent in Nahuatl (the dominant language of the Aztecs). He recruited his former students, native Aztecs, to interview the elders about life in Mesoamerica before the conquest. In collaboration with tri-lingual alumni of a Franciscan educational institution, he gathered ethnographic data for more than four decades to document and understand Mesoamerican culture. Bernardino and his students interviewed elders about their natural and social world, their religion, philosophy, ethics, and cosmology. He created a methodology for verifying information shared by members of a foreign culture; he and students would conduct independent interviews of elders in Nahuatl using standardized questions, and then repeat identical interviews with other elders for verification. His research assistants painted over 1855 illustrations, hand-painted with bird feathers, representing a hybrid European-Aztec style (Taylor Baird, 1988). About half of these illustrate the volume titled “About properties of animals, birds, fish, trees, herbs, flowers, metals, and stones, and about colors.” Most of *La Historia* is about the social, economic and religious world, but the natural history of Mesoamerica is portrayed in stunning color. Several of the other books in *La Historia General* describe and depict human ailments, remedies, and ethnobotany (Edmonson, 1974). Bernardino and his assistants provided astonishingly detailed documentary evidence of life in 16th Century Mesoamerica, and their method foreshadowed modern anthropology. This was a most remarkable study, a form of Franciscan anthropology in service of a missionary evangelization project.²

Our second figure is Bartholomew the Englishman. Bernardino may have become acquainted with the systematic approach to the gathering and presentation of knowledge through his education at Salamanca, which would quite possibly have used Bartholomew’s *On the Properties of Things* (*De proprietatibus rerum*). To instruct Friars Bartholomew compiled an encyclopedia that represented the best available knowledge about the natural and social world of that time (Keen, 2007). We have very little biographical information about him. He appears to have been teaching Scripture at Paris prior to joining the Friars Minor about 1225 (Seymour, 1992). He was missioned to Magdeburg in what is now Germany in 1231 (Schaeffer, 2009). He was one of the first Friar teachers there, where he completed his 19 volume work by drawing from encyclopedias of the classical period (e.g., Seneca, Pliny, Isidore) combined with rediscovered Aristotelian knowledge from Arab translations (Seymour, 1992). It is possible that this text reflects lectures he presented to the Friars. This became one of the most cited sources in the medieval

*In Bartholomew’s
Franciscan cosmology,
the Earth,
the human being
and God are
integrally related . . .*

world about natural history and a standard reference for Friars in studies. Bartholomew wrote *On the Properties of Things* as a formation tool to prepare friars for encountering, interpreting and evangelizing their world.

On the Properties of Things uses a vivid narrative to engage the reader (Keen, 2007). It can be read as a journey through the social and natural worlds of that era. It built upon everyday knowledge of the medieval household, garden and farm, but augmented this with knowledge about the Bible, distant lands, and the religious and ethical dimensions of the



social and natural world. Bartholomew describes minerals, plants, history, astronomy, medicine, philosophy and theology. He has individual volumes on God, angels, the human body, the four elements, stars, moon, plants, and animals. Like other medieval encyclopedias, *On the Properties of Things* is organized without what we today would understand to be foundational biological, physical or chemical scientific knowledge (Schaeffer, 2009). Bartholomew compiles excerpts from clas-

sical encyclopedias, homiletics on nature and society, and religio-ethical interpretations of life. We would not deem this “science” today, for it would appear to us as all manner of knowledge jumbled together. Yet Bartholomew’s work provides a basic introduction to the systems of social and natural knowledge at this time. It conveyed medieval science to the Friars. About 100 manuscripts and fragments exist, indicating its popularity. Eleven versions were published 1472–1492, suggesting the encyclopedia was valuable for more than two centuries (Seymour, 1992). This was a standard approach to knowledge at this time, and can be considered analogous to the Google of its day, or for some, a card catalogue. In its concluding volume, *On the Properties of Things*, Bartholomew describes the purpose of learning about nature: “earthly things can lead us to an understanding of heavenly things and to reconciliation with God” (Keen, 2007). In his Franciscan cosmology, the Earth, the human being and God are integrally related, and learning about one helps one learn about the others. This is integrated education indeed.

Our third figure is Roger Bacon. His life story remains sketchy, and many details have been clouded by subsequent polemical interpretations (Power, 2006). He was born between 1214 and 1220, and probably died in 1292. He joined the Franciscan Friars about 1256 (Hackett, 1997). He was educated at Oxford, but taught and wrote at the University of Paris for some time before returning to England. Roger Bacon was a 13th century scholastic philosopher, a proto-scientist, and a scholar with a truly astonishing scope of interest and ambition. He has been called an early pioneer of the experimental scientific method (Crombie, 1953), or alternatively, the first scientist (Clegg, 2003). He is often confused with another important early figure in science with the same surname, Sir Francis Bacon (1561–1626). Roger Bacon lived and worked toward the end of the great

Translation Movement (1140–1280), in which classical Greek scientific writings (e.g., Aristotle) were “rediscovered” in Arabic translation (Grant, 1996). He was able to take full advantage of the “new” knowledge about nature made available in his time (Hackett, 1997, p. 20). He was able to absorb this knowledge, and propose new ways of investigating the natural world and of organizing education.

Roger Bacon created a terrestrial coordinate system, a forerunner of cartographic map projections with latitude and longitude (Woodward, 1990). Bacon created new ways to study and evaluate light, physical force, and the shape of the Earth. He advocated the use of original languages in studying ancient philosophy, and created Greek and Hebrew grammars. He investigated alchemy, the antecedents of gunpowder, optics, astronomy, and comets. He proposed the use of mechanical devices for travel under water and through the air (Hackett, 1997). Bacon argued that the investigation of nature requires observation and experimentation. Appeals to authority do not suffice. Bacon did not propose what we understand today as the experimental method, but he does advance natural philosophy much closer to natural science than any contemporary (Clegg, 2003).

Bacon shared with Bartholomew a conviction that knowledge of the material world could assist one in religious devotion (Hackett, 1997), and he extended this conviction by proposing a reformulation of higher education for all of Christianity that would incorporate study of nature. Pope Clement IV requested his rationale, and Bacon developed his program for him. He critiqued most university professors for teaching in rote fashion, and for failing to incorporate the best of new knowledge. He argued that the reform of religion and society depended upon the reform of education, and that knowledge of nature was essential to proper preparation for ministry (Clegg, 2003).

Specifics of Roger Bacon’s life have long been obscured by many diverse polemics advancing biased views of religion, science, and English exceptionalism (Power, 2006), making him an ambiguous example for us. Still, his creative and brilliant studies, representing the best of the early Franciscan scholars at Oxford, manifest an interest in nature and its significance. Roger Bacon did not explicitly refer to Francis as an inspiration, yet his concern for nature can be seen in continuity with Francis.

A Franciscan Vision of Ecological Literacy

Lynn White (1967) was the first to associate Francis with ecology, and Pope John Paul II (1979) declared him *oecologiae cultorum patronum caelestem*. This could be literally translated as “the heavenly patron of those who promote (animate, nurture) ecology.” Latin, the language of official Catholic documents, has no word for “environmentalist,” so the Pope used the term ecology. In the North American context, ecology means a subfield of biology, but in European Romance languages, it can also mean “environmental concern” or “environmental awareness.” We could translate *oecologiae cultorum* as: “of those who promote environmental aware-

ness.” Perhaps the most helpful translation for AFCU members would be: Francis, the patron saint of environmental educators.

David Orr, the preeminent American philosopher of environmental education, echoes some of the themes advanced by Bartholomew and Roger Bacon seven centuries prior. He critiques American higher education for perpetuating environmental problems by presenting knowledge apart from a moral framework. His remedies would restructure pedagogies to incorporate knowledge of human dependence upon the earth’s ecosystems, and revise the goals of higher education to emphasize explicit ethical reflection on our human choices. He argued that a fundamental purpose of higher education should be to prepare leaders to guide us to a more sustainable human society. Orr coined the term “ecological literacy,” which he defines as the ability to understand and live within the natural systems that make life on earth possible (Orr, 1992). His educational vision is remarkably coherent with the contemporary Franciscan worldview, and we can learn from it.

In his influential essay titled “What Is Education For?” Orr asks why so few students graduating from American colleges and universities are able to recognize our environmental crises or care to address them (Orr, 1991). As he points out, many environmental problems result from the efforts of the best minds American education can produce: MBAs, JDs, and PhDs. He does not describe problems in education, but rather critiques the “problem of education,” arguing that the broader crisis in American higher education cannot be addressed without re-thinking its foundational assumptions (Orr, 2004a). Thus, he focuses his critique on the structure and values of American higher education:

The disorder of ecosystems reflects a prior disorder of mind, making it a central concern to those institutions that purport to improve minds. In other words, the ecological crisis is in every way a crisis of education. . . . All education is environmental education . . . by what is included or excluded we teach the young that they are part of, or apart from, the natural world. The goal is not just mastery of subject matter but making connections between head, hand, heart, and cultivation of the capacity to discern systems. . . . (Orr, 2004b)

Merely adding environmental themes to higher education is not enough. Orr argues that *all education is environmental education*, whether explicit or tacit, but that most educational experiences are structured so that students learn the environment is *materially and ethically insignificant*. He argues that the way in which learning occurs is as important as the content of particular courses:

Process is important for learning. Courses taught as lecture courses tend to induce passivity. Indoor classes create the illusion that learning only occurs inside four walls isolated from what students call without apparent irony the “real world.”

Dissecting frogs in biology classes teaches lessons about nature that no one would verbally profess. Campus architecture is crystallized pedagogy that often reinforces passivity, monologue, domination, and artificiality. My point is simply that students are being taught in various and subtle ways beyond the content of courses (Orr, 1991).

Thus, he argues that genuine environmental education requires re-thinking the structure of the educational experiences provided and revising the moral dimension of our pedagogies.

Orr’s critique takes on one of the most pernicious problems in contemporary higher education: hyperspecialization. Our dis-aggregated pedagogies result in our students developing a dis-integrated worldview, and then participating in human society that is dis-membering our planetary life support systems. Much higher education is structured to prompt our students toward a fragmented worldview. Note that Orr does not argue that students abandon their major, but rather that ecological literacy be embedded across the curriculum in every disciplinary department, woven together by a coherent moral vision. Learning about the earth should be combined with learning about our responsibilities to the earth and future generations: “The goal of education is not mastery of subject matter, but of one’s person. . . . Knowledge carries with it the responsibility to see that it is well used in the world” (Orr, 1991). Note that this same line of critique reflects Pope Benedict XVI’s comments in his address to Catholic educators in Washington, DC (Pope Benedict XVI, 2008): “moral confusion and fragmentation of knowledge” are obstacles to an authentically Catholic vision of higher education. The Catholic intellectual tradition is at its best when it reflects this commitment to a holistic, integral approach to knowing (Haughey, 2009).



Orr’s vision of ecological literacy can develop organically from an integral pedagogy, one that appropriately links learning about self, society, nature and God within a moral framework. At the 2008 AFCU conference, Wayne Hellman drew from Pope Benedict’s speech to elaborate three themes, prominent in Franciscan education, that could help us tackle the kinds of challenges Orr describes: the communal nature of higher education, the transcendent nature of the human person, and participation in the public forum (Hellman, 2009).

Our Franciscan tradition has resources for the work of integration! Francis’s life journey stands in contrast with this sense of fragmentation. His conversion can and should serve as a template for integral Franciscan education, but this alone is not enough. Educating for the care of creation will necessarily have to take seriously the role of science in cultivating

ecological literacy, but as part of an integral humanistic educational experience, grounded in the Incarnation. Franciscan education for ecological literacy should build upon our core competencies: education as a process of religious conversion; education as integral human and moral development; and social engagement with our extended communities of (human and other) brothers and sisters. Franciscan pedagogy assumes an integral approach; therefore, AFCU schools have a great advantage for undertaking ecological literacy initiatives.

We can weave in science and ecological knowledge to create a more integral and faithful approach to education. Ecological literacy requires a moral stance of care for the community of life, but more than merely that, lest we fall into sentimentality. It requires some degree of scientific literacy. I would recommend Christopher Uhl's *Developing Ecological Consciousness: Paths to a Sustainable World* (2004) as an ideal resource to outline the basics of ecological literacy within a refreshingly moral and humanistic framework consistent with Franciscan values. This approach does not obligate us to start new departments or degree programs.

Retrieving Franciscan Education for Ecological Literacy

We can create authentically Franciscan approaches to environmental education by retrieving the breadth of our Franciscan tradition and combining this with the best contemporary environmental pedagogy available to us. We can learn much from these three Franciscan medieval scientists: Bernardino de Sahagún, Bartholomew the Englishman, and Roger Bacon.

First, they help justify the term “intellectual tradition.” Their intellectual work stood out in its time, and contributed to the learning of many over several centuries. Their work places them in the company of Bonaventure and Scotus and demonstrates that the Franciscan tradition is broader than philosophy and theology. Late medieval science is part of our tradition, and we can benefit from retrieving not the data or the methods, but the curiosity, passion, intellectual vigor, and theological framework. For some people of faith, the search for God in the world has focused on the miraculous, the “gaps” in what humans can explain. The expansion of scientific knowledge has progressively shrunk the “gaps” in human knowledge, thus threatening the scope of God’s power and activity (Dixon, 2008). This approach, however, is not consistent with the Franciscan tradition. In these three examples we find an open stance toward scientific ways of knowing; the “conflict model” between science and religion does not really apply to our tradition. We are not afraid of scientific knowledge and power, but rather, concerned that it be used for the good, for the pursuit and love of God. I hope that these three examples remind us that we have a Franciscan tradition of science, or at least, of medieval science, that merits some retrieval.

Second, we should expand the scope of our retrieval to include the Iberian Peninsula (e.g., Salamanca), the Americas, and beyond! To date,

most of our retrieval work has been limited to the Universities of Paris and Oxford. In fact, the Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, near what is now Mexico City, is much closer to most AFCU campuses than Oxford or Paris; perhaps a pilgrimage there is in order. These centers of medieval Franciscan learning provided educational opportunities for these three friars, but with their knowledge they went on to serve the order, church and world beyond these schools. Franciscan education is always in service to our evangelical project.

Third, these three examples witness to a Franciscan theory of knowledge; this suggests what a Franciscan epistemology in action might look like. They are examples of another age, but also an alternative approach to the generation of knowledge. These friars lived prior to the hyperspecialization demanded by our era’s external academic institutions. They articulated knowledge of nature and people with a religious and ethical significance. They are examples of using intellectual inquiry to further the good. We can point to them as examples of integral, non-fragmented approaches to knowledge. They witness to the truth that the study of people and nature is a religious and moral act. Drawing from the Incarnation and the primacy of Christ, a Franciscan approach to knowing nature is clearly rooted in our understanding of God, Jesus Christ, the Christian Scriptures and tradition. This approach can attenuate the radical anthropocentrism of contemporary Christian thought, for it undermines the sharp ontological division between humanity and the rest of creation assumed by far too many modern Christians. This provides the foundation for an authentically integrated pedagogical vision.

The Incarnation matters: it is morally, religiously, and socially significant. It is material because God created it, and saw that it was good. Our Franciscan tradition is not dualistic; it does not split the spirit from the embodied; it leads us into the mystery and truth of the Incarnation. Franciscans believe the materiality, the physicality of the Incarnation matters. Do we agree with Bartholomew when he claims “earthly things can lead us to an understanding of heavenly things and to reconciliation with God”?

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Artwork: Images of nature and culture in New Spain circa 1580, from The Florentine Codex.

Images are taken from Fray Bernadino de Sahagún, The Florentine Codex. Complete digital facsimile edition on 16 DVDs. Tempe, Arizona: Bilingual Press, 2009. Reproduced with permission from Arizona State University Hispanic Research Center.

More color images available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florentine_Codex

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Endnotes

- 1 Spain's conquest of Mesoamerica was brutal, violent, inhumane, and unjust, and the relationship of the Friars' evangelization project to it merits moral reflection that this essay will not attempt.
- 2 For a sample of pictures from Bernardino's project, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florentine_Codex.

Franciscan Renga

INTRODUCTION BY ANDREW PRALL, Ph.D.

“Franciscan Renga” is the fruit of a collaborative process that occurred at a series of café sessions entitled “Writing the Contemporary Verses: A Mini Creative Writing Workshop” at the 2010 AFCU Symposium held at the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne, Indiana. During the session, symposium participants were invited

The renga is a collaborative poem that evolved into its current form in 12th century Japan . . .

to reflect on their own connection to nature and then contribute a verse to a new poem inspired by Saint Francis’s “Canticle of the Creatures.”

The poem was composed in the form of a renga. The renga is a collaborative poem that evolved into its current form in 12th

century Japan, so the time of its birth roughly coincides with that of Saint Francis, albeit on a different side of the globe. In a traditional renga, topics are assigned to participants who then have a very short time in which to compose a verse. The stanzas of the poem are compiled and assembled by a “renga master” who links them together as a chain, so that the form of the poem becomes intentionally symbolic of the interconnectedness of humans and the natural world. For these reasons, the renga seems an appropriate form for a Franciscan poem.

I adapted the renga form into a contemporary and Franciscan context by leading participants in a brief meditative exercise in which they focused on deep breathing and clearing their minds. Participants were then asked to look at a focus word that was lying face down on an index card that had been placed in front of them. Each participant had one of the following focus words: Sun, Moon, Wind/Air, Water, Fire, Earth, and Death. These key words come directly from Saint Francis’s “Canticle of the Creatures.”

After reading the focus word, participants were asked to visualize a memory, a moment in time evoked by their word, a time in which they felt connected to nature and felt the fullness of God and creation. Through a guided visualization, participants were asked to experience that moment through the five senses. Then, participants were given a small amount of time to freewrite, focusing on evocative images related to the memory.

After freewriting, participants then went back through what they had just written, underlining or circling moments of energy and connectedness. From these moments, participants crafted a two- or three-line stanza inspired by their focus words and by their memories.

Each session lasted twenty minutes, and there were three identical sessions. There were a total of nine participants overall. In the days following the conference, I assembled the stanzas written by the participants. I tried to minimize the amount of editorial and aesthetic changes when compiling

the poem to remain as true as possible to the original writing; however, I did make some changes so that the poem also remains faithful to the renga form.

The resulting poem, “Franciscan Renga,” was authored by the following people, listed in alphabetical order by last name.

Sr. Georgia Christensen, FSPA, Ph.D. from Viterbo University

Ms. Janat Davis from Cardinal Stritch University

Sr. Felicity Dorsett, OSF from the University of Saint Francis

Ms. Marian Gonsior from Madonna University

Sr. Jean Moore, FSPA, Ph.D. from the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, La Crosse, WI

Dr. Andrew Prall from the University of Saint Francis

Sr. Martha Ann Reich, OSF from the Sisters of Saint Francis Health Services, Inc.

Sr. Judith Schaeffer, OSF, Ph.D. from Franciscan Community Counseling, Inc., Colorado Springs, CO

Ms. Rhonda Wendler from the University of Saint Francis

I thank all of the authors for their contributions to this poem.

Franciscan Renga A Collaborative Poem

all hymns and praises
the forgotten daily threads
now remembered, sung:

an ever-changing moon is
relational, beautiful

clear, blue bell resounds
white light shivers, fractured through
branches: fruit, a truce

as parched dawn absorbs
swaths of continents

the red-orange rooster,
the red-orange sun awakens
a mighty village

wind on my face, toes in sand
insertion in creation

hair loose, unbraided
speeding, giddy, down the hill
ah, wind in my face

wrapped in a pure blue blanket
delight in a summer day

trees, vaulted arches
canopies across the street
breathing out O₂

peaceful frogs croaking, serene
snatches of conversation

campfire crackling
the Sierra dark rustles
with twigs, leaves, chatter

thrashing, crashing blue water
waves laughing hysterically
discerning current
buoyant whole, dark human plumes
churn deep rivulets

depth of mystery, freedom
time, space . . . wonder, imagine

gently we succumb
to death's loving hum, one art
threads earth with heaven

St. Francis and Creation: A Model for the 21st Century

ESPERANÇA MARIA CAMARA PH.D.

The issues addressed in this paper are “meta-issues” about the diversity of nature and how its forms evolved, about our place in this world, our relationship to creation and to its (and our) Creator. This paper is the product not only of scholarly research, but also of spiritual discernment. It brings together my knowledge of my own field of art history as well as my more recent reading on nature, the environment, and theology, my meditations on scripture and the teachings of St. Francis, and my observations of the world around me. It is the product of both faith and reason, of study and prayer. Through the themes of creation, creativity, sight, and delight, this paper aims to answer a question of fundamental importance to me: How does God want me to relate to the natural world?

The Role of Christianity in Shaping Our Relationship to the Natural Environment

In 1967 professor of medieval history Lynn White, Jr. published a provocative article in the journal *Science* entitled the “Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis” in which he sought to identify the deeper cultural reasons underlying modern society’s exploitation of nature. White claimed (rightly, in my opinion) that a society’s religious/spiritual perspective shapes its view of its relationship to the natural environment and thus ultimately determines its treatment of the environment. In the West, White concluded, the blame for society’s exploitative attitude rests on the shoulders of Christianity whose exaltation of man over other creatures shaped a broader cultural mentality in which man felt it was his divine right to use nature’s resources as he pleased.¹

White’s essay elicited quick response from scholars in a variety of fields and initiated an extensive discussion of the interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures, in particular the passages from Genesis (1:26, 28) in which God commands Adam to have dominion over and subdue the things of the earth.² Biblical scholars weighed in with philological, literary, and geographically- and historically-contextualized analyses of the Hebrew words translated as “have dominion” and “subdue,” arguing that the man-nature relationship presented in the Hebrew text, when examined in its specific cultural context, was one of benevolent stewardship and peaceful co-existence.³

White, however, was not concerned with the original meaning of Genesis, but rather with its interpretation throughout history, and in particular in the European Middle Ages.⁴ Subsequent scholars have refined White’s thesis noting that while the notion of dominion as a license for exploitation is not found in the Middle Ages, it does appear in the scientific discourse of the seventeenth-century when the text of Genesis was used as the justification, if not the motivation, for the investigation, and sub-

sequent manipulation and exploitation, of nature.⁵ This mentality played a significant role in the colonization and development of North America where the text of Genesis was cited as justification for subduing the wilderness. This notion is at the heart of the doctrine of Manifest Destiny.⁶ In numerous nineteenth-century reports of the continent's natural beauty, acknowledgements of landscape's transcendent beauty were quickly followed by assessments of the potential for material profit.⁷ This view is portrayed with striking clarity in the reports of the discovery of the great redwood forests of California. While some writers praised the trees as the master work of the divine Creator, far surpassing in their antiquity and majesty the cathedrals of Europe or the ruins of ancient Rome, others saw their great size in terms of the mileage of railroad tracks their wood could provide. The two views are often expressed by one and the same writer.⁸ This ambivalent attitude toward nature — seeing it, on the one hand, as a sign of divine blessing and a source of national pride worthy of being preserved, and, on the other, as a source of economic and industrial progress which necessitated its destruction — has deep roots in the American psyche.

In time, the religious underpinnings of the idea of human dominance over nature have been diluted, even erased by a more secular and materialistic perspective, but the attitude itself has not vanished.⁹ In fact, it is so ingrained in our broader cultural mentality, that when our society does acknowledge the damage caused by our modern way of life to the natural world, few see it as a spiritual or moral dilemma. And, even in instances when Church leaders, such as John Paul II and the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, clearly articulate the spiritual and moral

*St. Francis's
Canticle of Creation
expresses the essence
of his view of the
natural world.*

dimensions of our relationship to nature, the message seems slow to motivate serious re-examination of communal and individual behaviors that impact the environment.¹⁰

If, as White suggests, the root of the problem lies in the ideology of dominance that was at least partly justified by religious beliefs, then — White contends — the solution lies likewise in religion. White proposes a fundamental reconfiguration of the spiritual framework that shapes humanity's view of its relationship to nature, a reconfiguration whose basis is found within Christianity itself, and in particular in the figure of St. Francis.¹¹ Despite his flawed characterization of St. Francis's spirituality, which contains numerous theological and historical inaccuracies and errors, White's proposal of St. Francis as a Christian model for the relationship between humanity and nature is right on the mark. Pope John Paul II confirmed the importance of Francis as a model for our relationship to the environment in 1979 when he named St. Francis patron saint of ecology and again in his address on the World Day of Peace in 1990.¹²

Saint Francis as a Model for a Christian Relationship with Creation

St. Francis's *Canticle of Creation* expresses the essence of his view of the natural world. As much has been written about the *Canticle*, I will highlight, for my purposes, two key points. The first is that Francis's view of creation is firmly rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition. In the *Canticle* one hears echoes of the Psalms and the canticle of the three children from the Old Testament, as well as the influence of the hermitical and monastic traditions.¹³ The second pertains to what is distinct about Francis's vision. Francis's unique voice is heard above all in his familial, personal, even affectionate address to nature, and in the repeated acknowledgement that humans and the entities of nature, both animate and inanimate, are siblings sharing the same source of existence. Because of this bond, nature merits humanity's respect, gratitude, and compassion.¹⁴ The insights expressed in this masterpiece of early Italian poetry are the culmination of a life of prayer, much of it spent in solitude before God's creation.

Francis articulates several levels of appreciation for nature. He acknowledges its utility to humans and humans' dependence on it for physical survival; he emphasizes its symbolic associations, in keeping with biblical metaphors as well as with the medieval emphasis on reading nature as an allegory for religious truths; and he proclaims its beauty. Beauty plays an important role in Francis's experience of nature and of the divine through nature. It is clear from the *Canticle*, and from other stories in his life, that Francis spent much time looking at, listening to, thinking about and interacting with the natural world. He saw its beauty, its utility, and its symbolism as manifestations of God in the world.¹⁵ What Francis articulates with so much joy and what we as Christians, as Catholics, and especially as Franciscans need to increasingly live out and disseminate is the place of creation in making God known to humanity and in connecting humanity to God. Creation, like the Scriptures, reveals God to us.¹⁶ Francis sees nature — all of nature — as sacred because of its divine source.¹⁷ This is key to reshaping our relationship with the natural environment.¹⁸ How would we treat it each day if we saw it, in a very concrete way, as the work of God's hands, as a gift from God to each of us as individuals, not only for our physical survival and material comfort, but also for our spiritual and emotional well-being and delight?

God as Artist: Creation/Creativity as a Divine Gift

In its attempts to understand both God as Creator and God Incarnate, humanity has often resorted to comparison with its own acts of image-making. The description of God as artist has a very long history in the Christian tradition, first appearing in the book of Genesis where God is described as molding man out of the clay of the earth. The early Church Fathers speak of the Incarnation as the primary justification for the making and veneration of sacred art, emphasizing that Christ could be

portrayed in art because God had already portrayed him in the flesh. As medieval theologians argued, the material image itself is not in and of itself sacred, but it bears a unique relationship to the sacred.¹⁹ This relationship earned it an ardently-defended role in the dialogue between the faithful and God.²⁰ The arguments in defense of sacred art are applicable to the created world, so often described as the work of the divine artist. St. Bernard, for example, speaks of the “smiling countenance of the earth painted with varying colors.”²¹ Creation also has a role in uniting the believer to God.

Beginning in the Renaissance, the metaphor of God as artist finds itself reversed. In this era when artists embraced the study of the natural world and sought to imitate and even rival nature, the term “divine” begins to appear as an adjective describing the artist’s creative abilities. Two aspects of Renaissance art in particular earned the artist this appellation: his ability to recreate realistically the visible world on canvas or in stone and his ability to give physical, visual form to the ideas in his mind.²² The two went hand in hand. Leonardo da Vinci best articulated the relationship between art and nature when he upheld nature as the measure for the artist, advising the artist to hold a mirror up to the object he was painting. If there was no difference between the reflected image and the painted image, then the artist had achieved his goal.²³ The emphasis on the imitation of nature however did not stop with physical appearance. The goal of the Renaissance artist was also to convey a sense of movement, both physical and emotional, which expressed the inner life of the depicted figure. The greatest compliment an artist could receive was that his painted or sculpted figures lacked only breath.²⁴ Intimate knowledge of nature was the key. If the artist’s work was to be effective in moving the viewer, the artist had to master nature. For Leonardo da Vinci this meant the extensive study of every aspect of the natural world — of the properties of light and its interaction with air and matter, of human and animal anatomy, botanical and geological forms. In short, the artist had to know the handiwork of God, the master artist.²⁵ Artists in both northern and southern Europe were fully engaged in mastering the forms of nature in all their variety. Thus Netherlandish writer Karel van Mander could say of Pieter Bruegel that he had swallowed the Alps and spat them out on canvas.²⁶ The connection between nature, God’s creation, and artistic creation is indeed remarkable and speaks to the intimate connection between the divine and human acts of creation.²⁷

Nature: The Work of God’s Hand

It is no coincidence that the same period that witnessed the birth of naturalism in art also saw the celebration of the genius of the individual artist. While the artist’s stated goal in the Renaissance was the imitation, or rather emulation of nature, this by no means diminished the individuality of the artist’s works. His unique mind was reflected in the work of his hand, which was the product of the interaction between his divinely-

endowed creativity, his perceptive eye, his trained hand, and the world of nature.²⁸ One of the proverbs of the time stated “*ogni pittore dipinge se*” — “every artist paints himself.”²⁹ This proverb acknowledges the intimate relationship between the artist and the product of his mind. Born from within, the work of art reflects the artist’s very self — it is a physical manifestation of his mind. This idea is central to St. Francis’s perception of nature, for he recognizes it as a physical manifestation of God’s creative essence.³⁰

This perspective is precisely what humanity needs to bring back into focus as the guiding principle of its use of and interaction with the natural world.³¹ While most Christians see nature as the work of God’s hand to some extent, it is not the dominant lens through which we view and, even more importantly, interact with it. This is where the example of St. Francis can help us. For St. Francis, this was the only lens through which he viewed the world. Yes, through nature, God provides for our physical survival, and even our material comfort, but He also communicates with us. He reveals Himself to us, be it through symbolic association or through our engagement with its beauty, and, in this I include our intellectual, scientific engagement with nature’s inner workings as well as our aesthetic appreciation of its physical forms. Humanity’s immense progress in understanding the scientific principles of nature plays a significant part in revealing the incredible beauty of creation — be it of its molecular structure or its cosmic expanse.³²

In the late sixteenth century, Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti, archbishop of Bologna and participant in the Council of Trent, wrote an extensive treatise explaining the Church’s position on the orthodoxy of using visual art as a means of assisting the believer in knowing and communicating with God. Drawing on St. Augustine’s discussion of the role of oratory or preaching, Paleotti states that the role of sacred art is to “delight, instruct, and move [persuade]” the viewer to praise God and adhere to his commandments.³³ At the heart of his argument is the fact that humans are physical, we live in a physical world which we perceive through our senses; this physical world has a powerful part to play in uniting us to God. We must approach creation with this in mind.

So, what does creation tell us about God? There are two things in particular that stand out to me. God loves life and God loves variety.³⁴ Modern science and technology continue to reveal to us the incredible diversity, intricacy, and interconnection of life on this planet. Think of the ecosystems captured in the documentary, television series *Planet Earth*, for example.³⁵ Life is almost everywhere — in the ice of the Arctic, in the sulphuric vents of volcanoes, in the tree canopy of the rainforest, in the

It is important to note that in seeing God as an artist one does not put science aside, rather science reveals to us the methods of his artistry.

deep canyons of the ocean floor, in the darkness of caves. The list could go on. And, in each of these habitats, its variety is astounding. One must look both at the big picture and the small details to begin to see the magnitude of its wonder. It is important to note that in seeing God as an artist one does not put science aside, rather science reveals to us the methods of his artistry. One could say that matter is God's medium and geological and evolutionary processes are his tools.

Our knowledge of the natural world is a gift from God, the result of uniquely human faculties of consciousness, reason, inquiry, and creativity. As we survey the natural world, through the lens of artistic creativity, we can sense the artist's sheer delight in the act of creation. There is an over-the-top creative exuberance in the biodiversity of this planet, not unlike the hyperactivity of a creative mind, one that cannot stop creating. As Annie Dillard put it, "Nature will try anything once. . . . It is a spendthrift economy; though nothing is lost, all is spent."³⁶ Certain creatures in the animal world highlight to me the Creator's sheer delight in the process of creation. Take the peacock, for example — there is an extravagance in the peacock that seems to go beyond the need to attract a mate. Look at the variety of patterns, the intensity of hues, the precision of detail. Even the quieter plumage of the feathers that support this display betray meticulousness; this is the care of the craftsman. And, what do we make of the perfect fan of wispy feathers at the top of its head? They are like the decorative flourish at the end of the artist's signature — a mark of the facility of the artist's hand. And, what about the sea dragon, with its peculiar beak and its waving, vibrant appendages? Surely, God laughed with delight at its creation.

Interpreting creation like this may seem excessively anthropomorphic. So, let me return to firmer footing. Why do we humans not only have the ability to plumb the depths of nature and understand its evolutionary, biological, chemical processes, but also to delight in it, to experience the thrill of the aesthetic perception and/or intellectual understanding — what

We must bring to the fore a way of Christian living that encompasses the entire planet.

I think makes us God-like; it is a glint of God's image in us. God gave us the ability to delight in creation — this is a great gift, one that St. Francis lived fully and that brought him great joy. There is no biological need for us to admire creation, to experience nature's beauty the ways we do. It is purely a gift from God, one of true love and abundant generosity.

This world is God's masterpiece. And we, as the conscious, rational

beings on this planet, must use our abilities to appreciate, respect, and preserve it, at the very least out of respect for the One who made it. We must bring to the fore a way of Christian living that encompasses the entire planet. I do believe we will be held accountable for our way of living on this earth — for acts of omission as well as commission. Christ was angered when he entered the temple of the Father and found it turned into a den of thieves. Will He react any differently if our species has turned His creation into a rubbish heap?

Above all we must remember that God sees creation as good. This concept is so important in the Judeo-Christian tradition that it appears right at the beginning of our holy book. God made it and saw that it was good.³⁷ As Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, urges humanity to trust that God will provide for its needs, he also tells us that not only does God provide for the needs of other living creatures, but that he sees beauty even in the most transient of living things: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin yet, I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as one of these" (Matthew 6:30). St. Francis's spirituality magnifies the message contained in these words. He highlights the rightful place of creation in our relationship with God.

I would like to conclude my reflections with a passage from Annie Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*:

When I was 6 or 7 years old . . . I used to take a precious penny of my own and hide it for someone else to find. . . . I would cradle it at the roots of a sycamore, say, or a hole left by a chopped-off piece of sidewalk. Then I would take a piece of chalk . . . and draw huge arrows leading to the penny from both directions. . . . I was greatly excited by all this arrow drawing, at the thought of the first lucky passer-by who would receive in this way, regardless of merit, a free gift from the universe. . . . I've been thinking about seeing. There are lots of things to see, unwrapped gifts and free surprises. The world is fairly studded and strewn with pennies cast broadside from a generous hand. But — and this is the point — who gets excited by a mere penny? If you follow one arrow, if you crouch motionless on a bank to watch the tremulous ripple thrill on the water and are rewarded by the sight of a muskrat kit paddling from its den, will you count that sight as a chip of copper only, and go on your rueful way? It is dire poverty indeed when a man is so malnourished and fatigued that he won't stoop to pick up a penny. But, if you cultivate a healthy poverty and simplicity, so that finding a penny will literally make your day, then since the world is in fact planted in pennies, you have with your poverty bought a lifetime of days. It is that simple. What you see is what you get.³⁸

These words, in a more modern voice, reiterate the sentiment underlying St. Francis's *Canticle of Creation*. In his simplicity and poverty of spirit, St. Francis discovered a world full of riches — riches that enabled him to rejoice and partake of God's generosity present in every inch of creation. This way of seeing is our legacy as Franciscans — it is our privilege and our blessing. And, it is our responsibility to put it on the lamp stand in our individual lives, in our campuses, and in our Church.

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Endnotes

- 1 Lynn White, Jr., "On the Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis," in *American Earth: Environmental Writings since Thoreau*, ed. Bill McKibben (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 2008): 405-412. My use of the word "man" in this paragraph and elsewhere is intentional. I do not use it to indicate humanity in general but to capture more accurately the medieval and early modern perspective of the hierarchy within humanity itself which placed man, in particular, at the pinnacle of creation. The scientific, economic, and religious perspectives underlying the exploitative use of nature discussed by White were advanced by those with education and authority, in other words, by men, in accordance with the structure of Western society until relatively modern times.
- 2 The scholarship on this topic has increased exponentially in the past fifty years. See for example, Jeanne Kay, "Concepts of Nature in the Hebrew Bible," in *Franciscan Theology of the Environment: An Introductory Reader*, ed. Dawn N. Nothwehr, (Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, Quincy University, 2002), 23-45; Jeremy Cohen, *"Be Fertile and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master It": The Ancient and Medieval Career of Biblical Text* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); Peter Harrison, "Subduing the Earth: Genesis 1, Early Modern Science, and the Exploitation of Nature," *Journal of Religion* 79, no.1 (1999): 86-109.
- 3 Kay, 42. As Kay points out, however, the modern notion of stewardship is significantly different from the nature-human-God relationship presented in the Hebrew Scriptures, which presents nature as sharing in the covenant with God, as a vehicle through which God punishes and rewards humanity, and, at times, as the innocent casualty of punishment meted out to humanity for its transgressions.
- 4 See the discussion of White's thesis in Jeremy Cohen, "The Bible, Man, and Nature in the History of Western Thought: A Call for Reassessment," *Journal of Religion* 63, no. 2 (April 1985): 169-71.
- 5 Harrison, 95-96.
- 6 Harrison, 101; Cohen, "The Bible, Man, and Nature," 156.
- 7 Nancy Anderson, " 'The Kiss of Enterprise': The Western Landscape as Symbol and Resource," in *The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier, 1820-1920*, ed. William Treuttner (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991): 273.
- 8 Anderson, 275.
- 9 White, 406, 410, 412.
- 10 For Pope John Paul II, "The Ecological Crisis: A Common Responsibility" (Vatican City, 1990) and the United States Catholic Conference, "Renewing the Earth" (1991) see the Appendix of *"And God Saw That It Was Good": Catholic Theology and the Environment*, eds. Drew Christiansen and Walter Grazer (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1996): 215-222 and 223-243, respectively. On the lack of awareness of and responsive action to these official proclamations on the parish and individual level see Keith Douglass Warner, "The Greening of American Catholicism: Identity, Conversion, and Continuity," *Religion and American Culture* 18, no. 1 (2008): 126, 133.
- 11 White, 410-412.
- 12 Pope John Paul II, 222. Keith D. Warner, OFM clearly and insightfully demonstrated the urgent relevance of the Franciscan theological tradition to the current environmental crisis in his essay "Get Him Out of the Birdbath! What Does It Mean to Have a Patron Saint of Ecology," in *Franciscan Theology of the Environment: An Introductory Reader*, ed. Nothwehr, 361-363. The ideas presented in the latter essay were further developed, with particular attention paid to concrete application as well as their ecological and theological underpinnings, in Ilia Delio, Keith Douglass Warner and Pamela Wood, *Care for Creation: A Franciscan Spirituality of the Earth* (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2007).

- 13 The relationship between these traditions and St. Francis's *Canticle of Creation* is the subject of extensive analysis in Roger Sorrell, *St. Francis and Nature: Tradition and Innovation in Western Christian Attitudes toward the Environment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), see especially chapters 1, 2, and 5.
- 14 Sorrell, 42-44; 123-34. The most succinct analysis of St. Francis's view of creation and its subsequent elaboration by Franciscan theologians such as Bonaventure and John Duns Scotus is Ilia Delio, *A Franciscan View of Creation: Learning to Live in a Sacramental World* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, 2003). On Bonaventure's discussion of the importance of compassion in Francis's relationship to creation see Sorrell, 52-53. See also, Eric Doyle, "The Canticle of Brother Sun' and the Value of Creation," in *Franciscan Theology of the Environment*, ed. Nothwehr, 156, 158-9; Warner, "Get Him Out of the Birdbath," 369-371; Delio, Warner, and Wood, *Care for Creation*, 77, 84-85.
- 15 Sorrell, 123-125.
- 16 On Bonaventure's arguments for seeing God reflected in all of His creation see Phil Hoebing, OFM, "St. Bonaventure and Ecology," in *Franciscan Theology of the Environment*, ed. Nothwehr, 272-75; Delio, *A Franciscan View of Creation*, 23-31.
- 17 Warner, "Get Him Out of the Birdbath," 363-9; Delio, Warner, and Wood, *Care for Creation*, 9-10. For a concise discussion of the centrality of Christ as the culmination of the intimate relationship between God and all of creation see also William Short, "The Franciscan Spirit," in *Franciscan Theology of the Environment*, ed. Nothwehr, 118-122.
- 18 Delio, Warner, and Wood, *Care for Creation*, 52.
- 19 Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1994), 149-154. Bonaventure also uses the metaphor of the artist and artistic creation in the context of the Incarnation, see Short, "The Franciscan Spirit," 120-21.
- 20 See Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 146-159 for an overview of the arguments presented during the Byzantine iconoclastic controversy. On the defense of images in the post-Tridentine era see Esperança Camara, "Pictures and Prayers: Madonna of the Rosary Imagery in Post-Tridentine Italy" (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2002), 1-2; 163-166.
- 21 As cited in Sorrell, 34.
- 22 Stephen J. Campbell, " 'Fare una Cosa Morta Parer Viva': Michelangelo, Rossa, and the (Un) Divinity of Art," *Art Bulletin* 84, no. 4 (2002): 596-7.
- 23 Leonardo da Vinci, as cited in "Selections from the Original Manuscripts," in *A Documentary History of Art*, ed. Elizabeth Gilmore Holt, 2 vols. (1947; reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1: 284. It is important to note that Leonardo did not advocate an art solely tied to the realistic portrayal of the visible world; invention and the imagination were central to his, and other Renaissance artists', work. Rather, he viewed the understanding of, and ability to imitate, the forms and properties of the visible world as central to the artist's success in imbuing his inventions with a convincing sense of life-likeness. For a discussion of this topic see also, Campbell, " 'Fare una Cosa Morta Parer Viva,' " 598.
- 24 The sixteenth-century art critic and historian Giorgio Vasari praises the *Mona Lisa* in precisely these terms, see *Lives of the Artists*, trans. George Bull, 2 vols. (1965; reprint, London: Penguin Books, 1987), 1: 266-67. See also Campbell, " 'Fare una Cosa Morta Parer Viva,' " 603, 605.
- 25 Martin Kemp, *Leonardo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 49.
- 26 Konrad Oberhuber, "Bruegel's Early Landscape Drawings," *Master Drawings* 19, no. 2 (1981), 151.
- 27 The interconnections between creation in nature, human creativity, and God continue to be the subject of theological investigation. In a recent and compelling article, theologian Gordon D. Kaufman proposes we view God as "creativity" in all its forms — from the Big Bang, to the forces of evolution, to the development of humanity's complex social, scientific, and cultural systems. All of this, Kaufman stresses, is God. See "A Religious Interpretation of Emergence: Creativity as God," *Zygon* 42, no. 4 (2007): 915-928.
- 28 Campbell, " 'Fare una Cosa Morta Parer Viva,' " 598.
- 29 On the changing implications of this proverb in Renaissance Italy, see Frank Zöllner, " 'Ogni pittore dipinge sè': Leonardo and 'automimesis,' " in Matthias Winner, ed., *Der Künstler über sich in seinem Werk: Internationales Symposium der Biblioteca Herziana, Rom 1989* (Weinheim, VCH, 1992), 137-160. Available from <http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/artdok/volltexte/2006/161/>.
- 30 Delio, Warner, and Wood, *Care for Creation*, 41-45.
- 31 Delio, Warner, and Wood, *Care for Creation*, 52.
- 32 Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, as quoted in Delio, *A Franciscan View of Creation*, 1.
- 33 Gabriele Paleotti, *Discorso intorno alle imagine sacre e profane* (1582), as cited in Camara, "Pictures and Prayers," 164.
- 34 Delio, *A Franciscan View of Creation*, 37-38; Delio, Warner, and Wood, 70-71.
- 35 *Planet Earth*, BBC/Discovery Channel/NHK Co-Production, 2007, DVD.
- 36 Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (1974; reprint, New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1985), 65.
- 37 The goodness of Creation as an expression of God's generous love is a central theme in Franciscan theology. See Short, "The Franciscan Spirit," 112-116; Delio, Warner, and Wood, *Care for Creation*, 45-48.
- 38 Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, 15.

God's Extravagant Love: The Genesis of a Program

PATRICIA SMITH OSF, JCD, PH.D.

The program, *God's Extravagant Love: Reclaiming the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition* was the topic of the plenary and breakout sessions presented by this writer and Sister Kathleen Moffatt, OSF at the AFCU gathering in Fort Wayne, Indiana. In 2005 members of three religious congregations came together under Kathleen's direction to design a program that could be used to share and enrich the Franciscan tradition among Franciscans. Much research has been done in the last forty years regarding the retrieval of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition (FIT). Using these recent findings, the group created a program that was experiential, reflective, and intellectually stimulating. In 2007 some 15 programs were scheduled throughout the United States with the possibility of several more being offered in 2008. However, to date the program has been presented to thousands of participants worldwide on six continents. It has been adapted numerous times for various interest groups. Among them, Franciscan institutions of higher education have used its components for faculty orientation, retreats or other purposes.

The program consists of an historical overview and considerations of the primacy of Christ, creation and the humility of God, and the dignity of the human person. These topics provide the framework for considering theological issues from a Franciscan perspective. This paper summarizes the main points of the four components of the program.

Historical Overview

Theology continues to develop throughout our lives. Our understanding of God is not the same as it was when we were children or college students. We express our beliefs differently and search for alternate ways to express them. As Christians we share a common foundation in our theological approach to life, i.e., Jesus, the Christ, who is our way to God. Yet each of us has a unique slant on this tradition, determined by such factors as our family practice of faith, the time in which we were educated and formative experiences in our faith journey. Jesus revealed God to us as Father, Abba. In word and deed he taught us simply that God is Love. This truth has been interpreted in light of the gospel message throughout centuries of Christianity.

Throughout the history of the Church numerous theological traditions have existed, reflecting the gospel message from a plethora of perspectives. At times God has been understood in terms of Judge or King or Conqueror. For hundreds of years one intellectual tradition has been dominant in the Latin Church: that of St. Thomas Aquinas. Yet the FIT, as well as other traditions, have existed along with it.

Theology, whatever tradition, is not merely to be studied; theology is what we do and how we live. To bear fruit theology must move from

the intellect and take root in the heart. The exciting fact is that when we examine or speak of Franciscan theology we refer to much of what already echoes in our hearts. It is similar to what Moses told the Israelites in regard to God's command.

For this command . . . is not too mysterious and remote for you. It is not up in the sky, that you should say, "Who will go up in the sky and get it for us and tell us of it that we may carry it out?" Nor is it across the sea that you should say: "Who will cross the sea to get it for us and tell us of it, that we may carry it out?" No, it is something very near to you, already in your mouths and in your hearts: you have only to carry it out. (Dt. 30/11-15, *The New American Bible*)

As we learn more about the Franciscan tradition we deepen our appreciation of God's extravagant love for us and for all creation. We find that much of what we learn is already in our hearts. We need only carry it out.

The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition has not been in the forefront of theologies. Along our faith journey most of us have been immersed in Thomistic or Scholastic theology; we have been influenced by Augustinian, Jesuit or other traditions. For many the Franciscan tradition appears new! So we ask: Why has the FIT been overshadowed; why did we not learn more about it sooner; why is it essential to revive it today?

Historically, the institutional Church has long espoused the Scholastic approach of Thomas Aquinas. The Church's reliance on Neo-Scholasticism is evident even in contemporary papal documents and teachings. Part of the reason that Franciscan theology has remained a best-kept secret is the person of Francis himself and the spirit of those who have followed him! Francis never thought of himself as a theologian. His approach to life was incarnational and experiential. Theology for Francis was about doing what was his to do, not about constructing a methodology based on one's approach to God. Yet Francis was a theologian. The authority of Francis's theological voice emerged from his own experience of God; in this sense we can call Francis a vernacular theologian. In this way Francis was similar to Jesus. Jesus, an uneducated itinerant Jewish preacher, used images familiar to his audience to speak about God and God's presence among us. Called Rabbi by his disciples, Jesus taught with authority about an all good, intimate God. Francis, following in the footprints of Jesus, did likewise.

Francis's legacy was broadened and enriched in the lives and writings of many who followed him — Clare of Assisi, Anthony of Padua, Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, John Duns Scotus, Angela of Foligno, Roger Bacon, William of Ockham. Their teachings developed the theology that we call Franciscan, a viable alternative to existing theologies of the time.

Interestingly at the Council of Trent in the mid sixteenth century, there were many bishops who favored Franciscan theology. Nonetheless,

Thomism/Scholasticism became more rooted and other theologies faded into the background. In 1893 Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *Aeterni Patris* gave Thomism “pride of place” in schools of theology, because of its logical structure. Thomism was reaffirmed in the 1917 *Code of Canon Law* (and also preferred for the formation of clerics in the 1983 code). However, in 1923 Pius XI in his encyclical *Studiorum Ducem*, did acknowledge room for alternate theological systems of thinking in the Church!

In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries certain Franciscan scholars — among them Philotheus Boehner, Maurice Grajewski, Ignatius Brady, Zachary Hayes — saw the relevance of the Franciscan Intellectual

What is the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition? This term refers to a set of values, theologically formed, that embrace a distinct view of the world.

Tradition for a changing world. Numerous attempts were made to revive the FIT; yet these efforts were for the most part unsuccessful. Nonetheless, the vision and determination of these scholars was not entirely lost. Within the last forty years we have witnessed a contemporary revival of the tradition. In 1973 the *Omnibus* of Franciscan sources, a collection of Francis’s writings and early biographies about him, was published

in English. By the end of the twentieth century most of the significant texts written by St. Bonaventure were translated into English and serious attempts to retrieve the work of John Duns Scotus were being made. The *Omnibus* was itself replaced by a three volume compilation of early Franciscan documents which contained more accurate translations and additions. Practical programs, forums and symposiums promoting the Franciscan tradition were developed. Recently work has been initiated to present the FIT as a valued and much needed theology.

What is the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition? This term refers to a set of values, theologically formed, that embrace a distinct view of the world. This vision takes as its starting point and builds upon the theological intuitions of Francis of Assisi and other Franciscan theologians. In March 2001 the English-speaking Conference of the Order of Friars Minor formed the Commission for the Retrieval of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition (CFIT) to determine how the FIT might be significant to the Franciscan family and what it might offer to all the people of God. The objectives of CFIT include searching the spiritual depths of the Franciscan inheritance; cherishing its uniqueness as Franciscan and the theological expression of this; building a common public language to communicate the tradition to others; and integrating the theological inheritance with the structure of ongoing formation, pastoral practices and contemporary social settings (Osborne, 2003, p. vi).

The FIT addresses key theological concepts, including our view of God, of Christ the Incarnate Word, and the Paschal mystery. It influences our perception of the world and creation, the natural sciences, our view of the

human person and our understanding of Church. Kenan Osborne insightfully summarized the FIT, stating: “Since the end of the thirteenth century . . . there has been a form of theology called ‘Franciscan.’ The roots of this tradition are present in the New Testament, in the Church Fathers and in the early, pre-thirteenth-century medieval theologians.” He notes that

Franciscan theology did not start with the Franciscans. That this theology is now called “Franciscan” indicates that the early Franciscan[s] . . . did a masterful job . . . synthesizing . . . the elements . . . inherited from previous generations. They drew upon one of the major traditions in Christian history found in the New Testament and the Fathers of the Church and enriched it in such a way that history itself has given this . . . tradition a new name, Franciscan Theology. (Osborne, 2003, p. 41)

Osborne’s remarks echo what another Franciscan scholar, Maurice Grajewski, emphasized some fifty years earlier. Grajewski noted that practicality and actuality, not theory and possibility, are key to Franciscan theology which attempts to mirror our lives in the life of Jesus as recorded in the gospel (Grajewski, 1958, p. 24).

The Franciscan charism is often described as laity-friendly. This is not only because people of all walks of life were part of the Franciscan movement from the outset, but also because Francis is so relevant today. His belief in the goodness of God, the relationship of all creation, the dignity of the person and human freedom are theological truths that underscore the gospel message and offer hope and meaning to the world.

Through our institutions of higher education we can enliven the Franciscan tradition, the heart of which is the gospel and following in the footprints of Jesus. It is ours to continue to revive the Franciscan mission, which is ultimately the mission of Jesus.

Scotus saw creation eternally ordered toward the Incarnation regardless of human sin. Even if our first ancestors had obeyed God, Christ would have come among us.

Love and the Primacy of Christ

This section is deeply theological and thus the most intense component of the program. Our own unique experience of God is a mystery. We fall short when we attempt to put this into words. We use art, music, poetry and story to find clues to the mystery of who God is. For us as Christians, Christ is *the clue* to the mystery, as the New Testament attests. Colossians states that Christ is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). Yet, what does this mean?

A simple story provides an illustration. A little girl was afraid of the dark. Each evening at bedtime she begged her mother to stay with her

until she fell asleep. Attempting to assuage her fears, the mother assured her that God was always with her. The young child replied that she knew that, but she wanted someone with skin on.

Francis encountered a God with-skin-on in the leper, in his contemplation of the crucified Christ, in his brothers and sisters. Clare found the incarnate Christ when she washed the feet of her sisters and cared for them with a mother's love. For Francis and Clare, theology began with doing what Jesus did and then reflecting on and sharing their experiences. What continued to astound them was the humility of a God who would become incarnate. Because of this Francis and his followers saw God as relational, one who could be encountered in terms of familial love: father, mother, brother, sister, spouse. For them *all* creatures were good, because they had their source in the "highest good."

Two early Franciscan theologians, Bonaventure and John Duns Scotus, systematized Francis's vernacular theology. Bonaventure developed Francis's theme of relationality. He integrated Francis's poetry of the All Good God with the philosophical concept that good is, by nature, self diffusive. The highest good, God, is so abundant that God's goodness is never diminished by overflowing. (This can be likened to sharing good news. Parents' joy in relating the birth of their new baby is not diminished in the telling; rather each reiteration adds to the joy.) Bonaventure created a theology based on the primacy of love. He used the image of an overflowing fountain to express the love and relationship within the Trinity: God freely shares with the Son all that God is. The Son returns that gift fully. This mutual love, so abundant, so eternal and personal, is the Holy Spirit.

For Bonaventure the universe is like a stained-glass window that refracts in elegant diversity the overflowing abundance of divine love. Creation is the first "Book" of divine revelation. But because we have lost the ability to read this book, we need the revealed word of Scripture, the personal revelation of Christ, the Incarnate Word of God. For Bonaventure Christ is the primary clue to the mystery of Love in the divine life: all that flows from the living God (Delio, 2001, p. 60).

Bonaventure's contemporary, Thomas Aquinas, began his theology with "God as being"; John Duns Scotus, who followed Bonaventure, started with the premise "God is love." This influenced Scotus's understanding of the Trinity, shaped his perception of the primacy of Christ, and grounded his reverence for all creation as the work of God.

Scotus believed that Trinitarian love is perfect and complete. He posited that there was no need for God to create, yet God chose to do so. God freely chose generous, self-giving love. Scotus reasoned that true freedom, then, is ordered toward loving relationship. Both creation and the incarnation were freely chosen acts that reveal God as an artist of love. Scotus saw creation eternally ordered toward the Incarnation regardless of human sin. Even if our first ancestors had obeyed God, Christ would have come among us.

Salvation from the Franciscan perspective is sharing in the divine communion of love. The incarnation is salvific without any consideration of sin. We are saved by love, to share love! Scotus did not deny the cross; for him the cross was the consequence of sin. It is what the mystery of incarnate love looks like in a world wounded by sin. For Scotus divine mystery is revealed in creation/incarnation and in cross and resurrection (Delio, 2001).

Creation and the Humility of God

Francis was not a scientist nor did he live in a scientific age. Yet he had insights that speak to science today. Francis understood creation as the revelation of a humble God. We are familiar with the pyramid of creation (God at the top with angels, humans, animals, plants and inanimate objects filling in their respective places below). However, Francis used a different model to consider creation: one of mutuality, not superiority/inferiority; one where all creation was sister and brother because all had the same creator. (This might be envisioned as a circle with Christ at the center and all created things surrounding him.) Creation spoke to Francis of God's love. In the final years of his life Francis wrote the "Canticle of Creation." It summarized what he had learned through his lifetime, that through his loving relationship with Jesus he was truly brother to the sun, moon, stars, water, fire, etc.

Bonaventure noted that love opened the heart of Francis to see the overflowing goodness of God in creation. Bonaventure used three images to describe this: a song, a stained glass window and the work of the divine artist. The song is an excellent blend of harmonies that God freely sings into the vast spaces of the universe. Divine light shines through Christ and the stained glass window diffracts into a myriad of creatures that all reflect divine light. As we recognize a certain artist's work so we recognize nature as a reflection of an extravagantly loving God, a divine artist! Bonaventure thought of God in terms of Divine Simplicity and Boundless Fertility (Delio, 2001, p.23). This is exemplified in the simple elements of creation — hydrogen, oxygen, carbon, etc. — that come together to produce a staggering richness of living and non-living forms. Bonaventure connected all creatures with Christ. With the stones, Christ shares existence; with plants, life; with animals, sensation; with humans, intelligence (Hayes, 1996, p. 13).

For Scotus creation proved that God so wants to be one with us that we were given a share in God's very life. Scotus also spoke of *haecceitas* — "thisness." Each work of creation, each person is unique and has a particular "thisness." (Think of the trillions of snowflakes that fall in a blizzard. Each is one-of-a-kind!) In the *Canticle of Creation* Francis recognizes the distinct beauty and gift of creation — its "thisness," its *haecceitas*.

Francis's concept of the inter-relatedness of all creation is evident in science today. One example is Dr. Massaru Emoto's (2004) work, *The*

Hidden Messages in Water, which describes his research on the influence that humans have on water. Emoto studied water crystals after exposing them to a variety of spoken words and music. In a cold room, with high speed photography, he photographed the newly formed crystals of frozen water samples. He noted that water appears to “change its expression” with each interaction. The words “you make me sick” actually caused the crystals to look grotesque while the words of love and gratitude produced a distinct beauty in the crystallized water.

Dignity of the Human Person

St. Francis in Admonition 5, says: “Consider, O human being, in what great excellence the Lord God has placed you, for God created you and formed you to the image of God’s beloved Son according to the body and to God’s likeness according to the Spirit” (In Armstrong, 1999, p. 131). We are a time conscious people. We feel lost without a watch, calendar, or blackberry. We multi-task and constantly juggle commitments to provide time for family/community, work, exercise, leisure, spirituality. Often we do not live in the present moment but are pre-occupied with what is next on our agenda. Yet we need to take time to realize that we are known, blessed and loved by God. This fundamental reality is the basis of all relationships.

CFIT urges all those with a Franciscan heart to consider seriously the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition.

Francis, Clare and Bonaventure tell the story of the human person only in relationship with God, a God present in and through the routine, mundane events of our lives. It is true that we might recognize God in prayer; but God is just as present in the ordinary activities of our lives — planned and unplanned. Often the daily grind is a more accurate measure of how we love. As a Zen proverb suggests: After ecstasy, one does the laundry.

Franciscan theology is rooted in the incarnation. Bonaventure speaks of God as a fountain of all goodness; this goodness is the source of all creation. When we recognize this in our own lives, we are able to experience this creative love in others. Scotus gives expression to God’s extravagant love through *haecceitas*. Each person is unique in all time and for eternity. In relationships, each person gives something that cannot be given by another. Each of us uniquely contributes to making humankind into a human family.

Aquinas taught that the created order is a transparent medium through which divine light shines like a window. Scotus used the image of a lamp, for he believed that the source of the light had already been given to us by our Creator. Each creature already possesses the light; it need only shine forth from within. Scotus further posited that we who are made in the image of love have been given the freedom to love in return, just as

God loves, freely, by choice. This choice presents the human person as an ethical and moral being. With the human will there are two affections or orientations: Motivation to love self and motivation to love others. Right moral living requires balancing the two affections when making choices that shape our character. If we follow our affection for justice the result is a dynamic mutual love and expanding inclusivity.

Conclusion

The program, “God’s Extravagant Love — Reclaiming the Franciscan Intellectual/Theological Tradition,” concludes by considering practical insights that flow from a Franciscan theological perspective. It invites participants to examine their theological outlook and its impact on their lives. Francis would call this “doing what is ours to do.” CFIT urges all those with a Franciscan heart to consider seriously the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition. It asks: “If not us, who? If not now, when?”

For information about the *God’s Extravagant Love* program, contact Sr. Kathleen Moffatt, OSF at skmoffatt@aol.com.

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Inaugurating Wonder: St. Bonaventure's Account of St. Francis Preaching to the Birds

ROBERT A. GERVASI, PH.D.

In Catholic popular tradition, St. Francis is the patron saint of the environment, animals and, of course, birds. The birdbath Francis is perhaps the most ubiquitous modern expression of that persistent and simplistic association. Scholars have tried to correct that simplification by suggesting a symbolic or metaphorical interpretation of the bird image, especially as regards Francis's experience of kinship with all creation.¹

While respecting previous insights, this reflection goes further. It interprets St. Bonaventure's account of Francis preaching to the birds not only as an embrace of creation but also as a metaphor for the goals and experience of higher learning inspired by the Holy Spirit and guided by the authority of the Christian community. It does so in three ways: by considering the specific purposes of early Franciscan biographers in telling different versions of the story; by examining the sequencing of Bonaventure's text to infer his own objectives; and by recalling the cultural echoes of ancient religious views about the significance of birds — namely, the connection between birds and divine communication, especially communication about new beginnings.

Early Versions of the Story

To better appreciate the distinctiveness of Bonaventure's account of the story, let us first consider its most important predecessors, versions found in the first *Life of St. Francis* by Thomas of Celano; *The Life of St. Francis* by Julian of Speyer; *The Versified Life of St. Francis* by Henri d'Avranches; and Celano's final work, *The Treatise on the Miracles of St. Francis*.²

The earliest is Celano's first *Life* (1229), which was commissioned by Pope Gregory IX for the whole Church as a literary testimony to Francis to complement the architectural monument — the great basilica — that the pope was then constructing in the saint's honor. The story of Francis preaching to the birds at Bevagna and Alviano appears in Book 1, Chapter 21, which is set within an extended narrative of Francis's bold exploits to give witness to the gospel, as befits the *Life's* overarching purpose to commemorate the saint's canonization in the tradition of Christian hagiography.

Francis's boldness for the faith is dramatically underscored in the preceding narrative. Chapter 20 relates his intense desire for martyrdom, his determination to travel to Syria, his miraculous rescue of the sailors, and — the climax — his confident visit with the sultan. Francis then preaches to the birds at Bevagna — an extra-human audience that, in the narrative

sequence, seems extravagantly appropriate for his almost superhuman boldness. We might imagine Celano's own audience thinking that Francis surely deserved to be canonized and honored with the great basilica.

Julian of Speyer's *Life of St. Francis* (ca. 1234) relies closely on Celano's first *Life*. Its shorter length and stylistic details, however, reflect Julian's different aim: to compose not a hagiographical account for the whole Church but an inspirational text to edify the Franciscan fraternity. Accordingly, the story of Francis preaching to the birds at Bevagna (Julian's Chapter 8) is not told in relation to the stories of the sailors and the sultan that precede it. Rather it comes across as a freestanding moral exemplum, introduced by Julian's editorializing on his theme, as he says, "Blessed Francis was a man completely filled with a dovelike simplicity." Celano's version had emphasized that Francis "was a man of great fervor." In Julian's version, however, preaching to the birds is less the climax of Francis's passionate boldness for the gospel than it is evidence that Francis "had a great fondness for all creatures because of his love of the Creator." Julian stresses a different aspect of Francis's personality for a different audience.

Henri of Avranches' *The Versified Life of St. Francis* (ca. 1230) was written for yet another audience: neither the whole Church nor the friar community but the educated elites of the English and papal courts.³ As the editors of *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents* aver, "Henri was primarily interested in transforming the text of Thomas of Celano's *The Life of St. Francis* into a dramatic poetic recitation. As such it would be safe to presume that Francis of Assisi was not Henri's primary interest; poetry was."⁴

The editors further demonstrate that Henri's work is shot through with references to Ovid, Virgil, and other ancient authors.⁵ So while Henri's *Life* may be of lesser theological and historical value than those of Celano and others, it is a salutary reminder of the persistent influence of classical Roman culture in the medieval period.

Consider one final precursor to Bonaventure's version — Thomas of Celano's *Treatise on the Miracles of St. Francis*, which he composed between 1250 and 1252 as a capstone homage to the saint at the request of the new minister general, John of Parma. In the *Treatise*, Celano repeats the Bevagna-Alviano bird story substantially intact from the first *Life*, but with two notable differences. First, the preceding context is a narrative not primarily of Francis's bold travels but of his miraculous power — to withstand fire, to heal a woman's eyes, to turn water into wine. Preaching to the obedient birds simply follows as another miracle in the litany.

Second, Celano inserts another bird-related miracle, ascribed to a follower of Francis, which does not appear in the first *Life* and apparently is newly told here. Bonaventure later incorporates Celano's additional miracle in the *Major Legend*, in which he sequences the story carefully, so it is worth here quoting Celano's insertion in full:

In the city of Parma there was a scholar who was so annoyed by the inconsiderate chattering of a swallow that he could not stay in the place he needed for meditation. Rather provoked, he began to say, “This swallow was one of those we read about, who once would not allow Saint Francis to preach until he imposed silence upon them.” And turning to the swallow he said. “In the name of St. Francis I command you to let me catch you.” Without hesitation the bird flew to his hands. The surprised scholar gave it back its original freedom, and never again heard its chattering. (4.22)

Whether or not this story had an independent provenance is unclear, but it suited Celano’s purposes: to honor not only the saint from Assisi but also the new minister general from Parma. John led the Order from 1247

Bonaventure attempted to promote unity within the Order, loyalty to the institutional Church, and fidelity to the transforming witness of Francis as he understood it.

until 1257, entering amid high hopes after a period of turbulence. His appointment to head the Order was regarded as an opportunity for spiritual and intellectual renewal following the difficult leadership of Brother Elias, who was widely viewed as autocratic.

Elias, the vicar of Francis who had been instrumental in pursuing Gregory IX’s vision of the saint’s great basilica, was eventually elected as minister general in 1232. Elias extended the order’s influence in the service of the papacy, but his worldly ambition and arrogant demeanor alienated many, and he

was deposed in 1239. Three other ministers general succeeded Elias with brief tenures in the following eight years. Elias had been excommunicated and was living in disgrace, so when John of Parma assumed the generalship in 1247, the memory of Elias’s authoritarian rule was still fresh.

How fitting is Celano’s insertion, then, that the “surprised scholar” from Parma not only speaks to a swallow but also restores “its original freedom.” Not only was Celano obliging the new minister general’s wish for a reprise account of the miracles of St. Francis, but also he used the occasion as an opportunity to express the friars’ hopes for the new minister general himself as the restorer of the founder’s vision of the Rule as gospel freedom in the service of the Church.

John of Parma enjoyed broad support for almost a decade as a scholarly and saintly man committed to a life of holiness in the Spirit, but his emphasis on the Spirit eventually caused his downfall. During his tenure the conflict between the secular masters and the mendicant orders for influence at the University of Paris had reached fever pitch, with seculars accusing the mendicants of heresy, based on a controversial interpretation of Joachim of Fiore’s theology of history by a Franciscan, Gerard of Borgo San Donnino. Joachim had viewed all of history as comprised of

three phases, each guided primarily by a specific member of the Trinity — the Father during the Old Testament period, the Son during the New Testament era, and the Spirit during the present time. Many theologians and religious, including John of Parma, accepted that general schema, or were at least sympathetic to it.⁶

Gerard of Borgo San Donnino expanded on Joachim’s vision by asserting that Francis of Assisi was the angel of the sixth seal referred to in the Book of Revelation as inaugurating the final age of the Spirit. That much could be tolerated, as the memory of Francis was universally cherished. Gerard went much further, however, by emphasizing Joachim’s suggestion that the age of the Spirit had no need of a worldly hierarchy and would see the withering of the institutional Church, hastened by the gospel witness of the Franciscan community. That assertion understandably threatened the papacy, and Gerard’s theology was condemned.⁷

Distinctions between Joachim’s and Gerard’s approaches — distinctions that might have rescued John of Parma from accusations of heresy — were easily swept away in the heated controversy over theological control at the University of Paris, and John fell victim to guilt by association. He was forced from office and replaced by the candidate he supported, Bonaventure of Bagnoreggio.

Bonaventure’s Major Legend

Although the detailed intrigues of the period remain unclear, what is certain is that Bonaventure assumed leadership during an intensely discordant era in the history of the Order. The conflict with the seculars, the practice of poverty, the role of institutional authority, and the value of higher learning were all matters causing deep divisions. Bonaventure attempted to promote unity within the Order, loyalty to the institutional Church, and fidelity to the transforming witness of Francis as he understood it. To affirm and advance Bonaventure’s vision, the General Chapter of Narbonne (1260) formally commissioned him to compose a new life of Francis. The result was the *Major Legend*, by the Chapter’s fiat, superseding all previous accounts.

Bonaventure prefaces his work by lauding Francis as “a herald of Gospel perfection,” explicitly embracing the vision of Francis as the representation of the angel of the sixth seal of the Apocalypse. At the same time, he underscores Francis’s humility and obedience.⁸

Bonaventure also emphasizes that he has arranged his account of the life of Francis thematically, not chronologically:

To avoid confusion I did not always weave the story together in chronological order. Rather, I strove to maintain a more thematic order, relating to the same theme events that happened at different times, and to different themes events that happened at the same time, as seemed appropriate.⁹

In other words, Bonaventure intends to make a point by the order of his narrative, encouraging readers to be alert to the particular sequencing of his details. In fact, his story of Francis preaching to the birds is a centerpiece of reflection on Franciscan vocation and Franciscan education.

Consider Bonaventure's retelling of the story, aware of the contemporary challenges he faced. Perhaps surprising at first blush is Bonaventure's retention of the subsequent brief anecdote from Celano's *Treatise on the Miracles of St. Francis* about the Scholar from Parma. Bonaventure could hardly ignore the impact of John of Parma, who had enjoyed much popularity and who had served not only as minister general but also as Bonaventure's own mentor. Moreover, Bonaventure shared John's embrace of both higher learning and deep spirituality.

At the same time, Bonaventure strongly differed from John, or at least from John's perceived association with the radical position of Gerard of Borgo San Donnino, on the role of institutional authority in the life of the Church. While Gerard imagined the end of ecclesiastical authority in the age of the Spirit marked by the life of Francis, Bonaventure fiercely defended Church authority.¹⁰ Yet he did so in a highly nuanced way, as suggested by the narrative sequence leading up to the bird episode at Bevagna.

In Bonaventure's version, the story is immediately preceded not by Francis's confident boldness in traveling and preaching the Gospel, as in Celano's first *Life*, nor by an affirmation of Francis's humility and kinship with all creatures, as in Julian of Speyer's. Rather, the episode in the *Major Legend* follows Francis's intense inner struggle about his vocation: whether he should continue an active life of preaching or devote himself exclusively to contemplation.¹¹

To resolve his dilemma, Francis does not rely on unmediated inspiration from the Spirit, as the Joachimites might have expected, nor does he appeal directly to papal authority, as he had done when first seeking Church approval for his Rule. Rather, Bonaventure says, Francis seeks help from the friars and from St. Clare and the sisters to pray and discern God's will; and they confirm that he should continue to devote himself to preaching as well as prayer. That is enough for Francis. Filled with joy by his renewed sense of mission, he immediately goes out and preaches to the birds.

By this careful sequencing, Bonaventure makes it clear that Francis indeed subordinates himself to Church authority in discerning God's will for his vocation. Francis does so, however, not by seeking a decision from the pope nor even from the bishop of Assisi but rather by obedient discernment with his own Franciscan community — itself recognized by ecclesiastical authority. Bonaventure has therefore steered a nuanced middle course between the radical individualist spirituality of Joachim-Gerard and the centralized approach of Elias and the papacy itself. As a corollary, given Bonaventure's concern with restoring the Order's commitment to the founder's vision, he has stressed the importance of Franciscan fidelity to Gospel living and prayerful discernment in service to the Church.

Bonaventure also has steered a middle course with reference to higher learning (represented by the Scholar from Parma), by contrasting the reactive arrogance of the scholar in the episode following the Bevagna/Alviano bird story with the persistent obedience of Francis in the episode preceding it. The student imitates Francis by commanding a small bird to be quiet, but he does so in a superior and controlling way, and he is astonished when the bird trusts and obeys him. "The surprised scholar," says Bonaventure, "immediately gave it back its freedom."¹²

The scholar's conversion from a preoccupation with control (the bird had disturbed his attempt to meditate) to a sense of amazement at the bird's obedience finally reflects Francis's own humble submission to discernment and his joyful wonder at the birds. Despite the conflicts at the University of Paris — and the challenges facing higher education in our own time — humility and wonder are Bonaventure's core ingredients for a satisfying Franciscan embrace of higher learning, then and now.

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The Presence and Persistence of Augury

One key question remains to be considered: why birds in the first place? Why did not only Bonaventure but Thomas of Celano and the other early biographers who followed him choose to recount birds as the subject of Francis's special preaching? Given the medieval penchant for symbolism, why not wolves instead, to highlight Francis's boldness — his salient quality in Celano's version of the story? Or why not sheep, to underscore Francis's humble kinship with all creatures — the characteristic that Julian of Speyer chose to emphasize? In that regard Julian could have regarded Francis as much sheeplike as "dovelike"; and sheep, after all, have a clear biblical pedigree. So why birds?

The answer lies in Francis's well-known self-identification as the "Herald of the Great King," with birds understood in light of the ancient practice of augury, whose cultural echo persisted well into the Middle Ages.

In ancient Italy, augurs were religious officials charged with discerning the will of the gods before individuals and communities embarked on a new enterprise — a new leader, a new military campaign, a new commercial venture (hence our word *inauguration*.) The augurs did so by interpreting the flight of birds — their size, their speed, their direction, their movements. The ancient Romans paid special attention to birds associated with power, such as eagles, falcons and hawks. The augurs discerned the divine will by paying attention to birds, and then they shared the results of that discernment with the community.

The ancient practice of augury may seem odd to us, but it reflected a persistent human need to anticipate the future, to connect humanity with divinity, and to find personal meaning in the larger operations of nature. The Christian church rejected augury as pagan superstition, but the church retained the symbolism of augury, with some variation, to communicate its own message.

Our challenge as Franciscan educators is to encourage true freedom and amazement in our students and in the world, however bleak the world's problems may seem.

That is why, in Luke's Gospel, the baptism of Jesus — the inauguration of his public ministry — is accompanied by a bird, a dove, symbolizing the Holy Spirit descending from the heavens.¹³ In contrast with the powerful birds of Roman augury, the church emphasized vulnerable birds such as doves and sparrows, to symbolize the vulnerability of Christ. Ancient augury waned as a religious practice, but its symbolism, its cultural echo, persisted into medieval Christian Europe. That persistence would have been especially pronounced in Francis's local culture, because Umbria was renowned as a center of augury in the ancient world.¹⁴

When we realize the symbolism of birds as heralds of divine communication, we can appreciate their most fitting connection with the Herald of the Great King. Moreover, Bonaventure's narrative sequence then communicates an equally powerful message. Francis's preaching to the birds was itself a kind of inauguration — his beginning again, following his intense struggle over his vocation. It also was — and still is — a paradigm of wonder and transformation associated with Franciscan spirituality and Franciscan education.

For unlike augurs in antiquity who discerned the gods' will with birds and then pronounced the news to the community, Francis discerned God's will with his community, and then proclaimed Good News even to birds — an astonishing rearrangement of ancient expectations. The subsequent story of the scholar from Parma completes the message — genuine learning flows from a proper deference to the church community and is marked not by arrogance but by amazement.

That conviction, perhaps not always fully practiced but always fully affirmed, continues to lie at the core of Franciscan higher education. This explains why Franciscan institutions — and Catholic education in general — place such a high value on a caring community as the basis for students' learning and self-discovery.

Bonaventure's account of Francis preaching to the birds underscores that basis, and its consequence is an inauguration of joy and purpose — an experience available to all those who follow Francis's example with humility. "The surprised scholar immediately gave it back its freedom."

That simple statement, that simple story, expresses the core impulse of liberal arts education in the Franciscan tradition: not superiority and control but surprise — even amazement — and freedom, in a world

where the human and the divine are on familiar terms. Our challenge as Franciscan educators is to encourage true freedom and amazement in our students and in the world, however bleak the world's problems may seem. Indeed, it is not only a challenge but also a privilege to celebrate wonder at Brother Sun, Sister Moon, and all the gifts around us and within us. As Aristotle observed, philosophy — the love of wisdom — begins in wonder. What a profound and priceless calling we all share.

Notes

- 1 E.g., the excellent audiobook series by Fr. William Short, OFM, *St. Francis of Assisi: A New Way of Being Christian* (2007), in which the author highlights Francis's communion with all creation (Disk 3, Topic 7). Similarly, see Fr. Jack Wintz, OFM, "St. Francis and the Birds," *AmericanCatholic.org*, Sept. 27, 2007: "Bonaventure is trying to shock us into widening our horizons, and into learning with St. Francis that the whole family of creation deserves more respect and ought to be invited to praise God along with us human beings."
- For a provocative interpretation of the story, see Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1980), pp. 202-203. Eco draws a parallel between Francis's preaching to birds and his embrace of lepers, and he suggests a revisionist version: "When Francis spoke to the people of the city and its magistrates and saw they didn't understand him, he went out to the cemetery and began preaching to ravens and magpies, to hawks, to raptors feeding on corpses . . . They were birds of prey, outcast birds, like the lepers . . . Francis wanted to call the outcast, ready to revolt, to be part of the people of God."
- 2 All early Franciscan sources are from *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, 3 vols., ed. Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Cap., J.A. Wayne Hellman, OFM Conv., and William J. Short, OFM (New York: New City Press, 1999-2002).
- 3 *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 423. While Henri's primary aim was to please Pope Gregory IX, by 1219 he had moved to England, and the art of putting prose texts into verse was an important skill not only in academic life but also for the royal courts and the clergy.
- 4 Vol. I, p. 426.
- 5 See Vol. I, p. 488, for Henri's passage about Francis preaching to the birds at Bevagna.
- 6 Maurice Carmody, *The Franciscan Story* (London: Athena Press, 2008), p. 224.
- 7 The condemnation was effective to the extent that Gerard's work, *Introduction to the Eternal Gospel*, has not survived but is known through secondary sources.
- 8 *Early Documents*, Vol. II, pp. 526-527.
- 9 *Ibid.*, pp. 528-529.
- 10 Despite his prior relationship as John's protégée, Bonaventure also assumed a leading role in the tribunal prosecuting John for heresy.
- 11 Fr. Jack Wintz notes this in his reflection.
- 12 *Early Documents*, Vol. II, p. 622-625.
- 13 Luke 3:21-22. The dove has been suggested as a symbol of rebirth, harkening back to the dove released by Noah after the flood. However, since Luke's is the only Gospel that explicitly regards the dove as representing the Spirit of God, the use of the symbol is more likely influenced by Luke's worldview, and Luke was the evangelist with the closest affinity to Greco-Roman culture.
- 14 The most detailed ancient information about augury is contained in the Iguvine Tables, found near Gubbio (ancient Iguvium), dating from the 3rd-1st centuries B.C., and written in the ancient Umbrian language. See *Religions of Rome: Volume 2 — A Sourcebook*, by Mary Beard, John A. North, and S. R. F. Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 8-11.

Beauty or Beautification?
Reflections on the Theory and Practice of Art
on the Franciscan Campus

Part One

**“To Lead Us Back to God:”
The Transformative Power of Art**

RICHARD SAYERS, Ph.D.

At a “Meeting with Artists” in the fall of 2009, Pope Benedict XVI (2009) asked: What is capable of restoring enthusiasm and confidence, what can encourage the human spirit to rediscover its path, to raise its eyes to the horizon, to dream of a life worthy of its vocation — if not beauty? Dear friends, as artists you know well that the *experience of beauty*, beauty that is authentic, not merely transient or artificial, is by no means a supplementary or secondary factor in our search for meaning and happiness; the experience of beauty does not remove us from reality — on the contrary, it leads to a direct encounter with the daily reality of our lives, *liberating* it from darkness, *transfiguring* it, making it *radiant* and *beautiful*. (p. 455, emphasis added)

In that single comment, the Pope emphasized the essential importance of the experience of authentic beauty. Benedict (2009) then described a function of genuine beauty, a description that might or might not match our own:

[A]n essential function of genuine beauty, as emphasized by Plato, is that it gives man a healthy “shock,” it draws him out of himself, wrenches him away from resignation and from being content with the humdrum — it even makes him suffer, piercing him like a dart, but in so doing it “reawakens” him, opening afresh the eyes of his heart and mind, giving him wings, carrying him aloft. (p. 455)

To make sure we get the point, Benedict (2009) quotes Dostoevsky: “Man can live without science, he can live without bread, but without beauty he could no longer live, because there would no longer be anything to do to the world” (p. 455). The preposition “to” is significant. Yes, the experience of beauty is essential, but what is more, humanity is given the opportunity to participate in the creation of beauty.

Benedict (2009) contrasts the effect of true beauty — which “reminds us of our final destiny . . . sets us back on our path, fills us with new hope, gives us the courage to live to the full the unique gift of life” — with that of a false beauty that is:

illusory and deceitful, superficial and blinding, leaving the onlooker dazed; instead of bringing him out of himself and opening him up to horizons of true freedom as it draws him aloft, it imprisons him within himself and further enslaves him, depriving him of hope and joy. It is a seductive but hypocritical beauty that rekindles desire, the will to power, to possess and to dominate others; it is a beauty that soon turns into its opposite, taking on the guise of indecency, transgression or gratuitous provocation. (p. 456)

So beauty — true beauty — can shock, it can make us suffer; but then it must revivify; it must raise us up; it must *transform*.

How can the transformative potential of beauty, as manifest in the arts, best be brought to life on a Franciscan campus? What role should the arts play on college campuses? Should they simply provide adornment and beautification, or provide opportunities for spiritual transformation? To answer these questions, a twofold approach will be employed. First, the place of beauty in the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition will be briefly examined via two works: *Rejoicing in the Works of the Lord: Beauty in the Franciscan Tradition* by Mary Beth Ingham, C.S.J.; and *On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology* by Bonaventure of Bagnoregio. Second, various ways in which college arts programs might offer opportunities for spiritual transformation will be presented, distinguishing between what is merely pleasing and what is truly beautiful.

Beauty in the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition

In his comments above, Benedict is careful to qualify the term “beauty” with adjectives such as “authentic” and “genuine.” He is aware that there are many interpretations of the term. Furthermore, he refers not just to beauty in an abstract sense, but to the *experience* of beauty. In her recent examination of the place of beauty in the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition, Mary Beth Ingham, C.S.J. contrasts the classical/medieval worldview with that of the present. The experience of beauty in medieval cultures was not limited to sensory stimuli — visual perception of art and architecture, or auditory perception of music, for example — but extended to the realm of philosophy as well. It encompassed the search for truth and goodness, for wisdom, understanding and knowledge.

Contemporary culture, according to Ingham, tends to view the experience of beauty as an expression of personal preference. Beauty is relegated to a particular category of human expression — the fine arts — from which we pick and choose experiences at scheduled or convenient times according to personal taste. There is no need to identify or contemplate a beauty that is universal, that yields insights in matters of truth, goodness or wisdom because, after all, “beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” From this limited, preferential perspective, beauty is merely a decorative or ornamental

quality. It cannot serve a more foundational purpose; it cannot be a path to greater understanding of self, others, or God (Ingham, 2009).

Classic and medieval philosophy understands beauty as the union of the true and the good (Ingham, 2009, p. 5). The Franciscan tradition concurs with this understanding, taking things one step further: “Beauty is not just one aspect of reality, not just one element among many,” Ingham (2009) writes. “Rather beauty is *the deepest* foundation of reality. Beauty can be another name for God” (p. 5).

Where, then, does one find beauty? Franciscans would answer that, if beauty can be another name for God, then beauty is found where God is found: everywhere. Ingham (2009) concurs, noting that beauty is a frame in which we perceive and understand creation, and a lens through which we focus our reflections. It is simultaneously that which we desire, that which

guides our actions, and the way that God’s love is made manifest (p. 5). Ingham raises a few questions: “What if we understood the experience of beauty not as exceptional or rare, but as a regular part of every moment of our life? What if we made a conscious effort to see the world through the lens of beauty? What sort of transformation might take place in our lives?” (p. 6).

If we consider those times in our lives when we have been startled by beauty, left speechless by beauty, or moved to tears by beauty, we could, to quote the hymn, “scarce take it in” (Hine, 1953). More to the point, we could not contain it all; we would have to share it. That brings us to Ingham’s next observation about beauty. Since, as elucidated in the works of St. Bonaventure and John Duns Scotus, *praxis* is central to Franciscan thought, the experience of beauty would so move us that we would be spurred to action.

Beauty, then, as understood in the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition and as summarized by Ingham (2009), can serve “as a cornerstone of reflection, as a guide to action, and as a medium of transformation” (p. 10). How, then, does this transformation take place?

“To Lead Us Back to God”: Bonaventure

In his treatise *On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology*, St. Bonaventure uses the concept of *reductio*, “to lead back,” to show how the arts, defined broadly, can lead us back to theology — that is, to God. In his introduction to Bonaventure’s treatise, Zachary Hayes explains: “To lead the arts back to theology means, for Bonaventure, to show the organic connection between all the arts and the central concern of the Scriptures or theology” (Bonaventure, 1996, p. 2).

Bonaventure employs the concepts of emanation/exemplarity/reduction to describe a neo-Platonic circle, the origin and end of which is God, the

source of all light and all life. “And for Bonaventure,” Hayes writes, “between the point of origin and the point of end stands the mystery of exemplarity” (Bonaventure, 1996, p. 6). This mystery is characterized as a philosophical question with a christological answer:

[C]reation is said to reflect something of the Word of God’s self-expression that has become incarnate in Jesus Christ, and . . . creation returns to the depths of the divine love in and through its increasing conformity to the incarnate Word. This is the heart of the *reduction* by which all reality is led back to its fontal source. (Bonaventure, 1996, pp. 7-8)

In other words, the elements of creation contain varying degrees of evidence of God: these can be vestiges, or “footprints”; images; or similitudes, which Hayes defines as images “filled with the reality of grace” (Bonaventure, 1996, p. 14). The task of humans is to learn to see these vestiges, images and similitudes for what they are: manifestations of the presence of God. We have difficulty doing this, according to Bonaventure (1996), because of “our fallen nature, which has distorted our vision and deformed our intellectual capacities” (p. 11). One implication of this point of view is that we admit to the imperfection of artistic expression since it is, at best, a vestige, image, or similitude of the divine.

Employing a metaphysics of light, Bonaventure (1996) describes how the “exterior” light of mechanical arts, one of which is the dramatic art, illumines with respect to artifacts (objects made by humans). (That the other mechanical arts are weaving, armor-making, agriculture, hunting, navigation, and medicine shows the breadth of what constituted “the arts” in the medieval world). Every mechanical art is intended either for consolation or for comfort, to banish either sorrow or need; it is either enjoyable or useful. For Bonaventure, the dramatic art affords consolation (Hayes uses the word “enjoyment”) and delight; the other mechanical arts address need. As with the other forms of light (the “inferior” light of sense perception and the “interior” light of philosophical knowledge), the illuminations of the light of mechanical arts must be traced back (“reduced” in the sense of leading back) to the “superior” light of sacred scripture: in Bonaventure’s words, to theology.

The reduction of the mechanical arts exhibits the pattern of the circle that comprises emanation/exemplarity/consummation. Thus, the mechanical arts can lead back to theology — that is, to God. Bonaventure’s (1996) reasoning is as follows:

- God is the supreme artist;
- The work of art is an external projection of an exemplar, or model, that exists in the mind of the artist;
- According to Augustine, the Son of God is the “art of the Father,” (p. xx) existing for all time in the mind of God (“exemplar”), brought to creation to lead humanity back to God;

- All creation expresses something of the mystery of the divine, at different levels (vestige, image, similitude);
- So it is with the human artisan. “[I]n the production of every work of art there is contained an analogy to the Son of God” (p. 26) — the exemplar *par excellence*;
- The work of art should be beautiful, useful, and enduring — qualities that should also be evident in the human life.

In summary, then: Beauty — more to the point, the experience of authentic beauty — has the potential to transform us. From a Franciscan perspective, beauty is the deepest foundation of reality; in fact, beauty can be another name for God. Present in all of creation, beauty can serve “as a cornerstone of reflection, as a guide to action, and as a medium of transformation” (Ingham, p.10). Through its capacity to transform, the beauty of the arts can lead us back to God.

Part Two

Mining Campus Art for Franciscan Gold: Issues and an Approach

TERENCE GLEESON, MA

If we accept the premise, argued above, that the beauty of art can be spiritually transformative, we should clarify our understanding of these terms. First, let’s acknowledge that transformation is painful, challenging work, undertaken often *in extremis*, motivated by some personal trouble, and triggered by some external event. That dilemma might be in the “real world,” such as the illness and depression that befell the young Francis of Assisi following his return home from imprisonment in Perugia: “His depression in 1204 marked the first step in his definitive conversion from the world” (Smith, p. 33). And consider how Gautama Buddha was propelled onto the path to enlightenment by his struggle to make sense of the human suffering from which he had been sheltered as a youth (Ross, p. 9-10). But the external event that motivates change might be an experience of human-made beauty: an encounter with a novel, film, or song. As Parks (2000) observes, “. . . one of the most significant features of the human adventure is the capacity to take the perspective of another and to be compelled thereby to recompose one’s own perspective, one’s own faith” (p. 140). And what is art, after all, but the “perspective of another”? To be transformative, our encounter with art — like the “disorienting dilemma” encountered in the real world — would necessarily be troubling, because we are being “compelled to recompose our own perspective.”

Some Distinctions

Let us first distinguish art which is merely pleasing from art which is troubling. A very shaky distinction, to be sure, given the variety of individual

responses to art. After all, while there are apparent “laws” governing what is beautiful (harmony, proportion, etc.), it is important to remember that the experience of beauty is a deeply personal one, that the individual human on the “receiving” end of beauty is actually bringing much to the table herself, in the form of the prior experience through which her encounter with beauty is mediated. Indeed, it might be argued that beauty doesn’t exist outside of the *experience* of beauty; that is, although manifested in the physical world, beauty is brought into being only by the perceiver. Can we say that a sunset that no one witnesses, or a poem that no one reads, is beautiful?

The distinction between troubling art and pleasing art is also problematic because, in complex arts like film and the performing arts, there is a wide array of artistic elements to which a person might respond, some of which might be merely decorative, and some of which might be troubling and therefore potentially transformative. A person might admire the decorative beauty of the costumes in a theater production, for instance, while at the same time undergoing a transformation as she experiences vicariously the troubles and triumphs of the play’s hero.

But even if the distinction between decorative art and transformative art varies from person to person, each person — in alignment with his or her critical judgement and affective response — will experience some art as though it is simply decorative, and will be troubled by other art.

But what is this “art”? For our purposes, “art” involves the specifically human creation of beauty and the mastery of the skills needed to shape the raw material being used (words, sounds, movement, narrative arc, paintbrush, Photoshop, etc.). Such creations can be classified into “literary arts” which use words to evoke a response; “performing arts” which unfold in time (music, theater, dance); and “visual arts” which unfold in space (2D and 3D). Although such categories are notoriously porous, this is how the arts are usually organized on a college campus. This essay will focus on the art of theater, which transcends the categories described above. In addition to being a “performing” art, theater is also both literary and heavily visual, with sets, costume, lighting, projected images, special effects, gestural and facial expression, arrangement of bodies in space, etc.

Let us make a further distinction between arts that are created elsewhere and then brought to a college campus — say, a touring theater production, a traveling exhibit, a celebrity concert — and those that are created and exhibited on campus by the resident artistic community, most of whom are students and many of whom are receiving training on campus in the arts they practice. Here we focus on art created and exhibited on campus, mostly the production of plays.

*We must experience,
work through —
even tolerate! — the parts
we don’t find beautiful,
in order to fully savor
this scene’s beauty.*

The Chaff and the Wheat

We should not expect to find, in human creations, unalloyed beauty. Rather, we are more likely to find moments of beauty, sparks of beauty, elements of beauty. This is not to discount the remainder of the alloy: Just as non-precious metals give gold its strength, so do the unexceptional elements provide context, a ground for the figure, a narrative structure. We might, for instance, find the balcony scene in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* an especially beautiful moment in the play, but there are moments preceding that scene which we may find less beautiful: the street brawl at the top of the play, the exposition which establishes the Capulet/Montague feud, the crude jocularity of Romeo's friends as they crash the Capulets' party. But these elements are necessary to our discovery of beauty in the balcony scene. We know that Romeo's sojourn in Juliet's garden is dangerous because we know of the hatred of the Capulets toward Romeo and his family and have seen them use their weapons against them. Romeo's declaration of love for Juliet in this scene rings both true and false: false because we have already seen him declare his love for Rosalind, and true because we can contrast his earnestness with the cynicism of his pals. This complexity of our response might well be part of why we find the scene beautiful. And the response of most viewers is also conditioned by what happens *after* the scene: Nearly everyone attending a production of *Romeo and Juliet*, after all, knows how this is all going to turn out, and this foreknowledge of the tragic ending provides an almost unbearably beautiful poignancy to this scene, so full of the promise of young love. So the beauty of the balcony scene is by no means a stand-alone beauty. We must experience, work through — even tolerate! — the parts we don't find beautiful, in order to fully savor this scene's beauty.

Many years ago, there was a wealthy older couple remarkable in two respects: the exquisite artistry with which they cared for their gardens and grounds, and their generous hosting of foreign visitors. On one occasion, two Zen priests visiting from Japan were walking through their lovely gardens and observing, in a detached way, all the natural beauty they encountered. They stopped at one particular tree and intensely admired one small branch on that tree, which apparently had been pruned to perfection. The rest of the gardens and grounds were lovely perhaps, but here, in this one tiny branch, they were agreed that they had found true beauty. This is perhaps an extreme case, and one shaped by the Japanese aesthetic which craves much ground for the figure, much context for the small perfect moment. But it illustrates the fundamental truth that beauty is mixed up with, and inseparable from, its context and surroundings, and indeed *requires* those surroundings in order to *be* beautiful.

This principle must be kept in mind as we consider the arts on campus, particularly art created by students. We won't find beauty in every photograph or painting exhibited, in every musical number of every concert given, in every moment of every play produced. We may find beauty in one

photograph out of twenty on display, or in part of one photograph; in one number in the jazz concert, or in one solo in that one number; in one scene of a play's second act, or in the delivery of one of its monologues, or in the costume worn by one of the characters.

With produced plays there are those many arts within which we may experience beauty. First, there is the script, where we might find beauty in the dialogue, the characters, the plot construction, or the embodiment of theme. But since produced plays are actual acts of incarnation — the word (of the playwright) made flesh in the actors speaking that word — there are other arts to consider besides the script: acting, directing, costumes and make-up, sets and props, lighting, sound, and — in some plays — music, choreography, singing, stage combat. Again, every moment of every play won't necessarily contain beauty — especially on the undergraduate level! — but there are plenty of opportunities to find beauty within the many arts involved.

One more factor about plays must be considered, especially within the context of the not-infrequent tension between campus artists and administrators. Unless a play is in the public domain, it is licensed as a complete package, and the producing organization is permitted no alteration of the script. So a play which, from a Franciscan perspective, contains great themes and elements of true transformative beauty, but which also contains obscenity, profanity, and violence, must be produced as written. The “unbeautiful” must be taken with the beautiful. It may be helpful, then, to bear in mind the notion of beauty as one element in an alloy, and to appreciate the remainder of the alloy for the context it provides for our experience of beauty.

Transformation for Whom?

The arts — particularly those that are created and exhibited by the resident artistic community — play multiple roles on a college campus because there are multiple constituencies involved. First, there are those who participate in the arts — performers, directors, designers, crew, marketers, managers — who may be students, faculty, staff, or members of the wider community. For these people — and especially for the students — the role played by the arts certainly includes such things as the development of skills and self-confidence, an appreciation for teamwork, a social network, the opportunity to create, an understanding of production complexity. A second constituency is the audience, which may include students, parents and other family members of those involved, faculty, administrators, board members, alumni, and members of the local community. This constituency is really several distinct constituencies, with reasons for attending an exhibit or performance ranging from fulfilling a course assignment, to fulfilling a duty to make an appearance, to actual interest in the art being produced. The roles played by the arts for this group are as varied as their reasons for being there: to get a good grade, to impress

one's supervisor, to support the students, to support one's child or kin, to assess the quality of work being produced by one's faculty, to experience a work of art, to reconnect with one's alma mater. A third constituency with a stake in campus arts is the administration, since arts production legitimizes the claim to a liberal arts education and environment (what kind of college is it, after all, where no art is produced?), provides opportunities for student involvement in the life of the institution, and brings people onto campus who may be potential students or donors. But administrators may be somewhat wary of the arts, because of art's potential to be unsettling, shocking, profane, or poorly done, which can create marketing and image issues. Art which is verbal, and representational visual art, can be especially troubling from an administrative perspective. Words can challenge orthodoxy, can offend, can generate complaints. Representational images can display sexuality and violence, suggest transgressive relationships, etc. Plays, therefore, are especially problematic arts forms, since they are verbal, built around conflict, involve the body, and often are concerned with issues that are controversial.

Art plays these roles and generates these challenges on any campus, Franciscan or not. But our concern here is primarily with the function of art on a Franciscan campus. So to take up our initial distinction, should art on a Franciscan campus seek to be decorative (adornment,

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"beautification") or transformative (true — and troubling — beauty)? The obvious "right" Franciscan answer is "transformative," but in actual academic practice the question is more fraught. After all, adornment and beautification are "safe" and desirable from an administrative/marketing viewpoint, and in a Franciscan sense can be seen as images of God's beauty and therefore legitimate paths to "lead us back" to God. But simple adornment can also be trifling, superficial, even dangerous. Witness the spectacle (adornment) of much that passes for "artistic" within our culture (especially

commercial messages), and which leads its audience — by design — not to God but rather to the marketplace, conspicuous consumption, narcissism. But it's safe; no one complains about an excess of pretty stuff, and few stop to consider its purpose and consequences. Consider also the apparent purpose or function of art, as many students see it. Students often say that their parents or schoolteachers encouraged — or forced — them to attend plays and concerts and to visit museums because it would give them "culture," would make them more well-rounded as individuals, would enable them to have satisfying conversations with — and to make good impressions upon — educated people. In this sense, the experience of art is itself a kind of "adornment" of the person, a beautification, a decoration,

like a three-piece suit or an evening gown, a sign of advancement over the less-fortunate masses unable to discuss their experience of Shakespeare, Mozart, Rembrandt. The danger of such an adornment is self-evident in its hierarchical classification of people as "cultured" or not, and in its encouragement of pride in superficial exposure to what is really an arbitrary canon of "great art."

Transformative art is not necessarily "pretty." It is more likely to be somewhat disturbing — after all, transformation involves a shaking up, a challenge, a letting go, a *disturbance* in one's personal order. This kind of art is less "safe" too, because the impetus to one student's spiritual transformation might be the impetus to someone else's complaint to the university president. Consider a college art gallery displaying pleasing, artfully-constructed, and innocuous landscapes, portraits, and still-lives, in contrast to an exhibit in the same gallery displaying disturbing, artfully-constructed, and challenging images of dismembered bodies, scenes of extreme poverty or brutality, provocative images of a sexual nature. The first exhibit, likely to elicit little interest, may provide a momentarily pleasing and forgettable experience for those who enter. The second exhibit is likely to generate a lot of thought and discussion, and leave a long-lasting and disturbing impression on the mind of the viewer. Which is more likely to lead to spiritual transformation? Which is more likely to encounter stiff resistance?

In this regard, it's worth noting that spiritual transformation *itself* is not necessarily pretty; while it's something to which to aspire for ourselves and encourage in our students, it's not necessarily something we want to watch. It's also generally slow and hard to measure. Consider Francis. Statues of Francis on Franciscan campuses typically cast him in an heroic mold: alabaster or bronze, smooth and flawless, handsome, looking mightily transcendent and spiritual with birds and small mammals in attendance. In other words, Francis is pretty, an adornment, not particularly inspiring, something you just walk past after the first few times you see him, what Brother Keith Warner calls "birdbath Franciscanism." Now consider the actual Francis: an unkempt little man in an outrageously tattered robe, who took years to achieve the kind of spiritual transformation for which we call him a saint. Imagine having the actual Francis as a fixture on campus, roaming around the cafeteria, preaching to rocks and birds, popping into classrooms, asking awkward questions, talking skeptically about books, encouraging career-oriented students to embrace a life of poverty. Chances are some administrators would be devising plans to "beautify" the campus by getting rid of that crazy guy and replacing him with one of those reliably attractive statues.

The arts have the potential to engage their audiences in experiences that have transformative spiritual value. And this potential — especially on a college campus — is not limited to the audience. The performers/artists themselves also have a great opportunity for transformation; indeed, because of the amount of time spent on production — measured

in weeks or months for performers, rather than hours for an audience — and because of the emphasis on active engagement for performers versus passive reception for audience, the potential for transformation is even greater. But whether for audience or artist, how can this transformation be “formed,” guided, made intentional? And how can this goal be accomplished without creating the potential for censorship, obstructionism?

Franciscan Response to Campus Art

Let’s consider some aspects of a typical college theater program, and reflect on some ways an institution could support a Franciscan response to such work. Here is an example from my own institution. As artistic director, I select a play in consultation with some of the staff artists — mostly fellow faculty — who will be involved as music director, designers, choreographer, etc. I try to generate interest and attendance at the performances by inviting faculty to incorporate the play as a course requirement or extra-credit opportunity for students, in those cases where the subject matter of the play may be related to course content. A staff member or student is assigned to do dramaturgical research and produce material which contextualizes the play — its subject matter, production history, contemporaneous issues. This material is shaped for publication in the program book and for display in the lobby and on the web, and sometimes fashioned into a study guide. Material which may help shape the actual performance is also made available to the artists working on the production, including the actors (most of whom are students). Students in my theater and drama courses — as well as students in courses taught by other faculty who have required attendance at a performance of the play (or made it optional for extra credit) — also write papers about their experience. After the production closes, many members of the company — actors, designers, staff — participate in discussion sessions in those classes required to attend the production, as a way of helping students to process their experience and understand production choices which may have puzzled them. There is also the option of “talk-backs” after performances, where the audience can directly engage with the people who have helped to craft the art they have just experienced. These are all wonderful devices, from a secular pedagogical point of view, enhancing the experience of both those who create the art and those who experience it as audience members. But the Franciscan dimension of deepening spirituality through this encounter with art — if it exists at all — is accidental and serendipitous.

Before we consider how these elements could be employed in the service of *intentionally* eliciting spiritual and theological understanding, there are a few caveats and cautions. First, this spiritual/theological dimension should not be the exclusive or even primary focus of any of the efforts described above. That is, the dramaturgical research, or the program book essay, or web postings, or student performance reviews, or post-production discussions should not be primarily concerned with

Franciscan matters or be organized around the goal of “eliciting spiritual and theological understanding.” These devices all serve other important academic and production goals, which would be compromised by changing the emphasis. Second, the people responsible for mounting the production cannot be burdened with the charge to make these connections or elicit this understanding, because they are far too busy just making the production happen. Finally, efforts to explore the spiritual and theological underpinnings of a production should occur *in response to* an event on campus, rather than proscribing which events should be on campus.

How might this quest — to connect campus art with the spiritual and theological — play out with intentionality, in the production of a play on campus? Let’s posit a person — or better yet, a team — charged with using campus art to deepen the spiritual life of the campus community. This team would need to include at least one person well-grounded in Franciscan thought, but it might work best as a course taught by a Franciscan scholar. The important thing is that the team examine campus art not as a group of Inquisitors seeking to enforce orthodoxy, but rather as a group of explorers looking to mine some Franciscan gold in the works created by campus artists. Towards that end, team members might contribute, to the staff member or student serving as production dramaturg, Franciscan spiritual/theological perspectives on the play being produced (after, of course, having read the play and conducted some preliminary research, perhaps with the assistance of the dramaturg). The dramaturg could make this material available to the production artists, and would decide whether to include it in the program book, web postings, or lobby display. Alternatively, the team could post material about the play directly on the web, linked to the production page. The team could also suggest questions which might be addressed in production reviews written by students, or — more ambitiously — create or contribute to a study guide. Professors may or may not use suggested questions or the study guide, but they would be available (and after all, teachers are usually grateful for such questions and guides, so there is a high likelihood that they would get some use). Team members could sit in on the post-production course discussions and post-show talkbacks, and seek opportunities to engage the audience around matters spiritual and Franciscan.

Some plays can create special challenges for a Catholic campus, of course. Many productions have one or more of the following problematic elements: dark themes, overt sexuality, violence, obscenity and profanity. This, however, could present a worthwhile challenge, especially for students: to “mine” such material for that Franciscan gold, to see past what might be off-putting and offensive, and to discover a deeper spirituality beneath it. Besides “eliciting spiritual and theological understanding,” such a project would deepen the aesthetic sophistication of those engaged in such work.

Even absent such problematic elements, some plays would be easier to “mine” than others. Art which includes a verbal or imagistic dimension

— such as plays, song lyrics, and representational visual art — lend themselves to finding connections between “content” and the Franciscan spiritual tradition. Instrumental music, on the other hand, would create more of a challenge in this regard, but — particularly if this work were being conducted as part of a course — such a challenge might prove especially rewarding.

Art for Transformation

Two twentieth-century men who thought deeply about the transformative impact of their work were the German playwright Bertolt Brecht and the American journalist H. L. Mencken. Brecht famously said — or is famously reputed to have said — that “art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer with which to shape it” (JustAnswer). And Mencken popularized the advice to “comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.”¹ The importance of generating a Franciscan response to campus art, in the service of spiritual transformation — as outlined above — might well be considered within the context of these two quotations.

Although the Brechtian aphorism is in the service of the polemical goals of what is called epic theater, it has application to our discussion. Art as mirror is often just a pretty picture, a “beautification” of the environment; art as hammer is a tool for transformation — either social, as Brecht saw it, or personal, as in “eliciting spiritual and theological understanding.” And though the Mencken quotation addresses the responsibility of journalists,

... efforts to explore the spiritual and theological underpinnings of a production should occur in response to an event on campus, rather than proscribing which events should be on campus.

what he articulates here could be seen as two general goals of art: sometimes to comfort the afflicted (and who isn’t “afflicted”?) by providing the refuge of beauty, and sometimes to disturb us from our comfort, to challenge our cherished beliefs, to force us to consider our complicity in the suffering of others, to offend the sensibilities which we may have unthinkingly forged in conformity to an oppressive dominant culture. This is a cold, uncomfortable beauty, but beauty nonetheless.

The “mirror held up to reality” is usually a flattering one. Since all art is selective,

the image in the mirror is necessarily an edited version of reality. Certain elements are heightened, certain elements are removed or mitigated, and the final result is usually designed to be pleasing. Again, consider a statue of St. Francis. It depicts a tonsured man wearing a robe, and since Francis *was* a man who wore a robe and sported a tonsure, the statue might be seen as a kind of mirror to Francis’s reality. But if you’ve seen the actual robe worn by Francis, which is on display at the basilica in Assisi, and can imagine the standards of cleanliness and hygiene prevalent among the rural poor in 13th-century Europe, you know that the “reality” mirrored by

the statue is highly selective. Airbrushed away are the flies and the lice and the fleas and the dirt beneath the fingernails. Gone is the patched-together robe Francis actually wore, replaced with one whole and elegant. The statue is pretty, but it’s quite a distortion. It doesn’t force us to confront the distasteful surface of the actual Francis — of an actual poor person — and to see beneath that surface to the light within, to contemplate the ravages of poverty upon the human person and to consider what our responsibility might be with respect to that poverty. Francis, although actually afflicted with all the ills of poverty in addition to a debilitating eye condition, appears in the statue as a person not in need of any comfort. Our apathy towards the poor is unchallenged by the statue; we are given the comfort of imagining Francis as a clean, handsome, carefree man, perhaps an idealized version of how we might like to see ourselves. Such artwork beautifies a campus, and it comforts us. It also, in the Brechtian sense, functions as a tool. It shapes our response, it makes us look at Francis in a certain light, it eliminates from the picture his suffering, his poverty, and his alienation from the larger society, while it isolates Francis from the community which grew around him, presenting him instead as literally a stand-alone figure.

There’s nothing necessarily “wrong” with such artwork, but it would seem to have little to do with beauty as a path to spiritual transformation. Where such artwork is the only or the dominant form of beauty in the built environment, it creates a lack of balance; we have only the “comfort” part of the equation without the “afflict” part. And as Francis well knew, we all need affliction; hence his embrace of Lady Poverty. Artists on a Franciscan campus can restore this balance by supplying the other side of the equation, by producing works which afflict the comfortable — at least to some degree. There will always be several tensions here: between administrators who know that comfort and beautification are selling points, and artists who are responsible for engaging audiences on a deeper level; and within the arts community itself, between the need to appeal to an audience and the need to challenge that audience and help them grow. Rather than seeing this tension as a conflict which can be won by one side or the other, or as a battle between “superficial” administrators and “authentic” artists, we can see it as simply part of the natural dynamic of a complex institution, with people in different positions and with different spheres of responsibility all doing their jobs. There’s no reason why the two can’t co-exist. The administrators can occasionally grumble about this or that production or artwork that generates some troubling phone calls or embarrassing press, and the artists can occasionally raise their collective eyebrows about the latest bland statuary. But if good will is assumed on the part of all, we can just get on with our jobs and appreciate the efforts of all who contribute to the good of the institution. And if there is a Franciscan engagement with the art produced on campus, there is far greater potential for that art to have the transformative power that everyone on a Franciscan campus should crave.

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Endnotes

- 1 Although often — and correctly — attributed to Mencken, who published it in 1942 in a book of quotations, this advice originally appeared forty years earlier in the “Mister Dooley” sketches of Chicago-based humorist Finley Peter Dunne. (Astor, n.d., Ralph Keyes)

Profit or Prophet? A Franciscan Challenge to Millennials in Higher Education

DANIEL P. HORAN OFM

Introduction

What is it that we offer our students when we offer them a *Franciscan* education? Recently the trend has been to respond to that question with an eye toward integration of service-learning based pedagogy with core curricular goals and objectives.¹ This, in itself, is an admirable and important component to a well-rounded undergraduate education and should be supported and encouraged. However, service learning, as such, is not Franciscan.² Many colleges and universities associated with varying religious congregations or traditions emphasize the importance of service to the community as a constitutive element of a contemporary liberal arts education. To suggest that service is a core pillar of Franciscan education is to posit a false monopoly in the market of effective undergraduate curricula.³ The suggestion that service learning is not exclusively Franciscan is not to undermine the significance of its role in today's integrated educational programs. Rather, the question raised in noting this observation is: What about service-learning as it is done at explicitly Franciscan schools — member institutions of the AFCU, for example — makes it *Franciscan*? Or, to put it yet another way, and perhaps more realistically: What *can* be done to *make* such programs more Franciscan?

Academic community engagement, a phrase I prefer to service-learning, denotes a programmatic effort to introduce students to a new way of conceptualizing the educational experience that moves them beyond the classroom and into local and global communities. In so doing, students are introduced to a new medium of educational content. Whereas educational content is largely associated with text in most liberal arts curricula, the experience of academic community engagement provides students (and instructors) with a new form of learning. As such, academic community engagement becomes a new text, a new lesson plan. In considering community engagement, or service learning, as text, traditionally conceived content-based emphases are de-centered to open a space for creative learning and holistic experiences of education.

I believe that academic community engagement provides a unique opportunity for Franciscan colleges and universities to integrate the explicitly Franciscan dimensions of the various institutions' founding charism into the educational experience of their undergraduates. By refocusing the curriculum to more comprehensively shape academic community engagement to exhibit the values inherent in the Franciscan intellectual and spiritual tradition, AFCU institutions might better distinguish their programs as “Franciscan.” This can be done in a number of ways, but

I will offer two suggestions for consideration. The first is the challenge of changing the pedagogical grammar of academic community engagement from conceptions resembling civic responsibility, charity, service, and so on, to a more exclusive notion of solidarity. As it will be presented below, solidarity provides the framework for reconsidering one's stance in the world. The intentional self-subordination exhibited in the life and rules (*regula*) of Francis of Assisi provides a model for an authentically Christian posture or *vita evangelica*. While institutions representing religious traditions of all sorts and even secular or state universities can provide programs and curricula aimed at instilling civic responsibility, philanthropic interest and community building values in today's young adults, the Franciscan approach to academic community engagement should be less generic in its charge, moving more toward modeling and encouraging lives of Christian discipleship after the example of Francis and Clare of Assisi.

The second suggestion flows from this first consideration of solidarity as a constitutive element of the Franciscan tradition. Namely, one challenge that the Franciscan tradition should pose to Millennials in higher education is whether these students want to appropriate the increasingly common social norms that support ungoverned desire for social mobility and the accumulation of wealth or do they want to stand apart from such materialistic teleology, instead working toward an ever more integrated sense of prophetic call to live as Christian disciples according to the Franciscan tradition. The meaning of prophecy can vary largely from one authority to the next; therefore, it seems fitting to look within the Franciscan tradition for guidance in explicating its meaning. St. Bonaventure provides us with a helpful theology of prophecy in his *Legenda Major*, in which he draws on the life of Francis to serve as the hagiographical context from within which Bonaventure presents his understanding.

These two suggestions, the emphasis on solidarity in shaping academic community engagement opportunities and the promotion of graduates of Franciscan institutions of higher education as prophets according to the theology of Bonaventure, draw on the call to reach into the rich tradition latent in the very establishment of the AFCU-member colleges and universities.⁴ To direct academic community engagement in a manner that seeks to form prophetic graduates whose stance in the world is one of solidarity is not extrinsic to the founding charism, but instead flows from the Franciscan tradition.

This article is organized into four sections. The first section is a presentation of the Millennial generation and its propensity toward community service, global connectivity and volunteerism. The second section focuses on the Franciscan call to live in solidarity with the poor, marginalized and all of creation. The third section explores the theology of prophecy in Bonaventure's *Legenda Major* as a source for undergraduate character formation. Finally, the last section offers a recapitulative summary and conclusion that points us onward toward the next step in shaping an explicitly Franciscan form of academic community engagement.

The Millennial Generation and Service

Service is not a foreign concept to members of the Millennial generation, those women and men born in or after 1982.⁵ In a recently published popular book titled *Generation We*, Eric Greenberg and Karl Weber highlight this trend as a significant feature of Millennial affectivity.⁶ The authors explain their choice in book title: "They [the Millennials] are also a caring generation, one that appears ready to put the greater good ahead of individual rewards. Hence our preferred name for them — Generation We."⁷ Perhaps the primary expression of this generation's "caring" proclivity is the service they have elected to engage in from an early age. Greenberg and Weber explain:

Volunteerism is unusually high among Millennials. According to UCLA's American Freshman survey — conducted for the past 40 years with several hundred thousand respondents each year — 83 percent of entering freshman in 2005 volunteered at least occasionally during their high school senior year, the highest ever measured in this survey. Seventy-one percent said they volunteered on a weekly basis. (Some data sources indicate that rates of volunteering among Millennials may actually have been highest right after — and presumably in reaction to — 9/11, but difference in question wording and population surveyed prevent definitive judgment on this possibility.) Generation We is deeply concerned about the common good. They also believe in social change — and they are ready, even eager, to play their role in making positive changes happen.⁸

While Greenberg and Weber seek to identify general characteristics from within the Millennial cohort, additional studies suggest that the affective religiosity of today's young adults also reflects an increase in service as a priority or second-nature dimension of the collective generational personality. In other words, not only are Millennials across class, race, ethnicity and geographic location being identified as more likely to engage in direct service or some form of volunteerism than previous generations, but such action has also been linked to this generation's religious self-perception.

The authors of the recent book *American Catholics Today* note that, while young adults attach some importance to their identity as Catholics, Millennials do so to a lesser degree than previous generations.⁹ Additionally, Christian Smith and Melinda Denton, in their 2005 study on the religiosity and spirituality of American teenagers, maintain that

... *this generation makes choices about which aspects of their religious tradition's normative expressions they wish to embrace, while also appropriating other, and often new, expressions of faith.*

among U.S. Christian teenagers, Catholics consistently scored lower on most measures of religiosity.¹⁰ It would seem that such statistics yield a portrait of the Millennial generation that is not open to religious expression, participation or corporate membership, but such an interpretation is only possible when relying upon a metric that measured previous generations' affective religiosity. Renowned sociologist Robert Wuthnow supports this claim for a broader perspective of Millennial religiosity, suggesting, "Young adults overwhelmingly opt for personal experience over church doctrines."¹¹ He goes on to assert that an appropriate way to view Millennial spirituality is not through the adherence to a particular set of doctrinal canons, a simple test of religiosity for previous generations, but to understand that today's young adults are "spiritual tinkerers" or "spiritual bricoleurs."¹² By this categorization, Wuthnow is not suggesting that Millennials are necessarily adopting a spirituality of syncretism. Rather, this generation makes choices about which aspects of their religious tradition's normative expressions they wish to embrace, while also appropriating other, and often new, expressions of faith.

Whereas previous generations identified Catholic Christianity with factors such as participation in the sacraments and church attendance, today's young adults are more likely to associate religious experience with service, volunteerism and Catholic Social Teaching. Service has emerged as a form of religious expression often gone unstudied by generational observers and sociologists.¹³ What we can glean from this trend is that Millennials, while possibly uninterested in the traditional or normative tenets of Catholic religious expression, are in fact appropriating contemporary avenues to the divine and exploring new expressions of Catholic religiosity.¹⁴

What this means for Franciscan institutions of higher education is that, if this service-oriented generational trend continues, incoming students will already be predisposed to service as a regular feature of everyday life. On one hand, this presents the challenge for administrators and educators at Franciscan colleges and universities to move beyond simply introducing opportunities for academic community engagement. For what had once been a novel feature of an innovative curricular program, is now something that today's young adults might take for granted. On the other hand, this presents a unique opportunity for Franciscan schools to connect with incoming students who may *a priori* see academic community engagement as a place of spiritual encounter. Previous generations, during the earliest years of service-learning based education models, may have had to be "convinced" of the spiritual and educational nexus that such opportunities create for the students. Today's students, it would seem, are much more amenable to these programs and might even expect them.

Shaping academic community engagement programs to reflect the Franciscan tradition requires deliberate attention to students' social, cultural, ecclesiastical and religious locations. In light of the predispo-

sition of Millennials toward service and, in turn, identifying a spiritual or religious dimension in such action, Franciscan institutions of higher education are in a good place to begin offering their students a *Franciscan* education founded on the eight-hundred-year-old tradition handed down to us by Francis and Clare of Assisi. The first area in need of examination and reconsideration is the language and goal of service. A shift from this sort of discourse toward one that speaks of solidarity better reflects the Franciscan spiritual patrimony of which today's undergraduate students are heirs.

Solidarity: Moving Beyond the Discourse of Service

In an essay on the relationship between Franciscan identity and the university, renowned Franciscan theologian Zachary Hayes introduced the concept of Franciscanism as pertaining to a Christian religious experience. He wrote:

As a form of Christianity, Franciscanism is first of all a religious movement. The religious dimension is clearly attested to in the life of Francis and in the history of the Order. People have attempted to turn Francis into many things; for example a naïve nature-romantic, a social revolutionary, a rebel against the authority of the Church and such. Whatever may be said of these attempts, they commonly by-pass what stands out most clearly in Francis's own writings. The deep well-spring of his life from the beginning of his conversion *was a religious experience*. From this experience he came to perceive God in a distinctive way. He had, likewise, a distinctive perception of Christ. From this starting point he came to his perception of himself and to his vision of humanity and the whole created world.¹⁵

Hayes identifies religious experience, prior to all other dimensions of Francis's life, as the centerpiece of what makes Franciscanism *Franciscan*. In light of the Millennial generation's pre-collegiate disposition to engage in service and identify such activity with religious experience, one can see a starting point for dialogue more explicitly related to the Franciscan tradition. A featured component of any form of academic community engagement at a Franciscan institution of higher education should consist in theological reflection shaped, in large part, by the early sources of the Order. Here we might draw on the rich spiritual wisdom in the writings of Francis and Clare, look to the mystical and deeply illustrative theology of Bonaventure, explore the sermons of Anthony of Padua or Bernardine of Siena, or even delve into the ethical and metaphysical work of John Duns Scotus. To do so is to create a space within which contemporary appropriation of the religious experience of those early Franciscan practitioners can be engaged with the religious experiences of those young women and men today.

The intentional and conscious theological — and, therefore, *a priori* spiritual¹⁶ — reflection on service helps students and facilitators alike transcend the strictures of limited service- or civic-oriented discourse. To reflect on service within the context of faith and religious experience necessarily opens a wide horizon of encounter with the sacred that elicits ethical challenges to the participants. The *status quo* of everyday life peppered as it were by direct service becomes subjected to the scrutiny of authentic Gospel living in a way that is not concomitantly present in service-learning or civic engagement as such. Instead, the experience, like that described by Hayes above or found in the early life of Francis himself, becomes the foundation for re-integrating the *vita evangelica* with the rest of contemporary life. This is what distinguishes Gospel-oriented academic community engagement from other forms of service-learning in higher education. It is the moving beyond the language of service to conceive such experiences as initiatives directed at equipping students with the capacity to reorient their lives from a profit-based, post-collegiate teleology to an explicit stance of solidarity formed in the Franciscan tradition.

In order to unpack this transitional movement toward solidarity as a constitutive component of the Franciscan experience of academic community engagement, we must look at the tradition of evangelical poverty as it relates to the poverty of abjection so often encountered in these experiences of engagement. Gustavo Gutiérrez, largely considered the “Father” of Liberation Theology, explains that poverty within the Christian tradition is generally understood in two ways. There is “material poverty,” that is poverty understood in the first sense, and “spiritual poverty,” a term that has been both helpful and problematic over the course of Christian history.¹⁷ Material poverty needs little introduction. It is simply the absence of those basic resources that human flourishing requires. Spiritual poverty, a concept that has been used to diminish the demand of certain biblical pericopes on the wealthy and those who minister to the economically comfortable, is rather nuanced and unclear. Gutiérrez is concerned with exploring a third understanding of poverty, one that I would suggest aligns itself well with the Franciscan understanding of that evangelical virtue. This third approach is that of intentional poverty as both a form of solidarity and protest. Gutiérrez, drawing on God’s own example of kenotic impoverishment through the Incarnation, explains:

Poverty is an act of love and liberation. It has a redemptive value. If the ultimate cause of human exploitation and alienation is selfishness, the deepest reason for voluntary poverty is love of neighbor. Christian poverty has meaning only as a commitment of solidarity with the poor, with those who suffer misery and injustice. The commitment is to witness to the evil which has resulted from sin and is a breach of communion. It is not a question of idealizing poverty, but rather of taking it on as it is — an evil — to protest against it and to struggle to abolish

it. As Ricouer says, you cannot really be with the poor unless you are struggling against poverty. Because of this solidarity — which must manifest itself in specific action, a style of life, a break with one’s social class — one can also help the poor and exploited to become aware of their exploitation and seek liberation from it.¹⁸

As Gutiérrez notes well, solidarity is a comprehensive and integrated stance in the world. Unlike service work or charity (as popularly conceived), solidarity requires “specific action, a style of life, a break with one’s social class.” It is perhaps unreasonable to expect 18-year-olds to so radically adopt a position of solidarity in short order, but it is not beyond their capacity to begin to re-imagine what a morally just and particularly Christian life might look like, and then work in ways to make that commitment an ever-more concrete reality. These features of solidarity highlighted by Gutiérrez resound in the life experience of Francis of Assisi.

A young adult himself (born around the year 1182, Francis was about 23- or 24-years-old when he began to change his life), Francis slowly came to live a life of solidarity with the poor and marginalized much in line with the progressive sequence described by Gutiérrez. At first Francis engaged in a concrete, specific action. The Saint’s first official biographer, Thomas of Celano, recounts that Francis was at first “changed in mind but not in body” and apparently took his time appropriating the will of God in place of his own, yet he desired to do so even in the earliest stages of his ongoing conversion (1C3:6).¹⁹ It was then through the selling of his father’s cloth for money to be used in restoring the church of San Damiano that he began to engage in specific actions. He sought to live at the church, without accumulating wealth associated with income, selling all he could to give to the poor. It was in this transition of lifestyle that Francis exhibited the second characteristic of solidarity Gutiérrez notes. Finally, that famous scene depicting Francis’s renouncement of his father and the stability, status and inheritance associated with him, before the bishop marks the definite break with the Saint’s social class. No longer was Francis somewhere in the realm of the merchant class and *majores* of Assisi, but instead intentionally moved to the place of the *minores* or lesser ones who were often outcast or dismissed.

In essence, whether intentional or not, Francis’s movement from a place of power, wealth and security to a social location of vulnerability and minority reflected the kenotic character of God becoming human in the Incarnation. It was a self-emptying that made possible the condition for solidarity as opposed to service from another social, economic and cultural place. In solidarity one does not fall prey to the self-gratifying condescension that is rewarded in the “giving” of service to another from a remote location. Instead, solidarity depends on the poverty of Gospel life, modeled by Christ and echoed in Francis, that finds its source in the divestment of one’s selfishness and self-centeredness expressed in the dis-

association with others. Ilia Delio offers a reflection on this experience of conversion and Gospel living according to the Franciscan tradition when she writes:

True poverty creates community because it converts self-sufficiency into creative interdependency where the mystery of life unfolds for us. Only those who can see and feel for another can love another without trying to possess the other. Poverty is that free and open space within the human heart that enables us to *listen* to the other, to *respect* the other and to *trust* the other without feeling that something vital will be taken from us . . . Conversion to poverty and humility is the nucleus of Christian evolution because it is the movement to authentic love; a movement from isolated “oneness” toward mutual relatedness, from individualism toward community, where Christ is revealed in the union of opposites in the web of life.²⁰

As Delio notes, the movement toward this poverty lived by Francis and described by Gutiérrez is the constitutive dimension of solidarity called for in authentic Gospel life. To put it another way, Francis, in a reflection on the Eucharist, expresses the core of this kenotic sense of solidarity that

embraces evangelical poverty wholeheartedly. The *poverello* writes, “Brothers, look at the humility of God, and pour out your hearts before Him! Humble yourselves that you may be exalted by Him! Hold back nothing of yourselves for yourselves, that He who gives Himself totally to you may receive you totally!” (LtOrd 28-29)²¹

To speak of “Franciscan service” is, in some sense, redundant or at least perplexingly obvious. It should go without saying that those steeped in the Franciscan way of living in this world in the form and manner of the Holy Gospel would be present and

attentive to the needs of their brothers and sisters in a way reflecting service as it is popularly conceived. However, to act without reflection on the deeper call to conversion as a movement toward solidarity with those being served is to fall short of the Franciscan contribution to Christian living. The challenge of discourse for those shaping programs in academic community engagement at Franciscan colleges and universities is to return again to the distinguishing characteristics of Franciscan living that offer poignant contributions to the spiritual formation and social education of today’s young adults. There is indeed a *Franciscan* way of education, just as there is a *Franciscan* form of ministry.²² Instead of instilling a sense of service in our students — a sensibility the Millennial generation is already attuned to as noted above — perhaps we should focus more intentionally

on the shaping of that sensibility toward a commitment to Gospel life and ongoing conversion. In doing so, we will certainly encourage students to be better citizens and members of society, but we will also highlight the path toward solidarity. Once on the path of conversion toward solidarity with the poor and marginalized of our world, the students will begin to see reality in a new light through the lens of Christian living. What began as a heuristic model of academic community engagement marked by the language of solidarity will hopefully become a hermeneutic of prophetic living.

Franciscan Prophets for Today: Sustaining Solidarity and Christian Living

Unlike many of the other accounts of the life and times of Francis of Assisi, Bonaventure’s *Legenda Major* does not follow the typical style and conventions of medieval hagiography. Granted, there are certainly some elements that resonate with the work of hagiographers such as Thomas of Celano and Julian of Speyer, but Bonaventure was more interested in presenting a unique matrix of symbolic theology that posits Francis of Assisi as exemplar, not just of authentic Franciscan living, but as *the* Christian disciple. In his *vita* Bonaventure meticulously fashions a theological framework within which the life of the Saint is situated. There is richness to the style and deeply integrated and interrelated nature of the text, something that has often been overlooked due to the history of particularly unfavorable presuppositions about Bonaventure’s governance of the Order as Minister General and misunderstandings about the nature of the *Legenda Major* itself.²³ Despite the absence of critical examination of several of the theological themes present in the *Legenda Major*, the presence of insightful commentary on the meaning of the *vita evangelica* and Franciscan life more specifically merits consideration. Additionally, what Bonaventure has to offer us by way of a theology of prophecy connects well with the challenge of providing a “Franciscan education” for today’s young adults. Whereas the path to conversion exemplified by the movement from the discourse of service to that of solidarity marks the inaugural thrust of Franciscan academic community engagement, the Bonaventuran contribution to theological explication of prophecy provides us with the sustaining reflection on the meaning of Christian discipleship in a Franciscan key. Ultimately, the challenge presented to students at Franciscan colleges and universities should be to live lives driven by profit or exemplified by becoming a prophet. Bonaventure helps us to see how that challenge can be made concrete.

Prophecy is often popularly depicted as the ability to forecast future events. One is a prophet if he or she “saw it coming.” And while there is some validity in defining prophecy as such, it is a limited conception of prophecy and one that merits closer examination. Bonaventure’s perspective is informed by centuries of antecedent wisdom about and exploration

of the subject. In what emerges from both the Hebrew Scriptures and Hellenistic philosophical traditions, the theme of Christian prophecy finds its earliest references in both the canonical and extra-canonical texts of the New Testament era. We read in the New Testament epistolary of the various charisms bestowed upon the community by the Spirit, with prophecy among them.²⁴ The Greek word used (*propheteia*) has the connotation “to speak forth” more than it signifies “foretelling.”²⁵

In its earliest Christian manifestation, prophecy has little to do with one’s ability to predict the future. Instead, we see the earliest Christian commentators, drawing on the scriptural use of the term, describing prophecy as a particular form of expression. Prophecy is distinct from other declarative forms, not because of some unique format, but because of the grounding or source of the expression. Here we see that prophecy is intimately tied to one’s ability to read, understand and interpret scripture, which is the revealed Word of God. As such, one no longer sees with the eyes of ordinary human perception, but with the spiritual senses as illumined by grace and the Word. We can see this way of understanding prophetic speech articulated in the work of Origen (d. ca. 254). While clearly Platonic in his philosophical background, Origen’s understanding of prophecy is deeply rooted in one’s ability to read scripture through the spiritual senses.²⁶ This theme is picked up and developed by others, but reaches a pinnacle of systematic articulation in the work of Augustine of Hippo (d. 430).

In Augustine’s theology of prophecy, the working of grace — that is, the source of inspired intellectual vision — allows one not just to forecast future events or images, but to articulate “God-given insight into the meaning of ordinary, publicly accessible facts, whether of the present or of the past.”²⁷ There is a sense in which Augustine is distancing his theology of prophecy from some extraordinary and limited experiences of a few to instead include all Christians as would-be prophets. Those who, aided by grace, are able to express an inspired intellectual vision of even ordinary events would see the world anew and offer a voice of truth. One need not dream or conjure images to prophesy, but rather one need only be open to the Spirit’s working in one’s reading of scripture, which remains the true test of authenticity of the prophet.

After Augustine there are several thinkers over the course of Christian history that appropriate and adopt the strongly Augustinian notion of prophecy as that speech that arises from seeing the world as it actually is through the reading of scripture and illumined by grace. Some of the most notable thinkers include Gregory the Great, Hugh of St. Victor and Joachim of Fiore. While a full examination of the influence of all of these thinkers and their individual contributions to the antecedent theology of prophecy inherited by Bonaventure is beyond the scope of this current project, suffice it to say that Bonaventure’s sources significantly shaped the way the Seraphic Doctor constructed his *Legenda Major* and understood Christian prophecy.²⁸

For Bonaventure the prophet is one who is able to progress in the reading of scripture to arrive at its spiritual and truest sense. In so doing, to become one who can authentically read the Book of Scripture, one becomes able to read the Book of Life and see the fuller meaning of history. This is the core of Bonaventure’s understanding of prophecy. Like the earliest Christian references and subsequent patristic commentators, prophecy is not so much about foretelling as it is about seeing the world as it *really* is. In other words, we might say that prophecy is about seeing the world through the “eyes of God.” Bonaventure, following Augustine, holds that we are most able to do this by becoming people of scripture, imbued with God’s Revelation in a way that shades and reshapes our perception. Naturally, justice becomes a primary theme that emerges in the reading of the Book of Life when, with the sense and vision of a prophet, one sees the injustice, marginalization and abuse that occurs in our world. Like the prophets of scripture, the Christian prophet “calls it as he or she sees it” or, to use yet another colloquialism, “sees it as it really is.”

The prophet is himself or herself necessarily a marginal person. Although not synonymous with standing on the outskirts of society, there is a sense in which being prophetic requires the wholesale appropriation of evangelical poverty (as opposed to the abject poverty demarcated above). The more one moves from the position of privilege and wealth, of comfort and security, toward a place of solidarity with the marginalized, the more one is able to holistically embrace the call of the *vita evangelica* by following in the footsteps of Christ. It is a long process of conversion and growth that does not occur in sweeping or immediate changes. The exemplar of this way of authentic Christian living is none other than Francis of Assisi who, in Bonaventure’s *Legenda Major*, becomes the prophet *par excellence*. Francis is portrayed as one like the greatest prophets of the Old Testament (Daniel, Ezekiel, Moses and Elijah) and is identified with the herald of Christ, John the Baptist. This prophetic identification occurs most strongly in chapter eleven of the *Legenda Major*, long after Francis had fully entered a place of solidarity as identified above. Francis’s position in the world, one of solidarity rooted in evangelical poverty, allowed him to be more open to God’s Word and therefore see the world as it really was. Bonaventure illustrates this spiritual vision in twelve narratives, each exhibiting features of prophetic confirmation in the Spirit.

What emerges from Bonaventure’s portrayal of Francis the prophet as one steeped in scripture and rooted in a position of solidarity is a model for ongoing conversion and Christian living. What does it mean to be a

For the contemporary Christian — our young women and men at our colleges and universities — academic community engagement as a path toward solidarity is the beginning of such a life of ongoing conversion and prophecy.

Christian according to the example of Francis of Assisi? The answer is to live in solidarity and be a prophet. It is as a prophet, the living of the Word of God, that one is able to continually sustain a place of solidarity and speak the word of truth to a world in need of that challenge. For the contemporary Christian — our young women and men at our colleges and universities — academic community engagement as a path toward solidarity is the beginning of such a life of ongoing conversion and prophecy.

Francis's conversion to a life of solidarity with the poor, marginalized and abused exemplifies the type of lifestyle we most desire for the next generation of college graduates. A generation of young people committed to service, not out of a sense of philanthropy or condescending self-gratification, but out of identification of injustice in the world that calls for protest and committed engagement. That our students become prophets, living the Word of God in such a way that they see the world anew and speak the truth to power, is both what follows from a life of solidarity and sustains Christian living. When we offer Millennials the challenge of "profit or prophet?" we invite the next generation to transcend the limited and self-centered strictures of a profit-driven culture to enter a community of meaning rooted in the narrative of Christianity modeled in the particular life of Francis of Assisi.²⁹

Conclusion

Service in a generic sense, admirable as it may be, is but an action extrinsic to any faith commitment or exclusively Christian understanding of valued living. While one cannot expect all students to accept the challenge, live in solidarity and become people of scripture and therefore prophets, the issue for us to consider is whether or not the curriculum even provides the condition for the possibility of such conversion. The Franciscan tradition that serves as the founding charism of the AFCU institutions of higher education offers a timely and unique approach to holistic education for today's young adults. Already predisposed to service as they are, Millennials are particularly positioned to be formed in a tradition that moves beyond the concept of service toward a posture of solidarity. Encouraging community service as a component of integrated learning is not the challenge Millennials need, especially from Franciscan colleges and universities. Instead, Millennials should be challenged to move toward stepping outside the systemic structures of injustice motivated so often by profit and upward social mobility and instead position themselves in a place of solidarity. Keeping in mind that evangelical poverty is not the same as abject poverty, today's young adults should be encouraged to look at the model of Francis of Assisi and re-appropriate his way of life for contemporary living. To sustain this way of Christian living and to learn to see the world anew, Millennials should be open to the Word of God and live it in such a way as to speak the truth that comes with the call of the prophet.

Students may respond to this notion with varying degrees of enthusiasm,³⁰ but the condition for the possibility of some response — namely the shift in administrative discourse of service to solidarity and the challenge to be contemporary Christian prophets — should be a goal of Franciscan institutions of higher education. To integrate programs whose aim is precisely this might better enable AFCU institutions to offer a particularly *Franciscan* education to their students. The ongoing evaluation and (re)development of curricula and educational programs is nothing foreign to the Franciscan tradition. For Francis himself, shortly before his death, is remembered to have said, "Let us begin, brothers, to serve the Lord God, for up until now we have done little or nothing." (1C6:103)³¹ Hopefully a renewed emphasis on solidarity and prophecy as constitutive elements of a Franciscan education might contribute to the shaping of the next generation of young adults into integrated members of the Christian and global community.

Endnotes

- 1 The last several volumes of the *AFCU Journal* offer perspectives along these lines. For a sampling, see: Kevin Godfrey and Kelly Cockrum, "What are You Serving Today? How AFCU Member-Schools are Helping Students Integrate the Franciscan Ideal of Service into Their Personal and Professional Lives – Parts One through Four," *The AFCU Journal* 3 (2006): 81-101, *The AFCU Journal* 4 (2007): 73-86, *The AFCU Journal* 5 (2008): 150-158, and *The AFCU Journal* 7 (2010): 143-157; F. Edward Coughlin, "Serving Generously and Loving Rightly: Insights for a Value-Centered Life from the Franciscan Tradition," *The AFCU Journal* 7 (2010): 28-43; Matthew Sills and Timothy Johnson, "Reconstructing the Gift: Using Franciscan Thought to Foster Service Learning," *The AFCU Journal* 7 (2010): 65-79; Charles Coate and Todd Palmer, "Franciscan-Based Service Learning: The Evolution of a Service Experience," *The AFCU Journal* 5 (2008): 134-147; and Barbara Spies, "Using Academic Service-Learning to Teach Franciscan Values," *The AFCU Journal* 4 (2007): 66-72.
- 2 For an overview of early adaptation and development of so-called 'service-learning' programs at a variety of undergraduate institutions, see Alexander Astin, Linda Sax and Juan Avalos, "Long-Term Effects of Volunteerism During the Undergraduate Years," *The Review of Higher Education* 22 (1999): 187-202; and, while specifically geared toward undergraduate education majors, the following study provides insightful commentary on general community-engagement and service curricula: Margaret Vickers, Catherine Harris, and Florence McCarthy, "University-Community Engagement: Exploring Service-Learning Options Within the Practicum," *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education* 32 (2004): 129-141.
- 3 One recent study suggests service as a means for effectively introducing students to Catholic Social Teaching, thereby transcending charismatic delimitations in an effort to highlight the more genus-like mission and identity of all Catholic institutions of higher education. See Jennifer Reed-Bouley, "Social Analysis in Service-Learning: A Way for Students to Discover Catholic Social Teaching," *Journal of Catholic Higher Education* 27 (2008): 51-64. Likewise, a recent article in the NCEA journal suggests that what distinguishes service-learning at so-called secular institutions from that of Catholic ones is precisely the Catholicity present within the founding tradition of the school. See Kenneth Paulli, "Catholic Colleges Offer a Purposeful Engagement of the Head, Heart and Hands with the Love of Christ," *Momentum* 41 (February/March 2010): 60-63.
- 4 For a good overview of this task, see Margaret Carney, "The 'DNA' of Franciscan Institutions," *The AFCU Journal* 2 (2005): 1-17.

- 5 There is some debate about the most appropriate starting year. For our purpose, Millennials are understood as those born in or after 1980 up and through the year 2002. For more see Neil Howe and William Strauss, *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000).
- 6 Eric Greenberg and Karl Weber, *Generation We: How Millennial Youth Are Taking Over America and Changing Our World Forever* (Emeryville, CA: Pachatusan Publishers, 2008).
- 7 Greenberg and Weber, *Generation We*, 13.
- 8 Greenberg and Weber, *Generation We*, 31-32.
- 9 William D'Antonio, James Davidson, Dean Hoge and Mary Gautier, *American Catholics Today: New Realities of Their Faith and Their Church* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing, 2007), 34-35. For more on the religious identity of Millennial Catholics see Thomas Rausch, *Being Catholic in a Culture of Choice* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2006), esp. 1-19; and Dean Hoge, "Religious Commitments of Young Adult Catholics," in *Inculturation and the Church in North America*, ed. T. Frank Kennedy (New York: Herder and Herder, 2006), 198-214.
- 10 Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 194.
- 11 Robert Wuthnow, *After the Baby Boomers: How Twenty- and Thirty-Somethings are Shaping the Future of American Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 133.
- 12 Wuthnow, *After the Baby Boomers*, 134-135.
- 13 For more see, Wendy Murray Zoba, "Youth Has Special Powers," *ChristianityToday* 45.2 (February 5, 2001): 57; Megan Sweas, "Marked For Life: Former full-time volunteers confess that their experiences change them for good," *U.S. Catholic* 72.7 (July 2007): 12- 17; D'Antonio, et.al, *American Catholics Today*, 93; and Rausch, *Being Catholic in a Culture of Choice*, 12-13.
- 14 See Sharon Daloz Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose and Faith* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing, 2000), 25-26; Hoge, "Religious Commitments of Young Adult Catholics," 198-214; and Daniel Horan and Melissa Cidade, "Major Changes Toward Philosophy and Theology: Interpreting a Recent Trend For Millennials in Catholic Higher Education," *Journal of Catholic Higher Education* 30 (2011): forthcoming.
- 15 Zachary Hayes, "Reflections on a Franciscan University," *Spirit and Life: A Journal of Contemporary Franciscanism* 2 (1992): 98. Italics original.
- 16 See, for example, Ilia Delio, "Is Spirituality the Future of Theology? Insights from Bonaventure," *Spiritus* 8 (Fall 2008): 148-155.
- 17 Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, trans. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 162-171.
- 18 Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 172.
- 19 Thomas of Celano, *The Life of Saint Francis* Bk. I, Ch. III, v. 6, in *FAED* 1:187.
- 20 Ilia Delio, "Christian Life in a World of Change," *The AFCU Journal* 7 (2010): 9. Italics original.
- 21 Francis of Assisi, "A Letter to the Entire Order" vv. 28-29, in *FAED* 1:118.
- 22 For more on Franciscan ministry, see Daniel Horan, "A Franciscan Approach to Ministry," *Review for Religious* 68 (2009): 132-143; and Michael Blastic, "Contemplation and Compassion: A Franciscan Ministerial Spirituality," *Spirit and Life: A Journal of Contemporary Franciscanism* 7 (1997): 149-177.
- 23 For example, see John Moorman, *The Sources of the Life of Saint Francis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1940); John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order: From its Origins to the Year 1517* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1988); Anthony Mockler, *Francis of Assisi: The Wandering Years* (Oxford: Phaedon Press, 1976); and

- A. G. Little, "Guide to Franciscan Studies," *Études Franciscaines* 40 (1928): 517-533 and 41 (1929): 64-78. There exists perhaps no better example of such a biased perspective on Bonaventure's alleged agenda and participation in "reshaping" the Franciscan Order, in addition to its unique chronological proximity to Bonaventure's own work, than Angelo Clareno, *A Chronicle or History of the Seven Tribulations of the Order of Brothers Minor*, trans. and eds. David Burr and E. Randolph Daniel (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Press, 2005).
- 24 See 1 Cor. 11: 26 and 29. For more on this theme, see David Hill, *New Testament Prophecy* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1979) and Wayne Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000).
- 25 Niels Christian Hvidt, "Prophecy and Revelation: A Theological Survey on the Problem of Christian Prophecy," *Studia Theologica* 52 (1998): 150-151. See also, "Prophecy," in *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, eds. Richard Soulen and R. Kendall Soulen, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 142-145.
- 26 See, for example, Origen, *De pricipiis* Bk. IV, no. 8, in *Origen: An Exhortation to Martyrdom, Prayer and Selected Works*, ed. Rowan Greer (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 187.
- 27 Robert Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 194. Augustine further develops the Spirit's role in prophecy, that is the divine aid to intellectual vision, in *De Genesi ad Litteram* Bk. XII, 26.53; 30.58; and 31.59.
- 28 See Bernard McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism – 1200-1350* (New York: Crossroads, 1998), 93-101. For more on the influence of these figures on Bonaventure's theology, see my forthcoming article: "Bonaventure's Theology of Prophecy in the *Legenda Major*."
- 29 For more on the formation of a moral and ethical decision-making in light of the Christian narrative, see Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981). What I have envisioned here is a particularly Franciscan-Christian notion of ethical formation rooted in a curriculum and educational environment shaped by explicit reflection on the life and influence of Francis of Assisi and the subsequent Franciscan tradition.
- 30 See Daniel Horan, "St. Francis and the Millennials: Kindred Spirits," *St. Anthony Messenger Magazine* 118 (October 2010): 30-34.
- 31 Thomas of Celano, *The Life of Saint Francis* Bk. II, Ch. VI, v. 103, in *FAED* 1:273.

Francis: A Model for Servant Leadership

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Introduction

The lives of Francis and Clare of Assisi are difficult to translate into the context of the twenty-first century. However, the contemporary experience of economic recession, corporate greed, planned obsolescence of material resources, and the isolation of individualism is in dire need of the model and inspiration of these thirteenth century leaders from Assisi. One only needs to look at the abundance of literature regarding a Servant Leadership Model for corporate enterprises to see that there is a desire for an alternative model of operating within the corporate world.¹ But the call is not limited to the corporate world if we consider the level of disrespect and violence in our society, the marginalization of people as some get richer at the expense of others, the call for accountability in our educational institutions, and the commercialization of methods and means to meet our basic human needs. How do we meet the call for an alternative way to interact with each other in social, economic, educational, and political contexts? Servant leadership proposes essential characteristics for a relational model of doing business that can be extrapolated to other contexts. This paper will address how the spirituality of Francis of Assisi can inform and shape a Franciscan values-based model of servant leadership. The discussion begins with a brief characterization of *spirituality*, followed by an overview of the characteristics of servant leadership from key figures in the field. We then examine the core elements of the spirituality of St. Francis and illustrate the correlation between these core elements and the characteristics of a servant leader. Finally, we describe a methodology for using the Sources from the Franciscan Tradition² to bring the example of Francis into the present context through the events and circumstances of his life compared with events and circumstances of today.

An Understanding of the Concept of “Spirituality”

There are various types of spirituality: “Marian spirituality,” “eco-spirituality,” “mystical spirituality,” “charismatic spirituality,” “Christo-centric spirituality” and, of course “Franciscan spirituality.” Godet-Calogeras posits that spirituality is “. . . the ‘breath’ that moves us into action, or the motivation that ‘inspires’ us to act” (Franciscan Institute, lecture notes, 2009). In the forms of spirituality given above, it is the “breath” that comes from Mary, the Mother of God, the Earth, the Mystics, the Charismatic Movement, Jesus Christ, and from Francis of Assisi that motivates one to act. Ronald Rolheiser (1999) describes “spirituality” as that which shapes our actions, and in turn, shapes our desire (p. 7). Spirituality moves us into action by virtue of the example of another or values inherent to a

particular inspiration. One’s spirituality is known by one’s actions in much the same way that one perceives the blowing of the wind by the movement of the branches and leaves. The Spirit moves within us, and we respond.

The Characteristics of Servant Leadership

In the 1960s, after reading Herman Hesse’s novel, *Journey to the East*, Robert Greenleaf, former AT&T executive concluded that service was an essential part of a great leader. Greenleaf is credited with coining the phrase “Servant Leader.” The concept of servant leadership has been integrated into all arenas of society: for profit and not-for-profit, religious and secular, business and education, small and large organizations. In his seminal work, *The Servant as Leader*, first published in 1970, Greenleaf stated that

The servant leader *is* servant first. . . . It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. . . . The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other peoples’ highest priority needs are being served.

The best test . . . is this: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not further be deprived?” (p. 15)

Greenleaf’s remarks sound very “Franciscan,” very “Gospel-oriented” based on the passage found in the Gospel of Mark: “If one of you wants to be great, he must be the servant of the rest” (Mk 10:43). Or, as Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) pointed out, Jesus Christ taught us about servant leadership as found in the Gospel of John (p. 59):

You call me Teacher and Lord, and it is right that you do so, because I am. I am your Lord and Teacher, and I have just washed your feet. You then should wash each other’s feet. I have set an example for you, so that you will do just what I have done for you. (Jn 13: 15-16)

The construct of Servant Leadership connects with these Gospel passages very closely. Larry Spears (1998), an early follower of Robert Greenleaf and former CEO of The Greenleaf Center of Servant Leadership, synthesized Greenleaf’s work into ten characteristics of a Servant Leader (p. 528).

1. **Listening:** reflection; identify the will of the group
2. **Empathy:** understand and recognize the uniqueness and greatness of others; accept others
3. **Healing:** bring self and others to wholeness

4. **Awareness:** view situations from an integrated holistic position; understand issues involving ethics and values
5. **Persuasion:** convince others rather than coerce; build consensus; rely on influence rather than authority
6. **Conceptualization:** dream great dreams; think beyond the day-to-day realities; seek balance.
7. **Foresight:** understand the essence of the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequences for the future; be intuitive
8. **Stewardship:** hold all in sacred trust for the greater good of all people and things
9. **Commitment to Growth of Others:** recognize responsibility to nurture personal and professional growth in others; provide avenues for growth
10. **Building Community:** develop meaningful relationships; know the people with whom you work and serve, personally and professionally.

In his final research project for his graduate degree in Servant Leadership at Viterbo University, Michael Redington (2010) discovered another characteristic of a servant leader: “playfulness,” the ability to practice creativity, be curious, have a sense of humor, find pleasure in working with others, and practice spontaneity (p. 23-26). In 2003, James Laub developed the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) Instrument. Using the OLA, Laub provided a formal way to study how servant leadership is defined,

Francis was able to listen to the will of God and others and to reflect upon (contemplate) this will.

what the characteristics of servant leadership are, and how these characteristics can be assessed. Laub defines servant leadership “[a]s an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self interest of the leader” (“Servant Leadership”). He identifies six key areas which servant leadership promotes within a healthy organization 1) the valuing and 2) developing of people, 3) the building of community, 4) the practice of authenticity, 5) the providing of leadership for the good of those led, and 6) the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the total organization and those served by the organization.

Franciscan Spirituality

A reading and analysis of the writings of Francis of Assisi sheds light on his spirituality and reflects his inner motivation. Francis espoused the foundational virtues of *humility* and *poverty* lived in *obedience to the will*

of God and his brothers. His spirituality was grounded in the *itinerant* life as he followed in the *footprints* of Jesus.

Overwhelmed by the depth of God’s love for him, Francis understood the Incarnation of God’s Love through Jesus as the supreme act of humility in which the Most High God descends to become human in all things, except sin. This act of humility would live in Francis in his desire to always be *servus et subditus* — servant and subject to all (2LtF: 1; 2LtF: 47), acknowledging all as a gift from God. Counter to the then-dominant paradigm in Assisi of a society of privilege by social stature and wealth, Francis chose to eschew all manner of privilege, and to be in relationship to all as loving servant intent upon sharing the love of God through his actions in his life of penance. In the encounter with the leper, Francis was led into a life of humility and penance as he found the “sweetness of soul and body” he had longed for and the freedom to be who God was calling him to be (Test: 3). For Francis, the meaning of humility is reflected in Admonition 19:

‘Blessed is the servant who does not consider himself any better when he is praised and exalted by people than when he is considered worthless, simple, and looked down upon, ²for what a person is before God, that he is and no more. (Adm 19: 1-2)

The Passion and Death of Jesus spoke to Francis of the depth of God’s love for him and for all of humanity. The passion and death of Jesus was an example of sacrifice — of sanctifying one’s life — for the benefit of all; not in the sense of saving all from original sin, but as an exemplar of a complete and integrated way of sharing with others the gift of life and love given by God. Everything comes from God, so everything must be shared rather than appropriated for one’s own. This attitude of humility and dependence on God is expressed by Francis in a form of obedience that requires the relinquishing of one’s own will to God’s will, and in a way that does not upset the harmony of the *fraternitas*, or the community (ER 4) (Hellmann, 1987, p. 24-32). Because “no one is to be above another” (ER 4: 9-12), it would be counterintuitive to assert one’s will over that of another. This self-sacrifice was to be undertaken only when it was not “contrary” to one’s conscience or way of life and was for the greater good (ER 4: 2).

Francis as a Model for Servant Leadership

These basic tenets of the spirituality of Francis are reflected in many of Spears’ core characteristics of servant leadership mentioned earlier. In particular, Francis was able to listen to the will of God and others and to reflect upon (contemplate) this will. He was empathic in his love and acceptance of the dignity and worth of all of creation, and was committed to helping others to recognize their worth so as to grow into the persons God created them to be. He could move beyond the realities of the thirteenth century society of Assisi and conceptualize a new way of living according to the Gospel. He held all in sacred trust for the greater honor

and glory of God and for the common good, and his love of God and others impelled him to live in right relationship, as *servus et subditus*, for the good of the community. Francis's leadership was not based on traditional forms of power and authority, but on the inner authority he received from his Creator and from following in the footprints of Jesus.

Laub's (2000) six key areas of healthy organizations, cited earlier, are evident in Francis's relationship to his brothers, the Church and the *minores* of Assisi. Francis's response and actions in life, based on his spirituality of humility and poverty, facilitated the development of a new way of living the Gospel with his brothers that integrated the value and empowerment of others, the building of community, a leadership shared by all in service to all, and living life authentically and with integrity especially in the midst of conflict and disagreement.

The Franciscan Sources as a Resource for the Servant Leadership of Francis

The writings of Francis, the legends of Celano and Bonaventure, and the accounts found in the *Assisi Compilation*, the *Legend of the Three Companions*, and the *Anonymous of Perugia*, to name a few, are excellent sources for accessing the values, beliefs and behaviors of Francis. Whether for personal reflection for one's own growth as a servant leader or to illustrate the characteristics of servant leadership from a Franciscan perspective for students and colleagues, an analysis of these texts is an effective way to bring the spirit of Francis into the twenty-first century. Figure 1 outlines a methodology that can be used to examine a Franciscan text in light of the characteristics of servant leadership for discussion and incorporation into a contemporary context.

Figure 1.

A METHODOLOGY FOR EXAMINING FRANCIS AS A SERVANT LEADER

1. Use primary sources.
2. Consider the context and purpose of the text.
3. Examine the actions and motivations of Francis within the text.
4. Identify the values and virtues of Francis from the text.
5. Apply these virtues and values to a contemporary context for Servant Leadership.
6. Develop a summary statement of specific attitudes and behaviors that cultivate these values and virtues for servant leadership.

1. Use primary sources

As an example of this methodology, we use the account of the "Resignation" of Francis at the Emergency Chapter of 1220 as written by Thomas of Celano in *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul*.

In order to preserve the virtue of holy humility, a few years after his conversion, at a chapter, he resigned the office of prelate before all the brothers of the religion, saying: "From now on, I am dead to you. But here you have Brother Peter of Catanio; let us all, you and I, obey him." And bowing down immediately, he promised him "obedience and reverence." The brothers were weeping, and sorrow drew deep groans from them, as they saw themselves orphaned of such a father.

As blessed Francis got up, he joined his hands and, lifting his eyes to heaven, said: "Lord, I give back to you the family which until now you have entrusted to me. Now, sweetest Lord, because of my infirmities, which you know, I can no longer *take care of them* and I entrust them to the ministers. If any brother should perish because of their negligence, or example, or even harsh correction, let them be bound to *render an account* for it to You, Lord, on the *Day of Judgment*. . . ."

From that time on, he remained subject until his death, behaving more humbly than any of the others. (2C 143)

2. Consider the context and purpose of the text

The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul by Thomas of Celano, better known as "Second Celano" is one of several accounts of the "resignation" of Francis. For purposes of this illustration of the methodology, only this account will be used, but it would be important to examine all of the texts of this event for clarity and depth of understanding.³

The "resignation" of Francis came as a result of many changes that had occurred in the *fraternitas* during the time that he was in Damietta meeting with the Sultan, Malik al-Kamil. Within this context, a number of factors contributed to the disillusionment and despair that Francis experienced upon his return from the East: rumors had spread that Francis had died in the East; the friars appointed by Francis to serve as vicars of the community in his absence had begun to relax adherence to some aspects of the *Rule* especially with regard to lodgings for the friars; Pope Honorius III had mandated that the ministers give "ecclesial censures" to errant friars in contradiction to their use of fraternal correction; and the influence of the ordained clergy desiring to live a more traditional model for religious life meant following a rule such as that of Benedict, Augustine, or Bernard of Clairvaux.

3. Examine the actions and motivations of Francis within the text.

There are a number of actions of significance in this text from Celano, as well as some contextual information that provide us with an insight

Finally, with the motivation of his dependence on God, Francis prayed to God.

into Francis as a servant leader. True to the spirituality that guides his every action, he resigns from the role of prelate⁴ “to preserve the virtue of holy humility.” This motivation is a personal one that requires a personal response — his resignation. In light of the rumors of his death, yet in a metaphorical sense, he continues with the declaration:

“From now on, I am dead to you. But here you have Brother Peter of Catanio; let us all, you and I, obey him.” The motivation here is a communal one that led to a decision for the health and well-being of the entire *fraternitas* — to place someone else at the helm, and to promise obedience to him. We see this motivation again in the action of Francis, “. . . bowing down immediately, he promised him obedience and reverence.” Finally, with the motivation of his dependence on God, Francis prayed to God.

He then “got up, he joined his hands and, lifting his *eyes to heaven*, said: ‘Lord, I give back to you the family which until now you have entrusted to me. Now, sweetest Lord, because of my infirmities, which you know, I can no longer *take care of them* and I entrust them to the ministers. . . .’” (2C 143)

Francis does not appropriate what is not his; he humbly returns the care of the *fraternitas* to God in the person of Brother Peter of Catanio and the ministers.

4. Identify the values and virtues of Francis from the text.

Reflecting the characteristics of the servant leader, Francis was able to listen and identify the will of the friars; he was aware of, and understood, the complexity of the issues from an ethical and moral perspective; and he had the foresight to understand the essence of the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequences for the future of the *fraternitas*. His resignation of power and control came from a position of humility and poverty in which he could recognize the value of others, develop within them the skills and characteristics of leadership through their form of life, remain authentic to his way of life, and continue to build community by truly letting go of power and status to become a friar like all others. His actions, painful and disillusioning as they were for him, were done for the good of the whole. It is the mark of a true servant leader to know when to “step out” and let the process continue to fruition by the collaborative efforts of all.

5. Apply these virtues and values to a contemporary context for Servant Leadership.

At this point, it would be helpful to examine a current issue or event in which someone has best served the whole by stepping back, by recognizing one’s limitations, by accepting the fact that the company, school, institution, or organization is moving in a different direction. To facilitate this process, one would want to examine one’s values and spirituality, consider the context of the group, the wisdom and dignity of all involved, and the consequences.

A good example of this type of scenario for faculty and administrators is an experience common in many colleges and universities: the revision of the general education curriculum. The scenario might resemble the following:

The Academic Vice President (AVP) has appointed a faculty committee to revise the General Education Curriculum based on the mission, values and philosophy of the university. After months of meetings and lively discussions with the committee, the AVP realizes that the faculty is set on one particular design, while she has a very different design based on current research. The faculty committee and the AVP have reached an impasse. In the spirit of servant leadership, what do all parties involved need to consider and resolve, individually and communally, in order to bring a revised curriculum to the entire faculty for approval?

In a similar vein, a scenario for students could focus on a group project that three or four have been assigned to do for a course. Following is a description of such a scenario.

Students in a macro-economics course have been assigned a group project that will account for one quarter of their course grade. In one particular group, there is a very strong, verbal student who has been performing well in the course by way of class participation and completion of assignments. Another student is also very strong academically in the course, but is extremely shy about expressing ideas or asking questions. Another student is very gifted in this discipline, but also works a full-time job to pay for his tuition and books. The fourth student in the group comes fairly regularly to the class, yet struggles with the material. He is a very congenial person who gets along with everyone and is fun to have around. Given the complexity of the assignment, the flexibility of design and method for accomplishing the project, and the pending due date, there is a bit of tension within the group. In the spirit of servant leadership, what do these four students need to consider and resolve, individually and communally, in order to complete the project to their satisfaction by the due date?

As with the example for faculty and administrators, each would be asked to reflect upon the strategies and characteristics of servant leadership for this situation.

6. Develop a summary statement of specific attitudes and behaviors that cultivate these values and virtues for servant leadership.

Continuing with the scenario of step #5, the group(s) develop(s) a list of the personal and communal considerations and resolutions that they have discussed or incorporated into their work in order to complete the process of curriculum revision, or the course project. This compilation of attitudes and behaviors will serve to illustrate the qualities of a servant leader within each of these contemporary contexts. While hypothetical scenarios work best to keep local politics and personalities at bay, the exercise needs to be as concrete and real as possible for maximum effectiveness. Francis's perspective on life was always more concrete than abstract; a perspective that lends itself well to this type of exercise.

Curricular Implications and Applications

Academic and Student Support Staff in our Franciscan Colleges and Universities are becoming increasingly well-versed in the Franciscan tradition, and looking for meaningful ways to integrate this tradition into the curricular and extra-curricular life of our campuses. An efficient and effective way to integrate the life and values of Francis of Assisi into these areas of campus life is to examine them vis-à-vis other theoretical constructs from within curricular and extracurricular programs. We have demonstrated a methodology for examining Francis's life and values in light of

We can bring the spirit of Francis — and Clare — alive through creative ways of learning, knowing and teaching as servant leaders. Let us do what is ours to do!

the characteristics of Servant Leadership. It is possible to adapt this methodology to the professional standards of ethics within Nursing, Social Work, Education, Business, Pre-Med, and other disciplines. It is also feasible to examine the primary Franciscan sources in other academic disciplines such as using a process of critique of the primary Franciscan sources as literary works of non-fiction; or as a source of historical illustration of the Middle Ages of Eastern and Western Europe; or for examination

with select models of adult psycho-social development and adult faith formation. For those who work in the areas of Student Support Services and Campus Life, an interesting study would be the examination of the Franciscan sources in light of Arthur Chickering's Seven Vectors of the college student.⁵

Conclusion

We have attempted to describe how the spirituality of Francis of Assisi is the bedrock of a Franciscan values-based model of servant leadership. Living the core tenets of his spirituality — humility and poverty — Francis was able to respond to a very critical time in his life as a servant leader that allowed him to maintain his integrity, allowed the *fraternitas* to continue its necessary path into fruition, and empowered others to lend their talents and gifts for the common good. He could not have done this if he were not faithful to his spiritual motivations and his God. Francis was a true servant leader who chose to serve first and then lead. His spirit and life provide a model for servant leadership within contemporary situations and paradigms. One only needs to understand and integrate the dynamics of servant leadership, and to delve deeply into the spirit and life of Francis through the texts of the primary Franciscan sources.

We can bring the spirit of Francis — and Clare — alive through creative ways of learning, knowing and teaching as servant leaders. Let us do what is ours to do!

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Endnotes

- 1 Among this vast body of research most notable is the work of Robert Greenleaf (1970). Others who furthered the work of Greenleaf are Larry Spears (1998), James Hunter (1998, 2004), James Laub (2000a, 2000b), Kenneth Blanchard (2003), Max DePree (1989), and Sen Sendjaya and James Sauros (2002).
- 2 All citations of Franciscan sources are taken from Armstrong, R. J., Hellmann, J. A. W., Short, W. J., & Francis. (1999). *Francis of Assisi : Early documents*. New York: New City Press.
- 3 Other primary sources included from the FA:ED AC 11; AC 39; AC 112; 2C 104; and 2C 111.
- 4 While it is mentioned here that Francis resigned as prelate, scholars have yet to reach a consensus on what Francis actually resigned from. For an in-depth description of this question, see Godet-Calogeras, 281-300.
- 5 Chickering, A. W. (1969). *Education and identity* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Seven Little Portions

Assisi, 1999

Nobility, 1204

Below Monteluco, Francesco,
little Frenchman, the dream that grabbed you,
by your crested shield,
is stellar with the pieces
that are missing.

The leper, 1205

Francesco, dare un bacio a Elena.
Francesco, give a kiss to Elena.
Give. Give.

Il gusto di Elena gradisce il sale.
She tastes like the beginning of the sea.

Chiara, 1212, 1234

Low on Mount Subasio lives Clare
with her own at San Damiano,
ever the center of your hold on light.
In her own hands she lofts high the bread
over the valley of any threat.

The Creche, 1223

At Greccio your beasts
have invented for all winters
the glint of light of the world
off the brown globes of their eyes.

Hunger

Not all the fear that kept anything small
as the children or chickens of Gubbio
locked inside for months of wolf siege
assuaged any politics.

It was the wild noises and smells exuding
from this colloquy between the grizzled
that bought the settlement.

Stigmata, 1224

In every direction the cross
blasts seraph wings into birds,
till you are blind
to any wonted Assisi.

Any day your dream
has always bled under the skin.
Leo felt it every day.
Now, though, helping you
off Alverno,
it soaks his own tunic.

Relics — 1226

Your bones move from grave to grave.
Cimabue's colors vault over them,
until the earthquake of 1997
spreads fresco dust like a tsunami
down the basilica's aisles.

Buried intacta
not many miles away at
Dunarobba's foresta fossile
are trees that know songs
sparrows sang in the Pliocene.

— Vickie Cimprich
Kentucky

“St. Joseph Cupertino and I”

St. Joseph Cupertino and I
We could never share the same room
He could not abide the stench of sin
While I tried to take a more pastoral approach

In addition, his flights across the ceilings
Embracing statues of the Virgin and her Child
Coming down from the tops of baldachinos and such
With dust on his habit and cobwebs in his hair

Well, frankly, I thought it a bit much
Impressive, perhaps, to those ignorant few
Those ready to believe anything
The rosaries and relics crowd

And, honestly, he was as dumb as a post
Lucked out in his exams
You never heard him say an original thing
Platitudes and prayers, that was about it

Standing around with his mouth open
Daydreaming all the time, instead of working
Hugging lambs, talking to birds—
He was an embarrassment, really

They moved him around, you know, hid him away
Finally they had to lock him up
And good riddance, if you ask me
Pernicious as his influence had become

Everyone eager to see miracles everywhere
Well, this is the real world, I would tell him
But on this we did not agree
St. Joseph Cupertino and I

— Sean Edward Kinsella, Ph.D.
California and Macau, China

The New AFCU Website

KEVIN GODFREY, Ph.D.

The *Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities* (AFCU) is pleased to announce the launch of its new website. AFCU members and many others who share interests in Franciscan education and values will find it to be a powerful, user-friendly resource for obtaining and sharing information and for productive interaction. The new website has been under construction since June 2010 and is the result of commitments and work by many people. Early on, AFCU selected KEYPOPPY Christian Resources, INC. to assist with the redesign and integration of a content management system. The major work of designing and constructing the website was carried out by both Kevin Godfrey, Ph.D., Executive Director of AFCU, and Daniel T. Michaels, CEO and Proprietor of KEYPOPPY. Information from the previous website was successfully transitioned to the new site. It is the sincere hope of the AFCU Board of Directors and all AFCU Presidents that this important new Franciscan resource will be a valuable and readily available tool to foster dynamic, interconnected Franciscan higher education.

AFCU's new website is the product of visionary leadership by the AFCU Board of Presidents at their annual membership meeting (January 2010, Washington, D.C.). At that time, the Presidents urgently called for the construction of an attractive, robust website that could effectively launch Franciscan higher education into the next phase of its life and work. Above all, the Presidents wished to ensure that the ancient treasures of the Franciscan intellectual tradition, as well as opportunities to teach and learn about Franciscan values, should be made available to the widest possible contemporary audiences. In order to achieve these goals, the website was to include a social-networking feature that would facilitate, in an unprecedented way, the joining together of the individual Franciscan colleges and universities in order to build a new Franciscan community of learning, influence and hope.

Less than a year later, the new website is live and available to users. AFCU students, faculty, staff, administrators, trustees and institutional sponsors can now connect with one another and collaborate in ways that have never been experienced throughout the history of the Franciscan tradition. Thus, the new AFCU website becomes the newest resource through which individuals who study and serve at Franciscan colleges and universities can work and interact with one another in supportive partnerships. Some of the most obvious areas for collaboration include mission integration, curriculum development, scholarly research and publication, teaching, institution and resource management, administration, and assessment. Professional and personal relationships that will be forged through this collaborative environment are intensely valuable and will move Franciscan higher education forward.

The website has a very different appearance, energy and appeal than the previous site, which served the AFCU well for many years. Through it we realize our intention to deliver an inviting, welcoming internet resource that expresses the renewing energy of the Franciscan spirit as well as the enduring character of the Franciscan intellectual tradition. Accomplishing this goal has been a multifaceted enterprise. Danny Michaels proposed various templates from which the new design, including its vibrant colors, content manageability and networking features, emerged. From his experience as faculty member, department chair and dean, Kevin Godfrey brought knowledge of the academic and institutional structures of higher education that needed to be represented and served by the website. Many other people were also consulted and contributed important recommendations along the way. Among them are the members of the AFCU Board of Directors; AFCU Journal editor, Sr. Patricia Hutchison, OSF; the Editorial Board of the Journal; and past AFCU Symposium coordinators and planners. Although the website is already available, it will remain a work in progress since it is intended to be a living resource. As such, it must be modified and expanded as needs arise. In order to ensure its ongoing development, currency and quality, the website must continue to be supported by a wider group of contributors and managers who assume responsibility for it in targeted areas. Putting these structures in place is already under way.

In terms of content, navigation points at the top of the homepage provide access to the components of the site, including AFCU news features, a shared AFCU calendar, AFCU membership information, information about sponsored AFCU programs and resources, links to other important Franciscan websites, the AFCU Journal, the biennial AFCU Symposium, **AFCUFORUM** and AFCU contact information. The homepage is an exciting entrance into the website because of its rotating featured-article series, which provides updates and news about activities of AFCU member institutions and people. An information scroller also circulates photo-connectors of each AFCU institution, which provides direct access to college and university websites.

One of the most valuable features of the website is **AFCUFORUM**. **AFCUFORUM** is a social net-working infrastructure designed for the AFCU, which supports creative and productive interaction among Franciscan students, educators and institutional leadership on forums. In general, forums are similar to chat rooms; however, the content of forums is archived allowing for greater possibility of collaboration. Forums have the capacity to be either private or public, depending on the need of users and how they have registered. Thus, three kinds of forums are available on the website. *Confidential* forums have been established for targeted user groups such as AFCU Presidents, Vice-Presidents and Deans and other senior executive administrators. *Public registered* forums are available for professional groups such as librarians, registrars, first-year coordinators, and campus ministers. Discipline-specific *open* forums allow AFCU faculty

to share ideas and collaborate on new projects. Targeted open students' forums encourage students at AFCU institutions to learn from one another and to collaborate in areas such as student government, service-learning projects and collaborative research. In addition, a series of forums have been established around important Franciscan themes such as the environment, justice and advocacy, and building peace. Because there is no limit to the number of forums that the website will support, individuals or groups can request that forums tailored to their interests or need be added to **AFCUFORUM**.

Since the website operates through the use of a content management system, making modifications to it is a process that is easily accomplished. This means that information and news about/from the AFCU central office or any of the AFCU institutions will be frequently updated. Moreover, components can be tailored to respond to the needs of individual and institutional users. Startup initiatives and pilot programs within the AFCU can easily be added. Ongoing enhancements such as these will ensure that the website remains a lively and dynamic tool.

Please visit the new AFCU website at www.franciscancollegesuniversities.org and explore its many features! Be sure to register on AFCUFORUM. Comments or recommendations you may have are most welcome. Do not hesitate to share your ideas about how to expand the website or about how it can better serve the needs of your AFCU college or university.

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Viterbo University is located in beautiful La Crosse, Wis., a city of 52,000 people located between the majestic Mississippi River and the surrounding bluffs. *U.S. News & World Report* named La Crosse one of the nation's 10 Best Places to Live.

Whether it be floating on the Mississippi River, enjoying one of the extensive hiking and biking trails, shopping in La Crosse's historic downtown, or enjoying the city's cultural offerings and nightlife, there is literally something for everyone in La Crosse.

Located next to campus are the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, Viterbo's founders and sponsors. Viterbo's proud Franciscan heritage is prevalent throughout campus, as evidenced by the university's ethics-infused curriculum, a vibrant and welcoming faith community and campus ministry program, a service requirement for students, and the excellent speakers and programming brought to campus by the D.B. Reinhart Institute for Ethics in Leadership.

La Crosse is serviced by Delta and American Airlines. Our campus is located within blocks of downtown and easily accessed from Interstate 90. Ample choices of riverside hotels and campus accommodations are available.



Ingham, Mary Beth CSJ. *Rejoicing In the Works of the Lord: Beauty in the Franciscan Tradition*. St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2009. Pp. 73. ISBN 10: 1-57659-205-7. Pbk. \$5.00.

Rejoicing in the Works of the Lord: Beauty in the Franciscan Tradition invites readers to experience **beauty** not only as sculpture, art, dance, and music but also as a foundational Franciscan frame of understanding the world, God, ourselves, and our morality. Franciscans see all of life: the person, divine life and love, through the prisms of harmony and beauty. Questions arise such as: how do we love when we love beauty, do we understand the beautiful as a good we seek, and is there something true about beauty that attracts our loving admiration? In the author's quest for balance and breath in discerning beauty, Dr. Ingham turns to Bonaventure and Scotus, two great Franciscan philosopher-theologians, to facilitate the reader's appreciation and understanding of learning that Beauty lays beyond all understanding.

In the introduction, Dr. Ingham invites her readers to imagine and stretch the horizons of the possibility of a new beauty by admiring the Gothic Cathedral of Chartres, France. She tells her readers to imagine being filled with colors, seeing the labyrinth on the stone floor, the rose window, and feeling surrounded by beauty. These images are like icons that hold the Franciscan vision of human perfection in love which invites us into a journey of beauty

In chapter one, the author explores the concept of *Franciscans and Beauty* by exploring the ancient lineage from Plato to Augustine. These ancient writers contributed to the legacy of wisdom. It is the Franciscans who reflected upon this wisdom and drew implications for everyday living as they began to ponder the meaning of beauty.

In chapter two — *The Beauty of Creation* — Bonaventure and Scotus direct the readers to understand that the intellectual journey is a profound spiritual journey beginning with creation and centered on the recognition of beauty. It is here that the readers learn that the centrality of beauty calls us beyond what we are to what God desires of us.

In chapters three and four, Dr. Ingham shifts the readers to focus inward to the dynamic power of beauty. She reminds her readers that beauty is not something that we admire, contemplate from afar and appreciate, but rather beauty is where the soul enters into itself first as a reflection of God, and then as one reformed and made beautiful by grace. The reader learns that through meditation upon the life of Christ and the life of Francis, the individual becomes inwardly transformed into the image of the beloved.

The final chapter of the book focuses on the centrality of beauty as a deep and generous recognition of how beauty surrounds us in nature, in persons, in acts of generosity, and kindness. These traits belong to a tradition well-versed in Franciscan institutions. The author concludes by saying that Franciscans live and minister in the world with the vision of

Francis. This vision centers on beauty where mutual respect, listening, and working together bring forth an ever greater beauty. The readers are invited to pause and ponder and bask for a brief moment in the realm of beauty.

This book can be used not only for a book study of the Franciscan perspective of beauty but also for integrating beauty and the arts into the classroom curriculum. Richard Sayers and Terrence Gleeson, two Neumann University professors, took up the challenge of incorporating the Franciscan perspective of beauty in their courses. They designed a lesson for their music classes focusing on how a musical work can serve as a *via pulchritudinis*, a journey of beauty for composer, performer, and listener. Through power points and class discussions they illustrated how a composer uses the beauty of the arts coupled with the Franciscan perspective to educate students to recognize the potential residing in them as performer and audience.

Dorothy Bredehoft SSJ, Ed.D.
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Meet Our Contributors

Dorothy A. Bredehoft, SSJ is a Sister of St. Joseph, Chestnut Hill, PA. She is an Assistant Professor at Neumann University and teaches in the Division of Education and Human Services. She holds a masters degree in education from West Chester University, a masters degree in Administration from Villanova University and her doctorate degree from Immaculata University. Along with her teaching schedule, Sister Dorothy is a member of the “Core Committee” and a previous member of the Library committee. She also advises many education students.

Esperança Maria Camara received her Ph.D. in Art History from Johns Hopkins University. She is currently Associate Professor of Art History and Graduate Program Director at the School of Creative Arts of the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne, Indiana. She teaches a variety of art history courses, including Renaissance, Baroque and Nineteenth-century French Art. She also teaches in the First Year Seminar which includes a component on the Franciscan wisdom tradition.

Sr. Georgia Christensen, FSPA, Ph.D. serves as Dean of the School of Graduate, Professional, and Adult Education and Associate Professor in the Master of Arts in Servant Leadership program at Viterbo University. She is a consultant and facilitator for the Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis in Cameroon. She formerly worked as a staff development officer for Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Education Commission and faculty member at Arrupe College (Zimbabwe). Sr. Georgia earned a doctoral degree in Educational Administration and Policy Analysis from Stanford University.

Vickie Cimprich née Victoria Hucker lives in Northern Kentucky. Her work includes *Pretty Mother’s Home — A Shakeress Daybook* (Broadstone Books, 2007), and appears in *Poetry As Prayer — Appalachian Women Speak* ed. Denise R. McKinney (Wind Publications, 2004), *The Journal of Kentucky Studies*, *Mountain Life and Work*, *Street Vibes* and other publications. In 1999 she participated in The Spoleto Symposium for Writers, during which she first visited Assisi. At that time she learned of the Fossil Forest at Dunarobba. The life of Francis, illumined for Cimprich by the writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Buddhist poet Gary Snyder, seems a particular flowering of Christianity grounded in beliefs and practices common among many traditions.

Robert A. Gervasi holds a Ph.D. in Classics and is President of Quincy University in Illinois. He serves on several regional and national higher education commissions, including the planning committee for the Franciscan Leadership Academy. He has lectured at universities in the U.S. and abroad, and he was a Senior Fulbright Scholar in Classics and Philosophy at the University of Zimbabwe. He is the author of *The Spirituality of Touch* (St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1992).

Terence Gleeson teaches theater at Neumann University, and serves as the artistic director of the University Players. A director, designer, and actor, Terry will play the part of Old Adam in the Philadelphia Shakespeare Theater’s upcoming production of *As You Like It*. His poem “This World,” an homage to “Canticle of the Creatures,” appeared in the 2009 issue of the *AFCU Journal*.

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Daniel P. Horan, OFM is a Franciscan friar of Holy Name Province (NY) and currently teaches in the Department of Religious Studies at Siena College (NY). He has lectured and presented academic papers in the United States and Europe on his areas of research, which include the Franciscan intellectual tradition, the thought and work of Thomas Merton and the theological significance of the Millennial generation. He is the author of more than twenty scholarly and popular articles that have appeared in publications including *America*, *The Heythrop Journal*, *Worship*, *The Downside Review*, *Journal of Catholic Higher Education*, *Review for Religious*, *Spiritual Life*, *The Merton Annual* and others. He is currently completing a book on Franciscan Spirituality for St. Anthony Messenger Press and is the editor of the forthcoming volume of correspondence between Thomas Merton and Naomi Burton Stone. For more information on his work, visit www.danhoran.com.

Sean Edward Kinsella received his A.B. in History from Cornell University and his M.A. in Franciscan Studies from the Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University. Graduated from St. Michael’s College in the University of Toronto with a Ph.D. in Historical Theology, he is currently Associate Professor in the School of Christian Studies of the University of Saint Joseph in Macau, China.

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