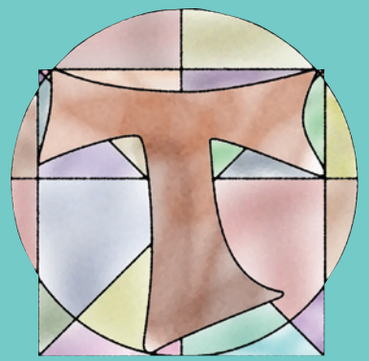

The AFCU Journal: A FRANCISCAN PERSPECTIVE ON HIGHER EDUCATION January 2012/Volume 9, Number 1 ASSOCIATION OF FRANCISCAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The AFCU Journal:

A FRANCISCAN PERSPECTIVE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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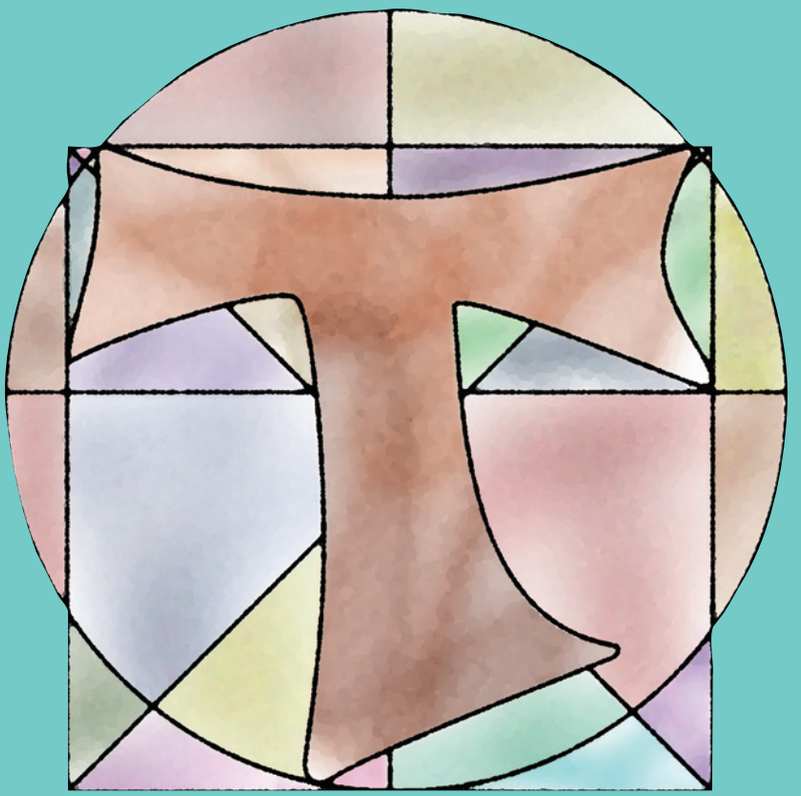

A Publication of the

association of Franciscan colleges and universities

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:

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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:

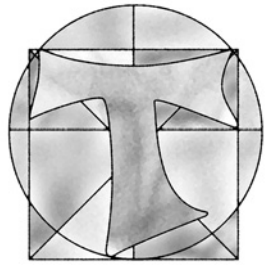
- To strengthen the vision of Catholic higher education in the Franciscan tradition
- To connect all the discrete disciplines to a Franciscan philosophy and heritage
- To encourage an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach to research and reflection from the Franciscan school of today
- To 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.*

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.



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About the AFCU

From the Chair

December 20, 2011

Dear Colleagues:

As Chair of the Board of the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities, I welcome this new edition of our *AFCU Journal* and take pleasure in the knowledge that it is now in your hands.

Our editor, Sr. Patricia Hutchison, with the support of Dr. Rosalie Mirenda of Neumann University, has once again provided a veritable feast of published offerings to assist each of our campuses in the work of integration of Franciscan mission with the many facets of our campuses.

Just a few months ago, our association hosted its first Leadership Academy for senior executives. Dr. Peter Holbrook was a major contributor to that program and we are pleased to offer some of his thinking on this important topic here. By the time this reaches you, the news of the coming canonization of Mother Marianne Cope of Molokai will have resounded in Franciscan institutions of the U.S.A. It is providential that this volume offers you material related to her life and work. Our country now boasts its first canonized Franciscan and we can offer her story as a modern example of the enduring values of our charism. Other material here encompasses philosophy, business education, and reviews of important publications and news of recent programs. St. Bonaventure University was pleased to host the first AFCU Leadership Academy and the Symposium on Liberal Education in the Franciscan tradition. Next summer, we pack our bags and head to Viterbo where President Rick Artman and his faculty and staff will host our biennial practical symposium: ***Franciscan Leadership: Serving, Learning, and Leading.***

Be sure to consult our AFCU web site regularly for more information on programs past, present and future. Dr. Kevin Godfrey, our Executive Director, loves to see those "hits" on our "cyber-space office."

May the year just beginning find us constant in our dedication and capable of managing the significant challenges each of our member schools must address day in and day out.

Sincerely yours,

Margaret Carney, OSF
President of St. Bonaventure University

From the Editor

This past July, the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities inaugurated a Franciscan Leadership Academy. The Academy, the result of more than two years of planning, attracted participants from 12 AFCU institutions. Dr. Kevin Godfrey, executive director of the AFCU, explains the purpose and content of the Academy in the "About the AFCU" section of this issue. The opening article of this January 2012 journal, in which Peter Holbrook, Ph.D. describes "The Leadership Story of St. Francis of Assisi," allows us to reflect upon key insights shared at the Leadership Academy. Dr. Holbrook's article also sets the stage for the 2012 AFCU Symposium which will deepen conversation around the theme of **Franciscan Leadership: Serving, Learning, and Leading**. The symposium planning team provides important information about the symposium in this issue.

The commitment to service among AFCU institutions has been well documented in a series of articles by Dr. Godfrey (see *AFCU Journals 2007, 2008, 2010*) and in several articles on service from member institutions. Indeed, several member institutions (Alvernia, Briar Cliff, Felician, Madonna, Marian, Our Lady of the Lake, Saint Bonaventure, Silver Lake, University of Saint Francis, Ft. Wayne, and Viterbo) have been named to the prestigious *President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll*. In "*Emersion Learning* at St. Bonaventure's School of Business," Dr. David Blake and Dr. Charles Coate describe the transformative impact of *emersion learning* (a service activity in which students interact in significant ways with persons from a culture different from their own).

Dr. Robert McParland's article, "Among Shadows Forever Nameless: Mother Marianne and the Lepers of Molokai," chronicles the ministry of Franciscan Sister Marianne Cope and her companions among persons with leprosy. This article is especially timely in light of the anticipated canonization of Mother Marianne this year!

The relationship of Francis of Assisi with creation has been explored extensively. In the article "Neoplatonism and Nature in the *Canticle of Creatures*," Dr. Lance Richey offers a "culturally situated definition of Neoplatonism" and then identifies key neoplatonic influences on Francis and within his *Canticle*.

Through the diligent efforts and careful review of Murray Bodo, OFM and Barbara Wuest, our poetry editors, this issue includes seven poems: *Wonder* by Sr. Adele Thibaudeau; *Communion Procession* and *Confessional Poem* by Larry Janowski OFM; *Reach* and *The Drama* by Judith Emery; *From the Canticle of Brother Sun with praise for Sister Clare* by Sr. Frances Teresa Downing; and *Rocky Road* by Sr. Felicity Dorsett. We hope that this section inspires creative contributions from additional writers!

This year's book reviews focus on topics of interest and concern today. In her review of *When Values Collide: The Catholic Church, Sexual Abuse, and the Challenges of Leadership*, Dr. Paula Scraba summarizes Father Joseph Chinnici's poignant and instructive account of dealing with sexual abuse within his own Franciscan Province. As Dr. Scraba concludes, "Readers will find this book beneficial to provide peace of mind to those who question how the Church is to accept responsibility and move forward with the present crisis." Dr. Lance Richey's review of *The Saint and the Sultan: The Crusades, Islam and Francis of Assisi's Mission of Peace* by Paul Moses is also quite relevant in light of the importance of understanding Islam and the worldview of a practicing Muslim. According to Richey, Moses "draws a fascinating portrait of cross-cultural and inter-religious dialogue in the thirteenth century that gives some modicum of hope to the twenty-first century."

Sr. Lynn Patrice Lavin describes new features of the 40th anniversary edition of a revered classic, *Francis: The Journey and the Dream* by Murray Bodo OFM. As Sr. Lynn attests, Bodo's "work is a reflective resource that allows readers to move more deeply into their understanding of the man Francis as he searched to see the poor Christ in the faces of all peoples and in his experience of being a Gospel messenger in the midst of the troubled world and Church of his times." The added features of the book will be a valuable resource for use in AFCU institutions with faculty, staff, and undergraduate and graduate students.

In addition to a description of the July 2011 *Franciscan Leadership Academy* and an invitation to the *2012 AFCU Symposium*, the "About the AFCU" section includes a summary of the special AFCU conference on *Liberal Education and Franciscan Pedagogies.* So successful was the *Liberal Education* conference that in July 2012, Master Teacher Mary Beth Ingham CSJ will lead participants in an intensive study of *The Challenge of Ethical Living in the 21st Century*.

Hopefully readers have explored the AFCU website which includes (under the Journal tab) a *Best Practices Newsletter*. The archived first issue of the newsletter featured an article entitled *Autism Awareness, Academic, and Franciscan Values* by Beth VanRheenen, Ph.D. The current *Best Practices Newsletter* features a description of *A Franciscan Approach to a Tobacco-Free Campus* by Brother Gregory Cellini, O.S.F., Richard Coladarci, SPHR, and Irina Ellison, Ph.D. This article will be of particular interest to everyone who has grappled with the challenge of creating a healthy campus while respecting the choices of faculty, staff, and students. A future *Best Practice* issue will feature *A Person—Scholar Approach to Mission* by Elizabeth Kirk Matteo, Ph.D. which describes her personal journey toward understanding the Catholic Franciscan mission, as well as her interest

in researching and assessing students' and stakeholders' perception of Catholic, Franciscan identity.

We are grateful for your support and encourage you to contribute an article, poem, or book review to the journal or to the *Best Practices Newsletter*.

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

The Leadership Story of St. Francis of Assisi: Toward a Model of Franciscan Leadership for Lay Leaders

PETER J. HOLBROOK, PH.D.

Abstract

A premise of quantum leadership theory is that everything exists in relationship and that nothing exists independently (Wheatley, 2002). If we accept this as truth, then the message and work of St. Francis of Assisi, founder of the Franciscan movement, provides a meaningful context for contemporary leadership. Francis saw the world through a web of relationships that were interdependent and connected with all of humanity and creation. He incorporated his worldview into a sustaining vision to rebuild God's house by creating a compelling moral purpose through shared vision, leadership, and power. By aligning his core values with his character, purpose, and leadership practice, he transformed medieval society. These same traits continue to be relevant for leaders who desire and seek sustainable change and transformation. This article summarizes a qualitative, historical research dissertation that examined the nature of Franciscan leadership, culminating in a model that conceptualizes a value-aligned, purpose driven leadership philosophy.

Overview of St. Francis of Assisi

St. Francis of Assisi (1181/82 – 1226) was born in Assisi, a small town in the Umbrian Valley of Italy, into a wealthy, merchant class family. Giving up his material wealth and position, St. Francis presented to the world a life of radical simplicity and poverty in his quest to live according to the Gospel and to imitate the poor Christ in every aspect of his life. He experienced Christ through actively living out the message of the Gospel, and it is through this experience that he found a new and practical way of understanding the words of Christ and Christ's message to humanity (Spoto, 2002).

St. Francis of Assisi represented new life, hope, and promise for the Church of his day. The evangelical life Francis professed and lived was attractive to followers and represented an inherent correction, renewal, and reform for religious life, the Church and the medieval world (Hellmann, 2004). His contribution to humanity was his love of God through his everyday experience of Him in all facets of His creation (Short & Delio, 2001). Francis' insights about life and creation presented his followers and the Church with a new worldview that envisioned all of creation in a relational nature that is equitable, interdependent, and connected (Delio, 2003). As a result, Francis saw all of creation, both animate and inanimate, in a brother and sister relationship that was truly systemic in nature.

Francis first experienced the relational nature of life through his experience of meeting a leper along the roadside. Lepers, who once had seemed bitter and grotesque to him, became sweet through God's grace (L3C, 11). It is through living in community and service with the lepers that Francis experienced God's world in relationship to the Creator, God the Father (Blastic, 2006). Because of his experience with the lepers, Francis ultimately desired to be lesser and to stand with people considered of little value, "the poor and the powerless, the sick and the lepers, and the beggars by the wayside" (ER IX:2, 70).

Francis' message to the world is as relevant today as it was in his time. He offers the hope and promise of a worldview that is inclusive and nonjudgmental, built on the fundamental premises of love, peace, forgiveness, and service; acts of caring; compassion for others; and a community of interconnected relationships with all of creation. His worldview challenges leaders and followers to create sustainable futures. It calls them to share power and resources in ways that promote human and material flourishing in the present without compromising or diminishing the possibility of future generations to flourish as well. Many Franciscans and others believe that his Gospel way of living will be the catalyst to reform both the Church and world of today.

The Leadership Formation of St. Francis

A review of the writings and major legends of St. Francis reveals that the core values that shaped and defined Francis as a person and a religious leader were deeply rooted in his life experiences. These experiences reflected the influence of his heredity and environment. His family of origin, the Assisi community he grew up in, the medieval Italian culture that shaped his worldview, and the mentors that guided his development all influenced Francis. Born to wealthy parents, he experienced the privilege associated with a prosperous Umbrian family. In his early years Francis very much reflected his parents' merchant-class values. The influence of his parents' wealth and status had a profound impact on Francis' character, which would be further clarified by his calling and ongoing conversion.

Eventually Francis rejected the values associated with his parents and the larger culture. In doing so, he aligned his value system more closely with his mother's religious values and the model of Christ to guide his life's actions and purpose (1C, 2C, LJS, VL, L3C). Thus the Gospel became his guide for living (Horgan, 1987). As a result, Francis' value system represented a countercultural way of existing in the medieval world. Throughout the assimilation of Christ's values, he did not lose his former roots, nor did he suppress the essence of his instincts, values, and attitudes (Horgan, 1987; Rotzetter, 1994). In effect, he transformed his roots into values of opposite qualities through God's love and power. Francis expressed a value for the evangelical life, radical poverty, fraternity, minority, and active contemplation.

Francis strengthened his core values through his ongoing conversion which ultimately led to his purpose in life, a calling he attributed to God's presence and providence in his life. Francis' core values were further refined and reinforced as he strove to follow in the footprints of the poor Christ of the Gospel. Francis' call to rebuild God's Church unfolded throughout a life-long journey which led him to understand what he should do in service of God and others. Moreover, his calling was further shaped and formed through experiences of adversity, disappointment, opportunity, and God's wisdom as revealed through visions and prayer.

Francis' natural tendencies toward leadership were apparent in his youth. Hagiographers frequently described him as an admirable, affable, and obliging leader, frequently chosen to plan banquets because of his generosity and wealth (1C, 2C, LJS, L3C). Francis was also a leader of the "company of dancers" who contended for the affections and attention of the young women of Assisi (Rotzetter, 1994; Spoto, 2002). He dreamed of great honor as a prince, knight, and hero (1C, 55 – 56; L3C, 5). While he became more humble about his ambition after his conversion, he never completely abandoned his aspiration for greatness (Rotzetter, 1994). He desired above anything else to be a great martyr. However, Francis never achieved the martyrdom he sought. On the other hand, he brought many to salvation through his example and form of Gospel life (1C, 56).

Leadership was never a primary goal of Francis; he found his path to leadership in response to serving God. His commitment emerged over time, following a path similar to those of the leaders studied by Stanford-Blair and Dickmann (2005). In answering God's call to rebuild, he began by rebuilding churches as well as proclaiming and preaching peace to all those who would listen. It was not until two years after his conversion that others were moved to do penance by his example; and as a result, joined him in life and habit (L3C, 27). Thus, Francis started out serving God and others. Leadership only came into play after he had followers, suggesting that Francis did not initially seek to lead others. Moreover, Francis recorded in his *Testament* (Test) that God gave him some brothers; he did not seek them out (14). At first, Francis did not know exactly what to do with his followers. However, the Lord revealed to him that they should live and work according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel (14). God's invitation and prompting brought Francis to accept his call to lead.

Leadership Practice of St. Francis

Francis' leadership practice was authentic. His clear set of core values aligned his character and leadership practice (1C, 83; 2C, 129). Francis' leadership practice represented a process of influence employed to persuade others to follow in the footprints of Christ and to lead a Gospel way of life (1C, 84). The ultimate shared goal of his influence was conversion and eternal salvation, which led to transformation for the greater good of all Christians (AP, 18).

In aligning his leadership practice to his core values and character, Francis' leadership became a living model for others to emulate in their desire to embrace the teachings of Christ and live a Gospel inspired way of life (1C, 90). Francis modeled what he expected others to do. He first persuaded himself of his purpose, then influenced others by his example and word (L3C, 54). More importantly, he gained his brothers' commitment to his vision by creating shared values and demonstrating them through his words and deeds (AC, 46; 82; 108; 111). Thus, what Francis professed was lived in example.

As both a leader and a follower, Francis was in a mutual relationship with his brothers. The very nature of this relationship required reciprocity and mutual exchange (Chinnici, 1985). Francis encouraged his followers to engage in leadership (L3C, 46). Through this engagement of shared leadership, Francis' moral purpose and vision became a common moral purpose and vision (Rost, 1991). His followers informed their mutual purposes as Francis did (1C, 34). His writings and actions demonstrated that leaders and followers may change places and that followers influence leaders and other followers, as often as leaders do (RH, 10; Rost). Finally, Francis believed that for the greater good leaders should submit humbly and willingly to sharing their leadership with their followers (2C, 151; AC 42). Francis' practice of being both leader and follower fits with Rost's definition which attests that "*leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes*" (p. 102).

Francis influenced others through creating a shared moral purpose and vision, acting from a service orientation, and building community.

Within the context of contemporary leadership theory, Francis would be described as a purpose-driven leader who fostered in himself and his followers conversion and transformation (Antonakis, Cianciolo, & Sternberg, 2004; Fullan, 2001; Rost, 1991; Stanford-Blair & Dickmann, 2005). Francis was not technically adept at managing, organizing, and controlling the Order which he founded. He was, however, skillful at producing change by creating shared purpose and vision within community that inspired human flourishing and spiritual growth. Francis created movement through his values, ideals, vision, symbols, and emotional exchanges (Antonakis, et al.).

In order to achieve shared purpose, Francis used three key leadership strategies. These strategies not only define and shape Francis' leadership influence and practice but also promote the alignment of his values and purpose with his leadership practice. Francis influenced others through creating a shared moral purpose and vision, acting from a service orientation, and building community.

- ***Creating Shared Moral Purpose and Vision:*** Francis influenced others through his moral purpose of rebuilding Christ's house by building an interior dwelling place for God in each person he served. His ultimate goal was the conversion and salvation of souls. Francis' moral purpose informed his vision for Gospel life. Life in service to others was to be carried out in fraternal community through the common bonds of obedience, poverty, charity, and humility. Francis fostered shared moral purpose and vision through dialogue and conversation.

- ***Acting from a Service Orientation:*** Francis influenced others through his service orientation. He believed that the greater among them should be the servant of all and that the greater should serve and minister to the others.

- ***Building Community:*** Francis influenced others by building a sense of community among his followers. He created inclusive and interdependent relationships grounded in being linked as brother and sister. Francis fostered a deep sense of community by working towards a shared moral purpose and vision that was lived out in solidarity through mutual love, care, respect, support, listening, and shared leadership.

Model of Franciscan Leadership

The model of Franciscan leadership interprets the nature of Franciscan leadership from the historic practice of St. Francis. The nature of Franciscan leadership is comprised of four central elements that describe its core, vocation, orientation, and practice. When viewed together as an integrated whole, these four elements of Franciscan leadership describe a value-aligned philosophy that informs leadership practice by emulating and applying the core values of St. Francis in contemporary leadership settings.

Figure 1 provides an illustration of the model of Franciscan leadership. At the center of the model is the Tau sign that St. Francis used to sign his letters (2C). The Tau is a sign of ascension. It symbolizes transformation, the life of humankind, saved and redeemed by the love of the crucified Christ and transformed into new life, life given for love and service (Sciamanna, 2005). For secular leaders, the Tau sign represents transformation of self in service to others for the greater good.

Flanking either side of the Tau are the four central elements that describe the nature of Franciscan leadership: the core, vocation, orientation, and practice. Combined, these four elements of Franciscan leadership comprise a value-aligned leadership philosophy that guides the

Figure 1 The model of Franciscan leadership

process of influence used to create change and transformation within the Franciscan Tradition. Thus, emerging from the elements of Franciscan Leadership is personal and collective transformation that fosters human growth and flourishing in relationship with all of creation and humanity.

Core of Franciscan Leadership

At the heart of Franciscan leadership are Francis' core values for the evangelical life: radical poverty, fraternity, minority, and active contemplation.

- ***The Evangelical Life*** calls for and fosters a life of active and contemplative living of the Gospel by consciously following in the footprints of the poor and suffering Christ. It calls for a leader to act from principles that reflect honesty, fairness, equity, kindness, justice, peace, respect, and human dignity.

- ***Radical Poverty*** calls for living *sine proprio,* without anything of one's own, to experience more completely the sufficiency of God's love and providence. Radical poverty fosters an interdependence and mutual need for God, creation and humanity. It calls for the "letting go" of all that is not of God so that one can see the dignity in each of God's creatures, recognizing that all things are God's gifts to be used to enrich the well being of others. Radical poverty calls for leaders to lead without ego; leadership is not about the leader but the people and mission the leader serves.

- ***Fraternity,*** rooted in God's fatherhood and Christ's brotherhood, fosters a universal brotherhood and sisterhood with all humanity and creation, a web of interconnected relationships that are mutual, interdependent and equitable. These relationships encourage mutual love, care, support, and interaction for all to flourish. Fraternity calls for a leader to see all things in relationship and to reverence both the human and material resources needed to accomplish organizational purpose.

- ***Minority*** fosters the quality of being least among others and servant to all, prepared to do good without reward, appreciation, praise, or credit (Lehmann, 2002). It is a gospel value that defines not only how one exists in relationship with others but also an attitude that embraces a servant's perspective. Minority calls a leader to serve followers before self and to be humble with the status that comes with leadership.

- ***Active Contemplation*** fosters the ability to see the heart of reality—the presence of God's overflowing goodness in oneself, in others, and in all aspects of creation. Active contemplation

calls one to move beyond self towards the other in solidarity; thereby sharing whole-heartedly in God's compassionate love. This allows one to see deeply the love and suffering of the other. Active contemplation calls a leader to be reflective, mindful, aware, and present to others.

The nature of Franciscan leadership emerges from Francis' core values which shape vocation, orientation, and practice in a framework of Franciscan leadership. Similarly, the vocation, orientation, and practice of Franciscan leadership both reflect and reinforce the core values of St. Francis. In essence, Francis' values guide leaders and ensure that what one values is congruent with Francis' values and moral purpose.

Vocation of Franciscan Leadership

Francis came to his leadership vocation through answering Christ's call to rebuild his house, a call that led to ongoing movement toward God. Francis originally interpreted Christ's request as a call to repair, literally, the church of San Damiano that was falling to ruins. He later discerned his call in a much broader way to rebuild the human church of Christ. According to Regis Armstrong (1994), the call eventually prompted "him to think not only of the universal house of God, but also of the house that is the dwelling place of God, each Christian" (p. 41).

The art and skill of listening is the means for Franciscan leadership to emerge in its fullest sense.

It appears then that Franciscan leadership takes form through answering God's call to rebuild and renew our world today. Discerning one's vocation as a Franciscan leader requires an experiential journey to discover the way to rebuild and serve given one's gifts and talents. This process of self-discovery, authenticated through aligning our core values with purpose, leads to the fulfillment of God's call for who we are to be in relationship to others and ourselves.

Answering the call to rebuild requires a commitment to act, which often results from a decisive moment that awakens a desire to make a positive difference in the lives of others and society as a whole. A commitment to act often compels one to lead as a means to answer the call. Thus, leadership emerges out of a call to rebuild and becomes the means to commit and realize one's vocation of moral purpose in life.

Orientation of Franciscan Leadership

Franciscan leadership occurs in relationship to the other through a service orientation that recognizes the inherent goodness of all creation and humanity. Embedded within the orientation of Franciscan leadership is mutuality, the reciprocity of human hearts, which calls for one to be both leader and follower in a reciprocal relationship of care and support

that leads to mutual flourishing and transformation (Chinnici, 1985). Francis asked that each of his brothers make known their needs so that their fellow brothers might discover those needs and minister to them with love and care (ER, IX: 10). Thus, at the heart of Franciscan leadership is the need to be aware, present, and open to the world by listening to the needs of others and finding ways to serve and minister to those needs. In turning outward and toward the other in service, Franciscan leadership requires that one listen, hear, and incline the ear of one's heart to the other so that God's call becomes audible and clear (LtOrd 5 - 6, 21, 34). The art and skill of listening is the means for Franciscan leadership to emerge in its fullest sense.

The spirit of Franciscan leadership rests in being present to the other. In true Franciscan tradition, the other represents the marginalized and lepers of present day. In being present to the other, one acknowledges what is too bitter for the world to see. By listening to the needs of the other and responding deeply in meaningful ways, one acknowledges their humanity and dignity. In turn, compassion, friendship, and presence to the other foster a service orientation that recognizes others as brothers and sisters who share equally in God's grace and love. From this stance of equality, the other is not seen as broken and in need of repair or our service. Rather, the other is seen as one who desires deeper meaning and purpose in life through the compassionate love of God.

Humility frames the service orientation of Franciscan leadership. One should always desire to be at the feet of others, serving them so that the achievement of shared moral purpose occurs in a manner that promotes sustainability of human and material resources (Adm, XIX). Francis reminded his brothers in *The Admonitions*, that no one in the Order of Lesser Brothers should make being over others his own (IV). Within this simple admonition, Francis illustrates the humility necessary to be a leader.

> I did not come to be served, but to serve, says the Lord (Mt 20:28). Let those who are placed over others boast about that position as much as they would if they were assigned the duty of washing the feet of their brothers. And if they are more upset at having their place over others taken away from them than at losing their position at their feet, the more they store up a moneybag to the peril of their soul. (IV: 1-2, p. 130)

Practice of Franciscan Leadership

The practice of Franciscan leadership emerges from the core values of St. Francis. The practice requires an internal coherence with the values for the evangelical life: radical poverty, fraternity, minority, and active contemplation. Grounded in an overall leadership orientation of humble service, six associated strategies comprise the practice of Franciscan

leadership. Each strategy provides a means to influence the capacity in self and others toward the achievement of shared moral purpose within the context of the Franciscan tradition. Collectively these strategies create a leadership practice congruent with the values of St. Francis and facilitate a process of influence that is truly Franciscan in nature. Important to the overall practice of Franciscan Leadership is the requirement that one leads more by example than by word.

Franciscan leadership by its very nature is rooted in sustainable development (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). The leadership practice requires a continual process of "letting go" in order to stimulate new growth, while respecting and building on the past to rebuild anew in the future. It preserves and develops things of lasting importance by building networks of interdependent relationships that foster the flourishing and growth of all humanity and creation. As a result of reverencing creation, Franciscan leadership develops and does not deplete human and material resources. Such leadership wastes neither its resources nor its people. It creates environments that are life-giving and nourishing by developing and encouraging leadership at all levels of the organization. As a result, leadership transitions are anticipated and prepared for through succession plans that safeguard and stimulate the moral purpose, core values, and culture of the organization.

Aligned Leadership Strategies

Transformational: Franciscan leadership focuses on personal and collective transformation and change. It fosters shared moral purpose and vision with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of followers, constituencies, and society as a whole (Fullan, 2001). Through shared purpose and vision, leaders and followers are empowered to serve the needs of others in ways that respect and promote the dignity and goodness of the individual. The transformational practice of Franciscan leadership engenders responsible freedom for a higher purpose and a richer connection with others and all of creation.

When leaders and followers talk from their hearts and listen to each other a sense of community emerges.

Authentic: Franciscan leadership is authentic in that it allows leaders the freedom of being who they are through the full expression of their values aligned with actions. Being authentic fosters openness and vulnerability that leads to greater wholeness and trust. Authentic Franciscan leaders practice the poverty of ego and let go of self-interests in order to see and address the needs of others. Authentic leadership

within this context fosters true poverty, which is a realization that leaders and followers are bound together in an interdependent web of relationships with God, others, and all of creation. The practice of authentic Franciscan leadership promotes a mindset that is open to personal and collective transformation as well as to diversity of thought and opinion. The practice focuses on being aware and responsive to the issues of social justice in the world.

Relational: The practice of Franciscan leadership occurs in relationship to all of humanity and creation. It fosters shared vision, leadership, power, and decision making among followers based on the art of responsive listening and dialogue. It promotes the practice of thinking together in ethical and inclusive ways to achieve shared moral purpose. When leaders and followers talk from their hearts and listen to each other a sense of community emerges. Thus, the practice of Franciscan leadership promotes the building of community through being in solidarity with one another through mutual love, compassion, care, respect, support, and listening.

Inquisitive: The practice of Franciscan leadership is inquisitive and grounded in appreciative inquiry. By its very nature, Franciscan leadership models the systemic nature of life. It requires what Wheatley (1999) refers to as ecological thinking or systems thinking, which allows leaders and followers "to see the webs of interconnection that weave the world together and awareness that we live in relationship and are connected to everything else" (p. 158). The inquisitive practice of Franciscan leadership generates true distributive learning that is generative and shared by all. As a result, leaders and followers release their creative, life-affirming energy into the organization. Mutual and appreciative inquiry fosters wonder, curiosity, and generative thought by searching, listening, expecting, and connecting to ideas and making meaning out of them.

Contemplative: The contemplative practice of Franciscan leadership balances reflection with action in order to more meaningfully respond to and serve the needs of others and the world around us. Focused on discernment and mindful action, leaders and followers are encouraged to pray and reflect as well as to seek counsel and feedback in order to fully contemplate their call to rebuild. Renewal is a very important facet of the contemplative practice. It focuses on developing strategies that sustain the leader. By managing emotion and promoting self-care, a leader is able to engage in activities that are regenerative and

promote the overall physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Essential to this practice is a leader's ability to step out of active life and enter into solitude to promote rest and renewal.

Reconciliatory: Promoting right relationships and peace was an important element to St. Francis' leadership. The reconciliatory practice of Franciscan leadership encourages diversity of thought and opinion through reducing conflict and building relationships in non-judgmental ways. This practice focuses on strategies that promote inclusivity and build, rather than hinder relationships. The reconciliatory practice of Franciscan leadership fosters *The Early Rule's* vision of how the ministers and the other brothers are to be in relationship. "Let them behave among themselves according to what the Lord says: Do to others what you would have them do to you; and 'Do not do to another what you would not have done to you' " (IV, 4 – 5, p. 66).

Personal and Collective Transformation

Franciscan leadership fosters personal and collective transformation. Franciscan leadership develops the capacity to serve others in humble ways that promote inclusive solidarity through mutual care, respect, support, listening, shared leadership, and collective power. Franciscan leadership fosters transformation that enriches the human capacity to flourish and grow in a mutually dependent way that promotes the well-being of all creatures.

Conclusion

Franciscan leadership calls leaders to align leadership practice and influence with the values of St. Francis in order to foster the transformation of communities and organizations in the fulfillment of moral purpose. For Franciscans, the moral purpose of their leadership is rooted in a call to rebuild. Franciscans are called to create communities and organizations that foster human flourishing through a relationship of service that is life-giving and sustaining. Franciscan leadership is humble, requiring leaders to practice poverty of ego. By letting go of ego, leaders become free to focus on the people and mission of the organizations they serve. Through poverty of spirit, leadership shifts to doing what is in the best interest of the prosperity of the people and organization served—rather than what is in the best interest of the leader's personal prosperity or gain. As a result, Franciscan leadership utilizes an influence process that recognizes the dignity and goodness of each person. The goal of Franciscan leadership is to enrich the capacity and development of others while at the same time accomplishing organizational purpose and mission. In doing so, both

people and outcomes are valued in the quest to achieve organizational purpose.

In the end, Franciscan leadership is about being in relationship, interdependent, and connected with all of humanity and creation. As Margaret Wheatley (2002) aptly states: "Relationships are all there is. Everything in the universe only exits because it is in relationship to everything else. Nothing exists in isolation" (p.19). Franciscan leadership fosters shared moral purpose through a service orientation that builds community within a network of interdependent relationships. Leaders and followers humbly serve one another in ways that promote inclusive solidarity, mutual care, respect, support, listening, and shared leadership.

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The following are the standard abbreviations used to refer to the writings of Francis and other early Franciscan texts (Armstrong, Hellmann & Short, 1999).

1. The Writings of St. Francis of Assisi

Adm	Admonitions
BlL	Blessing for Brother Leo
CtC	Canticle of the Creatures
CtExh	Canticle of Exhortation
1Frg	Fragments of Worchester Manuscript
2Frg	Fragments of Thomas of Celano
3Frg	Fragments of Hugh of Digne
LtAnt	Letter to Anthony
1LtCl	First Letter to the Clergy (Earlier Edition)
2LtCl	Second Letter to the Clergy (Later Edition)
1LtCus	First Letter to the Custodians
2LtCus	Second Letter to the Custodians
1LtF	First Letter to the Faithful
2LtF	Second Letter to the Faithful
LtL	Letter to Brother Leo
LtMin	Letter to a Minister
LtOrd	Letter to the Entire Order
LtR	Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples
ExhP	Exhortation to the Praise of God
PrOF	A Prayer Inspired by the Our Father
PrsG	The Praises of God
OfP	The Office of the Passion
PrCr	The Prayer Before the Crucifix
ER	The Earlier Rule *(Regula non bullata)*
LR	The Later Rule *(Regula bullata)*
RH	A Rule for Hermitages
SalBVM	A Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
SalV	A Salutation of the Virtues

Test	The Testament
TPJ	True and Perfect Joy

2. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1C	The Life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano
2C	The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul by Thomas of Celano
3C	The Treatise on the Miracles by Thomas of Celano
LJS	The Life of Saint Francis by Julian of Speyer
VL	The Versified Life of Saint Francis by Henri d'Avranches
1-3JT	The Praises of Jacopone da Todi
1MP	The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version
2MP	The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version
ScEx	The Sacred Exchange between St. Francis and Lady Poverty
AP	The Anonymous of Perugia
L3C	Legend of the Three Companions
AC	The Assisi Compilation (also known as The Legend of Perugia)
1-4 Srm	The sermons of Bonaventure
LMj	Major Life of St. Francis by St. Bonaventure
LMn	Minor Life of St. Francis by St. Bonaventure
LFl	The Little Flowers of St. Francis
KnSF	The Knowing of St. Francis
ChrTE	The Chronicle of Thomas of Eccleston
ChrJG	The Chronicle of Jordan of Giano

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Emersion Learning at St. Bonaventure's School of Business: In Pursuit of the Franciscan Tradition

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Abstract

Franciscan colleges and universities are always searching for ways to include their heritage and values in educational courses and activities. Co-curricular experiences, which we label as *Emersion Learning,* offer a unique and effective means of providing students a Franciscan educational experience. In short, *Emersion Learning* involves a group of students engaged in a service activity with significant interaction with individuals from a different culture.

This paper first presents background information on Franciscan traditions and values that are relevant to *Emersion Learning* experiences. Three specific *Emersion Learning* experiences at St. Bonaventure University's School of Business are then presented in detail. This detail includes the nature of the service programs, the new culture, and the impact of the *Emersion Learning* experience on students.

Introduction

St. Bonaventure University (SBU), like many Catholic universities, is continuously re-examining its heritage and traditions to promote its educational mission and to provide more unique and positive educational experiences for students. In 2002 the SBU School of Business conducted a review of the mission statements of the University and the School of Business as required by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

The faculty accepted as a goal improving the Franciscan element of education offered in the School of Business. The initial step was an educational program to help faculty members to better understand what it meant to be *Franciscan.* With a better grasp of Franciscan stories and traditions, the faculty of the School of Business began a number of initiatives. Most notable were programs that evolved into what we categorize as *Emersion Learning*. In short, *Emersion Learning* engages a group of students in an intense service activity combined with significant interaction with individuals of a different (or new) culture. *Emersion Learning* experiences, which include reflection and opportunities for transformation, are a critical part of exposing students to the Franciscan tradition. Because these service events are at least a week long, students are able to experience themselves and their groups as a community serving in and learning from a larger community.

This paper first presents relevant background related to Franciscan values considered pivotal to the business education mission at SBU. Next, the paper discusses the *Emersion Learning* initiatives that have evolved in recent years at SBU. Finally, the paper describes how these experiences provide and support educational experiences rooted in Franciscan traditions and values.

Background

Franciscan Mission vs. School of Business

The challenge the School of Business faced was the potential incompatibility of Franciscan and Business Values. After all, Francis had rejected the merchant upbringing of his family to pursue a life of service. Further, classic economic theory suggests that profit (or shareholder wealth) maximization is the objective of a firm; however, Catholic Social Teaching seems to suggest an alternative values system. Smith and Till (2010) have offered a variety of strategies to integrate Catholic Social Teaching into a business classroom; for example, they offer Stakeholder Theory and Stewardship Theory as management theories largely consistent with Catholic Social Teaching.

A more basic resolution to this perceived challenge was provided by Luca Pacioli. Pacioli, a Franciscan Friar who lived in the fifteenth century, is generally considered the father of modern day accounting. Commenting on Pacioli's writings on business profits, Fischer (2000) states: "Pacioli's statement seems to indicate his belief that the existence of the profit motive should, in fact, be considered axiomatic in successful business practice" (p. 304). Further, Pacioli believed that the responsibility for charity may fall on the business person and not the business entity. "Pacioli seems to indicate his belief that those who benefit from their business success should not seek to keep all of that wealth for themselves, but rather to share through charity with those less fortunate" (Fischer, 2000, p. 306). Thus, the writings of Pacioli seem to support the accumulation of profit by a business, but also establish a sense of, to use the contemporary term, social responsibility in business persons. Certainly this philosophy would be consistent with classic economic thought and the University's mission and distinction statements. The School of Business adopted the name *Pacioli Project* to define its efforts to enhance the Franciscan element of the educational experience within the SBU School of Business.

. . . Franciscans were hands-on people, responding, providing a service, to the needs of the individuals and communities around them.

Franciscan Traditions

It was evident from the beginning of the *Pacioli Project* that faculty members needed a better understanding of Franciscan values. Approximately half of the School of Business faculty participated in either (or both) the *Building with Living Stones* program or two graduate courses on Franciscan heritage taught through the Franciscan Institute. Participation in these programs provided the understanding that Franciscan values were more of a concept, tradition, or history than a list.

The general concept learned from this educational experience was that Franciscans were *hands-on* people, responding, providing a service, to the needs of the individuals and communities around them. Franciscan work revolved around relationships at the individual and community levels. That is, service was to be provided to a community through personal interaction with the members of that community. Hence, it was obvious that service programs should play a significant role in a Franciscan values based educational experience offered and promoted by the School of Business.

The St. Bonaventure University mission statement lists the values of "discovery, community, and individual worth." The University statement of distinction lists very similar Franciscan values: "individual dignity, community inclusiveness, and service to others." From the study of the Franciscan tradition and reflection on the University mission statement, a strategy evolved for the design of Franciscan values based educational co-curricular programs. First, these programs would involve service related to, consistent with, and guided by the values of human dignity and community. And second, these programs would provide opportunity for student reflection, possibly leading to transformation; that is, discovery or growth.

Dignity of the Human Person, Service and Community

Perhaps the central Franciscan value is the dignity of the human person. Francis himself spoke to the need for the brothers to recognize the value of every person when he wrote in the early rule that "[the brothers] should be glad to live among social outcasts, among the poor and helpless, the sick and the lepers, and those who beg by the wayside" (Early Rule, Chapter IX). This rule evolved from Francis' own (*emersion*, to use our term) experiences. Certainly Celano and other writers on the life of Francis present the experience with the leper as a key transformation for Francis. This transformation freed Francis to enter into relationship with those different from himself, most notably the poor and sick. As Blastic (2007) eloquently notes:

> The leper represented the total antithesis of what it meant to be human for the commune of Assisi, which held that prosperity, power, figura, and value identified what was useful to the purpose of the commune, . . . God led Francis to the lepers and

> enabled him to see them in a different way than did the commune. He saw them now for the first time as poor, suffering human beings. (p. 21)

Blastic goes on later to suggest that this engagement with persons different than yourself allows for personal transformation. He notes that "you become yourself only if you engage others different than yourself, if you are willing to be open and vulnerable, especially with those others whom society defines as unworthy or without value"(p. 23).

A second transformational experience may be found in Francis' contact with the Sultan; writings suggest that both men were able to come to a mutual respect for one another. The willingness to open oneself to an awareness and respect of others' humanity, regardless of class, religion, and other statuses then frees oneself to engage others in new ways and develop one's self and one's learning. Hoeberichts (2009) certainly argues the influence of the Sultan and Islam on Francis, particularly with regard to Francis' understanding of humility. For Francis true Christ like humility included working with and among the marginalized (those cast aside by society).

A willingness or even desire to serve by entering into community may evolve from one's respect for another's human dignity. This call to service reflects Francis' desire to be Christ-like in every way. Smith (2007) notes that there is a clear parallel between Chapter V in Francis' Rule and Life and St. Paul's letter to the Philippians in its message to be Christ-like in one's labors. Hence, the understanding of community as a Franciscan value evolves from Francis' own awareness of the dignity of the human person and his desire to serve as Christ served. It seems clear from the early history that while the first followers of Francis often came from a similar social class as Francis, not all of his brothers were educated and well-to-do. The very fact that Francis invited his followers to come with the tools of their trade suggests differing class distinctions (backgrounds and abilities) in the early order (Early Rule Chapter VII; 3, 9).

It is through service with others and for others that we can likewise foster community. Francis would reject the traditional monastic approach to community in his day in favor of a service oriented religious life. Care of the poor and alienated of his day was the responsibility of the fraternity. Ministering together fostered a stronger sense of community, as Francis would send brothers off together to preach and serve (as is found in Chapter XIV of the Early Rule). The potential for fraternal growth in the early community is perhaps best captured in the words of Celano (1, 38) when he writes about the experience of the early followers of Francis.

> O with what ardor of charity the new disciples of Christ burned! . . . For whenever they came together anywhere, or met one another along the way, as the custom is, there a shoot of spiritual love sprang up, sprinkling over all love the seed of true

> affection. What more shall I say? Chaste embraces, gentle feelings, a holy kiss, pleasing conversation, modest laughter, joyous looks, a single eye, a submissive spirit, a peaceable tongue, a mild answer, oneness of purpose, ready obedience, unwearied hands, all these were found in them.

Co-curricular *Emersion* Activities

Prior to 2002, other than student clubs, there were no organized service based co-curricular activities associated with the School of Business. Since that time three key service based organizations have emerged: Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), and BonaResponds. In each of the past four academic years (2008–2009 to 2010–2011) over 300 students (from all majors, but approximately half business majors) were involved in 15,000–20,000 hours of value-added service projects. Over half of the students participated in *Emersion Learning* experiences which require an intense service activity, reflection, and significant interaction with persons from a different culture. The interaction with persons from a different culture, as noted by Blastic (2007), promotes personal transformation by fostering relationships with those different from oneself. Further, working within another culture allows students to see the world through the eyes of others, a unique learning perspective.

We believe that *Emersion Learning* helps students to better understand and appreciate Franciscan work as defined by Flood (2001). Flood (2001) writes that "Francis and his friends understood work as participating in producing and sharing the good things of life" (p. 25). In contrast, "Assisians understood work as a limited set of roles whereby one acquired a share of Assisi's goods and improved one's social status" (Flood, p. 25). The *Emersion Learning* experience provided the contrast of Franciscan work and work in a modern business or professional setting. Students may be better able to balance demands of professional careers if they appreciate the Franciscan elements in their work.

Motivation for Service (work)

In Spring 2003, as a pre-curser to development of Franciscan based service programs, the motivations and predispositions for freshmen business students to become involved in campus and service activities were studied (see Coate & Jakubowicz, 2010). We believed that an understanding of student predispositions would improve the success of service-based student activities and allow faculty to support students in finding their own calling.

Students participating in this study completed two surveys. The first survey listed 40 existing campus activities (professional, social, and service) and asked students to select those activities in which they were

most interested in participating. The second survey listed 25 motivations (altruistic, egotistic, religious, or social responsibility) for participating in service activities. Students were asked to indicate the strength of each motivation in determining their interest in service activity.

Professional or career based activities, such as trips to the New York or Chicago Exchanges, generated the most student interest. Service activities also drew substantial interest; specifically those involving mentoring (ex. big brothers/sisters) or helping others through good deeds (ex. blood drive). Business students showed the least interest in activities traditionally coordinated through University Ministry (ex. parish internships). As a group business students showed the strongest motivation to participate in service activities that were career based (providing a resume item or experience for a job). However, students were also motivated by social responsibility and social interactions (participating with friends or establishing new friendships and experiences).

Analyses revealed that one quarter of students were likely to become involved with traditional service programs. Another half of students were potential volunteers for broader based service programs. Combining this grouping results with the student interest results suggested that broader based programs were more likely to attract business students if they connect to the student's major, stress their function as mentoring or helping, and down-play an overt religious overtone. Finally, the analysis indicated that student programs should stress potential social aspects including fun, and/or offer a unique experience.

SIFE, VITA, and BonaResponds programs utilized the survey results (Coate & Jacabowicz, 2010) to design activities of interest to students. These programs also used *Emersion Learning* as a foundation to support the Franciscan element of education.

SIFE

SIFE is an international student program with a trademark motto "A head for business, a heart for the world." Core values include Economic Empowerment, Entrepreneurial and Global Awareness, and Building 21st Century skills (leadership, project management, team building, and conflict management). SIFE's international focus and simple motto offer a natural fit with SBU Franciscan co-curricular business programs, a combination of professional and service activity.

The SBU chapter formed in Fall 2003 and is currently, with 70-100 student members and over 10 faculty and staff from three Schools, the largest student service organization on campus. Approximately half of SIFE members are outside the School of Business, a number from the School of Education. The chapter's focus has been educational business programs at a variety of levels, predominantly K–12. Adult programs are also offered. The focus on business education and skills allows business students the chance to use their classroom expertise in a team effort on site in local and international school communities. For the past few years

the SBU chapter has ranked, based on competitive presentations of the year's work, nationally in the top 5% of participating universities.

The Flagship project of SIFE is an *Emersion Learning* experience, a 10 day Winter Break trip to the Bahamas. Each year approximately 50 SBU SIFE members and five faculty/staff members travel to serve communities on Grand Bahamas Island. Coate and Palmer (2008) have documented the evolution of this trip as a Franciscan educational experience. In recent years, SBU SIFE members have provided classroom educational service to 1800 local children, conducting after-school programs, providing multiple school computer labs and skills training, and conducting general service work projects. Reflections on the service experience are held briefly in morning planning sessions and more extensively in multiple evening sessions. Clearly, this trip meets the definition of *Emersion Learning*: a group of students providing an intense 10 day service within the environment of another culture (Bahamas).

Coate, McCue, and Palmer (2007) studied the student motivation and learning experiences of students participating in the SIFE Bahamas experience. Their research study asked students, in a pre and post survey, to rank their motivations for participating in the trip. As a pre-curser to evening reflections, held toward the beginning, the middle and end of the trip, students were also asked what they learned from and their most memorable experience of the trip.

In both the pre and post surveys students acknowledged their motivation to help others. A comparison of student motivations at the beginning of the *Emersion* experience trip with those at the end of the trip suggests that students discovered much, often about themselves. On the pre surveys, in addition to the helping motive, students gave reasons for coming on the trip that were focused on self benefit. Reasons such as resume building, having fun with friends, and free time before the semester was to begin were offered. Furthermore, when students did speak of service, they often presented service as a duty. Post surveys reflected the views of students after they had the opportunity to interact with each other and the people of the Bahamas. Not only were motivations strongly related to helping others, but also motivation became more reflective.

. . . students discovered much about themselves and developed a greater awareness of human dignity and community.

An analysis of responses led to classification of comments on two dimensions. The first dimension classified comments as *group, self, or culture*. *Group* comments related to the SBU students as a group or group member. *Self* comments related to the students as individuals. *Culture* comments related specifically to the people, customs, and geography of the Bahamas. The second dimension classified comments as *observational, interactive, or relationship/reflective*. An *observational* comment

would involve a student observing the new environment or the actions of another person. An *interactive* comment would describe an interaction with another person or culture. A *relationship (reflective)* comment would go beyond an *interactive* comment and refer to an experience that demonstrates a relationship with another person. A *reflective* comment would be a comment first classified as self, representing learning at a reflective level.

These student comments provided a wealth of data to assess the Franciscan elements of this *Emersion* experience. Further, the comments demonstrated that over the course of the ten days, students discovered much about themselves and developed a greater awareness of human dignity and community.

As the trip progressed, students' comments suggested the influence of the people of the Bahamas, both in general and personal terms. A student noted in his reflection, "We have tapped into a complete love (that) words cannot describe." Many students mentioned the impact that the children were having on them. One student noted "they're so genuine and really friendly, taking in a bunch of new people." As "new people," the SBU students were learning about the culture and traditions of the Bahamas. The Bahamians were not simply persons to be helped, but persons with whom to interact and forge relationships. Students were welcomed by the Bahamian community. In speaking of being invited to, and sharing an evening and traditional meal of conch with some of the locals, one student noted "Fabio and Chubby are my buddies now." Students came to appreciate the human dignity of those with whom they shared experiences.

The experience in the Bahamas also facilitated the formation of communal ties between students. Students spoke of going on the SIFE service trip because their friends were going. However, in the reflection setting, they described the development of relationships at a much deeper level. As one student noted, "Looking back on all the new friendships I have made, I am so grateful for this experience." The bonds forged appeared stronger than casual friendships. Reflection statements suggested fraternal ties. As one student noted, "I learned more about everyone here that came on the trip who became my family." This idea of family suggests that students were able to move to a deeper level of relationship with their peers through their experience of service and group efforts. Furthermore, comments suggest the development of an awareness and understanding of self, a discovery or transformation facilitated by the emersion experience.

A student noted, "People are generally good and want to help others." For some students, the discovery was more personal, and even more profound. A student cited in her reflection, "There are many questions to be answered in my life and the way to figure them out is talking face to face when I get home." Students clearly found through this *Emersion* experience a willingness to self-reflect and make insightful decisions about how

they could grow in life. Perhaps the most profound statement made by a student was "I learned that two distinct groups of people from different backgrounds can come together and be a community." The Bahamas experience of SIFE has afforded students the opportunity to grow in a Franciscan fraternal manner in a way that a classroom experience does not offer.

VITA and Financial Literacy

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) is a national program initiated by the IRS in 1970. New York State began a partner program in 2003. The mission of the program is to provide free taxpayer assistance to low-income taxpayers. The SBU program began in Spring 2004 serving the working poor of Cattaraugus County, a county with a total population near 80,000 and an average household income below $40,000. In its first four years (2004–2007) the SBU VITA program prepared over 600 returns (150 per year) and generated over $1,000,000 for clients. The SBU program is staffed by SBU students supervised by SBU faculty. A student perspective on this program has been published in *The CPA Journal* (Doyle, Matt, & Owens, 2005).

In the last four years (2008–2011), SBU VITA partnered with the United Way and the Cattaraugus County Department of Social Services to procure a retail and professional site in the local mall. With funding procured by partners, student volunteers designed a VITA marketing plan that included radio and print advertisements. The site was open approximately 50 hours a week for 10 weeks. These initiatives resulted in an increase in average yearly total refunds procured from approximately $250,000 to over $750,000 and an increase in average households served from approximately 150 to over 500. Potentially more important to the Franciscan mission, the mall site provided the opportunity to offer tax services to clients in a professional atmosphere rather than a social services office. The impact of such a student program to a community is discussed by Fischer et al (2009) in the article "Volunteer Income Tax Assistance: Community Impact."

VITA offers student volunteers a unique educational opportunity to use their specialized technical accounting skills (or in Francis's words the "tools of the trade") to benefit local community members. Initial motivation of students is often professional experience. VITA also offers students a client type relationship with those they serve; such a relationship is the cornerstone of the Franciscan experience for students. By treating clients (the working poor) in a professional manner at a professional location, students are reminded of and enabled to support each individual's human dignity. Further, while preparing returns and working with clients (serving those without power, no understanding of tax law, procedures, etc.), students come to a greater appreciation for the challenges of living in a different socio-economic-status from their own. This, in itself, is a cultural shift for many.

In learning journals and reflective papers, students spoke of interacting with persons in the wider community; they also described how good it felt to be able to help people in the community. Students recognized their professional responsibility. A number of students' comments were very critical of their "client's" prior (paid) tax preparers; students felt that those persons had taken advantage of their clients. Students also created stronger bonds with one another. Several students discussed the many ways that other volunteers assisted them and the comradeship they shared with peers. Relationships were formed or strengthened through working together in the VITA program.

As mentioned, the primary mission of VITA is to provide free taxpayer assistance to low-income taxpayers. A goal of the program is to establish a client-type relationship between the student and those whom they serve. Student responses suggest that they were able to develop this relationship during their VITA experience. Every student, in addressing their experience, spoke of those they helped as "clients." This is clearly seen in the comment of one student who noted,

> I have been able to see how I am able to implement the Franciscan values that I have been taught throughout my time attending St. Bonaventure University. Through my ability to understand the accounting and tax system, I am able to help those who do not understand this process that is part of their lives. Many of the VITA clients are very low income families who are barely making ends meet. By me helping them with their tax returns I am able to give them my expertise to make it as easy as possible for them. I am also more importantly able to inform them of ways to improve their tax returns to give them the best possible outcome based on their financial situation.

The final two sentences of her journal citation could be meant for a Fortune 500 client as much as those served by VITA. The "client" emphasis of the SBU VITA program is included to provide an atmosphere of both professionalism and respect for human dignity. Many student comments, including the one above, suggest that students internalized the "client" focus and recognized the self-worth of all persons who engaged in the VITA program.

Finally, through this program students were able to discover the connection between what they were learning in the classroom and its application in the world outside of the classroom. As one student stated, "This type of education cannot be taught by lecture or in the traditional form. This must be learned by participation and experience." Most students spoke of desiring to continue in the VITA program through their fifth year graduate program and one even suggested that he hoped to find a VITA program in the area where he was accepting a job after graduation in order to continue volunteering his expertise in the field.

Anders, Coate, and O'Neill (2011) continue to study the impact of the VITA program on students. Specifically, they are studying student motivations to volunteer using the Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI) (Clary et al, 1998). The hope is that data will document the VITA experience as transformational relative to the six motivational functions of the VFI.

BonaResponds

BonaResponds is a service group guided by a simple purpose or mission "Help others through volunteering." BonaResponds was formed in 2005 in the wake of Hurricane Katrina when a small group of students led by a single faculty member spent Fall Break, 2005 volunteering on the Gulf Coast. From its inception the focus of BonaResponds has been responding to disasters, helping those unexpectedly in need. Because of the nature of disaster recovery, BonaResponds normally helps those who are least able to help themselves because of financial or physical limitations. Each year BonaResponds' volunteers have engaged in thousands of service hours both locally and nationally.

A unique characteristic of BonaResponds is its invitation to the community beyond St. Bonaventure to participate in the service projects.

BonaResponds sponsors a variety of service activities on a routine and non routine basis. Each semester BonaResponds sponsors a community service weekend with approximately 100 participants. More recently BonaResponds has held trips to Franciscan parishes in Camden, NJ and Greenville, SC. Each Winter and Spring break, BonaResponds sponsors an *Emersion* trip with 25–50 student participants. Students originally traveled to the Gulf Coast, but other destinations have included Enterprise, AL, Bucyrus, OH, and Gassville, AR; more recent destinations included Tuscaloosa, AL and Springfield, MA. In addition, BonaResponds continuously provides local support in response to routine community needs such as building home wheelchair ramps, as well as unexpected events such as winter storms or fire damage. Because these activities are varied, students may volunteer for an experience as little as three hours or as intense as an eight to ten day service trip. A number of students may work in continuous roles planning, organizing, and leading activities.

A unique characteristic of BonaResponds is its invitation to the community beyond St. Bonaventure to participate in the service projects. This characteristic expands student ideas of community. Students have worked alongside older people and often people of different socio-economic backgrounds. Thereby, students grow in respect for people different from themselves and become more aware of the dignity of others.

No effort better exemplifies BonaResponds than the alternative Spring Break in March 2006 (*Emersion Learning*). School of Business faculty led approximately 200 students and another 80 staff, alumni, and community

members on a Katrina related *Emersion Learning* trip. Groups of 30–80 students traveled to five different sites on the Gulf Coast. The trip also provided the opportunity to explore and better understand the *Emersion Learning* experience of students. Specifically, Blake and Coate (2006) studied motivation for participating, memorable experiences, and development of friendships and social interactions of students on the *Emersion* trip. Students were asked to respond in a discussion format to open ended questions relating to these topics.

The primary reason students offered for participating in the Katrina Relief effort was altruistic, a desire to help others. Service was mentioned by a majority of students; comments such as "to help the people of a devastated region in great need" and "I had seen documentaries on it so I saw the need for my participation" were common. Helping was not the only reason mentioned for volunteering for the trip. A number of students mentioned the value of an experience, such as "seeing the destruction first hand." Other students mentioned social reasons as motivation for going to the Gulf Coast, such as "because my friends were going." This desire to engage in service with friends is very important to the value of community. We note the parallel to our earlier statement of the role of fraternity and community at the beginning of the Franciscan movement. In fact, students cited friendships made during the trip as a most significant component of the experience; this included the friendships made with fellow St. Bonaventure students. One student's comment reflects the quote from Celano on the power of coming together in fraternity (1 Celano 38); this student noted when asked about contact with other Bonaventure students following the trip

Community rose from the ability to serve others and to see their human worth.

> I have had contact with so many of them . . . Every time I see someone from our site we go crazy and we throw high fives, hug, start talking very loudly and excitedly. We made such good friendships that it doesn't matter what group of friends you went down with or who you knew before hand. Everyone talks to everyone now.

Perhaps even more importantly in terms of transformation, were the relationships that students developed with people they assisted. When asked to share her most memorable experience of the trip, one student responded, "When an older gentleman, Mr. Williams, was searching through the muck for his wife's wedding ring. He was 68 years old and in the house working right alongside of us. He was just an incredible man." Some students spoke of the creation of friendships with some of the victims of the hurricane devastation. When students spoke of their desire to participate in this *Emersion Learning* experience, some of their

comments, while no doubt well intentioned, did speak of service as self-gratifying. Students, often, were speaking of going to help "these people" in their crisis much in the same way that Francis may have initially seen the lepers of his day as "those people" in crisis. Interview statements upon returning (such as the comment about Mr. Williams) showed that students had moved into a personal relationship with those whom they initially perceived as objects of their service. Those served changed from victims to human beings with whom the students could enter into relationship. The students came to see the human dignity of the people of the Gulf Coast. This is an important realization whenever engaging in service to and with others. Community rose from the ability to serve others and to see their human worth. And for many of our students, that was the greatest reward of this experience.

Summary

This paper presents the evolution of three co-curricular student organizations and documents their influence on the Franciscan element of business education at SBU. These organizations (SIFE, VITA, and BonaResponds) arose from faculty efforts to fuse Franciscan values into the learning environment in the Business School. The focus of our paper has been the *Emersion Learning* experiences of these organizations. We define *Emersion Learning* to occur when an intense service activity coupled with reflection takes place within the context of a culture different from the culture in which the students normally live. The goal is to create an environment to allow students a transformational experience.

By design *Emersion Learning* experiences support education driven by Franciscan values; at SBU these values are defined as service, human dignity, community, and discovery. Service is a value central to Franciscan mission and is the foundation of any *Emersion Learning* experience. The values of human dignity and community are addressed by the requirement that *Emersion Learning* take place in another culture. For SIFE the culture change is largely geographic (the Bahamas); the VITA cultural change is socio-economic because VITA clients are the working poor; and for BonaResponds the culture change is both geographic and environmental (such as the Gulf Coast following a disaster). The values of human dignity and community are understood by students because of the one on one relationships the students develop. Relationships develop between students and those served, as well as between the students and other members of the service group. As students reflect, learn and discover, we believe there may be a transformational process. Students may reassess their roles and responsibilities in a larger society. Because of *Emersion* experiences students are able to see society as a collection of unique human individuals and respect each individual's dignity.

Our paper documents considerable efforts to incorporate Franciscan Traditions into co-curricular *Emersion Learning* experiences at SBU.

Further, we reference literature that attempts to document and measure our success; clearly, there is evidence to support a causal link between *Emersion Learning* and transformative experience. We believe that we have also documented support that some of our students progressed toward the notion of *solidarity* as defined by Horan (2011) " . . . reconsidering one's stance in the world" (p. 60).

We lack concrete data to support a hypothesis that transformative experiences influenced our students beyond a particular *Emersion Learning* experience. This is a common shortfall of the Franciscan educational literature. To date, most of the research on Franciscan education offers an intellectual framework or a descriptive account of a curricular or co-curricular experience. Very little research measures outcomes. Future researchers need to investigate the impact on students' learning processes within Franciscan education. This research needs to consider the impact over multiple years and to determine if and how students transfer Franciscan values into their professional careers.

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Among Shadows Forever Nameless: Mother Marianne and the Lepers of Molokai

ROBERT McPARLAND, PH.D.

On May 20, 1889, Robert Louis Stevenson reflected upon the ministry of the Franciscan sisters to a settlement of lepers in the Hawaiian Islands:

> To see the infinite pity of this place,
> The mangled limb, the devastated face,
> The innocent sufferers smiling at the rod,
> A fool were tempted to deny his God.
>
> He sees and shrinks; but if he look again
> Lo, beauty springing from the breast of pain!
> He marks the sisters on the painful shores
> And even a fool is silent and adores. (CP 266)

Those sisters who served in Hawaii are remembered today at La Maddelena, in the valley below Assisi, where a small stone chapel stands within thirty yards of the residence of a community of Franciscan sisters. In the time of St. Francis, this landscape was the home of the lepers. When we pilgrims to Assisi arrived, it was bathed in October light, silent and inconspicuous beneath the hilltop city, in fields of grass and hay and olive vine. One week after the feast of St. Francis, several of us from Franciscan colleges were visiting this valley of the lepers. There someone placed a small card in my hand. I turned it over. Mother Marianne Cope of Molokai, it said. Mother Marianne, a Franciscan sister who worked with the lepers of the Sandwich Islands, later known as Hawaii, is honored by a small altar and a rough wooden cross in a garden area near that simple chapel.

Mother Marianne, it seems, was a woman destined to cross great oceans. Born Barbara Koob, she emigrated, as an infant, from Germany with her family and arrived in Utica, New York in 1839. As a young woman, she went to Syracuse in 1862 and was professed as a religious the next year. Sister Marianne's devotion to St. Francis of Assisi led her to care for the sick in the first public hospital in that city, St. Joseph's, where the sisters served a growing immigrant population. Syracuse, in 1868, was hardly a metropolis. A few months before St. Joseph's Hospital opened for business, Charles Dickens, visiting Syracuse, had offered his impressions of the town: "I am here in the most wonderful out of the world place, which looks as if it had begun to be built yesterday" (12:67). Indeed, the hospital had been built almost yesterday when, in 1870, Sister Marianne became a nurse-administrator at St. Joseph's. She was named Second Provincial Mother of the Syracuse Franciscans in 1877. Six years later, in 1883, a letter arrived from a priest in Hawaii with a plea for assistance.

Mother Marianne accepted the challenge. She chose to minister to leprosy patients in Hawaii, although some people questioned why she would want to go to such a far off place. Some two decades earlier, the government of the Sandwich Islands, fearing contagion, had created a leper colony at Molokai. Father Damien de Veuster had been working there for several years. Although Mother Marianne did not expect to stay there long when she brought her team of Franciscan caregivers to the island, she stayed there for the rest of her life.

The individual persons with leprosy whom Mother Marianne Cope encountered in Hawaii are not remembered by name. Yet, they form a part of a human history that is worthy of reflection. On Monday, October 22, 1883, Mother Marianne was joined by sisters from St. Anthony's Convent: Sr. M. Crescentia Eilers, Sr. M. Renata Nash, Sr. M. Rosalia McLaughlin, Sr. M. Ludovina Gibbons, Sr. Antonella Murphy, Sr. Bonaventure Caraher, and Miss Catherine Caraher, Sr. Bonaventure's cousin. Mother Marianne would later call them "the first brave soldiers to go to that land" (blessedmarianne cope.org). They traveled by train from Syracuse to Buffalo, carrying wicker baskets filled with peaches, bread, and roast chicken. Mother Marianne, discovering that she'd forgotten her purse, returned to the convent and she later rejoined the sisters in Chicago. From there, the sisters took another train, arriving October 27 in Oakland, California. A ferry brought them to San Francisco, where they stayed in local convents until November 1. The journey to Hawaii on the *Mariposa* took six days, twenty-two hours, arriving on November 8, 1883.

Far from home, in the South Pacific, the sisters began work at Kakaako, at a branch hospital. Later they worked at the Kaliki Receiving Station and, in 1884, they started the Mauiani Hospital and the St. Anthony School for Girls on Maui. By early 1885, Mother Marianne reaffirmed her decision to stay on the island. That year, King Kalakaua of Hawaii presented her with a testimonial: the Royal Medal of Kapiolani for humanitarian service. Four new sisters arrived from Syracuse: Sr. M. Benedicta Rodenmacher, Sr. M. Placida Tierney, Sr. M. Carolina Hoffman, and Sr. M. Leopoldina Burns. Their mission was about to change. By November 1888, they would be going to live in the leper colony at Kalaupapa, Molokoi.

The Leper Colony: A History

When the sisters arrived en force in 1888, the leper colony was a place of despair. Yet, the American writer Mark Twain, visiting years earlier on behalf of a West Coast newspaper, had observed that, in the midst of sorrow and death, the lepers practiced a curious custom: The lepers sang.

> Would you expect to find in that awful leper settlement a custom worthy of transplanting to your own country? When death sets open the prison door of life there the band salutes the very soul with a burst of golden music. (Anderson 16)

Mark Twain had arrived in the future Hawaii on the steamer *Ajax* on March 18, 1866, seventeen years before the Franciscan sisters. This was before his first book. After writing twenty-five letters for the Sacramento *Union,* he included comments on the Sandwich Islands in lectures and then in his first book, *The Innocents Abroad.* At Molokai, America's comic genius encountered one of the saddest of places and for him it was clearly unforgettable.

Twain describes the funeral singing of leper women: "They locked arms and swayed violently backward and forward; faced around and went through a number of quick gestures . . . turned and twisted and mingled together—heads and hands going all the time, and their motions timed to a weird howling which it would be rather complimentary to call singing" (June 30, 1866) (Letters I: 186). "Some of the voices were very rich and sweet, the harmony was excellent and the time was perfect. Every now and then while the choir sang [. . .] old-time natives scattered through the crowd would suddenly break out into a wild heartbroken wail that would almost startle one's pulse into stillness."(Ibid)[1]

At the turn of the century, a pamphlet described Molokai: "One third of the island is a barren waste [. . .] On the north coast, on a peninsula surrounded on three sides by the ocean and on the fourth by a high precipice, is the leper settlement, to which all persons afflicted with this disease are banished. Here two small villages are inhabited by lepers" (Schnook 24).

Some have speculated that leprosy arrived in the Sandwich Islands via whaling ships in the early 1800s. A smallpox epidemic in the 1850s frightened the islanders. This led to deep concern about the spread of disease. In the 1850s, leprosy was seen as cataclysmic. It was the greatest of public health threats. Fr. Damien De Veuster sailed across the Pacific and settled in the colony in 1868.[2]

The lepers were isolated. There lay Molokai "on a triangle of level land, at the foot of a precipice three thousand feet high that effectively guards the patients from the landward slide" (Anderson 105). Mark Twain writes of "The loathsome and lingering death" (Letters I: 84).[3] Robert Louis Stevenson, who visited later, echoed the phrase, "*A ole kanawai ma keia wahi* (In this place there is no law)" (*Travels* 55).

Leprosy had long been on the Sandwich Islands not only a fearful disease, but also a means by which people had been cast off. A story is told that Sheriff Treadway attempted to get rid of his alcoholic wife by claiming that she had the disease of leprosy. He made a report to the Board of Health on March 5, 1866 and summoned Dr. David Lee to examine his wife. Dr. Lee reported that she was "sobbing fearfully." However, his report indicated that this woman did not have leprosy at all. Rather, she was a victim of domestic abuse. "[S]he was a heavy *awa* drinker, had vertigo, and 'is of corpulent dropsical habit' but she did not have leprosy" (Tayman 57). The physician also stated that this woman was swollen in her face where her husband had "cuffed" her. In Dr. Lee's view, Sheriff Treadway had made

use of threats to put her in the leper colony, so that he could manage her behavior (Tayman 57). Mark Twain later noted the similarity of the symptoms of an *awa* drinker and leprosy: "It turns a man's skin to white fish scales that are so tough a dog might bite him and he would not know it till he read about it in the papers" (*Twain-Howells Letters* 496).

While he was at times critical of religious practices, Twain saw authenticity in the French mission in Hawaii. "The French Roman Catholic Mission here, under the Right Reverend Bishop Maigret, goes along quietly and unostentatiously; and its affairs are conducted with a wisdom which betrays the presence of a leader of distinguished ability. The Catholic clergy are honest, straightforward, frank, and open; they are industrious and devoted to their religion and their work" (*Sandwich Islands* 121).

It was a sad place to which the people who had contracted leprosy were taken. Twain was quite familiar with the story of one of them: William Ragsdale, a lawyer and son of an American plantation owner, who had become a leper. Mark Twain had once considered Ragsdale as a possible subject for a novel. Isabella Bird, a 42 year old woman with chronic back pain and depression, who arrived at Molokai on the *Kilauea*, bound between Hilo and Honolulu, told the story of Ragsdale. One evening, the lawyer lit an oil lamp as he pored over his law books. He was startled and his hand tipped the lamp. The hot oil burned his skin, but he did not feel anything. That was when he recognized that he had leprosy. "I therefore surrender myself to you," he told the island authorities. Ragsdale was marked as patient 1008. At the pier, "ten persons with leprosy" were being rowed to the ship. Isabella Bird, an observer, wrote: "The relations of those who have been taken from Hilo are still howling on the beach" (Tayman 100-01).[4]

Not long after Mark Twain's visit, in 1873, in reciprocity with U.S. Treaty, there was the cessation of Pearl Harbor and Pearl River for a U.S. naval base. That year, in *South Sea Idylls* (1873), Charles Warren Stoddard wrote, "I heard of an opportunity to visit Molokai—an island seldom visited by the tourist—where, perhaps, I could get a close view of a singularly sad and interesting colony of lepers." He added, "The whole island is green, but lonely" (Stoddard 119). A poet, Samuel L. Simpson, in 1874 described Molokai this way:

> An island at anchor in blue boundless seas
> Is ever more haunting my soul like a dream . . .

In the third verse of his poem, the leper colony appears:

> An empire of death! O, world has not known
> In all its great story of trouble and wrong,
> Another like Molokai, drear and alone
> Where Pluto, the hope-slayer, sits on his throne

Readers in 1874 are given sympathetic images of lepers:

> They buy not, they sell not—the joy and the care
> Of living and toiling are theirs nevermore
> But lonesome and weary, and calm with despair
> They sing their strange songs and sit braiding their hair
> Till day has gone down (256-57)

In 1875, Charles Nordoff described the steamer *Kilauea* that took him from Honolulu "one evening at half past five o'clock" and deposited him and his fellow passengers in a whale boat "near a point on the lee side of Molokai." He writes: "Here we landed, and presently mounted horses and rode seven or eight miles to the house of a German, Mr. Meyer, who is the superintendant of the leper settlement, and also, I believe, of a cattle farm" (Nordoff 99). The suggestion of the herding of human beings is arresting. Nordoff says that they rode to the top of the precipice overlooking the leper colony and they looked down. (Perhaps this is indicative of looking "down" upon an objectified other from a safe distance.) He informs his American readers: "Leprosy, when it is beyond its very earliest stages, is held to be incurable. He who is sent to Molokai is therefore adjudged civilly dead" (101). He tells his readers that the late king was thought to have had the disease, so exemptions have been granted. "You must understand that the native people have no fear of the disease"(101). However, this was written in 1875. A leper received a house, three pounds of paiai or unmixed poi, three pounds of salt salmon or the five pounds of beef that was often preferred. "There are two churches in the settlement, one Protestant, with a native pastor, and one Catholic, with a white priest, a young Frenchman, who has the courage to devote himself to his co-religionists" (102). Nordoff's article is reflective of the detachment of early social science. He provides no personal stories of the lepers. Rather, he offers statistics: "Since January 1865, when the first leper was sent here, 1,180 have been received (758 male, 422 female)." He says that there are "about fifty" leper children (102-03).

. . . the Franciscan sisters' attention to persons with leprosy was interpersonal and caring.

An Interpersonal and Caring Ministry

In contrast, the Franciscan sisters' attention to persons with leprosy was interpersonal and caring. Robert Louis Stevenson observes this in an account of the sisters and the lepers that is also highly personal. Stevenson's visit to Molokai is an interesting case because he had direct contact with the Franciscan sisters who assisted the lepers. The writer was chronically fatigued with an illness that has sometimes been considered tuberculosis. Stevenson arrived in Honolulu in December 1888,

the year after the islands gained a new constitution. He stayed in the Sandwich Islands for six months, completing *The Master of Ballantrae* and *The Wrong Box*. Stevenson's friend, Sidney Colvin, pointed out that he was "profoundly impressed" by "the leper settlement at Molokai, the scene of Father Damien's ministrations and death" (Stevenson *Letters* 73).[5]

On May 22, 1889, Stevenson arrived on Molokai on a boat with some Franciscan sisters and several lepers. "I do not know how it would have been with me had the sisters not been there," he wrote. "My horror of the horrible is about my weakest point; but the moral loveliness at my elbow blotted all else out; and when I found that one of them was crying, poor soul, quietly under her veil, I cried a little myself" (*Letters* 148). He writes: "Presently we came up with the leper promontory: lowland, quite bare and bleak and harsh, a little town of wooden houses, two churches, a landing stair, all unsightly, sour, northerly, lying athwart the sunrise, with the great wall of the *pali* cutting the world out on the south" (*Letters* 147-48).

On the shore were "hundreds of pantomime masks [. . .] waiting to receive the sisters" (*Letters* 148). He decided not to wear gloves, but also not to shake hands with the lepers. "All horror was gone from me: to see these dread creatures smile and look happy was beautiful" (148). He said hello to many of them and met a woman who thought he was "the new white patient"; "and when she found I was only a visitor, a curious change came in her face and voice—the only sad thing, morally sad, I mean—that I met that morning" (*Letters* 149).

Stevenson writes that he experienced a sense of "crushing fatigue" that he believes "was moral and a measure of my cowardice" (*Letters* 150). To Sidney Colvin he writes that the experience was a "tear of the nerves" (*Letters* 153). In May 1889, he appears to have recognized in this encounter his own mortality, the pattern of illness that had long beset him (*Letters* 185).

To his friend Sidney Colvin, he wrote: "I am just home after twelve days' journey to Molokai, seven of them at the leper settlement, where I can only say that the sight of so much courage, cheerfulness, and devotion strung me too high to mind the infinite pity and horror of the sights" (Letters 151). He called the sisters' home a "miracle of neatness." There on the lawn, the rail thin, lanky Stevenson, played a game of croquet with seven leper girls. (It was "90 degrees in the shade," he wrote.)

We can clearly see the humanness in each of the leper girls, as Stevenson describes them. "The girls have dolls and love dressing them. You who know so many ladies delicately clad, and they who know so many dressmakers, please make it known it would be an acceptable gift to send scraps for doll dressmaking to the Reverend Sister Maryanne, Bishop Home, Kalaupapa, Molokai, Hawaiian Islands" (*Letters* 152).[6] Stevenson wrote, "I have seen sights that cannot be told. And heard stories that cannot be repeated: yet I never admired a poor race so much, nor (strange as it may seem) loved life more than in the settlement" (*Letters* 152).

The sisters' example stayed with the writer. Apparently, Stevenson's experience there was later helpful to islanders in the South Pacific. In Samoa, on Penryn, Fanny Stevenson wrote on December 13, 1890: "leprosy has broken out with great virulence." She observes that her husband met with Seumana, one of the kings, and that "Louis had a very serious talk with him on the subject of leprosy" (*Our Samoan Adventure* 55).

A College Reflects Upon St. Francis and the Leper

In the valley below Assisi, an aging Franciscan sister closes a screen door. We visitors from the Franciscan colleges in America have long since gone home. The simple cross over the small altar piece that recalls Mother Marianne remains there, under the trees. Centuries have passed through the medieval city of Assisi. It stands high over the winding roads that lead up the mountain. For the visitor, it has become a photograph taken from the fields. Yet, as one among us noted, imagine the leper, separated, shattered by disease, looking back from the valley at all he or she had ever cherished as home. The lepers of Molokai, a world away, were similarly set apart, destined to live beneath a sheer cliff on a coastline surrounded by the sea.

It is through an extension of care and hospitality to those lepers that the sisters of Molokai stand as a reminder for us. The story of St. Francis and the leper and the story of Mother Marianne of Molokai recall to us the value of hospitality that we can practice in our college settings. This includes making a space for the needy student, the lonely Freshman, the uncertain outsider. As Fr. John Celichowski, O.F.M. said in his homily for the dedication of the Rose Marie Khoo Franciscan International Foundation: "At the core of the Franciscan revolution was the idea that, in the person of St. Francis and his brothers, the church not only met the leper at the periphery of society but brought him into the center, accompanying him along the journey" (357).

A faculty and staff retreat like ours might also have highlighted the disturbing fact that people in our world are still creating social "lepers."

Recently, at our college, our little group that had traveled to Assisi recalled the chapel La Maddelena, that place of the lepers. We were asked, faculty and staff, to think about St. Francis and the leper. Our attention was directed toward St. Francis's momentous encounter with the leper, a contact that was transformative. It was fairly easy to point out that there were no physical lepers among us. It was also easy to look around and to affirm that we at the college do not treat each other in a dismissive fashion as untouchables. In fact, people tend to appreciate and like each other and there is a good deal of mutual respect among faculty, staff, and administrators. In this sense, perhaps we are blessed. Even so, our college-wide "retreat" day, called for some reflection upon those more

inhospitable occasions in a lifetime in which one is rejected or "othered," as a leper might be. As Raul Manselli has pointed out: one may see oneself in St. Francis's "realization of the existential fact of the human condition as common to each person and that over each person loomed the possibility of an identical fate [. . .] any of us could be that leper" (44).

A faculty and staff retreat like ours might also have highlighted the disturbing fact that people in our world are still creating social "lepers." Obviously leprosy, Hansen's disease, is a medical condition, a health matter. However, symbolically, the leper might suggest the Jungian shadow, unresolved within oneself, transferred upon a construction of the other. Rene Girard speaks of scapegoating as violence. Examples of the construction of a despised class abound in modern history: South African apartheid, racial conflict in the American South, tribal warfare in Rwanda or Somalia. Fearful and vindictive, the Nazis made "lepers" of the Jews, casting the world in racial categories, placing people in ghettos behind walls. The leper is the outcast—the one ignored in the conversation. She is the lone-ranger, isolated, the challenged individual, seated in some corner alone. Sensitivity to the dispossessed of today, as Fr. Seamus Mulholland has pointed out, is "exactly the same as the encounter Francis has with the lepers" ("Excluded," jpic). The leper is the untouchable. He is the man with AIDS: rail thin, eyes gazing, hand holding the hand of a partner, slowly dying. As Bishop Michael Paschal Rowland, O.F.M. has commented "AIDS is the new leprosy"[7] (3). Yet, anyone dismissed and sent to the valley is the leper.

Francis Bernadone was perhaps well-prepared by experience for his encounter with the leper. In the time of St. Francis, conflict between the aristocratic class and the rising middle class erupted into armed fighting. Assisi and Perugia went to war, as many *maiores* (aristocrats) crossed the valley, fleeing to Perugia. Francis was captured in the fighting and was held as a prisoner of war for nearly a year, until his family could arrange to provide ransom. The violence of war had become part of Francis's experience; so too had disease and sickness. Francis was stripped to bare vulnerability. Here, as Kyle E. Haden, O.F.M., points out, in moral and physical suffering, "a seed was planted in Francis for future action towards others who suffer" (34).

St. Francis's encounter with the leper engaged him in a moment of transformation. In this "the brilliant cavalier had become a poor beggar," writes Paul Sabatier (18). Shaken to his foundations, a heart of compassion opened within him. As Fr. Haden says, "Francis's recognition of the leper's dignity was an indictment on his community's attitudes and behaviors towards those who did not fit into the neat categories of acceptability. His embracing the leper was a systematic act of re-invitation to human society" (31-32). St. Francis overcame "separation among human beings due to birth, accident, and location." Through these acts, as Fr. Haden observes, he made it clear that marginalization was unacceptable because every individual possessed human dignity (32).

Even so, the leper's name is lost to history. While he is significant in Franciscan tradition, this person, like most common figures in human history, remains anonymous. Our attention goes to St. Francis, hero of the story, more than to the heroic individual through whom God acted, a person whose illness and nondescript appearance challenged and contributed to the making of a saint. Thomas of Celano writes: "when he looked around he could see the leper no longer." Paul Sabatier writes: "Encouraged by his sojourn among the lepers he returned to S. Damian and went to work filled with joy and ardor" (18). Perhaps, one might say this leper was the presence of Christ. Even so, concretely, humanly, personally: who was the leper?

Francis, in his encounter with the leper, exemplifies the strength of faith to stand in this encounter that it might be shaped creatively.

St. Francis's movement toward solidarity with the lepers was hard-earned. Francis feared annihilation—an unknown most of us fear. As T.S. Eliot once wrote in "Burnt Norton" in *Four Quartets*, "Human kind cannot bear very much reality." Or, as Paul Tillich once wrote in *The Courage to Be*, one must take anxiety upon oneself to live creatively. A great work of art or action, he believed, involves an encounter with non-being. Francis, in his encounter with the leper, exemplifies the strength of faith to stand in this encounter that it might be shaped creatively. St. Francis facing the finite was engaged in a movement toward the infinite. Trusting in grace, he made a leap of faith. In vulnerability, this is *ecstasis*: a standing outside oneself. It is an act of courage, the will to be forgiving that heals the breach and the break. To use Tillich's terms, St. Francis leaped into life, in a dynamic movement of negating non-being. He welcomed in the abandoned. In facing death, the outcast, and the fearful, St. Francis affirmed life. He affirmed the dignity in the other person—the enemy, the ostracized other. In such an embrace our arguments dissolve; the fierce dialectic of opposites becomes dialogue, reconciliation, and restoration. Here the fractured world meets in logos, the new being in Christ.

To encounter the leper challenges us with finitude, with anxiety, with negation. It is a call to us to see each person as made in the image and likeness of God. For St. Francis, this meeting was a form of sacramental encounter. The leper appeared as God's self-othering in human selves. This is the *via negativa*. It is a moment of facing shadows, depths, fissures, a moment of kenosis. For St. Francis, this was a graced moment of emergent creativity. In an embrace that overcame estrangement, Francis crossed a boundary. Francis became a receptacle of God, a living work of art. In the midst of this brokenness, he became authentic and whole.

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NOTES

1. Writing of funeral rites for the death of the princess, Mark Twain observed: "a multitude of common natives howl and wail, and weep and chant the dreary funeral songs of ancient Hawaii, and dance the strange dance for the dead" (*Letters from Sandwich Islands* 99).
2. Fr. Damien arrived in Hawaii the same year as the eruption of Mauna Loa, 14,000 feet high, on the island of Hawaii. Mauna Loa's height is recorded by Mark Twain in *Roughing It* (237). The description of the funeral for the princess is here also (229-30). Twain visited the Kilauea volcano and wrote about it in an article that appeared in the *Sacramento Union*, November 17, 1866 (*Letters from Sandwich Islands* 206-213).
3. Twain recollects this in letters to William Dean Howells and to Mrs. Mary Fairbanks, January 24 and January 30, 1884. (*Twain Letters at Bancroft Library*, University of California-Berkeley.)
4. Mark Twain wrote of William Ragsdale in his letter to the *Sacramento Union* on May 23, 1866, published June 23 (See p. 85 *Letters from Sandwich Islands*). He began his novel on Ragsdale in 1884 (MTNJ 104) and learned later that he had suffered a "loathsome and lingering death" as a leper (*Following the Equator* 63, *Complete Interviews* 34 n.5, A. Grove Day *Letters from Hawaii*, 110-111). See Mark Twain's *Notebooks and Journals* ed. Frederick Anderson, et. al. Berkeley: University of California, 1975, 1:104. Twain visited Hawaii again in 1895.
5. Fr. Damien De Veuster had died of Hansen's disease (leprosy) April 15, 1889, shortly before Stevenson arrived at Molokai. It can be noted that Robert Louis Stevenson, born into the Scottish Calvinist tradition, was no fan of Catholicism but he greatly admired the work of the sisters on Molokai. Stevenson sees in Father Damien "A man, with all the grime and paltriness of mankind, but a saint and Hero all the more for that" (152-53). Fred Dutcher of the *Syracuse Post Standard*, on August 18, 1918, concluded that Mother Marianne was destined for sainthood also. He wrote: "When the roll of the saints is called, Mother Marianne will be there."
6. In the *Utica Reporter* in 1941, Sr. M. Magdalene, a nurse to Mother Marianne in her final years, recalled these gifts to the girls: "It was Mother Marianne who brought the girls hair ribbons and pretty things to wear, dresses and scarves [. . .] She interested the women in color harmony."
7. "The image of St. Francis embracing the leper impressed me, and that image has stayed with me," said Bishop Michael Paschal Rowland, O.F.M. of his decision to enter the Franciscan order. When he served in Sub-Saharan Africa and met Friars running a leprosarium in Guinea-Bissau he thought of staying there but went on to other aspects of his ministry.

Neoplatonism and Nature in the *Canticle of Creatures*

LANCE B. RICHEY, PH.D.

In 1967, Lynn White, Jr. proposed St. Francis as a model for Christians seeking to rediscover the goodness of the created order within a tradition that, due in no small part to its neoplatonic sources, has too often devalued it (White, 1967). This judgment was vindicated in 1979 by Pope John Paul II, who declared Francis the Patron Saint of Ecology (Pope John Paul II, 1979). Since then, much has been written exploring the contributions Francis' spirituality of nature can make to modern environmentalism (Richey, 2010). This literature sometimes romanticizes Francis as a proto-environmentalist who, breaking free from the cultural and intellectual constraints of medieval society, reimagined nature in a radically new manner. But such an intellectual *creatio sui ex nihilo*, however attractive it may be for modern readers, finds no parallel in history nor support in Francis' own writings. Francis always theologized within a medieval Christian tradition—which he developed and even redirected but never abandoned—that was deeply shaped by neoplatonic ideas at every level.

This article will attempt to identify some of the key neoplatonic influences on and themes in Francis' *Canticle of the Creatures*. It will begin by providing a more culturally situated definition of Neoplatonism than that commonly used by Franciscan scholars. Next, it will examine two seminal cultural phenomena that would have communicated neoplatonic ideas to Francis at key points in his spiritual development: (a) medieval religious art, especially iconographic images like the San Damiano Crucifix; and (b) vernacular preaching. Finally, it will argue that the heart of Francis' highly creative "nature spirituality," especially as found in *The Canticle of the Creatures*, reflects the Christian neoplatonic belief that the hierarchically-structured creation provides an icon-like manifestation of the divine goodness. This deeply neoplatonic view of nature, I conclude, makes Francis' attitude towards nature simultaneously more valuable and more difficult to translate into a modern idiom than many scholars would admit.

I. Defining Neoplatonism

For all its importance for the Christian theological tradition, Francis would have been a stranger to Neoplatonism in its academic manifestations. He almost certainly never read a single philosophical or theological treatise and probably could not have understood it if he did, since his philosophical studies were limited to logic, at best (Newman, 2007, p. 145–46). Francis' formal education was basic, brief and practical in character, although he was neither illiterate nor uncultured. As Dominic Monti (2002) observes, Francis "was considerably more educated than the vast majority of his contemporaries by the simple fact that he could read and write" (p. 22). But with a father like Pietro Bernadone grooming him as

successor, Francis certainly received an education whose goal was "not a scholarly knowledge but a practical one, suited for the world of business and of entertainment" (Manselli, 1988, p. 32). Francis' struggles with grammar and spelling throughout his writings testify to the limited and practical character of his boyhood schooling (and to his lack of enthusiasm for it). Moreover, his writings never employ scholastic methods of argumentation that, as Raoul Manselli writes, "would have been foreign to his temperament and, frankly, to his level of education" (p. 316–17). Indeed, it is difficult to think of a personality from the Middle Ages further removed from the dry debates of Scholasticism than Francis.

As many scholars have begun to recognize in the last generation, "Francis may well be thought of as one of the first major vernacular theologians" (McGinn, 1998, p. 51; see also Monti, 2002). Like Therese of Lisieux in the nineteenth century, "the authority of Francis's theological voice emerged from his experience of God" rather than from formal academic training (Delio, 2002, p. 6). In fact, his hagiographer and interpreter, Bonaventure, has often been accused (not without some justification) of forcing Francis' unsystematic religious intuitions into the rigid categories of a neoplatonic Scholasticism and "attempting to integrate Francis' experience of creation into the prevailing mindset of the day. Such a mindset was influenced by the Augustinian fear that the observer of nature be absorbed in the natural world and fall prey to the temptation to forsake the Creator for creation" (Vining, 1990, p. 104). While Francis' worldview should certainly never be conflated with that of Bonaventure, it is equally mistaken to draw too absolute a distinction between them. Neoplatonism was "the prevailing mindset" in Francis' day just as much as in Bonaventure's.

This somewhat amorphous notion of a "mindset" best captures what is meant here by the term "Neoplatonism." It can be understood as a philosophical counterpart to the various "cultural models" examined by Jacques Le Goff (2004), who defines them as "model or key concepts characteristic of the prevailing mentality and sensibility of the thirteenth century" by which people organized their mental lives (p. 97). Throughout the Middle Ages, Neoplatonism, especially (though not exclusively) through the influence of Augustine of Hippo and Pseudo-Dionysius, provided Western Christianity with a "mindset," that is, a fundamental set of categories for understanding and interpreting the metaphysical structure of the world. Therefore, the average person in the Middle Ages (including Francis) could fairly be called a Neoplatonist in the sense that, if pressed to talk about the structure of reality, she would draw upon images and structures of thought that reflected (consciously or, more often, unconsciously) a neoplatonic worldview.

What did this medieval *Weltanschauung* look like? In it, the entire cosmos—containing multiple levels of existence, ranging from dead matter to living organisms (of which the human person, possessing both body

and soul, is the highest type) to the purely spiritual and intellectual beings such as angels—was seen as both coming from and being ordered towards God, who both pervades and transcends creation. The countless types of creatures within the world each possessed their own natures and proper activities, all of which were subsumed within the ordered, hierarchical structure of the cosmos. Thus, creation expressed the wisdom and intelligence of the Creator both by its harmonious arrangement and by the orderly behavior of its individual parts which led them back to their source, God. For fallen human beings, composed of both matter and soul or spirit, this return to their Creator demanded they overcome their affections for creatures (especially those associated with bodily pleasures). Of course, most medievals who held them could probably not clearly enunciate even these few beliefs, much less say more about the structure of the cosmos or its relation to God. But these basic beliefs, both individually and *in toto*, are manifestly neoplatonic. And, in one form or another, Francis shared them all.

Many scholars emphasize Francis' distance from this neoplatonic worldview with its hierarchical understanding of nature, portraying his thought as the polar opposite of (and antidote to) "the ahistorical, world-transcending form of speculative Neoplatonic mysticism that had dominated Western Christianity prior to his arrival" (Cousins, 1983, p. 166; see also Kinsella, 2002). Indeed, Roger D. Sorrell (1988) argues for this position precisely because of Francis' lack of formal education: "Another factor—a negative one—is of immense importance. Francis had not been trained as an intellectual in his youth, and . . . had never absorbed the Christian Neoplatonic attitude toward creation—one which led to careful categorization of the levels of creation, their different significances, and the 'intellectualization' and internalization of mystical experience" (p. 90; see also Delio, 2003, p. 6; Delio, Warner, & Wood, 2008, p. 38). Even Thadée Matura (2004) describes him simply as "a layman with no scholastic background, who was little influenced by the scholarly currents of his times" (p. 21). However, it is unlikely that Francis would have seen himself as being independent of or in opposition to the dominant intellectual influence on Western Christianity since Late Antiquity. Francis' lack of a university education was an impediment only to his ability to express neoplatonic ideas technically and precisely, not a safeguard against holding them. And his exposure to these ideas, as I will suggest in the next section, would have been constant.

II. Neoplatonic Influences on Francis

Especially for academics, it is easy to forget that education in the Middle Ages was not strictly (or even primarily) a formal affair—indeed, it never is—since in a largely illiterate society most ideas would have been conveyed outside the classroom and beyond the written page. This is hardly an original observation, but one that is too often overlooked by

scholars. Most of Francis' knowledge of the Christian faith and the world would have come not from the classroom but from the daily life of the Church of his time—especially but by no means uniquely in the artistic works and popular preaching by which the Christian faith was passed on to the masses. It is there, in the environment where he was born, lived, and died, in the deeply-embedded intellectual structures of everyday life through which he came to hear the Gospel, that a Christian Neoplatonism would have had far more influence on him than any passing references to philosophy he might have heard as a schoolboy.

(a) The San Damiano Crucifix

While much work has been done documenting the artistic environment of Umbria during Francis' lifetime (Garrison, 1961), the vicissitudes of the intervening eight hundred years have destroyed most of the art Francis would have personally known. Even among those pieces that survive, connecting Francis directly with almost any individual work is extremely difficult. Therefore, our focus in this section will be on the one surviving work of art we know Francis encountered: the San Damiano Crucifix. Its central role in his conversion easily makes it the single most important work of art for understanding Francis' life and thought, and many studies of it have been produced (see, e.g. Goonan, 2007; Guinan, 2006; Picard, 1989). As Nesca A. Robb (1935) writes of the art of the Italian Renaissance, but perhaps even more applicable to the Christian culture of Francis' day, "it may truly be said that Neoplatonism was inherent in the whole intellectual background of the time" (p. 212). Thus, rather than attempting an exhaustive study of its imagery and symbolism, our more modest goal will be simply to define it as a type of icon and to identify some of the neoplatonic principles this icon would have conveyed to Francis—principles that, ironically, began to be dissolved precisely through the influence of the Franciscan movement on later medieval art (see, e.g., Brooke, 2006; Derbes, 1996; Thode, 1885).

The San Damiano Crucifix, as is well known, offers an excellent example of "the Italo-Byzantine style common to the period and which is still seen in Assisi to this day. Those crucifixes were not sculpted figures attached to a cross but monumental wooden panels on which the crucified Christ was painted" (Cunningham, 2004, p. 13). Painted by "an anonymous Umbrian artist in the late twelfth century" (Brooke, 2006, p. 4), it is technically a "Romanesque" piece, insofar as it represents "the upright Crucified with open eyes, who triumphs over death" (Belting, 1994, p. 358), rather than the lifeless Christ with closed eyes (*Christus patiens*) which has become almost universal in Western crucifixes. However, the San Damiano Crucifix's style and symbolism clearly link it with typical Byzantine crucifixion scenes in icons from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries (Chatzidakis & Grabar, 1965, plates 57, 64, 65).

Not surprisingly, the San Damiano Crucifix has come to function as a "Franciscan icon." However, as Michael Guinan (2006) has argued, it is not

just a "Franciscan icon" but "an icon also in the more technical sense" employed by the Eastern Christian tradition, where "icons are not just decorative art, but have a sacramental function" (p. 2). While the internal debates over Orthodox icon-theology cannot be discussed here, Solrunn Nes (2005) is certainly correct when she writes that "an icon is always a copy (*mimesis*) of a model or prototype. According to the Orthodox understanding of images, the model is present in an image by virtue of this likeness. Therefore, an icon of Christ will mediate Christ's presence in a direct way" (p. 16). This belief that Christ simultaneously is *and* is not present in the icon, which therefore both mediates *and* makes him present to the worshiper, in turn depends upon the neoplatonic belief in both the immanence and transcendence of God in relation to creation. Indeed, it has been argued that not just iconography but the entire Byzantine artistic tradition is especially indebted to the neoplatonic philosophy of Plotinus for the metaphysical framework that made possible the development of its distinctive anti-classical elements (Grabar, 1953, p. 39). This neoplatonic philosophy was then brought into the Christian tradition in the early medieval period by, among others, Pseudo-Dionysius, who "combines Jewish-Christian creation beliefs with Neoplatonic teaching to explain the relationship between the Creator and the created. The notion that all of creation is illuminated with a divine light is an important part of the basic concept regarding iconography" (Nes, 2005, p. 17).

Neoplatonism became central to the theology of icons during the Iconoclastic Controversy of the eighth century, which revolved around the question of whether icons violated the biblical injunction (Exodus 20:4) against making and worshiping graven images. After decades of conflict and theological polemic, the debate was ultimately resolved at the Second Council of Nicea in A.D. 787, where the iconographic tradition received the imprimatur of orthodoxy. This vindication was accomplished not by an appeal to Scripture but rather to the Christian neoplatonic tradition, and especially to its concept of the participation of the created world, including in a special way the icon itself, in the Divine source of all being (see Belting, 1994, p. 144–63; Chatzidakis, et al., 1965, p. 12–16; Nes, 2005, p. 14–15). Accordingly, the veneration of icons does not constitute idolatry "because Christ and his image are inseparable, the honor given to the image is transferred to him" (Davies, Denney, Hofrichter, et al., 2007, p. 265). In other words, Christ is, *in some sense*, truly present in the icon. Taking this theological tradition about icons seriously, in turn, sheds a new light on the episode of the talking crucifix.

Modern biographers of Francis tend to either psychologize the story or give a naively literal account of it, portraying it as either madness or miracle according to the standard Western dichotomy of reason and faith. But Francis' response fits neither of these categories, revealing instead a fundamentally (though certainly unconscious) neoplatonic understanding of the presence of Christ in the crucifix. *The Legend of the Three Companions*, in language that could have been taken directly from Pseudo-Dionysius or

the anti-iconoclast St. Theodore the Studite, testifies to the immediacy of Francis' encounter with Christ on the crucifix: "[Francis] was filled with such joy and became so radiant with light over the message, that he knew in his soul that it was truly Christ crucified who spoke to him." As a result, "after that vision and the message of the image of the Crucified, he was always conformed to the passion of Christ until his death" (Armstrong, Hellmann,& Short, 1999–2001, vol. II, pp. 75, 76). No Western language of artistic "representation"—language that, in any case, largely developed long after Francis' lifetime—can do justice to this transformative event in Francis' life. The reality depicted here is a neoplatonic and iconographic one, where the Divine Light shining through the crucifix actually makes Francis himself radiant, once he hears the message *of the image of Christ*.

Francis reflexively responded to the crucifix at San Damiano as he would to the Crucified Christ himself.

To argue that the San Damiano Crucifix is a piece of Western devotional art in the Italo-Byzantine style rather than an example of Byzantine iconography in the strictest sense, is to misunderstand both the work of art and its place in Francis' conversion. His religious response to and veneration of the crucifix, while ultimately *sui generis*, is much closer to Eastern worship of icons (*iconodulia*) than to later Western representational theories of art. Francis reflexively responded to the crucifix at San Damiano as he would to the Crucified Christ himself. *The Legend of the Three Companions*, perhaps less concerned than later biographies with the need for doctrinal precision (see Delarun, 2002, pp. 189–204), clearly expresses Francis' iconic attitude toward the crucifix. In the cross itself, Francis believed, Christ spoke to him. But more than that, the light of Christ came to dwell in him, and Francis became "radiant with light over the message." This direct encounter of Francis with Christ clearly fits the pattern of illuminative mysticism as it was understood in the Christian neoplatonic tradition, where knowledge of and union with the transcendent God was possible "through philosophy or through religion, or through both, as a 'gift of the spirit,' 'a radiant vision,' or 'an illumination.' Union with the divine came only through experience of him" (Artz, 1965, p. 29). This language of divine radiance or light is traceable in the Christian theological tradition at least as far back as Augustine and, before him, in the Greek philosophical tradition to Plotinus or, further still, Plato. The image of Francis becoming "radiant" with the message of Christ belongs neither to psychological theories of mystical experience nor to scholastic theories of infused grace. Rather, it evokes the neoplatonic belief that above and behind the material world there exists a spiritual light that not only creates but also indwells and illumines this world.

I am not arguing, of course, that the unlettered Francis (any more than countless generations of Orthodox believers) could have elaborated this

theology of icons or the neoplatonic worldview that underlies it. His grasp of it was necessarily intuitive rather than conceptual. Nevertheless, I am claiming that, in his experience of the Crucified speaking to him from the San Damiano Crucifix, Francis employed the neoplatonic "mindset" that makes authentic icon-theology possible. While much has been made of Francis' "sacramental" understanding of nature, it may also be possible to speak of his "iconic" understanding of nature, wherein the Divine Light dwells and manifests itself to those who approach it with the eyes of faith. Most important of all, the profound religious quality of Francis' encounter with the San Damiano Crucifix shaped his understanding of the world decisively, and did so along distinctively neoplatonic lines.

(b) Vernacular Preaching and Exegesis

Of course, icon-theology is not the only possible source Francis would have had for such light-imagery. An even more immediate source would be the Gospel of John, which had a formative influence on Francis' thought (Guinan, 2006, p. 1). Indeed, Francis' Christocentric spirituality has so many affinities with the Fourth Gospel that discussions of it lapse almost reflexively into the language of John's Prologue (1:1-18). James P. Scullion (2005) clearly evokes John 1:1-3 when he writes: "We cannot lose sight of the fact that for Francis Christ is always the Son, the Word and self-expression of the Father. A strongly Johannine understanding of the mystery of Christ is evident here. 'Through your only Son you have created everything spiritual and corporeal . . . . ' The Word of God is first of all for Francis the eternal self-expression of the Father in light of which he made all things" (p. 36–37). Likewise, Bernard McGinn (1998) echoing John 1:17-18, writes, "Francis does not depart from the biblical perspective that it is Christ alone, God made man, who gives us access to the Father during the course of salvation history" (p. 52). While it is often difficult to determine how familiar Francis was with parts of Scripture, he certainly knew that John refers to the Logos as "the light of the human race . . . [that] shines in the darkness" (1:4-5), and calls it "the true light, which enlightens everyone" (1:9). Moreover, since John 1:1-14 served as the Gospel reading for Christmas Mass, Francis would have heard it preached upon regularly at a feast he held especially close to his heart.

John's Prologue has been called "the fullest and clearest statement of Incarnation Christology in the entire New Testament" (Kysar, 1993, p. 34). Its influence on Francis is unquestionable, since "the Incarnation of the Word of the Father lies at the heart of [his] spirituality" (Guinan, 2006, p. 23). Given the Johannine influence throughout Francis' thought, it is noteworthy that "the artist [of the San Damiano Crucifix], in fact, had in mind the version of St. John" (Guinan, 2006, p. 12). Obviously, these Johannine and neoplatonizing influences on Francis would have frequently overlapped. But while modern historical-critical studies tend to emphasize the influence of Old Testament Wisdom Literature on John's

Prologue (an approach often followed by scholars examining Francis' relationship to John), medieval exegesis had no qualms about drawing on non-biblical concepts to unpack the meaning of Scripture (see, e.g., Guinan, 2006, pp. 31–39). Because of his limited education, Francis' direct access to Scripture would have been quite limited; more often than not it was mediated by art (e.g., San Damiano Crucifix) and the Church's liturgy. As a result, vernacular preaching would also have had a powerful effect on his understanding of Scripture, since any neoplatonizing tendencies in its exegesis "would eventually filter down to St. Francis as he learned to read by memorizing the Psalms, [and] as he listened to sermons" (Scullion, 2005, p. 24).

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were a period of sweeping Church reform, and "one of the principle instruments of pastoral reform was the spoken word and, more precisely, preaching, which, after the end of the twelfth century, experienced a dazzling revival" (Vauchez, 1999, p. 189). Moreover, this revival in preaching took place among both the clergy and the devout laity, a development with profound implications for Francis' work, since Pope Innocent III "had no objection to allowing the simple faithful [like Francis], who were engaged in various ways in religious life, to practice . . . preaching, so long as it was limited to dealing with questions of morality or behavior" rather than Christian doctrine (Vauchez, 1999, p. 191). Vernacular preachers were often the only real source of religious instruction for most Christians, and "sermons were the mass media of the day. They were a mediating culture between the institutional authority of the church and its lay audience. Sermons were the crossroads, as it were, the point at which the transmission of ideas and their reception often intersected" (Jansen, 2000, p. 6). In fairness, these preachers (especially the Franciscan ones) were often very effective in their work. By the latter half of the thirteenth century, "Angela of Foligno . . . illustrates well how relatively unlearned people, including women, could gain a good theological education and an education in the spiritual life through vernacular preaching" (Colish, 1998, p. 328). Exactly how widespread vernacular preaching would have been during Francis' lifetime is difficult to determine, given the variation in learning and ability between the priests in urban and rural parishes. However, as Francis lived near such prominent churches as San Rufino and Santa Maria Maggiore, he would have had easy access to whatever vernacular preaching occurred in Assisi.

Because of the extremely poor education many priests possessed, various preaching and exegetical tools, including "collections of model sermons . . . were composed and placed at the disposal of priests" (Vauchez, 1999, p. 189). Chief among these tools was the *Glossa Ordinaria*, a work composed by Walifred Strabo in the ninth century (Migne, 1852). This enormous work, covering the entirety of Scripture, "provided biblical texts with summaries of patristic commentaries, especially those of Augustine and Jerome" (Scullion, 2005, p. 24). In addition to these monumental

figures, "the better known of the Latin Fathers down to Bede, Origen and Hesychius in translation, Strabo, Paschasius, John the Scot, Haimo, Lanfranc, Berengar have all been laid under contribution" (Smalley, 1964, p. 66). In addition to the *Glossa*, Anscar Zawart(1928) writes, "the so-called *homilaria*, collections of the homilies of the Fathers, were prepared for the use of preachers who were unable to write an original sermon. . . . [A]t least one copy was in the hands of every cleric and formed the sole basis of his homiletic endeavor" (p. 243; see also Kneidel, 2001, p. 347). Given the influence of Neoplatonism on much of the patristic and early medieval tradition the *Glossa* and *homilaria* drew upon, these exegetical tools and the indirect influence they would have had on Francis' thought deserve closer attention by Franciscan scholars than they have generally received. As a result of these preaching instruments, the confluence, if not the actual conflation, of Scripture and Neoplatonism in popular preaching would have been almost inevitable.

A quick glance at the *Glossa Ordinaria*'s gloss on John 1:9 reveals this neoplatonizing tendency in medieval exegesis. It reads: "*He was the true light*. Everyone is called a man by that nature in man, which is made according to the image and the likeness of God. Everything else which is in man is the inferior part, and to that extent is outside of man. In that soul, the true light shines, just as it shines in a certain manner above the world, both coming into that world and renewing it by grace, because its life and conversation is in heaven, as if in another world" (Migne, 1852, vol. 114, pp. 356–357). The exegesis provided here is deeply dualistic, emphasizing as it does the distinction between spirit and body in the human person, and clearly subordinates the latter to the former. This soul/body distinction is then implicitly extended to the entire cosmos, which the Light renews by the work of grace. This work of illumination is ultimately intended, according to the *Glossa*, to point human persons back to their divine source and their true homeland, the spiritual realm which is *in coelis*. Indeed, one would be hard pressed to provide a more succinct neoplatonic interpretation of John 1:9 than that contained in the *Glossa Ordinaria*.

While it is impossible to know the exact contents of any of the sermons Francis heard in his lifetime, it is not difficult to imagine the catechetical concerns a typical Christmas sermon would have addressed. The theme of the Incarnation that dominates the feast of Christmas would certainly have been in the forefront, with its emphasis on "the true light, which enlightens everyone, [that] was coming into the world" (1:9). We have already seen the neoplatonic slant given this verse in the *Glossa*. The claim of 1:14, "And the Word became flesh," could be developed in light of the hierarchical language of the gloss, "What was above, descended below" (Migne, 1852, vol. 114, p. 357). Or emphasis could have been placed on the creative power of the Word, "the light of the human race," through whom "all things came to be, . . . and without [whom] nothing

came to be" (1:3). The gloss on this passage refers to Origen, who was perhaps the first Christian Neoplatonist, and to Augustine (Migne, 1852, vol. 114, p. 336). Examples could be multiplied, but the central point is that any preaching based on the *Glossa Ordinaria* would almost unavoidably have been influenced by the Neoplatonism that runs throughout the *Glossa* and the *homilaria*. And, as Scullion (2005) has suggested, this approach to scripture "would eventually filter down to St. Francis as he learned to read by memorizing the Psalms, [and] as he listened to sermons" (p. 24).

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The discussion offered above of two of the formative "extracurricular" influences on Francis' thought, while by necessity summary in character, indicates how pervasive neoplatonic ideas were in medieval culture. Of course, both of these areas would require a separate monograph to fully map out the manifold ways in which they shaped and transmitted the deeper intellectual structures of both the Christian and philosophical tradition to the general populace. Moreover, the topics treated, while not arbitrarily chosen, constituted only a small part of the larger culture in which Francis lived. A study of other cultural and social practices (such as the hierarchical language of the social and ecclesial orders of the thirteenth century) might reveal equally interesting influences on his understanding of the world. The goal here has simply been to point to some of the intellectual influences on Francis, and to show that even a lightly educated man like Francis would have constantly had his thinking subtly but decisively directed along neoplatonic lines.

III. Toward a Neoplatonic Reading of the *Canticle*

As we have seen, Neoplatonism (or at least a Christianized version of Neoplatonism) pervaded the culture of Francis' time, not only in the work of theologians and philosophers, but in that of the artists and preachers who mediated the mysteries of the faith to Francis. It in no way diminishes Francis to argue that his singular religious genius was able to be recognized and followed by countless others precisely because it reflected the worldview of his time, even as he began to transform it. Accordingly, if Francis' significance for contemporary thought, especially Franciscan theology of the environment, is to be properly appreciated, the temptation to confuse Francis' revolutionary spirituality with intellectual originality must be resisted. Thus, I will next examine how Francis' *Canticle of the Creatures* not only borrows images and ideas from the neoplatonic tradition which Francis had imbibed with his Christian faith but also lets this tradition structure and determine the vision of creation found within it. I argue that the *Canticle of the Creatures*, beneath its poetic and spiritual language, is replete with neoplatonic ideas and images that Francis intended perhaps to revise but not entirely to reject. As such, the *Canticle* should be seen as a quintessentially medieval (in the best sense) document, not a modern treatise appearing centuries ahead of its time.

Not surprisingly, the variety of approaches to the *Canticle* taken by modern scholars is quite diverse. Many writers have seen in the *Canticle* a focus on materiality and individuality that lies at the roots of modern scientific environmentalism, and a religious alternative to the "monotheistic disregard for nature" (White, 1967, p. 1203) which White claims has so frequently led to the Christian tendency to devalue (and despoil) the natural world. Others have found in it the "Cosmic Christ" of Bonaventure and Duns Scotus, whose respective "Nature-Christologies" have been examined by Phil Hoebig (2002) and Seamus Mulholland (1994). Retrojections of this "Cosmic Christ" theology to Francis, coupled with anti-neoplatonic interpretations of his thought, can be found in the work of Delio (1992; 2003) and Delio, et al. (2008), Eric Doyle (1997, esp. pp. 41–49) and Thomas Weinandy (2001). Some have even seen in Francis's poem a medieval form of Teilhardian nature-mysticism or even of New Age "Creation Spirituality." Thus, Timothy Vining (1990) can write that "Francis' vision of sublime creation catalyzed a mystical experience with the divine. This closely parallels Teilhard de Chardin's intellectual vision of creation as sacramental" (p. 102). Other scholars have recognized the biblical influences on the *Canticle*. As Giovanni Pozzi(1990) notes, "the Bible was always a fundamental reality of Francis' life—indeed the only reality at major and decisive points. The composition of the *Canticle* must surely be counted among such moments" (p. 1).

I contend that these interpretative approaches really reveal the powerful influence of Francis' nature-spirituality on subsequent theological and environmental thinkers rather than its deeper conceptual structures, which I argue are thoroughly neoplatonic. Although an exhaustive study of the *Canticle* is obviously impossible here, a look at just a few key elements of it, in particular the iconic and hierarchical understanding of nature contained in it, will reveal the formative influence of Neoplatonism on Francis' *magnum opus*.

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"Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Wind . . .
Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Water . . .
Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
Praised by you, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth . . . "

(Armstrong, et al., 1999–2001, vol. I, p. 114)

Thanks in no small part to Franco Zefferelli's 1972 film *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*, Francis' personification of the elements in his great poem is the most widely known part of his spiritual legacy. It is also an "essential backdrop for Francis' enterprise" in the *Canticle*, and an excellent place to begin searching for neoplatonic influences, reflecting as it does "the medieval understanding of . . . the cosmic elements," that is, the four elements of earth, air, fire and water that were considered throughout the Middle

Ages to be the fundamental constituents of the sub-lunar realm (Nairn, 2002, p. 179). Pozzi (1990) recognizes this influence, writing that "in place of the many creatures mentioned in the [*Canticum of the Three Young Men*], St. Francis has evidently substituted the four common elements," namely, earth, water, fire and air (p. 9). While this theory of four primal elements has its roots in Plato (*Timaeus* 31b-32c), it achieved its definite form in Aristotle (*De Generatione et Corruptione* II.1-5) before being taken (with further revision) into the neoplatonic tradition by Plotinus (*Ennead* 2.1). The historian Bede knew of the four elements in the ninth century, and it was a commonplace idea in the Middle Ages long before Francis' time (Evans, 1993, p. 87). Indeed, centuries prior to the rediscovery of the Aristotelian corpus in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the medieval mind had incorporated important elements of Aristotle into an already neoplatonized cosmology. As a result, Francis' understanding of the four elements was situated firmly within "the cosmos of the Christian Middle Ages, [which,] both in the East and West, was Aristotle's cosmos located in a Neoplatonic hierarchy of beings . . . created and ruled by a transcendent God" (Graham, 2005, p. 190).

This "cosmological" interpretation of the *Canticle*, and all the neoplatonic concepts it entails, is not uncontroversial, since "the ordering and the values given to the elements are contrary to that followed by medieval cosmology" (Nairn, 2002, p. 186). Both Eloi Leclerc (1977), who adopts a psychoanalytical approach to the *Canticle*, and Erhard-Woldfram Platzeck (1984), who takes a more biblical one, have challenged it. However, given not only Francis' limited education but also the highly sophisticated rhetorical strategy at work in the poem, this departure from the technical requirements of medieval cosmology is more likely the result of poetic license on Francis' part rather than any systematic critique of the philosophical tradition.

This invocation of the four elements by Francis has attracted much attention among Franciscan environmental theologians, many of whom (as has already been mentioned) see in it an attempt by Francis to sanctify nature through the "Cosmic Christ." This interpretation is generally paired with an emphasis on Francis' "sacramental" understanding of nature, whereby "Christ . . . sanctifies creation and transforms it into a sacrament of God" (Delio, 2003, p. 15). Accordingly, the materiality and individuality of the natural world becomes, in the *Canticle*, a sacrament, that is, the visible manifestation of the invisible grace of God. Delio concludes: "That Francis came to 'see' God in creation points to the idea that Francis contemplated God in the things of creation. Contemplation is a penetrating gaze that gets to the truth of reality, and Francis came to 'see' the truth of things by following the footprints of Jesus Christ" (p. 16). However, I contend that such a reading of the *Canticle*, however attractive it may be for our modern understanding of nature, forces Francis' spirituality into a "sacramental" framework understood too narrowly in the forms

sacramental theology assumed in the later medieval and modern periods. It seems very unlikely that Francis would have understood "sacrament" in such a concrete and material sense as it took in the later Middle Ages, largely under the influence of Aristotelian hylomorphism (Vorgrimler, 1992, p. 51–52).

Far from being the first environmental naturalist, Francis in his *Canticle* offers instead a nearly perfect poetic expression of the *neoplatonic* tendency to view nature as a symbol of the divine. Pozzi (1990) writes: "In developing this double aspect of creation—as primordial energies and as physical realties—St. Francis enjoys the wonders of this world, though at the same time he reduces them to ideas. Many people refuse to attribute this kind of thing to the saint who once described himself and his brothers with the words 'We were simple,' but they are wrong" (p. 10). Similarly, Fumagalli (2005) argues that the essential message of the *Canticle* is not that creation glorifies God but rather that, in nature, *God glorifies himself*: "So it is not creatures that praise God, but God himself who praises himself through the praises that the creatures, filled with his spirit, offer him. And the praise that is offered by creatures, but which originates in God and returns to God through creatures, is nothing else but a proclamation of the divine glory. By 'glory' he means 'the very being of God insofar as he manifests himself and communicates himself to creation without ceasing to be transcendent" (p. 56, quoting Pagliaro, 1947, p. 10). In other words, Francis sees the truth of God in creation. With considerable insight, William Short (2002) has called "the theology of image perhaps the most fundamental component of the Franciscan understanding of God" (p. 116). And this idea of creatures both manifesting and pointing towards the transcendent God, which we have already encountered in the discussion of icon-theology, suggests an essentially neoplatonic mindset at work in the *Canticle*.

The material world, for Francis, is not so much a sacrament as it is an icon, that is, a created medium through which the divine goodness shines forth.

Doyle (1997) captures this iconic understanding of nature perfectly: "In much the same way as Rublev's icon of the Trinity, but in words, *The Canticle* holds out invitation to participate in what it is communicating" (p. 43). Moreover, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's (2008) recent description of icon-theology encapsulates Francis' spiritual response to the beauty of the created order: "Beauty is a call, beyond the here and now, to the original principle and purpose of the world. Therefore, the spiritual way is never disconnected from the created and material world. It includes and involves every aspect and every detail of creation, to the last speck of dust just as 'to the least of our brothers and sisters' (Matt. 25:40)" (p. 28). The material world, for Francis, is not so much a sacrament as it is an icon, that is, a created medium through which the divine good-

ness shines forth. As Guinan (2006) aptly expresses it, "we can see that, in a real sense, Francis is not a saint of nature at all. He is a saint of creation. Creation and Creator go together, as they certainly did for Francis. He saw, in and through creatures, the hand of their creator God" (p. 39). Edward A. Armstrong (1973) echoes this idea: "For him nature spoke of God. All created things pointed beyond themselves to their Creator" (p. 11).

Moreover, this "iconic" understanding of Creation, predicated as it is on a neoplatonic metaphysics, also imparted to Francis a deeply hierarchical view of nature. This hierarchical pattern of thought works at the deepest level of the *Canticle*'s structure and logic. Because of its ability to illustrate the Neoplatonism inherent in Francis' *Canticle*, Pozzi's (1990) explanation is worth quoting at length:

> The structure adopted by St. Francis, made up of the closed circle of the four elements, explains his exclusion of the angels and the animals. Many scholars have been surprised at this latter exclusion, given the part played by animals, in the early biographies. Few scholars have mentioned the exclusion of the angels, but the one cannot be explained without the other. In the [*Canticum of the Three Young Men*], the angels stand at the top of the ladder of supraterrestrial creatures, while the animals are found at the bottom of the ladder of terrestrial creatures, just below human beings. St. Francis could have followed this same model, linking the angels with heaven and the animals with earth. But he did not do this, despite his great love for animals. . . . He did not wish to associate the animals with the earth, because they are not a product of the earth in the same way as plants and flowers. (p. 11)

The importance of this insight into Francis' decision to focus on the elements in the *Canticle* cannot be overemphasized. If Pozzi's interpretation is correct (and I believe it is): *Francis excludes the animals from the Canticle precisely because he adopted a neoplatonic metaphysics in which sentient beings exist on a higher level of the "great chain of being" than non-sentient ones*. Francis is very close here to the *Glossa Ordinaria*'s insistence that "everyone is called a man by that nature in man, which is made according to the image and the likeness of God. Everything else which is in man is the inferior part, and to that extent is outside of man." Thus it appears that Francis even extended the privileged place humans hold within creation (rising above the material universe because of their spiritual nature) to the animals as well. (This, incidentally, would also help make sense of his decision to include Sister Death, who releases the soul from the body as a necessary condition for the beatific vision.)

Many scholars have rejected the hierarchical character of Francis's understanding of creation. For example, Delio et al (2008) prefer a non-hierarchical approach to Francis stating: "At its deepest root, our eco-

logical crises derive from our belief that humans are somehow above or fundamentally distinct from—indeed, absolutely superior to—the rest of creation. This conceit is incompatible with a Franciscan worldview" (p. 78). Timothy Vining (1990) makes the same point, writing that "Francis replaces a spirituality of hierarchical ascent with one of descending solidarity between humanity and creation. . . . Gone now is the old notion of domination, of conquest, of stepping on creation in order to ascend to God. The hierarchical and paternalistic vision is replaced with a cosmic vision of creation as a brother/sisterhood, and all is seen as a way to God and a revelation of God" (pp. 105, 104). Nor are Delio and Vining alone in this appeal to what Keith Warner (2002) calls "the *familial* model of relating to nature left to us by Francis" (p. 80). Edward Kinsella (2002) praises the *Canticle* as "an exceptional and intimate identification between man and the natural world understood in terms of kinship and familial relationship. As man and world share the same Father, then they are brothers and sisters to each other" (p. 64).

However, it should not be forgotten that in the thirteenth century the imagery of brotherhood/sisterhood, even when being used by Francis, lacked the radically egalitarian meaning it has today. How else to explain the fact that in the *Canticle* Francis, when praising all creation, praises "especially Sir Brother Sun, Who . . . bears a likeness of You, Most High One" (Armstrong, et al., 1999–2001, vol. 1, pp. 113). This elevation of Brother Sun above all other creatures precisely because of its unique likeness to the Most High at the very least makes the Sun *primus inter pares*. While this privilege may grate against our modern sensibilities, it would have seemed natural in a society where primogeniture automatically favored the firstborn son over his younger siblings (as Francis' own brother Angelo knew all too well). This is a small detail, perhaps, but a telling one which reveals the distance between Francis' social world and our own, and the importance of acknowledging this distance.

The social and familial world of Francis, no less than the artistic and homiletic ones, communicated neoplatonic ideas to him in countless ways, making them a part of his mental universe every bit as real as the sun and moon he beheld with his physical eyes. Once this is recognized, it becomes even clearer that these iconic and hierarchical themes in the *Canticle* are not anachronistic projections of Bonaventurean metaphysics into Francis' thought, nor are they medieval verbal formulae concealing an essentially modern mindset. It is not necessary, in looking to Francis for inspiration and guidance, to make him our intellectual contemporary. This has been done too often already. Sorrell (1988), in his seminal study of Francis' *Canticle*, tells us that "Francis' opinions have been the source of tremendous controversy and an equally great amount of misinterpretation and distortion. He has been seen as a pantheist, a Protestant, a devout Catholic, a Catholic liberationist, and a heretic who miraculously escaped the stake" (p. 5). But, while he has at one time or another been

an inspiration for all these things, Francis was, first and foremost, a man of the Middle Ages. As Le Goff (2004) elegantly expresses it, Francis "was the contemporary of the smiling Gothic angels. He was also of his time, both in what he accepted and rejected, and in his doubts and ambiguities" (p. 11). But, as this article has attempted to remind us, his time was profoundly neoplatonic in its understanding of the world. Thus, it should not surprise us that, in the elemental categories he uses to name creation, in the iconic pattern with which he finds God within creation, and in the hierarchical order with which he follows nature to its Creator, Francis' *Canticle* is thoroughly and inescapably neoplatonic as well.

Conclusion

Ewert Cousins (1983), echoing a widely held opinion in Franciscan scholarship, has written that in Bonaventure's theology "the Neoplatonic universe has been Franciscanized" (p. 187). In my opinion, this statement is misleading since almost the entire conceptual world of the Middle Ages was already thoroughly neoplatonized. And Francis was thoroughly a product of that world. Having seen the influence of Neoplatonism on medieval practices as diverse as religious art and homiletic exegesis, we cannot expect that Francis alone was somehow immune to it. Indeed, it has been shown that neoplatonic patterns of thought, both iconic and hierarchical to the core, lie behind the portrait of creation found in the *Canticle of the Creatures*. A much longer study than this would be required to explore exhaustively the presence of neoplatonic ideas in Francis' thought. The arguments and evidence provided here suggest the formative influence of Neoplatonism, at least in its medieval Christian form, in Francis' understanding of nature.

Indeed, the iconic and hierarchical universe that Francis describes in his Canticle, which forms the very framework of his spiritual universe, presents as many challenges to contemporary Franciscan theology of the environment as it does to the ecological abuses of modern post-industrial society.

Reading Francis' poetic masterpiece against a specifically medieval neoplatonic background, rather than in light of our twenty-first century concerns, reveals an alternative understanding of nature different from many modern environmental appropriations of his thought. Indeed, the iconic and hierarchical universe that Francis describes in his *Canticle*, which forms the very framework of his spiritual universe, presents as many challenges to contemporary Franciscan theology of the environment as it does to the ecological abuses of modern post-industrial society. If Francis is to speak to our contemporary society and help us address our environmental crisis, it is *his* voice, in all its historical and intellec-

tual particularity, which must be heard. And to hear Francis, it is first necessary to understand the language which he speaks. While translating his thirteenth-century Italian is relatively simple, translating and hearing the thirteenth-century Neoplatonism lying behind his *Canticle of the Creatures* is much more difficult. This article has attempted to begin the process of uncovering and understanding the neoplatonic ideas which suffused Francis' spirituality. Whatever the difficulties in translating them for the twenty-first century, a deeper appreciation of Francis' Christian Neoplatonism may lead to a fresh perspective on the Franciscan theology of the environment.

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WONDER

**9-12-10 Experience of walking among dragonflies
devouring gnats at sunset, facing west on a southside bluff overlooking
Lake Michigan, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
Late July flooding of 8 inches in an hour and a half and 90 degree
daily temperatures forced pond larvae to create an unusual abundance of dragonflies.**

I MOVE THROUGH
A GILDED MESH OF WONDER

GLINTING IN SUNLIGHT
HIGH
LOW
RADAR SENSITIVE
MINI GOLDEN HELICOPTERS
WHIP
WHIRR
NEVER COLLIDING

FLORESCENT BLUEGREEN BODIES
WINGS CATCHING GOLD

PULSING SYMPHONY OF LIGHT

I
FLOW
THROUGH
THE GILDED MESH OF WONDER

— Adele Thibaudeau, OSF
Cardinal Stritch University
Milwaukee, WI

COMMUNION PROCESSION

He raises the eucharistic bread slightly and shows it to each one, saying:
The body of Christ. *The communicant replies* Amen.

The body of Christ must have been working in the garden
The body of Christ smells of playground sweat
The body of Christ is missing two fingers
The body of Christ must be six months pregnant
The body of Christ cannot look me in the eye
The body of Christ is still grieving his wife
The body of Christ has a baby in each arm
The body of Christ is growing her hair back
The body of Christ has a smile like a Roman candle
The body of Christ must be two inches taller than last week
The body of Christ has a son in Afghanistan
The body of Christ should have divorced him years ago
The body of Christ has hands nearly translucent
The body of Christ has been giggling all through Mass
The body of Christ tries hard to hide the Parkinson's
The body of Christ looks so much like my father
The body of Christ has skin the color of coffee
The body of Christ still hasn't the knack of her wheelchair
The body of Christ seems locked into that anger
The body of Christ can't remember to turn off his cell phone
The body of Christ has more faith than I
The body of Christ surely mustn't realize what that T-shirt says.
Amen.

— Larry Janowski, OFM
Chicago, IL

CONFESSIONAL POEM

Ever wonder what it's like on the priest's side
of the screen in that small dark closet? Guys
imagine it's like dirty secrets in a bar. It isn't.
It's sliding open a door to a swell of sorrow —
so sorry. The very first one I heard was a kid,
12 or 13 I'm guessing — and I was maybe 26.
What did he confess? You forget immediately.

What you remember is not hushed lust, a lie,
but the raw wound of a whisper, inches away,
This is what I've done, or often *haven't*, and
waiting. And silence. I remember the urge
to embrace him, to let him cry, to tell him
he is blindingly beautiful to God. But what
priest — or pope — can have the right words?

What you do — seventy times seven times —
is listen, is judge not, is utter the shattering
I absolve . . . and hope your own lousy breath
can lighten the unbearable weight of love.
You gulp the rush of cool air as one leaves
and another enters bearing the mirror of
your own fracture. It's something like that.

— Larry Janowski, OFM
Chicago, IL

Reach

There is something in the way
time splits into two dimensions

when those we love must leave us
and we can't plant firmly

on either side like the way
a call of sky mirrors blood red

the pain our hearts bear, a
moment of being, apart from the

moment we must be in, where
time splits grief into poetry

— Judith Emery
New York

The Drama
(for Thomas Berry)

the silence
of the lake in the
morning

haunts the slightest
sound
the oar

moving in water
the creaking of the oarlock
good sounds

simple and clear
sounds
in the hard

silence of
early morning
harmonious and whole

transformed and encompassed
within the order
of things

— Judith Emery
New York

From The Canticle of Brother Sun with praise for Sister Clare

Most high, all-powerful, good Lord
To you alone belong praise, glory, honour and blessing,
No mortal lips are capable of naming you.

Be praised my Lord through all that you have made,
For Brother Sun, our Brothers Wind and Air
And most of all through Brother Fire,
Playful, robust and beautiful.

And now my Lord, be praised for Sister Clare,
She is like Sister Moon to us in brightness,
Clear as our Starry Sisters who all shine
Bright and precious and fair in the heavens.

Be praised my Lord through Sister Water
So pure and precious and useful,
And praise be yours for the clear spring of Sister Clare
For the stillness of her spirit reflects your clarity to us.

Be praised my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth,
And through our Sister, Mother Clare,
For both sustain us, govern us and teach us.
Both produce varied fruits for you
with coloured flowers and many herbs
and sisters gathered by the Lord from many parts and provinces.

Be praised my Lord through Sister Clare
Who taught us reconciliation and forgiveness
and patient endurance in sickness.

Be praised above all my Lord, for our Sister bodily Death
Who will come to us all. And when she comes,
May Sister Clare come with her
And find us at work in your most holy will.

We give you praise and thanks, O Lord,
And serve you with great humility
And bless your holy name, O most high!

— Sister Frances Teresa Downing, OSC
Convent of Poor Clares
Hollington, UK

Rocky Road

going

theophany to transfiguration

you move

from seeing God shimmer through the daily

to letting God shine through you:

opaque to

translucent to

transparent

melt solidify morph

erosion heat and pressure

on the way

rock to rock star

rock on

— Felicity Dorsett, OSF
University of Saint Francis
Fort Wayne, IN

Chinnici, Joseph. *When Values Collide: The Catholic Church, Sexual Abuse, and the Challenges of Leadership.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 2010. Pp. 192. ISBN 978-1-57075-873-7. Pbk. $25.

This year on the feast of St. Bonaventure, Joseph Chinnici, OFM, was awarded the Franciscan Institute Medal at St. Bonaventure University, New York, a medal given to an individual who has contributed significantly to Franciscan scholarship and education. Chinnici's latest book, *When Values Collide: The Catholic Church, Sexual Abuse, and the Challenges of Leadership,* aptly demonstrates both the quality of this church historian's learning as well as the depth of his Franciscan grounding. Furthermore, it reveals the leadership skills — and the humanity — of a Provincial Minister (leader) confronted with the scandalous reality of sexual abuse by clerics within his own province and the Roman Catholic Church. (Coincidentally, David Couturier, OFM, Cap. must have thought so too. He assigned the book as a main text for a new course, "Franciscan Leadership in a Time of Crisis," which he taught in the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University in summer 2011.)

In the book's nine well-developed and readable chapters, Chinnici chronicles the history of the crisis in his own Santa Barbara Province, in which he, as leader, was intimately involved, and reflects as well on the scandal of sexual abuse in the broader Church. Chinnici frequently intersperses the words and experiences of Francis of Assisi and Bonaventure of Bagnoregio to introduce or illustrate his thoughts. A church historian, Chinnici also draws on the insights of one of the Church Fathers, Augustine of Hippo, a bishop who also faced alienating divisions within his Church and society. Chinnici traces the sexual abuse scandal as it evolved from the individual arena to the systemic, and examines the conflicting values within personal, political, cultural, civic, ecclesial, family, financial, and legal realms — and the underlying issues of power and relationship — that became evident and eventually collided. His intent is not only to provide a sequential historical record, but more importantly, to offer both perspective and process to move toward reconciliation.

Chinnici's vision is a Franciscan one, influenced by Augustine: we are all sisters and brothers related in God, bearing within ourselves and among ourselves that which is good and that which is not. When that relationship is ruptured and alienation results because of individual or systemic acts, as happened in the sexual abuse experience, penance must be done and reconciliation sought. That reestablishment of community or *fraternitas*, Chinnici contends, can come about through an ethic of "reciprocal exchange," which necessitates an acknowledgement of the injustice, an attitude of mutual respect and humility, and responsible action.

Joseph Chinnici had the opportunity to actualize that ethic. When the clergy sexual abuse scandal hit home in the Santa Barbara Province first in 1989 and later in the early 90s, Provincial Minister Joseph Chinnici met

the crisis and created, with his brothers and the lay community, a process to respond and to heal. That process included public acknowledgement of clerical misconduct, fact-finding, pastoral outreach to the victims and their families, the assistance of professionals in relevant fields, appropriate legal and financial actions, and, as further allegations of abuse emerged regarding St. Anthony Seminary in the Province, the establishment of a formal Board of Inquiry to advise the province. The process that became known as a "Comprehensive Approach" has served as a model for other religious communities and dioceses.

Although *When Values Collide: The Catholic Church, Sexual Abuse, and the Challenges of Leadership* can be read and appreciated on several levels, it is Chinnici's actions as leader during the crisis that this reviewer suggests can serve us programmatically as well as inspirationally. As befits a Franciscan who is to serve his sisters and brothers, Joseph Chinnici wrote his book for all of us.

The book would also be appropriate for discussion groups through campus ministry programs or Franciscan parish groups that are considering questions such as "what are the roles of Franciscans in the 21 century?" and "what is our role in the Church?" Chinnici has provided resources from the Franciscan spiritual and theological tradition as a service to Church leadership for dealing with the crisis at this time. In addition, this text would be a good resource for courses in the Catholic Franciscan Heritage which consider our Franciscan tradition and the foundation that has been given to us to serve each other in a spirit of forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing.

Couturier indicated that this text was used for healing in the Archdiocese in Boston and in Franciscan Communities to reflect on acting responsibly as a Franciscan in leadership. It was also used in *fraternitas* for healing of brothers in community and people who have lost trust in the brothers and the Church. Most important, the text informed how they journeyed with their brothers and sisters, victims, offenders, families, fellow brothers, priests, and religious to provide healing to all.

Readers will find this book beneficial to provide peace of mind to those who question how the Church is to accept responsibility and move forward with the current crisis. Chinnici's Franciscan leadership in a time of crisis might be summarized by a quote attributed to Francis, "I have done what is mine to do. May Christ teach you what is yours to do." In his attitude and actions as a humble servant faced with the challenges set before the Santa Barbara Province, with mutual respect and human dignity for all involved in this collision of values, Chinnici provides a model for the Church to follow.

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Moses, Paul. *The Saint and the Sultan: The Crusades, Islam and Francis of Assisi's Mission of Peace*. New York: Doubleday, 2009. ISBN 978-0-385-52370-7. $26.00. Pp. 302.

In this very readable and well-researched work, Paul Moses offers the reader a wide-ranging account of two remarkable men of the thirteenth century, Francis of Assisi and Sultan Malik al-Kamil, the course of events that led to their historic encounter outside Damietta in 1219, and the ways in which that meeting shaped and in turn was shaped by the legends and legacies surrounding both men. Writing in the genre of popular history and using the tools of contemporary journalism (Moses is Professor of Journalism at Brooklyn College and a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist), Moses undertook the book in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks and during the Iraq War, when he became "convinced that Francis and the sultan have something important to say to us today: we can find common ground despite our differences" (p. 10). The result is a work that avoids easy demonizations of the Muslim participants, offers often unflattering but nevertheless accurate accounts of the Christian forces, and presents a very sympathetic portrait of Francis as a man wounded in war himself and desperate to spare others the suffering he had undergone in his youth.

Moses' account of the early life of Francis centers on the experiences of war with and imprisonment in Perugia, and will be familiar to most readers. However, Moses usefully suggests that Francis' subsequent spiritual crisis and conversion were caused in part by the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that afflicts so many veterans today. Better still, he returns to this theme again when attempting to explain Francis' later decision to go on Crusade in Egypt and, once there, to seek out Sultan Malik al-Kamil for dialogue rather than combat. Parallel to this account of Francis' life, Moses reconstructs the biography of the Sultan as well (a story too often neglected by Christian writers), revealing him to be a humane and wise but politically savvy ruler, who successfully navigated the turbulent politics of his time by a combination of military leadership and creative diplomacy. While two men more different from a religious, military or political perspective could hardly be imagined, Moses does an excellent job explaining the deeper human qualities that drew them together.

When reconstructing the meeting between Francis and the Sultan, Moses draws a fascinating portrait of cross-cultural and inter-religious dialogue in the thirteenth century that gives some modicum of hope to the twenty-first century. Moses is exceptionally clear-eyed about the greed and political calculation that entered into the making and eventual unraveling of this Crusade, and his portrait of the human cost of the war inflicted by the Christian Crusaders is sadly all-too-accurate. Bending over backwards to avoid the one-sidedness of most Christian accounts of the Crusade and Francis' encounter with the Sultan, Moses sometimes falls

into a reverse apologetic bias, excusing or downplaying on the Muslim side the same brutality and avarice which he is quick (and correct) to condemn among the Christians. While this may serve as a healthy corrective to anti-Muslim prejudices in past accounts, this reviewer would have liked a slightly more neutral account of an episode in medieval history that casts a dim light on everyone involved. Nevertheless, Moses' narrative is solidly based in historical fact and is eminently readable throughout.

Perhaps the most interesting (or at least unexpected) part of the book is Moses' attempt to retrace the path by which this important historical encounter was gradually covered over by hagiographical narrative and ecclesial politics in the generations after Francis' death. Moses shows a solid understanding of the major historical research done by Franciscan scholars, and several names familiar to members of the AFCU appear throughout the text and in the bibliography. The author clearly did his homework and sought out the best authorities when trying to prove that, "in the language of the newsroom, . . . the truth about Francis and his relationship to Islam and the Crusades was covered up" (p. 3). While it is anachronistic to call the complex historical process by which the story of Francis was preserved and reinterpreted by later generations of Christians a "cover up," the desire to go beneath the surface of these accounts and ask whether Christian prejudices have concealed more than they have revealed about Francis' meeting with the Sultan and its importance for his later life is a sound one. Indeed, if Fr. Michael Cusato's claim (p. 184) that the parchment written by Francis and found on Brother Leo's body at his death really does contain a drawing of the Sultan (rather than of Leo or Adam), this is an important discovery that would vindicate Moses' decision to emphasize the importance of this event for Francis' self-understanding of his mission. This is certainly an interpretation that Fr. Cusato and others should follow up with more research and investigation, as it has the potential to change dramatically our understanding of how Francis understood his own mission and ministry.

In conclusion, Moses has offered the reader the best sort of popular history – a narrative well-grounded in historical research and the contemporary scholarship on Francis, while simultaneously engaging questions of contemporary relevance for readers in a light and lively style. This book could easily be used in the undergraduate classroom, even (or especially) as first-year reading for a Franciscan college serious about imparting the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition to its students. At the very least, it should be recommended reading for anyone interested in learning more about what Francis has to say about inter-religious dialogue (both its potential and its limitations for building bridges across cultures) to our troubled times.

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Bodo, Murray. *Francis: The Journey and the Dream.* Cincinnati, Ohio: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2011. Pp. 257. ISBN 978-1-61636-064-1. Hbk. $24.99.

Celebrating the profound influence that this inspirational book has had on the lives of so many seekers on the journey of life, St. Anthony Messenger Press has recently published this 40th anniversary hardcover edition of Murray Bodo's *Francis: The Journey and the Dream*. New features of this special edition include a foreword by John Michael Talbot, the author's personal account of his writing of the book, a reader's guide for book clubs, and a listing of Bodo's favorite Franciscan resources gathered from his lifetime of research on Francis, the poor man of Assisi, and his followers.

Bodo reflects in his interview that this book, translated into ten different languages with over 200,000 copies sold, "seemed to give people a way into the heart and mind of Francis, and they could identify with him" (p. 243). This ageless text captures the parallel between Francis' times and current times as he faced his disillusionment with war and his search for peace, as his desire to be a messenger of the Gospel took him into the lives of the outcasts of his world, the leper, the poor, the misunderstood, the marginalized. Bodo invites the reader, through his captivating poetic craft, into the unfolding of Francis' journey from favored son of the rich cloth merchant, Pietro Bernadone, to the little poor man who challenged Pope and Sultan, who embraced all as brother and sister in the manner of the incarnate Christ.

Even in its 40th year this book continues to be a valuable resource for use with college faculty, staff, and with undergraduate and graduate students, to assist them in entering into the spirit of Francis of Assisi and his transforming message for their lives. This work is a reflective resource that allows readers to move more deeply into their understanding of the man Francis as he searched to see the poor Christ in the faces of all peoples and in his experience of being a Gospel messenger in the midst of the troubled world and Church of his times. This book is versatile in its possibilities for incorporating into retreat experiences, into course work and service learning, for group reading and sharing, or for personal inspiration and meaning. In all of these contexts *Francis: The Journey and the Dream* offers everyone the invitation to enter into the heart of Francis' Gospel message and to discern how they might bring his Gospel message of peace to the troubled, complex world and Church of their times.

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Liberal Education and Franciscan Pedagogies

PATRICIA HUTCHISON, OSF, ED.D.

Undergraduate education holds the hope for promoting the Franciscan tradition. Dr. Timothy Johnson of Flagler College presented this inspiring challenge to 61 participants in the AFCU-sponsored conference on *Liberal Education and Franciscan Pedagogies* held at St. Bonaventure University from July 25 to 28, 2011. Over the course of three days, participants from 15 AFCU institutions engaged with Dr. Johnson, internationally recognized theologian and Franciscan scholar, in an exploration of diverse topics related to an integrated liberal arts education, including: the *Challenges and Opportunities of Liberal Education in 21st Century America* and *Roger Bacon: A Medieval Voice Seldom Heard*. Participants also had the opportunity to explore a variety of Franciscan Pedagogies with Dr. Johnson, Sr. Margaret Carney (President of St. Bonaventure University), Brother Edward Coughlin (Vice President for Mission of St. Bonaventure University), and Dr. Kevin Godfrey (Executive Director of the AFCU).

Dr. Johnson's presentation on *Liberal Education in the 21st Century* served as a reality check, reminding participants of the financial and demographic challenges to small liberal arts institutions and highlighting criticisms of colleges and universities for high cost (leading to accumulated debt) and inadequate academic rigor (resulting in lack of preparation for future employment). Johnson challenged participants to know the profile of their students and consider how to act "nimbly and entrepreneurially" to attract and keep students.

Describing the stereotypical portrait of the undergraduate experience as predominantly social, Dr. Johnson encouraged participants to appreciate and capitalize on the importance of the social experience of higher education. He described a formula for success in undergraduate education in terms of setting high expectations and providing good feedback. He encouraged faculty to develop relationships with students in order to challenge, lead, and accompany them on their collegiate journey.

Contending that AFCU institutions have the advantage of a mission which can provide direction for 21st century students, Dr. Johnson stated that the Franciscan tradition is all about "desire" and encouraged educators to relate the undergraduate experience to "the world and the desires" of students. Johnson emphasized the importance of establishing meaningful "rites of passage" throughout the undergraduate years. He presented a description of Francis of Assisi's transformation as a model for how Franciscan colleges and universities might impact undergraduates: *Francis acquired a basic education which prepared him for the business world. Social life dominated his youth. Through a series of learning experiences, Francis found a voice and a vision. So convinced was he of his direction that he*

spoke, wrote, and acted publically and decisively. Is this not what we desire for our students?

Dr. Johnson also offered a number of practical ways in which AFCU institutions can integrate the Franciscan tradition appropriately into the curriculum. He suggested the 13th century Franciscan master, Roger Bacon, as a "mentor" and model for recognizing and appreciating the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to education. According to Bacon, Johnson asserted, all the disciplines need to be in conversation with one another. To understand theology, for example, one needs to appreciate science. Experience is essential to the acquisition of knowledge.

In addition to plenary and keynote presentations, participants selected breakout sessions from a variety of options: Francis and Clare, the Witness of Vernacular Theologians; A Vision of the Diverse Academic Disciplines in a Creative and Dynamic relationship: The *Reductio of the Ars ad Theologiam*; Integrating the Resources of the Franciscan Tradition into the Undergraduate Curriculum; Education in the Spirit of St. Bonaventure; Roger Bacon: The Sciences and Attention to Experience; Engagement and Reflection: Work as Service—Learning through Experience—The Education and Formation of the First Franciscans; and Franciscan Theology and Undergraduate Education. Breakout session presenters included the conference planning team (noted above) and David Flood, OFM.

Participants expressed their enthusiasm for the conference in the following words: Dr. Johnson was "very engaging"; "refreshing, challenging and hopeful perspectives on undergraduate education in the Franciscan tradition." The "cross-institutional conversations were very enriching." "I was pleased that a number of individuals from our institution were able to participate, we began to think about and plan 'back home' implications before we left." "Great setting." The cost was "very reasonable" and the length of the conference was "good."

Participants appreciated the mix of presentations, breakouts, and informal conversations. One comment summarizes the value of the conference: "The conference provided me with a much clearer understanding of the role the liberal arts play in the overall development of the human person, especially within the Franciscan tradition."

Participants also identified a desire to explore the following topics in future conference: What are the distinctive contributions of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition in the sciences and arts, as well as political and economic thought? Can you create additional opportunities for AFCU faculty to interact with and learn from Master Teachers in different disciplines? Conference participants stated that opportunities to participate in "deeper dive" conferences in topical areas would be very welcome.

In response to recommendations received, the Franciscan Institute will offer a conference on *The Challenge of Ethical Living in the 21st Century* at

St. Bonaventure University from July 9-12, 2012. Led by master teacher, Sr. Mary Beth Ingham, CSJ, this intensive study program will explore the rich resources of a Franciscan-Scotistic approach to ethical-moral thinking and decision making. Scotus's model will be explored for the promise it holds to offer contemporary men and women a value based approach to ethical living that is potentially formative of persons awakened to the possibilities of building a more just and loving world.

Faculty Development Program
The Franciscan Institute
St. Bonaventure University

July 9-12, 2012

The Challenge of Ethical Living in the 21st Century

J. C. Chandler's *Margin Call* (2011) has been described as providing an "eye-opening window" into the "world inside" a fictional investment bank as the 2008 financial meltdown was unfolding. Described by one reviewer as a "tale of greed, vanity, myopia and expediency," the movie is a dark and powerful reminder that, on so many levels and in so many ways, ethical judgments are too easily compromised and moral judgments too often clouded in our contemporary world.

In response to the ethical-moral crises of the 1980's, the Harvard Business School initiated a major project that sought to explore the question: *Can Ethics Be Taught*? A decade earlier James Gustafson sought to answer the question: *Can Ethics Be Christian*? In both instances, educators sought to honestly explore their role in the education and formation of men and women as persons of character who were better prepared to become good citizens in a globalized world.

This intensive study program will seek to explore the rich resources of a Franciscan-Scotistic approach to ethical-moral thinking and decision making. Scotus's model will be explored for the promise it holds to offer contemporary men and women a value based approach to ethical living that is potentially formative of persons awakened to the possibilities of building a more just and loving world.

This program might be of particular interest to undergraduate professors of theology and philosophy, faculty in business, marketing and communications with a particular concern for ethical questions, Spiritual Directors, Faith Formation Leaders, and/or individuals who are interested in an in-depth exploration into the ethical-moral vision of John Duns Scotus, the 13th century Franciscan Master.

Master Teacher

Mary Beth Ingham, CSJ

Costs

Program Fee: $150.00

Plus
In-Residence: $150.00
Includes Room/Meals/Socials
or
Commuter: $75.00
Includes 5 meals and socials

More Information

www.sbu.edu/ethics
E-mail: ethics@sbu.edu
Call: 716-375-2105

Registration

www.sbu.edu/ethics
by June 15, 2012

Franciscan Leadership Academy

KEVIN GODFREY, PH.D.

The first gathering of AFCU's Franciscan Leadership Academy (FLA) was held at St. Bonaventure University last summer from July 27–30, 2011. The FLA was a new AFCU initiative that emerged from the recognition by AFCU Presidents that the future of the Franciscan intellectual tradition depends significantly on the mission, commitments and work of the Franciscan colleges and universities. In an effort to ensure the continuation of quality Franciscan higher education, AFCU determined to pool its resources and create a unique leadership-development program oriented to promising individuals who are interested in serving in senior executive leadership positions—particularly presidencies—at AFCU institutions.

The FLA was designed by the AFCU Board of Directors over a period of three years. The intention of the board was to generate a truly formative experience in which future leaders of Franciscan colleges and universities could learn about the Franciscan tradition(s) and also experience dimensions of Franciscanism firsthand. Thus, the FLA included content sessions, opportunities for group work and sharing, and contemplative time for personal reflection/enrichment and private discussion. Participants acknowledged after the conclusion of the FLA that the most important and formative input they received during their time together came from the opportunities they had to engage in large groups or in one-on-one sessions with the attending AFCU Presidents. Everyone who attended acknowledged that the most moving times at St. Bonaventure University were the daily liturgies and the half-day of spiritual retreat spent at Mount Irenaeus Retreat Center.

The leaders and presenters of the FLA included eight AFCU Presidents and four content experts in the field of Franciscan leadership. The presenters were Dr. Pauline Albert, Assistant Professor of Business (Saint Edward's University); Dr. Peter Holbrook, Executive Director of the Leadership Center (Cardinal Stritch University); Kristine Kiefer Hipp, Leadership Center (Cardinal Stritch University); and Sr. Patricia Hutchison OSF, Director of the Neumann Institute for Franciscan Studies (Neumann University). There were fifteen participants, each of whom holds a senior administrative position in his or her AFCU institution. Participants had to have been nominated for membership in the FLA by their President.

Future iterations of the FLA will be designed to ensure that Franciscan higher education thrives into the future. AFCU institutions will be successful in their mission to the extent that the individuals who hold positions of executive leadership are proactive in their promotion of Franciscan values in conjunction with the Franciscan intellectual tradition.

One of the participants shared the following poem after an afternoon of reflection.

Canticle of Mt. Irenaeus
Noemi's Noll, July 29, 2011

The winds sequestered
in whispers first gather

as softly as our humble
failures, dancing in differing

hills until released as one
white roar, autonomous gust

confesses us, symphonic
abundance once deemed

as empty reverberates
branches, awakens leaves

and we, our still still unstolen,
flutter and flower with sweep

of peeping sun as economic
birds convert air to song

and munificent clouds open
just enough, cupped drops

desirous of being, bleeding
into this little ink, these

loaves of grateful
paper.

— Andrew Prall
University of Saint Francis
Ft. Wayne, IN

AFCU Symposium 2012

Mark Your Calendars! The AFCU Symposium on Franciscan Leadership is set for June 12–14, 2012.

What are we looking for in a leader today? This question is integral to the 2012 AFCU symposium that will be held at Viterbo University June 12–14.

About the Symposium

Join fellow educators in the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition as we explore essential elements of **Franciscan Leadership: Serving, Learning, and Leading**. Francis of Assisi was a 13th century model of what Robert Greenleaf, founder of the Servant Leadership movement, called a "servant-leader." "The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead."

Symposium participants will be invited to examine what makes a good leader whether in the classroom, an office, a resident hall, on the athletic field, or in the White House. This year's symposium is divided into the three elements of **Franciscan Leadership: Serving, Learning, and Leading**. Three inspirational speakers will take us through the leadership journey. Thomas Thibodeau, Distinguished Professor of Servant Leadership at Viterbo University and director of the country's only Master of Arts in Servant Leadership program, will explore the basis of leadership as seen by St. Francis—to serve. The second keynote speaker, Aurelie Hagstrom, Associate Professor of Theology at Providence College and author of numerous scholarly works, will help us see how one needs to be a continuous student of leadership to be a successful leader. In a culmination of this journey, Kent Keith, CEO of the nationally acclaimed Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, will inspire participants with his insights on a true servant leader.

Submit a Proposal

Participants are invited to submit proposals relating to the topic of leadership from the three perspectives: to serve, to learn, to lead. The Call for Papers went out in fall 2011 to our Franciscan institutions of higher learning and colleagues in leadership in Franciscan congregations. The deadline for submission of papers, café style presentations,and panel presentations, is Feb. 13, 2012. Jurying will take place in March and notifications will be sent in April.

Bring along a Student(s)

A new dimension of this symposium is the addition of a track devoted entirely to undergraduate students. There will be a special opening reception, specific concurrent sessions and a workshop designed to assist stu-

dent leaders. Institutions are urged to encourage students to submit proposals around the topic of leadership as they see it. As a way of boosting student participation there is a special symposium fee for undergraduates (regular symposium fee $250, student fee $25).

Enjoy Beautiful La Crosse

Viterbo University is pleased to host this important symposium. The university is collaborating with their founders, the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (with their 135 years of Perpetual Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament), for the opening session. Viterbo University is located in beautiful La Crosse, Wis., between the majestic Mississippi River and the surrounding bluffs. Whether it be floating on the Mississippi River, enjoying one of the extensive hiking/biking trails, shopping in La Crosse's historic downtown, or enjoying the city's cultural offerings, there is something for everyone in La Crosse.

Register Today

A link to registration and further information is available on the AFCU website at http://www.franciscancollegesuniversities.org/symposium/afcu-symposium-2012.

AFCU Symposium 2012

June 12–14
Viterbo University
La Crosse, Wis.

Focus: Franciscan Leadership:
Serving, Learning, Leading

In the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, participants will:

- explore the ways in which we are called to serve the communities in which we live and work,
- learn together about our communities and their needs,
- and prepare to lead for the sake of the common good.

Keynote Speakers: Tom Thibodeau, M.A., on Serving
Aurelie Hagstrom, S.T.D., S.T.L., on Learning
Kent M. Keith, Ed.D., on Leading

New: In addition to the traditional program, undergraduate students are invited to submit proposals for papers, posters, and presentations to be part of the breakout sessions. An opening evening event and several sessions are being designed specifically for undergraduates.

Symposium and registration information is available at:
http://franciscancollegesuniversities.org/symposium/afcu-symposium-2012

Meet Our Contributors

David D. Blake, Ph.D., OFM is a Franciscan Friar of Holy Name Province teaching in the Department of Sociology at St. Bonaventure University. He holds degrees from Siena College, BA; Washington Theological Union, M.Div.; and SUNY Buffalo MA, Ph.D. His research interests include student volunteerism and service learning, family and young adult studies, and young adult attitudes and experience in religion.

Charles J. Coate, Ph.D., CPA teaches in the Department of Accounting at St. Bonaventure University. He holds degrees from Clemson University, BS; Loyola College of Maryland, MBA; and University of Maryland, Ph.D. His research interests include student volunteerism and service learning, and problems of professional auditing practice. His publications include articles in *AFCU Journal, BRC Academy Journal of Education, CPA Journal,* and *Journal of Business Ethics.*

Sr. Felicity Dorsett, OSF, a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, has bachelor and master degrees in education, and MAs in Religious Studies (St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia) and Franciscan Studies (Saint Bonaventure University). She is finishing her dissertation for a Ph.D. in historical theology from St. Louis University. She teaches religion and theology classes at the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Her poetry has been published in *The Bible Today*, *The Cord*, and *The Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities Journal*.

Sr. Frances Teresa Downing, OSC is a member of the small Poor Clare outpost in Hollington near Hastings, UK, living on the edge of a troubled Council Estate. She belongs to the Poor Clare Community of Arundel of which she has been a member for nearly forty years, fulfilling a number of different tasks within the community. She is the author of *Living the Incarnation* and *This Living Mirror* as well as having translated several books of mainly Franciscan interest.

Judith Emery is a publishing professional who lives and works in New York City. She is currently editing the audiotape letters of Robert Lax for publication.

Peter J. Holbrook, Ph.D. is interim dean of the college of Business and Management and executive director of the Leadership Center at Cardinal Stritch University. Dr. Holbrook's work focuses on the design and delivery of customized leadership programs and coaching. His expertise includes board development, organizational leadership and change, program development and evaluation, service, strategic thinking and planning, succession planning and teams. He has more than 23 years of experience in higher education leadership including key administrative positions at Cardinal Stritch University and Carthage College.

Larry Janowski, **OFM** is the winner of the 2010 Catholic Press Association Best Original Poem award and a 2008 winner of an Illinois Arts Council award. His most recent book is *BrotherKeeper* (The Puddin'head Press 2007). Larry belongs to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Province and teaches at Loyola University, Chicago.

Sr. Lynn Patrice Lavin OSF Ph.D. is an assistant professor at Neumann University, Aston, PA, teaching in the graduate Pastoral Counseling program. She received her Ph.D. in Pastoral Counseling from Loyola College in Maryland. She is a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia and does consulting, facilitation, and presentations for religious congregations, parishes, and other organizations.

Robert McParland Ph.D. is Associate Professor and chair of the Department of English at Felician College. His books include *Charles Dickens's American Audience*, *How to Write About Joseph Conrad*, and *Music and Literary Modernism.* The essay, *Among Shadows Forever Nameless: Mother Marianne and the Lepers of Molokai* emerged from his experience of the leadership pilgrimage to Assisi with colleagues.

Dr. Andrew Prall is Assistant Provost and Associate Professor of English at the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He received his Ph.D. in Literary Studies and Creative Writing at the University of Denver, and he is the author of a manuscript of poetry entitled *No Thoroughfare*, a multimedia work inspired by the tea industry near Darjeeling, India.

Dr. Lance Richey is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Theology at the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne, IN. He received his Ph.D. in Philosophy from Marquette University in 1995, and a Ph.D. in Biblical Theology (also from Marquette) in 2004. He has published a variety of articles on Francis and the Franciscan Intellectual and Spiritual Traditions in *The AFCU Journal* and *The Cord*.

Paula J. Scraba Ph.D. is an Associate Professor in the Physical Education Department in the School of Education at St. Bonaventure University. Paula earned a doctoral degree in Special Physical Education from the University of Connecticut where she also played on the women's basketball team. She earned a graduate degree in Franciscan Studies from the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University. Her master's thesis, *Tracing the Social Justice Movement of Franciscans Today through the Writings of Francis and Clare,* became the foundation for research combining Spirituality of Sport and Franciscan Spirituality as a model for service learning programs. Paula serves on the National Board as a facilitator for the *Build With Living Stones Program.*

Sister Adele Thibaudeau, OSF directs the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Center, Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI. Frequent walks with friends along Lake Michigan fuel her poetic instincts.