



A FRANCISCAN PERSPECTIVE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

December 2022 Special Edition Journal

Select Articles presented at a conference hosted by:

The Foster Center for Responsible Leadership

in

The School of Business at St. Bonaventure University

Leadership and Authentic Community

April 8-9, 2022

The AFCU Journal
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About The AFCU Journal

The AFCU Journal 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 AFCU 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.

From the Editor

This edition of the AFCU Journal is a Special Edition. The selected articles were presented at a conference at St. Bonaventure University on April 8-9, 2022. The conference was hosted by the Foster Center for Responsible Leadership in the School of Business at St. Bonaventure, and the title of the conference was *Leadership and Authentic Community*. The conference explored the effects of living and working in an increasingly virtual world. The pandemic caused a shift to much more digital interaction for people, resulting in positive outcomes for some, however for many, an experience of an “inauthentic community.” Social media increasingly caters to our biases, fostering division, conflict, and the further fracturing society. Research and discussions related to reclaiming and maintaining some sort of authentic community were presented and discussed.

The keynote address at the conference was given by Dr. Andrew Gustafson, Professor of Management and Marketing at Creighton University. Dr. Gustafson has published articles or reviews in *Business Ethics Quarterly*, *Teaching Ethics*, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, *International Philosophical Quarterly*, *Jesuit Higher Education Journal*, *Business Ethics: A European Review*, *UNLV Gaming Review Journal*, *Teaching Business Ethics Journal*, *Trinity Journal*, *Religious Studies Review*, *Faith and Philosophy*, and *Philosophia Christi*, and has given more than 100 academic or professional presentations at conferences and workshops regionally, nationally, and internationally. We are delighted to include Dr. Gustafson’s article, *Authentic Human Leadership and the Common Good In Light of AI, Zoom Meetings, and Virtual Society*, as the leadoff article in the journal.

As Director of the Foster Center, I feel particularly privileged to edit this edition of the journal. I am very grateful to the leadership of the AFCU, especially Debi Haug, for allowing the publication of a special edition. I am particularly grateful to the reviewers who donated their time to blindly review the selected scholarship submitted for publication from the conference. St. Bonaventure University has hosted a conference on opposite years of the AFCU Symposium starting pre-Covid and resuming this past spring in 2022. The purpose of the conference is to provide an opportunity to present and discuss scholarship and to gather in fellowship and community. The conference is on AFCU Symposium off years so as not to detract from our main symposium but to give academics another opportunity to share and receive feedback for their work.

The AFCU is now publishing the Journal only digitally in the hope that more individuals will thereby have access to the Journal. Distribution will be to the campus contact, who will then be free to distribute the volume electronically to the campus community.

Michael J. Gallagher
Foster Center Director
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St. Bonaventure, New York
December 13, 2022

**Authentic Human Leadership and the Common Good:
In Light of AI, Zoom Meetings, and Virtual Society**
Andrew B. Gustafson, Ph. D.

Introduction

In the last couple of years, many of us have been feeling anxious about the world. Here I want to set up what some of the factors are which have led to this unease, and then after we will consider some responses from a Catholic Social Thought (CST) perspective. Zygmunt Bauman, a Polish Sociologist, refers to our age as one of liquid modernity. (Gustafson, 2015) He says, “Uncertainty is the natural habitat of human life although the hope of escaping uncertainty is the engine of life pursuits”—we all live in uncertainty, that's just part of what it's always like. Yet it seems that the uncertainties with which we live have been amped up to 11 in the last few years. So the question is, how do we gain some certainty or some sort of stable footing in the midst of all that uncertainty, and how do we as business professors and leaders try to help contribute to stability and the common good?

One of the blessings of teaching MBA courses is you get the opportunity to hear how young and middle career business professionals are thinking about the world. I frequently have students say things such as ‘it seems that we as a society have lost any common agreement about what good to pursue.’ It can feel at times like there is no longer a cohesive unity in society—no agreed on expectations or norms, a weakening sense of ‘common sense,’ and few unifying experiences across social divisions which might somehow draw us together. We might wonder if there even is an agreed-upon common good to pursue anymore. We sometimes just live our lives and don’t stop to reflect on the significant changes we are living through. But the challenges are real, and it is important to understand and consider them, and that is our aim here. First, there are significant cultural concerns and challenges we have faced in recent years which are or perhaps have changed culture for the long term—Covid, the BLM protests, LGBTQ issues, and more. Second, there have been some very significant shifts in business theory and practices which have provided very real challenges for us to think through as business professors. And a third set of transformative issues which overlap both the social and the professional challenges are the impacts of social media and AI. Here, I will unpack some of these challenges so we are clear on the immense task we seem to face, including recent societal events, the challenges of social media addiction and the growing dependence on AI. Finally, I will make some suggestions as to the ways we might move forward as business professors, trying to contribute to the common good and cohesive society through intentional leadership as we try to navigate our way in the current situation.

Our Current Situation: The Wake of Covid, Political Turmoil, and Social Upheaval.

First, it is useful to consider some macro issues which are going on in society at large. There is no grand proposal here for trying to reunite all of society because I really think that depends on each of us doing our small part. These challenges can seem overwhelming, but we

need to face the challenges head-on. As Geoff Dembiki recently wrote, these are challenges “for the business people and leaders who are already wielding power in our society, the business schools that train them, and anyone else who cares about creating a more equitable and environmentally sustainable world for everyone.” (Dembiki 2021) None of us can achieve much alone, but each of us has a unique calling that God has given us and could give no one else because each of us are in an idiosyncratic unique situation. You've got things that you can do that I can't do, and I've got things I can do that others can't do, and that's just because of the position that God has put us in, the people that we're around, the people that God brings into our path each day and each moment. Each of you has something unique to bring. It is important to have eyes to see and think about how you might be able to do that at this time, because it's in some ways a very discouraging and confusing time.

Social Disruptions

We have faced a number of difficult societal challenges in the last few years. Here are a few:

Covid

Many of us got used to masks, remote learning, and keeping our distance from others during Covid. Life became work zoom meetings, zoom classes, and isolation-- all these sorts of things that have come from Covid and caused a lot of disruption in our life. These events caused us to become more isolated and made us have to figure out how to redo things, even if it's just for the short term, which has been one cause of frustration and cause of anxiety and certainly a cause of division in some ways in society. A recent McKinsey & Co. podcast says that Covid has led to a worsening of mental health among workers, the attrition and reset, leading many to drop out of the workforce or change career trajectories, shifts in expectations-- particularly working from home, withering of the social ties of workplace culture (as people work remote more), and more. (McKinsey & Co. 2022) The psychological and social impacts of Covid are still being assessed. (Saladino, Et al. 2020)

Black Lives Matter Protests

The 2020 Black Lives Matter demonstrations dominated local and national news. Everyone was forced to have opinions on the discussion and the discussion was everywhere, which led to further discussions about critical race theory, and what should be done about all of these things. (Ibram, 2019) (DiAnelo) The discussions on race have been a blessing in many respects but it has also been a source of division in our country, from families to the workplace. It's been difficult to have some of the conversations we needed to have and we still have people that are at different levels of what they feel comfortable with. Some are not comfortable with what should be done or shouldn't be done, leading to even more division and more uncertainty.

LGBTQ issues

LGBTQ questions have come to the foreground, particularly Trans and non-binary related concerns. One of the Economist Magazine's books of the year was about a so-called transgender craze among middle school girls (a book which was banned at Target, was not allowed to advertise on Amazon, and was denied on gofundme). (Shrier, Abigail 2020) It is clear that with recent polls saying that those identifying as LGBTQ has jumped from 3.6% in 2012 to 7.1% in 2022, and that young people in particular are thinking differently about themselves and the world. (Yang, 2022) It's hard to imagine but the first state that legalized same sex marriage in America was in 2004 and it wasn't until 2015 that all the United States legalized it, and that was only six years ago. This is a dramatic change and now there's been a lot more things going on with the Trans movement and things like that. So just a lot of people and a lot of family dissensions about certain topics in that area and all kinds of things. That's been a challenge and source of anxiety for individuals and businesses. (Ramaswamy, 2021) The recent case of Disney getting targeted by the governor of Florida for their corporate stance on Florida laws about sexual education is just one such example. (Gabbatt, 2022)

Domestic Politics, Trump, Etc.

Another source of upheaval and uncertainty for us has been politics: Politics recently have been a source of division more than ever, but 2020 was a year of intensely heated politics. The degree of incendiary political rhetoric reached extremes which were discouraging and at times frightening. Everything became political too—including wearing masks, getting the vaccine, and general public safety measures. Doctors (especially Fauci) became political pariahs. Nearly everything has gotten political—gas prices, the price of avocados, Dr. Seuss, etc. (Alexander, Harris, 2021) Almost anything, when touched by this dissension and political intensification brings tension for us even within our families much less among our colleagues or in our schools-- this political intensification has made everything more difficult to discuss.

Nationalism and International Politics (Russian & Ukraine, China, etc.)

On a global level, until Russia invaded Ukraine, we had recently seen strong turns from globalization to nationalism—outrage about Russia's invasion of Ukraine is one of the few things that's brought many (i.e., NATO and Europe) together. It is unfortunate that we have to have something like the Ukrainian invasion to do it. Recent examples of a nationalist swing against a connected globalized world include Brexit in the last couple of years, and the United States and China fighting with one another of course with the make America great again campaign (and of course Russia's invasion of Ukraine was itself rooted in Putin's new nationalism). In France Le Pen remains one of the top politicians, supporting very inward looking nationalism for her country; in Poland we've seen a lot of this nationalism-- so all over the world there's more and more nationalism happening and less global unity, so these are difficult things to try to deal with.

Generational Divide

Socially, there's the generational divide. I still get the Wall Street Journal delivered to my house every day in paper form and a lot of my students wonder what in the world am I getting all those trees cut down for. I wonder why they don't actually purchase physical books, and have strong suspicions that if they only have electronic copies of books, they probably aren't really reading them. They wonder why I don't allow them to use their phones in my classroom, while I wonder how they could imagine that they can be present to others while they are on their phones. So there are a lot of generational divides between us sometimes that make it hard to understand why others behave as they do. (Pryor, 2019)

Business Disruptions

In addition to these more societal shifts and challenges, there are significant business disruptions which directly impact us as educators and thought leaders. These shifts need to affect the way that we think about our classes and what we think about business in general. It's hard enough to get used to all the changes we see, much less to critically analyze it because sometimes they happen so quickly.

Questioning Shareholder Value Focus

Around 2012, a lot of people began publically raising serious questions about Milton Friedman's Shareholder value maximization (Stout, 2013) proposition. Of course Ed Freeman had been suggesting stakeholder theory for decades, but Lynn Stout's book helped bring about a lot of serious questioning from practitioners. (Stout, 2012) Even Jack Welch famously said in 2011, "I think the dumbest idea in the world is profit maximization." A famous public statement about the shift from shareholder maximization thinking to stakeholder thinking was put out in by the Business Roundtable in 2019, stating that, "the purpose of a corporation is to promote an economy that serves all Americans." (Business Roundtable, 2019) Despite this, many business schools continue to teach shareholder profit maximization to our students.

Work-From-Home Shift

The recent work from home shift is having significant effects on corporate culture—many of which we may not see for some time. Elon Musk has had strong resistance getting employees to come back to work live and in person. (Walters, 2022) There are significant effects on company culture which come with remote work. (Liu, 2021) I have a good friend who has worked for a decade at a financial office which decided to have everyone work from home and now they decided this will be permanent so they're selling the building. She will never have a building to go back to and be with her community. How will they onboard new people to help them learn the culture of the business? I don't think they've figured that out, yet how you bring them into a community when there is no building or physical community is going to be hard. These are hard questions and we've got some of our students graduating who are going right into that situation. They're going to be on-boarded virtually. How do we help? It is honestly hard for

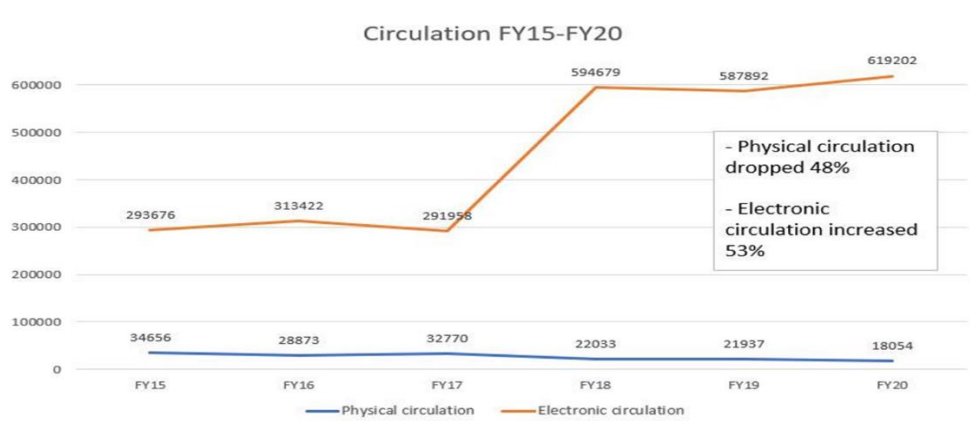
me to wrap my mind around that, much less help a student know how they're going survive and even flourish and grow in that sort of environment.

Monopolistic Control

Monopolistic control: we certainly can think of Facebook and Amazon and Apple, but there are a lot of monopolies and what do we have to say about that or do we just try to keep up with all the different acquisitions that take place. The conglomeration of industry has been happening a long time—as Walmart grew and small independent shops folded, as consolidation has occurred in pharmaceuticals, agriculture, banking, and so very many industries. We now see large scale investors getting into the single family housing market, and even into farmland, raising fresh questions about the social benefit of such consolidation of wealth and production.

Media Shifts, and the Exponential increase in information.

Information is doubling every 11 months now so it's no wonder it's hard to keep up with that and it's no wonder that we're forgetting so many things. With all that new knowledge a lot of it is going to get forgotten and left aside. Private publishing, private production of music, videos, films, podcasts, porn, everything-- All this is done without established gatekeepers that we used to have, so it changes the way that you do business, it changes the way that you think about business. There's a decline in standard media outlets we know that too-- no more NBC, CBS, and all that. An interesting statistic about books is that physical circulation has dropped 59% among Title IV degree-granting institutions between FY14-FY19. My own Creighton University showed a decline of 48 percent and the electronic circulation has increased 53% 2015-2020. (<https://culibraries.creighton.edu/books2022>) That is a pretty remarkable shift where there are more and more things being checked out electronically. Those of us who like books are really the dinosaurs nowadays so that's a change too for us as professors.



While these are just a few of the factors leading to a general sense of unease these days, it is obvious that we are seeing a lot of changes in a fairly short amount of time. We are needing to

shift our understanding and perspectives on a lot of fronts at the same time, and it is understandable that we might feel unsettled or lack a clear vision of how to proceed.

The Current Social Dilemmas: AI, Big Data, and the Effects of Social Media

If the contemporary social upheavals and significant lane-changes in business theory and practice weren't enough to challenge us, the disruptions of AI, big data, and social media are looming large. The recent documentary *The Social Dilemma* provides some startling insights into our current situation. It is a powerful film and it really raises some questions that might keep you up at night—especially if you have kids or grandkids.

Small Scale Decisions and their Unintended Aggregate Systematic Effects

As with many concerns, decisions we make regarding AI, Big Data and Social media often seem somewhat small and insignificant, perhaps even harmless, but there can be long term and amalgamated consequences which are much greater than what we thought with the small decisions. In their 2019 book, Frischmann and Selinger highlight the problem that we have:

Like climate change, there are an incredible variety of small-scale decisions we each make about technology that seem, on their own terms, rational and unproblematic. Yet the increments aggregate, and... we suffer if we fail to account for the systemic effects of our decisions including the production of negative externalities and the impacts on ourselves and future generations.” (Frischmann and Selinger)

When it comes to AI and social media in particular these small scale decisions lead to systematic effects which we did not foresee and did not want. We find a lot of unintended negative externalities from recent developments in AI and social media-- “systemic effects of our decisions including the production of negative externalities and the impacts on ourselves and future generations.” Again, the intentions may be good, but the unintended negative consequences are not thoroughly considered. A few examples may help make the point.

Fitbits

Fitbits were required of all students at Oral Roberts University in 2016. (Watkins, 2016) It seemed like a great idea-- all the students will be fit, you can make sure that your students are getting in so many days, so many steps per day, and everyone was required to do PE/Physical-Education every semester during their entire time there so that would help them to stay fit and they might not gain the freshman fifteen. What Oral Roberts apparently didn't really think about was ‘now we're monitoring all the students and all of our students have basically a dog collar on to monitor them so we can know where they're at’ and the university got a lot of pushback. Good intentions, but there was a lot of backlash from that. It has been the same kind of proposals in a lot of k-12 schools across the country and again, good intentions but what's the long-term implication of this?

Virtual shopping

Another example where it's been great for us during Covid, I haven't had to go out, and I don't have to deal with people—it has been great-- I can get stuff shipped to me. I don't know what the statistics are-- we would have to do an economic analysis of what the costs are in terms of global footprint of all the amazon boxes that get shipped to my house or to your house every week. I probably get 10 different boxes shipped to my house. Am I helping the environment with virtual shopping because I'm not driving to the store or am I actually causing more harm to you? (Farmbrough, 2019) I don't know the answer to that but there are a lot of interesting questions to be asking.

Texting and not Talking

When I was a kid I was told by my mom, “stop talking to him on the phone go out and have a real conversation with your friend” and I did that. Now I know parents who say, “stop texting them just call them on that phone!” and so, it's a different level. We are trying to get them to have voice communication. I was with my students a couple weeks ago-- we had an encounter Christ retreat at our retreat center-- and the students were sitting around after dinner and we weren't supposed to have our phones. Nobody did and we were talking. One of the students said “it's kind of weird isn't it to not have our phones, like now there was no hot topic going on so I was just going to check my phone” and everyone agreed. It becomes our automatic response—just reach for the phone. That's our go-to reflex-- to go look at our phone when there's no one talking.

Telematics insurance monitors

A great idea in theory, telematics lets insurance companies see how you drive so then you can pay less for your insurance. Of course the really bad drivers are the ones that are going to have to pay more money. It is a wonderful idea at one level, but you also then are monitored at all times. Will the government maybe use that and just issue you tickets whenever you speed? Maybe you'll just get another ticket. People already don't like the camera monitors to give us tickets. I really don't think we'd like that. So the effects of small decisions lead to these possible systematic effects.

What your face may tell lenders about your credit

China's huge insurer Ping An uses facial recognition technology to verify identities as well as examine expressions for clues about their truthfulness and assess to risk of the insured but also keeps agents from skipping meetings. Some companies use this in the United States right now as they're doing the interviews with our students. Using facial recognition to watch their facial features in some cases or to listen to the words that they're using and how they use them see if they think they're telling the truth. (Manokha, 2019) We're using this even sometimes in interviews today in the United States-- it's a concern I think, and this is where you have small steps that lead to bigger potential problems.

China's social credit system

It is not nationwide yet in China (it's piecemeal here and there) but China's social credit system rates a person's reputation using in part China's mass surveillance systems. Potentially denying some citizens from flying, or using the train, throttling your internet speeds, banning your kids from the best schools, keeping you from getting the best jobs, or rooms at the best hotels. Potentially even taking away your dog or cat depending on what your pet is. (Greenfield, 2018) Sometimes you're judged on how many times you use the back door instead of the front door because maybe you're trying to avoid them if you're going out the back door. While it does help to prompt particular behaviors through consequential punishments and rewards societally, serious questions arise regarding real autonomy and freedom.

The loss of Privacy Means the Loss of Real Moral Behavior

A fundamental problem with these monitoring methods, like the social credit system, facial recognition judgements, telematics monitors or Fitbits is that they are an externalist approach to getting people to 'do the right thing'—you will be punished if you don't. In business we sometimes use some externalist approaches to get 'compliance' from employees, which means you're using external forces to get people to do things. A recent study demonstrated that that clean scents promote moral behavior, which would be a good example of using external means to get ethical behavior. (Liljenquist, Et al., 2010) According to the study, "22 percent of Windex-ed room participants said they'd like to donate money, compared to only 6 percent of those in a normal room." In contrast to the externalist approach, an internalist approach aims to transform your conscience and moral compass inside and get you to build a better character so you'll do the right thing even when no one's looking. Another externalist approach would be a panopticon-- a jail where the jail guard can see everybody in every single jail cell in this jail. Such a situation may gain compliance, but it undermines individual freedom and choice by eliminating true privacy. And this is my point: without privacy there's no chance to do right without reward, or wrong without punishment.

I don't think you can truly be ethical if you don't have privacy, because if someone's watching me at all times—if they can simply run the body cam to check to make sure I always do the right thing that's different than if I don't have anyone watching me and I do the right thing. When the child is getting watched by the mom and dad then they do the right thing that's quite different than when mom and dad are far away and they're still doing what is right. So utilizing these externalist approaches without at least accompanying internalist efforts results in a superficial common good aim, and without protection of dignity of the person-- which is not the common good at all. The bottom line is: privacy and decision making are essential to human dignity. The basic problem is the elimination of the human in that situation. To reiterate, it happens in this way:

1. Constant monitoring relies entirely on consequent punishments, not on transformation of the person's desires or improvement of character.

2. Such a monitoring approach undermines individual freedom and choice by eliminating true privacy. Without privacy there is no chance to do right without reward.
3. It has a superficial ‘common good’ aim without protection of dignity of the person or difference— which is not common good at all.
4. Ultimately, privacy and decision making are essential to human dignity.

Real moral behavior and moral transformation require thoughtful human reflection and intentionality. This is the basis of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, for example:

“From the start, the Spiritual Exercises encourage purposeful reflection on the relationship between one's everyday activities and the end or set of ends associated with those activities. However, the Exercises do not just encourage reflection upon an abstract final end. Rather, they have the person purposefully contemplate the way he or she directs his or her life toward "the good" of the deity. As spiritual exercises, the Exercises encourage individual reflection upon the movements of the soul by the divine spirit and its ungodly opposite - God and the evil spirit. Dennis Moberg, 2001, JBE

Although this is the Jesuit tradition, really this view is part of the larger Christian tradition and so encompasses the Franciscan tradition as well. We are all concerned with reflecting on what am I doing-- I want to do it somehow for a higher purpose, for the glory of God and to reflect on that. Unfortunately, when we have these external things directing us there's not as much of that chance for reflection

Social media, phone and internet addiction, and their harms.

There are plenty of books you can buy about internet addiction. Depending on what country you're in, anywhere from seven to eighteen percent of people seem to have internet addiction in one sort or another. (Hull, 2022) Nomophobia is similar—the fear of not having your phone nearby has gone up pretty dramatically as well. People just don't feel comfortable when they don't have their phone around so they can find out what's going on. These technology disorders lead to anxieties which are having very serious effects, especially among the young. A lot of teen angst going on and a lot of teens are self-harming. The rate of teen suicide has gone up significantly, and this is directly connected in many respects. Kids are able to fixate on what other people are thinking about them all the time and being very concerned about that constantly.

A friend of mine has a teenager who has been in and out of the hospital for the last year probably at least once a month sometimes twice a month, oftentimes for self-harm. He explains it to me this way: “When I was a kid, I got bullied at school. My kid gets bullied at school. When school was over, I came home and had a loving family to be around, a safe place. But my kid brings their phone home with them and so they get bullied all evening at home via their phone 24/7” But phone addiction isn’t just a youth problem. I see plenty of people that are well over 50 that are hanging out with their kids or their grandkids but they're on their phone. Their kids are looking around at the world and their parents are on the phone. It’s not just one

generation or another, I know some of my friends who are in their 50s or 60s and are just as connected to their phone as any teenager I've ever met.

In a recent article in *Business Ethics Quarterly* by Manny Velazquez and Vikram Bhargava they reported the following harms which can happen due to social media addiction: (Velasquez, Vikram, 2021)

1. Poor Bodily Health
2. Dull Senses, Imagination, Thought
3. Emotional Deficits
4. Poor Practical Reason (autonomy, self-direction)
5. Isolation & Loneliness
6. Play/Interaction with world/others
7. Suicide

This is not a surprising list. First, bodily health: you don't get as much sleep if you look at your phone right before you go to bed of course. It dulls the senses, imagination, and thought. There can be emotional deficits that come from having too much connection with your social media accounts, and with the internet. Or there may be poor practical reasoning in terms of autonomy and self-direction, maybe you just don't make as many decisions for yourself and you're guided more by what you see as isolation and loneliness. Strangely enough the more that we're connected sometimes the lonelier and more isolated we feel. When we don't have a lot of play or interaction with the world or with others because we're on our phone, we have a connection to others alright but a lot of times it ends up being more passive. We are not going out, not in the world, not in nature, and not having direct contact with people. Finally, there are some statistics that seem to show that suicide has gone up as well with some of this addiction. It is obvious this has become an addiction.

The blessings and curses of AI

AI seems to help us immensely nowadays. Yet, there are ethical concerns as well. As Christina Pazzanese recently pointed out:

With virtually no U.S. government oversight, private companies use AI software to make determinations about health and medicine, employment, creditworthiness, and even criminal justice without having to answer for how they're ensuring that programs aren't encoded, consciously or unconsciously, with structural biases. (Pazzanese, 2020)

But beyond these unintentional biases, there might be some serious concerns to consider as we develop new (perhaps less-virtuous) characteristics and habits through our growing dependence on AI. AI can possibly help us live more deliberately, as Julien Friedland has pointed out, but there are also some serious negative consequences from AI. (Friedland, 2019)

Frequently an app that we have can tell us what to choose or where to go, or amazon helping us discover what new products we might want to buy, or apps suggesting to us what we maybe want or what we maybe do. With such help, we avoid the trouble of doing it ourselves and it spares us from mundane annoyances. By having that app do it for us on a regular basis, we don't have to think about it, we avoid having to adjust our conduct via interaction with others. Now I simply don't have to adjust at all, because it's frictionless-- I'm not dealing with you, and so we avoid having to adapt to new situations. It's great-- I don't have to go to grocery stores, I order it, it comes to me, and I don't have to deal with people. I don't have to drive anywhere or deal with all those crazy drivers. It is indeed wonderful, but the result is that I also don't have to adapt to new situations, and that adjusting is part of how we grow as human beings and grow in character as we face difficult struggles and difficult situations. So it's part of the curse that comes with this blessing. This goes back to the book I mentioned before-- convenience can lead to disengagement, less personal interaction, increased passivity, emotional detachment, decreased agency-- I'm not doing stuff myself and I'm just letting AI decrease my responsibility. These questions are in front of us: if you have artificial intelligence driving the car, and it gets in an accident, who is responsible? Elon Musk? You? You weren't driving at the time. It is hard to know and we're still trying to figure answers to such questions, but it sure doesn't seem like it's fully my responsibility. There is also an increased ignorance—there are a lot of skills that people are losing as they have AI do new things for them—reading maps to get somewhere, for example. I have experienced that myself and there's de-skilling and demotivating occurring as you have AI doing these various things for you through your app or through other avenues where decisions are just made for you and you don't have to make those decisions.

How should We Proceed? How should we embrace our Vocation as Professors Now?

It seems that there are a few options available to us in such an uncertain world. First, we could proceed as if nothing is different and just hope for the best. That's optimism of one sort—a pretty passive optimism. Of course habits can be good, and traditions can help us. Covid disrupted many of our good habits, and our addiction to social media can as well. So it can be helpful in some respects to go back to old habits: if you're used to going to church on Sundays, go to church again. Keep doing those things, get back into the habit and start having that book club you used to have before Covid, and go back to the gym. We want some normality. But habits can hold us back too. We've discussed some significant shifts in culture and business and sometimes we just keep teaching the same way over and over because that's my syllabus and it's really helpful it does it gets pretty good, and the responses from students seem decent, and so it'd be a lot of work to rework this class... so I just keep doing it the same way over and over. So just proceed as if nothing happened can be the most comfortable route-- don't bring up BLM or transgender things in your classroom (we're business we don't talk about controversial social things hopefully in the psych class they'll get some help right?). If I respond in this way while I know our students are struggling with these concerns, am I being the professor I should be? You can have those kind of attitudes as a business professor: 'well we're not teaching ethics we're not

teaching theology, we're business.' We expect that since we teach at Catholic schools that hopefully the students are getting that help and direction somewhere else (just not from me).

A second option is to coast until retirement (not unlike option 1 in many respects). I am nowhere near retirement, but I know from colleagues that the thought can creep in: "oh maybe I can just keep on doing things the way I've done in the past and no one will really notice, or will give me a break since I'm almost out of here anyway".

Play it safe and go with the flow and make slight adjustments in line with suggestions. We frequently respond to these questions by simply trying to policy and PR our way through these things. We respond to BLM concerns by bringing in some nationally recognized speakers. We respond to LGBTQ concerns by having a new administrator of DEI. We respond to AI and Big Data Ethics concerns by establishing a new institute for Big Data Ethics. We respond to Covid concerns by having highly publicized responses to these concerns for parents to feel good about their kids being here. What we don't do is participate in actual discussions with people of color or Trans students. We do not particularly adjust our own classes to reflect many of the significant changes we are here discussing. These initiatives may be great but that doesn't really deal with the problem. It doesn't deal with the fact that our colleagues and students don't know how to talk about those things. Having some speaker come in and talk to us about it doesn't really help our students figure out how to think it through. Pronoun policies don't help anyone talk about the issues and what's going on.

Personal examples of what not to do

It is natural for many of us to avoid the difficult discussions and hope things blow over and get resolved somehow. But if we don't help bring about community again, and help our students to be brought back into real community, who will do it? I have seen how I fail to do what I should and I want to bring those up as pointers as to what not to do.

One thing I loved during Covid was to just go in my office when no one was there at school. I would go to my office and I just read a lot and I wrote a lot of articles during the pandemic. It was great just escaping into my own little world. I kept doing my online classes—fine-- but I wasn't very engaged and I just escaped in my own little world and tried not to watch the news very much. I found that I am quite skilled at escaping the world in my own way by immersing myself in academia.

Another deficit of mine is that I spread myself too thin. This is a constant problem for me and I don't know if it is for you too, but I frequently spread myself too thin so I'm not able to really do *magis* in the world (A Jesuit Latin word for 'to do excellence') the way I should and part of that's from over commitment. I am having my first child around October 1st, and that has helped me get some perspective. It has been helpful to have a kid coming on the way because I started to think, what am I going to disconnect from, and what am I not doing next year that I did this year. I oftentimes substitute busyness for reflection because if I got stuff done I think I'm doing well, but that doesn't allow for the reflection that's necessary for me to really be thinking about what am I doing with my life what am I accomplishing? And why am I doing this? And

am I losing my focus, forgetting my values, and my calling? I do believe God has given each of us a calling, so I have got to figure out what is that? What am I uniquely called to, and what am I positioned to do? Might other people do this? What do I need to focus on and really be confident in so I can focus on those things and not get distracted by other good things.

The last way I want to share that I fail is that I can think of students and colleagues as work, not as opportunities for human engagement. When I recently went on an ‘Encounter Christ’ retreat with students, I thought, ‘I’m going to be with students for 48 hours straight-- all the time-- that’s going to be a lot for me to handle!’ but in the end it was really a blessing and I really love those connections with the students. So sometimes you just have to force yourself to get back into those modes after being out of touch with people for so long.

Personal Examples of What to Do

So these are my positive suggestions for you, and some of these are pretty personal. First, taking time to reflect regularly. Whether that’s prayer, or meditation, or whatever it is you need to be doing to help you think about what I am up to here. What do I need to be paying attention to today?

Audit your commitments-- go through your commitments and figure out what can I give up here? What should I not keep doing and what do I need to focus on so that I can be really excellent at it? And I don’t have to be in eight different clubs on campus I can just be in one or two and do that really well.

Rebuilding community on campus: I’m concerned about this frankly but I’m concerned about this everywhere. During Covid, we were actually told not to come to campus except for essential duties. Because of that, I think we’ve all gotten in the habit of coming in, teaching our class, and going home-- or maybe not even coming into each class. There has been a disruption of community in our own immediate communities, so we’ve got to figure out ways to help restart community. It must be intentional because it’s not just going to happen on its own. Typically, as we get into our habits we don’t get out of those habits unless we get shoved out of those habits, or at least lured out of the habits.

Help your students to re-engage. I met an OB professor recently who has an interesting assignment for her students—she asks them to film themselves getting rejected. Some approach a stranger in a grocery store and ask them to tie their shoes for them, or maybe ask a stranger to scratch their back or comb their hair—the point is that they need to ask a complete stranger for something and get rejected. It is very difficult for students to do this, because they do not like strange interaction and they especially hate rejection. But students have found that the exercise really helps them have confidence. One of my friends’ students even came back and said that having had so much experience of rejection, she was willing to ask for more during a job negotiation and got significantly more.

I plan to use her assignment in a slightly different way. Students seem to have a difficult time telling anyone else that they are wrong, and our society has made it quite difficult to make criticisms with civil discourse. So I plan to have my students engage with three people, giving

them criticism. It can be telling your roommate they need to refill the ice cube tray, or telling a roommate to wash their own dishes—but helping them to engage in civil criticism and conflict even at such a micro-level both would help them to have critical viewpoints and learn how to express them in a way which will be better received.

Finally, we need to incorporate AI and Big Data ethics into our classes, to provide an opportunity for students to conscientiously think about these things. And articles on the effects of Covid on corporate culture, the challenges of DEI in the face of LGBTQ and BLM concerns and other such issues must be addressed. We do not want our students unprepared to thoughtfully deal with these concerns in the workplace.

So I would urge you, if you haven't changed things or shifted things up in light of some of the concerns we talked about at the front of this essay, please think about that: how can you bring those up in a more positive way and how can you help students consider positive ways to use AI, etc., for the common good? Helping students consider how we can use these things for the common good and what can we do as agents of change to reconceive how we use these in a responsible manner? If we as professors don't help them think through how to respond and even redirect, I'm afraid AI and the concerns above are going to cause a lot more harm in our society, so we really have to figure out how to do it this.

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Service Trips, Hiker SPACE, the Early Franciscans, and Their Rule of 1209

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Abstract

Most faith-based Colleges and Universities consider education to be holistic; that is, educating the whole person, both academic and values elements. Franciscan colleges and Universities share this educational goal and use Service trips as a common means to accomplish the values-based mission. While Service trips are considered positive life experiences, anecdotally many students return from these trips with “sadness.”

The purpose of this paper is to provide a theoretical structure, taken from the Hiking the nature of this sadness and improve the Service trip experience. The paper applies and literature, to better understand discusses this structure in the context of the Service trip and Early Franciscan experiences. Relying on and leveraging this structure, we suggest Service trips can be more authentic Franciscan experiences both physically and emotionally.

Introduction.

Most faith-based Colleges and Universities consider education to be holistic; that is, educating the whole person, both academic and values elements. Franciscan colleges and Universities share this educational goal within the context of the Franciscan tradition. Service activities and especially service trips are a common means to accomplish the values-based mission. Service trips allow students to step away from their normal routines for a week or more and focus on the service mission. While service trips are considered positive life experiences, faculty and staff who lead these trips often, at least anecdotally, observe a, for lack of a better word, sadness (depression, blues, haze,...) in many students returning from a service trip. This is also reported by many volunteers when they return to school.

Academic literature and mainstream media report that periods of sadness and adjustment often follow the end of many life events. While this feeling is often called depression, it is more correctly labeled grief and associated with a type of loss. These life events commonly relate to careers; graduation, retirement, or vocational change. However, a line of this research, based in thru-hiking has multiple parallels to service trips. A notable contribution to understanding this depression is Baker (2019) and her SPACE framework. SPACE is an acronym for Simplicity, Purpose, Adventure, Community, and Endorphins (or Extreme exercise). The SPACE framework also has clear parallels to the Early Franciscans and their very first rules presented in 1209 to Pope Innocent III.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a theoretical structure, taken from the Hiking literature, to better understand the nature of this sadness and improve the service trip experience. The paper applies and discusses this structure in the context of the service trip and early Franciscan experiences. Relying on and leveraging this structure, we suggest service trips can be authentic Franciscan experiences both physically and emotionally.

The paper is organized into six sections. The first provides background and motivation. The second section presents Baker's (2019) SPACE structure in the context of Thru-hiking; the context it was developed. The third section applies the SPACE structure to Service trips. The following two sections relate to the Earliest Franciscans. One section provides context on the Earliest Franciscans and their Rule of 1209. And the following section applies the SPACE structure to the Earliest Franciscans. The final section summarizes and concludes the paper.

Background and Motivation.

Service activities are a fundamental part of a holistic college education providing many benefits to students. In addition to the educational benefits, a variety of work (eg. Musick and Wilson 2003 and Green 2019) suggest that volunteer service work has a positive impact on participants including a reduction in feelings of depression or grief. However, the service activities studied are primarily short-term; that is they are done at home and supplement daily activities and are not longer-term trips. Additionally, positive outcomes of service are consistent with the scales of the Volunteer Function Inventory or VFI (Cleary et al, 1998)) that assess participants' motives to engage in service. All motives are positive; for example, enhancing career or ego by engaging in volunteer service.

In contrast with the positive short-term service findings, longer-term trips are often associated with a feeling of sadness (or regret) that many who volunteers and service trip leaders report. Fortunately, this feeling, which is often misnamed depression, typically disappears in a short-time for the majority of volunteers and as such is more aptly named grief than depression. This grief is so pronounced for longer trips that the Peace Corps volunteer community has numerous postings on the difficulty of 're-entry' into previous life, can be significantly difficult. Observing these feelings or emotions may cause concern of the trip leaders for the mental health of the student volunteers; hence, the importance to understand this sadness.

Feeling down or depressed after major life changes is a common event. Many of these types of depression (or grief) have been well-documented in both academic and mainstream literature. A large part of this feeling of grief is from the loss that participants feel as their lives change and they give up one identity for a new identity. Often this depression is associated with a major personal or professional event. More closely related to service trip sadness are the concepts of *culture shock* resulting from international travel, most commonly service-based, return (Anjarwalla 2010) and *post-hike depression* resulting from completion of a major thru-hike such as the Appalachian Trail (AT) or Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) (Parris, 2017; Bodnar, 2018; Abrams, 2018; Stinchcombe, 2019; Neves, 2019; Thomas, 2020).

Thru-Hikers and Baker's (2019) SPACE framework.

In this section, we first provide background on the nature and culture of hikers to give context to the SPACE structure. It is important to know that SPACE evolved in an effort to understand *Post-hike "depression;"* an occurrence similar to the sadness experienced by many volunteers following service trips. We then present the SPACE structure within the hiker culture.

The term Thru-hiker describes a backpacker who completes a long trail such as the Appalachian Trail (AT), Pacific Crest Trail (PCT), or Continental Divide Trail (CT). These trails are over 2,000, 2,600 miles, and 3,000 miles respectively and commonly require four to six months to complete. A segment hiker is a person who hikes a segment of a trail (in a time segment ranging from as little as one week to as much as two months). Section-hikers may complete a Trial (such as the AT or PCT) over multiple years.

Post-hike depression is a term used by many thru-hikers (and some section-hikers) to describe “down” feelings or emotions following or near the end of a thru-or section hike. Such emotions might be unexpected since thru-hikers often view completing a trail as a major life achievement.

Anecdotally, *Post-hike depression* is well documented in social media outlets such as posts podcasts or blogs as well as the related comments to these posts. These discussions of *Post-hike depression* include common themes such as a failure to fit back into society and norms, homesickness for the trail, a lack of understanding from family and friends, and how the trail changed them as a person.

Motivated to better understand *Post-hike depression*, hiker and cognitive scientist Ann Baker studied *Post-hiker depression* in a more formal manner by interviewing numerous hikers; logging and organizing responses. As Baker (2019) points out with respect to hiking, the malaise that volunteers feel is upon further examination more one of grief than depression. Hence, Baker’s analysis argues that depression is a misnomer; a better term is grief.

Many people use the terms interchangeably. However, more specifically, depression is longer-term and more apt to be focused on one’s feeling of a lack of worth; grief is more transitory and centered on a loss. Depression is contrasted with grief by Schimelpfening (2022) in a manner consistent with Baker’s work.

A critical element in grief is a loss; Baker (2019) created the SPACE structure to define what is lost at or near the conclusion of a thru-hike. SPACE is an acronym for Simplicity, Purpose, Adventure, Community, and Extreme exercise. The SPACE framework defines in detail what is lost causing grief; generally and briefly outlined below.

Simplicity – the focus on basic goals and needs of daily life.

Purpose – A singular well defined goal that is easily measured.

Adventure – An experience of challenge and accomplishment (includes shared hardship).

Community – A supportive relationship of persons sharing common goals.

Extreme exercise – A positive feeling from endorphins release, a “runner high.”

When a hiker leaves the Trail this SPACE is lost. Interpretations of SPACE framework in a hiker context is discussed below.

Simplicity. Trail life is simple. A hiker carries all their needs in a 30-50 pound pack. Only a few decisions are needed each day. Where to get water? How far to hike that day?

Finding level ground for a tent (or hike to the next shelter). In short, the trail reduces daily life to the essentials and basics. This voluntary simplicity is a stark contrast with the “real world” where there many complex life issues. Hikers leave the “real world,” enjoy the simplicity of the hike, but must return to their complex lives after a hike.

Purpose. The purpose is singularly to complete the thru-hike (or long section hike), to reach a destination, and hike the Trail. Clearly, purpose (or goal) is related to simplicity, yet, the purpose is distinct. The overall goal requires months, those months are easily broken into weeks and days and the number of miles hiked in each. Weekly or daily goals, such as planning the next resupply or miles to cover each day, are directly related to the singular purpose and it is easy to see progress. In contrast, normal (or “real world”) life requires multiple social and professional goals; these goals are both difficult to measure and balance.

Adventure. Nature provides a sense of adventure, challenge, and fun. Related to Adventure the hiking and outdoor community have developed terms defining types of fun. Fun can be type I, type II, or type III. Type I fun is fun as it happens, enjoying a sunset. Type II fun is not as fun as it happens, but is fun when reflected upon with others who shared the experience (later that day, next week, or next year). An example of type II fun is a hard climb in the cold rain to a mountain top shelter; type II fun provides a sense of accomplishment. Type III fun is not fun; neither as it occurs nor when reflected upon.

Community. Hikers are and live in a culture and a community. They have their own jargon (for example, Nobo and Sobo – north bound and south bound hikers). Hikers have trail names (a nick-name of sorts they use on the trail that gives identity), Hikers travel in bubbles (or groups they camp with) and have trail family, (those other hikers with whom they have a close connection, often made on the trail, and specific shared experiences). All hikers in this trail family share a similar purpose and rely on each other for support. Hikers also include non-hiking supporting persons in the community; these are others helping the hiker achieve the purpose such as trail angels (Bunker 2015) or those helping with re-supply. Hikers freely share information, advice, and goodwill; and at times simple necessities.

Community is the strongest and most common hiker experience. For example, type II fun, a key component of Adventure must be a shared experience. But, Community also includes the bonds of simplicity and a shared purpose. Hikers tend to view the hiking community and people, in contrast with the communities of the “real world,” as more supportive, real, and authentic.

Extreme exercise (Endorphins). Hiking, with the pack, 10-12 hours or 15-25 miles a day depending on terrain and elevation change is physically demanding. Hikers commonly require a Zero-day (no miles hiked) or Near-O (few miles hiked) every six to ten days to refuel depleted calories. Extreme exercise causes the body to create endorphins or a “runner high.” Completing a hike and coming off the trail quickly reduces the endorphin level; this drop in endorphin level is noticeable and eliminates the “runners-high” feeling to the hiker.

In other words, *post-hike depression* (or more appropriately grief) results from what is lost when a hiker leaves the trail, the hiker’s SPACE. But, this hiker SPACE is more than a

collection of experiences. Hiker SPACE is a sense of self and identity, often personified by trail names. Trail names are acquired by multiple means; a hiker may choose a trail name themselves or be given a trail name by others (see Trial and Summit 2020). Hikers are in a relationship with the Trail and its community; when Hikers leave the trail a part of this relationship and the hiker's identity may be lost.

Service trips and the SPACE framework.

This section applies the SPACE framework to Service or Mission trips; we will consider these trips broadly, as Relief trips. Simply, the trip provides a relief service. Relief is needed as a response to a person or group in need. This need may result for a variety of reasons. In this paper, we will use specific examples from relief trips related to natural disasters, extended economic hardship (Habitat for Humanity like work) or soup kitchen. Clearly, other reasons exist for relief trips such as support services for emerging economies or areas with low educational resources. Service volunteers may supply labor based on their educational skills, such as technology, or simple manual labor. On a trip, volunteers provide services away from their normal living environment; that is, to some extent students become would-be pilgrims.

Below we apply the SPACE framework to Service (Relief) Trips. We provide both overall insights as well as examples related to specific trip missions for each of the components in the SPACE framework.

Simplicity. On a service trip, the day is often greatly simplified relative to the “real world” or even a three-hour shift a volunteer would experience back in the “real world.” Consider a disaster relief (BonaResponds at St Bonaventure University) trip as an example: the volunteers often sleep in dorms or bunks commonly in sleeping bags, volunteers are told when the vehicles will be leaving to and returning from work sites. Meals are served to volunteers; either by hosts at the housing site or a team from the volunteer group. Similarly, working at a soup Kitchen (such as St. Francis Inn, Philadelphia), volunteers are told the times of meal preparation, serving, and clean-up. Volunteers are housed collectively. Again, life is reduced to the essentials.

Purpose. The purpose of a trip, regardless of trip type, is simple, to make things better and serve those in need of relief. The purpose is simple, measurable, and visible: clean-up or rebuilding in a disaster area, repairs to a home, or preparing/serving meals at a soup kitchen. A volunteer team, depending on the nature of the trip, may “gut” a flood-damaged home, repair entrance stairs to an elder's home, or prepare and serve a countable number of meals per a day. In each day's activities volunteers know they have made things better and contributed to a common goal; volunteers can visually see and measure the contributions of their labor to the overall goal.

In contrast to the typical “real world” school environment, a volunteer, now in the role of a student, has multiple, complex goals related to grades, professional, social, and clubs. These “real world” goals may be difficult to achieve, measure and balance. For example, students may struggle is a course and not be able to measure learning until a mid-term exam.

Adventure. In a sense student volunteers on a relief trip, traveling to a different area, are pilgrims, thus a sense of adventure. For example, being among the first on the scene after a natural disaster provides a new experience and contributes to Adventure. Relief trips are exciting, out of the ordinary, and memorable. In a SPACE context adventure is extended by shared experiences some of which are type II fun. Relief trip tasks, regardless of their nature, include multiple challenging activities for teams of volunteers. Service trip volunteers are likely to first recall and recount a variety of stories of struggles or hardships encountered on their trips; many of these were type II fun.

In contrast, there is little adventure in students' day-to-day campus lives; routine drives classes, clubs, and social activity. And while many of these routine activities are type I fun, these routine activities provide less chance of type II fun.

Community. As with hiking, Community is likely the strongest of all of the SPACE elements. Persons are social animals, and more so students; much research shows that all want to be part of a community. Community is what volunteers develop over the course of a trip through mutual purpose, dependence, and shared experiences with other volunteers. As with trail names, volunteers may enjoy nicknames provided by their peers. Volunteers also develop social ties with the persons being served; volunteers are able to place a human face on the service they provide.

Yet, the strongest ties are with their fellow volunteers; those with which they shared the Simplicity, Purpose, and Adventure. These shared activities allow volunteers to be part of a team with a purpose-based service to others. The shared experience gives volunteers the ability to talk, bond, and relate with other volunteers (including those on different trips) in a way they just cannot relate to their friends in the "real world" who have not been on relief trips.

Extreme exercise (endorphins). While the exact exercise level of a volunteer will vary with the specific relief trip, all trips are normally characterized by an increase in activity intensity and time. Knowing days in a relief area are limited and the needs are great, volunteers may have 10-12 hour work days to complete projects or daily tasks. Many volunteers could expect a reduction in endorphin levels upon returning to campus similar to hikers returning home.

We suggest that the post-trip sadness experienced by many volunteers may result from the loss of SPACE. Further, as with hikers, we suggest that SPACE is more than a collection of experiences. SPACE is a sense of self and identity; volunteers, as do hikers, like the person they become on the Service trip. And while hikers have a longer period to establish this identity; volunteers have a relief-centered purpose of helping others. Volunteers, then, are in a relationship with their volunteer community; a community that includes fellow volunteers and those in need of the relief service. Volunteers contribute to the greater society; these contributions are focused on those in need.

Early Franciscans and their Rule of 1209.

In this section, we provide a short summary of Francis' life from 1205 to 1209. While the stories are known by many working or studying at Franciscan Colleges and Universities the order of events along with some key details related to the SPACE framework may not be as well known. We primarily use Spoto (2002) as the source; we recognize that multiple sources are available, but Spoto is a commonly recognized and read book (especially by students). Spoto commonly references Thomas of Celano (In Habig, 1983).

In the Spring of 1205, Francis received his “repair my house” calling and begins his service work of the small church of San Damiano. Francis' father, believing Francis' actions to be completely irrational, places Francis under home imprisonment. By the Fall of 1205 Francis has escaped imprisonment in his father's home and dwells in a cave outside of Assisi. By early 1206 Francis's confrontation with his father ends as Francis famously and publicly strips off his clothes symbolizing a complete break with and independence from his father and his past life. Bishop Guido, of Assisi, gave Francis a hermit's tunic and a small purse and suggested Francis make a pilgrimage to Rome. On his return trip from Rome, the impoverished Francis has the transformative experience of embracing the leper. Francis, who is also reduced to begging at this time, has no other gift to provide.

Francis returns to Assisi (and Gubbio) and supplements his work on San Damiano with service to lepers. Francis also begin work on two other churches, San Pietro (della Spina) and Santa Maria (della Porzina); he begs material when he cannot find them.

In early 1208 Francis added the search for “disciples” to his calling. In late March a young merchant Bernard found Francis and wished to join Francis in living the same simple life of work and sacrifice. Others joined Francis including Sylvester, a local priest; Peter, an experienced canon and ecclesiastical lawyer; and Giles, a peasant. By early 1209 the number of Francis' companions had grown by 10. Francis' fraternity could become a new Religious Order; with this goal, Francis and his companions set out for Rome to seek approval from Pope Innocent III.

To be granted the approval of Innocent III Francis needed a rule; Francis need to define the mission of his fraternity, what he and his companions would do and how. Further, he needed this mission to be within and under the scope of the Church. The lives of Francis and his companions were Apostolic, working with the people especially those in need; in contrast, most religious orders of the time followed a more formal life of pray or study. Hence, Francis needed a simple rule giving those in his fraternity the ability to serve the various needs or populations. Such a rule would also contrast the lengthy rules of existing orders, rules that specified the hours and means of pray, eating, fasting, work, study, preaching and interactions with the populations.

Francis and his companions present a very brief rule. They base the rule on simple Gospel passages such as Mathew 16:24, 19:21 and Luke 18:22 where Jesus tells his disciples to sell what they have, give to the poor and follow him. The rule then included poverty and a simple apostolic way of life. Any preaching was to be limited to “moral encouragement and avoid all discussion of theological matters” (Spoto, p. 87); thus avoiding any potential conflict with

church doctrine. Importantly the rule also includes obedience to the church. Pope Innocent III accepts the rule; before leaving Rome Francis and his companions submit to tonsure, a cutting of the hair to signal their service to the church.

This Rule of 1209 was verbally approved by Innocent III and grew into The Early Rule (of 1221). The Early Rule is well known and can easily be found; for example, see franciscantradition.org for a side by side English and Latin versions. For insight into the Rule of 1209 consider Flood (2013, p.6) "...a structure that derives from three points in the text (of the Early Rule), Chapters I, VII, and XIV." Flood (2013) suggests that Rule I addresses the recruiting and motivations of new members, Rule VII defines the brother economic means differing from society, and Rule XIV established their purpose.

Translation of Rule I of the Early Rule of 1221 (franciscantradition.org) offers multiple scripture passages as motivations for the brothers. In passages such as Mathew 19, Jesus suggests disciples sell what they have, give to the poor, and follow in his footsteps. Stropko (2002) in Chapter Six offer stories of Francis hearing a certain gospel at Mass or randomly opening to a certain passage as motivation. Flood (2013) favors the explanation that collectively the brothers knew the nature of their work, that this work involved service to the marginalized of society (a deviation of the days' norms), and found justification in Scriptures to support this work.

Translation of Rule VII of the Early Rule (franciscantradition.org) offered a description of the brother's manner of serving and working. At the places the Brothers stay they should serve or work. Brothers should do good works and remain occupied and exercise the skills or trades they have learned. All should be received with kindness and respect. Flood (2013) provides a practical context for Rule VII as an extension of Rule I. The Brothers linked or mixed themselves with those in society not adequately benefiting from the economic system. The brother engaged in service with the poor and sick of the times.

Translation of Rule XIV of the Early Rule (franciscantradition.org) is short. The rule suggests, referencing Mathew 10, that the Brothers should take nothing and bless any house they stay eating and drinking what is put before them. The context of this Rule may suggest that the brother provide their service and work and accept the hospitality of the place they stay. Flood (2013) presents the Brothers as pilgrims and strangers as they went about their work. And their work often placed them in the poor houses. Hence, Rule XIV relates to the people among whom the Brothers served and worked.

SPACE and the Franciscans of 1209.

In this section, we consider the SPACE structure in the context of the Franciscans of 1209. We rely both upon the actions of these first companions and the Rule of 1209 they proposed to Innocent III. However, with these Franciscans roles are reversed. Rather than completing a hike or service (relief) trip and returning to the "real world," these Franciscans were leaving their "real world" and entering a new SPACE. In the below paragraphs we discuss

each of the components of SPACE considering both the daily lives and Rule of the Franciscans of 1209.

Simple. The lifestyle of Francis and his companions was by definition simple or Apostolic. They dressed as poor, they owned nothing and for their work they took only the basics and essentials. The Rule of 1209 was simple; it was a stark contrast with the rules of other orders of the time. As Flood (2013) notes Chapters I, VII, and XIV which compiled this Rule of 1209 addressed motivations, economic means, and purpose.

Purpose. Rule I established the Apostolic way of life, or purpose, for the first Franciscans. Rule VII offered the description of how and where the Brothers served. They were linked to those in society in need of relief. Finally, Rule XIV gave them purpose. The brothers would provide their work and service and accept the hospitality of whatever house they stayed in. This work often placed them in the poor's houses or for some the colonies' of lepers.

Adventure. In 1206 Francis' daily activity included repairs and rebuilding of churches; work and begging materials. Hardly adventure in the normal context of the word. Yet, Francis had left behind his comfortable life as a member of a wealthy merchant family. Later that year his life included a pilgrimage to Rome and his embrace of the Leper. By 1208 Francis began to add brothers and his life with these new companions may begin to seem more of an adventure, or more in the SPACE context. The Brother shared a simple life and purpose and endured a set of common struggles. Relying on Chapters I, VII, and XIV to embody the Rule of 1209 the brothers has defined their lifestyle; a very different experience than they had left behind in their "real world."

Community. With the adding brothers to his calling in 1208, a Franciscan community began. The earliest brothers lived in fraternitas serving those in the greater community with the most economic disadvantage. In fact, it was the desire of these early companions to be a community that sent them to Rome to seek Papal approval of their new order. The Rule of 1209 was simple in that it documented the basics; The Rule of 1221 was an expanded version of the Rule of 1209 and largely documented the way the brothers lived in community with each other (Flood, 2013).

Extreme exercise (endorphins). We substitute Work for Extreme exercise in our analysis. Work of the Early Franciscans has been documented (see Flood 2001). Work was the means of the brother to accomplish their goals of service to those on the economic fringes in contrast with nobles and wealthy. The work frequently involved the use of the Brother tools and skills. Work of the time, the 13th century was rigorous; so it is more likely work gave the brothers meaning more so than endorphins.

The lives of the Earliest Franciscans was more than activities such as work. These first Companions found an identity in work and their relationship with those they served. Arguably they enjoyed SPACE. Their lives were simple with a well-understood and related purpose. Clearly, their lives were filled with a type of adventure and hardship, as Pope Innocent III had noted and cautioned, but they embraced the experiences and certainly reflected upon the experiences – potentially a medieval type II fun. Above all, they were a community serving

those on the margins of the greater community. They found and cherished a new self-image or persona; they left behind their old selves departing from their “real world.”

Summary and Conclusion.

Those involved with Service (Mission or Relief) trips as leaders, organizers or supporters generally recognize a parallel between the Early Franciscans and their Service trips. Service trips provide student volunteers the opportunity to serve those on the margins, the economically disadvantaged.

Yet, the SPACE framework and related discussion in the paper suggests that Service trips are often a Franciscan experience both physically and emotionally. As with the Early Franciscans, Service trips provide the volunteers a simple experience with a direct and well understood purpose. The change in routine and challenging work provide a sort of adventure and memories of those challenges. Most importantly the volunteers build and live in community; not only with themselves, but with those they serve.

We believe that the post-trip sadness, or more appropriately grief, commonly felt by volunteers is due to both a physical and emotional loss. But more so the emotional loss from the loss of a positive and fulfilling identity volunteers associate with themselves and their service experiences.

The work in this paper has limitations. The application of the SPACE framework to Service trips is intuitive; however it is also anecdotal. Yet, we believe that many volunteers would find discussions of the SPACE framework similar to their experiences. More formal research is needed to better understand and improve the overall Franciscan based service trip experiences. Research could include surveys or interviews of volunteers returning from trips, similar to Baker’s (2019) work with hikers.

Research could also include investigating and developing strategies to address and minimize post trip sadness either in preparations prior to the trip or activities following the trip. These strategies may be based in the extension of the Franciscan like experiences found on a service trip. Critically, such strategies must recognize the elements of Purpose or Service, the nature of the work and most importantly community. For example engaging in service to those on the margins within the local community near campus would meet the Service and Work (Extreme exercise) elements. Community also includes reliving the experiences of the service trip. This may occur by planning a future trip or reporting in teams to peer groups about the trip. Or, as simple as an evening of reflection where volunteers might relive their type II fun (Adventure) moments.

The overall goals of this paper and follow up lines of research would be to understand and reduce the grief and feeling of loss after a Service trip. To some extent a feeling of loss may be expected if a volunteer’s authentic experiences, physically and emotionally reflect those of the Early Franciscans.

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**Liberals, Conservatives & Franciscans:
Is There Common Ground On The Common Good?**
Michael J. Fischer, Ph. D.

Abstract

What's missing from our law today is an emphasis on the common good, a concept that from the founding era onward was central to the American legal tradition, embodied in references to the "general welfare" in both the preamble to the Constitution and its text. The classical legal tradition, the mainstream of the Western legal tradition until the 20th century, holds that laws should be interpreted in light of the legitimate aim of government, which is the flourishing of the community as community. Classical constitutionalism holds that our political community can succeed only as a whole, rather than as a collection of warring interests, competing ideologies and isolated individuals. Vermeule, 2022.

Introduction

Several questions may have arisen when reading the title of this paper.

First, why examine something as abstract as the "common good" at a conference devoted to exploring the "dark side of biased content and inauthentic users of digital technology that are increasingly fracturing society?" Part of the central thesis underlying this paper, which comes more than anything from the author's own reflections in recent years on our increasingly divisive, polarized, fractured society is that, at its core, is a departure from a focus on the common good. So, following that train of thought, things like the biased, partisan use of digital technologies can be seen to be *symptoms* of the underlying disease: loss of focus on the common good. Also central to the paper is the belief it's necessary to understand, and then address the root cause, in order to ameliorate the symptoms.

Many writers in recent years have pointed to the loss of focus on the common good to explain what is being experienced in our society. The opening quote above is just one example; a recent guest essay in the *New York Times* by Harvard Constitutional Law Professor Adrian Vermeule addressing what he sees as the root cause of divisions in our current U.S. Supreme Court—a loss of focus on the common good.

Second, why a search for "common ground?" It seems easy today to find *differences* in perspectives on almost any topic. However, an objective of the study presented here was to see if *similarities* could be identified in perspectives from very different sources—the common ground, if you will—that might help to illuminate the central elements of the common good, as well as hopefully provide insights into our "increasingly fracturing society."

The remaining sections of this paper describe the research undertaken in pursuit of this "common ground on the common good," and then discuss the findings and their implications.

Research Question and Analysis

One of the first questions that had to be answered when beginning the search for “common ground” was “common ground among whom?” An effort was made to stay away from our current very partisan politics, including that which might be associated with the major U.S. political parties. However, a decision was ultimately made to explore “liberal” and “conservative” perspectives since there seems to be so much debate—on many topics—organized under those labels. This choice is reflected in the first major question examined in this study:

Is there common ground between “liberals” and “conservatives” on the common good; and, if so, what is it?

There was also a desire to see whether there might be any distinctively Franciscan perspectives on the topic, which is reflected in this second research question:

Are there any distinctive insights on the common good from the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition; and, if so, what are they?

While the framing around “liberal” and “conservative” perspectives was useful, it was still very broad. To narrow the focus further, the decision was made to conduct an in-depth examination of one text that might be considered to be an exemplar of each perspective.

Robert Reich’s *The Common Good* (Reich, 2018) was selected as an exemplar of the liberal perspective. Reich currently serves as the Carmel P. Friesen Professor of Public Policy and Senior Fellow in the Blum Center for Developing Economies at the University of California, Berkeley. Robert Reich has a long record of national-level public service, going all the way back to having served in the administrations of both Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter. However, Reich is perhaps best known for his service as Bill Clinton’s Labor Secretary from 1993 to 1997. He later served as a member of Barack Obama’s economic transition advisory board. *The Common Good* is one of the 18 books that Reich has published to-date (UC Berkeley, 2022).

Michael Novak’s *Free Persons and the Common Good* (Novak, 1989) was selected as an exemplar of the conservative perspective. Novak held a variety of academic positions throughout his career, and also had a long stint as a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. He finished his career as a professor at Catholic University before passing away in 2017 at age 83. Novak is interesting because he would likely have been considered to be a “liberal” early in his scholarly career; but most of his later works, including those for which he is best known, would be characterized as “conservative” (Novak, 2022).

The research method employed to answer the first question might be best described as a semi-structured, qualitative, recursive textual analysis. The research was approached with a focus on finding “common ground” among the Reich and Novak texts, but with no pre-conceived notions as to what that common ground might be. The research began with an inductive process, attempting to extract at least preliminary, major themes from each of the texts. The research then proceeded deductively, returning to the texts to test and refine the major themes. The research process continued in a recursive process, “tacking back and forth” (Van Maanen, 1988, p. 77) between the two texts and the emerging themes until the researcher was satisfied that the emerging themes were representative of the texts from which they were developed and did truly represent “common ground” between the two authors.

Reich’s and Novak’s works on the common good are very different in many ways. However, through the process just described, a set of major themes were identified that it was felt were shared by the two authors. Each of the major themes was named *in vivo*—close to the source (Van Maanen, 1979, p. 520)—rather than being based on an *a priori* coding protocol. The first five themes, along with associated selected excerpts from each text, are presented separately in Panels A through E of Figure 1. A sixth theme will be introduced later.

FIGURE 1
MAJOR THEMES

Panel A	
In the US, pursuit of the common good is as old as the nation itself	
<u>Robert Reich</u>	<u>Michael Novak</u>
The idea of “the common good” was once widely understood and accepted in America. After all, the U.S. Constitution was designed for “We the people” seeking to “promote the general welfare”—not for me the selfish jerk seeking as much wealth and power as possible. (p. 13)	The framers were determined to try a new approach to achieving the common good, an approach that simultaneously protected individual rights. They wished to attain two things at once, both private good and the public good. (pp. 41-42)

Panel B	
Pursuit of the common good is essential for the functioning of our society	
<p>A concern for the common good—keeping the common good <i>in mind</i>—is a moral attitude. It recognizes that we’re all in it together. If there is no common good, there is no society. (p. 18)</p> <p>Not only does the common good exist, but it is essential for society to function. Without voluntary adherence to a set of common notions about what is right or wrong, daily life would be insufferable. (p. 22)</p>	<p>The new experiment set before the world an original conception of the common good. It made central to the conception of the common good the protection of individual rights. Simultaneously, it invited history to test a new proposition; viz, that a <i>society</i> so constituted would inculcate a new range of human virtues, achieve unparalleled prosperity through innovation in every field of human industry, and flourish under the blessings of unprecedented liberty. (p. 42)</p>

Panel C	
“Both, And” not “Either, Or”	
<p>The common good is about inclusion—joining together to achieve common goals. (p. 30)</p> <p>But we are not in a zero-sum game with the rest of the world. Our common good is inextricably bound up in the good of the rest of the planet. (p. 29)</p>	<p>The relation between free persons and the community is reciprocal...The free person is ordered to the building up of the common good; the common good is ordered to the fulfillment of free persons. (p. 12)</p> <p><i>e pluribus unum</i>, “out of many, one” (p. 94)</p>

Panel D	
The essential role of individual virtue	
<p>The founding fathers nonetheless embraced a set of principles that would eventually lead to a far more inclusive society. They understood that the best way to preserve freedom was through people fiercely committed to it. When they spoke of “virtue,” it was not as we understand the term, involving personal kindness and generosity. For them, virtue meant a concern for the common good. Without virtuous citizenry, they feared the young republic would succumb to authoritarian rule. (p. 37)</p>	<p>It is, first of all, a moral problem. Only a people practicing virtues of a certain kind can make such an experiment work. Without such virtues, their situation would be “pitiful.” It is, second, an institutional problem. Virtue alone, experience has shown, can never be enough in politics, economics, or culture. Institutions need to be designed to cope with the structural diseases inherent in republican societies. Among those diseases are <i>self-interest</i>, <i>faction</i>, and ...<i>individualism</i>. (p. 42)</p>

Panel E	
“Trust,” “truth,” and “respectful communication” are essential to pursuit of the common good	
<p>Most basically, the common good depends on people trusting that most others in society will also adhere to the common good, rather than lie or otherwise take advantage of them. In this way, civic trust is self-enforcing and self-perpetuating. (p. 27)</p> <p>Reviving the common good also depends on each of us taking responsibility for finding, sharing, and insisting on public truth. By public truth I mean facts about what is happening around us that could affect our well-being, as well as clear logic about the significance of those facts and reasoned analysis about their practical consequences. (p. 156)</p>	<p>The common good of free persons is an order in which critical communication—that is, with respect for the other’s reason—occurs regularly. Such an order respects the dignity of each free person and the common order that is required for such communication. (p. 169)</p> <p>... defining the common good in terms of order reached through civic discourse...(p. 169)</p>

Additional discussion is now provided regarding each of the five themes shown in Figure 1.

Both Novak and Reich took very U.S.-centric perspectives in their books, and it was interesting to see both of them trace the origins of the “common good” back to the establishment of this country as we know it; i.e., to the United States Constitution. It certainly might be very validly asserted that the concept of the common good is much broader than the United States, and that it originated much earlier than 1787. However, that’s beside the point for purposes of this analysis. What’s important here is that both of these authors found it important to them to establish the foundations of the common good in the U.S. Constitution.

Besides just being a historical footnote, however, both Reich and Novak made a very important point: that a focus on the common good is essential to the functioning of our U.S. society as we know it. In fact, the common good is at the very core of the definition of our U.S. society. Reich asserts that: “if there is no common good, there is no society” (2018, p. 18). However, Novak also points out the concept of individual rights, which is also central to the U.S. Constitution, is also critical to the pursuit of the common good as it was envisioned by the founders.

The concepts of individuals and the larger society come out in both Reich’s and Novak’s writings on the common good. Something really striking, however, is that neither author wrote about individual rights *versus* the common good. Or, as reflected in the third theme, neither used the language of “either, or” but rather of “both, and.” Neither wrote about a “zero-sum game,” where if you get more I get less. Rather, while neither explicitly used the term “synergy” in their books, it was the concept that came to

mind while doing the reading; the notion that we can all and each be better off—that is we can “grow the pie”—if we work together for the common good. That was a key insight.

The synergistic nature of “both, and” holds so much promise. What’s not to like about working together to make all of us better off? However, both Reich and Novak talk about an essential element for the collective pursuit of the common good. They both used the same word to describe this necessary element: Virtue. And, interestingly, they both again went all the way back to the founding of the United States to describe both the concept of virtue and the challenges to it.

So, what is the concept of virtue? While it may seem somewhat circular, Reich describes “virtue,” as used by the founding fathers, to mean a concern for the common good. And Novak articulates what were seen as some of the major threats to pursuit of the common good in a free republic: self-interest, faction, and individualism.

Finally, here’s the last major theme of the first set of five. Both authors spoke of the importance of “trust,” “truth,” and “respectful communication” in maintaining a society that is committed to pursuit of the common good. Or, perhaps more darkly, this theme points to the great damage that can be done to society if we lose the ability to engage in civil discourse with those having perspectives different from our own; if we lose trust in the rule of law being applied equally to all; lose trust that long-established and accepted norms will be followed; and, lose trust that we will share equitably in the fruits of collective effort. And, finally, if we lose even a basic agreement on what constitutes “truth,” and move instead into a world of “alternative facts” (Blake, 2020). These are all critical factors that can undermine the “virtue” essential to the voluntary, collective pursuit of the common good.

We’re seeing a loss of civil discourse, and a rise in what Novak termed “radical individualism” (1989, p. 122) versus the common good. We seem to be increasingly moving into a world of “either, or”—you versus me—rather than a society of “both, and.” It is indeed a perilous time. And, as both Reich and Novak point out, the focus on the common good is central to the very definition of our Constitutional republic, in fact to the very definition of our U.S. society.

As indicated earlier, there was also a desire to see if additional insights on the common good from a Franciscan perspective could be identified. Relatively little that was applicable was located in the existing literature. A recent paper titled “Franciscans and the Common Good: Institutional Integrity and Organizational Virtuousness” by Fr. David Couturier (Couturier, 2022) was a notable exception, and served as the focus for this part of the study.

There were several themes identified in Fr. David’s paper that were considered to be particularly relevant to the issues being explored here.

The first theme is “fraternity.” This was a form of life with no inherent competition; no superiors, but only servants for all. While, in pure form, this life order

was and is radical, it shows a way in which the individual can truly flourish in a social order with only common good, without self-interest. As Fr. David pointed out, “Francis’ (social ordering) of fraternity required the construction of an economy and a society of inclusion”...”rooted in a metaphor of (shared) abundance,” rather than in “scarcity” (Couturier, 2022).

An additional, relevant, Franciscan theme in Fr. David’s paper has to do with recognizing the dignity of every human person. In this vein, Fr. David recounts the seminal story of Francis’ encounter with the leper, with the key insight that Francis is grateful to the leper for fully embracing him, Francis, despite Francis’ state of sin at the time. It wasn’t Francis dignifying the leper, but the leper dignifying Francis that is at the core of this story (Couturier, 2022).

It seems we increasingly witness instances in which individuals not only passively fail to respect the dignity of others, but actively seek to *dis-respect* others. And, we’re all worse off as a result. Certainly, respect for the dignity of others, which is central to the Franciscan tradition, is essential for collective pursuit of the common good.

It was indicated earlier that one additional theme gleaned from the reading of Reich’s and Novak’s texts was identified. That final theme, and excerpts from supporting text, is presented in Figure 2: Engaging Education and the Common Good.

Both Reich and Novak described the essential role of individual virtue in pursuing and promoting the common good. In that vein, it was striking that both authors also wrote of the role of education in developing virtuous future generations. However, they did not describe an education that can be delivered only in the classroom, or only through abstract inquiry. Rather, the type of education they described requires active learning, engaged learning in communities, through which the personal virtue—what Reich so nicely described as the “habits of the heart”—essential to collective pursuit of the common good are developed. While neither writer cites St. Bonaventure in their text, St. Bonaventure’s teaching *that there is no knowledge without love* comes to mind when reading those passages.

Interpretations and Concluding Thoughts

So, how might the lens of the common good, as it’s been briefly examined here, be applied to the theme of the 2022 Foster Center Conference; that is, to understanding threats to “authentic community” in an increasingly digital society?

A major factor, being enabled by our current technology, is the rise in tailored “news” sources. “News” is deliberately included in quotes here. There was a time when, at the conclusion of a half-hour of news each evening, Walter Cronkite would tell us: “And that’s the way it is.” And it was. But no more. Now we can get radically different perspectives on the same facts—and in fact, even different “facts,” if we choose between viewing some of the major cable TV outlets—say between CNN or MSNBC, and Fox. And that’s before even getting into the kinds of algorithm-based search engines and social media feeds that can lead us further and

further down rabbit-holes with like-minded individuals; pursuing alternative realities and alternative facts.

Some of the results of all this, it would appear, have been a loss of trust in what we are being told, and of those who are telling us. And, in fact, even a loss of grounding in what are, in fact, “facts.” We’re seeing a loss of civil discourse; and a rise in what Novak termed “radical individualism” (Novak, 1989, p. 122) versus the common good. We seem to be increasingly moving into a world of “either, or”—you versus me—rather than a society of “both, and” or “fraternity.”

This research was undertaken with a desire to understand more about the concept of the “common good,” and how it might be being impacted currently.

The conclusion was reached that yes, we are in fact losing our focus on the common good—or, to equate the two terms, undermining “authentic community”—as the fracturing of our society increases. This is an existential threat to our society as we know it, given that a focus on the common good goes all the way to back to the founding Constitution of the United States; and is, in fact, central to the very definition of our society.

It does appear that the proliferation of increasingly tailored “news” sources is both a cause and effect of this fracturing, with ongoing cycles of distrust, division, and even the erosion of what could be considered to be “facts.”

Recommendations for addressing some of the larger issues aren’t readily available. However, there is encouragement for educators in mission-based institutions.

The way forward for us can involve continuing to focus on the development of virtue in our students, including an understanding of the value of and commitment to the common good. We need to recognize that such an education occurs not just in the classroom, but particularly through active engagement with and service to others. And finally, continuing to share with our students and others what we sometimes refer to as Franciscan values, or the Franciscan story, or as Fr. David so artfully calls them, the “Franciscan Transformative Myths” (Couturier, 2022).

FIGURE 2
FINAL THEME

Engaging education and the common good	
<u>Robert Reich</u>	<u>Michael Novak</u>
These lessons cannot be learned only in the classroom. A true civic engagement also requires learning by doing. Young people must develop the “habits of the heart,” as Tocqueville called them, by taking on responsibilities in their communities—working in homeless shelters and soup kitchens, tutoring, mentoring, coaching kids’ sports teams, helping the elderly and infirm. Young people need to move out of their bubbles of class, race, religion, and ideology, and to go to places and engage in activities where people look different from themselves, and have different beliefs and outlooks from their own. They must learn to communicate with them. They need to learn how to <i>learn</i> from them. (p. 179)	Human beings do not know the good spontaneously, and they cannot learn it either by deeper and deeper introspection or by philosophical analysis of selfhood apart from the ends the self ought to pursue. Therefore, if we are to know how persons should live and how communities should be organized we must be schooled in virtue. That is, we must serve as apprentices in a community with a tradition that has taught it virtue. (p. 158)

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Authentic Servant Leadership Out of an Authentic Community Grounded in the Franciscan Tradition

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Abstract

This paper draws upon Gospel examples of Jesus' leadership, particularly in the Gospel of John to show similarities and differences from the leadership style of Greenleaf's seminal work "Servant Leader." Jesus' examples will be reflected in stories from the Sources that both Clare and Francis imitate in the early Franciscan movement. Those in roles of leadership in Franciscan higher education might be more effective by understanding an authentic Franciscan community in which both leaders and followers conceive the intent, behavior, and gift to serve in a distinct Franciscan manner of servant leadership.

Introduction

Current workplace reality reflects more elements of a virtual realm. Thus there is a need to exercise a form of leadership that will be effective for these times. In *Heroic Leadership*, Chris Lowney builds a helpful definition around a leader as one who has a profound experience of and passion for life coupled with a vision of the future communicated well and inspiring others to achieve it. (Lowney, 2013, pp. 13-4). This is even more so in higher education with a horizontal professional workforce composed of faculty and administrators, whether because of the COVID-19 pandemic where patterns of remote work emerged, or the culture that engages from the very young with computer-in-your-hand technology. This increased technology has certainly enabled greater connections yet also increases hunger for face-to-face encounters in the language of Pope Francis. Written and virtual word on leadership overflows with the adaptive language of servant leadership building on Robert Greenleaf's landmark 1970 essay, "The Servant as Leader." In practice, the effort is exerted only on the leader, not the community.

The Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership defines this style of leading as "a non-traditional leadership philosophy, embedded in a set of behaviors and practices that place the primary emphasis on the well-being of those being served." (Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 2023, Header section). The distinction is where the "servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. While traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the 'top of the pyramid,' servant leadership is different. The servant-leader shares power puts the needs of others first, and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible." (Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 2023, Servant as Leader section). A Franciscan interpretation of both the leader and the community can offer a distinct yet effective model in the plethora of pressures facing higher education.

The first part of this paper will examine the foundation of an authentic Franciscan community, and the second part will offer a distinction of an authentic Franciscan model of servant leadership that stems from within such a community. Authentic in this context implies

being true to the Franciscan tradition and charism. The intent is to demonstrate aspects of authentic servant leadership shaped by an authentic community in the Franciscan tradition. The Franciscan model calls for balancing virtual engagement with a direct and in-person dimension within the community. As Greenleaf is quoted, “Where there is not community, trust, respect, ethical behavior are difficult for the young to learn and for the old to maintain.” (Greenleaf, 2022, Quotes)

Section I – A Johannine foundation of a Franciscan community

As with all things Franciscan, the starting point is in the gospels, “The rule and life...is this: to observe the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ...” (LR 1, 1; RCI 1, 1; TORR&L 1, 1) Sandra Schneider’s extensive exploration of the Johannine Gospel, “Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel” (Schneider, 2003) offers distinct images and practices that embody the style. In the Franciscan tradition, Francis and Clare imitating the model of Jesus in the gospels offer solid footing to a style of servant leadership. This evangelical distinction shown against current models offers greater authenticity in the Franciscan tradition. Googling the topic offers a plethora of servant leadership models that emphasize a more organizational foundation or power structure. This, however, seems to lose the values of humility and poverty focusing on a more secular, business approach for the leader. Yet the eight-hundred-year-old Franciscan model reflecting the two-thousand-year-old example of Jesus offers a great deal when adapted for a professional setting.

The resources in the legends and writings of both Francis and Clare of Assisi offer a clear distinction of what constitutes a Franciscan community. If community by Webster’s definition is “a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common,” (Merriam-Webster, 2023, community) it is critical to define this common characteristic. The Franciscan community is bound together by a relationship, not an organizational structure.

Schneider’s work suggested the idea of tracing through the Johannine gospel an evolution of relationships that Jesus has with the community of believers. (Schneider, 2003). Noting the various titles show a distinct progression. Jesus first calls many (Jn 1:43), one by one, by name as he encounters women and men on his journey. He invites individuals in particular circumstances to “come and see” (Jn 1:39).

At the beginning of John’s Gospel, Jesus uses a term referring to those he leads as “disciples” (Jn 4:1), as ones who must learn the discipline of following the Lord. This comes with certain expectations, e.g., “*continue in my word*” (Jn 8:31), “*love one another*” (Jn 13:35), and “*you abide in me*” (Jn 15:7). Some finding the disciplines too difficult leave (Jn 6:66). A specific reference is to a disciple Jesus cures, a blind man who in turn invites others to join in this relationship. Nevertheless, after an encounter with the Pharisees who treated the man as a disciple, they drive him away (Jn 9:28).

Note the different meanings of the words ‘apostle’ and ‘disciple’ in the New Testament (Catholic Resources, 2020).

***Disciple** = "learner, pupil, student" (Gk. *mathētēs*, from the verb *manthanein*, "to learn") **Apostle** = "missionary, messenger, emissary" (Gk. *Apostolos*, from the verb *apo-stellein*, "to send out")

One *first* must be trained as a disciple (learning from the teacher) *before* one can be sent out as an apostle (representing the teacher). It is clear not all disciples necessarily are sent out on a particular preaching mission (thereby functioning as apostles). (Catholic Resources, 2020).

Interestingly, the Fourth Gospel never shows Jesus calling any of his followers' apostles, as the other synoptic gospel writers do (Mk 3:14, Lk 6:13). Throughout his ministry, Jesus consistently refers to them as disciples, as ones learning from the Master. The Gospel of John does not contain a list of the twelve or even mention all their names collectively. There is one reference to apostles, though the term apostle is never used as a title for the twelve or even specific disciples in John (only once referring to messengers sent out in general), "servants are not greater than their master, nor are *apostles* greater than *the one who sent them*" (Jn 13:16).

In Jesus' farewell discourse, he refers to them as "little children" (Jn 13:33). Perhaps Jesus is becoming more aware of the implication of a relationship with the one he calls, "Father." This Eucharistic discourse is lengthy, and a little later Jesus tells them intimately, "I shall no longer call you servants... I call you friends...for I have revealed everything to you" (Jn 15:14-15). The sharing around the table of friends continues as Jesus seeks to find exactly what he wants to say despite an abundance of words. In his priestly prayer, Jesus hints at a particularly intimate relationship of communion (Jn 17:23-24), but that is yet to come.

Schneider's trace stopped here, however, this is not where the gospel story ends and one more title of the evolving relationships occurs. The titles climax in a specific characteristic revealed in the post-resurrection event when Jesus tells Mary Magdala, "Go and tell my **brothers** [emphasis mine] ... I will meet them in Galilee..." (Jn 20:17). This ultimate relationship given in the title "brother" defines the communion Jesus was praying for in his final discourse. It is to be finally realized in the fulfillment of the paschal event. In John's Gospel, it is only then after the Resurrection that followers are sent and sent out as brothers...

Francis came to discover this first in his time as he knelt before the San Damiano cross seeing the many called in communion under the arms of Jesus, Christ. The iconic cross holds those called mothers, friends, male and female disciples, soldiers, Gentile and Jewish followers, and even possibly the artist and future followers. In his "Letter to the Faithful" which is written shortly after this experience to those who wished to follow Francis, he makes clear that it is all about relationships, noting how those followers are "spouses," "brothers" and "mothers" because of a "Father in heaven" and so blessed "to have a brother" in Jesus (LtF Chapter 1). Francis references the priestly prayer in John's Gospel nine times.

This relationship in Franciscan parlance is *fraternitas* realized through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ referenced particularly in the Johannine text. The word is about the relationship that Jesus has with all humanity which can fully claim as he reveals to Mary Magdala for the first time in that post-resurrection encounter proclaiming, "I am your brother!"

The Good News proclaims how we are all “adopted” daughters and sons (Eph 1:5-6) with Jesus as the “firstborn” (Romans 8:29). According to Roman law, an adopted child was legally entitled to all the rights and privileges of a natural-born child. The firstborn, by rank not necessarily birth order, possesses the singular privilege of inheritance and leadership. The birth order of other siblings ranks all equally beloved children of God. Within this bond, individuals cleave to the reality as sisters and brothers even greater than blood for they are in communion through the “adoption” of and love for their brother Jesus.

This term *fraternitas* in the original Umbrian dialect that Francis uses in his writings is oddly feminine denoting a masculine relationship with Jesus as brother to all. This relationship as a feminine noun connotes a nurturing, intimate, sweet connection. The brotherly connection is only through the salvific and ultimate act of Christ. It is not the same as our English term fraternity used for a social gathering of males. Clare never references the Poor Ladies as a sorority. This relationship is greater than a mere social gathering whose members have something in common, such as gender, a shared government, geographic location, culture, or heritage. Rather it is in the relationship being restored into full communion (*fraternitas*) through the death and resurrection of our brother Jesus, the Christ, and consecrated by our one Creator Father in heaven.

In Francis’ writing of his “Testament,” he recalls importantly not the encounter with the San Damiano cross, but that “...the LORD gave me **brothers**, [emphasis mine] and no one showed me what I had to do...” (Test 14). Francis learned how to lead the small band of followers from his life experiences and reflected on these considering his brother Jesus on the San Damiano cross and in the gospels and from his sister Clare. All were welcomed and received kindly (ER 2:1) as sisters and brothers.

Francis and Clare both found *fraternitas* not in the gathering around individuals’ strengths, but rather from a sense of their weaknesses. It is what they lacked that brought others to gather and stay. It is in owning one’s poverty that the bondedness of the group is strengthened through the relationship they share with Jesus. The Franciscan movement grew and developed by participating in such relatedness evolving into shared attitudes, values, and goals. It was not those commonalities but the *fraternitas* relationship that was the essential ingredient to life, not the other way around. In an authentic Franciscan community, *fraternitas* is real and strong because of the unconditional relationship of love in and through the commonality of our brother Jesus Christ. This is critical because it is an unearned and important source of social connection yielding a sense of belonging where all who make up the culture are equal.

In summary, an authentic Franciscan community is grounded in the relationship through Jesus Christ as brother to all. We are sisters and brothers with God as “Our Father.” This marks a core Franciscan value of relationship, *fraternitas*, where there is not a rank but respectful mutuality. Thus the role of a leader emerges from the challenge to create one’s own distinct identity (*hacceitas*) as a child of God with the freedom of spiritual boldness. It is right that this kind of leadership be revealed today when the world needs a model grounded in the reality that we are all sisters and brothers through Christ Jesus.

Section II- Servant Leadership stemming from within community/*fraternitas*

In this second part, several particular Franciscan distinctions are presented for authentic Franciscan leaders. These arise from a reading of the Franciscan sources in what Francis and Clare modeled. To begin, note that the Franciscan term for the leader is “minister and servant” (LR 8:1). The very title for the one chosen indicates a dual role of leader and servant intricately linked while not losing the familial term, brother. As was shown in the first part, the Franciscan community is distinct from a social or even monastic grouping thus the role of Franciscan leadership is also distinct. Authentic Franciscan servant leadership is grounded essentially in this characteristic relationship of *fraternitas* and does not usurp the original bond. One receives a call to lead and to serve from the sisters and brothers as a whole.

The fundamental experience of a group working together in higher education brings adult relationships and professional behaviors. In a community setting one operates out of an attitude of exclusivity defining who belongs with *fraternitas* being more open and inclusive. The former tends to encourage silos with clearly defined roles, some superiors with the ‘inferiors’ in a top-down structure. The latter invites collaborative efforts with a diversity of contributions from participants. Relationships within *fraternitas* foster good mutual exchanges that would exemplify such qualities as care over domination, affirmation instead of criticism, and pursuing understanding rather than judgment. Several characteristics extracted from the Franciscan legends and sources flow out of this model. These characteristics include Duty, Relinquishment, Itineracy, Humility, Power from purpose, Learn to imitate through reflection on the Gospels, and Followers flourish.

Duty The role of the servant leader is one of trusted duty as much as a sacred privilege. Greenleaf remarks, “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. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first” (Greenleaf, 1998, p. 123). Should one visit the refectory of the Poor Ladies of San Damiano, a bouquet marks the location where St. Clare sat. The seat is not in the privileged middle, pinned in by others on either side. Rather it is at the end of the table where one could easily rise and serve others. Service needs to be manifest in action not by one but at every corner seat by the sisters/brothers. Exemplified also in the Rule for Hermitage of those called to a time of hermitage, Francis defines the roles as Martha and Mary (RH 2) where one serves the other in the mission of the contemplative time apart.

In the Rule of Life for First, Second and Third Order, there is language describing the role of the leader that the ministers are “to receive them with such love, kindness, and sympathy that the sisters or brothers can speak and act towards them just as an employer would with a worker.” (TORR&L 27; LR 10, 4-6, RCI 10.1) “This is how it should be. The ministers are to servants of all.” (TORR&L 27) This upside situation makes the leader function as one hired by the whole.

Relinquishment In another case contextualized in the “Franciscan Rule and Life” for both Francis and Clare, the role of the Franciscan leader is not an appointment for a lifetime. This was the pattern for the Abbott/Abbess of the monastic tradition as well as the royal roles of the King/Queen. Rather, one receives a call both within and without to serve for a designated time or purpose. The Franciscan tradition notes a first where the leader of a religious group steps down; Francis relinquishes the role and title. Speaking of this relinquishment in day-to-day practice, a president might invite a member of the senior executive team to take the lead while offering to function as one of the team or committees. It would be done prudently without embarrassment if the CEO does not feel the task is their strength. In their poverty (weakness) and out of humility (integrity), they would step out of the leadership function and contribute to staying at the table, nonetheless. This would also apply when a leader is no longer effective and would relinquish the role without shaming from the brothers/sisters.

Knowing the sister/brother is essential, Clare paid “close attention to the development of the gifts of those she worked with” (Karecki, 2009, p.8). This Franciscan practice of relinquishing the lead can be found again in the “Rule for Hermitages” where these roles are exchanged from time to time and not designated as unique to an individual (RH 9). The leader might indicate a need for contemplative time and ask others to serve as the ‘Martha’ for a time. The roles simply reverse in a different situation.

Even more clearly, Robert Birnbaum states, “Campus leadership positions are roles and not careers. Presidents should be prepared to leave when they are no longer having the support they need. I would add this and the effectiveness necessary for fulfilling their role.” (Birnbaum, 1992, p. 193). Understand, the gospel story isn’t told with an ‘eternal’ leader for even Jesus relinquishes his leadership role passing on authority to the apostles, namely Peter (Mt 16:18).

Itineracy The sources note that the specific duties of the minister and servant whom they are strict to obey (or follow) are to “visit, admonish and encourage...with humility and love” (ER 4:2). Good leadership includes regular “drop-ins” designed to give both information they need to be more effective in fulfillment of the mission as well as to maintain good relationships. The Franciscan model differed from the monastic tradition with the leader actually traveling to the place of the brother where he is at home rather than the other way around. Honest feedback given is both affirmation and correction. “Servant leadership always empathizes,” notes Greenleaf, and “always accepts the person, but sometimes refuses to accept some of the person's effort or performance as good enough” (Greenleaf & Spears, 1977, p. 43). Note in this instance, the servant leader exercises Franciscan itineracy not sitting in their office receiving the associate and delivering directions but going out to meet their brother/sister in their locale. The gospels tell of Jesus admonishing the leaders who deliver “hard to carry burdens but...do not lift one finger to touch them.” (Lk 11:26) The Franciscan description to see one another with deep compassion in a tender loving exchange “where one can speak or act as ladies do with their handmaids” (RCI 10, 1 and LR 10, 4-6) is in a safe locale enabling better freedom to act as one would visit a sibling. Contrary Greenleaf claims, “Even the frankest and bravest of subordinates

do not talk with their boss the same way they talk with colleagues” (Greenleaf & Spears, 1977, p. 73). Trust must be developed.

Humility Franciscan leadership springs from littleness, from humility. This seemingly upside-down role as has been shown makes the leader the one who is ‘employed’ and hence serves. Francis defines this quality of the servant leader as treating the other as master and not as subject – the quality of practicing *minoritas* or humility as the renunciation of power over anyone or anything (Blastic, 2018, p.6). As in Catholic social teachings’ preferential option for the poor, Greenleaf emphasizes this by claiming that “the quality of society will be judged by what the least privileged in it achieves” (Greenleaf, 1998, p. 264).

Harvard Business Review on Leadership: Covert Leadership: Notes on Managing Professionals (Mintzberg, 1998) likens that leadership function to a conductor of highly trained professional individuals who most often need very little overt leadership. “The maestro walks up to the podium and raises his baton, and the musicians respond in unison. Another motion, and they all stop.” (Mintzberg, 1998). They are all literally on the same page reading the same score. There is clarity in their role, their love of music, and their talent to play the appropriate instrument. The Franciscan sense of *haecceitas* or the ‘thisness’ of an individual reflected is so important that you have the right people in the right position with the right resources to function well. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines this simply as “the status of being an individual or a particular nature, what makes something to be an ultimate reality different from any other.” (Merriam-Webster, 2023, *haecceitas*) In a Franciscan world, this means more than a job function as a cog in a machine. The Franciscan leader would also consider the personality that fills it comes with needs and desires, history and quirks that can make the difference between mere efficiency to include effectiveness and satisfaction.

Power from Purpose The power of such leadership resides in the evangelical gathering of “two or more” and is thus effective not by position or role but in communion. The power entrusted by the group in *fraternitas* calls forth the one to lead with a promise for others to follow and consequently fulfill the agreed-upon mission. The role of the leader thus comes after the agreed-upon purpose or vision arises out of the group and circumstances. Leadership is most important when there is a said purpose for the group. The power and influence of an authentically Franciscan leader are in a common service. First, the authentic Franciscan leader clearly and often must articulate the mission and vision of the group. Leadership is not about the individual but the service called forth from or for the group. Blastic makes the point that this Franciscan mission, no matter what work or activity, is to “pay attention to the gospel of our Lord Christ as we go about the world as agents of God’s peace” (Blastic, 2018, p. 4).

This power from the Sources describes what Francis heard in the initial call in the voice of the San Damiano crucified, “Go repair my house, can’t you see it is being destroyed” (L3C). Clarity of mission is essential to effective leadership. Birnbaum looks at several factors to define effectiveness from expert authors, peers, self-evaluations, trustees, and constituent support from

students, alumni, legislators, parents, faculty, and administrative staff. (Birnbaum, 1992, pp 51-59) The bottom line is you are only leading if others are following and others follow only if they know where they are going.

Learn to Imitate through Reflection on the Gospels Franciscan leadership is centered on the gospel model of Jesus in which Jesus teaches in both word and example. Francis and Clare learned how to be authentic Franciscan servant leaders based “on the unity of mutual love which is the bond of perfection” (RCl, 10.7) by reading and group reflection on the gospels. They gazed upon, considered, and contemplated the one they desired to imitate (2LCI 19) the authority and power based on the love Jesus lived. No better example stands out than the dramatic demonstration of Jesus in his last hours teaching them to lead manifesting what he wanted his disciples to do. Again, in the Johannine text to “show how perfect his love was...he got up from the table, removed his outer garment and, taking a towel, wrapped it around his waist; he then poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel he was wearing” (Jn 13:1-5). This replaces the actual Eucharist pericope in the other synoptic gospels.

Both Clare and Francis imitated this kind of leadership. Karecki noted that this scene from John’s Gospel is the fundamental image that shaped Clare’s sense of what it meant to be in leadership (Karecki, 2009, p. 6). God led Francis through Clare to work and live among the lepers bathing and learning from them. Clare washed the feet of the persons with Hansen’s disease as well as her sisters. She eagerly washed the straw mats upon which the sick sisters slept (Proc. 2:1, 6-7). It is in orthopraxy or right practice that the authentic Franciscan servant leader leads. It is not enough to be grounded in orthodoxy or right knowledge. The stance of an authentic Franciscan leader would be to ‘stand under’ the other in a posture of listening to understand. These acts are done out of love for those they aspire to lead. Love is a verb manifested in action meeting the other’s needs while seeking the common good. The how and why behind the activities are both key.

Followers Flourish A familiar quote by Robert Greenleaf claims the success of a servant leader is measured in the “well-being of the followers.” “The best leaders are clear. They continually light the way, and in the process, let each person know that what they do makes a difference. The best test as a leader is: Do those served grow as persons; do they become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become leaders” (Greenleaf, 1998, p. 18). The Franciscan leaders must be both servants and leaders. This balance is essential not to be a ‘leader of servants’ where followers feel diminished nor a ‘slave’ leader who by doing the work fails to engage the gifts of the followers.

A Franciscan leader must get to know their followers as intimately as one knows their siblings. Though professional boundaries are respected, the “dichotomy between the private and the political is quite incorrect...it coalesces in the personal, and the personal is always relational and communal. And the personal is not a concept, but real in the human person.” (Osterman, 2021, p. 126-7) The sisters and brothers rise to recognize the Christ, i.e. the good, in one another

building up the body of Christ as a whole as each flourishes. This process contributes to the ongoing Franciscan mission “to repair the house” (LM 2, 1). The care for one another honors the intrinsic value of each human person. “We can become lovers of Christ as we are lovers of people, walking and working with them in the toil of daily life.” (Osterman, 2021, p. 128)

Clare (whose name translates as light) not only lighted the way but also radiated the light to the vision of gospel life shining on each sister and illuminating her value. “God wanted Francis to create houses where human beings could flourish.” (Blastic, 2018, p. 4). The servant leader in the Franciscan tradition identifies the limitations without shame while maximizing their strengths and drawing them into the mission. This bears fruit for the individuals as well as the group -- “*Go and bear fruit, fruit that will last*” (Jn 15:16). This is the kind of service and a leadership style based on joy, not the mere obligation or duty -- “*that your joy may be complete*” (Jn 15:11). Greenleaf quoted in a speech that “purpose and laughter are the twins that must not separate. Each is empty without the other... Love without laughter can be grim and oppressive. Laughter without love can be derisive and venomous. Together they make for greatness of spirit.”

The “Admonition IV” clearly summarizes in Francis’s own words the role of a servant leader:

IV. Let No One Appropriate to Himself the Role of Being Over Others.

I did not come to be served but to serve (cf. Mt 10:28), says the Lord. Those who are placed over others should glory in such an office as much as they would were they assigned the task of washing the feet of the brothers. And the more they are upset about their office being taken from them than they would be over the loss of the office of [washing] feet, so much the more do they store up treasures to the peril of their souls (cf. Jn 12:6).

This description addresses the aspirations of an authentic Franciscan community and servant leader though not a perfect one. A contemporary example lies in our current Pope Francis who bears the name of Francis of Assisi. He is a living example of a Franciscan servant leader. He advises other servant leaders to “smell like sheep.” For several years, the news reported that Pope Francis celebrated the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday at the Casal del Marmo, Rebibbia, Paliano, and in Regina Coeli while his example of visiting the prison and washing the feet of twelve prisoners allowed him to smell like the prison. Like Jesus, he washes their feet, not just telling others what to do. He leads in the service of birthing the kingdom by his example of the incarnation of his words and of the Word. May we who are called to lead, who are called to serve in these times step away from the virtual world and back into the sacred space of *fraternitas* and do likewise.

Jesus teaches the disciples (and those who feel called to leadership) by the example of his doing that servant leaders manifest and invite his followers to do likewise. "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord--and you are right, for that is what I am. So, if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, *you also ought to wash one another's feet*. For I have set you an example that *you also should do as I have done to you*" (Jn 13:12b-15).

In summary, good effective Franciscan leadership can happen despite the "pressures of these times in our world which have been growing even before COVID-19 from social, political, and economic stresses." (Eckel, 2022) It seems that Franciscan presidents of higher education have a rich tradition to draw upon from the gospels and the models of Clare and Francis with some key characteristics to follow. "Particularly in a shared governance environment, effective leadership can and should make the environment a place of purpose. It is necessary to look at the culture and conditions of the environment as well as the style of leadership impact on effectiveness." (Eckel, 2022) True Franciscan servant leaders "can tell strength from power, growth from greed, leadership from dominance, and real greatness from the trappings of grandiosity." (Pax Christi, 2012)

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Imposter Syndrome and Authentic Leadership

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Introduction

Monitoring our mental health and well-being is a crucial dimension for personal and professional flourishing. As managers and leaders, it is also important to encourage colleagues and those we supervise to self-monitor their mental health and well-being. Stress, anxiety, and self-doubt are feelings that most people experience in varying degrees throughout their personal and professional lives. It is imperative to recognize when these feelings negatively impact personal relationships, job performance, or well-being in ourselves or colleagues. Authentic leadership requires professionals to monitor their well-being and model healthy habits and self-care to others. Imposter syndrome is a potential barrier to professional success and personal flourishing. Recognizing what imposter syndrome is, and how it can be addressed, is critical for maintaining well-being and success in the workplace. Authentic leaders should strive to recognize the feelings of imposter syndrome creeping into their own thoughts and to be able to discuss the impact of imposter syndrome with colleagues. These skills are especially important for those working with underrepresented minorities who may be more likely to experience imposter syndrome.

What is Imposter Syndrome?

Many of us, at some point in our careers, have felt like imposters. At times during our professional development we may have felt anxiety about our competence or qualifications. Many of us have felt we were admitted to an academic program or hired for a position we weren't qualified for. Research, originally conducted on women, into imposter phenomenon—later called imposter syndrome—in the 1970s, by Pauline Rose Clance & Suzanne Imes, focused on the following questions: “Why do so many bright women, despite consistent and impressive evidence to the contrary, continue to see themselves as impostors who pretend to be bright but who really are not? What are the origins and dynamics of such a belief and what functions could be served by holding on to such a belief” (Clance & Imes, 1978)? Kirsten Weir writes:

Impostor phenomenon occurs among high achievers who are unable to internalize and accept their success. They often attribute their accomplishments to luck rather than to ability, and fear that others will eventually unmask them as a fraud. Though the impostor phenomenon isn't an official diagnosis listed in the DSM, psychologists and others acknowledge that it is a very real and specific form of intellectual self-doubt. Impostor feelings are generally accompanied by anxiety and, often, depression. (Weir, 2013)

Casually speaking with colleagues and peers at other institutions, it appears these feelings of inadequacy are more prevalent than we widely share. One recent study explains, “The prevalence of imposter syndrome varies widely from 9% to 82%, largely depending on the recruitment strategy for the study (e.g., population-based evaluations, studies of students),

screening tool used (e.g., Clance Imposter Phenomenon Scale, Harvey Impostor Phenomenon Scale), and cutoff used to assess symptoms” (Bravata, Madhusudhan, Boroff & Cokley, 2020). A 2019 article in the *Harvard Business Review* argues about 70% of professionals feel like an imposter at some point during their career (Johnson & Smith, 2019). A quick Google search of people admitting they have feelings of self-doubt, consistent with imposter syndrome, includes Maya Angelou, Jacinda Ardern, Tom Hanks, Michelle Obama, Sonia Sotomayor, Nicola Sturgeon, Sheryl Sandberg, Lady Gaga, Howard Schultz, and Tina Fey.

There are several possible explanations for why successful individuals feel like imposters. The original researchers believed imposter phenomenon arose from specific family dynamics and family expectations of the women in their family to be successful (Clance & Imes, 1978). More recent research suggests those who are minorities in their fields tend to experience imposter syndrome at higher rates than their peers. Kirsten Weir suggests “differing in any way from the majority of your peers—whether by race, gender, sexual orientation or some other characteristic—can fuel the sense of being a fraud” (Weir, 2013). Sometimes specific events can trigger feelings of self-doubt. Johnson and Smith explain, “imposter moments are transient—often most acute immediately after accepting a promotion, starting a new job, or entering a workplace in which our minority status is obvious. For some, imposter feelings become more pervasive and begin to hinder performance” (Johnson and Smith, 2019). Individuals experiencing imposter syndrome are found across various professional occupations, including higher education. Individuals can feel inadequate at work for a variety of reasons, however, Delma Ramos and Raquel Wright-Mair argue, “Not surprisingly, we have observed systems in higher education that sustain and legitimize imposter syndrome via policies, practices and procedures in faculty tenure and promotion” (Ramos & Wright-Mair, 2021). Why is addressing imposter syndrome important? According to one recent study, “in the workplace, those affected with imposter syndrome may experience increased levels of stress and burnout, and decreased job performance and satisfaction over time. Employees who persistently question their professional legitimacy may also be at higher risk for experiencing adverse psychological outcomes with implications for career retention and advancement” (Bravata et al. 2020). Imposter syndrome can hold us back, harm our careers and mental health, and prevent us from being the leaders we strive to become.

Social Media use and the Covid-19 pandemic

One trigger which may elicit imposter syndrome is when we compare our accomplishments and careers with others. One must consider how wide-spread use of social media has changed our communication patterns. Researchers explain the unique challenges people faced in the past three years due to the Covid-19 pandemic:

Covid-19 forces people out of the safety and comfort of their life routines. The quarantine and social distancing policies have been fundamentally changing people’s life in many ways. For example, many companies, including Google and Facebook, have deployed a work-at-home policy; schools have moved classes online; and airline companies are

firing employees due to the significant decline of passengers and travel restrictions. People are experiencing social isolation at an unprecedented scale and length. As a result, online social media becomes one of the primary channels for communication, information gathering and sharing, social connection, and entertainment. It can be argued that under Covid-19, people are attached to and rely on social media more than ever before. (Zhang et al, 2020)

With the wide-spread use of social media, professionals around the world stayed connected to peers and colleagues while working remotely. Research has demonstrated social media and online technologies had tremendous positive benefits for people during the pandemic, while also highlighting some of the negative aspects the online platforms have had on the well-being of users (Zhang et al, 2020). One area for further study is exploring the relationship between the increased use of social media during the pandemic and rates of imposter syndrome.

Franciscan virtues that can help us be authentic to ourselves and others

In the research about imposter syndrome there are several suggestions for overcoming the feelings of fraud, doubt, and anxiety. If someone is suffering from anxiety, depression, or other conditions that negatively impact their careers and relationships they should seek professional mental health assistance. If someone is experiencing minor self-doubt and lack of confidence associated with imposter syndrome there are strategies to overcome these feelings. Johnson and Smith urge others to normalize imposter feelings by recognizing that many people experience these doubts during their careers and to empirically challenge negative self-talk to remind us of the accomplishments and successes we have experienced (Johnson & Smith, 2019). Authentic leaders should be aware of imposter syndrome and be sensitive to the self-perceptions of others. Speaking to colleagues or mentees about their own challenges with self-doubt and anxiety can reassure others that these feelings are common and there are ways to overcome the feelings to prevent them from negatively impacting their careers.

In addition to seeking professional mental health guidance, there is a rich tradition of employing Franciscan values to foster community and compassion that can be utilized to help overcome the negative feelings arising from imposter syndrome. As business leaders, it is helpful to affirm core values that center us and provide a foundation for reflection about our personal lives and our professional careers. What are the Franciscan values? A quick internet search of the websites of different Franciscan organizations, high schools, universities, and religious communities highlights the diversity of values Franciscans seek to embody. Each Franciscan organization has a unique set of values arising from the life and work of Francis of Assisi that reflect their identity and mission, but there is considerable overlap in the values they assert. The Franciscan values articulated by the St. Bonaventure University School of Business will be explored as a starting point for analyzing how Franciscan values can assist leaders in overcoming imposter syndrome. These specific values were selected for analysis for two reasons. First, these values have their foundation in the teachings and writings of St. Francis of Assisi. As a result, an analysis of these values is useful for business leaders seeking to utilize and embody the

Franciscan tradition in their careers. Second, there is considerable overlap between the values cherished by St. Bonaventure University and the values at several other Franciscan institutions. Therefore, an analysis of these values will be productive for others outside of the St. Bonaventure University community.

The St. Bonaventure University School of Business lists six values on the wall of the Swan Building as foundational to the education of our students. These values can also be used by professionals for meaningful personal reflection about their careers. These six values of: contemplation, love, respect, joy, peace, and compassionate service can orient our actions towards others, towards ourselves, and towards God. It is easy to see how they are used to inform our lives in community with others, but they can also help us keep a healthy perspective on our reflection about our careers and talents to encourage us and help us avoid imposter syndrome.

A note about the terminology. Many tend to use the terms values and virtues interchangeably. But I want to note a subtle difference. Values are things that we think have value or are good. Virtues are character traits or personal dispositions. Virtues are part of our character and give us a tendency to behave in a certain way given a particular situation. Values are what we find to be meaningful while virtues describe character and action.

Jack Krupansky argues, “values are primarily aspirational and that the real goal is to realize values, to make them virtues, by living them in our daily lives on a consistently regular basis” (Krupansky, 2019). One reason people use the terms values and virtues interchangeably is that they have the same purpose or end goal. The reasons we define and articulate our values, and the reason why we practice the virtues until they become habitual and part of our character, have the same end goal: personal excellence, human flourishing, and enriching our well-being.

The six values, as noted previously, on the wall in the Swan Building that houses the School of Business at St. Bonaventure University are: contemplation, love, respect, joy, peace, and compassionate service. These values are things that we, as a Franciscan community, find good. These values serve as aspirational qualities that orient our lives to others in community and serve as a foundation to personal self-reflection. These values can help us acknowledge our personal and professional strengths and dig our way out of the ruts that can lead to imposter syndrome. A brief analysis of the six values illustrates how meditating on the values can guide self-reflection and potentially challenge self-doubt and negative feelings associated with imposter syndrome.

Contemplation and deep reflective thought about our professional lives can help us recognize the accomplishments we have made and can assist us in validating our contributions and celebrating our successes (instead of solely focusing on the achievements of others). Quiet contemplation can help us set and evaluate personal work goals, reflect on disappointments, and recognize our personal strengths that contribute to the workplace. Authentic leaders can demonstrate practices that support contemplation in the workplace and encourage colleagues and mentees to incorporate contemplative reflection in their own lives. Contemplation is a value illustrated in the life of Francis of Assisi as he sought a closer relationship with God through his

contemplative prayer and quiet meditation. Taking time to contemplate our successes and our challenges can assist professionals seeking to overcome imposter syndrome and promote a sense of well-being.

Love is a value that orients our actions towards others, but one that we can fail to utilize towards ourselves. Although we want to avoid focusing too much on ourselves and do not want to be narcissistic or excessively self-absorbed, it is important to recognize and celebrate this value in ourselves. Those suffering from imposter syndrome tend to focus on the achievements of others and fail to acknowledge, appreciate, and celebrate their own successes. Demonstrating love towards ourselves includes monitoring our emotional health, practicing self-care, and seeking help when necessary. Taking time to love, care for, and appreciate ourselves can play an important role in overcoming imposter syndrome. Authentic leaders can create a work culture that discourages narcissistic and self-absorbed behavior while encouraging mentees to reflect positively on their personal strengths and professional successes.

Respect, or admiring someone deeply as a result of their abilities, qualities, or achievements, is important for our relations with others. Like love, respect can be an important aspect of how we reflect on our own abilities. Like love of self, self-respect can be a crucial foundation for appreciating our own successes and contributions and can help ward off the feelings of inadequacy that fill our thoughts when we have imposter syndrome. Taking the time to list our accomplishments, reflect on our successes, and learn how to respect ourselves is a healthy way to honor ourselves. Respecting ourselves includes setting healthy boundaries with others, being honest about our abilities and contributions to the workplace, and not settling for inferior treatment or inadequate conditions in our professional life. Authentic leaders can demonstrate the value of respecting others and self-respect through their own actions, which can have a significant impact on the workplace culture.

Joy as a value, or an aspirational good, can help ward off the negativity and worry that many feel when comparing ourselves to others. Choosing joy, pleasure, delight, and happiness can inspire us to celebrate the successes of others and our own accomplishments without worry, self-doubt, or negativity. Cultivating the value of joy can help create a mindset that will sustain us when faced with disappointment and challenges. Authentic leaders can emphasize a work culture that opposes negative thinking and seeks to celebrate workers and professional success with joy.

Peace is a value we tend to focus on when thinking about interpersonal relationships. Inner peace and freedom from disturbance or tranquility, calmness, and serenity can help us think clearly about our own achievements and can help us overcome anxiety and distress. Striving for peace in our inner lives, by recognizing our professional accomplishments, can help us overcome the negative thoughts that lead to imposter syndrome. Peace can help us tame

anxiety and free us to recognize our own unique gifts and strengths. Authentic leaders can set the tone for the workplace and strive for a peaceful work culture, free from hostile behavior and constant friction among workers. Leaders can also demonstrate peace in their interactions with others and their self-care routines.

Compassionate service is our love for others in action. Compassionate service includes feeling or showing sympathy and concern for others while working to alleviate their burdens and providing for their needs. Compassionate service is a value that connects our lives and our successes with the lives and needs of others. Authentic leaders can create opportunities for colleagues and mentees to practice compassionate service with meaningful philanthropic activities and time for reflection. Leaders can embed compassionate service into the foundation of the workplace as a key priority and workplace goal to help others recognize their work is connected to the greater good and can positively impact the lives of others.

Conclusion

It is important to note that values are worthless if they are not lived out in the form of virtues in the realm of everyday life. As we strive to live out these values in our interactions with others and in our reflections about ourselves, we are practicing and becoming comfortable with the values. As we continue to practice these values, they become virtues, and can become part of our character and disposition. As we practice contemplation, love, respect, joy, peace, and compassionate service we are better equipped to celebrate the success in the lives of others and appreciate the meaningful and important contributions we provide our workplace and community and we are better prepared to ward off the feelings of inadequacy and doubt that pull us into the imposter syndrome mind frame. As authentic leaders we should be actively working at promoting our own well-being while being mindful of the mental health and emotional challenges our colleagues and mentees may be facing. It is important to recognize the traits of imposter syndrome that may creep into our thinking and practice self-care and positive contemplative reflection that acknowledges our strengths and contributions to the workplace. As leaders, it is important to embody the traits and characteristics in our lives that we hope to see in our colleagues and mentees. Imposter syndrome can be a barrier to professional success. By acknowledging the self-doubt and anxiety many face in the workplace, authentic leaders can effectively assist colleagues and promote a positive and productive work culture that supports employees and creates a professional work environment where everyone has the potential to succeed.

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