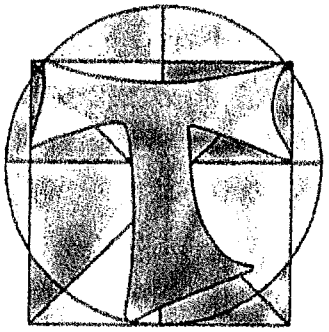

The AFCU Journal:

A FRANCISCAN PERSPECTIVE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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From the AFCU Board Chair

Dear Colleagues,

Peace and good! Franciscan scholar (Most Rev.) Michael Higgins, T.O.R. observed, "[Saint] Francis [of Assisi] lived at a time that Europe and the Church was confronted with a great deal of turmoil. On the political scene, the feudal system was collapsing, nation states and cities were becoming increasingly conscious of their unique cultural and ethnic identities and were driving for independence and self rule. There was a rapidly growing middle class, and trade was becoming more important for the wealth of individuals and nations. There was the ever present threat of Islamic encroachment." Into this milieu enters the poor man from Assisi who, Higgins observes, "did his best to balance all these forces and still maintain a spirit of joy and dedication to the God he loved so much." In today's society there is evidence of turmoil as well, with rising nationalism, culture wars, incivility, and violence. Today, as in the middle ages, Franciscans are called to maintain the spirit of joy and dedication to God that Francis had.

Those in Franciscan higher education are called to be models of civility in public discourse; to help our students deepen their knowledge and be rooted in fact; to engage in healthy discussion and debate; to speak and act always with respect for others. Pope Francis reminds us that Jesus began to preach in "Galilee of the Gentiles," a crossroads for people of different races, cultures, and religions. Pope Francis calls us to "experience the humility of research, that attitude of silent welcoming to the unknown, of the stranger, of the other, and demonstrate one's openness and willingness to walk with all those who are driven by a restless tension toward the Truth, believers and non-believers, foreigners, and the marginalized." (Message of Pope Francis to the Italian Catholic Federation of University Students 14 October 2014)

I thank the (outgoing) editor of the *AFCU Journal*, Adam A.J. DeVille, Ph.D. for his efforts in producing this publication. The AFCU wishes him well and thanks him for his fine work during his tenure. I am grateful to our authors for their contributions to Franciscan scholarship. May the works contained herein inspire us to maintain a spirit of joy and dedication to our God.

May the Lord give you His peace.

Sincerely,
(Rev.) Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R., Ph.D.
President of Saint Francis University
Chair of Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities

Franciscan Business Principles

BY PETER CRAFT

Introduction

When I ask my students about their goals in life, the most common answer that I get is that they want to graduate as quickly as possible to start making real money. The cultivation of leadership skills and Franciscan values are rarely mentioned, and some students see the latter as antithetical to their pursuit of wealth. After all, Saint Francis renounced his worldly riches. Interestingly enough, most bestselling authors on the accumulation of wealth such as Jim Collins, Anthony Robbins, Robert Kiyosaki, and others advocate principles that sound remarkably Franciscan, such as charitable giving, improving the lives of others, and dealing fairly with people.

This paper argues that we as educators can disrupt the binary opposition that many students have in their minds, namely, that they must behave unethically if they are to rise in the world and that goodness will bring only poverty. Rather than viewing leadership skills and Franciscan values as unrelated or in opposition to business goals, I hope to reposition these ideals as central to long-term financial success. While ruthless and deceptive businesspeople and corporations might flourish for a time, we have seen examples such as Enron and Bernie Madoff that suggest such models do not offer peace of mind, which is one of the main reasons people pursue wealth in the first place.

If, as Franciscan educators, we can instill or encourage student leaders to incorporate philanthropy into their identities, then there is a good chance that they will spread those beliefs in an exponentially growing network. Leaders by definition have followers, who in turn have an impact, however small, on everyone with whom they interact. Over the course of our careers, we have the privilege of helping to shape the minds and characters of thousands of students. Our contributions therefore have the potential to make a real difference in the world.

The Principle of Consistency

I would like to suggest that we use the principle of consistency, which psychological studies have shown, time and time again, to be an effective motivational tool. This principle can help us to guide student leaders toward a life of compassion

and solidarity with the poor. Consistency is central to a stable sense of self. Our identities depend upon our ability to construct meaningful narratives about who we are as people. When we notice contradictions between our beliefs and behaviors, we feel compelled to align them.

Let us take a look at how this idea works in a real-life situation. In one study, a social psychologist named Steven Sherman called Bloomington, Indiana residents and asked them to answer the following survey question: would they be willing to spend three hours collecting money for the American Cancer Society? People did not want to seem uncharitable to either the person taking the survey or themselves, and so most of them said "yes." At this point, the question was merely posed hypothetically with no mention of having the respondents actually engage in charitable work. With no actual time commitment at stake, people felt as though they had nothing to lose by presenting themselves as caring people who volunteer.

However, as part of the study, Sherman arranged for representatives from the American Cancer Society to visit the houses of the people surveyed a few days later to ask for actual volunteer time from them. The result was a 700 percent increase in volunteer rates (Cialdini, 2007, p. 68). People did not want to appear inconsistent, and their identities had started to change in such a way that they began to see themselves as philanthropic citizens.

The principle of consistency works not only within our own minds as we attempt to align our beliefs and behaviors, but also as we try to reconcile our identities with other people's perceptions of us. In a study of Connecticut homemakers, those women who were told that they were considered charitable people a week earlier donated considerably more money to the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation than those who did not receive the same compliment (Cialdini, 2007, p. 77). In other words, the women who received the compliment wanted to bring their actions in line with other people's favorable perception of them. If we foster and nurture the idea of philanthropy in our classrooms, create volunteer opportunities for students, and treat them as though they are charitable human beings, then their behaviors will likely follow suit.

Consistency can therefore be a beneficial influence on student leaders if they attempt to harmonize their actions with positive beliefs such as volunteering. Yet consistency can also work in the other direction. If student leaders associate success

solely with money, and they are bombarded with media representations of those who have obtained wealth unethically, then they could feel pressured, at least subconsciously, to align their behaviors with this skewed vision of morality. Many are the media examples of this skewed vision: rap music videos glorify the violent acquisition of money, often conspicuously displaying large sums of cash accompanied by lyrics implying that the money was stolen or obtained through gang activity; an entire genre of heist or gangster movies has existed since at least the 1930s; newspaper articles tell us of professional athletes who used banned substances to gain a competitive edge; and we read about hedge fund managers who use insider trading and other illegal methods to acquire vast fortunes. Michael Douglas' character Gordon Gecko from the 1987 film *Wall Street*, with his famous "greed is good" philosophy, seemed to embody this association. Even some of our common sayings reinforce this supposedly natural link between success and corruption such as "nice guys finish last."

Saint Francis' Perspective on Money

Saint Francis' own attitudes toward money are slightly more complicated than they are often depicted. On the one hand, he was known as *il poverello*, or the poor one, and the renunciation of worldly possessions was a prerequisite to becoming a friar in his order. Artistic images of Saint Francis over the centuries often emphasize his connection with nature, which is in direct contrast to the secular world of wealth and power. Even the *Cambridge Companion to Saint Francis of Assisi* mentions his refusal to take coins for his charitable work and his insistence that his friars not touch money (2013, p. 6). This statement would seem to imply that money itself contaminates all who touch it.

If, however, we look closely at Saint Francis' words on the subject, a more complex picture begins to emerge. In chapter eight of *The Earlier Rule*, Francis said, "Let none of the brothers, therefore, wherever he may be or go, carry, receive, or have received in any way coin or money, whether for clothing, books, or payment for some work—indeed, not for any reason, unless for an evident need of the sick brothers" (FAED, I: p. 69). While generally distrustful of money, Saint Francis includes one key exception to his rule by saying "unless for an evident need of the sick brothers." The use of money, according to Saint Francis, is morally justifiable when it directly leads to helping others.

Saint Francis would often look to scripture for guidance, and the Bible's statements on wealth are, at times, confusing. One of the most misquoted, or rather abbreviated, lines of the Bible is "money is the root of all evil." Yet all of the biblical editions that I looked at had the words "the love of" preceding this well-known phrase, including the Latin Vulgate Bible that Saint Francis would most likely have used. The complete verse is therefore "The love of money is the root of all evil." Although this addition of a few words may not seem of monumental significance, it radically alters the meaning of the passage. In the full quotation, money itself is not depicted as the cause of all evil. Money is a tool that can be used either for good or evil.

Franciscan Principles in Business

Self-improvement authors who write business books advocate ethical principles that sound far more similar to Saint Francis than they do to Gordon Gecko. Robert Kiyosaki's book *Rich Dad, Poor Dad,* for instance, is a perfect example. For a book about money, it has some surprisingly spiritual moments. Kiyosaki quotes a Vietnamese monk who said "'The path is the goal.'" Based on that philosophy, Kiyosaki says, "Finding your path means finding out what you were put on this earth to do." He follows this statement with a series of questions for the reader: "What is your life's purpose? Why were you given this gift called life? And what is the gift you give back to life?" (2011, p. xvi). Interestingly enough, Kiyosaki asks not if we should give back to life but what we should give back to life, which implies that we should be giving back. The emphasis on reciprocity, giving to balance taking, is very different from the selfish hoarding practices of Ebenezer Scrooge in the early parts of Dickens' famous novel *A Christmas Carol.*

In addition to numerous bestselling books, Robert Kiyosaki designed a *Monopoly*-inspired online game that teaches the principles of financial success. When players land on a certain square, they have the option of donating 10% of their income to charity. The word "tithe" literally means to pay one-tenth, and it seems unlikely that Kiyosaki chose this number without realizing its long history in the church. If players decide to donate, they get to roll two die rather than one for their next three turns. This gives them a huge advantage because there are three squares on the relatively small board that are comparable to "Go" in monopoly. Each time the player passes these squares, he or she collects

a monthly income payment. By having two die rather than one for several turns, the player advances much more rapidly on the board and collects monthly income payments much faster than he or she ordinarily would. Thus the benefits of donating to charity not only pay back the initial amount given, but they also result in a substantial profit. Kiyosaki therefore implicitly argues that charitable donations create a karmic bonus that dramatically increases one's wealth. Donations to good causes, from his perspective, are lucrative financial investments.

Anthony Robbins' book *Money: Master the Game* describes in elaborate detail how to acquire wealth. After more than 500 pages, however, Robbins ends on a surprising and somewhat counterintuitive note. He devotes his last chapter to giving money to charity. Robbins estimates that his own charitable donations have fed forty-two million people over thirty-eight years (2014, p. 565-566). He says, "the secret to a fulfilled life is not only to do well but to do good" (2014, p. 563). According to Robbins, doing "well" refers to financial prosperity, whereas doing "good" relates to giving money to help others. He argues that the combination of the two results in overall life satisfaction.

Robbins takes these ideas a step further by citing scientific studies. Specifically, he mentions a study conducted by Harvard scientists Elizabeth Dunn and Michael Norton that suggests people derive more long-term satisfaction from spending money on others than they do from spending money on themselves. According to these researchers, spending money on others not only increases happiness, but it also leads to physiological changes within the body that increase health. Dunn and Norton's findings held true across different cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds. Based on this evidence and other studies, Robbins arrives at the following conclusion: "giving makes you both happier and healthier" (2014, p. 559). Robbins approaches philanthropy primarily from a secular and scientific perspective, but the end result, giving money to those in need, is the same as what Saint Francis and his followers have done for spiritual reasons.

Listening and Connecting with Others

In the 2014 volume of the *AFCU Journal,* Karen Spear emphasizes the importance of listening for servant leaders. She says, "Dialogue for servant leadership transcends mere problem-solving and seeks to establish authentic relationship – to know the other at a personal level. To dialogue at this deep level, we must listen

at a deep level" (p. 10). Richard Branson, the founder of Virgin Records and Virgin Airways, devotes an entire chapter to listening in his book *The Virgin Way: Everything I Know about Leadership.* He argues that the willingness of senior management leaders to listen to their employees is an even more effective long-term way to ensure a productive and smoothly running company than giving raises (2014, p. 35).

As with the idea of listening, Branson and Spear are in harmony over the idea of creating genuine relationships in order to lead effectively. Branson lists several attributes that he associates with leadership, and one of those is that leaders "should truly care about their people" (2014, p. 36). Like Karen Spear, Branson asserts that leaders can only establish an "authentic relationship," to use Spear's phrase, with their employees by listening intently. In an age when jobs are increasingly performed by machines, it is refreshing to hear a billionaire CEO emphasize the importance of personal connections with employees. According to Branson, they are not only important intrinsically, but they are also essential to the longevity of a company.

Billionaires, CEOs, and Saint Francis

Whereas Spear and Branson draw more heavily on principles to arrive at their conclusions, bestselling author Jim Collins relies on inductive quantitative data to examine leadership. Collins is specifically interested in the question of why some companies thrive financially and others fail. Collins and his research team examined companies whose stock returns were, on average, seven times higher than the general stock market over a fifteen-year period. In a chapter subtitled "Not What We Expected," Collins says that "extreme personal humility" was a common feature of the CEOs of these incredibly successful companies. Collins states, "We found leaders of this type at the helm of every good-to-great company" (2001, p. 21). The leaders of these companies were willing to put the needs of the company above their own.

Collins himself claims that his results were not what he and his research team expected. The idea of a self-effacing leader is almost difficult to believe because it is so far removed from the negative media stereotypes. Part of this image problem most likely comes from the fact that few people actually know extremely wealthy CEOs personally. Most of our information is gathered from the movies or from news articles about a few camera-loving narcissistic leaders. Yet, according to Collins' data, the vain

attention-seeking jetsetter CEOs are actually the exception rather than the rule. Most extraordinarily successful company heads are humble men and women who put others before themselves.

For instance, 143 billionaires have already signed the Giving Pledge, which is a commitment to donate more than half of their fortunes to charitable organizations either during their lifetime or afterward. Officially announced in 2010, this campaign was the brainchild of Warren Buffet and Bill Gates. Forbes magazine found 1,810 billionaires in the world in 2015, which means that roughly 8% of them have already signed this pledge. Many wealthy individuals give to charity, but the extravagance of these gifts by some of the richest people in the world suggests that success and generosity are closely related.

Student Servant Leaders

Even these charitable souls fall short of Saint Francis' example, who gave up *all* of his possessions. Not only that, but he did not wear shoes, fasted for forty days, received the stigmata as a sign of divine favor, asked for more suffering for himself, and remained chaste after his conversion. Expecting our student leaders to exactly emulate Saint Francis' example is perhaps unrealistic, especially since we ourselves would find many of these acts of faith a challenge to fulfill. Saint Francis was exemplary in every way, so much so that the poet Dante Alighieri suggests that the world had not seen anyone like *il poverello* for over a millennium. In *The Divine Comedy*, the narrator emphasizes the rarity of Saint Francis' devotion to Lady Poverty by saying that he:

> Did make her his,
>
> Before the Spiritual court, by nuptial bonds,
>
> And in his father's sight: from day to day,
>
> Then lov'd her more devoutly. She, bereav'd
>
> Of her first husband, slighted and obscure,
>
> Thousand and hundred years and more, remain'd
>
> Without a single suitor, till he came. (XI: 57-62)

Dante personifies poverty as a woman whom very few people find attractive. Indeed, part of what made Saint Francis so exemplary was his love for all God's creatures, even those who were viewed with condescension by others in his society: lepers, the poor, non-Christians, animals, and so on. Dante's implication that no one was as committed to poverty as Saint Francis for over a thousand years indicates how rare an individual he was.

As much as we try to guide our student leaders to follow in Saint Francis' footsteps, the odds are slim that they will be able to fully live up to his example. We may not see someone with Saint Francis' level of piety in our lifetime. In fact, if Dante's time frame is accurate, the world may not see someone who matches the intensity of Saint Francis' faith for centuries. Perhaps the best we can hope for with our student leaders and ourselves is an asymptotic aspiration. In the mathematical graph of an asymptote, a line approaches an axis infinitely without ever quite touching it. Saint Francis identified strongly with the Greek letter "Tau," so much so that he even used it as his signature at times. I have therefore chosen this symbol to represent Saint Francis' spiritual example, and I have superimposed a graph with an asymptote that shows our attempts to reach the lofty heights of spiritual purity that he attained. As the diagram shows, even if we fall short, we still rise spiritually and become closer to God in the process of trying.

Ordinarily, leaders and followers are two opposite groups of people who by definition occupy different roles. Yet, in order to become Franciscan leaders, our students must follow Saint Francis' example. *Il poverello* voluntarily gave up his own leadership position to Peter Catania. Thomas of Celano states that Francis' poor health caused him to resign (Pansters, 2013, 28). This decision demonstrates Saint Francis' conviction. Since he stepped down because of illness, he did so for the good of the group. During his time in the East, he had contracted malaria, and his health was steadily declining. Power-hungry leaders would have held on to their authority until the very end even if they were unable adequately to perform their responsibilities, because of their addiction to the feeling of control over others. Saint Francis, however, was only interested in leadership as a way to serve others, so when he could no longer do that he passed along the position to someone who could. As Jim Collins' study reveals, this character trait, putting the needs of others before oneself, is the same one that successful business

leaders exhibit. Perhaps it is fitting that Francis is the patron saint of merchants.

Egalitarian Leadership

As we attempt to guide our students on their journeys to become leaders, it is important to examine Saint Francis' own beliefs about leadership. He respected the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. In fact, he explicitly said, "Let no brother preach contrary to the rite and practice of the Church" (FAED I: p. 75). Saint Francis embodied this by seeking official approval from the Church for his brotherhood. While the established church consists of leadership positions that include priests, bishops, cardinals, deacons, and the pope, Saint Francis envisioned his own order as simpler and more egalitarian. His organizational structure consisted of ministers and brothers. Many of Saint Francis' beliefs and practices were modeled directly on Jesus Christ, and *il poverello's* conception of leadership is no exception. Saint Francis exclaimed, "Let the ministers remember what the Lord says: I have not come to be served, but to serve" (FAED I: p. 66). Service to others rather than oneself is therefore central to Saint Francis' vision of leadership. Indeed, the word "minister" itself is etymologically related to the words "minor" and "minus," which emphasize the lesser or subordinate role that Saint Francis believed that leaders should inhabit with their flock. "Minister," which is the same in Latin as it is in English, also directly traces back to the word for "servant" or "inferior."

Saint Francis further elaborated on his conception of leadership with the following words: "Let the minister, on his part, endeavor to provide for them as he would wish to be provided for him were he in a similar position. Let no one be called 'prior,' but let everyone in general be called a lesser brother. Let one wash the feet of the other" (FAED I: p. 68). In the first part of this passage, Francis once again mirrors Jesus Christ by advocating a rephrased version of the golden rule: "And just as you wish others to do for you, do also the same for them" (Matthew 7: 12). Saint Francis' belief that the ministers or leaders should wash the feet of their brothers clearly follows Christ's example. Moreover, Saint Francis likely intended for this gesture to keep leaders humble. Feet are both literally and symbolically the lowest part of the body, and one must stoop or kneel in order to wash them, thus occupying a spatial position below the recipient of this service. Rather than passively receiving service as a king

or emperor would, Saint Francis believed that leaders should be the ones actively serving their people.

Francis' statement that none should be called "prior" reveals his awareness that the term carries with it connotations of superiority. Both "prior" and "minister" would have designated leadership positions within a monastery, but Saint Francis deliberately avoided the former in favor of the latter in order to build a reminder of a leader's role right into the very title itself. While the noun "prior," in its most basic sense, simply meant a superior of a small house in Saint Francis' time, the adjectival form relates to the words "first," "before," "forefather," "better," "taking precedence," and "more important." As he considered which title leaders within his order should adopt, perhaps Francis had the following related biblical quotation in mind: "And behold, those who are last will be first, and those who are first will be last" (Luke 13:30). This passage helps to shed light on Francis' conception of leadership by inverting conventional notions of status. Saint Francis was careful that any control that ministers had over their brothers should not be used to justify the sin of pride. By cautiously choosing the word for his leaders and specifying that they perform humbling gestures such as washing their brothers' feet, Saint Francis helped to ensure that his leaders remained grounded and in touch with the needs of others.

Follow Your Calling

In addition to guarding against pride, Saint Francis took precautions to prevent his brothers from succumbing to the temptations of sloth. This work ethic coincides harmoniously with modern business practices since those who are idle rarely prosper. Saint Francis reveals this belief by quoting the following biblical passage: "Whoever does not wish to work shall not eat" (FAED I: 69; 2 Thessalonians 3:10). Saint Francis reinforces a direct correlation between the sustenance that makes life possible and the labor that provides such nourishment. Rather than living off the fruits of others' labor, Saint Francis urges his ministers to work. Yet labor should be more than a means to nourish the body. Francis emphasizes this idea by quoting 1 Corinthians: "Let everyone remain in that trade and office in which he has been called" (FAED I: 69; 7:24). The word "called" is especially important in this passage because it highlights God's role in the process. God "calls" people to certain professions over others, depending on their unique gifts and skills.

While billionaire Warren Buffett does not specifically phrase this idea in spiritual terms, he nonetheless expresses a similar sentiment by saying: "You should do the job you love whether or not you are getting paid for it. Do the job you love. Know that the money will follow" (Woodruff, 2016). In Buffett's vision, a job becomes more than a means to an end. It is not a tiresome obligation that one must endure in order to make money, but should rather be an end in itself. This notion of doing a job because a person loves it harmonizes nicely with Saint Francis' citation of the Bible. If one is "called" to a certain profession by God, it makes sense that that person would have a natural liking for it. This calling could take several forms. One person might feel called to the medical profession because he or she feels that healing the sick is emotionally rewarding. Another individual could feel called to the law since he or she want to right injustices. Yet another soul might feel drawn to education because he or she feels a natural talent for the profession. These are ways in which God makes certain professions appealing and therefore calls people toward them.

One crucial addition to this idea that Buffett makes is the last sentence of his quotation: "Know that the money will follow." This goes against conventional wisdom that states that people must sacrifice what they feel passionate about in order to find a lucrative job. Perhaps one of our students' dreams of becoming an artist or a musician, but his or her parents or the rational side of him or her says that a profession in law, medicine, or finance is the only reliable way to earn a large income. That student would be forced to endure a lifetime of a job that he or she intensely dislikes simply to have large paychecks. Yet, according to Buffett, who is often considered one of the greatest investors who ever lived and is one of the wealthiest men in the world, our student leaders should invert traditional wisdom. By pursuing their dreams, and helping others to pursue theirs, our student leaders could also fulfill their financial aspirations. In other words, the stark binary oppositions that so often accompany career decisions, the bored hedge fund manager or the starving artist, are inaccurate according to Buffett. One can be a wealthy, well-fed artist. The biblical passage that Saint Francis quoted about not eating when one does not work perhaps takes on a different meaning here if we think of it symbolically. In order to gain spiritual or emotional fulfillment, one cannot work in a job that one does not feel personally invested in.

Relational Wealth

Like Robert Kiyosaki, Buffett advocates a relational form of wealth. For someone who has accumulated more money than most people can dream of, Buffett's definition of wealth might surprise some; he says, "You're rich if you are working around people you like" (Woodruff, 2016). Just as Saint Francis conceptualizes labor in terms of service to others, so too does Buffett envision a type of currency that only interpersonal exchange can generate. Working with people that we like, according to Buffett's quotation, is a way, and perhaps the most important way since he lists no alternatives, to gauge one's wealth. Buffett's idea of wealth directly contradicts popular images of CEOs who get rich by exploiting their workers. Rather than a zero sum model of wealth, in which one person gains at another's expense, Buffett thinks about wealth in terms of relationships. The labor that we provide therefore not only improves our own lot in life, but it also benefits our coworkers.

Interestingly enough, Buffett's sentiments echo those of a philosopher who is often seen as one of the most influential voices in the development of modern capitalism: Adam Smith. While people generally remember Smith's contributions to the idea of capitalism, they sometimes forget that he was heavily invested in the idea of empathy as a basis for morality. In *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith argued that a single laborer making a product could only produce a very small number per day, which would benefit fewer people. If, however, that individual worked with colleagues and they each focused on specialized tasks in the production process, then the production rate would increase exponentially. Through the system that Smith advocated, far more people would be able to enjoy the fruits of specialized labor than they would if someone worked alone. The idea of collaboration is therefore built into the very foundations of capitalism, and Adam Smith believed that self-interest could be turned toward the greater good by an "invisible hand."

Elon Musk

Let us turn now from the past to the present and from theory to practice. One modern entrepreneur in particular provides a model for us to share with our student leaders. His name is Elon Musk, and he is the genius billionaire who is largely responsible for the success of PayPal, Tesla, and SpaceX. Musk's extraordinary success was by no means guaranteed in his childhood.

He was a voracious reader and had a brilliant mind, but those qualities drew the attention of envious classmates in South Africa. In America we tend to think of bullying as name-calling, but Musk experienced a much more intense version that included savage beatings, one of which battered his face so badly that he had to have reconstructive surgery. After traumatizing days at school, Musk would return home to a single-parent household that consisted of a cold unsupportive father. For several years, Musk's reality was very bleak.

However, Musk found escape through books, and he had always had a strong interest in science. He dreamed of creating inventions that could improve the quality of life for everyone. Rather than turning bitter from the abuse that he suffered at the hands of his peers, Musk focused on the future. In his early 20s, Musk made twenty-two million dollars by selling his internet software company Zip2. Shortly thereafter, he co-founded PayPal, a company that most people considered impossible to establish because of the banking industry's tight regulations. The notion of an internet banking system, in which people could exchange money online, is something that we take for granted today. However, at the time that Musk and his co-workers developed the idea, it was radical indeed. When eBay bought PayPal for 1.5 billion dollars, Musk received 165 million dollars for his shares.

Most people in Musk's position would likely have retired comfortably with such a sizeable fortune. However, Musk invested almost all of his money on a new project: SpaceX. Musk was convinced that rockets could be constructed for a fraction of the budget that NASA and other government-manufactured space facilities used. He worked tirelessly, often twenty hours a day, to ensure that every component of his rockets was being produced as cost efficiently as possible. People again said that his ideas were impossible, but he managed to shave millions of dollars off production costs. Consequently, he paved the way for much more frequent trips to space. He and his team even figured out a way to reuse rockets. Ordinarily, a spaceship detaches into two parts, with the bottom, more expensive part falling into the sea and being wasted.

As if those accomplishments were not enough, Musk is also the CEO of Tesla Motors, an electric-powered car company. Musk is committed to finding sustainable sources of energy, and our world's reliance on limited fossil fuels is a problem that we have been dealing with for quite some time. In fact, Musk is the chairman of SolarCity, a company that specializes in solar-powered

energy. Musk has set up free charging stations for his electric vehicles, and some of them are solar-powered.

Elon Musk shares a pacifist stance with Saint Francis. Musk could easily have turned his gifts in engineering and electronics toward military applications, but instead he chose to focus his efforts on sustainable energy and methods of transportation that can bring people together more quickly and in a more environmentally friendly manner. The exhaust from gas-powered automobiles harms our atmosphere, so Musk provided a cleaner alternative in the form of solar and electric power.

Inspirational, Environmentally-Conscious Leadership

Musk's leadership example is especially worth emulating when it comes to his concern for the environment since Saint Francis is the patron saint of ecology and animals. Our world faces challenges today that people in Francis' time would be shocked by. According to a National Geographic study, human beings are responsible for a 1,000 percent increase in animal extinction, largely in the past few hundred years as a result of habitat destruction. Our carbon footprint is larger now that it ever has been, largely due to the fact that our global population is so much bigger than it was in the past. If our leaders of tomorrow wish to preserve the Franciscan spirit, they must use technology to find new ways to inhabit our earth without destroying it. In his "Canticle of the Creatures," Saint Francis said:

> Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind,
>
> And through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather, through whom You give sustenance to Your creatures. . . . Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs. (FAED I: p. 6, 9)

As this excerpt reveals, Francis cared deeply about nature and its creatures. In fact, most paintings and statues of Francis depict him in a natural setting with his beloved birds.

Another important leadership quality is the ability to inspire others. Musk certainly fits this description since his companies attracted extremely well-qualified applicants who were at the top of their respective fields. They could have lived comfortably rather than taking a chance on Musk's unproven startup companies, but his vision was so inspirational that they were drawn

to him. Great leaders bring out the best in their followers by expanding the limits of possibility. Many would have thought that convincing a group of Assisi residents to give all of their possessions to the poor and live a life of poverty was impossible, and yet Saint Francis did exactly that.

Conclusion

As I have demonstrated with numerous examples from successful businesspeople, Saint Francis' religious beliefs not only lead to spiritual fulfillment, but they will also put our student leaders on a path to career success. We should encourage our student leaders to start businesses that would make Saint Francis proud, businesses that are environmentally friendly and that inspire their workers. Values such as honesty, compassion, and respect are as necessary today as they were in the thirteenth century, and they are as important in our secular lives as they are in our spiritual ones.

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Giving Students Voice: Learning from Student Reflections on their Transformation during College

BY SR. PATRICIA HUTCHISON

Introduction

This article summarizes the findings of a research project conducted at Neumann University during the 2015-2016 academic year. The project invited students preparing for graduation to reflect on their personal growth during the college years. Student reflections revealed seven themes: primacy of relationships; importance of belonging/bonding/finding a niche; emotional barriers to confidence; appreciation for academic challenges; learning from adversity; the value of spirituality; and the importance of experiential learning within and outside the classroom. This paper presents the context and background for the research; a review of related literature; descriptions of the pilot and research projects; the major themes; and connections of the themes with the *Characteristics of Franciscan Higher Education.*

Context and Background

In 2009 Neumann University commissioned a task-force with responsibility for revising the undergraduate core program. Two sources proved indispensable for the work of the revision task force: the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, especially the document *A United Endeavor: Promising Practices in General Education at Catholic Colleges and Universities* (2009), and the Association of American Colleges and Universities, especially the documents related to *Essential Learning Outcomes for the 21st Century* and *High Impact Practices in Higher Education.*

The revised core philosophy states:

> The Neumann University Core Experience flows directly from the University's mission as a liberal arts institution in the Catholic, Franciscan tradition and lies at the heart (*cor*) of the University itself. The campus community unites to impart the knowledge, skills, competencies and values that create opportunities for students to integrate faith and reason, grow in social responsibility, and prepare for personal and professional leadership roles in the local and global community.

The goals which flow from this include:

- Comprehension: Think critically, creatively, and analytically
- Contemplation: Engage in meaningful reflection
- Conscience: Act ethically and responsibly
- Compassion: Respect all of creation
- Communication: Communicate effectively

Associated with each of these goals are clear learning outcomes. We envision that students will achieve the learning outcomes through active engagement with academic credit-bearing courses and co-curricular activities.

As we engaged the Neumann campus community in conversations about the Core, we also discussed six specific high-impact practices endorsed by both the ACCU and the AAC&U:

- First-year seminars and experiences
- Common intellectual experiences
- Undergraduate research
- Diversity and global learning
- Service learning, community based learning
- Capstone courses and projects

The research project[1] we conducted relates directly with the overarching goal of *Contemplation: Engage in meaningful reflection* and the practice of *capstone courses and projects*. The specific learning outcomes associated with *Contemplation* include:

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[1] Sr. Marguerite O'Beirne, Vice President of Mission and Ministry, and Sr. Patricia Hutchison, Director of the Neumann Institute for Franciscan Studies, conducted the research. Sr. Patricia Hutchison originally presented the results of the research at the 2016 symposium of the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities. Sr. Marguerite assisted in the preparation of the AFCU presentation and this article.

> Apply the principles and values of the Catholic Franciscan tradition to personal, professional, and societal questions and issues; engage in self-reflection; embrace life-long learning; discern career and vocational choices; and recognize and appreciate creative expression.

At Neumann University we define the capstone course, required in every major, in the following manner:

> A capstone course is a culminating experience required for students nearing the end of their undergraduate academic studies. Within this course, students produce a project that integrates and applies what they have learned. The project can be a research paper, professional portfolio, portfolio of "best work," or an artistic expression of some sort. *In addition, all capstones address the mission and philosophy of the University and the Core values of the University.* Majors choose how to implement the capstone. (Adapted from *A United Endeavor* of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, 2009, p. 34; and Association of American Colleges and Universities documents related to *High Impact Practices*.)

The culminating project reflects the students' mastery of the content of the major program; therefore, projects are discipline-specific. In addition to the culminating project, every student produces a "transformation paper" the idea for which emerged as we reviewed literature related to the importance of holistic education, reflective practices, and the quest for meaning and purpose in the lives of undergraduate students. In the transformation paper students describe the person they were when they began their college career and identify the ways in which they have grown intellectually, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

Review of Literature

Research related to Reflective Practices

According to Braskamp, Trautvetter, and Ward (2006), "an effective and ideal undergraduate college education is one that

centers on holistic development, including the search for meaning and purpose in life" (p. xvii). Such an education emphasizes the connection among a student's sense of self, patterns of behavior, and the sociocultural environment within the college (culture, curriculum, co-curriculum, and community). Braskamp, Trautvetter, and Ward organized their findings around three characteristics they believe are essential for colleges desiring to promote holistic student development: focused mission that is alive and guides the institution's direction; integration of academic, social, emotional, and spiritual development; and a campus community which both supports and challenges students in all areas of development. The current research project invited students to reflect upon the relevance of these areas to personal growth.

The results of a seven-year longitudinal study of undergraduate students conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) of the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) highlighted the importance of the quest for meaning and purpose in the lives of undergraduate students (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011). Through surveys, interviews, and focus groups with approximately 15,000 students from a representative sample of more than 130 United States colleges and universities, the researchers discovered connections between students' spiritual development and their intellectual/academic growth, personal/emotional maturation, and openness to persons of other races and cultures. They found that students who had the freedom and encouragement to explore spiritual and religious questions during their college years seemed to advance in academic, emotional, and interpersonal areas.

The authors also identified several practices which positively impact spiritual development, including: contemplation, participation in service, exploration of life's "big questions," engagement with persons different from themselves, and meaningful interaction with faculty and other adult mentors within the academic community. Several other authors (e.g. Haughey, 2009; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Parks, 2000) have established the importance of promoting integration of the intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and social growth of young adults. In addition, these scholars have expressed concern over the fragmentation which occurs when colleges separate the academic and the spiritual, the head and the heart, knowledge and love.

Research related to Reflective Practices within Capstone Experiences

According to Brownell & Swaner (2010), capstones differ widely from institution to institution. Although there have been relatively few studies on the outcomes of participation in capstone courses, scholars have identified the value of reflection within the capstone experience. The fall 2013 issue of *Peer Review: Emerging Trends and Key Debates in Undergraduate Education*, a publication of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), focused on capstones and integrative learning. In this issue, authors from a variety of colleges and universities shared insights into the meaning and value of capstone experiences, including the importance of reflection. For example, Redman (2013) described the efforts of the University of LaVerne to embed reflection throughout the undergraduate years culminating with the capstone course which includes "the final opportunity for students to reflect on their total program at the University of LaVerne, both curricular and co-curricular" (p. 12). This final reflection invites students to complete an autobiographical essay connecting the undergraduate experience with the university values of ethical reasoning, diversity and inclusivity, lifelong learning, and community and civic engagement. According to Redman, the power of such reflection is evident in "the emergence of a developed person who has integrated all the experiences and merged them" (p. 15). Such is the hope of the transformation paper embedded into every senior capstone course at Neumann University.

Fernandez (2006) described the efforts of faculty at California State Polytechnic University at Pomona to assess and improve capstone courses. As a result of the review of student work by an outside evaluator, the college revised its course to invite students to reflect upon their own learning, the purposes of higher education, and the role of the college in promoting learning.

Brooks, Benton-Kupper, and Slayton (2004) described a capstone course at Millikin University in Decatur, IL which has components similar to Neumann's capstones: a project which demonstrates application of theory to practice in the major area of study and a reflective component which invites students to consider their personal and professional development, especially in light of the college's mission and values and the key university questions: *Who am I? How can I know?* and *What should I do?*

Based on a review of various capstone definitions, Goldstein and Fernald (2009) contended that in capstones the student's learning and experiences are more critical than the content (p. 27). Goldstein and Fernald believe that a capstone provides a bridge "prompting self-examination leading to personal and professional growth" (p. 28). The model they describe includes five components focusing on personal and professional growth and identity.

The final report of a Teagle Foundation exploration of capstones in four colleges revealed that only one college included a specific reflection component which invites students to "assess how their projects contribute to the intellectual, social, and physical communities of which they are a part, and how they could make a difference in those communities" (Schermer & Gray, 2012, p. 13). However, 55% of respondents to a survey completed by representatives of the four institutions involved in the Teagle project reported that reflection on the project—its valuable lessons leading to growth in self-awareness—was essential. In addition, students and faculty mentors reported that the capstone experience promoted growth in self-understanding and personal development.

Pilot Project

Although the full implementation of capstone courses at Neumann, including the transformation paper, was not required until the 2015-2016 academic year, a few majors chose to pilot capstone courses beginning in the 2013-2014 academic year. From a review of transformation papers and discussions with senior students, several themes emerged, including:

The value of reflection: Some students claimed that this was the first time they had been invited to reflect on experiences that had an impact upon their personal and professional growth; students recommended that such reflection be required early in their undergraduate career.

The connection of such reflection with career preparation: Several students stated that the reflective paper helped them to identify experiences they could include on their resume and prepared them for job interviews.

Personal affirmation: Students consistently stated that they were proud of "how far they had come" and "how they had changed and learned from mistakes."

Value of co-curricular activities: Several students identified participation in team sports as a facilitator of growth. Other students described the value of participation in leadership roles in student organizations.

Importance of Service: Many students identified engagement in service as a critical facilitator of growth. Students described how they were stretched beyond their comfort zones and awakened to complex life issues through service with diverse communities.

Research Project

As we read the transformation papers submitted during the pilot of the capstone course development, we became increasingly convinced of the importance of sharing the students' insights formally within Neumann University and beyond. Therefore, in October 2015 we submitted a proposal to our institutional review board:

> The purpose of this research is to identify the factors which Neumann students nearing the end of their undergraduate studies believe have helped them to grow intellectually, socially, emotionally, and spiritually. Identifying these factors will help Neumann University faculty and staff design programs and services which facilitate students' growth.

In total, we invited 283 students to participate in the study. This included all students enrolled in the traditional undergraduate program and senior capstone courses during the 2015-2016 academic year. By the end of the 2015-2016 academic year, 229 students (81% of the total invited) had submitted transformation papers. Seventy-one students (25% of the senior capstone students) returned papers indicating a desire to participate in Focus Groups, and 47 students (17% of those invited) participated in one of six Focus Groups.

Based on the recommendations of Corbin and Strauss (2008), Creswell (2007), and Merriam (2009), we used a qualitative research process to analyze the transformation papers and Focus Groups. After we had read the papers and concluded the Focus Groups, we identified the following themes:

- Primacy of relationships
- Importance of belonging/bonding/finding a niche

- Emotional barriers to confidence: Shyness and fear
- Appreciation for academic challenges and pride in academic accomplishments
- Learning from adversity
- Value of spirituality
- Importance of experiential learning within and outside the classroom

Major Themes

Primacy of Relationships

Students consistently highlighted the importance of relationships in their papers and in the focus groups. Students expressed gratitude for parents who had sacrificed so that they could be the first in their families to achieve a college degree. A few students credited a healthy relationship with a person who really believed in them and pushed them to believe in themselves as critical to their success.

However, what emerged most strongly was student gratitude for the support and encouragement of faculty and staff members. One student wrote:

> I transferred to Neumann from another school where I had academic failures and problems. I struggled with depression and perfectionism. . . . When I decided on Neumann, I was not sure what I would find. I was worried that I would experience the same academic problems that I experienced at my previous school; however, when I got to Neumann University, I was astonished by the level of care that every member of the University staff exhibited toward me . . .

The same student continued, "The classes here were often challenging for me, but I found professors who cared deeply about my success." This student also singled out a particular teacher who "never made me feel stupid for taking longer to understand . . . and has continued to show by example that I never need to be ashamed of doing things on a different timeline than a typical student."

Several students commented on the advantage of a small college where everyone knows their name. The following comment was typical: "While being from a small university is not something I was originally looking for while choosing colleges I am extremely grateful that I was able to choose [a college] that gave me the close relationships that I have with my teachers."

Some students expressed amazement at the interest and care they received from coaches, faculty, and staff. This is evident in the following reflection from a young man who, by his own admission, never believed he would graduate college:

> I will never forget when I sat down one on one with [names teacher] and she said to me, "You are going to do great things in this world by making a difference. What you currently do for the Neumann community with all your involvement is only a fraction of what you will do in the future. God has much in store for you and you will most definitely go far in life." I almost broke down in tears after hearing how much someone appreciated the work I have done and believed that I will make a difference.

Several students commented on the sense of family, community, and safety they felt at Neumann. The following comment provides a good summary of students' gratitude for the relationships they established: "That's what I love about Neumann, the teachers actually care about the individual and they are there to help. . . . They take the time to really get to know the students and are always there to help whenever they are needed."

Importance of Belonging/Bonding/Finding a Niche

Although most students characterized Neumann as a friendly and welcoming environment, it was clear that students also needed to experience a sense of belonging to a special group. They need to create bonds and find their niche. Most students described how they had found where they "belonged" through a club, athletic team, in a residence hall or apartment shared with close friends, or within the community developed in certain majors. One student expressed the importance of finding a special community in these words:

> Through group experiences and attending religious events, I felt part of a community. Through these opportunities at

> Neumann University, I have gained a respect and understanding of differences, a compassion for those who are forgotten, and an understanding of the Franciscan tradition enabling me to take action and inspire change. One of the goals of life is being called to a purposeful life and there are world problems that need our attention.

Not surprisingly, some of the strongest descriptions of the impact of connectedness came from student-athletes:

> I came into school not knowing a single soul and gained over 40 brothers. I know it's cliché to call your teammates your brothers but that is truly what they are . . . they become the people you look forward to seeing every day, they become your best friends, and they become the people who help influence and shape you over the quick four years you share together. They gave me confidence in myself as an athlete and person, mental toughness to conquer all the challenges I face in life, motivation on both the field and in the classroom, established values and strengthened my faith, and taught me the value of forming relationships and impacting another person's life.

Emotional Barriers to Confidence: Shyness and Fear

One surprise which emerged from the reflections was that 35% of the students described themselves as shy, scared, and/or a nervous wreck when they began their college journey. As one student stated, "we are all lost students in our own way and sometimes need that extra kind helping hand to reassure us we can do this." Fortunately, most students claimed that they found that "extra kind helping hand" at Neumann with the result that they were leaving with new found and sometimes hard won, confidence. Several students spoke of "finding their voice." For example, one young woman shared, "I came into Neumann as a shy girl who did not have a voice, and now I can say I do have a voice."

Appreciation for Challenges and Achievements

It was refreshing to note how consistently and vigorously students voiced an appreciation for faculty members who promote academic rigor and maintain high standards. Despite their desire

for academic rigor, several students admitted that they did not always appreciate the challenge in the moment:

> This was one of my most challenging courses. I had to continuously prove my knowledge through homework, presentations, and tests. After I conquered that class I felt more confident in my abilities with schooling as I pushed myself to the limit. I learned how to study better, take notes to be more prepared, and how to give stellar presentations.

Similarly, another student confessed that, "[Name] was one of the first instructors in my many years of education who pushed me to be better than I already was and if it wasn't for her I don't think I would have worked as hard as I did to pursue my goals. She ignited a fire in me that allowed me to accomplish whatever I set my mind to."

In addition to expressing appreciation for teachers who maintained high academic standards, students acknowledged the sense of pride they experienced when they achieved more than they could have imagined.

> I now more fully understand the meaning of excellence because I have felt what it is like to work very hard on something I love and achieve my goal of completing it and completing it well. . . . Though it may be difficult and distressing at time during the process, the feeling of accomplishment I experience upon completion, is absolutely indescribable and personally well worth the work it required.

Learning through Adversity

Several students mentioned how they had grown through adversity. At least 35% of students described significant challenges they had experienced during their college years. Students spoke, sometimes in heartbreaking detail, of psychological, emotional, and social trauma; serious illness; death of family members and friends; and the experience and impact of war (either as a soldier or a refugee from a war-torn country).

In addition, students shared how immature decisions led to problems. At the same time, students described how they had

triumphed often in the face of overwhelming odds. Many students, expressed the conviction that "everything happens for a reason" and that learning from adversity is important. As one student said, "I think the biggest thing I learned in college was how to deal with failure. . . . I am a firm believer that everything happens for a reason and I think these failures will set me up to be a successful person and help me push myself through adversity and problems to find a solution and answer."

Overcoming obstacles frequently meant finding and accepting the help of others. One young woman wrote of the encouragement she received from a counselor with whom she worked for an extended time: "What I've learned at Neumann was that God has been with me the whole journey, I just wasn't aware of it . . . My counselor said to me, 'God doesn't walk through the front door. You may think that God hasn't been in your life or your faith isn't strong, but you're just not looking in the right places.'"

One student offered the following philosophy of dealing with adversity. "To be frank college is hard, strenuous, downright exhausting: college will test you physically, mentally, financially, and spiritually, but I have come to the conclusion that these challenges are exactly what makes going to college such a fantastic experience." But in the end, according to another student, "This transformation shows me that second chances are a gift and a privilege, and when offered, never be scared to accept the offer."

Value of Spirituality

In recent years there has been an increasing focus on the importance of spirituality in the lives of emerging adults. A groundbreaking study conducted by Astin and Astin and colleagues (2011) revealed that nearly two-thirds of college students desire to explore spiritual questions related to the meaning and purpose of life but less than one-third meet faculty open to such conversations. Admittedly, faculty and staff in religiously affiliated institutions are more open to such explorations; still, we were pleasantly surprised by the depth with which students discussed their spiritual growth.

The majority of students believed that Neumann had a significant influence on their spiritual development. Some students expressed surprise at how important this growth was. For example, one student stated: "Coming to Neumann I knew I had picked a Catholic university. I knew I would be around a religious

environment, but I did not know I would like it . . . Being able to be part of a community of people who have the same beliefs and who try to accomplish the same goal is extremely rewarding."

We had expected that students would attribute their spiritual growth to experiences such as the annual evenings of reflection in which teams participate, retreats offered through Campus Ministry, engagement with and reflection on service, and the University's emphasis on our core values known as RISES (Reverence, Integrity, Service, Excellence, and Stewardship). What we did not anticipate was the significance most students attached to these experiences as evidenced by the following representative passages.

Evenings of Reflection for Athletic Teams:

> Playing collegiate basketball has taught me how to be organized, and forced me to manage my time . . . but more importantly through playing basketball I was given the opportunity to not only meet new people and challenge myself athletically, but also to participate in evenings of reflection and learning how to see spirituality in sports. I've learned that it's not always about the wins and losses, blood, sweat, and tears, but about the connections you make that will ultimately last a lifetime.
>
> Being away from home and family I stopped going to church and I regret it now . . . (But) the evenings of reflection with the teams pushed me out of my comfort zone and pushed on my faith with others around me and made me think about reconnecting with my faith and wondering if I ever will.
>
> Through evenings like "A Night of Reflection" I was given the opportunity to express myself to my peers and realize that I had support spiritually and physically. I found a deeper connection to myself and my community while also realizing a new-found connection to life from my experiences here at Neumann.

Campus Ministry Retreats:

> Students identified the Search retreat as life-changing. In the words of one student, "Going on Search changed

my life . . . Being able to be in a room with 20 of my peers while all of us were in a state of complete vulnerability was a beautiful experience . . ."

Students often found their way to the Search retreat through interactions with peers. One young woman described her journey in the following words:

This past spring I happened to be in the right place at the right time to learn of yet another opportunity for me to meet Neumann students: campus ministry's annual Search retreat. I probably would never have considered it because I do not consider myself religious. But one day I found myself in the TV studio when a student was editing a promotional video about Search. I heard students' testimonials about how despite not being religious, they had one of the best experiences of their lives . . . Search helped me reconnect with myself.

For another student the letters she received from her parents during the Search retreat were a source of strength and encouragement: "I still have the letters my parents wrote me. They really opened up and spoke to me at a different level now that I was in college and exploring my faith more in depth."

Engagement and Reflection on Service:

Service is one of Neumann's core values. First-year students participate in a morning of service during welcome weekend in August. They reflect on this service within their first-year experience class and explore the deeper meaning of the service through a theological reflection process in the theological foundations course required of all freshmen. In addition, every major has developed at least one service-learning course, athletic teams and student clubs and organizations engage in service, and several majors have integrated service opportunities into short term immersion experiences.

Senior reflections revealed the significance of such opportunities. These reflections also demonstrated that students were at different stages with relation to the impact of service on their personal growth. For some students, service increased confidence and self-esteem. Many students recognized our common humanity, that we are all brothers and sisters. Still others were

able to name the injustices which were at the root of the need for the services they provided and articulate a belief in their power to effect change.

> Another aspect of my career was volunteering for service. In the prayer of St. Francis it is stated, "It is in giving that we receive." I came to Neumann humbled while dealing with the sudden parental loss in my life. My desire to help others so that they may gain the tools to attain a happier life became most prevalent. The time I spent volunteering has made me whole again and full of purpose.
>
> It was in the homeless shelter that my perspective of giving back to the less fortunate really solidified into a value that I will have for the rest of my life. . . . My revelation was: most people have nothing more than the clothes on their back, and if it wasn't for people were kind enough to make places like that homeless shelter, a lot of these people would starve.

Describing her work at a residential camp for persons with severe disabilities, one student wrote: "I questioned my capabilities, a lot, to care for these individuals. But after camp was over and I was home I realized my life had drastically changed. I finally felt like I belonged somewhere and it was working with this population of people." Service led another student to recognize her calling in life: "As a required service-learning project I volunteered at a local hospital. This experience changed my life; it gave me direction and helped me find a purpose . . . I was always waiting for a voice or a magical arrow to point me in the direction God wanted me to follow. Never taking the time to pay attention to my life, thoughts, feelings, or reaction. Finally paying attention, I realized God has already given me direction; he wants me to serve him by serving his children."

Another student traced her personal journey from understanding service in traditional ways to desiring to serve by journeying with others on their spiritual quest:

> There is a traditional view of what service is: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, environmental advocacy. That is where my journey began as well. However, as my spiritual life developed and deepened so did my opinion of

> service. I began to notice myself craving for deeper conversations with others. Meeting students where they are on their faith journey and challenging them to take the next step is my favorite type of service. This is why I think I find passion in retreat . . . If it were not for Neumann I would not be preparing to enter a year dedicated to service.

RISES Values:

At Neumann we express our core values of reverence, integrity, service, excellence, and stewardship with the acronym RISES. From the moment students step onto our campus, they are literally surrounded by reminders of the RISES values. Because we have placed so much emphasis on the values, we expected that seniors would include them in their papers; however, what delighted us was the importance the students placed on the values as guides for life. One student wrote: "Neumann is not just all talk, they really do live these values (RISES) every day and their hope is that every individual student will live these values." Another student proclaimed that "RISES has become such a big part of my life and I will carry it with me no matter what job field I get into. It means living life to the fullest, taking things in stride, and learning from my mistakes. RISES is something that has helped shape me to become the compassionate, selfless person I am today." Many students described in detail their understanding of the RISES values, how they have impacted their lives, and how they will apply them in their future careers.

Theology and Philosophy Courses

Theology and philosophy classes helped many students clarify their own values and find their own voice. One student shared, "Classes such as theology and Life's Big Questions forced me to truly think about my personal spirituality allowing me to find my own thoughts and opinions instead of repeating someone else's." Another student described finding her own voice in the following manner: "One of my favorite things about college is that you're not only learning more course material, but you're learning more life material. You're learning how to question things, whether it is social, political, economic, or simple issues among your friends. You're questioning the world around you and coming up with alternatives and solutions."

Although some students expressed initial reservations about the requirement that they take two theology and two philosophy courses, most students came to appreciate the value of these courses:

> When I began my classes at Neumann, I felt that it was unnecessary for me to take additional courses in theology and philosophy. However, after taking the courses, I understood how crucial they were for any college student beginning their career. . . . The biggest change that I have experienced at Neumann was with my spirituality. I have not only become closer to God and more dependent on him, but I have learned to be more spiritual with the earth and its surroundings. I have always believed in God, but did not pray daily or learn how important having a relationship with God was . . . I have definitely learned about the power of prayer and have become a lot happier than I once was. I feel that my spirituality is the most significant change that I experienced through my growing process in college.

Students who were unchurched found theology courses especially meaningful as evident in the following reflections from two different students.

> Attending Neumann, a Catholic university, requires each student to take two semesters of theology courses. These courses opened my eyes and woke me up from my daydream. Coming from a non-traditional background, going to church and learning about the Bible was a choice, not a requirement, and I chose not to. Choosing not to go I never gave myself the chance to really get to know myself and understand my purpose in life.

> As a person who did not grow up with very much religious teaching, at first I just sat in theology classes and took a lot of notes, but as I was able to truly listen and learn I found myself drawn to the Franciscan way of life. . . . It made a profound impact on me to be told I didn't need to do anything to be a good enough person. While it is good to succeed at the things we do, Saint Francis taught that every single person deserves a dignified existence. This

> outlook allows me to be more likely to succeed because it allowed me to realize that failing at a specific task does not make me less worthy as a person. Being able to put aside failure and detach it from my own self-esteem and concept of who I am as a person is something that Neumann taught me that I will be able to bring to everything else that I do.

Perhaps the most poignant testimony to the value of theology came from a young man who had returned to college after being deployed to Iraq. The student shared his experience in Iraq as follows:

> It was not until the first time our platoon was ambushed that I realized I had little control over my life. I started praying before every mission. My machine gun became my altar. I would kneel at the base of my weapon and pray that we would not encounter the enemy, that if we did encounter the enemy that the enemy would have a change of heart, that if the enemy did not have a change of heart that his weapons would not work, and if his weapons did work, that mine would work better. The war grew worse during the Arab Spring, but by the grace of God I came home in one piece . . .

Although unable to erase the impact of his experience, the student found support from the university chaplain and the theology course in which they first met.

Finally, a student who described a rather circuitous route through three different colleges and years spent "stopping out" summarized his conviction that Neumann was truly the right choice for him and the key to his growth in faith. "Neumann got me back to my faith. They didn't drown me in a tub of holy water but their subtle traditions and values rubbed off on me . . ." This student continued by recognizing the value of a decision he made "on a whim . . . to come to a small school where I am known and loved and am able to become one again with my faith."

Experiential Learning:

Many universities define experiential learning as educational opportunities that provide an integral way for students to gain

insight into the world of work, explore vocation, and participate in servant leadership. The experiential learning that students described as valuable for their intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual growth included: internships, field and clinical placements, study abroad, service-learning, guest speakers, field trips, and classroom pedagogy which engaged them in active learning connected to "real life" and their career.

Many students stated that what they had learned in the classroom was directly applicable in their internships and field placements. Students consistently expressed gratitude for the internships and field placements which helped them to clarify and sometimes alter their career goals and frequently resulted in an employment offer or at least a reference for a future position. Students uniformly described their supervisors in the field as valuable mentors.

Students spoke enthusiastically about the value of short and long term study abroad experiences. Such experiences forced students to move beyond their comfort zones, gain confidence, grow in their appreciation for different cultures, and recognize the common bonds that unite all people the world over as brothers and sisters.

Several students recounted the value of what they termed "field trips," where they spent extended time on-site in a location related to their intended career and had time to interview persons in the field; e.g. a radio or television studio, a courtroom, or a facility for adjudicated youth. After a class visit to a school for incarcerated juveniles, one student wrote, "I had compassion for these boys and believed they deserved a second chance. I had respect for them because no matter what they did, they were still human beings made in the image and likeness of Christ."

Characteristics of Franciscan Higher Education

Recently the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities developed a document to help institutions reflect on the characteristics we share as Franciscan colleges and universities. The document, *Characteristics of Franciscan Higher Education,* states that the Franciscan tradition "holds a sacramental view of the world and of the human person as a reflection of God's overflowing goodness, . . . emphasizes building relationships, . . . and is grounded in Gospel values" (Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities, 2015). During academic year 2016-2017, Neumann personnel (faculty, staff, and administrators)

have been gathering in small groups to reflect on the meaning of these characteristics and to identify ways in which these characteristics are manifest within our campus community. Our analysis of the student transformation papers has provided evidence of these characteristics from the students' perspective.

Support for Everyone's Journey of Conversion

The concept of "ongoing conversion" is integral to the Franciscan tradition; however, in our campus conversations this year, several members of our community found the word "conversion" confusing, preferring "transformation" or "growth" or "renewal of spirit." At the same time, members of our campus community recognized their role in being patient with and present to students as they "grow." Several employees described what a joy it is to witness the way students mature and change over the years. Likewise, many students expressed delight as they reflected on their own growth. Affirming the value of this invitation to reflect, students recommended that a similar paper be required early in their college career with encouragement to identify what they could do to promote their own transformation.

In describing the Franciscan moral vision, Sr. Mary Beth Ingham writes: "Moral living is better understood as a lifelong journey of ongoing conversion toward beauty: a way of seeing and living in the world. This journey is centered on the human capacity to respond freely and generously to the good. Within this vision, the moral person appears as an artisan whose vocation is to be creative of beauty in the world" (Ingham, p. 100). As we read the students' papers, it was quite evident that they had indeed acquired a new "way of seeing and living in the world" through their "journey" at Neumann University.

Reverence for the Individual and the Primacy of Relationships

Student reflections affirmed that faculty and staff members honored the uniqueness and dignity of every student. Every student paper described in some manner how important it was to belong to a community where "everybody knows your name." Many times students recognized their own goodness and giftedness only when a teacher, staff member, or coach affirmed them. The following comment represents the feelings of many students

who declared the importance of the "familial communion" they experienced:

> They [professors] have also watched me grow and find myself. They deserve an award for helping me as much as they did. [One professor] is like a second mother and knows more about my life than I do. [Another professor] is like a friend to me that helps me and also tells me like it is. [A third professor] is like a big sister to me, always giving me advice on friends and ways to write different papers . . . Neumann really shows you who you are and makes you believe in yourself no matter what happens.

Special Care for the Suffering and Marginalized

Thirty-five percent of the students who participated in our study indicated that they experienced social, emotional, academic, and spiritual challenges during their college years; challenges which had the potential to defeat them. As a result of relationships formed and bonds established, students who described themselves as "fragile emotionally [and] scared to be wrong, make a mistake, or embarrass [themselves]," reported becoming "much more grounded . . . with a greater connection to [self]."

Spirituality and Contemplation

According to the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities (2016), one of the ways in which Franciscan education seeks "to form persons and build a better world" is by providing "opportunities to contemplate and communicate the reality of God's abundant goodness and beauty." The responses of our students revealed that even those who did not consider themselves religious or spiritual felt nurtured by a positive and spiritual environment. Students repeatedly spoke of the value of evenings of reflection offered regularly to athletic teams. They described Campus Ministry retreats as "life changing," and students who had not taken the time for quiet and contemplation expressed regret for missed opportunities. In addition, students identified the value of those theology and philosophy courses which encouraged deep personal reflection.

The Call to Leadership through Service

A review of the websites of the 24 Franciscan colleges and universities reveals that nearly every institution includes service as a core value. Furthermore, there are numerous articles in past AFCU journals which invite consideration of the distinctiveness of service in the Franciscan tradition. In describing our core value of service at Neumann, we state the following:

- We serve with humility, compassion, and love.
- We challenge unjust structures and work for social transformation.
- We embrace service as a life-long commitment.[2]

Many students framed their approach to service in light of this description. Furthermore, students expressed a desire to continue to engage in service as they embarked on a professional career.

Implications for Practice

Although it was affirming to read students' reflections and enjoyable to engage them in conversations through the focus groups, the ultimate goal of our research was to gain insights into how we can improve our programs and services in order to provide students an experience which will facilitate their intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual growth. During the coming months we will continue to unpack the findings of this research. In addition, we are planning to invite students into conversations about their understanding and experience of the *Characteristics of Franciscan Higher Education.* Our preliminary review and discussion of these findings suggest a number of implications for practice. Although we cannot generalize our findings, others may find these suggestions meaningful.

Primacy of Relationships and Bonding

It is important to students that we know their names and that they know the names of the peers with whom they share classes each semester. In addition, it is essential that faculty

[2] For a description of Neumann University's Core Values visit our website at https://www.neumann.edu/about/history_mission.asp#mission

develop strategies to create community within their classrooms, that advisors promote community in clubs and other student organizations and groups, and that coaches encourage bonding within athletic teams. Several students offered examples of faculty members who demonstrate the ability to establish classroom communities of caring. According to students, creating community within classrooms becomes increasingly important for students who commute and/or work several hours each week and have limited ability to become involved in co-curricular activities.

Emotional Support

We would have never guessed that so many students would describe themselves as shy, scared, or fragile. Many students identified the value of the assistance they received through the resources available on campus. First year students are introduced to available services early in their first semester; however, it is not clear that transfer students receive the same orientation. Additionally, students often assimilate information only as needed. Therefore, it is critical to educate faculty and staff on how to identify and respond to students' emotional needs and connect them with appropriate helping professionals.

Maintaining Academic Rigor and Showcasing Student Success

Most students desire to learn and thrive when they are challenged and also supported with care and encouragement. Students named the teachers who consistently challenged them to think critically and strive for excellence. Additionally, students who engaged in undergraduate research, published papers, and presented at conferences expressed tremendous pride in their accomplishments even as they acknowledged the burden of work such activities entailed. However, these activities are largely invisible to the larger university community. Public celebrations of the academic accomplishments of students may establish a culture of excellence and serve as a valuable marketing tool for prospective students.

Learning from Adversity

As an educational institution, we have much to learn from the experience of students who confronted and overcame challenges.

According to Parks (2000), "When the young adult is invited into both suffering and wonder, then contradiction and dissonance proliferate, raising questions and activating the imagination in its search for meaning and faith" (p. 149). A question we need to consider is why some students have the resilience to persevere in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds while others do not. Understanding the role of faith and the phenomenon of grit in the face of adversity may help us to promote a higher quality of life for all students.

Growth in Spirituality

In their extensive study of more than 15,000 US college students, Astin, Astin, and Lindholm (2011) discovered that 80% of college students describe themselves as spiritual and have the desire to deepen their spirituality in college. In light of the value students place on their spiritual growth, we need to identify creative ways to ensure that all students have an opportunity to engage in contemplative practices both inside the classroom and beyond. In addition, we need to emphasize the potential of theology and philosophy courses to transform the lives of students.

Service and Service-Learning

It is essential to build on the positive foundation already established in the area of service and service-learning. Although students find service opportunities personally enriching, it is important to develop a systematic plan to provide opportunities for sustained engagement in service and to help students understand and challenge structural injustices. Blastic (2007) and Horan (2011) offer practical strategies for theological reflection and social analysis which is rooted in the Franciscan spiritual and intellectual tradition. Student descriptions of their own growth through engagement in and deep reflection on service attest to Parks' (2000) belief that "Faith develops at the boundary with otherness, when one becomes vulnerable to the consciousness of another, and thus vulnerable to reimagining self, other, world, and 'God'" (p. 141).

Conclusion

As we embarked on this research project, our aim was to learn from our students. We wanted to allow their voices to emerge.

We wanted to share their stories, but even more importantly we wanted their stories to shape who we are and how we operate as an institution. In their own words, students have described the basic characteristics and the transformational potential of every Franciscan institution. Our students have articulated the importance of affirming the dignity, goodness, and giftedness of every person as a reflection of God's goodness. They have reminded us that building relationships needs to remain at the core (the heart) of all that we do. They have communicated that college is a critical part of their life journey of transformation; they desire and appreciate our efforts to accompany them on this sacred journey. How can/will we respond and how can/will we allow their voices to proclaim the tremendous value of the gift we have to offer us institutions of Catholic education in the Franciscan tradition?

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Teaching to the Margins: *Laudato Si'* and the Inclusive Classroom

BY MATT JANICKI

Introduction:

Laudato Si' is an encyclical written by Pope Francis to address the environmental and ecological issues currently affecting the earth. The encyclical is addressed to all people, not just Catholics or any particular group of people. He calls for all people to care for creation and so maintain the earth and God's creatures. This paper will identify three main topics in *Laudato Si':* human dignity, devotion to the poor, and access to human rights. These will be discussed in the context of the rising trend of what is called "inclusive education."

Background to Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is becoming an increasingly common approach to teaching students with disabilities alongside their typically developing peers. There are many different ideas people have when they think of the word "disability." The common definition of inclusive education among professionals refers to "students who are eligible to receive special education services according to federal and state guidelines" (Friend & Bursuck, 2015). Special education includes three different types of services: specially designed instruction, related services, and supplementary aids and services. Specially designed instruction refers to how educators modify instruction to meet the individual needs of a student with a disability. Related services contain any services that provide assistance beyond academic instruction. Some examples of related services are occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech/language therapy, counseling, and transportation to and from school. Supplementary aids and services describe the supports that enable students with disabilities to participate in general education and extracurricular activities. Preferential seating, extended time, and assistive technology are all examples of supplementary aids and services (Friend & Bursuck, 2015).

The three aspects of special education previously mentioned are spelled out in a federal special education law called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA serves as a cornerstone for special education. "This federal law describes

categories of disabilities that make students eligible to receive special education and specifies the related services and supplementary aids and services to which students might be entitled" (Friend and Bursuck, 2015). The foundation of IDEA is based upon six core principles: free appropriate public education (FAPE), least restrictive environment (LRE), individualized education, nondiscriminatory evaluation, due process, and zero reject/ child find. The last principle, zero reject/child find, means that "[n]o student may be excluded from receiving an education because of a disability" (Friend & Bursuck, 2015). In addition, "each state must be proactive in locating children who may be entitled to special education services" (Friend & Bursuck, 2015). These six core principles describe the essential components of special education.

Although there are many supporters and proponents of inclusive education, there are some who believe inclusion is not a good idea. One argument from a general education perspective is that the curriculum is becoming more constrained and more time is spent testing and assessing students (Tompkins & Deloney, 2015). Those opposing inclusion claim that adding special education students to the general education classroom will cause more issues and there is not enough flexibility to manage such a diverse classroom. However, a primary goal of education is to create a classroom supporting diversity; therefore, it is contradictory to reject the idea of inclusive education. Further, there should be less time spent assessing and more time spent teaching. Another argument against inclusion is that students with disabilities will be ridiculed by their typically developing peers (Tompkins & Deloney, 2015). On the contrary, inclusive education actually has positive social benefits for all students in the classroom. The diverse population allows children to learn from each other and create new friendships. It is wrong to deny children the opportunity to learn alongside their friends. Children with mild disabilities will not thrive in isolation from their friends during the school day.

The effects of inclusive education are different for each individual child. Inclusion is not meant for everyone: some children will benefit from it, while other children are more comfortable in special education classes. The following sections will explore two case studies of two children with disabilities that have very different experiences in special education. These case studies were used for a study in a special education class and are used in this research

paper to support the thesis of this paper. The two case studies were included in the *Wall Street Journal* and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, which were found during research to be used in this research paper. Two special education students, Ro and Eli, were both placed in inclusive classrooms, but had different outcomes based on their experiences.

Villa and Thousand (2015) investigated Ro, a student with cerebral palsy who has severe communication difficulties and motor skill issues. For example, Ro's parents recall a time when Ro was in kindergarten and they were given an insightful remark by the parent of another student. The mom suggested, "I think kids like Ro because she isn't a threat to them; they can just be themselves around her." I think this opinion holds truth especially for children at younger ages. Although Ro is different, she is not scary or intimidating. Her lack of threat appeals to other children, and I believe this helped Ro have a positive experience in a general education setting.

During the first few years of school, most classroom environments are very friendly and the class is not divided into cliques. Ro had a positive experience early on because her classmates did not consider her disability when interacting with her. An example of this is in second grade when Ro was having her birthday party. A classmate named Eric told Ro he was coming to the party and did not consider the issue of Ro passing on the message to her parents. This event is significant because it signifies the fact that Eric did not consider the issue that Ro would not be able to tell her parents. He viewed her as an equal and did not dwell on her disability. The innocence of the young children was actually beneficial to Ro because she was treated normally and was accepted totally by her peers.

As a result of her time in the general education class, Ro was able to have many experiences she would have missed if she has been in a separate classroom. In fourth grade, Ro was voted "Best Friend" by her classmates. Clearly, Ro's classmates benefited from her presence as much as Ro benefited from being in the general education class. Ro's parents share how one friend, Ghadeer, learned sign language from Ro over time. Tragically, Ghadeer had a severe stroke and lost her ability to communicate verbally. However, thanks to Ro's presence in the general education classroom, Ghadeer was able to adapt right away and use sign language to overcome her adversities. Socially, Ro had many of the experiences typical students go through.

She had one phone call from her friend from school and was asked to give advice on a birthday present. This demonstrated how Ro's opinion and thoughts were valued by her peers. One of my favorite accounts from the article was the story of Ro's 11th birthday. First, her friend's mom had bought a jump rope for Ro because her child did not think it was important to mention that Ro was handicapped. That in itself is a powerful story. However, it got better when Ro opened the present and all her friends erupted in excitement. They rushed outside with Ro to play and they took turns helping Ro swing the rope. Ro's parents also mentioned that it was Ro's best adaptive occupational therapy activity in a long time.

The time spent in an inclusive setting helped Ro prepare for middle school and beyond. In middle school, Ro's parents described her experiences as fairly typical, as she went through ups and downs just like her peers. Initially, Ro struggled to make friends and gain acceptance, but as time went on she began to fit in and made some good friends. In high school, Ro was involved with various extracurricular activities and was even nominated for student of the month. Later, as a student at Syracuse University, Ro was featured in a video about the ONCAMPUS program. With the support of some caring peers and helpful advocates, Ro was able to have a very successful and positive experience in an inclusive setting (Villa & Thousand, 2005).

Inclusive settings have many benefits, but are not advantageous for everyone. Marcus (2005) investigated Eli, and he did not flourish in the general education classroom. Eli was the only student in his class with Down syndrome, and he was not totally accepted by his peers. On the surface, it could appear that everything was fine for Eli, but when Eli was asked if he wanted to go to the local high school, he said he did not want to go. Eli's mom recalled the many times she visited the school and saw him eating alone. In one instance, she witnessed Eli eating at a table with his aide while the other members of his chorus group were eating at a separate table. Eli's mother offered that Eli was liked, known, and talked to by his classmates, but they did not view him as a peer. In the article, there is mention of a survey recently conducted. The survey data reports that more than half the participating students are willing to interact with students with disabilities, while only one third of the participants said they were willing to invite them over to their house or "hang out" outside of school. The results of the survey show that the attitudes of

students greatly impact whether a student with intellectual disabilities has a positive or negative experience.

Although Eli was not a good fit for inclusion, he did have some beneficial experiences during his time in the general education class. One example of his success is his participation in the science fair. Being in an inclusive setting allowed Eli the opportunity to present science experiments with the rest of his classmates at the science exposition. In Eli's ceramics class, he had the opportunity to work with another young boy side-by-side. They laughed and had a good time. Eli would not have this opportunity to interact if he was only in special education classes. Overall, Eli had some positive experiences in an inclusive setting, but he was much happier separated in a special education setting (Marcus, 2005).

In my opinion, I believe inclusion is a good idea and can be beneficial for many students. There are numerous social and academic advantages of having classrooms consisting of special education students and general education students. Participating in an inclusion classroom helps students with disabilities prepare for life after school, as there are no special education jobs. Inclusion, however, is not the best option for all students. During my service trip to the Benedictine School in Maryland, I saw firsthand how some students would have better opportunities to learn in a separate classroom. Considering the various behavioral and intellectual issues some children have, they would not benefit from an inclusive setting. Even though a selective group of students is better suited for learning in separate classrooms, a large majority of special education students would benefit much more in an inclusive classroom than being separated from their other peers.

Influence of Saint Francis

While not mentioned in *Laudato Si'*, inclusive education is one way educators can respond to Pope Francis' call to care for creation because inclusive education serves and gives special consideration for the vulnerable students that are too often left behind. In his encyclical, Pope Francis often references the life of Saint Francis as he models the life of a good steward of the earth. Saint Francis had a conversion of faith during his life and became a devout follower of God. He lived a life of poverty and demonstrated great concern for the poor and vulnerable. In addition, Saint Francis stressed the importance of caring for nature.

In the opening pages of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis states, "The poverty and austerity of Saint Francis were no mere veneer of asceticism, but something much more radical: a refusal to turn reality into an object simply to be used and controlled" (Pope Francis, 11). This statement emphasizes St. Francis' embrace of evangelical poverty as a way to deepen solidarity. St. Francis realized that his purpose in life was deeper than owning material possessions. Francis' refusal to play by the rules of the rising merchant economy led him to lead a life of poverty living among the outcasts of society. Pope Francis refers to the life of St. Francis throughout *Laudato Si'* and establishes Saint Francis' life as a model for others to follow as they respond to Pope Francis' call to care for creation.

Although Pope Francis does not specifically mention the topic of inclusive education in *Laudato Si'*, he addresses three main ideas that can be applied to the field of education. The three main points that Pope Francis stresses in his encyclical are: human dignity, concern for the poor and vulnerable, and access to human rights. Educators can respond to Pope Francis' call to care for creation by considering these three concepts as they carry out their professional duties.

Human Dignity

Human dignity derives from the fact that all people are made in God's image and have an innate value because of that and an inherent equality also regardless of differing characteristics, appearances, or abilities. In the classroom, it is wrong to discriminate against certain students just because they have been identified with a diagnosed disability. Students with disabilities are just as deserving as students without disabilities. Everyone is created in God's image. Educators need to adopt a mindset that focuses on what students can do, not what they cannot do.

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis offers "It is not enough, however, to think of different species merely as potential 'resources' to be exploited, while overlooking the fact that they have value in themselves." As he continues, our arrogance in exploiting other species means they "will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right" (*Laudato Si*, 33) to deprive the planet of this ecological diversity. Similarly, school classrooms will lose diversity if students with disabilities are not permitted to be taught alongside their peers in general education programs. One of the biggest contributing factors towards

social development in the classroom is the diverse population of students that make up the class (Ochs, Kremer-Sadlik, Solomon, & Sirota, 2001). All students are reflections of God, so no child should be excluded from the general education classroom because of a learning difference or any type of difference.

Translating all this into terms familiar to the Franciscan tradition, we turn to the notion of *haecceitas,* a term used to support the idea that all people are created equal and have an undeniable dignity. The term is rooted in the Franciscan tradition and was apparently coined by John Duns Scotus, a fourteenth-century philosopher-theologian and follower of St. Francis. The term *haecceitas* refers to "that which makes every creature unique, the result of every creative being individually and lovingly willed into existence by God" (Horan, 2015). All humans have a "thisness" that sets us apart from the rest of creation. Humans have an intrinsic value due to the fact that we are all individual reflections of God Himself. The principles of *haecceitas* reinforce the idea that we are all equal as creations of God. In the classroom, educators can consider the implications of *haecceitas*, and how all children share a common, innate value that makes humans unique from all other creation. Because of this, all children should be given an opportunity to participate in an inclusive classroom.

Special Concern for the Poor and Vulnerable

Pope Francis takes an explicit stance on the importance of caring for the poor and vulnerable in *Laudato Si'*. Throughout the encyclical, he makes connections between ecological degradation and how it affects those in poverty. He stresses the idea that solutions to problems must begin with helping those who are suffering most: the poor and vulnerable, who are unable to adapt quickly because of a lack of resources. Pope Francis calls us to consider the effects our decisions have on the poor, because they will experience the most significant consequences of our actions. Pope Francis also mentions, "Today, however, we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" (49). The message behind this quote is that positive changes in the environment start with positive changes for those in poverty. The impoverished areas suffer most from environmental degradation, so Pope Francis identifies that it is

essential to devote our efforts to helping relieve the poor of their struggles in an effort to preserve the earth.

Children with special needs are vulnerable to falling through the cracks in school. Often times, these children present the biggest challenge to the teacher and too often are denied the extra attention they need as the teacher lets them "get by" with a passing grade without providing the extra instruction and care these children require. Students with special needs tend to be pushed to the margins similarly to people suffering from poverty. They often fall through the cracks in the education system. There are too many instances where a child in special education does not receive the accommodations and services he or she needs to succeed in school. It is unjust to have a child go through the special education process but then not receive the services he or she deserves. Rather than take the easy way out and provide minimal effort to struggling students, educators should fulfill their moral responsibility as teachers to ensure each child is receiving the best academic instruction and has the best opportunity to reach their potential.

Basic Human Rights

One of the main topics Pope Francis addresses in *Laudato Si'* is access to basic human necessities. E.g., he says that all people should have access to fresh drinking water. It is also true that all people should have access to an appropriate education: the former crucial for the flourishing of the body, the latter for the mind. No one should be denied the opportunity to learn in a classroom alongside one's friends and peers just because one has been diagnosed with a disability. To do so would violate article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as several sections of the 1983 Charter of the Rights of the Family composed by the Holy See.

Another factor that prevents children with disabilities from receiving an appropriate education is the tendency to shield the individual student from the rest of the class, which is sometimes done by so-called para-educators, that is, "a school employee who works under the supervision of teachers or other professional practitioners. Their jobs are instructional in nature and they provide other direct services to children and youth and their families" (National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals, 2009). However, observations of mainstream classrooms show that often one-on-one paraprofessional support has detrimental

effects on the student receiving support. A phenomenon known as the "Velcro effect" occurs when a paraprofessional acts as an obstacle preventing a student from social interaction with peers and receiving academic instruction from the teacher (National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals, 2009).

This practice of pairing the least qualified educator with the student with the most needs is not morally sound or sensible. Would it be acceptable for students in general education programs to be taught by a staff member with little or no training? Although paraprofessionals usually have good intentions when providing help to students, there is a tendency to cut off any other interaction with others in the classroom.

Conclusion

Many of the topics mentioned in *Laudato Si'* can, *mutatis mutandis,* be applied to inclusive education. Including all students in the same classroom together maintains the human dignity of all people, devotes attention to the students with the most needs, and provides access to the human right of getting an education. Teachers can respond to Pope Francis' call to care for creation by providing the best educational opportunities to all students. Although inclusive education is not a topic specifically mentioned in *Laudato Si'*, the three concepts of human dignity, concern for the poor and vulnerable, and access to human rights can be applied to inclusive education, as we have done here. If educators apply teachings from the Franciscan Tradition and *Laudato Si'*, they will have a foundation to provide the best educational opportunities to students while respecting each child's dignity and providing access to their basic right of an appropriate education.

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Relevance of Catholic Social Teaching to Counseling Professionals

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Social justice is a central value of the counseling profession and is defined by the American Counseling Association (ACA) as "the promotion of equity for all people and groups for the purpose of ending oppression and injustice affecting clients, students, counselors, families, communities, schools, workplaces, governments, and other social and institutional systems" (2014, p. 21). As social justice has become an increasingly prominent element of the profession, a body of literature has emerged to propose pragmatic ways of integrating social justice, and especially advocacy, into counseling practices (e.g., Bemak & Chung, 2011; Brubaker, Puig, Reese, & Young, 2010; Dixon, Tucker & Clark, 2010; Steele, 2008; Turner & Pope, 2009).

A smaller body of literature explores the principles, philosophies, and values that frame counselors' understanding of social justice. For example, Crethar, Rivera, and Nash (2008) described the principles of equity, access, participation, and harmony as points of convergence for social justice, feminist, and multicultural approaches to counseling. In a similar vein, Brady-Amoon (2011) proposed that shared values within the schools of humanism, multiculturalism, and feminism can inform counselors' understanding of social justice. Eason and Robbins (2012, p. 18) provided a culture-specific look at principles of social justice. They described an American Indian understanding of social justice called "walking in beauty" that involves living in connection to one's own body and the natural environment, being in touch with human creativity, and appreciating the sublime nature of the created world. While these examples are evidence that the counseling literature is not without explorations of the principles of social justice, we believe there is a place for further reflection on philosophical worldviews that inform social justice action, particularly because we see counselors' firm foundation in a social justice worldview as adding to their integrity, credibility, and skill when working for justice with and on behalf of clients.

In this article, we offer a particular framework through which to understand philosophical principles of social justice. Like Eason and Robbins (2012), our framework is cultural. Our aim is to describe social justice as understood through the Catholic faith tradition and, specifically, through Catholic social teaching (CST). Such a framework is particularly suited for educators, students, and professionals who strive to incorporate Franciscan values into their work and lives, as these values often directly reflect tenets of Catholic social teaching. For instance, Palmerio-Roberts and McDonough (2014) spoke of social responsibility and respect for all persons as being aligned with the Franciscan tradition. O'Connell (2014) referred to Francis' commitment to tackling such problems as poverty and inequality among people of differing backgrounds and ethnic groups in response to God's call to rebuild the Church. Finally, Franciscan universities espouse vision and mission statements aligned with social teaching principles.

A Catholic Vision of Social Justice: Key Principles for Counselors

For centuries, the Catholic Church has voiced concern over dehumanizing social conditions that affect all people, especially the poor and disadvantaged. The body of Catholic social teaching is informed both by scripture and by church doctrine, or formal writings, such as encyclicals and conciliar documents that outline a philosophy of the person, as well as the Church's position on social issues. Modern social teaching can be traced to the document, *Rerum Novarum* (*On the Condition of Labor*), an encyclical written in 1891 by Pope Leo XIII in response to unfavorable working conditions and unjust social structures that emerged during the Industrial Revolution. Among other things, the encyclical laid out a Catholic doctrine of work, advocated for the poor, and supported workers' rights to organize in unions as a means to bargain for better working conditions (Russo, 2014). The corpus of Catholic social teaching developed since *Rerum Novarum* is a diverse collection of documents addressing issues such as the dignity of the human person, political rights, rights of workers, rights of immigrants, economic justice, global climate change, the death penalty, racism, the culture of violence, response to domestic violence against women, the state of war (and specific wars), and responses to the September 11, 2001

terrorist attacks (The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], 2014).

Social teaching provides guidance on how Catholic Christians ought to act in the world, and it is also the Church's statement to social and governing bodies about what it sees to be moral and immoral policy in various social, political, and economic realms. In this way, CST is meant to have both individual and systemic impact (Hornsby-Smith, 2006). Though Church teaching deals with socio-political and economic issues, the Church itself does not presume to be acting in the role of an economist, politician, or even counselor or social worker when it describes positions on social issues. Rather, social teaching is offered in the spirit of reflection for individuals discerning personal moral choices and for those who make policy so that key decision makers and stakeholders might judge what is in the best interest of human solidarity and act accordingly (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004). Similarly, we offer these thoughts on social teaching to counselors and educators in the spirit of reflection so that each reader might be able to discern if and how these ethical principles can inform his or her practices. What follows is a description of six recurrent themes or principles of social justice that have surfaced throughout the history of Catholic social teaching and across its varied areas of focus. Namely, these themes are: respect for the dignity of the human person; rights and responsibilities; option for the poor and vulnerable; solidarity and the common good; rights of workers and the dignity of work; and respect and care for creation. With the ACA social justice competencies in mind (Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporek, 2003), we incorporate clinical implications of these themes into the discussion as a means of suggesting that good counseling by definition draws on principles of social justice diversely understood.

Respect for the Worth and Dignity of the Human Person

The underlying principle that informs every other social justice precept proposed by CST is that each person is endowed with unalienable dignity and deserving of respect for his or her life. This idea is the heart of the Catholic Church's personalist philosophy, which places the human person at the center of all aspects of the social life (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004). Men and women are creatures made in the image and

likeness of God and are, therefore, worthy of basic human rights beginning from conception and extending to natural death (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004). In describing the person as made in God's image, CST proposes a specific understanding or philosophy of the person, which includes the following facets: (a) the person is created for a relationship with God; (b) the human person has a social nature, which necessitates living in relationship to and with responsibility for other people; (c) the person exists in the presence of creation and has both an opportunity to enjoy and a duty not to exploit the natural world; and (d) the person has the capacity to be self-reflective (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004). Social teaching also recognizes that the human person is free to determine his or her own path in life by following one's conscience, which provides guidance in discerning what is good and moral, but because of human fallibility and "wounded potential" (Constable, 2012, p. 153), may not always hit the mark in living the good life.

The counseling profession reflects similar values. First and foremost, the ACA *Code of Ethics* preamble states that counseling professionals adhere to the value of "honoring diversity and embracing a multicultural approach in support of the worth, dignity, potential and uniqueness of people within their social and cultural contexts" (2014, p.3). Multiple other standards in the *Code of Ethics* align with the CST principle of human dignity and human freedom. For example, A.1.c describes how counselors go about co-creating and reviewing counseling plans with clients and instructs counselors to "[respect] clients' freedom of choice" (2014, p. 4) when doing so. While the *Code of Ethics* and CST are not necessarily grounded in the same philosophical anthropology, they nonetheless both recognize that people are not things or objects to be used for another person's gains and whose freedom must be safeguarded and potentials encouraged.

Rights and Responsibilities

Rights and responsibilities are a natural consequence of recognizing human dignity. People ought to be assured basic rights, beginning with the right to life. From this comes all other human rights, including the right to personal and religious freedom; to the physical and relational resources needed for proper human growth and development; to clothing, shelter, and food; to healthcare; to education and the resources needed to foster

one's intelligence; to a means for creating a livelihood; to one's culture and language; and to being cared for in old age (John XXIII, 1963; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004). All of these rights are derived from the inviolability of human life.

In light of the fact that an abundance of people live without basic necessities, later CST, such as *Charity in Truth* (Benedict XVI, 2009) and *Peace on Earth* (John XXIII, 1963), developed to challenge the belief that people have the *right* to excess. As a balance to the principle of rights, CST proposes the principle of responsibility, which calls each person to see wherein his or her accountability lies in promoting the betterment of others, be it the family or other individuals or community groups. To grasp one's rights without also making a contribution to the advancement of the common good leads to the distortion of this principle, and more fundamentally, undermines the philosophical anthropology proposed by CST that people are uniquely social and owing something to others for their own human flourishing.

The implications of this principle for counselor intervention can be seen on micro and macro levels. For instance, both community-based and school counselors often find themselves working with children whose rights to basic physical, socio-emotional, and attachment needs are unfulfilled, neglected, or purposely denied, as in the case of maltreatment and abuse. Sometimes this type of situation occurs because a family lives in poverty, is unfairly subjected to discrimination that might limit parents' employment opportunities, has had limited access to education, or has not been able to receive medical or other types of health care that are needed. Affirming child clients' rights involves affirming the entire family's right to have access to the necessities of living a humane life and, simultaneously, it involves identifying and denouncing the systemic circumstances that violate or limit the family's rights (and especially those of the children). This type of intervention occurs at the micro-level (Ratts & Hutchins, 2009) within therapeutic conversations and can be viewed as having the broad goal of family empowerment (Barrett, Lester, & Durham, 2011) in so far as the adult members of the family begin to appreciate the interaction of unjust social circumstances with their individual life choices. A positive gain that can be aimed for in identifying and denouncing violations of rights is energizing the family to address the social and political blocks to their healthy functioning, thus separating their sense of self (as good) from the environmental factors that have the

potential to undermine their positive self-image (Barrett, et al., 2011). Depending on the counselor's knowledge of the unique situation and of the social systems involved, the counselor might also consider his or her responsibility to advocate with the clients or on their behalf with the goal of obtaining the basic human rights that are lacking and that are not able to be met directly through the therapeutic process (e.g., access to medical care, housing, accommodations in a school setting, etc.). The counselor might even decide to challenge systemic injustices facing this client family and other families who share similar circumstances through large-scale advocacy efforts. This constitutes a more macro-level intervention (Lee & Rodgers, 2009).

The principle of rights and responsibility also prompts counselors to help clients ponder their obligation to others' well-being and to their own self-development. There is a multitude of ways in which people might overlook their responsibility to the common good (especially if they are experiencing a severe lack of human rights) and thereby undermine another person's human dignity. Thus, it can be useful for counselors to consider ways in which to bring the principle of responsibility to bear in the counseling process. Using the same example of the family whose children's rights are unmet or neglected, it could be that the parents are unaware of, underestimate, or simply are disinterested in their responsibility to provide essential material and non-material elements for their child's healthy development. Challenging the parents in the areas of neglect over which they have some measure of control and in the hopes of alerting them to their responsibility to contribute to the good development of their children would stand as a prime opportunity for advancing the principle of accountability. Moreover, challenging the parents in this example to take up their responsibilities to the degree possible can simultaneously provide an opportunity to denounce the violation of rights under which their children are living and, finally, honor the adult clients' dignity to the extent that a denunciation (provided with compassion and without judgment) is an opportunity for the adults clients' own self-reflection and embracing of their human potentials.

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

The Church's stance on the poor and vulnerable in social teaching is clear: the poor and vulnerable should be given special consideration in the development of social, economic, and

corporate structures; their needs should be addressed concretely; and policies should not favor the amassing of wealth at the expense of the needs of the poor who have fewer resources on which to depend for survival (Leo XIII, 1891). According to the United States Catholic Bishops, "the obligation to provide justice for all means that the poor have the single most urgent economic claim on the conscience of the nation" (1986, p. 20). True justice is measured by the extent to which the poor are cared for so that they may become active and contributing members in society (United States Catholic Bishops, 1986). It is important to understand that the option for the poor in CST refers to more than an option for those living with or facing material poverty; it also includes various other types of poverty, such as spiritual, cultural, and ethnic poverty that can erode true human development (John Paul II, 1987).

Poverty, as it is broadly defined in CST, makes this justice principle especially relevant for counselors, who tend to see their job as nourishing clients in the areas in which they are personally, psychologically, culturally, and spiritually impoverished. In her writings about counseling the poor, Smith (2005) explicitly challenged counselors to view poverty and racism as issues worthy of their conscious consideration. She and her colleagues (Smith, Chambers, & Bratini, 2009) described oppression as a pathogen that erodes mental well-being and human development. In so doing, they highlighted how unjust social structures, poverty, and racism have very real and tangible personal effects, including depression, physical and sexual assaults, and exposure to community violence and environmental toxins. Counselors who intentionally address the realities of living in poverty within their therapeutic relationships can be seen as acting responsively to this justice principle at a micro-level.

Various authors further spell out what it means to address issues of poverty or, as CST understands it, *to take an option for the poor* within the counseling relationship. Greenleaf and Bryant (2012), for example, challenged counselors not to be constrained by intra-psychic interpretations of clients' problems to the degree that those understandings block their ability to recognize the influence of social factors, such as poverty, on personal problems. Concretely, this might mean using not only diagnostic language to help clients put meaning to their life issues, but also using language that addresses the environmental impact on them. Smith (2005) advocated for counselors being pro-active in

identifying points of countertransference that might inhibit them from being able to connect to poor clients, reach out to them effectively, or even place themselves in the presence of the poor who are in need of mental health services.

Finally, a call to help the poor and vulnerable is issued by the counseling profession in the *Code of Ethics* (ACA, 2014, Standard C), which urges counselors to offer a share of their services as *pro bono* work for which they receive little or no financial gain. In the same way that the United States Catholic bishops noted that the poor have a claim on the conscience of a nation, they also have a claim on the personal and professional reflections of counselors who must decide how they can purposefully help the most underserved of clients in their daily professional practices, especially as they look at what client populations they serve and at how financially and locationally accessible their services are to the poor and vulnerable.

Solidarity and the Common Good

The principles of solidarity and the common good are intricately linked. Both communicate the idea that human existence is not solely independent, but rather, is deeply interdependent and fundamentally social. The common good is concerned with the development of a society in which social structures protect human rights and help to ensure an equitable distribution of goods and services, which thereby allows people to strive towards fulfilling their individual potentials. Social policy, law, and related structures are seen as serving their purpose when they support the common good without undermining or impinging on individual rights. Likewise, the principle of the common good recognizes that each person bears a responsibility to others in the local community (including family), state, nation, and even the world. Solidarity, in CST, confirms that all people are equal in their worth and dignity. Recognizing others' dignity prompts one to radical action, such as self-sacrifice that leads one to give up some of his or her needs and wants in order to help others achieve basic conditions for living. In this way, all people are considered as debtors to the communities in which they grow and develop, for they make use of the technologies, scientific advancements, goods and services, social structures, policies, and so forth that help to make their existence livable (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004). John Paul II (1987, ¶ 38), in

his encyclical, *On Social Concern*, stated that solidarity is a moral virtue that surpasses a "feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good. That is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all." Finally, the principle of solidarity is linked with the virtue of charity and takes on a specifically Christian understanding in that those who embrace this principle are prompted to forgive and to love those who have harmed others or themselves. Reconciliation and forgiveness help to further human solidarity, which ultimately is solidarity with the *personhood* of others and not just with the *rights* owed to them.

Social teaching by its very nature attempts to focus attention on the *social* realm of existence. Heidegger, for example, referred to the human person as *being-in-the-world-with-others* (Macquarie, 1968). What is just, therefore, is not only what is good for the individual or what supports an individual person's independence.

When working with families, counselors can use social justice principles, and especially that of the common good, to help clients examine their family structure in order to identify ways in which rules and boundaries serve each member's overall good and the survival of the unit itself. Counselors might work with a family to identify whether rules and boundaries disenfranchise any members by preventing them from being able to fulfill their individual potentials. Likewise, counselors could help families examine their structures for over-emphasis on one member's individual rights over.

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

The adult life rightly involves engagement in work. To make this claim, CST grounds itself in the scripture passage in which Adam is told to be fruitful, multiply, and subdue the earth (Gen. 1:28). Work is a uniquely human activity from which a person both derives and expresses his or her dignity; thus, CST views working conditions that limit or distort a person's dignity as unjust. Work should help people meet their needs and have a sense that they are creating something that provides them with purpose and joy; but work should not undermine their personhood (e.g., through working environments that over-emphasize

capital gains and under-emphasize the rights of workers) (John Paul II, 1981). Social doctrine is clear that through work, men and women can develop and advance their personhood.

One of the most obvious applications of the principle of workers' rights and the dignity of work for counselors is in the area of career development and career-related counseling. Career counseling literature often highlights the history of the profession as being grounded in the work of Frank Parsons, considered as the father of counseling, and on his efforts to create work opportunities for under-privileged workers (McMahon, Arthur, & Collins, 2008; Pope, Briddick, & Wilson, 2013; Pope & Pangelinan, 2010). With Parsons as its inspiration, counseling professionals have proposed a multitude of means through which they can put social justice principles to action in the special area of career counseling. Many of these dovetail with CST. McMahon et al. (2008) noted that counselors working at the micro-level can be mindful about not perpetuating cultural values and beliefs that hard work *alone* directly leads to job success or that the individual *alone* is responsible for his or her career future. Similar to Greenleaf and Bryant (2012), McMahon et al. (2008) pointed out that an individualistic interpretation of career development can mask social factors, such as discrimination or unequal educational opportunities, which play into career outcomes. If unrecognized, individualistically-oriented cultural beliefs have the power to erode a client's sense of personhood and dignity, particularly when one's efforts towards job and career development are thwarted by unjust pay structures, institutional racism or sexism, and the like. CST clearly states that people ought not to be treated as if they are cogs in a machine whose purpose is to produce a good or service. Even before counselors and clients consider whether or not systemic level intervention is called for in order to address injustice in the workplace, counselors can help clients process their experience as workers and affirm that the role of work is to enhance, not undermine, personhood.

Care for Creation

Catholic social teaching stresses the safeguarding of the environment. The environment is an inherent part of human identity (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004). One of the most well-known Catholic figures to highlight the relational aspect of the person to the environment was St. Francis of Assisi, who is

credited with writing the prayer known as *The Canticle of Brother Sun.* It reads, in part:

> Praised be to You, my Lord, and to all your creation,
>
> Especially Sir Brother Sun,
>
> Who is our day, and you give us light through him.
>
> And he is beautiful shining with great splendor,
>
> From you, Most High, he takes his meaning.
>
> Praised be You, my Lord, from Sister Moon and the stars,
>
> In the heavens you have formed them, shining, and precious and beautiful.
>
> Praised be You, my Lord, from Brother Wind
>
> And from air and cloud and calm and all weathers
>
> Through which You give your creatures nourishment.
>
> Praised be to You, my Lord, through Sister Water,
>
> Who is so useful and humble and precious and chaste (Maloney, 2013).

As Francis repeatedly pointed out, the natural world is a gift for all people, from all countries on the earth. As such, no community or nation is seen as exempt from acting towards creation in a respectful way or, when using elements of creation for its various good means, from not exploiting or depleting the natural world. Creation and the natural world thus are seen as more than mere resources for humankind's use; they constitute humanity's home (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004). In relation to this justice principle, John Paul II (1991) also discussed what he identified as a tendency for humanity to misuse the natural world in favor of consumeristic, economic, and political ends. He cautioned against a reductionistic perspective in which people and nations can view creation as the means to fulfilling a perceived "right" to unlimited products and technologies. Instead, John Paul II (1991) suggested that care for creation ought

to involve people in directing their lives to being and to growing one's potentials more than doing and having. Responsible care for creation means that people have some level of orientation to future generations and therefore want to leave the earth as a resourceful and beautiful place for those yet to inhabit it.

The principle of care for creation and its relevance to counselors might not seem evident at first blush. However, several elements of this principle stand out for reflection, especially in light of theories known as ecological counseling (Conyne & Cook, 2004). Herr (2004) described ecological counseling as an approach informed by various bio-ecological theories (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Lewin, 1951) that view the human person as living in and developing through his or her interactions with various layers and dimensions of the environment. While mental health professionals likely often think of the environment-person interaction in terms of the social, familial, educational, economic, and political elements of the environment, they are, in this principle, invited to specifically consider the reciprocal relationship between the physical world and the human person. Herr (2004, p. 43) pointed out, for example, that when the relationship between the physical environment and the human person is not healthy, or worse yet, is destructive, as in the cases of people living with pollution, smog, greenhouse gases, and terrorism, the "effects of these interactions are psychological and behavioral because they spawn anxiety, information deficits or distortions, fear, stress-related diseases, post-traumatic stress disorders, and other emotional and psychological concerns."

In addition to the psychological and behavioral effects of the person-environment relationship, there are spiritual dimensions to consider as well. From the Catholic perspective, the natural world is a gift from God to humanity, a sign of God's creativity, and a tangible indication of God's love for humanity. Caring for the earth, therefore, is a spiritual act that enables people to participate in the creative works of God. Catholicism is not the only religious or spiritual tradition to understand the human relationship to the natural world as a meaningful, spiritual connection and as tied to the human identity. Native American culture and spirituality is well-known for being rooted in an appreciation for the natural environment. Numerous applications of Native American spirituality to the counseling process have been proposed in the literature (e.g., Colmant & Merta, 2000; Garrett & Myers, 1996; Garrett et al., 2011. These stand as testament to

the value of considering the justice principle of care and reverence for creation as valuable to the counseling process.

Conclusion

The counseling profession embraces a mission to care for the physical, psychological, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual well-being of human persons and to facilitate their growth. On that basis alone, we believe that social justice is integral to the core of what counseling really is: a holistic and developmental approach to helping that includes both personal growth and social transformation. In their practices, counselors can be inspired by and grounded in Catholic social teaching, and the Franciscan values reflected therein, to act both ethically and justly with and on behalf of the people they serve.

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Taking the Values off the Wall: Developing Responsible Leaders in the St. Bonaventure University School of Business

BY CAROL M. FISCHER
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Preface:

The St. Bonaventure University School of Business has for nearly two decades explicitly delivered the education of future business leaders within a framework of Franciscan values as a critical component of its mission. The new William E. and Ann L. Swan Business Center on the St. Bonaventure campus includes prominently on its entry wall the Franciscan values that guided William Swan throughout much of his adult life. Now the School is making a purposeful effort to "take the values off the wall" of the Swan Center as a framework for initiatives to fulfill the school's mission of "Developing Responsible Leaders for the Greater Good and the Bottom Line."

This paper elaborates upon the values that were central to the personal and professional life of William Swan, and describes some of the recent past and planned future initiatives intended to make those values come alive for future generations of students in the St. Bonaventure School of Business. Among the topics covered is a summary of curricular and co-curricular service learning initiatives in the School; the annual retreat at the Mt. Irenaeus Franciscan retreat center; and the role of student leadership.

Introduction:

The following words fill the wall of the two-story main entry of St. Bonaventure University's new William E. and Ann L. Swan Business Center:

Contemplation
Love
Respect

[1] The authors are grateful for the research assistance provided by graduate student Kristin Woodhead and St. Bonaventure University archivist Dennis Frank.

Joy
Peace
Compassionate Service

These Franciscan values were featured prominently in a brochure that was carried by William Swan throughout much of his adult life. Swan referred to these values often as he made important decisions, including in his career as a prominent executive and bank president. Now these values can provide daily inspiration also for the students, faculty, and staff studying and working in the Swan Business Center.

The St. Bonaventure University School of Business has for nearly two decades explicitly included the education of future business leaders within a framework of Franciscan values as a critical component of its mission. Now the school is making a purposeful effort to "take the values off the wall" of the Swan Center as a framework for initiatives to fulfill the school's mission of "Developing Responsible Leaders for the Greater Good and the Bottom Line."

This paper elaborates upon the values that were central to the personal and professional life of William Swan, and describes some of the recent past and planned future initiatives intended to make those values come alive for future generations of students in the St. Bonaventure School of Business. We begin with a brief sketch of Swan himself.

The Legacy of William E. Swan

William E. (Bill) Swan grew up in a working-class neighborhood on the east side of Buffalo, NY. His father was a city bus driver and his mother was a waitress. In the fall of 1965, Bill enrolled as a freshman at St. Bonaventure University where he "blossomed almost instantly . . . into a confident, outgoing campus leader. He became a popular disc jockey on the student radio station and was voted by his peers to the position he coveted most of all—the Brown Indian mascot, the cheerleader at basketball games" (Lieber, 2003, p. 2C).

Swan went on to a very successful career in banking after his graduation from St. Bonaventure in 1969. He worked for 18 years at Buffalo-based M&T Bank, where he rose to the ranks of senior management as administrative vice-president and regional executive. Swan joined Lockport (New York) Savings Bank in 1988 as senior executive vice-president; and was

elected bank president on January 1, 1989, being awarded the title of chief executive officer on July 1, 1989 (Clarence Bee, 2002, p. 26).

Under Swan's leadership, Lockport Savings Bank was transformed from "a savings bank with a few local branches into a financial service company selling loans, investments and insurance products at 39 branches from Utica to Niagara Falls" (Bridger, 2003, p. B12). Along the way, the bank changed its name to First Niagara Bank, with First Niagara Financial Group, Inc., as its holding company. In January 2001, Swan was elected to serve as chair of the boards of both the bank and the holding company while continuing his role as president and CEO (Clarence Bee, 2002, p. 26).

Swan was also a well-known leader in the Buffalo-area business and civic community. He served on numerous boards, including the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York, the Buffalo Niagara Partnership, the Buffalo Niagara Enterprise, and the Community Bankers Association of New York State. Additionally, Swan served on such boards as the Catholic Charities of Buffalo, the RSI Retirement Trust, and as a member of the Bishop's Council of the Laity of the Diocese of Buffalo (Clarence Bee, 2002, p. 26).

Bill Swan also served on the board of trustees of his alma mater, St. Bonaventure University. He was first elected to the board in 1990 and then served for two years as vice chair before being appointed chair of the board in 2000. Swan was serving in that role when the University's "basketball scandal" erupted in March 2003 and at the time of his passing in August of that year.

A *Buffalo News* article in March 2003 asked the question: "How does a blue-collar kid from Buffalo's Fruit Belt, armed with only a sociology degree, become head of one of the state's fastest-growing banks?" (Bridger, 2003, p. B11). Swan attributed much of his success to his St. Bonaventure University education, and particularly the values that he had embraced at the University; as the *Buffalo News* reported:

> "Every working day of my adult life, I've carried this brochure about Franciscan values in my jacket pocket," Swan, a 1969 St. Bonaventure grad, said during a recent interview, pulling a tattered brochure from the pocket of his suit

coat. "I've actually taken this and built our own company's values around these values" (Bridger, 2003, p. B11).[2]

Similarly, a *USA Today* article indicated that:

> Every day of his working life, he never left home without tucking a Franciscan values pamphlet in his suit coat pocket. And he waved it every chance he got. At bank meetings. In the trustees room. During fundraisers for St. Bonaventure, local charities and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo (Lieber, 2003, p. 2C).

The same *USA Today* article described the decision made by Bill's wife, Ann Swan, at the time of his funeral:

> When the time came to bury him, she didn't hesitate. She laid her husband to rest in the St. Bonaventure cemetery, on a hill overlooking the school. Into his coffin she put his tattered Franciscan values pamphlet and his Brown Indian headdress (*USA Today*, 2003, p. 2C)

Ann Swan is herself a very visible leader in the Buffalo-area educational, civic, philanthropic, and Catholic communities. She served as a long-time member of the board of trustees and board chair of another Franciscan institution of higher education, Hilbert College. Hilbert's campus proudly houses the William E. Swan Auditorium, which was opened in 2006 as a tribute to the late Bill Swan. However, it is the campus of St. Bonaventure University which houses perhaps the greatest lasting tribute to Swan: the first-ever dedicated facility for the University's School of Business. Through Ann's generosity, as well as that of many other benefactors, the William E. and Ann L. Swan Business Center opened on the St. Bonaventure campus in the summer of 2013, with the Franciscan values that Bill held so dear affixed in large letters to the building's two-story main entry wall.

So, what are those Franciscan values that Bill Swan kept with him throughout his adult life and beyond?

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[2] Swan is holding his Franciscan values brochure in the *Buffalo News* picture accompanying this article.

The "Values on the Wall"

The brochure[3] titled "St. Bonaventure University & Franciscan Values" contains the following description:

> a University committee at St. Bonaventure selected the Franciscan values described on the following pages as values which in fact characterize the University and which the University endeavors to realize in its faculty and staff, its students and its graduates. These values are characteristic of a Bonaventure education.

The following is a summary of the six values contained therein along with excerpts from the description of each:

Contemplation

> After an experience of war and serious illness, Francis began to think deeply about the meaning of all the things which seemed important to him: money, fine clothes, parties, popularity, prestige, power, even the beauty of the countryside he loved. To think deeply, to ponder, to meditate, to consider, to study, to plan—this is contemplation.

Love

> A St. Bonaventure education does not aim for the acquisition of facts for facts' sake or the titillation of the mind. Knowledge which leads nowhere leaves us in a blind alley, and a contemplation which terminates in mere speculative knowledge is sterile. St. Bonaventure wrote, "This is the fruit of all sciences, that in all, faith may be strengthened, God may be honored, character may be formed, and consolation may be derived from union with God through love. For without this love, all knowledge is vain." A disciple of Francis, Bonaventure

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[3] The brochure carried by Bill Swan was believed to have been produced by St. Bonaventure University in the 1970s. An updated version containing the same values was published in the late-1980s. The original publication is not available in the University archives. This information regarding the Franciscan "Values on the Wall" in the Swan Business Center is based on the second brochure (St. Bonaventure University). All of the quotations in this section of the paper are also from that second brochure.

believed knowledge of cold hard facts needed to be married with a warm-hearted love. Men and women use computers; they aren't computers.

Francis looked at the sun, the moon, the stars, the brooks, the birds, and the beasts, and sang the praises of God for all his creatures. St. Bonaventure, his learned disciple who studied the sciences that studied the creatures, saw that they too could lead to God.

Respect for the Dignity of All

Francis discovered that brotherhood centuries ago in his realization that we are all sons and daughters of one God. He admonished his followers: "Be conscious, O man, of the wondrous state in which the Lord God has placed you. He created you and formed you in the image of His beloved Son according to the spirit." Inspired by gospel principles, he tried to erase in his religious community all distinction between those who had been rich or poor, of the nobility or the common people. His friars were to identify with the little people, they were friars minor, "little brothers," and as such they were to identify with the poor. In fact, "they should be glad to live among the social outcasts, among the poor and helpless, the sick and the lepers, and those who beg by the wayside."

Joy

Above all, Francis discovered joy in the goodness and lovability of God. He tried to convince all the world of his joy. He found joy in the brothers who loved him. He wanted his friars to find joy in every human being, showing hospitality by receiving with kindness whoever should come to them, friend or foe, thief or robber. Francis did not wish his followers to be condemnatory or judgmental of those who had not yet discovered the goodness of God, but by their good example to encourage all to do good. He found joy in all God's creatures, whom he called his brothers and sisters, be they sun, moon, and stars, sheep in the meadow, birds in the sky, or flowers by the wayside. Francis found joy even in the pain and suffering that is inescapable in life: it was, he said, "perfect joy" to bear

suffering with patience for the love of God. And when the moment came for him to pass from this life, St. Bonaventure says: "he died quietly, praying, and singing a psalm."

Peace

In the days of St. Francis the army of Assisi clashed with the army of Perugia, papal armies fought imperial armies, Christian crusaders fought the Saracen host, robbers murdered in the countryside, kith and kin clashed in the cities, and the vendetta was a social institution.

On the eve of the First World War, an unidentified Frenchman wrote a prayer for peace. People thought it expressed the ideals of St. Francis and called it his "Peace Prayer." Francis truly was an "instrument" of God's peace. St. Bonaventure recalls: "At the beginning and end of every sermon he announced peace; in every greeting he wished for peace; in every contemplation he sighed for ecstatic peace." He knew that no one could have peace with God without striving for peace with his fellows, and so he sought to bring people to both.

An absolute pacifist Francis was not; but he tried to remove the causes of war and violence.

Compassionate Service

Education in the Franciscan tradition is not undertaken as a means to the acquisition of wealth, prestige, or power, and not even for the enjoyment of knowledge for knowledge's sake. Education equips us to serve our fellow human beings. Medicine cures disease, law promotes justice, business provides livelihoods, communication promotes knowledge, literature and the arts exalt the human spirit, theology speaks of God, and education is the foundation of all. To feed the hungry in a soup kitchen is a heroic act of love; so also is a life dedicated to eliminating the need for soup kitchens throughout the world.

Compassion is the key to our study and to our lives of service. This compassion was at the core of St. Francis' spiritual being. According to St. Bonaventure: "God

> implanted in the heart of the youthful Francis a certain openhanded compassion for the poor." It is not merely service of the poor that is Franciscan, it is loving service, an accepting, affirming, sharing, co-suffering with the poor who are his brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of the same Father, co-heirs with him of the glory of a heaven to come. With compassion Francis gives a leper a kiss as well as alms; with compassion he begs a friend to provide food for a poor woman.

The brochure concludes with a statement that: "These are the Franciscan values to which we aspire at St. Bonaventure University." And now they are the values that are prominently displayed on the two-story entry wall of the William E. and Ann L. Swan Business Center.

The Integration of Franciscan Values in the St. Bonaventure School of Business

Franciscan History/Values Education

St. Bonaventure University's School of Business has a long history of embracing the Franciscan tradition. The Franciscan tradition was prominent in the new mission statement adopted by the School of Business in 1997, as it undertook initial accreditation by AACSB International. That mission statement indicated, in part, that:

> Our School of Business is dedicated to educational excellence in the Franciscan tradition. This education takes place in a Catholic university environment that values discovery, community, belief in the goodness of life and the God-given worth of every individual.

Two off-site retreats, attended by the majority of business faculty, were held in January and August 2002 to discuss further the relevance of Franciscan values to contemporary business practices, and to brainstorm about how best to integrate these values in the curriculum. Despite initial expectations that the retreats would reveal a "list" of Franciscan values that could be the cornerstone of our programming, it quickly became clear that this should not be the immediate objective, and that a deeper

understanding of the Franciscan tradition was needed. Later in 2002, a group of business faculty began collaborating with faculty from St. Bonaventure's School of Franciscan Studies to develop programming that would provide a richer understanding of Franciscan history and tradition.

Beginning in the fall of 2002, the St. Bonaventure Schools of Business and Franciscan Studies jointly offered *Build with Living Stones,* a program of study in the Franciscan tradition and charism. Faculty members from Franciscan Studies facilitated a series of sessions, each with a Franciscan reflection around themes of life and work. This initiative, which was opened to outside faculty and staff, was very well received.

Finally, to further enhance their formal education in the Franciscan tradition and history, a group of Business faculty enrolled in a series of two graduate-level, specially designed courses taught by colleagues from the School of Franciscan Studies over a two-year period. Again, these courses were opened to those outside of Business, and a few additional members of the university joined the classes. These courses, audited by most of the participants, but taken for credit by a few, provided an in-depth history of St. Francis and the Franciscan movement. For several Business faculty members, the experience also included participating in a pilgrimage to Italy in 2005, during the summer between the two courses.

The Pacioli Project Signature Program

Early in the process, St. Bonaventure's School of Business named its Franciscan Values initiative after Luca Pacioli, a Franciscan Friar whose seminal writings about mathematics are widely viewed as the first written documentation of the double-entry method of accounting, resulting in his being called the "Father of Accounting." While not as widely-known, Pacioli's writings also included insights about business ethics which St. Bonaventure's School of Business wanted to bring to the forefront; thus the initiative became known as the "Pacioli Project."

As the business faculty developed their understanding of Franciscan history, ideas began to be generated for integrating Franciscan values into the curriculum, and the project was discussed with both internal and external constituents. These ideas resonated strongly with a number of donors, resulting in funding for the Pacioli Scholars Program, as well as additional

financial support for a number of individual service initiatives in the School of Business. The Pacioli Scholars program invites prospective freshmen with an above-average academic profile and substantial involvement in community service to apply for a position in the program. Pacioli Scholars receive a modest scholarship, participate in a learning community with their cohort (typically 15 to 20 students per class), and are groomed as leaders in School of Business service initiatives.

Service Initiatives in the School of Business

> The 1997 School of Business mission statement referred to earlier also indicated that:
>
> Providing service to others, the very core of the Franciscan tradition, is our third priority. True to our heritage, we encourage our faculty, staff, and students to manifest our values through lives of citizenship and service.

A number of service initiatives have taken hold in the past fifteen years or so in pursuit of this distinctive mission. In addition to many course-based service initiatives, there are several School of Business-based organizations that focus on community service.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program provides income tax assistance to low-income taxpayers in the region, and has generated over 4,700 tax returns and $7.6 million in tax refunds since 2003. The program is a collaborative venture between the university, the local United Way, and Cattaraugus County Social Services programs. For many years, the university has provided leadership for the VITA program, and the vast majority of volunteers have been St. Bonaventure University students, primarily accounting majors at the junior level or higher. In some years the VITA program has been linked to a course in the university's core curriculum, enabling students to earn course credit for their involvement, but in other years (including the most recent tax year) the program was available as an extracurricular activity only.

At about the same time as the VITA program began, a chapter of Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), now known as Enactus, was instituted in the School of Business. This organization bonds teams of students together that gain leadership perspective, teamwork skills and entrepreneurial mindsets, to design and execute legacy projects. While many students participate in

Enactus through the Gubbio leadership program, which affords students an opportunity to earn course credit for their activities, many others participate on an extracurricular basis. The Enactus students participate each year in an entrepreneurial service trip to the Bahamas. This student-run trip includes business consulting, work with elementary schools, technology expos and Special Olympics programs. Open to students from all majors, Enactus focuses on economic empowerment and education.

BonaResponds is another initiative that grew out of the desire to integrate Franciscan Values in the School of Business, and has expanded to include alumni and friends of the university, as well as students and others from across campus. BonaResponds was established in 2005 as a grassroots organization created to provide assistance after Hurricane Katrina. When more than 280 St. Bonaventure University students and community volunteers went to the Gulf Coast to help with recovery efforts in March of 2006, it was the largest service trip in the history of the university. BonaResponds has grown from a Katrina relief mission to a volunteer organization that pitches in wherever help is needed. In addition to providing assistance after natural disasters, members of this organization have constructed hundreds of wheelchair ramps, performed periodic park and nature trail clean-ups, and developed partnerships with numerous aid initiatives both domestically and internationally.

The newest formal values-centered initiative of the School of Business is the William C. Foster Center for Responsible Leadership, which is currently in its formative stages. This center, funded through an endowment to honor an alumnus, will provide programming and research support to enhance the understanding of responsible leadership, building on efforts to bring Franciscan values into the forefront. The center will be another resource to help the School of Business to fulfill its mission: *Developing Responsible Leaders for the Greater Good & the Bottom Line.*

Taking the Values off the Wall

Our many service initiatives are designed to enable us to "take the values off the wall" of the William E. and Ann L. Swan Business Center. Many of the service learning activities incorporate reflection to assist participants in making the connections between Franciscan values and their community involvement. However, with the Swan Business Center now open the latest

initiative described below is explicitly aimed at taking the values off the wall and creating a foundation for future initiatives in the School of Business.

In 2014, the School of Business hosted its first "taking the values off the wall" retreat at Mt. Irenaeus, a Franciscan retreat center located approximately 45 minutes from campus. The retreat was open to School of Business students, faculty, staff and alumni, and was facilitated by the Franciscan community members from Mt. Irenaeus in collaboration with faculty and student leaders. Approximately twenty participants spent a weekend at the retreat, engaged in guided discussion and reflection on the relevance of the "values on the wall" of the Swan Center. The 2015 retreat included a number of repeat participants, as well as some who were new to the program. In the second year, the focus moved from an understanding of the values to a discussion of how to take the values "off the wall" and into daily life. Ann Swan has been an active participant in both retreats.

An important feature of the retreat has been the role of student leaders in planning and facilitation. To ensure sustainability of the initiative, upper-level and graduate students have been partnered with lower-level undergraduate students so that the latter can move into leadership roles in the future. Programming to replicate the experience of the retreat on campus has also been discussed, since not all interested students, faculty and staff can participate in the weekend retreats. In 2015-16, there were two follow-up campus events, and there are plans for more in the near future.

Summary and Conclusions

Clearly the Franciscan values on which St. Bonaventure University was founded remain prominent in the life of the University's School of Business and the education of its students. For over a decade, the school's mission statement has explicitly recognized Franciscan values as a critical component. That focus on Franciscan values continues to the present. There have been numerous, successful efforts since the start of the new millennium to advance the understanding of Franciscan values in the School of Business and their integration into the education of its students. Those initiatives have been focused in such areas as faculty and staff development, curricular innovation, and the development of a wide array of service opportunities. Throughout, a question that has persisted has been: what *are* the Franciscan

values. All will readily acknowledge that no single, definitive set of values exists. Thanks to the legacy of Bill Swan and the generosity of Ann, though, the St. Bonaventure University School of Business now has *its* set of Franciscan values to provide daily inspiration for the students, faculty, and staff studying in the Swan Business Center; and a growing set of initiatives directed at "taking the values off the wall."

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The Trinitarian Foundation for Leadership and Authority in the Writings of St. Francis of Assisi

BY RICHARD A. NICHOLAS

1 Introduction: The Trinitarian Foundation for Leadership and Authority

In the secular world, leadership is often associated with authority. A leader is given the authority and obligation to lead a group, a company, an institution, a nation. Authority is often associated with the possession of power over others, and holding a visible public position or office.[1] If, however, a person looks into the origins of the word "authority," one will discover that it really has little to do with these two associations. As Monica Migliorino Miller explains,

> Authority is not simply a power possessed by a leader by virtue of being the strong one within a group who then uses strength to organize and direct a group according to his vision. Someone who has power can declare himself outside of the group in a dominant position toward the group in a world where there is no inherent relation between the leader and the group. Order is achieved by outside force because there is no inherent relation among any members of the group. Indeed, if authority is the wielding of power, this presupposes that the group [and its members] has no meaning or purpose outside of the leader's will. This is the Nietzschean world where no ontological truth or harmony exists.[2]

This is not the world of a Trinitarian God. God did not create a world where authority is arbitrary, a matter of mere quantifiable strength, power, or domination, dismissive of the intrinsic dignity of all members of the group. This point is bore out etymologically. The word "authority" comes from the Latin *auctor* which means the author, source, originator, creator, or maker

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[1] Monica Migliorino Miller, *Sexuality and Authority in the Catholic Church* (Scranton, NY: University of Scranton Press and London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1995), xi.

[2] Miller, xii.

of something.[3] By extension, authority deals with those rights which the author exercises to sustain and maintain his created work.[4] Authority then involves responsibility for the well-being of that which has been created.

Thus, God the Father sent the Son to give the Holy Spirit so that a good creation would come into existence and the creatures who were capable of a free response would enter into covenantal union (i.e., the New Covenant) with their Creator.[5] All three persons of the Trinity are the *Auctor* of creation. Each person acts according to His own unique property: the Father *from* whom all things are, the Son *through* whom all things are, and the Holy Spirit *in* whom all things are.[6] All authority in the created universe is rooted ultimately in the divine authority of the Creator. It emanates from and participates in the omnipotence of God. Just as the Creator is responsible for the well-being of His handiwork, so too is all subsequent authority responsible for those entrusted to it.[7]

2 The Trinitarian Foundation Present in the Writings of St. Francis of Assisi

2.1 Letters to Those in Authority: The Salutations

Francis of Assisi had a Trinitarian view of authority. His understanding of the very nature of authority was based on the authority exercised within the Triune Godhead itself. A good place to begin exploring Francis' understanding of authority is in his letters to those people in authority, namely: the *First Letter to the Custodians,* the *Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples,* and the *Second Letter to the Custodians.*

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[3] Miller, xii.

[4] Miller, xi.

[5] Cf. Richard A. Nicholas, *The Eucharist as the Center of Theology: A Comparative Study* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2005), 29 and Donald J. Keefe, SJ, *Covenantal Theology: The Eucharistic Order of History,* revised edition with an appendix (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1996), 456.

[6] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (United States Catholic Conference, Inc.-Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994, 1997), 258 (Council of Constantinople II: DS 421).

[7] The Father spoke His Word and through this Word, the first-born of all creation, something came to be. Creation is sustained and sanctified through the gift of the Holy Spirit, Who draws all freely into life of the Trinity through the New Covenant.

In the opening salutations of all three letters, Francis subordinates himself to the authority of the Trinity as God's servant. He writes, "Brother Francis, your little and looked-down-upon servant in the Lord God, wishes health and peace to all mayors and consuls . . ."[8] and "Brother Francis, the least of the servants of God, sends greetings and holy peace in the Lord to all the custodians of the Friars Minor whom this letter reaches."[9] In the *First Letter to the Custodians*, he even subordinates himself to the leaders of the Order with these words, "To all the custodians of the Lesser Brothers whom this letter reaches, Brother Francis, you servant and little one in the Lord God sends a greeting."[10] In these salutations, Francis rightfully recognizes that he is a finite creature and God is the infinite *Auctor* of all creation.

In these letters, Francis uses the terms "God" and "Lord God." In his analytical study of Francis' writings, Thaddée Matura reports that whether Francis uses the term "God" 219 times or, more frequently, the title "Lord" 364 times, God is the central eternal Being from whom everything comes and in whom everything converges.[11] Yet, for Francis, God is not an abstract, ill-defined deity. Rather, he always sees God and proclaims Him as the Trinity, the Triune God.[12] God is customarily placed within the context of the Trinity by various forms of the expression such as, "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," "perfect Trinity and simple Unity," "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" or "glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."[13] In the Trinity, for Francis, there is perfect diversity of persons within the total unity of nature.[14]

According to Matura, Francis customarily refers to the Trinity practically every time he speaks of God.[15] In so doing, the Father

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[8] *Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples*, in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, Vol. 1: *The Saint*, edited by Regis J. Amstrong, OFM Cap, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, OFM Conv, and William J. Short, OFM (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1999), 58. Hereafter, referred to as FAED 1.

[9] *Second Letter to the Custodians* in FAED 1, 60.

[10] *First Letter to the Custodians* in FAED 1, 56.

[11] Thaddée Matura, OFM, *Francis of Assisi: The Message in His Writings*, translated by Paul Barrett, OFM Cap., edited by Roberta A. McKlevie, OSF and Daria Mitchell, OSF (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1997 and 2004), 51.

[12] Matura, 51.

[13] Matura, 54.

[14] Matura, 54.

[15] Matura, 54.

has the authority of primacy. In texts where Francis either addresses God or speaks of Him at length, he directs his comments to the Father. Francis uses the title "Father" ninety-two times throughout his writings and does not associate the title primarily with His fatherhood of human beings but with fatherhood of the Second Person, the Son. This is to say that Francis contemplates the fatherhood of God at its very source, in the relation that exists between the Father and the Son.[16] The Father's authority is to take the initiative and to be the sole principle, the eternal source (*arché*) of the Son. He is the Father because He is the eternal begetter of the Son, the begotten. The first person of the Trinity is Father in terms of His total donation of all that He has, His Divinity, to the Son.

For Francis, the Son's authority is to be the only eternally begotten image of the Father, the "true Son of God,"[17] "equal to the Father,"[18] the "Word of the Father, so worthy, so holy and glorious."[19] The Son is Who He is by being begotten and receiving all that He has, His divinity, from the Father. As the Father's divine Word, He is the fullest revelation of the Father Who dwells "in inaccessible light."[20] He makes the Father known through His role in creation as the "first born of all creation" and through His incarnation and passion, by which He carried out the Father's plan to establish a covenantal union with creation. The Son's will is at one with the Father's will.[21]

For Francis, the Holy Spirit's authority is to be the term that proceeds from the mutual recognition and love eternally expressed between the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is the fruit, the work, the result of the relationship of love between the Father and the Son. He is the "other" that makes love "non-exclusive" and communal. The work of the Holy Spirit to be the "other" in the dynamic of love is present in Francis' thought when he refers to the Holy Spirit with the unique expression, "your holy love with which you have loved us."[22] This phrase is

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[16] Matura, 55.

[17] *Admonitions* 1:7 in Matura, 61.

[18] *Admonitions* 1:7, in Matura, 61.

[19] *Second Version of the Letter to the Faithful*, 4 in Matura, 61.

[20] *Admonitions* 1:5 in Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, vol. 5, The Franciscan Heritage Series (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2008), 76.

[21] Calisi, 76.

[22] *Early Rule*, 23:3, in Matura, 77.

part of a larger expression wherein Francis is thanking the Father for having created humanity through the Son and for loving us through the Holy Spirit. "We thank You for as through Your Son You created us, so through Your holy love *with which You have loved us.*"[23] This point is also made in Francis' *First Admonition* when he points out that just as it is the Son who reveals God the Father, it is the Holy Spirit who reveals God the Son. It is through the work of the Holy Spirit that the faithful are led through the Son to the Father.

What conclusions then can be drawn regarding an authority that is based upon the Trinity? From God the Father, it is apparent that a person in authority is a source or originator who initiates creative actions and sets out a plan to accomplish this mission. From God the Son, it is apparent that a person in authority is not a lone agent but one who acts in union with a source, receiving, revealing, and realizing the source's plan and mission. From God the Holy Spirit, it is apparent that a person in authority acts to produce some fruit, a work, a result for the benefit of another. He does not carry out the mission in an exclusive manner but involves others for the benefit of others and the community.

Thus, each person within the Trinity has a specific role or task to play in achieving the shared creative mission. Each role of authority is distinct, essential, and unique to the person. But distinction does not mean inequality. Each person within the Trinity is a rational supposite and, therefore, unique and distinct from the other two persons but they are all co-equal due to being of the same divine substance. They each contribute to the creative mission which would be undercut by individual power or domination.

Consequently, it is fair to say that for Francis, a true leader knows his specific role in a work or mission and acts to carry it out for the sake of the larger mission. He realizes that he is only one part of the process and that others are needed to achieve the goal.

2.2 Letters to Those in Authority: the Letter Bodies

The above comments regarding authority were made in response to the salutations in Francis' three letters to those in

[23] *Early Rule*, 23:3 in FAED 1, 82.

authority wherein he subordinates himself to the Trinity as God's mere servant. The following remarks on these same letters will develop and augment the above comments.

Since a leader does not exercise authority in a vacuum but always within the context of others, true authority necessarily involves responsibility. A leader has a responsibility to carry out his role for the benefit and well-being of those who rely on him. This necessity of responsibility is addressed when Francis, in his *Letter to the Rulers of the People*, writes, "May you foster such honor to the Lord among the people entrusted to you that every evening an announcement may be made by a messenger or some other sign that praise and thanksgiving may be given to all people to the all-powerful Lord God. If you do not do this, know that, *on the day of judgment*, you must render *an account* before the Lord Your God, Jesus Christ."[24] Just as the God the Father entrusted His divine plan to God the Son, so too are a people entrusted by a higher authority to a leader for the purpose of accomplishing a task that promotes the people's well-being. Since the leader has been given this responsibility by a higher authority, he is held accountable for his actions and the people entrusted to him. A leader is not beyond answering to a higher authority. This is why Francis writes earlier in the letter, admonishing leaders "not to forget the Lord because of this world's cares and preoccupations and not to turn away from His commandments, for all those who leave Him in oblivion and *turn away from His commandments are cursed and will be left in oblivion* by Him."[25] True authority is never despotic or autonomous. A leader is answerable to God. True authority is never unprincipled or unrestrained. A leader is guided by the divine law. Authority is Trinitarian and not monadic. Each divine person is free but he is not autonomous. He is not free not to love the other two persons. He has a responsibility to them and He is bound to the law of the divine nature to be divine. Likewise, each human person is not a monad but a relation bound by the laws of human nature.

In all three letters, Francis also mentions the Eucharist. In the *First Letter to the Custodians*, he begs those in authority to "revere above all else the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and His holy names and the written words that

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[24] *A Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples*, 7-8 in FAED 1, 59.

[25] *A Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples*, 3 in FAED 1, 58.

sanctify His Body."[26] In the *Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples*, he counsels the leaders to "receive the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ with fervor in holy remembrance of Him."[27] In the *Second Letter to the Custodians*, he reminds the clergy that he recommends "the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord" to them.[28] Why then does Francis bring up the Eucharist in letters addressed to leaders in authority? The Eucharist is the natural consequence and manifestation of the new and eternal Covenant. If authority comes from the Trinity, then leaders in authority need access to the Trinity, authority's source. This access is given most profoundly through the Eucharist for through it, the recipient receives sacramentally the true body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ. Through communion with the God-man, a person gains access to the other two divine persons who are united consubstantially with the Son. Francis makes this point in the first *Admonition*, when he writes:

> All those who saw the Lord Jesus according to the humanity, therefore, and did not see and believe according to the Spirit and the Divinity that He is the true Son of God were condemned. Now in the same way, all those who see the sacrament sanctified by the words of the Lord upon the altar at the hands of the priest in the form of bread and wine, and who do not see and believe according to the Spirit and the Divinity that it is truly the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, are condemned. [This] is affirmed by the Most High Himself Who says: *This is the Body and Blood of my new covenant [which will be shed for many];* and *Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.* It is the Spirit of the Lord, therefore, That lives in Its faithful, That receives the Body and Blood of the Lord. All others who do not share in this same Spirit and presume to receive Him eat and drink *judgment on themselves.*
>
> Therefore: *children, how long will you be hard of heart?* Why do you not know the truth and believe *in the Son of God?* Behold, each day He humbles Himself as when He came *from the royal throne* into the Virgin's womb; each

[26] *First Letter to the Custodians*, 2 in FAED 1, 56.
[27] *A Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples*, 6 in FAED 1, 58.
[28] *Second Letter to the Custodians*, 4 in FAED 1, 60.

day He Himself comes to us, appearing humbly; each day He comes down *from the bosom of the Father* upon the altar in the hands of the priest.[29]

Here Francis is reminding his readers that the incarnate Son of God reveals the otherwise inaccessible Father through the action and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Yet, he explains, not all who saw Jesus Christ according to His humanity saw the Father, nor did they believe that He was the true Son of God. Now in a similar fashion, not all who see the consecrated bread and wine believe that it is the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ for they do not cooperate with the promptings and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But those who do cooperate with the Holy Spirit and believe that it is the Body and Blood of Christ, they indeed share in the New Covenant and have eternal life.[30] Just as the Son of God humbled Himself to enter into the Virgin's womb, so too does He humble Himself each day when He comes from the bosom of the Father to be present upon the altar during the celebration of the Eucharist. The Eucharist then is a prolongation of the incarnation by which humanity has tangible access to the God-man and, by extension, the Godhead. Therefore, in order to access their authority most completely and profoundly, leaders must have sacramental access to the source of their authority, the Trinity.

2.3 The Earlier Rule

Francis' Trinitarian understanding of authority is also evident in his *Earlier Rule*, where he sets out the guidelines which will govern the communal life of the Order. There he writes, "Let all my other brothers diligently obey them [i.e., the brothers designated to minister to and serve the other brothers] in those matters concerning the well-being of their soul and which are not contrary to our life.[31]"

Just as with the admonition to obey the commandments, Francis recognizes that with leadership comes, to invent a term,

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[29] *Admonitions,* I. The Body of Christ, 1-2, 5-18 in FAED 1, 128. (Jn 14:6-9; I Tim 6:16; Jn 4:24; Jn 1:18; Jn 6:63.) N.B. "A medieval admonition was more than a warning or a calling to mind; it had more of a religious sense in which a biblical passage or image was presented and, in light of it, a practical application was made" (FAED 1, 128).

[30] Calisi, 78.

[31] *Earlier Rule,*4:3.

"followership." To obey a leader is an act of trust and an act of love. It is a surrender to the other, a mutual self-donation of one's own will, just as the Son is obedient to the will of the Father in the love of the Holy Spirit. Being a follower is a distinct role from that of being a leader but it is no less important and significant for it too is needed so that the larger creative mission may be achieved.

In the same Rule, Francis continues, "Let them behave among themselves according to what the Lord says: *Do to others what you would have them do to you*; and 'Do not do to another what you would not have done to you.'"[32] This passage speaks of love and mutual respect. While each person of the Trinity has a different role to play, each is a person due to his distinct relation with the other two. And because each relation is essential to the nature of the Godhead, each person himself and each person's role is met with respect. The persons and their roles are also met with love because God is by His very nature love, as John the Apostle tells us, and love requires three relations and roles: the Lover (Father), the Beloved (Son), and Love (Holy Spirit). Thus, each person of the Trinity "does unto the divine person as they do unto Him" for the sake of the divine nature and their roles in the creative mission. So it should be with humanity, with all leaders and followers. All human beings are called to be in relationship with others through the various roles they possess. These roles contribute to the carrying out of the mission.

Mutual respect and love are expressed in service, in action. Francis continues, "Let the ministers and servants remember what the Lord says: I have not come to be served, but to serve; and because the care of the brothers' souls has been entrusted to them, if anything is lost on account of their fault or bad example, they will have *to render an account* before the Lord Jesus Christ *on the day of judgment.*"[33] Each person's role is to be carried out in a spirit of service to the one's entrusted to his care. This service should be rooted in love. Love is primarily in giving, in serving, and not in receiving, in being waited upon. It involves giving of one's self for the benefit of others. If one does not take this responsibility seriously, there will be an accounting "on the day of judgment," as Francis mentions here. No matter what one's role is, there comes with it a responsibility and an accounting.

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[32] *Earlier Rule*,4:4-5.
[33] *Earlier Rule*,4:6.

3 Conclusion

In conclusion, the adjective "relational" accurately describes in one word a Trinitarian understanding of authority. By reflecting upon God the Father, a person learns that a leader takes the initiative as source and sets forth a creative plan, a mission. From God the Son, a person learns that a leader acts in concert with the source to carry out and accomplish the mission. From God the Holy Spirit, a person learns that a leader does not act in an exclusive manner but produces fruit for the benefit of others. Thus, there are distinct roles in leadership but distinction does not involve inequality.

For Francis, all roles of leadership are relational, communal. They are directed toward others and involve a responsibility toward others. A leader is responsible for those entrusted to him and is held accountable to the source of his authority, namely, God. He gains access to this highest authority most profoundly through reception of the Eucharist, the sacramental representation of the New Covenant. By receiving the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ, he has access to the other two persons of the Trinity. With leadership comes the role of a follower and the relationship between a leader and a follower should be one of mutual respect, love, and service.

San Damiano General Education Curriculum: A Franciscan Model of Mission Integration

BY PAUL SCHMIDT AND VINCENT WARGO

Introduction:

In one of the breakout sessions at the recent AFCU 2016 Symposium at Marian University Dr. Lance Richey and Dr. Paul Schmidt of the University of Saint Francis (Fort Wayne, IN) gave a short presentation of the university's new general education program, which integrates the liberal arts tradition along with our Catholic, Franciscan identity in a way that is both clear and practical for students, faculty and the administration. While the response to their presentation was overwhelmingly positive, all the specific questions surrounding the design and implementation of the San Damiano general education program could not be fully addressed at that time. It was decided that in this short paper we would outline the reasons for and the steps required to implement such a program in order to offer a possible model, and some potentially useful cautions and guidelines born from our experience, to our sister schools in the AFCU. What follows is a concise examination of the goals and benefits of this program along with strategic and logistical considerations that needed to be met for its implementation. While the authors realize the San Damiano general education may not be the complete realization of everything a Catholic, Franciscan undergraduate education could be, we believe it is a step forward in the right direction, and we humbly submit this as but one example of what can be achieved through the shared worked of faculty, staff and administration in faithful commitment to our students. We hope that this paper can inspire and support your own efforts.

History, Goals and Benefits

The new San Damiano General Education (GE) Curriculum was developed as part of the university's new strategic plan (2014-2016). The goals for the revision of the general education curriculum were three-fold: (1) to revise the general education to align it more closely to the University of Saint Francis' mission statement[1], (2) to enhance experiential learning opportunities within

[1] Rooted in the Catholic and Franciscan Traditions of Faith and Reason, the University of Saint Francis engages a diverse community in learning, leadership and service.

the general education curriculum, and (3) to reduce complexity while strengthening the understanding and rationale behind the general education curriculum. The San Damiano GE Curriculum addresses the directives of the university's mission statement by distinguishing five course types: a first year seminar (iConnect), Franciscan Values courses, academic skills courses, eight disciplinary courses, and a capstone taught within the major. The GE curriculum was designed to form the whole person intellectually, spiritually, and morally. It was the intent of the GE task force to have the Franciscan identity of the university be more prominent in the GE curriculum and be articulated through the university's shared Franciscan values.[2] It is our judgment that the new GE curriculum is now more fully aligned to the university's mission statement than its predecessor. Leadership and service expressed in our mission statement are achieved through the Franciscan Tradition, Social Justice, and Care for Creation courses.

In contrast, our earlier GE was based on eight educational goals that were articulated across thirty-one learning outcomes, which were then managed as eighteen course distributions. None of these goals addressed the Franciscan character directly. Neither was it apparent how the leadership and service component of our curriculum arose from the heart of our identity as a Catholic Franciscan institution. By placing courses that illustrate the Franciscan values along with course on the Franciscan tradition at the center of our GE, we were able to express our Franciscan identity in a clear and consistent way to student, faculty, and assessors.

The name, San Damiano, comes of course from the San Damiano Cross of Assisi which is a hallmark of our Franciscan identity. In schematic, (see appendix) our GE closely resembles the structure of this cross. At the foot of the cross is the first year seminar (iConnect) and at head of the cross, its symbolic completion, lies the capstone. The vertical beam represents the eight essential discipline courses (behavior and social sciences, creative arts, history, literature, mathematics, natural science, philosophy, theology), while the horizontal beam represents the

[2] The Franciscan Values of USF are versions of the shared values of all participating AFCU institutions. They are the following: (1) Reverence the unique dignity of each person; (2) Encourage a trustful, prayerful community of learners; (3) Serve one another, society, and the Church; (4) Foster Peace and Justice on all levels, (5) Respect creation.

academic skills, which transcend individual disciplines, and the Franciscan tradition and values. The revision of the GE curriculum involved examining best practices in the creation of GE curricula and surveying faculty and students. USF was clear that the rationale behind the San Damiano GE was to meet the five Higher Learning Commission's criteria while seeking to achieve three overarching goals: to simplify, to scaffold, and to integrate the general education curriculum.

The revised GE curriculum simplifies the relationship between goals, outcomes, and distributions. Prior to the new GE, students found it difficult to navigate the labyrinth of educational goals, objectives, and distributions. For example, many times separate disciplines shared the same objectives but achieved different goals. The San Damiano GE curriculum simplifies this by reducing the layered hierarchy and attaching general education learning outcomes (GEOs) directly to disciplines to make it clear to students how courses fulfill GEOs.

The San Damiano GE is also innovative in that it scaffolds certain academic skills across undergraduate courses: written communication, information literacy, and Franciscan values should be scaffolded across every undergraduate program at USF. For example, under written communication, there are two writing courses given by the English department: composition and rhetoric (ENGL 101) and rhetoric and research (ENGL 104). Building from these foundational courses, each major has a writing intensive course and capstone course that reinforces and further develops students' disciplinary writing skills. Information literacy and Franciscan values are also similarly scaffolded.

Finally, the San Damiano GE also breaks down the divides between GE and major by integrating the disciplines. It achieves this integration by scaffolding the Franciscan Values across the curriculum. Students take one course from the Social Justice and Care for Creation distributions. These courses integrate a disciplinary subject with the university's Franciscan Values. Additionally, the capstone also requires students to integrate their disciplinary subject with the university's Franciscan Values.

The San Damiano GE applies to all undergraduate degree programs at USF. A comparison of GE program sheets for associates and bachelors shows that at each degree level students are engaged in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information. Typically, the associate degree has 12-13 credit hours covering (ENGL 101), mathematics, one discipline-specific course,

one course from the Franciscan tradition, and two courses from the Franciscan values. The bachelor degree has 47-49 credit hours which cover the full gambit of academic skills, Franciscan values, and disciplinary knowledge. The eight essential discipline courses offer students an overview of how the different arts and sciences collect, analyze, and communicate the content of their subjects. Each of these is described in the very language of the GEO.

Every disciplinary GEO refers to both a content and method by which it is assessed. In the previous GE curriculum, the assessment rubrics for the various disciplinary courses were designed without the input of those experts, whereas under the San Damiano system each area of expertise, with oversight from the curriculum council, defined their GEO and the rubric to assess courses. This helps to complete the assessment process by including faculty who will be able to make changes as assessments are done in the future. Together, the eight discipline courses combine to form students who can be creative and adaptable in their chosen fields. The original insight of the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration was that the "Liberal Arts are not in competition with but rather an essential component of the intellectual training required for a career in education, healthcare, business, or the arts."[3]

The other goal of the task force was to enhance experiential learning opportunities at USF. The mission statement of the university reads, "Rooted in the Catholic and Franciscan Traditions of Faith and Reason, the University of Saint Francis engages a diverse community in learning, leadership and service." This mission is translated into various educational and co-curricular initiatives on the campus. In 2010, the university established an Office of Service and Social Action whose vision is to serve the "community needs and to meet educational goals by assisting students, faculty and staff in creating diverse learning experiences through curricular and co-curricular service-learning, community service, and volunteerism."[4] Service learning, which is a combination of service to the community and real-world learning experience, seems to be one of the best instruments to combine the Franciscan value of service with a real-world

[3] The University of Saint Francis, "The Damiano Curriculum: A Proposal from the General Education Task Force," Fort Wayne IN, 2015 p.2

[4] *Office of Service and Social Action.* The University of Saint Francis, 2017, https://service.sf.edu/service/about_mission.asp. Accessed 14 Jan. 2017.

educational experience. A service learning component has been increasingly adopted by many of the courses at USF and is part of the San Damiano GE curriculum, from our first-year seminar to our course on the Franciscan tradition (THEO 105), through to our courses on social justice and care for creation.

Implementation: Strategic and Logistical Considerations

The process of implementing the revision to the USF GE curriculum started with faculty input and continued to completion via faculty governance. The revision of General Education requirements are often fraught with difficult discussions and can lead to uncertainty in the minds of faculty whose programs and departments rely heavily on GE coursework. Thus it was with great care that the process was developed, starting with a task force that consisted of a wide variety of faculty disciplines. This task force maintained a public record of discussions and encouraged non-members to provide input and perspective. This transparency was critical to the final successful implementation, nearly two years after the initial task force meeting. Task force deliberations included review of current practices at USF and feedback received from the Higher Learning Commission during the previous accreditation cycle. In addition, many other GE program types were analyzed.

After a year of effort, the task force created a recommendation and set of guidelines for a revised GE. This thirty-page document clearly laid out the strengths and weakness of the previous curriculum and then laid out the goals and vision for the revision. This document was presented to all faculty near the end of the spring semester. With task force recommendations in place, the next step was to develop the implementation strategy.

During the summer, the director of GE worked with the chair of the curriculum council, the registrar's office, technology services, and other departments to set the framework that would permit implementation of the task force's vision over the following full year, which was necessary largely because of technical challenges in the registrar's office, which had enormous changes to input into our software systems. Breaking the proposal into manageable chunks reduced stress and offered our faculty multiple opportunities to generate as much consensus on some aspects as possible while still being unsure about others.

To reduce conflict, manageable steps were developed. For example, when developing a new GE curriculum, many programs

may be concerned about changes to credit hours and how that will affect the course work specific to a particular major. With a recent university decision, approved by the faculty, to allow majors to be 120 credit hours, reduced from 128, several majors were already extremely tight on elective credits and often would have had to remove a course in the major if additional credits were allocated to the GE curriculum. Conversely, many departments are primarily dependent on GE coursework to maintain their faculty teaching loads and thus an equally valid constraint is to not reduce the number of GE credits, more specifically in any one area. It would seem that if there can be no change in credits, than how does one create a new curriculum. Extensive negotiations brought the community together.

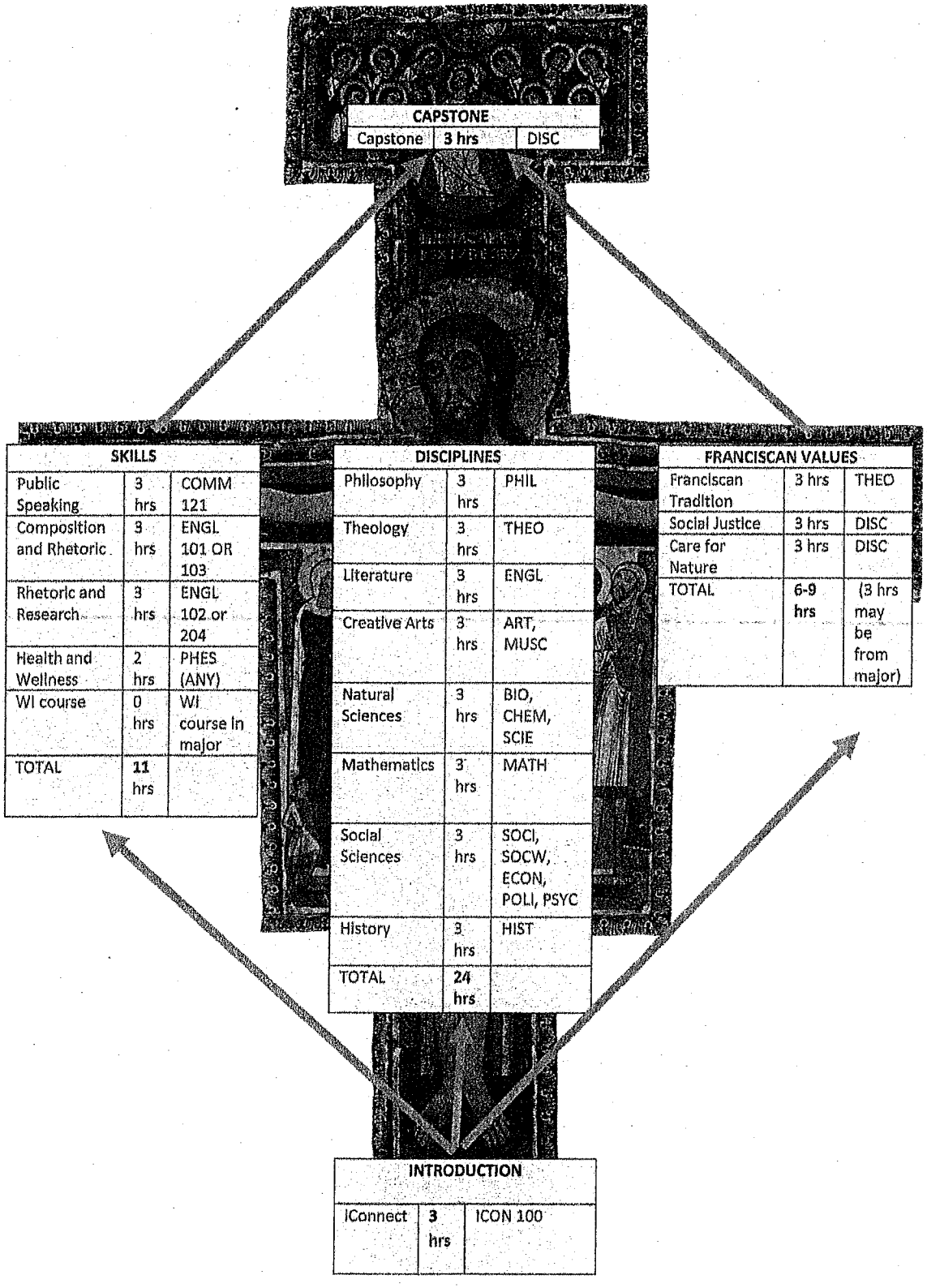
The revision of GE is a weighty exercise that touches on a myriad of philosophical and logistical concerns, each of which pushes one or more groups outside their comfort zones. Thus, building consensus was not always possible, though it was heavily encouraged. One feature of the vision was to name each of the respective distribution requirements and their associated outcomes, with some of the outcomes being scaffolded to more than one distribution. Negotiation of the names for each distribution can often raise concerns so the step of agreeing to names without truly providing the defining characteristics allowed for certain constraints to be registered which then permitted more time to work through other challenges, such as ownership of particular GE areas that are typical of a GE Curriculum. This often pushed challenges to a later date but it provided a continued sense of forward movement while still recognizing lingering concerns.

Compromise and awareness of other viewpoints were a constant requirement for the development of a faculty approved system. Many meetings were needed to address competing concerns. One strategy to managing these challenges is to restate each side's arguments and ask for clarity. Often, when faculty were able to hear their arguments re-articulated by an individual who did not have vested interest in one side or the other, they were more willing to compromise and adjust.

Conclusion

As a central part of the process, the members of the curriculum council analyzed proposals and options primarily to discern the likely effect they would have on student success. This provided a grounding principle that helped to re-center conversations

and maintain a focus on the best path forward. In summary, the revision of USF's GE curriculum provided an exciting chance to better align our curriculum with our mission. The process at USF was a determined effort involving members of the faculty as well as others, most especially the registrar and technology services. For those considering GE revision, be patient and do not force agendas, but be firm with timelines. In the end, our process created a truly viable GE curriculum, which is easier to navigate, plays to the strengths of faculty, provides flexibility, and retains the breadth of coursework.



CAPSTONE		
Capstone	3 hrs	DISC

SKILLS		
Public Speaking	3 hrs	COMM 121
Composition and Rhetoric	3 hrs	ENGL 101 OR 103
Rhetoric and Research	3 hrs	ENGL 102 or 204
Health and Wellness	2 hrs	PHES (ANY)
WI course	0 hrs	WI course in major
TOTAL	**11** hrs	

DISCIPLINES		
Philosophy	3 hrs	PHIL
Theology	3 hrs	THEO
Literature	3 hrs	ENGL
Creative Arts	3 hrs	ART, MUSC
Natural Sciences	3 hrs	BIO, CHEM, SCIE
Mathematics	3 hrs	MATH
Social Sciences	3 hrs	SOCI, SOCW, ECON, POLI, PSYC
History	3 hrs	HIST
TOTAL	**24** hrs	

FRANCISCAN VALUES		
Franciscan Tradition	3 hrs	THEO
Social Justice	3 hrs	DISC
Care for Nature	3 hrs	DISC
TOTAL	**6-9 hrs**	(3 hrs may be from major)

INTRODUCTION		
IConnect	**3** hrs	ICON 100

Worth a Thousand Words: Using Visual Art to Advance Community-Engaged Scholarship

BY SCOTT NELSON FOSTER AND KATRIA FOSTER

What does it mean to take the classroom into a community? Art students practice uniquely visible forms of scholarship that have much to offer community partners. The attraction of community-engaged scholarship for students is that it broadens both their worldview and their education. Teaching at a small liberal arts school, we are aware of the potential limitations students may have in gaining access to higher level research opportunities. Through community-engaged programs students gain access to professional networks and experiences. Besides stretching them beyond the confines of their discipline, community-engaged scholarship encourages students to apply their scholarship to real world problems. Similarly, the challenges they encounter off campus force them to adapt and reinvent their familiar methods of problem-solving. Thus community-engaged scholarship can be a powerful pedagogical tool for educators.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss community-engaged scholarship in the visual arts, and outline strategies that can be used to create opportunities for students and build greater connections between the academy and our communities. To accomplish this, we will first present an art commission on which we worked in collaboration with our students. We will look at the elements that made this project successful, and how those can be exported to other projects and contexts. We will conclude with a discussion of the institutional and curricular structures that can facilitate this sort of engaged scholarship.

The Last Seven Words Commission

During the fall of 2013 we began a conversation with the pastors of a local church about creating artwork that could be used in their 2015 Holy Week liturgies. The extended timeframe gave us ample opportunity to build this project into our teaching schedules and bring a wide array of resources to bear on the project. We envisioned this project as something on which we could collaborate with our students. We could offer the church something that they needed and the church could offer our students a real life application of their technical skills—the opportunity to work

on a long-term commission for a public audience. Ultimately, the church commissioned the two of us, and our students, to create eight artworks depicting *The Last Seven Words of Christ,* and *The Resurrection.*

Through our college's center for undergraduate research we were able to receive funding for a student research assistant during the summer of 2014. She assembled a dossier of texts and artwork relating to *The Last Seven Words*, as well as a written analysis of social justice themes in the gospel of Luke (from which the majority of the words are taken). During her research fellowship she also met with staff at a local arts-based community advocacy group to learn more about regional issues of urban poverty and inequality. She identified the St. John's Bible as a model for how traditional materials and iconography can be leveraged to communicate new content (Sink, 2013). Other artists, such as the Mexican muralist José Clemente Orozco and the social realist Hyman Bloom, supplemented the images of the St. John's Bible.

During the fall term of 2015, students in our Figure Studio course used this framing research to inform their artwork. Our research assistant, who was also a student in the class, was able to influence the direction of the project throughout the term. The class was able to take accounts of contemporary issues such as police brutality, urban poverty, and food scarcity to reflect on the suffering and death of Christ. Our students also worked with each of us, in the initial stages of each work's creation, and in the final stages of unification. At the beginning of this project one of us, a photographer, created abstract photographs as a base upon which the students would paint and draw. These photographs created space and color informed by specific texts. From here the students worked in teams under our guidance. They began with gesture drawings created from models, creating imagery based on specific texts. The students made multiple images for each of the seven words. Finally, seven artworks were selected based their overall unity and relationship to the text. An eighth piece, depicting The Resurrection was created by ourselves in response to our students' work.

Following the completion of the work, we installed the work in the church for their Holy Week liturgies. The design team at the church also used images of the work for publication in a small devotional guide, and for projection during services. To reach audiences outside of the church, a reception was held in

the church's gallery space during the city's monthly arts-night. In analyzing the successes and shortcomings of this project, we can point to three aspects of the project that made it successful. First, the project was community driven. It arose out of a specific need from a local church. This is a key component of any form of engaged scholarship. The Carnegie definitions and criteria for Community Engagement Classification stress mutuality and reciprocity (New England Resource Center for Higher Education, n.d.). This cannot happen without ground level interaction both on and off campus. Our project was not an exception to this. Our previous relationship with the church, which often involved curating and installing artwork in their gallery spaces, or inviting artists from their congregation to participate in workshops or events, meant that both we and they had a sense of the others' needs, abilities and capacities.

Second, the project capitalized on the parallel visions of the college and the church. We have purposefully avoided using the term "shared vision" because rarely do multiple organizations and individuals have the same vision. Our school is deeply committed to its Franciscan heritage. It seeks to instill its students with the values of St. Francis, such as concern for the marginalized, a delight in beauty, and a desire to serve the global community. Our community partner was a modern evangelical church, and part of a national network of similar churches whose goals were very different from our college. The congregation, however, was also committed to historical traditions of Christianity, and to expressing those traditions in a way relevant in the twenty-first century. Hence this project, with its focus on giving visual form to social justice, and tying that theme to liturgy, was something that resonated with both organizations.

Third, throughout the commission, there were multiple points for student involvement in a variety of capacities. Initially, one student was involved in the framing research. This task involved examining historical antecedents and discovering contemporary artwork, but also involved analytical work in extracting thematic content from ancient texts that could offer commentary on contemporary events. Subsequently, multiple students were involved in the creation and execution of work. They developed concept sketches; they painted, drew, and revised the artwork. Other students ran sessions with our models. They set up poses; arranged for costumes, props, and drapery; and set up lighting. Finally, students were involved in the presentation and dissemination of

that work. They assisted with the press release and photoshoot, and served as spokespersons for the project.

We also identified challenges: maintaining student interest over a long-term project that extended beyond a single term and equitably dividing work between students of different abilities. Both difficulties were mitigated to some degree by having multiple points for student involvement. This allowed us to break the trajectory of the project into multiple components. For example, students with less confidence in drawing were able to be more involved in other meaningful tasks, such designing the composition, managing the model schedule, or assembling visual research and references.

Building Support Structures

Above we have described how we were able to use a community-engaged scholarly project to benefit our students. We must acknowledge that this was only possible through reliance on the support systems available at our college. Few of these are unique to our school, so we aim below to discuss curricular and extracurricular support structures that are usually found at any institution.

We are fortunate to be teaching in a multidisciplinary department at a school that values collaborative work. Our department includes music, theatre, and visual art. Our students follow a course of study that brings them into contact with each discipline from their introductory pro-seminar course, through multimedia studio courses, and finally culminating in a capstone project. Although many students gravitate toward specific content areas, their work within those bounds is never totally isolated from other disciplines.

There is frequent interaction between schools and departments at our college, whose small size makes this collaboration especially possible. We have worked with history students to investigate the materials and methods of Revolutionary-era American painters—even making paint from the recipes of John Singleton Copley. We have studied the physics of light and color in tandem with aesthetic concerns. The inherent visibility of art is a distinct advantage, and we have found that those in other disciplines are excited about the possibility of partnering with us. The challenge is finding an arena for partnership in which the undiluted content of either discipline can be approached by outsiders (Jentworth & Davis, 2002, p 22-23). In the case of our

Last Seven Words project, the Franciscan tradition of our institution, friars, and religious studies department were valuable resources that gave our students a perspective on the theological context for this work.

When dealing with multiple disciplines in a single class, a related challenge is that of assessment. Our department is consciously interdisciplinary, and whether working with practitioners in other creative fields, or those from other academic departments, we have had success applying the insights set forth in Mansilla and Duraisingh's (2007) survey of the literature of interdisciplinary assessment. The authors distinguish three components that have a bearing on the success of interdisciplinary projects and programs: 1) the grounding of student work in disciplinary insights, 2) the integration of these insights to advance learning, 3) and the sense of purpose, reflection and self-criticism evident in the student work (p.222). The challenge of grounding work of multiple disciplines within a single class, by an individual with specialization in only one discipline, is significant. When two faculty (both with individual specializations) collaborate to teach, this difficulty is not necessarily ameliorated.

We have found that in working through the process of the second component, the integration of disciplinary insights, that many of the challenges of the first were mitigated. That is, in searching for common creative habits and processes, our faculty in one content area are better able to foster the creative growth of students outside of their area of specialization. No one pretends to be an expert but instead everyone focuses on overlapping skills and practices. First and foremost of these is the practice of critique and reflection. Indeed, the critique and revision of one's own work, and the work of one's peers is integral to all art forms. By building both disciplinary and interdisciplinary critique into our curriculum, our students practice conscious reflection on the strengths, opportunities, and challenges present in their work throughout their course of study.

It is in the exhibition of art that the habits of critique and reflection find their culmination. The gallery is where students are able to see how their work really "works." That is, how an audience reacts to their creation. Using a gallery for teaching requires a focus on the presentation of work beyond the technical means of the artworks' production. Yet in subjecting their work to the same professional practices (framing, mounting, entablature, etc.) as art would receive in a gallery, students quickly start

to see their work as part of a larger context, and can even start to treat their work with a kind of reverence (Buster & Crawford, 2007, p. 73-74).

We have had success in broadening the scope of the sort of learning activities that can happen in the gallery. For example, it is possible to bring in students—even from other disciplines—to curate a show or manage the exhibition schedule. Cross disciplinary lectures, discussions, or reading groups can further augment the content of the artwork and offer alternative opportunities for learning, especially where such activities present a counterpoint to the dominant content of the art on display. The content of the alternative opportunity could focus on issues of class, race, or religion raised by the artwork, thereby offering an access point to the growing diversity of our student body.

Alternative teaching and learning strategies will continue to become more important, if for no other reason than the changing makeup of the student body (Ramaley, 2010). The classic lecture classroom model of higher education, in which a professor disseminates knowledge, and students absorb that information is both similar to, and different than, the instructional models of studio art. With a pedagogical tradition that has evolved from academies and ateliers (Goldstein, 1999), the pedagogy of studio art has undergone much revision and reinterpretation, but has rarely been systematized (Rockman, 2000, p. 5-6). Most often, in the studio classroom, the artist/instructor demonstrates and the student imitates, until a level of technical mastery is attained. This hierarchical structure is not unlike a traditional lecture. Yet unlike a lecture, the process of demonstration/imitation tends to require smaller classes sizes, hand-on guidance from the instructor, and individualized critique. Thus, in studio classrooms, the demonstration/imitation model is a valuable resource for communicating technical processes and procedures, while also offering opportunities for impactful learning. In our own classroom, we supplement the demonstration/imitation model with alternative and collaborative learning experiences such as the Last Seven Words project. Such projects move our students toward interdisciplinary thinking, engage a broader community, and involve our students in real-world experiences.

In fostering collaboration and community-engaged work, we would do well to consider the model of collaborative learning created in New York City in 2009 by artists Caroline Wooland, Rich Watts, and Louie Ma ("Tradeschool," n.d.). Besides introducing

a bartering economy of education, the Trade School is made of individuals with very fluid roles. Students readily become teachers, and teachers in turn become students.

In our own classroom, turning students into teachers has been very useful for interdisciplinary projects. During the *Last Seven Words* project, students worked in teams to create each artwork. Due to the varied abilities of our students, it was useful to allow the students to break down each artwork into segments and offer each other guidance and critique to develop the work. For instance, the student sketching the composition and creating the underpainting was able to offer feedback to the student drawing the head and hands about preserving the energy in the initial lines and shapes.

Later, during an unrelated painting and history collaboration, our painting students were able to teach history students some of the fundamental aspects of oil painting that would facilitate the history students' investigation of colonial American painting. In turn, the history students were able to unearth particular iconographic and material components that were applied by the painting students in the creation of their colonial "forgeries." During both of these projects, the class had to move at a slower pace than other painting classes, yet the greater level of participation, combined with a deeper insight into the history and process of painting, has yielded much more interesting paintings. We would hope that the insights gained during such projects are more durable and lasting, since they are gained through a student directed investigation and self-evaluation.

The movement from a more passive learning environment to one in which students are actively engaged in their own learning—and eventually in the mutual exchange of information between their peers—has been a critical step in advancing community-engaged scholarship in our classrooms. It was not an easy step to take, and it truly was a step, or series of steps. In their chapter in the 2009 text, *Innovations in Interdisciplinary Teaching*, Myers and Haynes suggest that the relatively simple act of writing more interactive lectures can be an important first step in building a more active learning environment (2002, p. 182). From there it can be easier to transition into group work, team projects, and, finally, student-generated labs (Meyers & Haynes). Ultimately, this ownership of their own educations will bear fruit when students work with a community partner on a project outside of academia.

It is, in fact, outside the walls of academia where most of our students will spend their lives. We can prepare them for this by encouraging community-engaged scholarship. In order to do this, we as teachers and as scholars must work to align these activities with academic goals (Fitzgerald, Burack, & Seifer, 2010, p. 425). In the case of our *Last Seven Words* project, the exhibition of artwork was that goal, as was the meaningful experience of working in collaboration with peers and professionals. Our students were able to provide a tangible piece of scholarship to meet a local need. Reciprocally, our community partner was able to facilitate this process and provide our students with the opportunity to work as a professional artist for a term. Although each student began the semester at different levels of ability and interest, all finished as meaningful contributors to their community and to the scholarship of the visual arts.

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"Once, in a vision"

Acts of the Process of Canonization of Clare of Asissi, 3.29

I have rushed to reach him,
To see him,
Small and dark and intense

But I am ardent also
And I am alight
A flame struck off his flint

Hurrying with towel and hot water
Every midwife's clichéd appointments
What, is he with child?

To wash, to dry,
Lavabo inter innocentes manus meas
How my thoughts are racing with me!

And, now, to meet him
Emaciated, skeletal, wounded
His breasts are bared to me

Accipite, et bibite
Oh, what words to use!
My mother, my father, my brother!

I drink, and drink again,
His nipple soft on my tongue
His milk warm in my mouth

So delicious! So delightful!
A fountain flowing between my lips
How can I explain this sweet intoxication?

And what, then, remains?
For that from which I gave suck
Is now held in my hands

Like a mirror, golden, so clear and bright,
Reflecting what is seen as it has been tasted
Gustate, et videte

Sean Edward Kinsella

Julie McElmurry, ed., *Living & Serving in the Way of St. Francis: Reflections from Franciscan Volunteers* (Phoenix, AZ: Tau Publishing, 2015), 93pp.

Franciscan volunteers have been serving the poor and the needs of others for years, and for the first time Julie McElmurry brings to light these quiet witnesses to a life of mercy, so recently commended to the Church by Pope Francis. *Living & Serving in the Way of St. Francis: Reflections from Franciscan Volunteers* deserves to be found on the shelf of every Franciscan bookstore as well as on every Franciscan campus being used for reflection by students involved in service learning programs.

Julie McElmurry has been that silent witness of hope for others in her own ministries. A graduate from The Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, Julie put her scholarly works into action by starting Franciscan Passages, a non-profit educational organization. Julie provides retreats and presentations to many groups as well as some of the Franciscan volunteer organizations mentioned in the book in sharing her own personal experiences of volunteer services in the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare. During Julie's years of service as a campus minister at Wake Forest University and Salem College many students were led on mission trips for service learning experiences to Central America and India as well as areas within the United States devastated by disasters such as Hurricane Katrina.

McElmurry's works have been recognized by members of the Franciscan family such as Cardinal Seán O'Malley, OFM Cap. He offers a reflection in the foreword in order to consider what is our call to service today and how do we witness to the call from Pope Francis to walk with the poor and the outcast of our time. Like St. Francis we are called to be a presence, to dialogue and to witness the Gospel Way of life of being that hope to others through our ministries of service. Julie's mentor Jean François Godet-Calogeras from The Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University offers in the Preface the encouragement for Julie to complete this manuscript based on the Testament of St. Francis to inspire others to that commitment of the true spirit and intent to share the lived human experiences of service.

The stories of moments of conversation are represented by the women and men from twelve Franciscan Volunteer service organizations. What is most intriguing are that these volunteers are from all walks of life, different college experiences, different

volunteer settings, different works, different age groups and different cultures and countries. However, there is a commonality in the challenges, moments of conversation, highs and lows and moments of inspiration to continue to strive and be there for others. One of the common elements working with college students today is the growth and development in maturity and being open to "let go." These young volunteers are placed in settings of community living and ministries to "let go" of their way of thinking, perceiving and controlling within a few months. For years the world centered on their needs and wants, always leading to the belief that they were always right and always deserved the best grades or reviews from peers, teachers or supervisors. The "wake up call" for some came sooner than others. At the same time there were those volunteers that came from very humble personal experiences themselves and could identify with the people that they ministered with because they were there themselves in the soup kitchen line, in the shelters and totally dependent on social services . . . etc.

Amazingly the bases for all those moments of conversation were centered in the growth and development in their personal prayer life. For many it was being exposed to what is a prayer life? How does my journey with God relate to my personal journey? One of the most important awakenings was the realization of the intricacy that your prayer life experience sends you to your community and your community experience sends you to your ministry. The reverse in turn is that your ministry experience sends you back to community and your community experience sends you back to your prayer life to discern "where is God in the picture?"

One testimony relates to their experience at Mt. Irenaeus Mountain Retreat for the Franciscan Volunteer Ministry. The tradition to center oneself in prayer at Mt. Irenaeus begins with, "Be Still and Know I am God." For Kathryn Kirkpatrick this was the moment that opened her to a whole new world of "listening" to the God within. This leads into the reason why this book has become so popular with Franciscan colleges and universities to use with their students preparing for service oriented learning experiences. Each testimony shared by a Franciscan volunteer begins with a reflection from the Testament of St. Francis of Assisi. This is followed by the reflections from the Franciscan service volunteers, leading into the questions at the end of each shared experience. Each testimony leaves the reader with a moment of "Reflective Pause" to ponder the insights.

Overall the book gives many such insights to ponder. *Living & Serving in the Way of St. Francis: Reflections from Franciscan Volunteers* is therefore a must-read for campus ministers and service learning programs. Each testimony offers insights into the question of Franciscan identity in the twenty-first century that will be valuable to us all.

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