Spirtu u Ħajja

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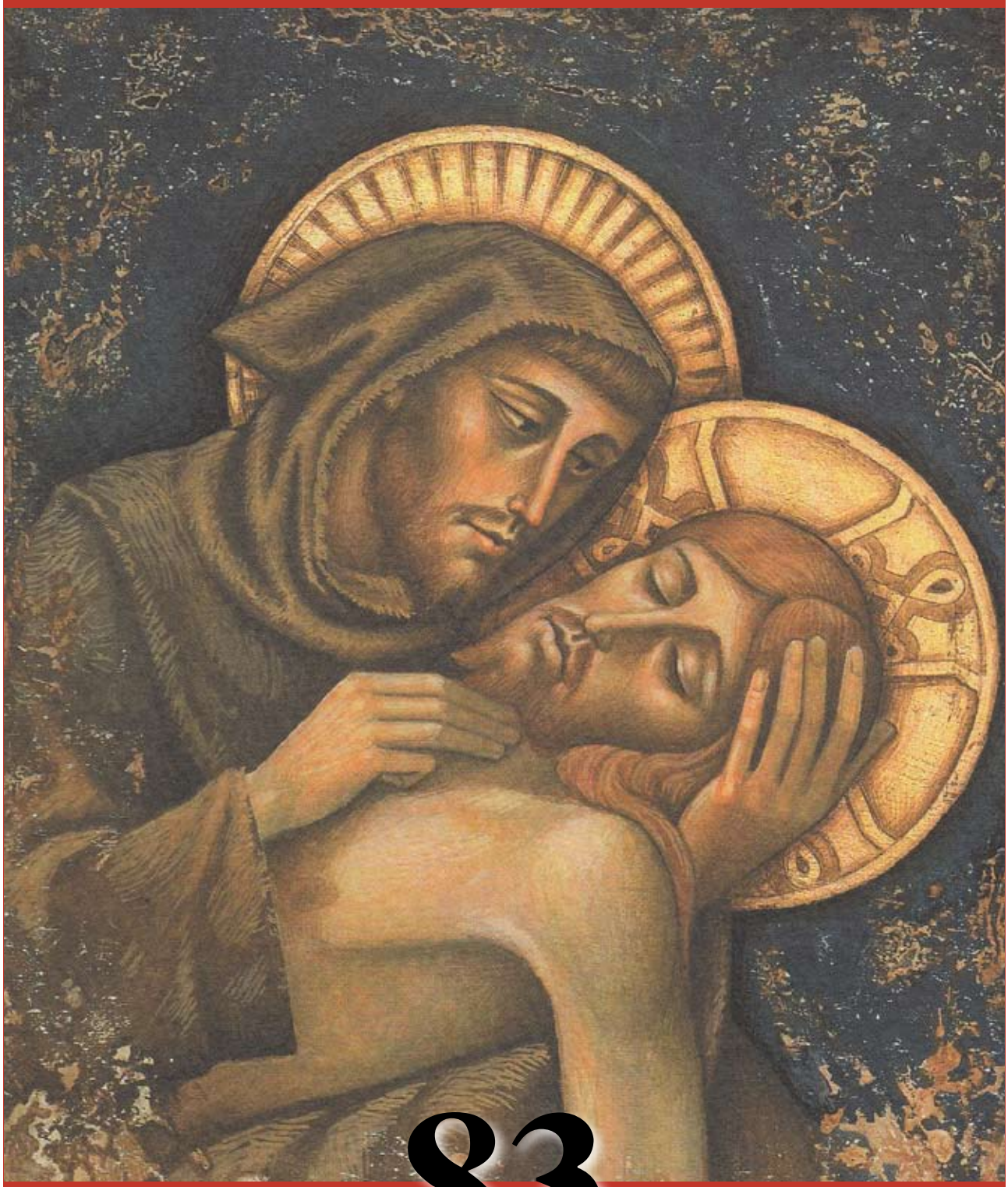

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«SPIRTU U ĦAJJA» IN ENGLISH

The journal of Franciscan culture «Spirtu u Ħajja» («Spirit and Life») is now on line and is being presented in English. We have chosen to retain the original Maltese name given to the journal in April 1986, when it began to be published by Edizzjoni TAU of the Maltese Franciscan OFM Province, since there already exist other publications in English with the same name. Our aim in presenting the journal in English is that of making it more accessible outside our small and insular environment of Malta, especially via internet, where it is posted on the official web-page of the Maltese Franciscan Province.

This journal is not strictly speaking a scientific publication. It is only meant to be an instrument for the formation of Franciscan religious and lay people in Malta. Our choice of presenting it in English has no aim of excluding the Maltese readership, for whom English is an accessible language. We intend to reach out, without pretending to be presenting anything strikingly new in the field of Franciscan studies.

The various sections of the journal are dedicated to themes appealing to the First Order Franciscan Friars, to the Poor Clares, to the Franciscan Sisters of the Third Order and to Secular Franciscans. Many of the articles are adaptations from other publications of Franciscan reviews or translations from Italian, although some of them are original.

This publication is an instrument which is the fruit of many years of hard work on the part of the Maltese Franciscan Friars Minor to print Franciscan books and reviews. Although we have limited possibilities and resources in our small environment we have managed to publish two or three books a year on average, ever since 1982. Our crowning effort has been the publication of the two-volume Sources for the Life of St. Francis in Maltese, the one-volume Sources for the Life of St. Clare, and now the imminent publication of the one-volume Sources for the Life of St. Anthony of Padua.

This journal is a quarterly publication, and will be available on line in March, June, September and December. Anybody residing in Malta who does not have access to internet can request a printed copy from the editor.

We are pleased to receive any comments from our readers, both in Malta and abroad, and to try to continue providing this small service to all those who have the Franciscan life and mission at heart.

Fr. Noel Muscat ofm

THE NAKED SAINT FRANCIS

Noel Muscat OFM

The period 1203-1206 in the life of St. Francis of Assisi was characterised by various episodes referring to the saint's conversion. In 1203 the citizens of Assisi signed a peace pact, the *charta pacis*, with their rival Perugia. In 1202 they had fought the Perugians at Collestrada, and had lost miserably. Francis was one of them, and had to spend one year in prison in Perugia. In 1203 his father, Pietro di Bernardone succeeded in paying a hefty sum to ransom his son. When Francis returned home, he was sick and frail in his health, and had to spend a long time indoors as a convalescent. He had been engaged in the upsurge of civil agitation in the town of Assisi ever since 1198, when together with the *homines populi*, or *minores* (commoners) he had assailed the Rocca fortress, symbol of the power of the Holy Roman Emperor, and succeeded in driving away from Assisi the *boni homines*, or *maiores* (nobles), who fled to Perugia. It was they, the aristocratic families, who sided with the Perugians in order to humiliate the Assisi citizens at Collestrada. In 1203, however, peace was restored, at least formally, although the war between Assisi and Perugia continued, on and off, until 1209. The citizens of Assisi had acquired prestige through their independent comune, while the aristocrats regained their castles and properties in Assisi. Among them there was the family of the knight Favarone di Offreduccio, the father of St. Clare, whose palace was in the piazza of San Rufino.[1]

The *Legend of Three Companions* (L3C) provides us with precious information regarding this period of the life of St. Francis. It might have been written some time around 1246, since many of the manuscripts begin with a letter written on 11th August 1246 from the hermitage of Greccio by brothers Leo, Rufino and Angelo, companions of St. Francis. Scholars doubt as to whether these are the "three" companions who are the authors of the L3C. We cannot enter into the merits of this debate at this point. For us, it is interesting to note that, although the L3C was written 20 years after Francis died, it still bears the freshness of the memories of the early companions who lived with St. Francis. So we will take it as our guide in trying to recompose the key events in the life of St. Francis from 1203 until 1206. Our style will be mainly descriptive, in order to provide easy reference for the use of historical data and Franciscan Sources.

The salient episodes of Francis' conversion according to L3C

In 1204 Francis was totally cured and was again dreaming of the glories of chivalry. He found a golden opportunity when a certain knight, called Gentile invited him to accompany his expedition to Apulia, in southern Italy, in order to join the crusade led by Count Walter of Brienne in favour of Pope Innocent III. Before leaving Assisi he dreamed that he was in a magnificent palace full of glittering shields and arms, which were promised to him and his future knights. But his hopes were soon dashed by another dream, this time in Spoleto, a day's journey from Assisi. The dream had such a devastating effect upon Francis that he returned to Assisi the following morning.[2]

Back in Assisi he continued to enjoy himself with his friends. But one night, probably on 12nd June 1204, when the young people of Assisi celebrated the feast of San Vittorino, bishop and martyr, by electing one of them as the leader of the "Compagnia del Bastone", Francis was wielding his sceptre as leader of this group and leading his friends out singing in the Assisi alleyways, when all of a sudden he was struck with an ecstatic experience. He began to withdraw from the company of his friends, and began to become more sensitive to the plight of the poor people of Assisi, and to be more generous in giving alms to them.[3]

It was during this period that Francis went on pilgrimage to St. Peter's tomb in Rome. There, he exchanged his clothes for those of a poor beggar, and stayed with the other beggars on the steps of Constantine basilica of St. Peter's, asking for alms in French.[4]

One morning in 1205 Francis was riding on his horse in the plain below Assisi, close to the leper house of San Lazzaro d'Arce. In that place he came face to face with a leper. The meeting of Francis with the leper was such an important event in his life that the saint recorded it in his last will before dying at the Porziuncola. "With the help of God's grace, he became such a servant and friend of the lepers, that, as he testified in his *Testament*, he stayed among them and served them with humility."[5]

Francis was being transformed into a new man. "Changed into good after his visit to the lepers, he would take a companion, whom he loved very much, to secluded places, telling him that he had found a great and precious treasure. Francis often led him to a cave near Assisi, and while he went

alone inside, he would pray to his Father in secret."[6] This experience of the cave was to leave an indelible mark upon Francis, in his search for a new sense to his life.

The first answer to his prayers came in 1206. The L3C goes on to narrate the episode of the encounter with the Crucifix of San Damiano.[7] The authors of the L3C portray the episode with simplicity and exact detail. Francis was "told by the Spirit" to enter and pray in the church of San Damiano. The image of the Crucifix spoke to Francis "in a tender and kind voice", inviting him to repair the church. Francis answered, "I will do so gladly, Lord." His answer was "radiant with joy", and he immediately gave coins to the poor priest (Pietro) in order to keep the light before the Crucifix burning continually.

In order to raise money and repair the church of San Damiano Francis went to the market at Foligno and sold his father's precious bales of cloth and horse. The L3C gives us a good idea of the negative reaction of Pietro di Bernardone at his son's extravagance. Francis decided to hide himself for a whole month in a "pit" close to the church of San Damiano, but then decided to face up to his father's anger and returned to Assisi. His father put him in chains, but Pica, his loving mother, liberated Francis, who returned to San Damiano.[8] At this point, the L3C begins to narrate how Francis, who had become a changed man, arrived at a crucial decision in his life. In front of bishop Guido of Assisi, Francis truly showed that he was inwardly changed and ready to follow Jesus Christ.

The naked Francis in 1Celano

The well-known episode of St. Francis who appears before Bishop Guido of Assisi occurs in various sources.[9] We shall try to analyse some of them, in order to underline the importance of this event in the life of St. Francis. Indeed, we could immediately state that this episode marks a watershed in the saint's life. Francis first underwent a conversion from secular life to a life of a penitent hermit. In 1206 Francis began the second phase of his conversion, from the life of a penitent hermit to that of an itinerant hermit who restored churches, served the lepers, and eventually discovered the gift of brothers and the form of life of the Gospel.[10]

The earliest source regarding the event which occurred at the Vescovado, or bishop's palace, in Assisi, close to the old cathedral church of Santa Maria Maggiore, is found in *The Life of St. Francis* by Thomas of Celano (1C).

"(Pietro di Bernardone) led the son (Francis) to the bishop of the city to make him renounce into the bishop's hands all rights of inheritance and return everything that he had … When he was in front of the bishop, he neither delayed nor hesitated, but immediately took off and threw down all his clothes and returned them to his father. He did not even keep his trousers on, and he was completely stripped bare before everyone. The bishop, observing his frame of mind and admiring his fervour and determination, got up and, gathering him in his own arms, covered him with the mantle he was wearing. He clearly understood that this was prompted by God and he knew that the action of the man of God, which he had personally observed, contained a mystery. After this he became his helper. Cherishing and comforting him, he embraced him in the depths of charity."[11]

Celano is the first biographer of St. Francis. Writing in 1228-1229 just after the canonization ceremony on 16th July 1228, Celano dedicates his work to Pope Gregory IX. He is keen in presenting St. Francis as a faithful disciple of the Church, which welcomes him in her embrace (the bishop who shields Francis in his mantle).[12] Francis' action in front of the Assisi populace seems rather eccentric. Yet, it has a profound theological significance.[13] The hagiographers of the 13th century all agree that this episode is linked with the theme of spiritual nakedness, which was one of themes already developed by the Church Fathers.

Celano himself gives a spiritual interpretation of the nakedness of St. Francis. He writes: "Now he wrestles naked with the naked. After putting aside all that is of the world, he is mindful only of divine justice. Now he is eager to despise his own life, by setting aside all concern for it. Thus there might be peace for him, a poor man on a hemmed-in path, and only the wall of the flesh would separate him from the vision of God."[14]

The original Latin expression, *nudus cum nudo luctatur*,[15] expresses the whole drama which unfolded in front of the eyes of the onlookers on that cold winter morning in 1206. The fact that St. Francis appears naked before the bishop, father and onlookers, has a deep theological significance. From the first centuries of Christianity, the neophytes used to wear a white robe for eight consecutive days, that is, during the Easter Octave, after having gone down naked into the waters of baptism for the rite of immersion. Before receiving baptism they renounced Satan and professed their faith in the risen Christ. Thus, Celano seems to imply that Francis was re-enacting the rite of baptism, especially through the renunciation of Satan, who is often portrayed as being naked, and thus having advantage upon those who wrestle with him clothed.

Julian of Speyer, whose Legend depends upon

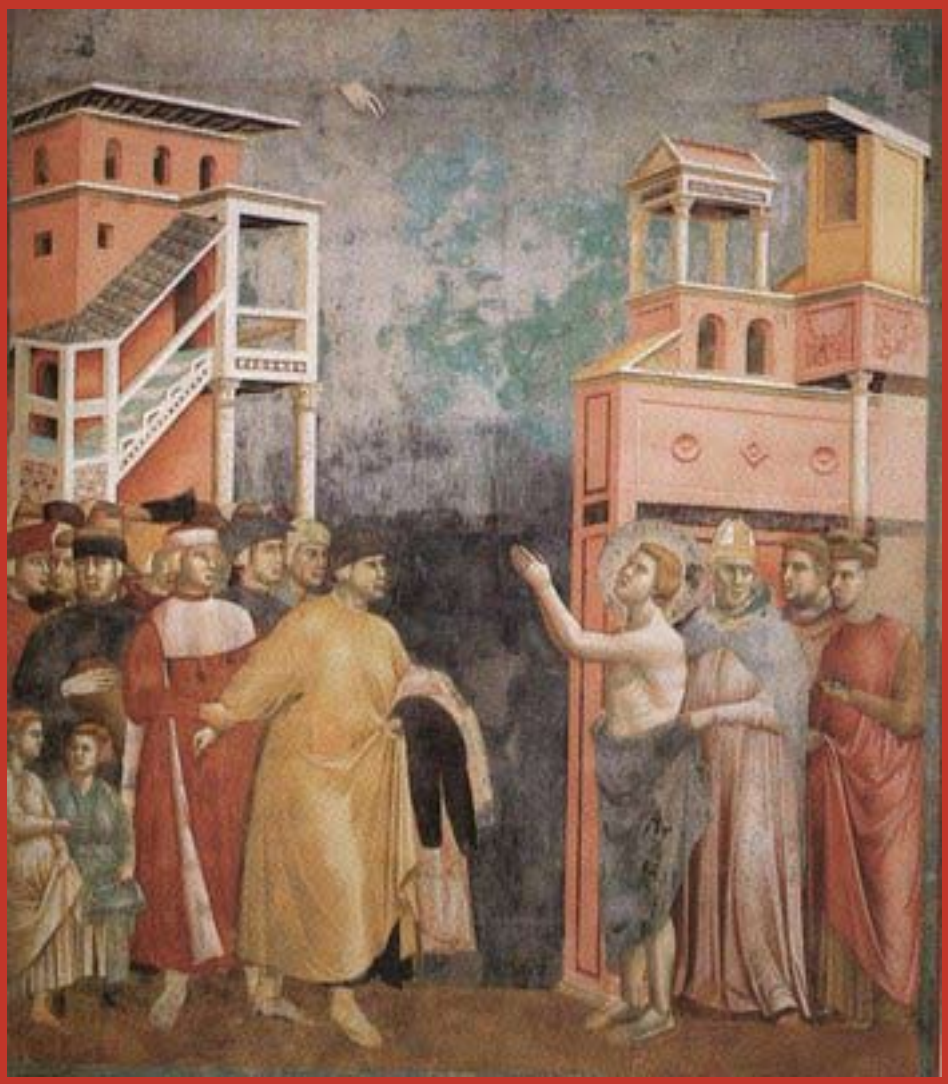
1C, interprets differently the action of Francis who strips himself naked in front of Bishop Guido. "Thus, the naked man of God had conformed himself to the naked one on the cross."[16]

The naked Francis in the Legend of Three Companions

Although 1C 14-15 is the oldest account of this event in the life of St. Francis, we have to go to L3C 19-20 for a detailed exposition of what actually took place.[17] Pietro di Bernardone, upon returning from his journey (maybe a business trip), and not finding his son bound in chains at home as he had left him, heaped verbal abuse upon Pica, his wife and left for the palace of the consuls in order to make them compel Francis to return the money he had acquired with the sale of his father's possessions. The magistrates did send a messenger to Francis, who was at San Damiano, summoning him to appear before them. Francis, however, being an oblate at the service of a church, reminded them that they had no jurisdiction over him. Thus the magistrates, not willing to enter into an unpleasant dispute with the bishop, answered Pietro: "Because he is in the service of God, he no longer falls within our power."

Therefore Pietro di Bernardone turned to bishop Guido, who also sent a messenger summoning Francis to appear before him. This time Francis answered: "I will appear before the lord bishop, because he is the father and lord of souls."

At this stage the L3C describes the "trial" at the Vescovado. The bishop asks Francis to return the money he had acquired. "If you wish to serve God, return to him the money you have, because God does not want you to spend money unjustly acquired on the work of the church." At these words Francis "got up, joyful and comforted by the bishop's words, and, as he brought the money to him, he said: 'My



Lord, I will gladly give back not only the money acquired from his things, but even all my clothes.' And going into one of the bishop's rooms, he took off all his clothes, and, putting the money on top of them, came out naked before the bishop, his father, and all the bystanders, and said: 'Listen to me, all of you, and understand. Until now I have called Pietro di Bernardone my father. But, because I have proposed to serve God, I return to him the money on account of which he was so upset, and also all the clothing which is his, wanting to say from now on: *Our Father who are in heaven*, and not: My father, Pietro di Bernardone.'" Bishop Guido then took Francis into his arms and covered him with his mantle.

This episode is maybe the most fresh among the parallel texts in the Sources, coming as it is from the pen of some of Francis' companions. The fact that the L3C has been called the *Leggenda Assisana*, shows that it is very interested in local details regarding Assisi and the way of life of this medieval town during the times of St. Francis. Arnaldo Fortini has given us many interesting details regarding the trial of St. Francis before bishop Guido.[18]

The episode at the Vescovado marks a point of arrival and a point of departure in the life of St. Francis. We have noted that from a penitent-hermit, Francis becomes an itinerant penitent. His renunciation of all worldly possessions marks truly the beginning of a commitment to religious life. Bishop Guido must have interpreted the event in this way if he accepted to defend Francis in all ways and help him in his new way of life. We shall now consider one last note regarding the figure of the naked Francis, namely the theological interpretation of Francis as an image of Christ crucified, given to us by St. Bonaventure.

The naked Francis in the Major Life by St. Bonaventure

St. Bonaventure, author of the *Legenda Maior S. Francisci* (LMj), written in 1260-1263, depends upon Celano's *Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul* (2C) as well as upon 1C and Julian of Speyer. Although he adds few new details to his account, Bonaventure is a mystical theologian, and therefore has the advantage of reading the various episodes of Francis' life in a spiritual way. When he comes to describe the naked Francis in front of Bishop Guido, Bonaventure remarks:

"Thus the servant of the Most High King was left naked that he might follow his naked crucified Lord, whom he loved."[19] This is a Latin expression taken from the writings of St. Jerome: *nudum Christum nudus sequere*.[20] Bonaventure intends to portray Francis as having followed Christ Crucified along the road of conversion, in such a way that all the LMj is a meditation upon the mystery of the Cross which shines in the various episodes of the life of St. Francis.[21]

Bonaventure is not, therefore, concentrating his attention upon the theme of spiritual struggle against the devil, but rather upon the following of the poor and naked Christ on the Cross. In fact, when he speaks about the bishop covering the naked Francis with his mantle, Bonaventure continues: "Like the pious and good man that he was, he bade his servants give him something to cover his body. They brought him a poor, cheap cloak of a farmer who worked for the bishop, which he accepted gratefully and, with his own hand, marked a cross on it with a piece of chalk, thus designating it as the covering of a crucified and half-naked poor man."[22]

The theme of spiritual nakedness is present in other events in the life of St. Francis. Thus Bonaventure presents Francis who wants to die naked on the ground. "He threw himself in fervour of spirit totally naked on the naked ground so that in that final hour, when the enemy could still rage, he might wrestle naked with the naked."[23] Bonaventure leaves for this moment the theme of the spiritual battle against Satan, which Celano had already presented years before in the event of Francis' renunciation of his possessions in front of the bishop. The assimilation with the naked Christ on the Cross on the part of St. Francis reaches its maximum expression in the account of Francis' *transitus:*

"In all things he wished without hesitation to be conformed to Christ crucified, who hung on the cross poor, suffering, and naked. Naked he lingered before the bishop at the beginning of his conversion, and, for this reason, at the end of his life, he wanted to leave this world naked."[24]

Bonaventure brings the circle of Francis' life to an end, by showing that the saint's conversion in 1206 was the beginning of a cycle of events which led him to receive the stigmata on La Verna and to be considered a living icon of Christ crucified at the moment of death.

Another two episodes of spiritual nakedness in Franciscan Sources

The aim of this incomplete picture is that of understanding the inner meaning of the drama, which unfolded before Bishop Guido of Assisi in 1206. There are many other instances in the Franciscan Sources that can help us to grasp the

radical meaning of spiritual nakedness in the life of St. Francis. We shall choose two of them.

In the allegory *Sacred Exchange between St. Francis and Lady Poverty* (ScEx), Francis asks to be able to go up a high mountain where Lady Poverty lived. Francis gets this answer: "If, then, you wish to reach her, brother, take off your clothes of rejoicing, and put aside every burden and sin clinging to you for, unless you are naked, you will not be able to climb to her who lives in so a high a place."[25] So Francis and the brothers go up the high mountain, naked and unencumbered, to meet Lady Poverty, "resting on a throne in her nakedness." Francis then praises Lady Poverty, and tells her: "You did not abandon him (Christ) even to death, death on a cross. And on that cross, his body stripped, his arms outstretched, his hands and feet pierced, you suffered with him."[26] Lady Poverty answers Francis, reminding him that she "was once in the paradise of God, where man was naked … and was walking with naked man through that entire splendid paradise."[27] This image of Lady Poverty in the ScEx reminds us of the famous "Allegory of Poverty", one of the four frescoes of the "Maestro delle Vele" above the main altar of the lower basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, where St. Francis is presented giving the wedding ring to Lady Poverty, who stands poorly dressed with a transparent robe (the theme of nakedness is very evident), upon a high rock and thorns, while Christ is witnessing these mystical espousals.

The second source we shall consider, and which speaks about the theme of spiritual nakedness, is taken from *The Deeds of Blessed Francis and His Companions (Actus Beati Francisci et Sociorum Eius)* (DBF) and their more popular translated edition, the *Fioretti,* or *Little Flowers of St. Francis* (LFl).[28] It is the story of brother Rufino, who humbly obeys St. Francis when he orders him to go up to Assisi naked, except for his underwear, and preach to the people. Rufino obeys and full of shame goes to preach among the crowd, where he is ridiculed. Francis repents for having given such a hard obedience to Rufino and goes up to Assisi naked as well, and joins him in his preaching. "And then Saint Francis, naked, got up into the pulpit and preached such wonderful things about contempt of the world, holy penance, voluntary poverty, the desire for the kingdom of heaven, about the nakedness, insults, and most holy Passion of Jesus Christ crucified, that all the men and women who had gathered in a great crowd, began to weep loudly." The effect of the preaching of Francis and Rufino was the conversion of the entire congregation present, since they re-enacted in a visible way the poverty of the poor and crucified Christ.

Conclusion

The well-known cycles of frescoes by Giotto in the upper basilica of St. Francis in Assisi depicts, among many other events taken from Bonaventure's *Legenda Maior*, the episode of Francis who strips naked in front of Bishop Guido and renounces his father's possessions. The fresco shows Francis being covered by the bishop in a gesture of welcome and protection. Francis looks up to heaven, where he contemplates the loving gaze of God the Father, under whose guidance he entrusts himself after having abandoned the ways of the world. The episode marks a turning point in the life of St. Francis. From that moment onwards, Francis becomes the "herald of the great king". He discovered in the loving gaze of the Crucified Christ at San Damiano the secret to true happiness and freedom. Nakedness is, in so many ways, an expression of freedom, of a return to the natural state. In the Bible nakedness is the symbol of the primeval innocence of mankind. Francis' action in stripping himself naked is a representation of the new man, reborn in Christ, in order to return to this state of innocence, in the loving embrace of the poor and naked Christ nailed to the cross.

NOTES

[1] Cfr. PAUL SABATIER, *The Life of St. Francis,* Translated from the original *Vie de Saint François d'Assise* by Louise Seymour Houghton, (Hodder and Stoughton), London 1908, 10-14. ARNALDO FORTINI, *Nova Vita di San Francesco,* Edizioni Assisi 1959, Vol. I, Parte I, 151-251. *Francis of Assisi,* Translated from the original *Nova Vita di S. Francesco* by Helen Moak, (Crossroad Publishing Co.), New York, 1980, 166-230. The contents of the *carta pacis* between Assisi and Perugia, according to A. Fortini, pp. 166-169, included the following: the Assisi Commune had to build new houses for the aristocratic families within the town, in order to compensate for the castles that had been destroyed in the countryside; no citizen of Assisi could make any pact with any other power, castle, lord, imperial nuncio, without the permission of the Commune; those citizens who had passed over to the Perugians were to be expelled permanently from Assisi; all those who had been enemies in the town were asked to drop their mutual accusations and an amnesty was offered to all those citizens who committed crimes against other citizens during the hostilities; the *boni homines* and the *homines populi* were henceforth bound to observe this mutual pact *pro bono pacis*.

[2] *Legend of Three Companions* (L3C) 5-6, *Francis of Assisi. Early Documents,* Vol. II, The Founder (FAED II),

edited by R.J. Armostrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, W.J. Short, (New City Press), New York – London – Manila 2001, 70-71.

[3] L3C 7-9 (FAED II,71-73).

[4] L3C 10 (FAED II,73-74).

[5] L3C 11 (FAED II,74).

[6] L3C 12 (FAED II,74-75).

[7] L3C 13-14 (FAED II,75-76).

[8] L3C 16-18 (FAED II,77-79).

[9] 1C 14-15 (FAED I,193-194); JULIAN OF SPEYER, *Life of St. Francis* (LJS) 9 (FAED I,375); *Anonymous of Perugia* (AP) 8 (FAED II, 37); L3C 20 (FAED II,80); THOMAS OF CELANO, *Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul* (2C) 12 (FAED II,251); ST. BONAVENTURE, *Major Legend of St. Francis* (LMj) 2,4 (FAED II,538); LMj 14,4 (FAED II,642-643); *Minor Legend of St. Francis* (LMn) 1,7 (FAED II,687).

[10] The theme of the conversion of St. Francis is developed by PIERRE BRUNETTE, *Francis of Assisi and His Conversions,* Franciscan Press, Quincy University, Illinois 1997.

[11] THOMAS OF CELANO, *Life of St. Francis* (1C), 14-15, *Francis of Assisi. Early Documents,* Vol. I, The Saint (FAED I), 1999, 193-194.

[12] Guido II was bishop of Assisi from 1204 to 30th July 1228.

[13] LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM, "Francis Naked and Clothed: A Theological Meditation", *Francis of Assisi. History, Hagiography and Hermeneutics in the Early Documents,* edited by J.M. Hammond, (New City Press), New York 2004, 165-178.

[14] 1C 15 (FAED I,194).

[15] According to endnote 47 of Celano, First Life, Book I, in *St. Francis of Assisi. Omnibus of Sources,* edited by MARION HABIG, (Franciscan Press), Quincy, Illinois 1972, 564, the citation is taken from St. Gregory the Great's *Homilia in Evagelium,* 32, as contained in the Roman breviary, IX lesson for the feast of the Stigmatization of St. Francis: *Nihil autem maligni spiritus in hoc mundo proprium possident: nudi cum nudo luctari debemus* ("All of us who come to the wrestling gound of Faith are to wrestle with the evil spirits. *Now, the evil spirits possess nothing in this world, and therefore it behooves us to wrestle naked with naked adversaries*. For if a clothed man should wrestle with a naked man, he will soon be thrown down, for his adversary will have something by which to take hold of him").

[16] JULIAN OF SPEYER, *Life of St. Francis* (LJS) 9 (FAED I,375). In Latin the expression reads: *nudus in cruce nudato conformat*.

[17] L3C 19-20 (FAED II,79-80).

[18] A. FORTINI, *Nova Vita di San Francesco,* Vol. I, Parte I, 289-294. According to Fortini the year was not 1206, but rather the winter of 1207. The famous Assisi historian records the chronicler Salimbene de Adam, who says that January-February 1207 remained notorious for the abundant snowfalls *(fuit magna nix)*.

[19] ST. BONAVENTURE, *Major Legend of St. Francis* (LMj) 2,4 (FAED II,538).

[20] JEAN CHÂTILLON, "*Nudum Christum Nudus Sequere:* A Note on the Origin and Meaning of the Theme of Spiritual Nakedness in the Writings of St. Bonaventure," *Greyfriars Review* 10, Vol. 3 (1996) 293-340. The original text: JEAN CHÁTILLON, "Nudum Christum nudus sequere. Note sur les origines et la signification du thème de la nudité spirituelle dans les écrits spirituels de saint Bonaventure," in *S. Bonaventura 1274-1974*. Volumen Commemorativum Anni Septies Centenarii a Morte S. Bonaventurae Doctoris Seraphici, cura et studio Commissionis Internationalis Bonventurianae Grottaferrata (Roma) Vol. IV, 719-772.

[21] ILIA DELIO, "The role of the Crucified in Bonaventure's doctrine of mystical union," in *Studia Mystica* 19 (1998) 8-20; *Crucified Love: Bonaventure's mysticism of the Crucified Christ*, (Franciscan Press), Quincy University, Illinois 1998; NOEL MUSCAT, *Francis of Assisi and Bonaventure's Theology of the Cross,* "Franciscan Studies" section in web-site of the Maltese Franciscan Province: http://www.ofm.org.mt/fsc/F&C_in_Bonaven.pdf

[22] LMj 2,4 (FAED II,538).

[23] LMj 14,3 (FAED II,642). Bonaventure depends upon 2C 214 (FAED II,386): "As he was wasted by that grave illness which ended all his sufferings, he had himself placed naked on the naked ground, so that in that final hour, when the Enemy could still rage, he might wrestle naked with the naked. The fearless man awaited triumph and, with hands joined, held the crown of justice. Placed on the ground and stripped of his sackcloth garment, he lifted up his face to heaven as usual, and, totally intent upon that glory, he covered the wound on his right side with his left hand, so that no one would see it. Then he said to his brothers: 'I have done what is mine; may Christ teach you what is yours!'"

[24] LMj 14,4 (FAED II,642-643).

[25] *The Sacred Exchange between St. Francis and Lady Poverty* (ScEx) 11 (FAED I,532).

[26] ScEx 21 (FAED I,536).

[27] ScEx 25 (FAED I,537).

[28] The episode can be read in DBF 34, *Francis of Assisi. Early Documents,* Vol. 3: The Prophet (FAED III) 507-508, and LFl 30 (FAED III,620-621). It also occurs in ARNALD OF SARRANT, *Chronicle of the 24 Ministers General OFM*, in *Analecta Franciscana* III,47-48. English translation by Noel Muscat in http://www.ofm.org.mt/noelmuscat/texts/Chron_24_Min_Gen_OFM.pdf

PAUL SABATIER «LIFE OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI»

Introduction by Noel Muscat OFM

The publication of Paul Sabatier's *Vie de Saint François d'Assise* at the end of 1893, represented a great moment in history for the progress of Franciscan studies.[1] Paul Sabatier came from a family of Huguenots from the region of Cévennes. During the French Revolution the family had moved from the agricultural village of Anduze to Nîmes. The Sabatier family also had its martyrs during the wars of religion, seven of whom were killed at Montpellier.

Paul Sabatier was born on 3 August 1858 at St. Michel de Chabrillanoux in the region of Ardèche. His family ideology was that of a reformed evangelical Church upholding the ideals of freedom. Paul's father was a Protestant pastor. However Paul also had some Catholic teachers at Besançon, Dyon and Lille. His paternal grandmother was also Catholic. Thus he was brought up in a Protestant environment, but also had knowledge of the Catholic faith. We shall see Paul Sabatier's religious openness in a time when antagonism between Catholicism and Protestantism was rife in France.

As a young man, Paul Sabatier studied at the Faculty of Theology in Paris, in order to become a Protestant pastor. Among his teachers at the Faculty he had Ernest Renan, author of a famous life of Christ. Sabatier studied theology between 1880 and 1885. During this time he also frequented some courses in Germany. The work he presented for his BA degree in Theology was a commentary on the Didaché, which he translated into French from the original Greek.

His first commitment was that of a pastor in the church of Saint Nicholas in Strasbourg, but had to leave this town after it passed into German domination. In 1889 he went to the mountainous region of Ardéche, to be a pastor at St. Cierge de la Serre.

During his studies under the direction of Renan, Paul Sabatier had been drawn to the figure of Saint Francis of Assisi in 1884. During one of his lectures, Renan had a personal conversation with two of his students, one of whom was called Leblond, and the other one was Paul Sabatier. He told them: "When I started my work, I had planned to dedicate my live as a scholar to analyse three periods. Those were the happy illusions of a young man! Imagine, three periods! The origins of Christianity in relation to the history of Israel, the French Revolution, and the marvellous religious renewal realized by Saint Francis of Assisi. Up till now I have only realized one third of my plans. But you, Leblond, must be the one to create a religious history of the Revolution. You, Sabatier, must be the historian of the seraphic saint."

The young Sabatier immediately set himself to the task of writing a life of Saint Francis. He began his research in earnest only in 1888, when he chose Assisi as the place to spend his honeymoon. Unfortunately, the four years spent as a pastor in Strasbourg, did not leave him any time for research. It was only in the winter of 1890-91 that Paul Sabatier embarked upon a serious and scholarly research on Franciscan sources. In the meantime he visited Assisi a second time and studied various documents in the archives of the town.

It is to be remembered that positivism and rationalism during the 18th and 19th centuries had frowned upon the Franciscan ideal. Goethe, during a visit to Assisi, had only time to mention the remains of the pagan temple of Minerva and did not even refer to the basilica of Saint Francis.

Sabatier worked hard during seven years of research, until 1893. In the meantime Ernest Renan had died. When he finished his research he found himself in difficulty to publish his work, until he decided to publish the biography at his own expense in Strasbourg. The Protestant editor Fischbacher accepted to insert this new biography among the titles of his catalogue. The *Vie di Saint François d'Assise* was a splendid success right from the start. The first edition of three thousand copies, published in November 1893, was already sold out, and in March 1894 another two thousand copies were published. The biography soon became a best-seller, and in 1894 there were already fourteen requests for translations.

The success of Paul Sabatier's biography was immense. In 1901 the name of Sabatier was proposed for a candidate of the Nobel Prize for literature. Besides other prizes at the Academy of moral and political sciences in Paris, Sabatier was awarded with the doctorate *honoris causa* in the universities of Oxford, Aberdeen and Edinburgh. Tolstoj, who read the first edition of the biography in French, immediately asked to translate it into Russian. The biography had so many editions, that the 1931 posthumous edition was the forty-fourth. It had been translated into Swedish, Russian, German, English, Polish, Italian.

As time went on, Paul Sabatier was continually

updating his biography, because of the great interest which scholars and researchers began to show in Franciscan studies. The last edition of the *Vie de Saint François,* published in 1931 after the death of Sabatier in 1928, included many notes which his wife had inserted from his notes. This was the definitive edition of the biography.

Up till Sabatier's time, scholars had insisted nearly exclusively upon the *Vita Prima* by Thomas of Celano and the *Legenda Maior* by Saint Bonaventure. According to Sabatier they were neglecting another important source, namely the *Legend of Three Companions*, which he considered as the most chronologically close biography to the reality of the facts, written by the famous three companions (Leo, Angelo and Rufino). Sabatier based his analysis on these "leonine" sources, coming from the pen of Leo, who was Francis's closest collaborator.

Although Paul Sabatier's biography met with great success in literary circles as well as in liberal societies and the Protestant churches, the case was quite different as regards its reception by the Roman Catholic Church.

In the long preface to the biography, Sabatier had written, among other things: "When the priest sees himself vanquished by the prophet he suddenly changes his method. He takes him under his protection, he introduces his harangues into the sacred canon, he throws over his shoulders the priestly chasuble."

The reception of the book by Leo XIII and the ecclesiastical authorities in Rome was soon to be made clear to Sabatier. On 8th June 1894 the biography was officially included in the Index of forbidden books to Catholics. The end result was obviously that of encouraging the publication of thousands of other copies of the same biography.

Among the various offences which Sabatier would have made to Francis and to Roman Catholicism in general, the following were the most worthy of note: malignant insinuations regarding the office of the popes, bishops and priests; support to the Ghibelline cause; defence of the heretical sects; condemnation of theological science; lack of respect towards ecclesiastical authority and contemplative Orders; glorification of individual freedom regarding morals, study and arts. The Jesuit Angelo De Santi wrote in the "Civiltà Cattolica" (January 1894), that the entire book was "an insult to the Catholic church and to the saint."

When Sabatier answered the director of the "Civiltà Cattolica" in 1896, he wrote: "It is certainly difficult for a protestant to see, feel and understand things in the same way as a catholic does, but the reverse is also true. Personally I like to believe that all this depends upon a common human condition … However, in the specific case of the *Vie de Saint François*, I have to say that I have searched for historical truth with an effort which was out of the ordinary. I would have hoped to receive from the ecclesiastical authority the same welcome to which the heretic and the lost sheep have a right, but I have found myself in front of proceedings which I prefer not to qualify."

In fact, in one of his letters, Paul Sabatier was also to say: "The Franciscan movement represents the most beautiful and real effort of religious renewal which has ever existed after Christ. We have to refer to it more than to the Reform of the 16th century."

Giovanni Miccoli has described the *Vie de Saint François d'Assise* as "a work of history, an important work of history, which, however, is also a work of religious battles as it proposes itself explicitly, since it is an expression of a Christianity which is ecumenical and reformative, and which is also anti-roman in as much as it appears necessary to propose in antithesis the proper conception of religion and religious life, which is variably inspired by the ideas of liberal Protestantism. For Sabatier, moreover, the rediscovering of Francis is the necessary premise for that religious rebirth which the society of his times rendered necessary."[2]

Sabatier utterly rejected the accusation that he had made out of Saint Francis a "protestant *ante litteram*". He insisted upon the historical superiority of the Poverello of Assisi upon that of Luther. According to him it was only the movement initiated by Francis which could be called an authentically evangelical movement, promoting religious liberty. At the same time he was aware that he had exaggerated upon the antithesis between prophecy and institution, and especially between Francis and Cardinal Hugolino (later Pope Gregory IX).

Paul Sabatier certainly merits the honour of having been the one who initiated the modern study of the Franciscan Sources, and who introduced the famous "Franciscan question" among scholars. His biography of Saint Francis, although having been written more than a century ago, is still indispensable as a critical tool for discovering the historical Francis. Indeed, Sabatier has left us a legacy, which will still challenge us to pose questions and search for answers in the quest for the genuine Francis and his ideals.

We present here the English translation of the first chapter of this famous biography, with the aim of continuing the presentation of the other chapters in future issues of this journal. Our aim is that of presenting a text which, although published a century ago, and not easily found nowadays, retains its perennial historical value. We have chosen not to

include the footnotes, since our readers might find them too complicated to read.

PAUL SABATIER, ***The Life of St. Francis,***

Translated into English by Louise Seymour Houghton, (Hodder and Stoughton), London 1908.

CHAPTER 1 - YOUTH

The numbers in square brackets indicate the page numbers of the biography.

[1] Assisi is to-day very much what it was six or seven hundred years ago. The feudal castle is in ruins, but the aspect of the city is just the same. Its long-deserted streets, bordered by ancient houses, lie in terraces half-way up the steep hill-side. Above it Mount Subasio proudly towers, at its feet lies outspread all the Umbrian plain from Perugia to Spoleto. The crowded houses clamber up the rocks like children a-tiptoe to see all that is to be seen; they succeed so well that every window gives the whole panorama set in its frame of rounded hills, from whose summits castles and villages stand sharply out against a sky of incomparable purity.

These simple dwellings contain no more than five or six little rooms, but the rosy hues of the stone of which they are built give them a wonderfully cheerful air. The one in which, according to the story, St. Francis was born has almost entirely disappeared, to make room for a church; but the street is so modest, and all that remains [2] of the *palazzo dei genitori di San Francesco* is so precisely like the neighbouring houses that the tradition must be correct. Francis entered into glory in his lifetime; it would be surprising if a sort of worship had not from the first been centred around the house in which he saw the light and where he passed the first twenty-five years of his life.

He was born about 1182. The biographers have preserved to us few details about his parents. His father, Pietro Bernardone, was a wealthy cloth-merchant. We know how different was the life of the merchants of that [3] period from what it is today. A great portion of their time was spent in extensive journeys for the purchase of goods. Such tours were little short of expeditions. The roads being insecure, a strong escort was needed for the journey to those famous fairs where, for long weeks at a time, merchants from the most remote parts of Europe were gathered together. In certain cities, Montpellier for example the fair was perpetual. Benjamin of Tudela shows us that city frequented by all nations, Christian and Mohammedan. "One meets there merchants from Africa, from Italy, Egypt, Palestine, Greece, Gaul, Spain, and England, so that one sees men of all languages, with the Genoese and the Pisans."

Among all these merchants the richest were those who dealt in textile stuffs. They were literally the bankers of the time, and their heavy wagons were often laden with the sums levied by the popes in England or France.

Their arrival at a castle was one of the great events. They were kept as long as possible, everyone being eager for the news they brought. It is easy to understand how close must have been their relations with the nobility; in certain countries, Provence for example, the merchants were considered as nobles of a second order.

Bernardone often made these long journeys; he

went even as far as France, and by this we must surely understand Northern France, and particularly Champagne, which was the seat of commercial exchange between Northern and Southern Europe.

He was there at the very time of his son's birth. The mother, presenting the child at the font of San Rufino, had him baptized by the name of John, but the father [4] on his return chose to call him Francis. Had he already determined on the education he was to give the child; did he name him thus because he even then intended to bring him up after the French fashion, to make a little Frenchman of him? It is by no means improbable. Perhaps, indeed, the name was only a sort of grateful homage tendered by the Assisan burgher to his noble clients beyond the Alps. However this may be, the child was taught to speak French, and always had a special fondness for both the language and the country.

These facts about Bernardone are of real importance; they reveal the influences in the midst of which Francis grew up. Merchants, indeed, play a considerable part in the religious movements of the thirteenth century. Their calling in some sense forced them to become colporters of ideas. What else could they do, on arriving in a country, but answer those who asked for news? And the news most eagerly looked for was religious news, for men's minds were turned upon very different subjects then from now. They accomodated themselves to the popular wish, observing, hearkening everywhere, keeping eyes and ears open, glad to find anything to tell; and little by little many of them became active propagandists of ideas concerning which at first they had been simply curious.

The importance of the part thus played by the mer-[5]chants as they came and went, everywhere sowing the new ideas which they had gathered up in their travels, has not been put in a clear enough light; they were often, unconsciously and quite involuntarily, the carriers of ideas of all kinds, especially of heresy and rebellion. It was they who made the success of the Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Humiliati, and many other sects.

Thus Bernardone, without dreaming of such a thing, became the artisan of his son's religious vocation. The tales which he brought home from his travels seemed at first, perhaps, not to have aroused the child's attention, but they were like germs a long time buried, which suddenly, under a warm ray of sunlight, bring forth unlooked-for fruit.

The boy's education was not carried very far; the school was in those days overshadowed by the church. The priests of San Giorgio were his teachers, and taught him a little Latin. This language was spoken in Umbria until toward the middle of the thirteenth century; every one understood it and spoke it a little; it was still the language of sermons and of political deliberations.

He learned also to write, but with less success; all through his life we see him take up the pen only on rare occasions, and for but a few words. The autograph of [6] Sacro Convento, which appears to be entirely authentic, shows extreme awkwardness; in general he dictated, signing his letter by a simple τ, the symbol of the cross of Jesus.

That part of his education which was destined to have most influence upon his life was the French language, which he perhaps spoke in his own family. It has been rightly said that to know two languages is to have two souls; in learning that of France the boy felt his heart thrill to the melody of its youthful poetry, and his imagination was mysteriously stirred with dreams of imitating the exploits of the French cavaliers.

But let us not anticipate. His early life was that of other children of his age. In the quarter of the town where his house is still shown no vehicles are ever seen; from morning till night the narrow streets are given over to the children. They play there in many groups, frolicking with an exquisite charm, very different from the little Romans, who, from the time they are six or seven years old, spend hours at a time squatting behind a pillar, or in corner of a wall or a ruin, to play dice or "morra," putting a passionate ferocity even into their play.

In Umbria, as in Tuscany, children love above all things games in which they can make a parade; to play at soldiers or procession is the supreme delight of Assisan children. Through the day they keep to the narrow streets, but toward evening they go, singing and dancing, to one of the open squares of the city. These squares are one of the charms of Assisi. Every few paces an interval occurs between the houses looking toward the plain, and you find a delightful terrace, shaded by a few trees, the very place for enjoying the sunset without [7] losing one of its splendours. Hither no doubt came often the son of Bernardone, leading one of these *farandoles* which you may see there to this day: from his very babyhood he was a prince among the children.

Thomas of Celano draws an appalling picture of the education of that day. He describes parents inciting their children to vice, and driving them by main force to wrong-doing. Francis responded only too quickly to these unhappy lessons.

His father's profession and the possibly noble origin of his mother raised him almost to the level of the titled families of the country; money, which he spent with both hands, made him welcome among them. Well pleased to enjoy themselves at his expense, the young nobles paid him a sort of court. As to Bernardone, he was too happy to see his son

associating with them to be niggardly as to the means. He was miserly, as the course of this history will show, but his pride and self-conceit exceeded his avarice.

Pica, his wife, gentle and modest creature, concerning whom the biographers have been only too laconic, saw all this, and mourned over it in silence, but though weak as mothers are, she would not despair of her son, and when the neighbours told her of Francis's escapades, she would calmly reply, "What are you thinking about? I [8] am very sure that, if it pleases God, he will become a good Christian." The words were natural enough from a mother's lips, but later on they were held to have been truly prophetic.

How far did the young man permit himself to be led on? It would be difficult to say. The question which, as we are told, tormented Brother Leo, could only have suggested itself to a diseased imagination. Thomas of Celano and the Three Companions agree in picturing him as going to the worst excesses. Later biographers speak with more circumspection of his worldly career. A too widely credited story gathered from Celano's narrative was modified by the chapter-general of 1260, and the frankness of the early biographers was, no doubt, one of the causes which most effectively contributed to their definitive condemnation three years later.

Their statements are in no sense obscure; according to them the son of Bernardone not only patterned himself after the young men of his age, he made it a point of honour to exceed them. What with eccentricities, buffooneries, pranks, prodigalities, he ended by achieving a sort of celebrity. He was forever in the streets with his companions, compelling attention by his extravagant or fantastic attire. Even at night the joyous company kept [9] up their merrymakings, causing the town to ring with their noisy songs.

At this very time the troubadours were roaming over the towns of Northern Italy and bringing brilliant festivities and especially Courts of Love into vogue. If they worked upon the passions, they also made appeal to feelings of courtesy and delicacy; it was this that saved Francis. In the midst of his excesses he was always refined and considerate, carefully abstaining from every base or indecent utterance. Already his chief aspiration was to rise above the commonplace. Tortured with the desire for that which is far off and high, he had conceived a sort of passion for chivalry, and fancying that dissipation was one of the distinguishing features of nobility, he had thrown himself into it with all his soul.

But he who, at twenty, goes from pleasure to pleasure with the heart not absolutely closed to good, must now [10] and then, at some turning of the road, become aware that there are hungry folk, who could live a month on what he spends in a few hours on frivolity. Francis saw them, and with his impressionable nature for the moment forgot everything else. In thought he put himself in their place, and it sometimes happened that he gave them all the money he had about him and even his clothes.

One day he was busy with some customers in his father's shop, when a man came in, begging for charity in the name of God. Losing his patience Francis sharply turned him away; but quickly reproaching himself for his harshness he thought, "What would I not have done if this man had asked something of me in the name of a count or a baron? What ought I not to have done when he came in the name of God? I am no better than a clown!" Leaving his customers he ran after the beggar.

Bernardone had been well pleased with his son's commercial aptitude in the early days when the young man was first in his father's employ. Francis was only too proficient in spending money; he at least knew well how to make it. But this satisfaction did not last long. Francis's bad companions were exercising over him a most pernicious influence. The time came when he could no longer endure to be separated from them; if he heard their call, nothing could keep him, he would leave everything and go after them.

All this time political events were hurrying on in Umbria and Italy; after a formidable struggle the allied republics had forced the empire to recognize them. By the immortal victory of Legano (May 29, 1176) and the Peace of Constance (June 25, 1183) the Lombard League had wrested from Frederick Barbarossa almost all the [11] prerogatives of power; little was left to the emperor but insignia and outward show.

From one end of the Peninsula to the other visions of liberty were making hearts beat high. For an instant it seemed as if all Italy was about to regain consciousness of its unity, was about to rise up as one man and hurl the foreigner from its borders; but the rivalries of the cities were too strong for them to see that local liberty without a common independence is precarious and illusory. Henry VI, the successor of Barbarossa (1183-1196), laid Italy under a yoke of iron; he might perhaps in the end have assured the domination of the empire, if his career had not been suddenly cut short by a premature death.

Yet he had not been able to put fetters upon ideas. The communal movement which was shaking the north of France reverberated beyond the Alps.

Although a city of second rank, Assisi had not been behind in the great struggles for independence. She had been severely chastised, had lost her

franchise, and was obliged to submit to Conrad of Suabia, Duke of Spoleto, who from the heights of his fortress kept her in subjection.

But when Innocent III ascended the pontifical throne (January 8, 1199) the old duke knew himself to be lost. He made a tender to him of money, men, his faith even, but the pontiff refused them all. He had no desire to appear to favour the Tedeschi, who had so odiously oppressed the country. Conrad of Swabia was forced to yield at mercy, and to go to Narni to put his submission into the hands of two cardinals.

Like the practical folk that they were, the Assisans did not hesitate an instant. No sooner was the count on [12] the road to Narni than they rushed to the assault of the castle. The arrival of envoys charged to take possession of it as a pontifical domain by no means gave them pause. Not one stone of it was left upon another. Then, with incredible rapidity they enclosed their city with walls, parts of which are still standing, their formidable ruins a witness to the zeal with which the whole population laboured on them.

It is natural to think that Francis, then seventeen years old, was one of the most gallant labourers of those glorious days, and it was perhaps there that he gained the habit of carrying stones and wielding the trowel which was destined to serve him so well a few years later.

Unhappily his fellow-citizens had not the sense to profit by their hard-won liberty. The lower classes, who in this revolution had become aware of their strength, determined to follow out the victory by taking possession of the property of the nobles. The latter took refuge in their fortified houses in the interior of the city, or in their castles in the suburbs. The townspeople burned down several of the latter, whereupon counts and barons made request of aid and succour from the neighbouring cities.

Perugia was at this time at the apogee of its power, and had already made many efforts to reduce Assisi to submission. It therefore received the fugitives with alacrity, and making their cause its own, declared war upon Assisi. This was in 1202. An encounter took [13] place in the plain about half way between the two cities, not far from *Ponte San Giovanni*. Assisi was defeated, and Francis, who was in the ranks, was made prisoner.

The treachery of the nobles had not been universal; a few had fought with the people. It was with them and not with the *popolani* that Francis, in consideration of the nobility of his manners, passed the time of his captivity, which lasted an entire year. He greatly astonished his companions by his lightness of heart. Very often they thought him almost crazy. Instead of passing his time in wailing and cursing he made plans for the future, about which he was glad to talk to any one who came along. To his fancy life was what the songs of the troubadours had painted it; he dreamed of glorious adventures, and always ended by saying: "You will see that one day I shall be adored by the whole world."

During these long months Francis must have pretty rudely undeceived with respect to those nobles whom from afar he had so heartily admired. However that may be, he retained with them not only his frankness of speech, but also his full freedom of action. One of them, a knight, had always held aloof from the others, out of vanity and bad temper. Francis, far from leaving him to himself, always showed him affection, and finally had the joy of reconciling him to his fellow-captives.

A compromise was finally arrived at between the counts and the people of Assisi. In November, 1203, the arbitrators designated by the two parties announced their decision. The commons of Assisi were to repair in a certain measure the damage done to the lords, and the latter agreed, on their part, to make no further al-[14]liances without authorization of the commons. Rural serfage was maintained, which proves that the revolution had been directed by the burghers, and for their own profit. Ten years more were not, however, to elapse before the common people also would succeed in achieving liberty. In this cause we shall again see Francis fighting on the side of the oppressed, earning the title of *Patriarch of religious democracy* which has been accorded him by one of his compatriots.

The agreement being made the prisoners detained at Perugia were released, and Francis returned to Assisi. He was twenty-two years old.

NOTES

[1] For a recent analysis of the life of Paul Sabatier and the impact of the *Vie de Saint François d'Assise* on Franciscan studies, cfr. *Paul Sabtier e gli Studi Francescani*, Atti del XXX Convegno Internazionale in occasione del centenario della fondazione della Società Internazionale di Studi Francescani [1902-2002], (Assisi, 10-12 ottobre 2002), Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, Spoleto 2003.

[2] G. MICCOLI, "La *Vie de S. François* di Paul Sabatier", *Paul Sabatier e gli Studi Francescani*, Atti del XXX Convegno Internazionale, 18. Translation from the original text in Italian.

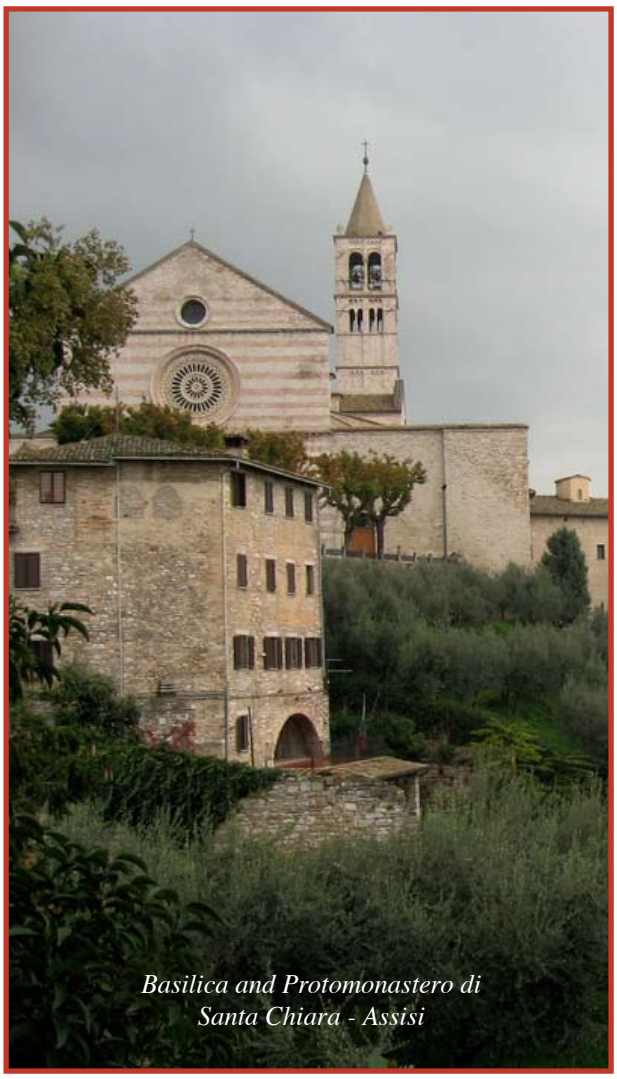
THE BASILICA OF SAINT CLARE IN ASSISI

Noel Muscat OFM

Clare of Assisi died at San Damiano on 11th August 1253. On 18th October of the same year Pope Innocent IV addressed the papal bulla *Gloriosus Deus* to Bishop Bartolomeo Accorombani of Spoleto (1236-1271), in which he instructed him to declare open the canonical process for the canonization of Clare. The Acts of the Process have been preserved. From these Acts we know that Bishop Bartolomeo conducted the canonical process from 24th to 27th November in the monastery of San Damiano, and on 28th November in the infirmary of the same monastery and in the abbey church of San Paolo in Assisi. To assist him he had Leonardo, archdeacon of Spoleto, Jacobo, archpriest of Trevi, brothers Leo, Angelo and Marco of the Order of Friars Minor, and a notary, messer Martino.

On 12th December 1254 Cardinal Rainaldo dei Conti di Segni, Bishop of Ostia and Velletri, and Protector of the Friars Minor and the Poor Ladies of San Damiano, was elected Pope as Alexander IV. On 15th August 1255 this Pope canonized Clare in the cathedral church of Anagni, and published the official bulla of canonization, *Clara claris praeclara,* in the period 26th September – 19th October of the same year.

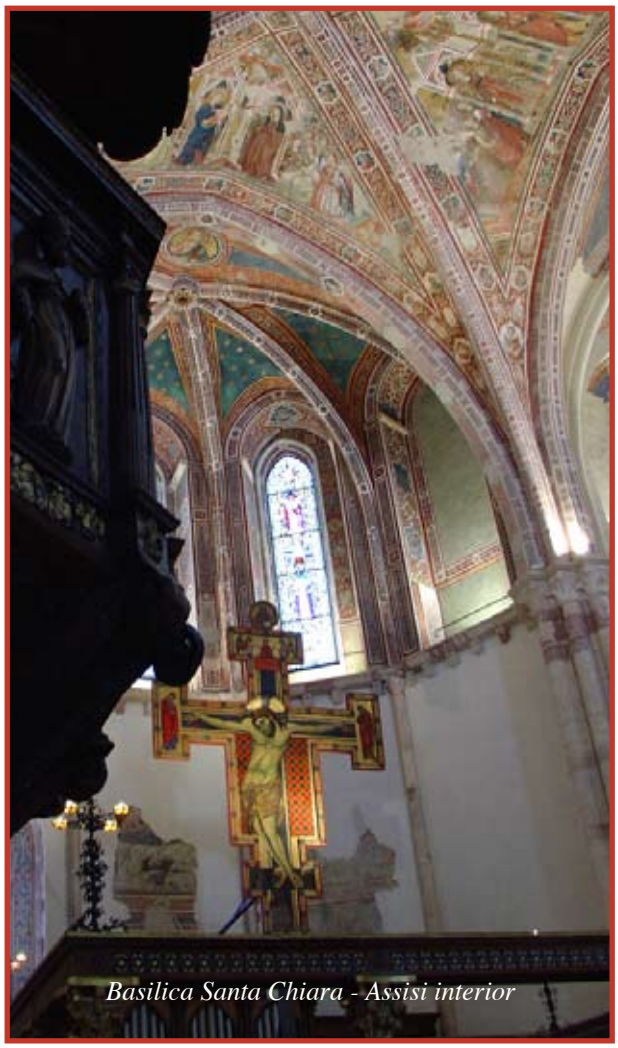
In the meantime, after the death of Clare, the new abbess at San Damiano was Lady Benedetta. Before entering San Damiano she was called Ginevra di Giorgio di Ugone di Tebalduccio, and therefore descended from one of the most noble families of Assisi. According to the Franciscan historians Mariano da Firenze (*Libro delle dignità et excellentie,* 153-154) and Luke Wadding (*Annales Minorum* I, ad. an. 1214, n. 34, 237-238) Benedetta entered San Damiano in 1214. Her name appears in the list of sisters present at San Damiano in the *Mandate* of 1238. It was to her that brother Leo and brother Angelo entrusted the precious breviary of St. Francis for safekeeping at San Damiano. The same breviary can still be seen among the relics in the Basilica of St. Clare in Assisi. Leo and Angelo address her as "the Lady Benedetta, abbess of the Poor Ladies of the monastery of Saint Clare" (*Domine Benedicte abbatisse pauperum dominarum monasterii sanctae Clarae*). As we shall, see later



Basilica and Protomonastero di Santa Chiara - Assisi

on, Benedetta commissioned the large crucifix on the main altar of the Basilica of St. Clare. According to the Assisi historian Arnaldo Fortini (*Nova Vita di San Francesco,* Santa Maria degli Angeli 1959, II, 293), Benedetta died in 1260.

In 1257, just over three years after the death of Saint Clare, a new church was being built in honour of the new saint, together with a new monastery for the Poor Ladies, on the very spot where the church of San Giorgio stood. In 1226 St. Francis had been buried in this church, until 25th May 1230, when his relics were transported to the new basilica built in his honour by Pope Gregory IX and brother Elias. The new church, or basilica, dedicated to Saint Clare, was ready by 1265. The building of the church was under the direction of the architect Filippo da Campello. It is built of the white and red stone quarried from Mount Subasio, which is typical in the Assisi churches. The church was built in a Gothic style in the form of a Franciscan Tau, just like the upper basilica of St. Francis in Assisi. On its façade it has a splendid rose window, while its typical characteristics are the buttresses which support the northern wall. On the southern section



Basilica Santa Chiara - Assisi interior

the basilica is flanked by the Protomonastero di Santa Chiara, where the Poor Ladies transferred for San Damiano in 1260.

On the same southern side, there is the chapel of the Crucifix of San Damiano and the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament. This area formed part of the nave of the old church of San Giorgio, where Gregory IX had canonized St. Francis on 16th July 1228. The Poor Ladies brought with them the venerated icon of the Crucifix that spoke to St. Francis from the church of San Damiano, and it has been hanging ever since in this chapel on the side of the Basilica of St. Clare.

The frescoes in the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament are by Puccio Capanna (1340-1346). They represent the Madonna with Child on the throne, with Saints Clare, John the Baptist, the Archangel Michael and St. Francis, together with other frescoes by the Giotto school and by Pietro Lorenzetti.

The high altar, standing at the end of the single nave of the basilica, is surrounded by 12 polygonal columns, the work of an Umbrian sculptor of the 15th century, with a railing of wrought iron from the 18th century. Above the main altar stands the splendid cross by Benvenuto Benveni da Foligno. We have already noted that this large crucifix was commissioned by Abbess Benedetta, whose image appears at the feet of Christ, in adoration together with Saints Francis and Clare. The reference to Abbess Benedetta is clear in the words: "Lady Benedetta, the first Abbess after Saint Clare, commissioned me" (*Domina Benedicta, post sanctam Claram prima abbatissa, me fecit*).

In the right-hand transept, there is the famous painting of the Life of St. Clare by the anonymous painter known as Maestro di Santa Chiara (end of the 13th century). The left-hand transept is famous for the fresco of the Nativity, coming from the school of Giotto (14th century).

On the left-hand side of the altar there is the small chapel of St. Agnes of Assisi, the sister of St. Clare. Agnes was the younger sister of Clare. Her original name was Caterina. When Clare went down to join Francis at the Porziuncola on Palm Sunday, 28th March 1211, he first sent her to the Benedictine monastery of San Paolo delle Abbadesse, near Bastia Umbra, and then to the "reclusorio" of Sant'Angelo di Panzo, under Mount Subasio. It was at this place that Caterina joined Clare and became sister Agnes. In 1212 the two sisters entered San Damiano. In 1229 Agnes was sent as abbess in the monastery of Monticelli, near Florence, where she remained until 1253, when she returned to San Damiano some time before the death of Clare. Agnes also died shortly afterwards at San Damiano on 16th November 1253.

From the Basilica one can go down to the crypt, hewn in 1850-1872 and remodelled in a neo-Gothic style in 1935. The crypt was opened on 30th October 1872 in order to enshrine the sarcophagus with the relics of St. Clare, which was found beneath the high altar of the Basilica on 23rd September 1850.

Before going down to the crypt one can stop to see the chapel of the relics, which are enshrined by the Poor Clares. Among the relics there is the original Rule of St. Clare with the papal seal of Pope Innocent IV (9th August 1253), which was found in 1893 in the folds of the tunic of St. Clare; the bulla *Sicut manifestum est* (17th September 1228) by Gregory IX, giving the Poor Ladies the Privilege of Poverty; and the breviary of St. Francis, given to the Poor Clares for safekeeping by brother Leo in the period 1253-1260.

The Basilica of Saint Clare suffered considerable structural damage during the earthquakes of September-October 1997, but has since been restored. The Protomonastero of Santa Chiara overlooks the Spoleto valley and is the place where the Poor Ladies transferred after leaving San Damiano in 1260.

SECULAR FRANCISCAN SAINTS: BLESSED ANGELA DA FOLIGNO

Adaptation of an introduction to Angela da Foligno by Alessandro Ghisalberti, *Mistici Francescani. Sec. XIV,* Vol. II, Editrici Francescane, Milano 1997, 175-190.

Life and works of Angela da Foligno

The biographical profile of Angela da Foligno can be reconstructed from the information contained in the first part of the *Liber* of the Blessed Angela, known also by the name of *Memoriale*, which refers to the years of her conversion (1285-1291) and, in more detail, to her visions and mystical experiences, in the period 1291-1296.

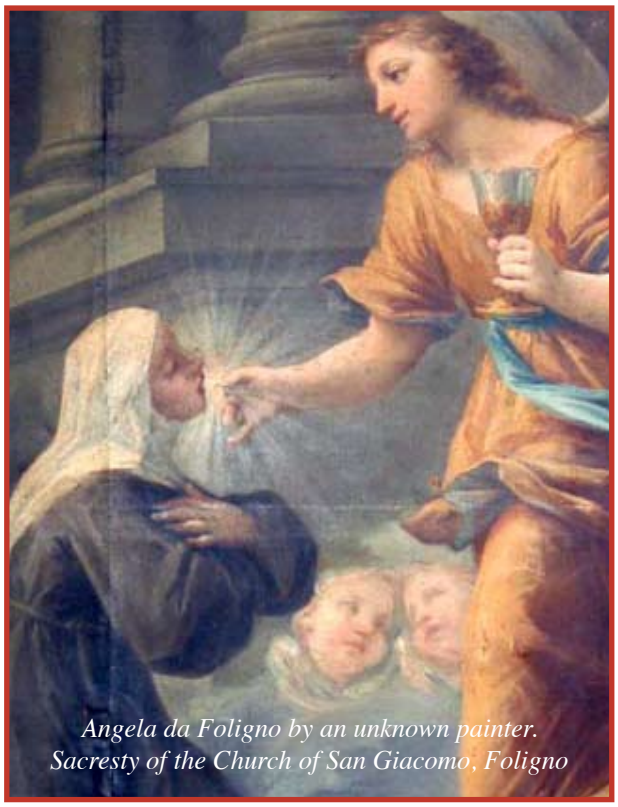
Before her conversion, Angela had been married to a rich man from Foligno, and had bore him children. The only detail which Angela records is that she had been subjected to a turbulent life, and to certain not well-defined moral depravations.

Angela was born in the town of Foligno, not far from Assisi, in 1248. Her process of conversion began round about 1285, when she visited the basilica of St. Francis in Assisi. There she went for a general confession and obtained full remission of her sins, thanks to the intercession of St. Francis. It was in Assisi that she met a certain friar A. (Arnaldo), who was chaplain to the bishop and her relative, and who later on became the one who wrote the *Memoriale* from her own mystical experiences, besides being a spiritual director to Angela. From her first confession Angela embarked upon her spiritual itinerary, in which she made a vow of chastity, promised to live a humble life in the experience of the contemplation and physical participation of the sufferings and passion of Christ.

In a short time Angela lost her mother, her husband and her children. So she decided to sell her personal belongings and distribute her wealth to the poor. She then went on pilgrimage to Rome and to Assisi, in order to ask Saint Peter and Saint Francis to give her the gift of perfect poverty. From this moment her life was characterised by intense mystical experiences, qualified as "visions" and "revelations", in a way of life of harsh penance, together with a companion whose name we only know through her initials (M., Ma., Mas.), and which as been read as Masazuola.

In the summer of 1291 Angela was admitted for profession of the Rule of the Order of the Brothers and Sisters of Penance of St. Francis (the Rule approved by the Franciscan Pope Nicholas IV through the bulla *Supra montem*, 18th August 1289). It was in this period that friar A. came to know about the interior experiences of Angela, and began to write them down. According to many scholars, Blessed Angela used to narrate her feelings in the Umbrian dialect, while friar A. would translate them directly in Latin and write them down as faithfully as he could. The main part of the *Liber* is the *Memoriale*, which presents the events of the conversion of Angela until 1296, in 26 out of the promised 30 chapters. In that year the text was approved by cardinal Giacomo Colonna and a commission of two Franciscan friars. The second part of the *Liber* contains a collage of writings, which the scholars Thier and Calufetti have called *Instructiones*, including 8 mystical experiences, 9 letters, 12 discourses, 7 miscellaneous writings, the official notification of the death of Angela on 4th January 1309 at Foligno, and a commemorative sermon called epilogue.

A very interesting note about the life of Blessed Angela is the meeting she had with friar Ubertino da Casale round about the year 1298. Ubertino, one of the famous Spiritual Franciscans of the early 14th



Angela da Foligno by an unknown painter. Sacresty of the Church of San Giacomo, Foligno

century, writes that he had received many spiritual benefices from this meeting.

Angela and feminine mysticism in Europe in the late 13th and early 14th centuries

The 13th century in Europe was characterised by feminine mysticism, linked with contemplative women, or feminine religious movements. The most widely known is that of the "béguins" in northern and central Europe and that of the "bizzocche" or "recluse" in central Italy, where many women consecrated their lives to God as *sanctae mulieres*, out of the ordinary canons of monastic religious life.

The most famous female mystics in this period were Hadewicjh of Antwerp, Beatrix of Nazareth, Mechtilde of Magdeburg, Margherita Porete, in northern and central Europe; and Chiara da Montefalco, Margherita da Cortona and Angela da Foligno, in central Italy.

In many of the cases we do not possess a direct literary production. Many of the documents which have reached us, including Angela's *Liber*, express these mystical visions as experiences: ecstasy is described as a state of intense suffering, accompanied by intense pleasure, which transforms a sinful soul into union with God who is Love, through redemptive grace.

This same attitude towards mystical experience is evident in the writings of Meister Eckhart (1260-1328). Eckhart does not think that mystical union with God is reserved only to clerics, intellectuals, philosophers or theologians, but retains it his duty to propose such an experience to all, religious and lay, béguins and beghards, in his sermons in the vernacular in the various villages on the banks of the Rhine.

The *Liber* of Angela da Foligno has to be seen within this European context of the Rhineland mysticism of the 14th century. The characteristic elements of Angela's *Liber* include references to the spirituality of St. Francis, which she gathered from the friars minor, to the Order of St. Clare and to the secular Order of penitents.

The environment in which Angela dictated her mystical experiences was that of Umbria during the 13th century, with Assisi as the spiritual centre. Her spiritual itinerary is characterised by an intense experience of conversion, which leads her to the radical choice of poverty and following of the poor and crucified Christ, embracing the charism of St. Francis. Angela speaks about personal "apparitions" which she had of St. Francis; in his tomb, within the basilica of Assisi; in the concrete figures of friars who were spiritual directors of Angela; in the works of the other Franciscan theologians, mystics, itinerant preachers, in the penitential movement, in the reform of the Church and the Order. Angela's experience can be described as a *cognitio experimentalis*, an experience through what she had to go through and suffer.

The particular themes of the mystical theology of Blessed Angela da Foligno include the following: 1) God is infinite love, He is the All-Good; 2) Christ in his passion is the book of life; 3) the Eucharist is the principal means which transforms the soul into the life of Christ; 4) prayer is a means to search for God; 5) spiritual life is expressed through poverty, suffering, humility; 6) Francis is a mirror and guide of perfection; 7) Mary is the queen of mercy and grace; 8) the cross is the true companion on the road towards holiness; 9) God reveals himself to the naked soul as Creator, who fills all creation with His goodness; 10) the aim of every mystical experience is transformation according to God's will; 11) love is the principle of every action; 12) the symbolic language of mystical experience is strongly biblical and liturgical-sacramental.

Angela da Foligno is considered to be Blessed in the Franciscan Order. Her feastday is celebrated on 4th January. She is considered to be a *theologorum magistra* (teacher of theologians) because of her profound mysticism.

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"LET THEM ALL BE CALLED FRIARS MINOR" (1)

(Earlier Rule 6,3)

MINORITY IN THE LIGHT OF THE WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Fernando Uribe OFM

Original paper in Italian: *"Minores et subditi omnibus". Tratti caratterizzanti dell'identità francescana*. Atti del Convegno 26-27 novembre 2007, a cura di L. Padovese, Istituto Francescano di Spiritualità, PUA, Edizioni Collegio S. Lorenzo da Brindisi – Laurentianum, Roma 2003, 149-190.

The word "minority" has entered with great force in modern Franciscan vocabulary in order to indicate one of the essential components of the Franciscan form of life.[1] Since the second half of the 20th century there has been an increasing interest in order to identify minority and its precise implications, particularly in the field of spirituality, of the form of life and of formation. This is evident in numerous studies which have been exclusively dedicated to the theme of minority,[2] as well as within the context of other studies touching upon various themes, and which are ordinarily dedicated to the principal aspects of Franciscan spirituality. The recent legislation of the diverse institutions that compose the Franciscan Family proposes minority as one of the ideals forming part of the Franciscan life. However, neither legislation nor specific studies dedicated to this theme have offered a definition, in a strict sense, of minority. Normally they make use of an implicit concept or make descriptions, which do not always satisfy and which, in certain instances, result in being even contradictory.[3]

We must underline the fact that the word "minority" is not found in the writings of Francis of Assisi. Minority, in fact, is an abstract term, which does not fully agree with the high sense of concreteness typical of the "Poverello", who was interested in the friar minor as a person, and therefore, for the same reason, used the word "minor" with a specific connotation. The term is not found in biblical vocabulary and was not used in classical Latin, both of which use abstract terms very sparingly.

According to the data we possess at this moment, the first time that the word "minority" appears in Franciscan literature is in one of the Sermons in honour of St. Francis written by St. Bonaventure, who associates minority to inferiority as an expression of humility.[4]

It seems, however, convenient to be precise as to what minority is or is not, and to try to come closer to the concept in a systematic way. We shall start by analysing the data which the writings of Francis of Assisi offer us, and which are the primary sources to know his frame of mind. It is only occasionally that we shall make recourse to other complementary sources, especially to the hagiographic sources. In order to render more easy the understanding of the concept of minority, we shall start by gathering the principal data on the origin of the term "minor".

The origin of the term "minor"

In order to discover the origin of the term *minor* we have to move in a triple method: the semantic method, the historical method and the method we can term as etiological.[5] The semantic origin will compel us to centre our attention upon the value of the word *minor* as such. The historical method will help us to interest ourselves in the moment in which the adjective "minors" began to be used in order to define the friars of the Order founded by Francis. From the etiological viewpoint we are interested in knowing the cause or the reason for the use of this term, especially the eventual motives which induce its adoption on the social point of view.

THE SEMANTIC METHOD.

If we depart from the linguistic point of view we notice that the term "minor" is a relative term, in the sense that it is not sufficient in itself like absolute terms (big, tall, short, small), but always implies the need to enter in relationship with another term, in order to establish a comparison between them. For example, we say that a country is smaller *(minor)* than another because of geographical extension, or that a building is smaller in height than another, or that a man is minor in age than another. In the same way there exist many other relative terms, which have a diverse value, such as, for example, major, superior, prior, inferior. Many times the comparison is not done in an explicit way, but is supposed, as happens in the name "Friars Minor".

As a relative concept, in an intrinsic way the term "minor" asks for a dynamic action, in the sense that it never assumes a definitive status, that is, it never has a static significance. To be "minor" always means to be less than something or somebody else, even when the comparison is done with a very small thing or person. The dynamic tension of the term "minor" suggests interesting applications to the condition of those who bear the name "Friars Minor".

THE HISTORICAL METHOD.

We can say that the oldest document we know of today, which makes use of the word "minors" applying it to the friars, is that of Cardinal Jacques of Vitry. It is a document of great value not only because it is very old, but because it comes out of the pen of an external witness to the Order. This document is the letter written by Jacques de Vitry in October 1216, in which, referring to his journey across the regions of central Italy, some time after the death of Pope Innocent III, he says: "I did find, however, one source of consolation in those parts. Many well-to-do secular people of both sexes, having left all things for Christ, had fled the world. They were called 'Friars Minor' and 'Sisters Minor'. They are held in great reverence by the Lord Pope and the Cardinals."[6] This comment follows the first contacts which Jacques had with the Franciscan movement, and is apparently confirmed in another letter, written from Damietta, in Egypt, in 1220, during the 5th Crusade, in which Jacques regards the disciples of Francis as a religious group and identifies them as "the religion of the Friars Minor."[7] Some time after Jacques wrote the following comment in his *Historia Occidentalis:* "This is the religious way of life of the true poor of the Crucified One and of the Order of preachers whom we call Friars Minor. They are truly Minors, for they are more humble than all present-day religious in their habit, in their poverty and in their contempt of the world."[8]

The testimony of the Premonstratensian prior Burcard of Ursperg (†1230) in his *Chronicon*, written between 1225 and 1227, is of great objective value, since it proceeds from the pen of an eyewitness. Referring to his journey in Italy in the year 1210, Burcard affirms that the followers of Francis were initially known as "Poor Minors", and then he adds: "Later on these men realised that their name could possibly lead to self-glorification under the cover of great humility and that, as many bear the title "poor" to no purpose, they could boast in vain before God; therefore, obedient to the Apostolic See in all things, they preferred to be called Friars Minor instead of Poor Minors."[9] The chronicler insists upon the reasons as to why the friars decided upon changing their name, but does not refer to the date in which the brothers actually changed their denomination. However, he gives us the impression that he was well informed.

We do not know exactly when the friars adopted the name of Minors. If we accept the information given to us by the *Anonymous of Perugia*, the first friars identified themselves simply by the name "penitents born in Assisi."[10] It seems, however, that this name was improvised, and that it stresses the penitential dimension, which was an element that characterised the lay and poor movements of the time. The most primitive section of the *Earlier Rule* belongs to this period as well, and this explains why the adjective "minors" does not appear in order to qualify the noun "friars" in the first chapter of the same Rule, particularly in the title and prologue.

Thomas of Celano, the first biographer of St. Francis, gives us the account of the origins of the name "minors" as follows: "He himself originally planted the Order of Friars Minor and on the occasion of its founding gave it this name. For when it was written in the Rule, 'Let them be minors…,' at the uttering of this statement, at the same moment he said, 'I want this fraternity to be called the Order of Friars Minor.'"[11] If we make a judgement from this affirmation, the name was imposed directly by Francis, who was inspired to pronounce it upon hearing the reading of the Rule. The biographer does not indicate which Rule it was, but with all probability he is referring to the *Earlier Rule (Regula non Bullata, 1221)*. In fact, the text to which he refers has a powerful semantic relationship with the following precept, which is found in chapter 6 of the same Rule: "Let no one be called prior, but let everyone in general be called a friar minor."[12] The tone of the phrase, which sounds like a precept, and its universal character, permit us to suggest that in it are codified the dispositions of the Saint as Celano explains. In chapter 7, the same Rule establishes the criteria upon the method which the friars should follow when working in the houses of other persons, namely, not to be treasurers or overseers, but "minors and subject to all in the same house."[13]

Unfortunately it is not possible to be precise regarding the date of composition of these two texts of the Rule. Maybe it is not presumptuous to say that they go back to the first five or six years of the Fraternity. According to this idea, the title "Friars Minor" must have been adopted before 1216 for the reasons we have already expressed, that is, because in that year Jacques de Vitry identifies the newly born *Religio* (Order) with this name. This is the first time that the name appears in the *Earlier Rule*,

since in its title, which is certainly the oldest and most primitive part, and which must have formed part of the text orally approved by Pope Innocent III in 1209/10, the official name of the Fraternity does not appear. This name appears in the *Later Rule (Regula Bullata)*, confirmed on 29th November 1223 with the bulla *Solet annuere* of Pope Honorius III. We should, however, note, that the official name "Friars Minor" is to be found in various pontifical documents from 1219 onwards.[14]

THE METHOD OF ETIOLOGY.

The question regarding the social causes that motivated the adoption of the term "minority" leads us, first of all, to consider the state of things in Assisi during the 13th century, when there was a profound social division in the town. Such a division was the reflection of what was happening in Italy and in central Europe, where the *meliores burgenses* or the *majores oppidari* were living a life marked with a profound difference from that of the common people.[15]

The way, which we normally follow is that of asking ourselves what is the significance of the term *minor* in the Latin culture of the late Middle Ages. However there does not seem to be a univocal answer to the question.[16] Thus, for example, in a bulla addressed by Pope Gregory VII to the citizens of Fiesole (close to Florence) in the year 1073, there is a distinction between clergy and people, in which there exist *maiores* and *minores: Gregorius VII faesulano clero et populo maioribus et minoribus* ("Gregory VII to the clergy and people of Fiesole, both *maiores* and *minores*").[17] In other pontifical documents of the 12th century both terms are used in the same sense even though in a more ambiguous form, referring without distinction to communal offices (*boni homines*), as well as to all the other citizens. On the other hand, in a document written by Guido Faba round about the year 1230, the term *minor* (united to the term *subditus*) appears in opposition to *maior*, applied in this case in an indiscriminate way to the clergy and the secular masters: *Si maiores, clerici vel laici, praelati ecclesiastici vel domini saeculares, subditi vel minoribus scripserint…* ("If the *maiores,* clerics and lay, ecclesiastical prelates or secular masters, subjects or *minores*, were to write…")

In the field of civil law in the history of Italy, A. Bartoli Langeli reminds us that the free citizens of the Italian towns were already classified in three groups during the 10th century: the major citizens, the middle-class citizens and the minor citizens. This was a distinction of an economic character, since it was based upon the quantity of possessions of each citizen.[18] Round about the year 1230, in central Europe, among the *personae minores* were included not only those who exercised certain trades, but also the citizens without titles, like the *mercatores, cives simplices, et artis manichae professores et omnes consimiles carentes dignitatibus* ("merchants, simple citizens, those engaged in manual trades, and all other similar citizens who do not possess titles".) The problem became more serious when one keeps in mind that in many Italian towns of the period there was another social group whose existence was recognised, namely the "miserable" people, or those who did not possess anything.[19] If we look specifically at the social conditions in Assisi, we know that in a document dated 1203 there is a reference to the discord between the nobles and the common people, which had culminated in the battle of Collestrada. However the document does not mention the term *minores: In Assisi erat quaedam discordia inter bonos homines et homines populi propter destructionem castrorum et hominitia* ("In Assisi there was discord between the *boni homines* and the *hominess populi* because of the destruction of the castles and because of the practice of *hominitium*").[20] On 9th November 1210, as a consequence of the ratification of the alliance between Perugia and the Papacy, the citizens of Assisi (this time regarded by the document only as *maiores* and *minores*) were compelled to reinforce their union with a pact of peace (*Instituto pro bono pacis*).[21]

The lack of precision which exists in this camp, has consequently created diverse opinions among scholars who have dealt with this problem. On one part there is the group which admits the direct influence of social division in the choice of the name *minores,* since they believe that initially Francis would have adopted this name in order to show more solidarity with the oppressed social class of his town.[22] Raoul Manselli points out, but does not provide sufficient proof, that it was "others" who applied this name to the friars and that Francis accepted it.[23] The theory which this group presents is appealing and can also be probable, but unfortunately it does not find any substantial proof in the writings of the Saint, neither in the biographical sources, or in the chronicles of the time. On the other hand there are many scholars who show scepticism regarding the relationship to the true meaning of the term "minor"[24] or who totally refuse the possibility of a true influence upon it by the social conditions, and affirm that the humility, which characterised the Friars Minor was in total contrast to the arrogance of the *minores* of the Commune of Assisi, who pretended to take into their own hands the government of the town

and also made distinctions between persons.[25] This double position creates an ambiguous situation and does not permit a clear exposition of the sociological origin of the term.

NOTES

[1] [We shall be presenting the translation of this study in four parts, one in each issue of this journal in 2008, in preparation for the 8th centenary of the foundation of the *Ordo Fratrum Minorum* in 2009-2010. For reasons of space, we shall not include all the abundant and rich footnotes, except for some minor indications. The title of the paper has been translated as "Let them all be called Friars Minor". In the English edition of the Writings of St. Francis (FAED I,68) the translation is: "let everyone in general be called a lesser brother". We do not agree that the Latin name *fratres minores* should be translated as "lesser brothers", but rather as "friars minor", for two reasons: first because this is the official name which the Church gave to Francis and his brothers, and second because the adjective "lesser" does not express the spiritual richness of "minor", as this study aptly demonstrates.]

[2] The author presents a long and exhaustive list of publications. In English he quotes: V. LAPSANSKI, "Poverty and Minority in the Early Sources of the Franciscan Order", *The Cord* 25 (1975) 288-292; D. COUTURIER, "Franciscan Minority and prophetic presence. A psychological perspective", *Laurentianum* 26 (1985) 902-931. Recent studies in Italian: J. MICÓ, *Minorità*, in *Dizionario Francescano. Spiritualità,* a cura di E. Caroli, 2a. ed. riveduta e ampliata. Ed. Messaggero, Padova 1995, 1115-1140.

[3] "Minority can be understood as the quality or attitude of being unassuming, inconspicuous, gentle, unobtrusive and fully yet imperceptibly present to God, to one's brothers and to the whole created world with a desire for loving service that will go so far as to sacrifice one's whole person in imitation of Him who humbled and emptied Himself for us in this world" (W. ROBINSON, *Minority in the Writings of Saint Francis,* unpublished work quoted in D. COUTURIER, *Franciscan Minority and prophetic presence,* p. 903).

[4] "Mitis est homo per effectum fraternitatis; humilis per effectum inferioritatis, sive minoritatis" (*Sermo V de S. Patre Francisco,* in *Opera Omnia,* IX, Ad Claras Aquas, Quaracchi, 1901, 594).

[5] Etiology is the philosophical investigation of causes and origins.

[6] JACQUES DE VITRY, *Letter I (Genova, 1216),* (FAED I,579). Original text in R.B.C. HUYGENS, *Lettres de Jacques de Vitry,* Leiden 1960, 75-76. Italian translation in *Fonti Francescane. Scritti e biografie di san Francesco d'Assisi. Cronache e altre testimonianze del primo secolo francescano. Scritti e biografie di santa Chiara d'Assisi* (FF), Ed. Messaggero Padova, 4th ed. 1990, marginal no. 2205. Once more, we prefer the names "Friars Minor" and "Sisters Minor" to "Lesser Brothers" and "Lesser Sisters" in the edition in English.

[7] JACQUES DE VITRY, *Letter II (Damietta, 1220),* FAED I,580.

[8] JACQUES DE VITRY, *Historia Occidentalis (c.1221-1225),* (FAED I,582). *The "Historia Occidentalis" of Jacques de Vitry.* A critical Edition by J.F. HINNEBUSCH (*Spicilegium Friburgense,* 17), Fribourg 1972.

[9] BURCHARD OF URSPERG, *Chronicon,* (FAED I,594). Original Latin text in *Testimonia minora saeculi XIII de S. Francisco Assisiensis,* ed. Lemmens, Collectanea Philosophica-Theologica III, Quaracchi 1926, 17-18; Italian translation in FF 2246.

[10] AP 19 (FAED II,43); cfr. L3C 37 (FAED II,90).

[11] 1C 38 (FAED I,217). [The footnote on page 217 explains the methodology used by the translators of the English edition of the Sources, which we do not agree with, as we have stated in note 1]: "*Ordo Fratrum Minorum* is translated as Order of Lesser Brothers. 'Friars Minor,' the commonly accepted title of the First Order of Saint Francis, reflects the early English translations of *frater* as 'friar' and the diminutive *minor* as 'minor.'"

[12] *RegNB* 6,3 (FAED I,68).

[13] *RegNB* 7,1-2 (FAED I,68).

[14] "Cum dilecti filii frater Franciscus et socii eius de Vita et Religione Minorum Fratrum," 11th June 1219 (*Bullarium Franciscanum* [BF] I,2); "Pro dilectis filiis Fratribus de Ordine Fratrum Minorum," 29th May 1220 (BF I,5); "Dilectis filiis Prioribus, seu Custodibus Minorum Fratrum," 22nd September 1220 (BF I,6); "Dilectis filiis Fratri Francisci et aliis Fratribus Minorum Ordinis," 29th March 1222 (BF I,9). English texts of the first two bullae in FAED I,558-559.

[15] Cfr. A. FORTINI, *Nova Vita di San Francesco,* Vol. I, part I, 392-395; Vol. II, 131-219.

[16] DU CANGE (*Glossariuim ad Scriptores mediae et infimae latinitatis,* t. II, pars secunda, Basileae 1762, col. 431-432) presents the verb *minorare* as a synonym of *minuere* and applies it to the lessening of things, authority, power and even life. He says that *minoratio* also means the lessening of levies or of punishment. First of all, *Minor* means the last, the youngest, the nephew, the one who is born after another, the minor in age; it also implies the private person in front of the public person. Secondly, the *minores* are "the religious of the Order of St. Francis, who gave this name to his followers." *Minoritas* first means the minor age, the condition of he who is under the tutelage of somebody else; secondly it implies someone who has a defect or who becomes smaller.

[17] Quoted by FALOCI-PULIGNANI, *I maggiori e i minori,* in *Miscellanea Franciscana* 13 (1911) [184-189], 184.

[18] Cfr. A. BARTOLI LANGELI, *La realtà sociale assisana e il papato del 1210,* in *Assisi al tempo di San Francesco*. Atti del V Convegno della Società Internazionale di Studi Francescani, (Assisi, 13-16 ottobre 1977), Assisi 1978 [271-336], 312-314.

[19] P. MARANGON, *Verbali delle sedute,* in *Assisi al tempo di San Francesco,* 30, writes [our translation from the Italian original]: "In an analogous manner, besides the three «ordines» in the towns, consisting of «maiores», «mediocres» and «minores», if this last category would be identified with the «populus» as has been proposed, I am afraid that we have to be more precise by determining more clearly that in Assisi – as well as in the other Communes – there existed also the «minimi» and the «miserabiles». My inkling is that the «rurales» living in the countryside and the «minimi» living in the towns did, in fact, constitute the major part of the population. I am of the opinion that if we recognise this reality, it would be more problematic to associate in a more strict way the origin of the term «fratres minores» to the «minores» of the towns, who in any case represented an active political power, while at the same time a great part of the population was too miserable to be even called «minor»."

[20] Cfr. A. FORTINI, *Nuova Vita di San Francesco,* Vol. III, 373-434.

[21] Cfr. the complete text in FALOCI-PULIGNANI, *I maggiori e i minori,* 186-188. Regarding the repercussions of this pact upon Francis and the incipient group of his brothers, cfr. DAVID FLOOD, *Peace in Assisi in the Early Thirteenth Century,* in *Franziskanische Studien* 64 (1982) [67-80] 73-79.

[22] This is what one can deduce from some affirmations made by PAUL SABATIER in his introduction to the *Vie de Saint François d'Assise*, Paris 1931, p. XVI. Cfr. Id., *Études inedites sur saint François,* Paris 1932, 234-235.

[23] R. MANSELLI, *San Francesco d'Assisi,* Edizioni San Paolo, Milano 2002, 258.

[24] In the beginning of the 20th century, FALOCI-PULIGNANI (*I maggiori e i minori,* 184), wrote: "I am of the opinion that we have not yet studied enough the entire implication of the word *Minori* at the time of St. Francis. Was it a sign of humility, or the *Minori* were a class of citizens who were clearly distinct, even legally, from the *Maggiori*?"

[25] Cfr. ARNALDO FORTINI, *Nuova Vita di San Francesco,* Vol. I, part 1, Assisi 1959, 394-395.

Books

Giovanni Duns Scotus: Commemorative Volumes

GIOVANNI DUNS SCOTO, *Studi e Ricerche nel VII Centenario della sua morte,* in onore di P. César Saco Alarcón, a cura di Martín Carbajo Nuñez, 2 Volumi, Edizioni Antonianum, Roma 2008, pp. 1020.

The 2 volumes form part of the series «Medioevo» (n.15) published by the Pontifical University "Antonianum" of the Order of Friars Minor, in Rome. They are being published on the occasion of the 7th centenary of the death of Blessed John Duns Scotus (1265-1308). The volumes are dedicated to Fr. César Saco Alarcón, a Franciscan from the Province of Santiago de Compostela in Spain, who worked in the International Scotistic Commission in Rome from 1964 till his death in 2005. The International Scotistic Commission was refounded by Fr. Carlo Balic OFM (1899-1977) in 1933, with the aim of publishing the critical edition of the works of the Subtle Doctor.

The volumes contain 34 studies by scholars from all the world, including a Maltese Franciscan Conventual scholar, Fr. Pasquale Magro OFMConv, who resides at the Sacro Convento in Assisi.

The studies concentrate on various themes of Scotus' thought regarding Philosophy, Theology, Christology, Mariology, Canon Law, Iconography, and place the works of Scotus within the context of the works of other great scholars of all times, including Thomas Aquinas, Avicenna, William of Ockham, Teilhard de Chardin, among others.

The following is the list of scholars who contributed to this monumental work, and the themes they develop:

Vol. I
1 - INTRODUCTORY STUDIES

Franz Lackner (Auxiliary Bishop Diocese of Graz-Seckau), *Johannes Duns Scotus und die Wirklichkeit am Rande des Denkbaren*.

Pietro Messa OFM (SSMF and Istituto Teologico di Assisi), *Il beato Giovanni Duns Scoto tra apologia e storia*.

Priamo Etzi OFM (Faculty of Canon Law, PUA, Rome), *Duns Scoto e lo scotismo nell'antica legislazione dell'Ordine dei Frati Minori*.

Barnaba Hechich OFM (President of the International Scotistic Commission, PUA, Rome), *Il problema delle 'Reportationes' nell'eredità dottrinale del B. Giovanni Duns Scoto*.

Saturnino Ruiz De Loizaga OFM (International Scotistic Commission, PUA, Rome), *Hitos significativos de la Comisión Escotista durante el período 1964-2004*.

Herbert Schneider OFM (Johannes-Duns-Skotus-Akademie), *Betende Erhebung zu Gott mit dem Seligen Johannes Duns Scotus*.

Maria Manuela Brito Martins (Catholic University, Porto), *La présence de la pensée augustinienne dans le Prologue de l'Ordinatio de Duns Scot*.

Dominique Demange, *Pourquoi Duns Scot a critiqué Avicenne* (doctoral dissertation on knowledge according to Scotus).

Benedykt Huculak OFM (International Scotistic Commission, PUA, Rome), *Quoniam in vestigio differat doctrina Scotica a Thomistica*.

Josep-Ignasi Saranyana (Università de Navarra), *'Primo in intellectu cadit ens.' Juan Duns Escoto frente a Tomás de Aquino*.

2 – PHILOSOPHICAL THEMES

Marcella Serafini (Researcher Philosophy of Religion), *Il desiderio naturale di Dio nel pensiero di Giovanni Duns Scoto*.

Hernán Guerrero Troncoso (Università Nacional Andrés Bello, Chile), *La pregunta por el carácter infinito de Dios en la Lectura de Duns Scoto*.

Isidoro Manzano OFM (Professor Emeritus PUA, Rome), *Idea del sobrenatural en el Prólogo de la Ordinatio de Escoto*.

Olivier Boulnois (École praique des Hautes Etudes, Paris), *Les catégories selon Duns Scoto*.

Katsumi Shibuya (Aichi University of Education, Japan), *Duns Scotus on 'ultima realitas formae'*.

Luca Parisoli (Université de Paris x Nanterre, UFR de Sciences juridiques), *Oggetti e norme: ontologia e volontà nella lettura paraconsistente di Giovanni Duns Scoto*.

Guido Alliney (University of Macerata), *L'acrasia secondo Duns Scoto: autonomia della volontà o disordine della passione?*

Vol. II
3 - THEOLOGICAL THEMES

José Rodríguez Carballo OFM (Minister General Order of Friars Minor), *Cristo 'summum opus Dei' en la visión de Duns Escoto*

Heinz-Meinolf Stamm OFM (PUA and Pontificia Università Lateranense, Rome), *Die Heilige Schrift als Fundament des für die Erdenwanderung Notwendigen Übernatürlichen Wissens nach dem Seligen Johannes Duns Scotus*.

Leonardo Sileo OFM (Urbaniana Pontifical University, PUA, Rome), *Filosofia, medicina e teologia. Il concepimento di Maria nella svolta teoretica di Duns Scoto*.

Alessandro Ghisalberti (Università Cattolica Sacro Cuore, Milano), *Verbo umano e verbo divino nell'Ordinatio di Duns Scoto*.

Richard Cross (Oriel College, Oxford University), *Fitting Reasons in Duns Scotus' Theological Methodology: Christocentrism and the Immaculate Conception*.

Orlando Todisco OFMConv (Università di Cassino, "Seraphicum", Rome), *Libertà e bontà chiave di lettura del III libro dell'Ordinatio di Duns Scoto*.

Bernardino de Armellada OFMCap (Franciscan Institute of Spirituality, PUA, Rome), *El mistero del dolor y la muerte en la cristología de Escoto*.

4 – INFLUENCES UPON AND COMPARISONS WITH LATER AUTHORS

Lawrence Moonan (Argyll, Scotland, UK), *Scotus, Ockham, and an apparent discrepancy on divine power.*

Marta Vittorini (Università dell'Aquila), *La teoria delle idee di Pietro d'Aquila ed i suoi fondamenti ontologici*.

Gaspar Calvo Moralejo (President Emeritus PAMI), *El escotismo de la Mistica Cuidad de Dios y su influencia en el processo de beatificación de la M. Agreda*.

Giovanni Cogliandro (Pontifical Seminary Pio XI, Reggio Calabria), *Duns Scoto e J.G. Fichte. La prospettiva scotista e la dottrina della scienza di fronte al problema della determinazione*.

Josip B. Percan OFM (International Scotistic Commission, PUA, Rome), *Teofil Harapin (1883-1944), un illustre rappresentante dello scotismo croato*.

Francis de Beer OFM (Faculty of Theology, Lille), *La primauté inconditionnelle du Christ chez Jean Duns Scot. Convergence avec le Père Teilhard de Chardin*.

Giuseppe Roccaro (Università di Palermo), *Il 'De secundarum intentionum natura tractatus' del siciliano Carlo Belleo*.

Pasquale Magro OFMConv (Professor of Franciscan Art, PUA, Rome), *Tra Duns Scoto e Francesco Sansone. I protagonisti della controversia sull'Immacolata nel coro intarsiato della chiesa superiore di Assisi*.

Elvio Lunghi (Università per Stranieri di Perugia), *Il beato Duns Scoto e l'iconografia francescana nella chiesa di San Francesco a Montefalco*.

Martín Carbajo Núñez OFM (PUA and Accademia Alfonsiana, Rome), *Actualidad de Duns Scoto en la Sociedad en la Información*.

Know Your Vocation

The Relationship between the OFM and the OSC

José Rodríguez Carballo OFM, Minister General

Assisi, 28th January 2008

“

«How do you present your identity today? How to you present it to the Friars Minor and to the world? It is time for you to re-appropriate your form of life as Poor Clares which, because of the historical events of your Order, it is still found hard, at times, to find once again your specific nature, when it is not sufficiently rooted in the Rule written for you by St. Clare. This need of a return to the origins is not only asked for by us Friars Minor, it is the whole Church which is asking it of the religious life: “Institutes of Consecrated Life are thus invited courageously to propose anew the enterprising initiative, creativity and holiness of their founders and foundresses in response to the signs of the times emerging in today’s world” (Vita Consecrata 37). Too often the security, which is offered to us in our life by consolidated forms and structures, impede us is asking if these are still significant or if they have lost their power and have not been reduced to a comfortable refuge. Renewal always implies a great effort, requires an attentive discernment, and needs time and patience, but it is the only possibility we have for our life to continue to be a readable “sign” for whoever is close to us. We Friars Minor are also on a journey along this path and the document of our General Chapter of 2003 reminded us of this proposal to pay attention, because “Whoever does not read the signs of the times runs the risk of becoming installed, of repeating himself, of nullifying the deepest dreams, of losing, little by little, the contagious joy of faith.” We Friars Minor and you Poor Clares, therefore, need great clarity in order to distinguish what in our life is still charged with meaning, indwelt by the presence of the Lord. In addition to this clarity we need audacity to make consequential choices which would allow us to remain faithful to what is truly founding in our charism and to re-embody it in a new way in the cultural reality in which we live.»

”

Abbreviations

Writings of St. Francis

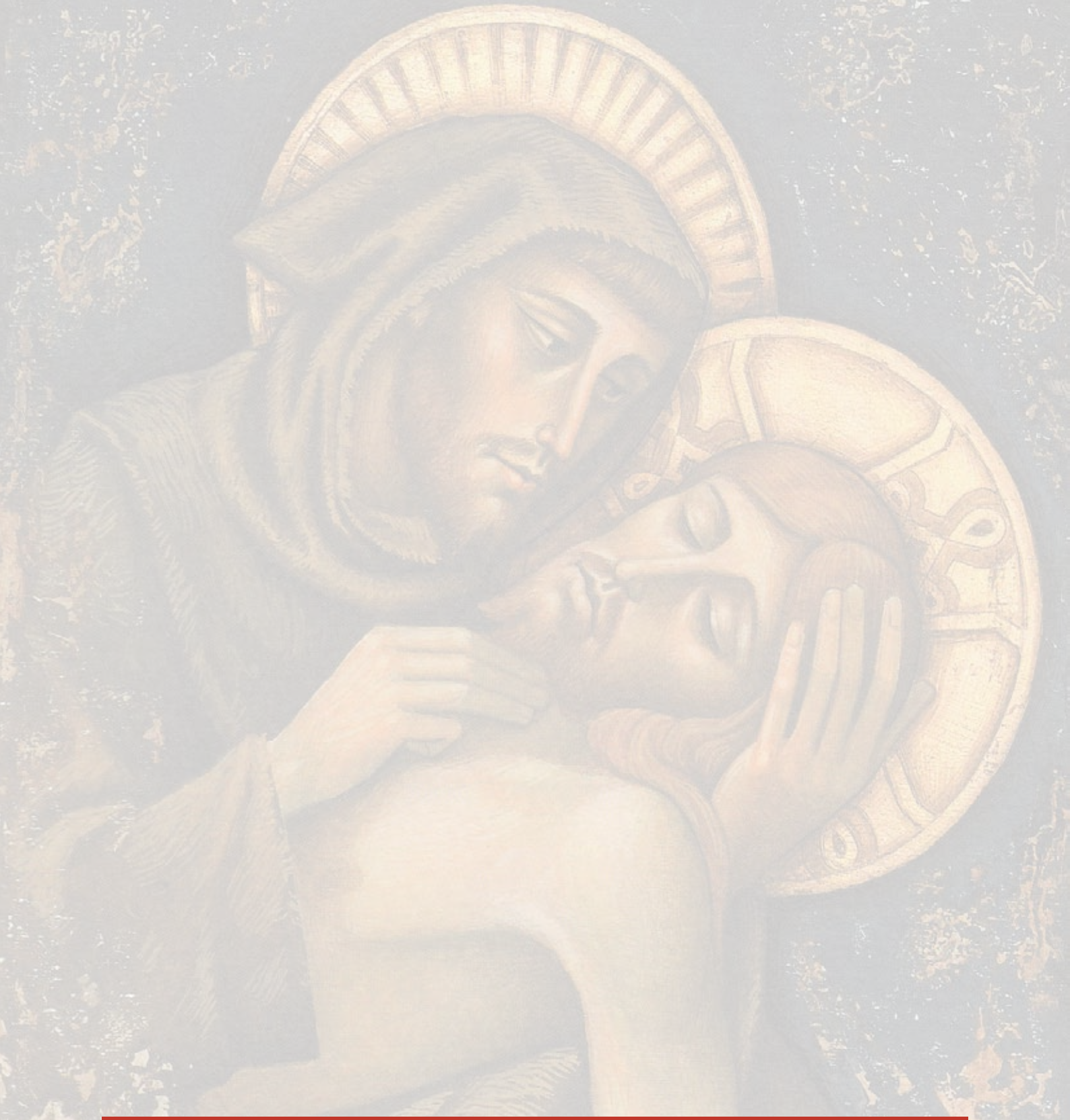
Adm	Admonitiones.
CantAudPov	Cantico Audite Poverelle.
CantSol	Canticum fratris Solis.
LaudDei	Laudes Dei Altissimi.
BenLeo	Benedictio fratri Leoni data.
EpAnt	Epistola ad sanctum Antonium.
EpCler I	Epistola ad Clericos (Redactio prior).
EpCler II	Epistola ad Clericos (Red. posterior).
EpCust I	Epistola ad Custodes I.
EpCust II	Epistola ad Custodes II.
EpFid I	Epistola ad Fideles I.
EpFid II	Epistola ad Fideles II.
EpLeo	Epostola ad fratrem Leonem.
EpMin	Epistola ad Ministrum.
EpOrd	Epistola toti Ordini missa.
EpRect	Epistola ad populorum rectores.
ExhLD	Exhortatio ad Laudem Dei.
ExpPat	Expositio in Pater noster.
FormViv	Forma vivendi sanctae Clarae data.
Fragm	Fragmenta alterius RegulaeNB.
LaudHor	Laudes ad omnes horas dicendae.
OffPass	Officium Passionis Domini.
OrCruc	Oratio ante crucifixum.
RegB	Regula bullata.
RegNB	Regula non bullata.
RegEr	Regula pro eremitoriis data.
SalBMV	Salutatio beatae Mariae Virginis.
SalVirt	Salutatio virtutum.
Test	Testamentum.
UltVol	Ultima voluntas S. Clarae scripta.

Sources for the Life of St. Francis

1C	Tommaso da Celano, Vita Sancti Francisci.
LCh	Celano, Legenda ad usum chori.
2C	Celano, Memoriale in Desiderio Animae.
3C	Celano, Tractatus de Miraculis S. Francisci.
LJS	Julian of Speyer, Vita Sancti Francisci.
OR	Officium Rhythmicum S. Francisci.
AP	Anonimo Perugino.
L3C	Leggenda dei Tre Compagni.
CA	Compilatio Assisiensis.
LMj	S. Bonaventura, Legenda Maior S. Francisci.
LMn	S. Bonaventura, Legenda minor S. Francisci.
SP	Speculum Perfectionis.
SC	Sacrum Commercium S. Francisci.
ABF	Actus Beati Francisci et Sociorum Eius.
Fior	Fioretti di San Francesco.

Sources for the Life of St. Clare

BC	Bull of Canonization of St. Clare.
BlCl	Blessing of St. Clare.
1-4LAg	Letters to St. Agnes of Prague..
LCl	Legend of St. Clare.
PC	Acts of the Process of Canonization.
PrPov	Privilege of Poverty.
RegCl	Rule of St. Clare.
TestCl	Testament of St. Clare.



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