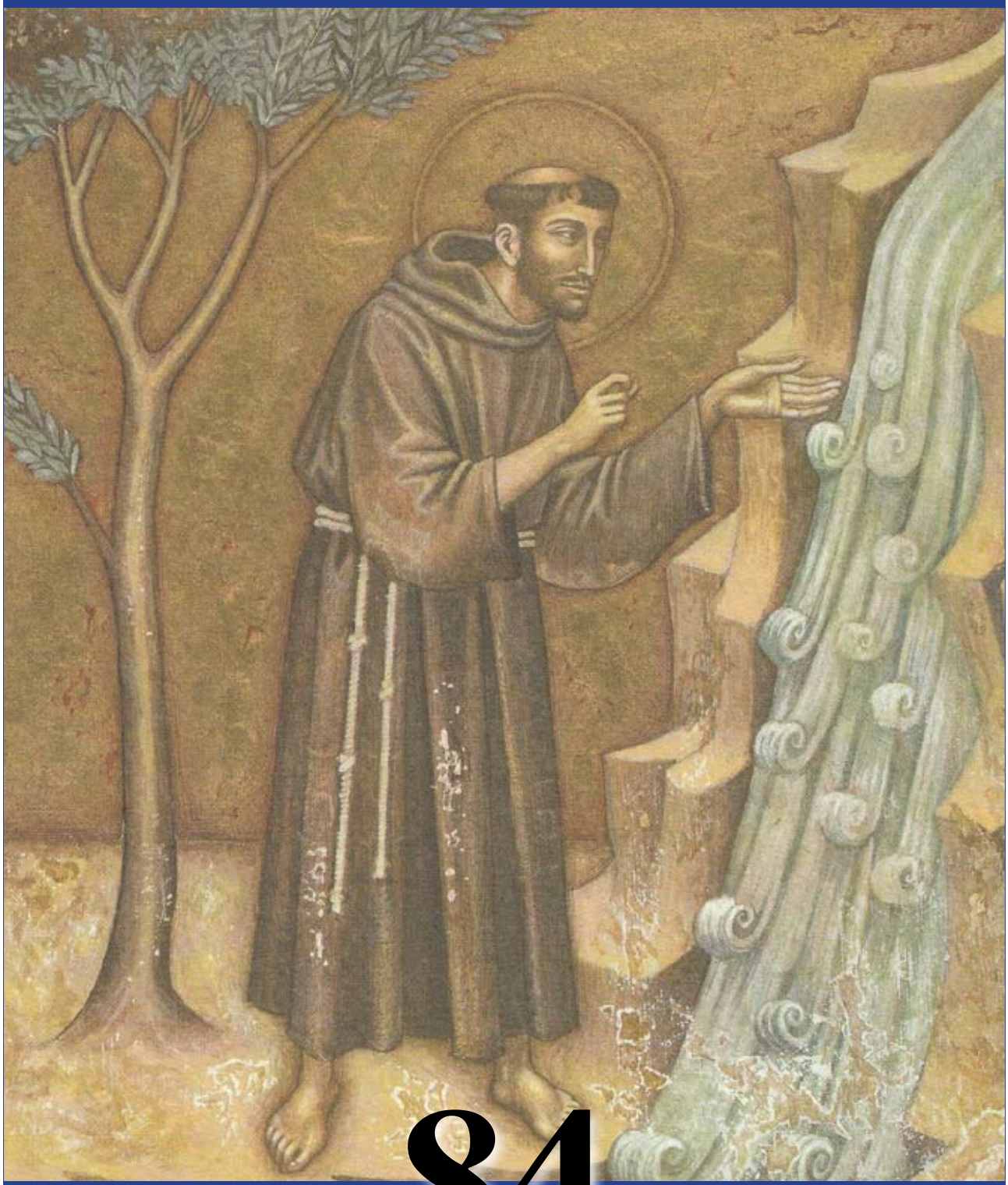
Spirtu u Ħajja

Journal of Franciscan Culture

Issued by the Franciscan Friars (OFM Malta)



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April - June 2008

84

Quarterly journal of Franciscan culture published since April 1986

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FRANCISCANS AND THE HOLY LAND

In the beginning of April I had the occasion of being a spiritual guide to one of the four groups of pilgrims who came to the Holy Land on a diocescan pilgrimage from Malta, led by Archbishop Paul Cremona OP and the three Ministers Provincial of the Franciscan Orders in Malta. The pilgrimage was truly a remarkable achievement on the part of the Commissariat of the Holy Land in Malta, since it is the first time that a record number of 168 persons have taken part in a pilgrimage on just one occasion. We are now awaiting smaller groups of Maltese pilgrims who will come with the Franciscan friars for an experience to the Holy Land in 2008.

The experience of the pilgrimage in the Holy Land is always unique. Any tourist who comes to the Holy Land (we prefer to use this term which is accepted by all peoples of all religions who live in this region, Israelis or Palestinians; Jews, Christians or Muslims) can find expert and well-prepared guides to visit all the archaeological sites and shrines. Since the majority of Maltese who come to the Holy Land are not tourists, but pilgrims, we Franciscans can offer them expert guidance to visit the Holy Places dear to all Christians. The Franciscan friars have been living in this land ever since 1217. In 1342 Pope Clement VI recognised them as being the official custodians of the Holy Places. That is why a Christian pilgrimage guided by a Franciscan friar makes all the difference.

The Holy Land is part and parcel of the Franciscan calling. St. Francis of Assisi came here with the fifth crusade in 1219-1220, but with a different purpose. He came to build bridges with other religions. He went to meet Sultan al-Malik-al-Kamil of Egypt, with the sole intention of befriending a Muslim king who was open to dialogue with Christians.

We Franciscans believe that our mission in the Holy Land is the continuation of that of St. Francis. We believe that we are here, first and foremost, to be custodians of the Holy Places dear to all Christians, to welcome and guide the thousands of pilgrims who visit them, to take pastoral care of the local Christians, irrispective of their political or national beliefs, and to contribute to the furthering of archaeological and biblical studies in this region. Our mission is appreciated by all those men and women of good will who understand the importance of the Holy Land as a melting pot of cultures and religions.

Fr. Noel Muscat ofm

A FAMOUS FRANCISCAN HISTORIAN: FR. LUKE WADDING OFM (1588-1657)

Noel Muscat OFM

The scholarly account of the life of Luke Wadding by Fr. Francis Harold, forms the introduction to his prestigious and voluminous Annales Minorum, of which he wrote the first 8 volumes. Luke Wadding was born on 16th October 1588 at Waterford, a town on the south coast of Ireland, looking over the Celtic Sea and St. George's Channel. His parents, Walter and Anastasia Lombard, named him Luke, in memory of the evangelist St. Luke, since he was born close to his feast day, 18th October.

Luke was brought up in a Catholic family. His brother Ambrose became a Jesuit, and he also had cousins who became Augustinian friars and Jesuits. Luke's religious formation was influenced by the post-Tridentine Council spirit among Catholics, and he soon learnt various devotional practices, including the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, the seven penitential psalms, the Office of the dead, and the minor breviary of Pope St. Pius V. He also learned how to read and write in excellent Latin, and studied philosophy. At fourteen years of age he lost both his parents. His brother, Matthew, took care of Luke's education, and sent him over to the Irish seminary in Lisbon, under the care of the Jesuits.

After a short period in the seminary Luke entered the Order of Friars Minor Recollects in the friary of the Immaculate Conception at Matozinhos, near Oporto. He made his solemn profession and received minor orders in 1605. Afterwards he was sent to Leyria, a Franciscan house of studies, to specialise in the philosophy of John Duns Scotus. As a companion during his studies, Luke had Fr. Richard Synott, of Wexford, who was later to become Guardian at the Irish College of Saint Isidore, in Rome, and then died as a martyr in Ireland during the time of Oliver Cromwell.

Wadding studied theology at Lisbon and at Coimbra, having as his lectors Fr. Diego Limadensis, Francisco Suárez and Egidius a Presentatione, an Augustinian friar. The Benedictine monk Leo a Sancto Thoma also bears witness to the great preparation of Luke in theological sciences.

In 1613 Wadding was ordained priest and immediately was sent out to preach. He accomplished this ministry with great eloquence, and was capable of preaching fluently in Portuguese and Catalan. In 1613 he started compiling a long list of quotations from Scripture, the Church Fathers and the lives of the saints, in order to be handy for preachers. These sylva are still preserved in two volumes of a manuscript in Dublin, Ireland. The vicar general of the Order, Antonio a Trejo, sent Luke to the university of Salamanca, where he became a scholar of the Hebrew language. Subsequently he occupied the chair of theology at the College of San Francisco.

Wadding continued to exercise the office of professor until 1618 when, only 30 years old, he was chosen by king Philip III to accompany as a theologian a delegation which the same king sent to Pope Paul V to promote the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. The legate appointed for the purpose was Antonio a Trejo, Bishop of Cartagena, who had been vicar general of the Franciscan Order and teacher to Luke Wadding. The delegation left Spain on 1st October 1618 and reached Rome on 17th December of the same year. Wadding had to prepare the documentary material for theological presentations. Thus he spent most of his time in the libraries of Rome, and visited also the libraries of Naples, Assisi and Perugia. He left the history of this delegation in a work called Acta legationis, in which he summarises the proceedings and the theological questions he had to deal with. Although he had to reside in official quarters, Luke Wadding insisted that he be sent to a Franciscan friary, and was assigned to the friary of San Pietro in Montorio in Rome. In May 1620 Antonio a Trejo returned to Spain, but Wadding was ordered to remain in Rome, where he continued his theological investigations.

While in Rome, Wadding tried to realise a dream he had cherished for a long time, namely that of writing a voluminous work in which he could present the glorious history of the Franciscan Order and of its most eminent representatives. At that time the Minister General of the Friars Minor was Benigno da Genova, who in 1619 wrote an encyclical letter to the whole Order in which he ordered that all provinces should forward to Rome all documents relating to the history of the Order. The documentary material was then handed over to Wadding. The two most distinguished among the collaborators were Bartolomeo Cimareli, who worked in the archives and libraries of northern and central Italy, and Jacobus Polius, who worked in Germany.

The first fruit of Wadding's endeavour was published in 1623 at Antwerp. This is the famous

Beati Patris Francisci Assisiensis Opuscula, which is considered by scholars to be the first critical edition of the Writings of St. Francis.

Wadding also undertook to finish and publish a Hebrew concordance, grammar and dictionary, which had been prepared by Marius a Calasio, a learned Franciscan who had died in Rome. With the permission and financial aid of Paul V Wadding managed to establish a printing press with Hebrew type at the Franciscan friary of Ara Coeli. The preface to this voluminous work was written by Wadding himself: De Hebraicae linguae origine, praestantia et utilitate ad ss. Litterarum interpretes, while he was still professor at Salamanca.

Although the publications of Wadding are numerous, his fame rests chiefly on his edition of 16 volumes of all the works of the Subtle Doctor John Duns Scotus, published at Lyons in 1639. He corrected the text according to the best manuscripts at his disposal, inserted his own critical notes and scholia, and enriched the edition with commentaries. His life of John Duns Scotus, which forms the preface of the first volume, appeared separately in 1644.

Wadding's greatest literary achievement, as we mentioned at the very beginning, was the publication of the Annales Minorum, a history of the Franciscan Order from its foundation. He is the author of 8 of the volumes (the total number is 32), which were published between 1625 and 1654 and present Franciscan history from 1208 to 1540. After writing 8 volumes Luke was nearing his death, and decided to close the eighth volume with significant words, stating that he now had to lay aside his pen in order to concentrate on the salvation of his soul. This work makes of Luke Wadding one of the most famous of ecclesiastical historians of all times. Many critics have shown that there are many historical inaccuracies in Wadding's work, and have also criticised the lack of accuracy and scientific methodology. However, one has to consider the enormous endeavour which Wadding had put into the composition of this history, and the limited time and means at his disposal. Indeed, the famous modern Franciscan historian Herbert Holzapfel, author of a manual of Francisan history, writes: "Only those who have consulted the Annals hundreds and thousands of times can appreciate its true worth."

It is enough to state that Wadding was so occupied with producing works of theology and history commissioned by popes, cardinals, and other superiors, that most of his literary work regarding the Franciscan Order was done in the hours between sunset and midnight. In the preface to the sixth tome of the Annales Wadding writes: "I could only write

this work in the early hours of the night, since I was so taken up by many cares during daytime hours." It also seems that Wadding suffered from acute migraine headaches and vomiting ever since he was 22 years old. He often had to suspend his literary activity every time he suffered from this physical discomfort.

Luke Wadding is also famous for his work in favour of his beloved country, Ireland. Wadding, in fact, is the founder of two Irish institutions in Rome, the Irish Franciscan College of St. Isidore and the Ludovisian College for Irish priests. The College of St. Isidore was founded in 1625, with the permission of the Minister General and a special Bull of Pope Urban VIII (20th October). Wadding enlarged the existing building, which had been a Spanish friary of the Friars Minor Discalced, founded during the time of Pope Gregory XV. Wadding enriched this college with a library of 5000 volumes, besides a precious collection of manuscripts, bound in 800 volumes. The college was the centre of education for many young Irish Franciscans, many of whom returned to Ireland and even died as martyrs for the faith. The love which Wadding had for his native land is also seen in his tireless endeavour to celebrate the feast of St. Patrick with due solemnity every year on 17th March, and it is thanks to him that the feast was

inserted in the liturgical calendar of the Catholic Church. Thanks to his friendship with Cardinal Ludovisi, protector of Ireland, Wadding founded another college for the Irish secular clergy. The Ludovisi College for Irish priests was opened on 1st January 1628. In 1635 the Franciscans ceded the administration of the college to the Jesuits. With the permission of Pope Alexander VII, given at Castel Gandolfo in 1656, Wadding founded another friary at Capranica, north of Rome, to be the novitiate house of the Irish province.

In 1654 Wadding asked Pope Innocent X to send his personal ambassador to Ireland, with the powers and dignity of an Apostolic Nuncio. Archbishop Rinuccini was sent to defend the Irish cause, during the time of the Irish war. Wadding managed to collect the sum of 26,000 scudi towards the Irish cause, and repeated this offer the following year. The end result was O'Neills' victory at Benburb on 5th June 1646, when a solemn Te Deum was sung in the Basilica of St. Mary Major.

The official career of Luke Wadding was remarkable. He was a lector jubilatus of sacred theology and chronista of the Order. He was Guardian of St. Isidore's College for four terms, and praeses of the Irish College. He was appointed Procurator of the Order in 1630 and declined the office, but was reappointed in 1632 and remained until 1634. He was quaresimalista, or Lenten preacher, to the papal household. He was appointed vice-commissary of the Order in 1645, and when he declined the offer, he was obliged to accept it in 1648. Paul V gave him a nomination in the Holy Office, and Gregory XV made him consultor of the Index. Urban VIII made him consultor of the Rites and Propaganda Fide, and named him a member of the commission for the reform of the Roman Breviary. It is said that he repeatedly declined the offer to be consecrated bishop and even to attain to the dignity of the cardinalate. The Cismontane family of the Order wanted him to pass over to them from the Ultramontane family in order to be elected Minister General, but he again refused. He used to say that he could serve his beloved Ireland better as a humble Franciscan than as a Church prelate.

After a month-long illness, Luke Wadding died on 18th November 1657, when he had began his 70th year, and was buried in the church at St. Isidore's Irish College in Rome.

"LET THEM ALL BE CALLED FRIARS MINOR" (2)

(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.

Towards an identification of the concept of minority

In order to find the raison d'être of the name "minors", chosen by Francis to designate the Order which he founded, it is indispensable to study his Writings in order to verify the use he makes of such a name in them and, above all, to discover the reasons which motivated him to choose such a name.

One first important verification is that in Francis' writings there is a certain adverse feeling against all that which gives an idea of superiority, as in the case of such terms as *magis (magnus, magister, magnatus)*, or in the prefix *prae (praelatus, prior)* or *super (superior, superbus)*, as well as in other similar terms. The term *minor* is found fourteen times in the critical edition of the Writings by Kajetan Esser, and it is always linked with those writings which speak about the life or condition of the brothers. It is only once that the term is used to refer to time, in the *Later Rule* 8,3: "Let them do this [the Chapter] once in every three years, or at other longer or shorter intervals." The other thirteen times can be distinguished into two groups: the first refers to the use of the term to indicate the identity of the Order or the brothers, while the second is used to express their condition or modality of being.

A) The group of texts which use the term to indicate the identity of the Order is the most

numerous: we find eight texts in all. Six of these refer to the Order or *Religio:*

"The Life of the friar minor begins" (*RegB* title);

"The Rule of life of the friars minor is this" (*RegB* 1,1);

" All of us friars minor, useless servants, humbly ask and beg those who wish to serve the Lord God to persevere in the true faith and in penance" (*RegNB* 23,7);

"To all the custodians of the friars minor" (*1EpCust* 1; *2EpCust* 1);

"To Brother A., the General Minister of the Order of Friars Minor" (*EpOrd* 2).

The other two references could be included within this group, since one contains the mandate which gave origin to this name, as appears in the *RegNB*, while the other expresses one of the auto-qualifications used by Francis in the introduction or conclusion of his letters:

"Let no one be called 'prior', but let everyone in general be called a friar minor (*RegNB* 6,3);

"I, brother Francis, your minor servant" (*2EpFid* 87).

B) To the second group belong those texts which explicitly refer to being minors as one of the conditions characterising the followers of Christ, according to Francis. In this sense the term is used five times always in the context of exhortations which the Saint addresses to his brothers. Two of the texts are found within the context of obedience and more specifically when the saint refers to the spirit that should animate those who exercise the service of authority; both of them refer to the biblical text of Lk 22:26. Another two contain one of the criteria which should guide the choice of the friars' work. The last text forms part of the criteria by which the servant of God knows that he truly possesses the Spirit of the Lord:

"Let whoever is greater among them become the minor" (*RegNB* 5,12);

"Let the one to whom obedience has been entrusted and who is considered the greater be the minor and the servant of the other brothers" (*2EpFid* 42);

"None of the brothers […] may be in charge in the houses in which they serve […] Let them, instead, be minors and be subject to all in the same house" (*RegNB* 7,1-2; *Fragments of the RegNB* 2,10);

"A servant of God can be known to have the Spirit of the Lord in this way […] if he regards himself the more worthless and esteems himself minor than all the others" (*Adm* 12,3).

The difference between group A and B is really tiny, and touches minor details. When Francis identifies his Order as a group of "Friars Minor", he is not pretending other than to express a spiritual condition which has to be always present in the soul of those who are called by this name; in this case the name is the social reason and the external manifestation of the motives which should guide the exhortations of Francis regarding "being minors".

Although the word *minoritas* is absent from the writings of Francis and the term *minor* is used only a few times, it is important to observe that it appears in a very unified way, and it assumes great significance, since, as a spiritual condition, it indicates a peculiar form of being. For the same reasons the name "Friars Minor" is not a simple title, empty and standardized, but it denotes a programme of life, a profound dynamism which supposes a constant attitude of the spirit that can be placed in the ambit of great evangelical ideals and asks for a permanent commitment. From this point of view the writings of the Saint are rich with references and teachings regarding minority.

Another important verification regarding the presence of the term *minor* in the writings of Francis is that it has an evident evangelical-christological inspiration. Maybe the Gospel text which is most recorded is that of the washing of the feet in Jn 13:14: "If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet." This text is directly referred to in the text we have quoted form the *Earlier Rule* 6,3-4: "Let no one be called 'prior,' but let everyone in general be called a friar minor. Let one wash the feet of the other." The reference to this same episode of the life of Christ as narrated by St. John, can also be found in other texts in the writings of the Saint, and always within the context of a humble service to the brothers (cfr. *Adm* 4,19; *RegNB* 4,6), even though in these cases the reference is rather to Mt 20,26-28. The presence of Lk 22:26: "the greatest among you must behave as if he were the youngest, the leader as if he were the one who serves," can be found in the text of the *Earlier Rule* 5,10-12: "The Lord says in the Gospel: 'Let whoever wishes to be the greater among them be their minister and servant. Let whoever is the greater among them become the least.'" These references can be explained by the fundamental option of Francis to follow Jesus Christ seen especially in the mystery of his self-emptying, as it is expressed in the Letter to the Philippians 2:5-9, a text which is then quoted in the *Second Letter to the Faithful* 4-15, and which is maybe the most expressive Christological reflection in Francis' writings. In the light of what we have said, we have to underline once again the condition of Christ as a personification of the Servant of Yahweh, as it is presented by the authors of the New Testament, and which provides us with the key to understand the

image of Christ that Francis wanted to present as a source of inspiration for all the dimensions of his spirituality.

The Christological origin of the term, or rather, the evangelical reasons which made Francis of Assisi choose the name *minores* to identify the members of his Fraternity, shows that this abstract substantive which depends from it (*minoritas*) cannot be defined simply as a sum of virtues, in the complementary way of presenting them that the Saint uses, for example, in the *Salutation of the Virtues*. Neither can we restrict the term into one single virtue, such as that of humility, even though it resembles it very much. On the other hand, because of evangelical reasons and also because of the use of the term, we find ourselves in front of a concept of *minoritas* in which we find importance being given to the relational dimension on personal qualities that are normally linked with the concept of humility. This means that, beyond a simple and individualistic ascetical choice, *minoritas* has a most intimate link with *fraternitas* in all its dimensions.

If the name chosen by Francis to identify his Order does not depend upon the colour of the habit (brown or grey friars), neither upon the place of origin (Assisi friars), nor upon the work they do (nursing friars, preachers, missionaries…), but upon their way of being: "Friars Minor," it is perfectly logical that minority is something much more than just a virtue. In other words, it points to a concept of life which implies the human person in all its aspects, that is, in all of the dimensions of its existence (itself, the universe, the others, God). We shall try to look at each one of these dimensions in the light of the most important texts of the writings of Francis, in order to approach as closely as we can the concept of minority. Even though it might result to be more convenient to complete our study by confronting the most ancient hagiographical sources, for the sake of limited time and space, we shall only refer to the Writings, which offer us with a complete idea and have a value which cannot be substituted by other documents, since they are the primary sources for the knowledge of St. Francis.

Minority in reference to the human person itself

We can find a dual way of looking at the human person in the Writings of St. Francis: on the one hand, according to the way the Saint refers to himself, that is, by studying in what way he auto-defines and identifies himself; on the other hand, through an analysis of those texts which in a certain way present his vision on the human person, especially whenever the person enters into a relationship with itself.

The great majority of references done by Francis to his own person are to be found in the titles and the epilogues of his letters and of the other personal writings. The term which is most used is the noun *servant* (7 times). Once the noun is linked with the term *subject:* "Brother Francis, their servant and subject […] Because I am servant of all, I am obliged to serve all and to administer the fragrant words of my Lord to them" (*2EpFid* 1-2). More frequently the noun *servus* is linked with other adjectives, such as *parvulus, minor* and *despectus*. Examples include the following: "Brother Francis, your little and looked-down-upon (*despectus*) servant in the Lord God" (*EpRect* 1); "To all the custodians of the Friars Minor whom this letter reaches, Brother Francis, your servant and little one (*parvulus*) in the Lord God" (*1EpCust* 1); "This is a remembrance, admonition, exhortation, and my testament, which I, little brother Francis, make for you" (*Test* 34. 41). In other instances Francis prefers the term *servulus* (*EpOrd* 3), or other ways of presenting himself, such as: *ignorans et idiota* (*EpOrd* 39 [translated into "ignorant and stupid"], or "a useless man and unworthy creature of the Lord God" (*EpOrd* 47).

It is important to observe that the way the Poverello identifies himself is not made up of titles of nobility, or ecclesiastical dignity, or juridical, military titles, but of titles which are profoundly evangelical: "the servant, the minor, the subject, the little one." These are titles which are inspired by Christ Servant of Yahweh, the one who is despised, the man of suffering, and for the same reason, they constitute the great ideal and seal of honour of the Saint. We should also note that, against the way of writing letters in those times, when one normally placed the name of the sender before that of the one who received the letter, in his letters Francis inverts the order, and places himself in the second place, and as we have seen, using terms which reveal his great humility.

The way Francis defines himself corresponds to other expressions in his writings, used to qualify the condition of the Friars Minor. Let us give a couple of examples: "[we who are] miserable and wretched, rotten and foul, ungrateful and evil ones" (*RegNB* 23,8); "rather let everyone judge and look down upon himself" (*RegB* 2,17). These expressions are not revelations of a hidden masochistic tendency, as some would imagine, but they find their theological reason in Francis' concept of man under a double perspective: namely his vision of humanity bearing the wounds of sin and his profound sense of poverty understood as expropriation. These are two dimensions which often result to be intimately

united, but which we here present distinctly in order to be more clear.

The concept, which the Saint has regarding the sinful condition of the human person, is often linked with the idea of the body or the flesh as an instrument of sin and as a manifestation of human egoism. An example of this trend is to be found in this admonition: "We must hate our bodies with their vices and sins […] We must also deny ourselves and place our bodies under the yoke of servitude and holy obedience as each one has promised to the Lord" (*2EpFid* 37.40). It is evident that in this way the Poverello is just applying the teachings of St. Paul on this argument.

The relationship between "body" and "sin" is very clear in the following *Admonition*: "There are many people who, when they sin or are injured, frequently blame the enemy or their neighbour. But it is not so, because each one has the enemy in his power, that is his body through which he sins. Blessed is the servant, then, who always holds captive the enemy delivered into his power and wisely safeguards himself from him; because, as long as he does this, no other enemy visible or invisible will be able to harm him" (*Adm* 10,1-4).

In one of the exhortations in the *Earlier Rule*, Francis returns upon the motives which induced him to despise the body, in these seemingly harsh words: "And let us hate our body with its vices and sins, because by living according to the flesh, the devil wishes to take away from us the love of Jesus Christ and eternal life and to lose himself in hell with everyone else. Because, by our own fault, we are disgusting, miserable and opposed to good, yet prompt and inclined to evil, for, as the Lord says in the Gospel: *From the heart proceed and come evil thoughts, adultery, fornication, murder, theft, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, false witness, blasphemy, foolishness. All these evils come from within, from a person's heart, and these are what defile a person* (Mk 2:21-22; Mt 15:19)" (*RegNB* 22,5-8). We have quoted this long text because in it we see not only the causes which induced the Saint to despise the spirit of the flesh, but also because we find the words taken from the Gospel, presenting the consequences of all that which proceeds from the heart of the human person.

These words can be better understood with the help of another very difficult quotation from the second version of the *Letter to the Faithful*, where the Poverello expresses himself with equally harsh words regarding the way he looked at himself and at others in the context of minority: "We must not be wise and prudent according to the flesh, but, instead, we must be simple, humble and pure. And let us hold our bodies in scorn and contempt because, through our own fault, we are all wretched and corrupt, disgusting and worms, as the Lord says through the prophet: *I am a worm and not a man, the scorn of men and the outcast of the people* (Ps 22:7). We must never desire to be above others, but, instead, we must be servants and subject *to every human creature for God's sake* (1Pt 2:13)" (*2EpFid* 45-47).

The third and last sentence is the one which has the most direct relationship with our theme, but it must be read in the light of the two preceding ones, since it depends upon them semantically.

The text departs from an affirmation that opposes those who are "wise and prudent according to the flesh" to those who are "simple, humble and pure." The same opposition is found in the *Salutation to the Virtues*: "Pure holy Simplicity confounds all the wisdom of this world and the wisdom of the body" (*SalVirt* 10); in this quotation the word "body" is used instead of the word "flesh", but both are used within the context of the theology of Paul. The second sentence has a negative tone, since it is centred upon the word "body", understood also here in the context of Paul's theology, even though in this case Francis defines it also within the context of terms which denote egocentrism: "wretched and corrupt, disgusting and worms". In this way he exhorts his readers to despise themselves and think of themselves as being similar to worms, an image taken from the Psalms and applied also to Christ.

In fact, the reference to "worms" is taken from Psalm 21,7, where it is applied to Christ, suffering Servant of Yahweh. In this way one can understand that wisdom according to the spirit renders the human person aware of its insignificance, of its weakness and sin, so that no one can boast or "desire to be above others," but rather to "be servants and subject to every human creature for God's sake." This self-image departs from a theological vision of life, in which man, when he confronts himself with the greatness and sanctity of God who created him and formed him according to the image of His Son in the flesh, and according to His likeness in the spirit, feels the full force of the evidence of his littleness because of his sinful humanity.

As a complement to what we have already stated, we now consider *Admonition* 19 which, although very short, helps us to see another dimension of the teachings of Francis regarding the way we should look at ourselves: "Blessed is the servant who does not consider himself any better when he is praised and exalted by people than when he is considered worthless, simple, and looked down upon, for what a person is before God, that he is and no more." This is one of the texts of the writings of the Saint which, instead of speaking about "brother" speaks

about "servant," and thus underlines the value of minority, in the context of the theology of the figure of the Servant of Yahweh. In the last part of this text we have the evidence of the vision of the person, according to the mind of St. Francis, which is profoundly conditioned in his faith and in his sense of God. In fact, here also we have to depart from a theological concept of life. When the human person (servant) places himself before God, he discovers the exact dimension of himself. This is therefore a vision of oneself in all sincerity and humility, which is not conditioned by the appreciations of the others, whether they are positive or negative.

The teachings of Francis regarding the relationship of man with himself find various interesting elements, departing from the concept of poverty understood as an expropriation. According to the Saint, true poverty must depart from the very centre of the human person, that is, from one's own free will. When one want so appropriate one's own free will he boasts of the good things that the Lord says or accomplishes through his servant. This is the primary cause of sin. "For that person eats of the tree of the knowledge of good who makes his will his own and, in this way, exalts himself over the good things the Lord says and does in him. And so, through the suggestion of the devil and the transgression of the command, it became the apple of the knowledge of evil. Therefore it is fitting that he suffer the punishment" (*Adm* 2,3-5).

As we can see, the vision of oneself which departs from the element of expropriation, comes out of a theological perspective. Another expression of expropriation implies the effort not to glory because of the knowledge of divine Scriptures or because of wisdom, nor to boast because of spiritual gifts which one receives or because of the good which the Lord says or does through us, nor to boast because of one's beauty; for Francis, as for St. Paul, the only reason for boasting and the glory of God's servant is the cross of Jesus Christ.

"Consider, o human being, in what great excellence the Lord God has placed you, for He created and formed you to the image of His beloved Son according to the body and to His likeness according to the Spirit. And all creatures under heaven serve, know, and obey their Creator, each according to its own nature, better than you. And even the demons did not crucify Him, but you, together with them, have crucified Him and are still crucifying Him by delighting in vices and sins. In what, then, can you boast? Even if you were so skilful and wise that you possessed all knowledge, knew how to interpret every kind of language, and to scrutinize heavenly matters with skill: you could not boast in these things […] In the same way, even if you were more handsome and richer than everyone else, and even if you worked miracles so that you put demons to flight: all these things are contrary to you; nothing belongs to you; you can boast in none of these things. But we can boast in our weaknesses and in carrying each day the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (cfr. 2Cor 12:5; Lk 14:27)" (*Adm* 5,1-5.7-8).

True poverty expresses itself also when one does not lose inner peace, since "that servant of God who does not become angry or disturbed at anyone lives correctly without anything of his own. Blessed is the one for whom nothing remains except for him *to return to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's* (Mt 22:21)" (*Adm* 11,3-4). The Saint also offers us a very clear description of inner peace and poverty of spirit in the *Admonition* which comments upon the first Beatitude: "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven* (Mt 5:3). There are many who, while insisting on prayers and obligations, inflict many abstinences and punishments upon their bodies. But they are immediately offended and disturbed about a single word which seems to be harmful to their bodies or about something which might be taken away from them. These people are not poor in spirit, for someone who is truly poor in spirit hates himself and loves those who strike him on the cheek" (*Adm* 14,1-4).

All this brings, as a logical consequence, to one of the manifestations of interior poverty, namely, living in peace with others, as Francis affirms in this other comment to the Beatitudes: "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God* (Mt 5:9). Those people are truly peacemakers who, regardless of what they suffer in this world, preserve peace of spirit and body our of love of our Lord Jesus Christ" (*Adm* 15,1-2).

After having studied in the writings of Francis the principal texts which refer to the way the human person should understand himself, we arrive at an immediate conclusion, namely, that this view is eminently theological. We are, therefore, dealing with a vision that has its foundation in God and finds its reason of being in Him alone. According to this vision, for the Saint of Assisi, the human person is wholly realised in the measure in which he or she lives in harmony with God. The contrary choice is that of living according to the flesh, that is, living in sin which corrupts the human nature and makes it "miserable," "corrupt," "disgusting," and similar to "a worm." When man excludes God from his heart, he does not live in full expropriation, and for the same reason, does not have the spirit of a servant, since he wants to possess all the good things which the Lord has offered him. In this way he loses interior peace. This is a theological concept of the human person, and not a psychological one, and excludes all the pathological and miserable deviations (masochism, inferiority or superiority complex, etc.).

THE MEMORY OF CLARE OF ASSISI (1)

Translation from original paper by STEFANO BRUFANI, «La Memoria di Chiara d'Assisi», in *Clara Claris Praeclara*. Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Assisi, 20-22 novembre 2003), [«Convivium Assisiense», Ricerche dell'Istituto Teologico e dell'Istituto Superiore di Scienze Religiose di Assisi], gennaio-giugno 2004, Edizioni Porziuncola, S. Maria degli Angeli, Assisi 2004, 501-523.[1]

In the title of this congress, *Clara claris praeclara. The Christian experience and the memory of Clare of Assisi*, the theme of memory appears at the centre and is intimately related to the papal initiative between 1253 and 1255, which led to the canonisation of Clare of Assisi and to the promotion of her cult. The distinction between Christian experience and hagiographical memory is the historiographic key opening the way for a renewal of Franciscan studies from 1960 onwards. This renewal has imposed a distinction between Francis of history and Francis of the *legendae*,[2] between reality and memory of a Christian proposal, in order to use the words of Giovanni Miccoli.[3]

In the case of Clare of Assisi the problem is, at the same time, more simple and more complex. It is simpler, if we focus our attention immediately upon the years 1253-1255[4] and upon the hagiographical *legendae* of St. Clare.[5] Already fifty years ago Ezio Franceschini had observed that "the sources for the biography of Clare are not numerous […] and are extremely simple."[6] It is more complex, since in Clare of Assisi the distinction between experience and memory is not that simple; the memory of Francis and of his Christian proposal is an essential element of the Christian experience of Clare. The memory of Clare interacts with the memory of her and of San Damiano which the hagiographers insert in their Franciscan *legendae*. The expression "memory of Clare" has thus three aspects: the memory of Clare herself, the memory of Clare which the Franciscan hagiographers have handed down to us,[7] and finally the hagiographical memory of the authors of the Clarian *legendae*. Here we shall try to take into consideration the first aspect, although we cannot avoid taking also into consideration some elements of the Clarian presentation of the Franciscan *legendae*, since there are inevitable interferences which are the result of contemporary and reciprocal influences between two diverse processes of sedimentation of the historical memory. I would like to avoid the method of combining the reading of various Franciscan sources,[8] and therefore I will choose and analyse in a distinct way the Franciscan and Clarian sources written during the crucial moments of the human and institutional event of the life of Clare and her community. My aim is that of verifying how much these sources reflect the reality and problems of the times in which they were written, more than reflecting the actual episodes. In this way we can realise how, very early on and in significant moments, Clare assumed a primary and autonomous role in the formation of her memory, that is, in the image she wanted to give of herself and of the San Damiano community, in order to defend her religious identity.

Before analysing some texts, we should remember how, at the end of an attentive and brilliant thematic analysis of the Franciscan writings and *legendae*, Jacques Dalarun affirmed that "the relationship between the father and his *plantula* are profoundly asymmetrical […] In the life of Francis, women are casual. [Francis] has not written a *propositum* for women."[9] These conclusions were based upon the thesis that whereas Clare refers to Francis 32 times in her writings, Francis is totally silent regarding Clare in his writings. We have to try and verify whether this asymmetrical relationship is to be found in fact or whether it is not rather to be attributed to the way in which Clare endeavoured to build a memory of Francis. As Raoul Manselli thought, we have to see whether it refers not only to the "profoundly intense and unforgettable fascination which [Francis] exercised upon her",[10] but also to the visible effect which the memory of the years gone by exercised upon Clare and her way of thinking. Clare's memory was not only active. It was interested in reflecting a battle of "resistance".[11] To win this battle Clare had to make use of every means at her disposal: the heart-rending cry in front of the dead body of Francis, the request of an unheard-of privilege, a hunger strike, a privation of liturgical assistance, the courage to be the first woman to compose a Rule for female religious, her tenacious efforts to see the Rule confirmed, the writing of a spiritual Testament in which she quotes Francis with insistence and on purpose.

Clare in The Life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano

The first significant text is that of the *Vita beati Francisci* by Thomas of Celano. He mentions Clare two times in this work: immediately after

the conversion of Francis and at the moment when the dead body of Francis is taken into San Damiano. In chapter 8 of Part I,[12] the hagiographer reminds us of the effort of St. Francis to restore the church of San Damiano. Celano goes beyond time to associate Clare and the *pauperes dominae* to this place, and creates the nucleus for a future *legenda* of St. Clare. This episode has already been examined by Jacques Dalarun within the wider context of the female presence in the *legendae* of Celano. When he reflects upon the way in which the *Vita beati Francisci* places the memory of Clare in the two chronological extremities of Francis' life, namely conversion and death, Giovanni Miccoli has seen the plan of a "protomonastic model to which Thomas was inspired," and which asked for an effort "to erase from the memory of the Order the remembrance of those links which had existed from the origins between Francis and his *fratres* and the *pauperes dominae*."[13] This scholar concludes that, after paragraphs 18-20, "Clare and the *pauperes dominae* can quietly go out of the scene without interfering in any way in the future development of the *fraternitas*, in order to appear once more only at the very end of the narrative, in the great scene of the funeral of Francis, where they are presented as his daughters, without any further problems."[14]

Chapter 10 of the second part is dedicated to the funeral of Francis and gives importance to the weeping of Clare and her sisters in front of the dead body which was placed for some time in the monastery of San Damiano, stopping along the way from the Porziuncola to Assisi.[15] This narrative does not have any particular interest for those who try to understand the relationship and meetings, real or hagiographical, between Francis and Clare, for the simple reason that here we are dealing with a dead man and a living woman. The event did not draw Miccoli's attention, since when he refers paragraph 20 to the legislation of Cardinal Hugolino received by Clare and her sisters (*«institutio gloriosa, quam a domino papa Gregorio, tunc temporis Ostiensi episcopo, susceperunt»*), he sees an explicit will of Thomas of Celano to seal the tombstone above any direct relationship between San Damiano and the Friars Minor.[16] Beyond the strong ritual component and the references to the hagiographical tradition of the death of the holy founders – particularly to that of St. Martin of Tours[17] – the description of the heart rending weeping of the Poor Ladies is the only noise which breaks the silence with which Thomas of Celano envelopes the female community of San Damiano, after having referred to them when speaking about the conversion of Francis. At the same time he openly contradicts what he had witnessed to before, when speaking about Francis

and Cardinal Hugolino regarding the care of the *institutio gloriosa*, referring to the religious women of San Damiano in the first episode we have analysed. In order to give greater strength to the narrative, the hagiographer introduces at the centre of chapter 10 a long section in direct speech, in which Clare and her sisters express their anguish regarding their own future, with a long series of unanswered questions. These are the words of Thomas of Celano:

"They looked upon him, groaning and weeping with great anguish of heart. 'Father, O father, what shall we do?' they began to cry out, 'Why are you

abandoning us poor women? We are forsaken! To whom are you entrusting us? Why didn't you send us ahead of you in joy to the place you are going, instead of leaving us behind in sorrow? What would you have us do, enclosed in this cell, without your usual visits? All consolation ebbs away along with you, just as no solace remains for us who are buried to the world! Who will comfort us in so great a poverty, poverty of merit as much as of goods? O father of the poor! O lover of poverty! Who will help us in temptation? You, who experienced so many temptations! You, who were such a careful judge of temptations! Who will comfort us in the midst of distress? You, who were so often our help in times of distress! What bitter separation, what painful absence! O death, dreadful death! You are killing thousands of his sons and daughters by taking away their father! Our poor efforts bore fruit through him, and you rush to tear him far from us, beyond recall!'"[18]

To the desolation of the present, following upon Francis' death, because now they felt abandoned by him, by his visits to the monastery, by the death of him to whom they had committed themselves and from whom they received consolation, they now had to face the agonising uncertainty of the future, full of questions regarding whom would take care of them, and give them help and sustain them. If we compare this scene of the lamentation of the *pauperes dominae* with the preceding scene of the weeping of the friars at the moment of the *transitus* of St. Francis, we immediately notice a diversity regarding the tone and centre of attention. At the Porziuncola, as soon as the friars beheld the stigmata, "incredible joy lightened their grief";[19] the entire scene has as its centre of attraction the stigmatised body of Francis. The Friars Minor are described as orphans being deprived of their father and founder, but there is no question regarding the serious uncertainties of their future. Indeed, in just a few decades, the *fraternitas* had been transformed into an Order, the *forma vitae* into a Rule, the approval of the Apostolic See into protection.[20] Although difficulties would not lack, there were instruments to solve them. The situation of Clare and her sisters was very different in the autumn of 1226. In spite of many years of organising activity of monastic female communities by Cardinal Hugolino, San Damiano still did not belong to an *ordo*.[21] The only *Forma vivendi* it had was that of the Constitutions of Hugolino, and the Privilege of Poverty had not yet materialised.[22]

This episode assumes greater significance if we consider the time of composition of the *Vita beati Francisci*, that is the period 1228 to 1230, more than the actual time in which the events took place, namely 1226. During those years there was an open discussion taking place between Gregory IX and Clare of Assisi. On the one hand the Apostolic See was planning to found a female monastic Order regulated according to the *Forma vivendi* of Cardinal Hugolino, which foresaw strict rules for enclosure, the possession of immovable property and the reference to the Benedictine Rule. On the other hand, Clare and her community regarded the choice of radical poverty and the privileged link with the Order of Friars Minor as elements which were part and parcel of their charism, even though they did not refuse the principle of being part of the larger context of monastic life. Gregory IX conceded to them the Privilege of Poverty (17th September 1228) after the tense meeting between the Pope and Clare in Assisi. Clare won over the strong words in *Quo elongati* (28th September 1230) prohibiting friars from visiting the Poor Ladies. At the same time San Damiano was inserted among the "Hugolinian" monasteries, to the point where, after 1230, it constituted truly an *Ordo Sancti Damiani*.[23]

Thomas of Celano wrote his *Vita beati Francisci* in this context and we cannot doubt that he was aware of the harsh discussions in course. He could not and did not renounce to praise Clare and he nearly wrote a *legenda ante litteram* by narrating the beginnings of the religious life of Francis. For reasons of opportunity, he then chose to obliterate the figure of Clare and to evoke the institutional-directive role of Cardinal Hugolino. At the end he could not renounce to evoke the scene of that significant representation of a dialogue between a living woman and a dead man, where the questions which Clare makes were hardly of any rhetorical kind, and they justly awaited real answers. The two representations of this Clarian "fresco" by the hagiographer respond to different logical themes. In the first representation the author gives importance to the canonisation which was the work of the Apostolic See, following a praxis that was being consolidated and that had to correspond necessarily to a precise project of promotion of cult. In the second representation, the author wanted to open his readers' eyes to a dramatic moment of the life of Clare and of her institution. The first instance presents a living saint, while the second presents a woman empowered by grief and doubt, who cannot accept to take upon herself the role of a holy icon. By being enthusiastic for the canonisation of Clare and for the fame of her *pauperes dominae*, Thomas recognises that they had an objective and privileged position which permitted them to dialogue with a certain degree of authority with the leaders of the Friars Minor and with the Apostolic See. The events recorded during the years 1228-1230 amply demonstrate this fact.

The memory of Clare, which is the theme that

has been assigned to me, makes it essential for me to clarify the problem of the sources of information used by the hagiographer. In the case of the Clarian narrative inserted in the first part of the *Vita beati Francisci* it is improbable to make the hypothesis of a specific source. In fact, the fame of the religious virtues of the *pauperes dominae* had, by that time, spread far and wide, as evidenced by the letters of Clare[24] and the visits of Gregory IX to San Damiano.[25] Thomas could also have made use of his personal acquaintance with various persons, before leaving for Germany, as well as of the public fame of the characters he portrays. The problem regarding the narrative inserted in the second part of the *Vita beati Francisci* is more specific. Most probably Thomas was not present for the death and funeral of Francis, while he was certainly present for the solemn canonisation in July 1228. The lamentation of the Poor Ladies was expressed in the presence of the dead body of Francis in the small church of San Damiano, in the inner section of the small grille from which the nuns received the Eucharist.[26] It is improbable that somebody, in that particular situation and in church, could truly have distinctly heard the words pronounced by Clare and the Poor Ladies in the inner part of the grille, and could have then referred them to the hagiographer. It is more true to suppose that, while Thomas was collecting the sources and drafting the *Vita*, Clare could have communicated to him her own witness of the event, either directly or through one or another of the companions of Francis, and in the first place, through the person of brother Elias, the vicar. In this case Clare gave witness to herself, regarding her inner anguish, her preoccupations, her sense of feeling lost both existentially and institutionally in those months following upon the death of Francis.

Although having had to face the difficulties and hesitation in referring this case, Thomas of Celano did not let Clare down in her expectations in his *Vita beati Francisci*, and one can truly regard him as being the first hagiographer of Clare of Assisi and her Poor Ladies of San Damiano, independently from the uncertain attribution of the *Legenda sanctae Clare virginis* to the same Thomas. Ever since that early date, the memory of Clare lies at the base of an interesting memory of the saint, which is organically part of a project of resistance outlined in those early months, and which was already giving its first fruits. The unstable equilibrium reached in this first phase of Clarian history during the third decade of the 13th century rested upon the ambiguity of the concessions made to Clare: while the Apostolic See regarded them as privileges *ad personam,* Clare saw in them the first step towards an opening up her ideals to other monasteries. The letters of Clare and of Gregory IX to Agnes of Bohemia are the most eloquent witness of a triangular distant confrontation, which was taking part after 1230, and which regarded two different ways of conceiving the *Ordo Sancti Damiani*.[27]

NOTES

[1] For reasons of space we can only present a selection of the abundant footnotes of this study.

[2] *Gli studi francescani dal dopoguerra ad oggi*. Atti del Convegno di studio, Firenze, 5-7 novembre 1990, a cura di F. SANTI ("Quaderni di cultura mediolatina", 2) Spoleto 1993.

[3] "The authentic character of the original experience of Francis and the terms which historiography and memory of the first decades of the Order has used in order to understand, accept, translate and ripropose them [...] remain, in effect, an essential link not only for the Franciscan adventure but for the entire religious and ecclesiastical history of the late Middle Ages in the west." G. MICCOLI, *Francesco d'Assisi. Realtà e memoria di un'esperienza cristiana,* Torino 1991, VIII.

[4] G. LA GRASTA, *La canonizzazione di Chiara,* in *Chiara d'Assisi*. Atti del XX Convegno internazionale, Assisi, 15-17 ottobre 1992 ("Atti dei Convegni della Società Internazionale di Studi Francescani e del Centro interuniversitario di studi francescani". Nuova serie, 3), Spoleto (PG) 1993, 299-324.

[5] E. FRANCESCHINI, *Biografie di santa Chiara,* in *Santa Chiara d'Assisi. Studi e cronaca del VII Centenario, 1253-1953,* Assisi (PG) 1954, 263-274, now also printed in ID., *Nel Segno di Francesco,* a cura di F. CASOLINI – G. GIAMBA, premessa di E. MENESTÒ ("Medioevo Francescano", 1) Santa Maria degli Angeli (PG) 1988, 346-361; S. BRUFANI, *Le «legendae» agiografiche di Chiara d'Assisi del secolo XIII,* in *Chiara d'Assisi,* 325-355.

[6] E. FRANCESCHINI, *Biografie di santa Chiara,* 263; *Nel segno di Francesco,* 346.

[7] J. DALARUN, *Donne e Donna, femminile e femminizzazione negli scritti e le leggende di Francesco d'Assisi,* in *Chiara d'Assisi,* 237-267.

[8] G. MICCOLI, *La proposta cristiana di Francesco d'Assisi,* in *Studi medievali* serie III,25 (1983) 17-73.

[9] J. DALARUN, *Donne e Donna,* 265.

[10] R. MANSELLI, *San Francesco d'Assisi*. Editio maior, Cinisello Balsamo (MI) 2002, 240.

[11] TH. MATURA, Introduction to: CHIARA D'ASSISI, *Scritti*. Introduzione, testo latino, traduzione, note e indici di M.F. BECKER – J.F. GODET – TH. MATURA – G. ZOPPETTI, Vicenza 1986 (Paris 1985), 11-77, particularly pages 35, 38, 72, 74, 76.

[12] THOMAE DE CELANO, *Vita prima sancti Francisci,* 18-20, in E. MENESTÒ – S. BRUFANI –

G. CREMASCOLI – E. PAOLI – L. PELLEGRINI – STANISLAO DA CAMPAGNOLA, *Fontes Franciscani,* Apparati di G. BOCCALI ("Medioevo Francescano. Testi", 2) Santa Maria degli Angeli – Assisi (PG) 1995, 293-295.

[13] G. MICCOLI, *Postfazione* in, J. DALARUN, *Francesco: un passaggio. Donna e donne negli scritti e nelle leggende di Francesco d'Assisi* ("I libri di Viella", 2) Roma 1994, 181-198, particularly page 194.

[14] G. MICCOLI, *Postfazione* to J. DALARUN, *Francesco: un passaggio,* 197.

[15] THOMAE DE CELANO, *Vita prima sancti Francisci,* 116-118, in *Fontes,* 395-398.

[16] THOMAE DE CALENO, *Vita prima sancti Francisci,* 20, in *Fontes,* 295; G. MICCOLI, *Postfazione*, 197.

[17] J. DALARUN, *The death of the holy founders: from Martin to Francis,* in *Greyfriars Review* Vol. 14, No. 1, 2000, 1-19. For the presence of the *Vita Martini* in the *Vita beati Francisci* and the other hagiographical sources, cfr. *Praefatio a Legendae S. Francisci Assisiensis saeculis XIII et XIV conscriptae* ("Analecta Franciscana", X) Ad Claras Aquas (Florence) 1926-1941, IX.

[18] 1C 117 (FAED I,285). Latin text in THOMAE DE CELANO, *Vita prima sancti Francisci,* 117, in *Fontes,* 396-397.

[19] THOMAE DE CELANO, *Vita prima sancti Francisci,* 390: "versus est luctus in canticum, et ploratio in iubilationem."

[20] TH. DESBONNETS, *Dalla intuizione alla istituzione. I francescani*, Milano 1986 (Paris, 1983).

[21] R. RUSCONI, *L'espansione del francescanesimo femminile nel secolo XIII,* in *Movimento religioso femminile,* 263-313; M.P. ALBERZONI, *Chiara e il papato* ("Aleph", 3) Milano 1995; ID., *Chiara d'Assisi e il francescanesimo femminile,* in M.P. ALBERZONI – A. BARTOLI LANGELI – G. CASAGRANDE, *Francesco d'Assisi e il primo secolo di storia francescana,* 203-235.

[22] S. TUGWELL, *The Original Text of the Regula Hugolini (1219),* in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 93 (2000) 510-513; W. MALECZEK, *Questions about the Authenticity of the Privilege of Poverty of Innocent III and of the Testament of Clare of Assisi,* in *Greyfriars Review*, Vol. 12 (Supplement) 1998, 1-80.

[23] The concession of the *Privilegium paupertatis* by Gregory IX on 17th September 1228 was the result of the meeting between the Pope and Clare at San Damiano in Julu 1228, during the occasion of the canonisation of St. Francis. The Pope wanted to ensure a stable means of income for the monastic community, but Clare reacted strongly and refused. Cfr. *Process of Canonisation of St. Clare* 2,22; 3,14, in *Clare of Assisi. Early Documents,* revised edition and translation by R.J. ARMSTRONG, New City Press, New York 2005, 155. 158; *Legend of St. Clare*, 14, in *Clare of Assisi. Early Documents*, 294. On the Bull *Quo elongati,* cfr. H. GRUNDMANN, *Die Bulle «Quo elongati» Papst Gregors IX,* in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 54 (1961) 3-25. Clare reacted strongly against the Papal prohibition to the friars to visit the Poor Ladies; cfr. *Legend of St. Clare*, 37, in *Clare of Assisi. Early Documents,* 311-312. With letters dated 18th August 1228 Cardinal Rinaldo communicated to 24 monasteries in central and northern Italy that they had to observe the Hugolinian Constitutions and that brother Filippo Longo was their visitator. The first monastery of *pauperes dominae* among them was that of San Damiano. The community in this monastery gradually became known as *Ordo Sancti Damiani*.

[24] The letter of Cardinal Hugolino, dated 1220, is taken from the *Chronica XXIV generalium* (*Clare of Assisi. Early Documents,* 129-130); the letter of Gregory IX, dated 1228, is taken from Wadding, *Annales Minorum* (*Clare of Assisi. Early Documents,* 131-132).

[25] In the first letter, Hugolino speaks about having spent Easter (probably that of 1220) at San Damiano. In the months May-July 1228, on the occasion of the canonisation of St. Francis in Assisi, the papal curia resided in Assisi. This is the moment when Gregory IX visited Clare at San Damiano.

[26] THOMAE DE CELANO, *Vita prima sancti Francisci,* 116, in *Fontes,* 396: " [...] aperta est fenestra parvula per quam ancillae Christi constituto tempore communicare solent dominici corporis sacramento."

[27] A. MARINI, *«Ancilla Christ, plantula sancti Francisci». Gli scritti di Santa Chiara e la Regola,* in *Chiara d'Assisi*, 107-156, particularly pages 127-145.

SECULAR FRANCISCAN SAINTS: SAINT MARGARET OF CORTONA

Noel Muscat OFM

Margherita (Margaret) was born at Laviano, half way between Cortona and Montepulciano, in 1247. Her mother's name is unknown, while her father was probably Tancredi Bartolomeo, who worked the land in Laviano, rented to him by the Comune of Perugia.

The little house in which Margaret was born still stands to this very day. She was baptised at the parochial church of Pozzuolo, in the province of Perugia. The early childhood years of Margaret were serene and happy ones. The little church of Laviano was only 20 metres away from her house. In this chapel, which still stands, Margaret's mother taught her the rudiments of prayer. The young girl's joy, however, was soon to vanish, since her mother left her an orphan when she was only eight years old. Her father remarried, but her stepmother treated Margaret with little kindness and made life miserable for her.

During the years of her adolescence Margaret was thus left without the maternal love of her mother, and her father did not seem to be able to give her any paternal affection. She had a younger brother called Bartolo, who became a Franciscan Tertiary and left as a crusader for the Holy Land, and also a sister by the name of Adriana.

When she was fifteen years old, Margaret fell in love with a noble, rich and handsome young man from Montepulciano. Tradition has given him the name of Arsenio, and he came form the family del Monte, and lived in the region known as dei Palazzi. Arsenio knew that Margaret's situation in her family was creating misery for her, and invited her to go and live in his family's house at the Palazzi villa or castle.

One night in 1263, when she was only sixteen years of age, Margaret escaped from her house to go and live with Arsenio. She went out of Laviano along the Val di Chiana, which was a swamp where she risked drowning in the mud or remaining stuck in the forest of reeds which grew there. She managed to cross the ten kilometres which separated her house from Montepulciano, and was welcomed at Arsenio's family manor. In this place of Palazzi, Margaret found love and affection not only from Arsenio, but also by all the members of his family. Deep down, however, she had to battle against the pangs of her conscience, which scolded her continually, since she was known to be the loving mistress of a noble young man. After some years Margaret accepted to have a son from Arsenio, so that she might in a certain way seal the cohabitation with him with a bond of love which would make them inseparable.

Margaret lived with Arsenio for ten years, from 1263 until 1272. Her relationship with him, alas, had to end tragically for her. One day Arsenio went out hunting in the woods of Petrignano, some kilometres away from Palazzi. All of a sudden Margaret heard the frantic barking of the family's dog, which came and tried to pull her by her sleeves. Following the dog Margaret arrived in a spot where she beheld her beloved Arsenio brutally murdered under a chestnut tree. For a second time in her life Margaret went through a terrible time of sadness and grief, and felt that she had no one else to love her. It was at this moment that Margaret went through an intense conversion, which has sometimes been described in similar terms to the conversion of St. Mary Magdalen, to the point that Margaret has been known as the "Franciscan Magdalen".

She rose and took her son with her to Cortona.

Anonymous, St. Margaret of Cortona, Arezzo

Margaret left from Pozzuolo towards Lake Trasimeno, and then proceeded towards Cortona. She felt that she needed the protection of the Friars Minor of the friary of San Francesco in Cortona, a famous church built by brother Elias, Francis' own vicar (1221-1227) and Minister General of the Order (1232-1239) in 1247. She entered the town by the Porta Bernarda, where her presence and that of her little child was soon noticed by two noble ladies, Marinaria and Raniera, from the Moscari family, whose palazzo was close to this city gate. Margaret was thus accepted out of charity in the house of these noble ladies, where she also worked to earn a living.

With the initiative of these noble ladies, Margaret was also introduced to the friars of San Francesco, where she got to know brother Giovanni da Castiglion Fiorentino, who became her spiritual director. In the Moscari palazzo, Margaret began to live a simple life of penance, hard work and prayer, and also gave herself to charitable works, notably that of assisting pregnant mothers during childbirth.

Margaret soon felt the need to retire in a more secluded life, and asked for permission to live in a cell within the Moscari property. In 1275, three years after she arrived at Cortona, Margaret was accepted in the Third Franciscan Order of Penance by brother Ranaldo, custos of Arezzo, and member of the Province of Tuscany. The friars at first did not want to accept Margaret, because of her past experiences, and because she was too young and beautiful. At last they gave in and handed her with the habit and mantle of penance. She was always in the church of San Francesco, assisting in the divine offices, receiving communion and listening to preaching of the Word of God. In the meantime she took care to place her son under the guidance of a charitable institution of Arezzo. Her son grew up to become a Franciscan friar. Margaret asked for permission to live in a second cell, also close to the Moscari palace, where she remained for 13 years, until 1288, living as a recluse, but always within the town of Cortona.

Margaret became aware of the great poverty and of the many sick people in Cortona, as a result of continual wars between the town and Arezzo. Through the kind services of Uguccione Casali il Grande, who was Capitano del Popolo of Cortona, and through her personal friendship with a noble lady called Diabella, who offered her own house to Margaret, the saint realised her dream to open a hospital for the poor and sick people of the town. Thus she founded the hospital of Santa Maria della Misericordia (which still exists in Cortona), and left it under the care of a Confraternity, whose statutes were approved by the bishop of Arezzo, Guglielmino in 1286. Margaret offered herself to nurse the sick and poor people who came for cures in this hospital, and often spoke about her sinful past and made public penances for her sins. Her fame spread far and wide, so much so that, on 2nd February 1289, a "great and learned man from Florence" came to visit her to speak about the state of his soul. Many scholars think that this man was the famous Italian poet Dante Alighieri, who was then 24 years old, and who died a Franciscan Tertiary. Dante represented Margaret in the personage of Lucia who encourages him on his journey to the netherworld in his famous *Divine Comedy*.

More than once, her confessor had to prohibit Margaret from indulging in acts of penance which would be too hard to bear, such as deforming her face or being carried to Montepulciano to be mocked and ridiculed because of her past sins. She managed, however, to obtain permission to go to Laviano, her native village, in order to ask for public forgiveness

during the parish Sunday Mass, even in front of her own relatives.

Margaret also had many mystical experiences. She would often pray in front of an early 13th century Crucifix, which is still venerated in the basilica of Santa Margherita at Cortona. One day the Crucifix spoke to her and she immediately entered into ecstasy. Another time she ran to be "mentally crucified" in front of this Crucifix in the church of San Francesco. From the hour of Tierce, after conventual Mass, until after sunset, she remained immobile, even though around her there was a great crowd of onlookers, and she was seen to be suffering visibly and seemed to be in agony. At three in the afternoon she seemed to be dying, just like the Lord who died at that hour, and rested her head on her bosom. On a Good Friday she went out of her cell and began to run here and there along the streets of Cortona crying aloud just like a mother who lost her son, only to be held by the friars when she reached the church of San Francesco. This outward devotion to the Passion of Christ is typical of medieval culture in central Italy. Another example is Jacopone da Todi and his famous *lauda* regarding the weeping of the Virgin under the cross.

Since these mystical experiences made her famous and the people left her with little time for peace, Margaret decided to live a more secluded life. In 1288 she went up close to the summit of the hill upon which Cortona is built, just underneath the Rocca, or castle. She chose to live as a recluse in a tiny cell close to the small chapel of St. Basil, which had been destroyed by the people of Arezzo in 1258, but which Margaret restored in 1290, with the generous help of Ildebrandino, bishop of Arezzo. At this moment of her life, Margaret was being spiritually accompanied by a certain fra Giunta Bevegnati, who would be the author of her biography. It is important to give some information regarding this Franciscan.

Giunta Bevegnati was a nobleman from Cortona, and was born around 1240. When he was 20 he became a Friar Minor in the friary of San Francesco in Cortona. When Margaret came to Cortona and asked for a Franciscan spiritual director, the guardian, Giovanni da Castiglion Fiorentino, indicated brother Giunta as her ordinary confessor, since he was a learned priest and a man of virtue. It was in 1288, when Margaret went to live in her third cell above Cortona, that the superiors commanded fra Giunta to begin to write down the life of the Franciscan penitent, which he concluded in 1311, after Margaret's death. In 1290 fra Giunta was transferred to the friary of Siena, but he returned to Cortona in 1297, just in time to assist Margaret in her final days before she died on 22nd February 1297.

Basilica of St. Margaret, Cortona

Giandomenico Tiepolo, S. Margherita, XVIII sec. Palazzo Rovererlla, Rovigo

Fra Giunta lived 15 years more than Margaret and died round about 1312, after having published the manuscript which bears the title *Legenda de vita et miraculis Beatae Margaritae de Cortona*, which is still preserved in the Franciscan friary at the basilica of Santa Margherita in Cortona.

During the absence of fra Giunta Bevegnati from Cortona (1290-1311) Margaret was spiritually assisted by a certain priest called ser Badia Venturi (or di Venturo), who became witness to her never-ending ecstasies and was even converted by her from a rather disordered spiritual life to a life of intense virtue. In 1290 ser Badia became rector of the chapel of St. Basil, and was instrumental in giving to Giunta Bevegnati precious information regarding the years Margaret spent as a recluse in her tiny cell close to that church.

Her health began to fail her, until radiant with spiritual joy, Margaret died on 22nd February 1297, feast of the Chair of St. Peter, before daybreak, assisted by fra Giunta. Although she had wished to be buried in the church of San Francesco, the local authorities decided to bury Margaret in the same church of St. Basil under the Rocca castle above Cortona. There she remained buried for 95 years. Although the Franciscans protested strongly against this decision, it was only in 1392 that they managed to acquire the remains of the saint.

The small church of St. Basil was eventually enlarged in 1304 to become a large new church, built by Giovanni Pisano, although the old wall in which the tomb of the Saint lay remained intact. In 1580 Margaret's remains were placed in a silver urn upon the main altar, designed by Pietro Berrettini. Unfortunately, the building of the new basilica of Saint Margaret above Cortona, inaugurated in 1887, obliterated from memory the remains of the old castle, of the church of St. Basil and of the tiny cell in which Margaret lived, including the 14th century frescoes by Lorenzetti and Barna da Siena.

Margaret was declared a blessed in 1516 by Pope Leo X. On 16th May 1728 Pope Benedict XIII declared her a saint in a solemn ceremony of canonisation. Her feast day occurs on this date in the new Franciscan liturgical calendar. Pope John II visited the shrine of Santa Margherita and prayed in front of the relics of the Saint on 23rd May 1993.

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Chapter II - STAGES OF CONVERSION
Spring 1204 – Spring 1206

[15] On his return to Assisi Francis at once resumed his former mode of life; perhaps he even tried in some degree to make up for lost time. Fêtes, games, festivals, and dissipations began again. He did his part in them so well that he soon fell gravely ill. For long weeks he looked death so closely in the face that the physical crisis brought about a moral one. Thomas of Celano has preserved for us an incident of Francis's convalescence. He was regaining strength little by little and had begun to go about the house, when one day he felt a desire to walk abroad, to contemplate nature quietly, and so take hold again of life. Leaning on a stick he bent his steps towards the city gate.

The nearest one, called *Porta Nuova*, is the very one which opens upon the finest scenery. Immediately on passing through it one finds one's self in the open country; a fold of the hill hides the city, and cuts off every sound that might come from it. Before you lies the winding road to Foligno; at the left the imposing mass of Mount Subasio; at the right the Umbrian plain with its farms, its villages, its cloud-like hills, on whose slopes pines, cedars, oaks, the vine, and the olive-tree shed abroad an incomparable brightness and animation. The whole [16] country sparkles with beauty, a beauty harmonious and thoroughly human, that is, made to the measure of man.

Francis had hoped by this sight to recover the delicious sensations of his youth. With the sharpened sensibility of the convalescent he breathed in the odours of the spring-time, but spring-time did not come, as he had expected, to his heart. This smiling nature had for him only a message of sadness. He had believed that the breezes of this beloved country-side would carry away the last shudders of the fever, and instead he felt in his heart a discouragement a thousand-fold more painful than any physical ill. The miserable emptiness of his life suddenly appeared before him; he was terrified at his solitude, the solitude of a great soul in which there is no altar.

Memories of the past assailed him with intolerable bitterness; he was seized with a disgust of himself, his former ambitions seemed to him ridiculous or despicable. He went home overwhelmed with the weight of a new suffering.

In such hours of moral anguish man seeks a refuge either in love or in faith. Unhappily the family and friends of Francis were incapable of understanding him. As to religion, it was for him, as for the greater number of his contemporaries, that crass fetishism with Christian terminology which is far from having entirely disappeared. With certain men, in fact, piety consists in making one's self right with a king more powerful than any other, but also more severe and capricious, who is called God. One proves one's loyalty to him as to other sovereigns, by putting his image more or less everywhere, and punctually paying the imposts levied by his ministers. If you are stingy, if you cheat, you run the risk of being severely chastised, but there are courtiers around the king who willingly render services. For a reason-[17]able recompense they will seize a favourable moment to adroitly make away with the sentence of your condemnation or to slip before the prince a form of plenary absolution which in a moment of good humour he will sign without looking at it.

Such was the religious basis upon which Francis had lived up to this time. He did not so much as dream of seeking the spiritual balm which he needed for the healing of his wounds. By a holy violence he was to arrive at last at a pure and virile faith; but the road to this point is long, and sown thick with obstacles, and at the moment at which we have arrived he had not yet entered upon it, he did not even suspect its existence; all he knew was that pleasure leads to nothingness, to satiety and self-contempt.

He knew this, and yet he was about to throw himself once more into a life of pleasure. The body is so weak, so prone to return to the old paths, that it seeks them of itself, the moment an energetic will does not stop it. Though no longer under any illusion with respect to it, Francis returned to his former life. Was he trying to divert his mind, to forget that day of bitter thought? We might suppose so, seeing the ardour with which he threw himself into his new projects.

An opportunity offered itself for him to realize his dreams of glory. A knight of Assisi, perhaps one of those who had been in captivity with him in Perugia, was preparing to go to Apulia under orders from Count Gen-[18]tile. The latter was to join Gualtier de Brienne, who was in the south of Italy fighting on the side of Innocent III. Gualtier's renown was immense all through the Peninsula; he was held to be one of

the most gallant knights of the time. Francis's heart bounded with joy; it seemed to him that at the side of such a hero he should soon cover himself with glory. His departure was decided upon, and he gave himself up, without reserve, to his joy.

He made his preparations with ostentatious prodigality. His equipment, of a princely luxury, soon became the universal subject of conversation. It was all the more talked about because the chief of the expedition, ruined perhaps by the revolution of 1202 or by the expenses of a long captivity, was constrained to order things much more modestly. But with Francis kindliness was much stronger than love of display. He gave his sumptuous clothing to a poor knight. The biographies do not say whether or not it was to the very one whom he was to accompany. To see him running hither and thither in all the bustle of preparation one would [19] have thought him the son of a great lord. His companions were doubtless not slow to feel chafed by his ways and to promise themselves to make him cruelly expiate them. As for him, he perceived nothing of the jealousies which he was exciting, and night and day he thought only of his future glory. In his dreams he seemed to see his parents' house completely transformed. Instead of bales of cloth he saw there only gleaming bucklers hanging on the walls, and arms of all kinds as in a seignorial castle. He was himself there, beside a noble and beautiful bride, and he never suspected that in this vision there was any presage of the future which was reserved for him. Never had any one seen him so communicative, so radiant; and when he was asked for the hundredth time whence came all this joy, he would reply with surprising assurance: "I know that I shall become a great prince."

The day of departure arrived at last. Francis on horseback, the little buckler of a page on his arm, bade adieu to his natal city with joy, and with the little troop took the road to Spoleto which winds around the base of Mount Subasio.

What happened next? The documents do not say. They confine themselves to reporting that that very evening Francis had a vision which decided him to return to Assisi. Perhaps it would not be far from the truth to conjecture that once fairly on the way the young nobles took their revenge on the son of Bernardone for his airs as of a future prince. At twenty years one hardly pardons things like these. If, as we are often assured, there is a pleasure unsuspected by the profane in getting even with a stranger, it must be an almost divine delight to get even with a young coxcomb upon whom one has to exercise so righteous a vengeance.

[20] Arriving at Spoleto, Francis took to his bed. A fever was consuming him; in a few hours he had seen all his dreams crumble away. The very next day he took the road back to Assisi.

So unexpected a return made a great stir in the little city, and was a cruel blow to his parents. As for him, he doubled his charities to the poor, and sought to keep aloof from society, but his old companions came flocking about him from all quarters, hoping to find in him once more the tireless purveyor of their idle wants. He let them have their way.

Nevertheless a great change had taken place in him. Neither pleasures nor work could long hold him; he spent a portion of his days in long country rambles, often accompanied by a friend most different from those whom until now we have seen about him. The name of this friend is not known, but from certain indications one is inclined to believe that he was Bombarone da Beviglia, the future Brother Elias.

[21] Francis now went back to his reflections at the time of his recovery, but with less of bitterness. His own heart and his friend agreed in saying to him that it is possible no longer to trust either in pleasure or in glory and yet to find worthy causes to which to consecrate one's life. It is at this moment that religious thought seems to have awaked in him. From the moment that he saw this new way of life his desire to run in it had all the fiery impetuosity which he put into all his actions. He was continually calling upon his friend and leading him apart into the most sequestered paths.

But intense conflicts are indescribable. We struggle, we suffer alone. It is the nocturnal wrestling of Bethel, mysterious and solitary. The soul of Francis was great enough to endure this tragic duel. His friend had marvellously understood his part in this contest. He gave a few rare counsels, but much of the time he contented himself with manifesting his solicitude by following Francis everywhere and never asking to know more than he could tell him.

Often Francis directed his steps to a grotto in the country near Assisi, which he entered alone. This rocky cave concealed in the midst of the olive trees became for faithful Franciscans that which Gethsemani is for Christians. Here Francis relieved his overcharged heart by heavy groans. Sometimes, seized with a real horror for the [22] disorders of his youth, he would implore mercy, but the greater part of the time his face was turned toward the future; feverishly he sought for that higher truth to which he longed to dedicate himself, that pearl of great price of which the gospel speaks: "Whosoever seeks, finds; he who asks, receives; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened."

When he came out after long hours of seclusion the pallor of his countenance, the painful tension of his features told plainly enough of the intensity of his asking and the violence of his knocks.

The inward man, to borrow the language of the

mystics, was not yet formed in him, but it needed only the occasion to bring about the final break with the past. The occasion soon presented itself.

His friends were making continual efforts to induce him to take up his old habits again. One day he invited them all to a sumptuous banquet. They thought they had conquered, and as in old times they proclaimed him king of the revels. The feast was prolonged far into the night, and at its close the guests rushed out into the streets, which they filled with song and uproar. Suddenly they perceived that Francis was no longer with them. After long searching they at last discovered him far behind them, still holding in his hand his sceptre of king of misrule, but plunged in so profound a revery that he seemed to be riveted to the ground and unconscious of all that was going on.

"What is the matter with you?" they cried, bustling about him as if to awaken him.

"Don't you see that he is thinking of taking a wife?" said one.

"Yes," answered Francis, arousing himself and looking at them with a smile which they did not recognize. [23] "I am thinking of taking a wife more beautiful, more rich, more pure than you could ever imagine."

This reply marks a decisive stage in his inner life. By it he cut the last links which bound him to trivial pleasures. It remains for us to see through what struggles he was to give himself to God, after having torn himself free from the world. His friends probably understood nothing of all that had taken place, but he had become aware of the abyss that was opening between them and him. They soon accepted the situation.

As for himself, no longer having any reason for caution, he gave himself up more than ever to his passion for solitude. If he often wept over his past dissipations and wondered how he could have lived so long without tasting the bitterness of the dregs of the enchanted cup, he never allowed himself to be overwhelmed with vain regrets.

The poor had remained faithful to him. They gave him an admiration of which he knew himself to be unworthy, yet which had for him an infinite sweetness. The future grew bright to him in the light of their gratitude, of the timid, trembling affection which they dared not utter but which his heart revealed to him; this worship which does not deserve to-day he will deserve to-morrow, at least he promises himself to do all he can to deserve it.

To understand these feelings one must understand the condition of the poor of a place like Assisi. In an agricultural country poverty does not, as elsewhere, almost inevitably involve moral destitution, that degeneration of the entire human being which renders charity so difficult. Most of the poor persons whom Francis knew were in straits because of war, of bad harvests, or of illness. In such cases material succor is but a small part. Sympathy is the thing needed above all. Francis had treasures of it to lavish upon them.

[24] He was well requited. All sorrows are sisters; a secret intelligence establishes itself between troubled hearts, however diverse their griefs. The poor people felt that their friend also suffered; they did not precisely know with what, but they forgot their own sorrows in pitying their benefactor. Suffering is the true cement of love. For men to love each other truly, they must have shed tears together.

As yet no influence strictly ecclesiastic had been felt by Francis. Doubtless there was in his heart that leaven of Christian faith which enters one's being without his being aware; but the interior transformation which was going on in him was as yet the fruit of his own intuition. This period was drawing to a close. His thought was soon to find expression, and by that very act to receive the stamp of external circumstances. Christian instruction will give a precise form to ideas of which as yet he has but vague glimpses, but he will find in this form a frame in which his thought will perhaps lose something of its originality and vigour; the new wine will be put into old wine-skins.

By degrees he was becoming calm, was finding in the contemplation of nature joys which up to this time he had sipped but hastily, almost unconsciously, and of which he was now learning to relish the flavour. He drew from them not simply soothing; in his heart he felt new compassions springing into life, and with these the desire to act, to give himself, to cry aloud to these cities perched upon the hill-tops, threatening as warriors who eye one another before the fray, that they should be reconciled and love one another.

Certainly, at this time Francis had no glimpse of what he was some time to become; but these hours are perhaps the most important in the evolution of his thought; it is to them that his life owes that air of liberty, that per-[25]fume of the fields which make it as different from the piety of the sacristy as from that of the drawing-room.

About this time he made a pilgrimage to Rome, whether to ask counsel of his friends, whether as a penance imposed by his confessor, or from a mere impulse, no one knows. Perhaps he thought that in a visit to the *Holy Apostles*, as people said then, he should find the answers to all the questions which he was asking himself.

At any rate he went. It is hardly probable that he received from the visit any religious influence, for his biographers relate the pained surprise which he experienced when he saw in Saint Peter's how meagre were the offerings of pilgrims. He wanted to give everything to the prince of the apostles, and emptying his purse he threw its entire contents upon the tomb.

This journey was marked by a more important incident. Many a time when succouring the poor he had asked himself if he himself was able to endure poverty; no one knows the weight of a burden until he has carried it, at least for a moment, upon his own shoulders. He desired to know what it is like to have nothing, and to depend for bread upon the charity or the caprice of the passer by.

There were swarms of beggars crowding the Piazza before the great basilica. He borrowed the rags of one of them, lending him his garment in exchange, and a whole day he stood there, fasting, with outstretched hand. The act was a great victory, the triumph of compassion over natural pride. Returning to Assisi, he doubled his kindnesses to those of whom he had truly the right to call himself the brother. With such sentiments he could not long escape the influence of the Church.

On all the roadsides in the environs of the city there were then, as now, numerous chapels. Very often he [26] must have heard mass in these rustic sanctuaries, alone with the celebrant. Recognizing the tendency of simple natures to bring home to themselves everything that they hear, it is easy to understand his emotion and agitation when the priest, turning toward him, would read the gospel for the day. The Christian ideal was revealed to him, bringing an answer to his secret anxieties. And when, a few moments later, he would plunge into the forest, all his thoughts would be with the poor carpenter of Nazareth, who placed himself in his path, saying to him, even to him, "Follow thou me."

Nearly two years had passed since the day when he felt the first shock; a life of renunciation appeared to him as the goal of his efforts, but he felt that his spiritual novitiate was not yet ended. He suddenly experienced a bitter assurance of the fact.

He was riding on horseback one day, his mind more than ever possessed with the desire to lead a life of absolute devotion, when at a turn of the road he found himself face to face with a leper. The frightful malady had always inspired in him an invincible repulsion. He could not control a movement of horror, and by instinct he turned his horse in another direction.

If the shock had been severe, the defeat was complete. He reproached himself bitterly. To cherish such fine projects and show himself so cowardly! Was the knight of Christ then going to give up his arms? He retraced his steps and springing from his horse he gave to the astounded sufferer all the money that he had; then kissed his hand as he would have done to a priest. This new victory, as he himself saw, marked an era in his spiritual life.

[27] It is far indeed from hatred of evil to love of good. Those are more numerous than we think who, after severe experience, have renounced what the ancient liturgies call the world, with its pomps and lusts; but the greater number of them have not at the bottom of their hearts the smallest grain of pure love. In vulgar souls disillusion leaves only a frightful egoism.

This victory of Francis had been so sudden that he desired to complete it; a few days later he went to the lazzaretto. One can imagine the stupefaction of these wretches at the entrance of the brilliant cavalier. If in our days a visit to the sick in our hospitals is a real event awaited with feverish impatience, what must not have been the appearance of Francis among these poor recluses? One must have seen sufferers thus abandoned, to understand what joy may be given by an affectionate word, sometimes even a simple glance.

Moved and transported, Francis felt his whole being vibrate with unfamiliar sensations. For the first time he heard the unspeakable accents of a gratitude which cannot find word burning enough to express itself, which admires and adores the benefactor almost like an angel from heaven.

Books

Intentio Beati Francisci

EDITH PÁSZTOR, *«Intenio Beati Francisci». Il percorso difficile dell'Ordine francescano (secoli XIII-XV),* a cura di Felice Accrocca, Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini (Bibliotheca Seraphico-Capuccina, 85), Circonvallazione Occidentale 6580 (GRA km. 65,050) – 00163 Roma 2008, pp. 366, ISBN 978-88-8801-52-4, €24,00 [E-mail: ist.cap@ofmcap.org.

The volume is a collage of articles, studies and reviews of books by the famous scholar and researcher Edith Pásztor. Born in 1925 in Budapest, Hungary, Pásztor continued her studies in Rome, particularly at the "Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo." Ever since the mid 1950's she has published extensively, particularly works of Franciscan historiography, and she has specialized in a particular way upon the Spiritual Franciscans and their troubled history.

Pásztor has been an expert scholar of philology and history, coupled with her detailed knowledge of the Roman curia and the pontifical chancery during the Middle Ages. This and much more is present in the list of articles and reviews that have been published in this volume, which is presented by another contemporary scholar of Franciscan history, Felice Accrocca.

The title of the volume: *Intentio Beati Francisci,* expresses one of the most challenging aspects of Franciscan studies today. Indeed, after more than a century of Franciscan studies, ever since the time of Paul Sabatier, scholars have been poring over historical documents, which have helped us to produce a fairly faithful historical image of Francis and his movement. The problem which still remains to be tackled is that of understanding the genuine intentions of Francis, when these are placed against the background of what the Church expected of his Order in the 12th century. This challenging task is very hard to undertake, since it involves an in-depth knowledge not only of the documentary material about Francis and his movement, but above all, an ability to read between the lines and try to understand the reasons for certain choices, words, attitudes of Francis, and the way these were interpreted by the other brothers of the Order and by the Roman curia, as the history of the Order unfolded during the turbulent period of its first century of existence.

The list of rich contributions by Pásztor, listed at the end of the volume, but with indications of the original reviews and congresses in which they were presented and published, includes the following, the titles of which we translate into English for the benefit of our readers:

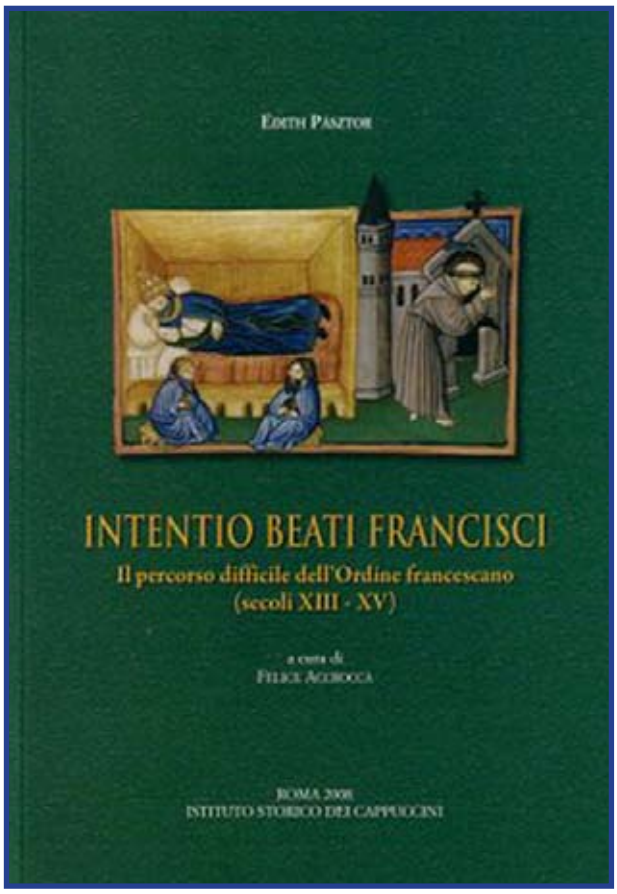
(1) «The Process of Andrea da Gagliano (1337-38)», minister provincial of Naples, accused of being a *Michelist* (supporter of the ousted minister general Michele da Cesena) and of plotting against the Roman curia by drawing to his side the Anjevin king of Naples Robert and his wife Sanchia de Maiorca, originally published in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 48 (1955) 252-297.

(2) «The polemic regarding the "Lectura super Apocalypsim" of Pietro di Giovanni Olivi until his condemnation», originally published in *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo e Archivio Muratoriano* 70 (1958) 365-424.

(3) «John XXII and the Joachimism of Pietro di Giovanni Olivi», originally published in *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo e Archivio Muratoriano* 82 (1970) 81-111.

(4) «The Spirituals and Saint Bonaventure», originally published in *S. Bonaventura francescano. Atti del XIV Convegno di studi sulla spiritualità medievale,* (Todi, 16-19 ottobre 1973), Todi 1974, 159-179.

(5) «The image of Christ in the teachings of the Spirituals», originally published in *Chi erano gli Spirituali. Atti del III Convegno internazionale* (Assisi, 16-18 ottobre 1975), Assisi 1976, 107-124.



(6) «Saint Bernardine of Siena and the Italian episcopate of his times», originally published in *Atti del simposio internazionale Cateriniano-Bernardiniano* (Siena, 17-20 aprile 1980), Siena 1982, 715-739.

(7) «Saint Francis and the expansion of Franciscanism. Historical conscience and emergent problems», originally published in *Il francescanesimo in Lombardia. Storia e arte,* Cinisello Balsamo (Milano) 1983, 9-16.

(8) «The Church of the Friars Minor between the ideals of Saint Francis and the needs of the *cura animarum*», originally published in *Lo spazio dell'umiltà. Atti del Convegno di studi sull'edilizia dell'Ordine dei Minori* (Fara Sabina, 3-6 novembre 1982), Fara Sabina 1984, 59-75.

(9) «The Franciscan expansion in the "Chronicle" of Salimbene», originally published in *Salimbene di Parma. Studi in occasione delle Celebrazioni del VII centenario della morte di Fra Salimbene da Parma (1221-1287),* originally published in *Zenit Quaderni*, Supplemento al quarto numero del 1987, 13-21.

(10) «The "Supra montem" and the pontifical chancery during the times of Pope Nicolò IV», originally published in *Analecta TOR* 20 (1988) 65-92.

(11) «Joachimite eschatology in Franciscanism: Pietro di Giovanni Olivi», originally published in *L'attesa della fine dei tempi nel Medioevo,* Bologna 1990, 169-193.

(12) «Girolamo d'Ascoli and Pietro di Giovanni Olivi», originally published in *Niccolò IV: un pontificato tra Oriente e Occidente. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi in occasione del VII centenario del pontificato di Niccolò IV* (Ascoli Piceno, 14-17 dicembre 1989), a cura di E. Menestò, Spoleto 1991, 53-72.

(13) «The times of Matteo d'Acquasparta», in *Matteo d'Acquasparta francescano, filosofo, politico. Atti del XXIX Convegno storico internazionale del Centro di studi sulla spiritualità medievale* (Todi, 11-14 ottobre 1992), Todi 1993, 19-50.

(14) «The Roman pontiffs and the mendicant bishops», in *Dal pulpito dalla cattedra. I vescovi degli ordini mendicanti nel '200 e nel primo '300. Atti del XXVII Convegno internazionale* (Assisi, 14-16 ottobre 1999), Spoleto 2000, 27-42.

The reviews by Edith Pásztor include the following three famous studies: (1) *I fiori dei tre compagni*, by J. Cambell, Milano 1967 (in *Studi Medievali*, serie III, 9 (1968) 252-264); (2) *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages*, by Majorie Reeves, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1969 (in *Studi Medievali*, serie III, 12(1971) 795-802); (3) *Legenda Antiqua s. Francisci,* by Sophronius Clasen, (Studia et documenta Franciscana), Leiden 1967, in *Studi Medievali,* serie III, 13 (1972) 483-485.

Felice Accrocca has these words of praise for the great contribution of Edith Pásztor to Franciscan studies:

"Edith Pásztor has certainly imprinted her mark, clear and profound, upon Franciscan studies. The expert contents of this volume, which realizes a project which has long been in preparation, certainly demonstrate this truth. Pásztor has been able, moreover, to initiate a numerous group of disciples to continue her studies. The university lecture hall was the workshop where she taught the art of the historian to her young students, transmitting to them not only new notions, but rather a new methodology of work. For this reason her lectures were captivating to those who, like me, had the privilege to take part in them, and who still carry impressed in their minds her living memory, with so much gratitude after all these years."

The Custody of the Holy Land

Pastoral Letter of
His Beatitude Michel Sabbah
Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem
(1st March 2008)

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«I thank all men and women who, in the Church of Jerusalem and in its name, were able to fulfil the ministry owed to the universal church: the Biblical Institutes, the centres for continuing formation, as well as the seminaries which, alongside of our own patriarchal diocesan seminary, formed priests here for the universal and the local Church. Welcoming the pilgrims from the Churches of the world is also an important ministry, which a large number of religious houses fulfil. This ministry needs to be developed so that the pilgrimage might be at one and the same time a way of sanctification for the pilgrim when he or she comes into contact with the divine mystery that the Holy Places conserve, and also a time when the pilgrim becomes aware of the human presence in this country, of every religion, and above all of the presence and life of the Christian community that surrounds the holy places with its living faith. From among the religious orders and congregations present, that of the Custody of the Holy Land has been here the longest and is the most meritorious. By their prayer and their daily witness, the Franciscan religious have remained in this land since the 13th century. They served the Holy Places and welcomed the pilgrims throughout the centuries. In 1342, the Holy See formally entrusted them with this task. From the beginning, they have served the local population, created parishes and opened schools that exist to this day. We can only thank them and acknowledge the good they have done for men and women of every religion in this land in the shrines, in the parish churches, in the schools, and in their social work. In that area too, along with the immensely good things that exist, there is a need for renewal, for better insertion in the diocese, and for a dialogue that remains to be carried out with the diocese in order to be better “incarnated” in the Church of God which they serve.»

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Abbreviations

Writings of St. Francis

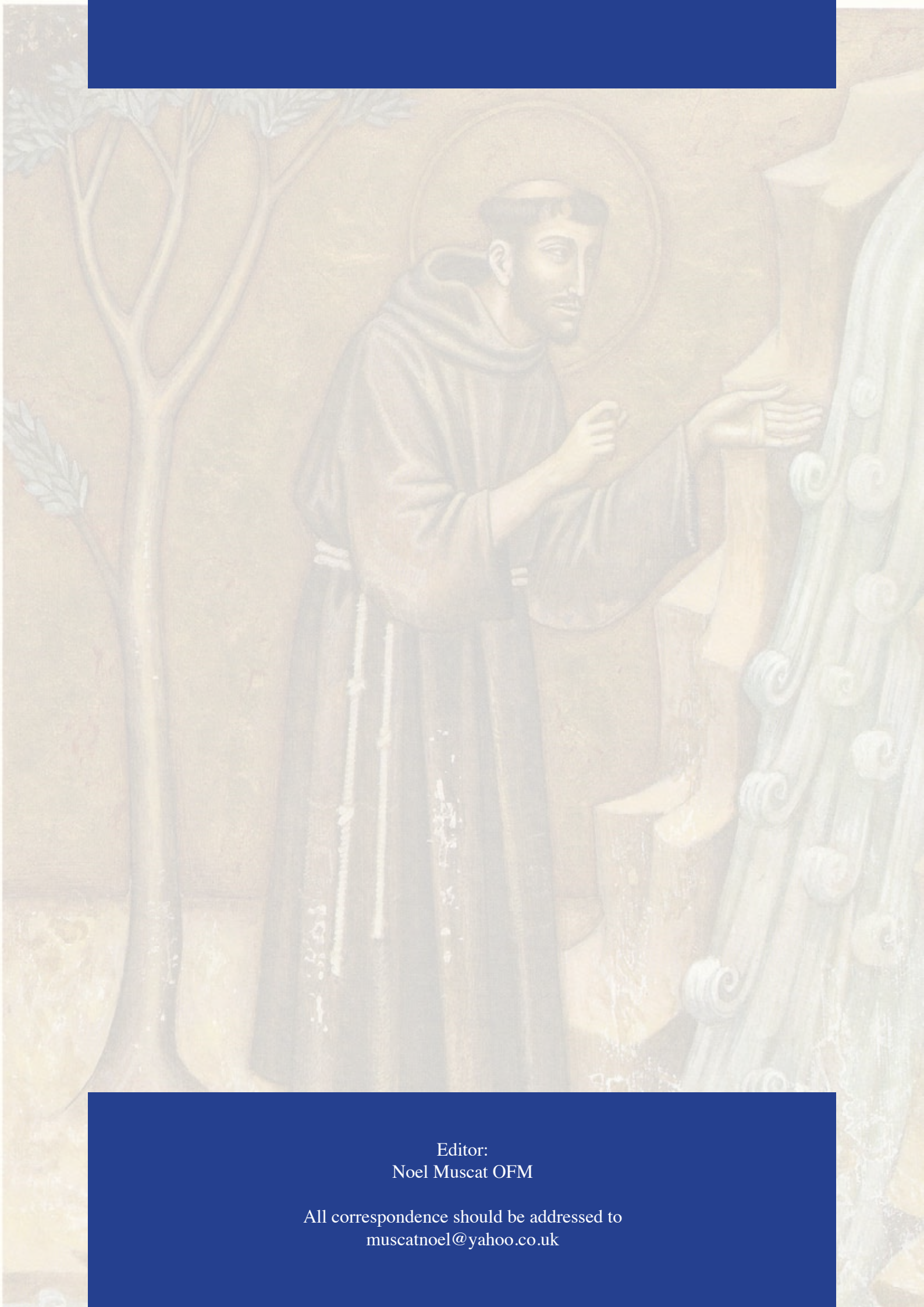
Adm	Admonitiones.
CantAudPov	Cantico Audite Poverelle.
CantSol	Canticum fratris Solis.
LaudDei	Laudes Dei Altissimi.
BenLeo	Benedictio fratri Leoni data.
EpAnt	Epistola ad sanctum Antonium.
EpCler I	Epistola ad Clericos (Redactio prior).
EpCler II	Epistola ad Clericos (Red. posterior).
EpCust I	Epistola 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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