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Green New Deal: A Franciscan Perspective

By Patrick Carolan and Sr. Margaret Magee, OSF

Many agree, we're running out of time to tackle the climate crisis. The clock is ticking as more and more communities face catastrophic wildfires, droughts, and storms. We urgently need bold, unprecedented action to tackle the twin crises of climate change and inequality. We need to mobilize vast public resources to transition from an economy built on exploitation and fossil fuels to one driven by dignified work and clean energy. We need a Green New Deal.

A Green New Deal would simultaneously tackle the climate crisis, create millions of high-paying jobs, and counteract racial and economic inequity. It would revitalize our infrastructure, retro-fit our buildings, revive clean manufacturing, and restore our ecosystems - delivering clean air and water, good jobs, and climate stability to those who've borne the brunt of the fossil fuel economy.

The Green New Deal just took an *enormous step forward*: Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Ed Markey just introduced *resolutions* to support a

Green New Deal in the House and the Senate, which lays out a 10-year plan to mobilize every aspect of American society to achieve 100% clean and renewable energy by 2030, a guaranteed living-wage job for anybody who needs one, and a just transition for both workers and frontline communities. This is the type of visionary thinking that reflects the passion and care for all of God's creation that guided the life of St. Francis of Assisi.

Saints Francis and Clare had a relational understanding of creation. For them and for us today, we believe that all people and all creatures, from the smallest to "our Sister, Mother Earth," are sisters and brothers, part of the very fabric of the family of God. Because of this, Francis was named the patron saint of ecology by Pope John Paul II. Following this tradition, St. Bonaventure developed a theological and spiritual vision that acknowledged all creation as emanating from the goodness of God, existing as a "footprint" of God, and leading us back to God if we are



able to “read” nature properly. He spoke of creation as the first book that God wrote.

As Franciscans, we are called to consistently examine our relational understanding of creation. Looking to theologians like St. Bonaventure who developed a theological and spiritual vision that acknowledged all creation as emanating from the goodness of God, existing as a “footprint” of God, and leading us back to God if we are able to read the Book of Creation, i.e. nature properly.

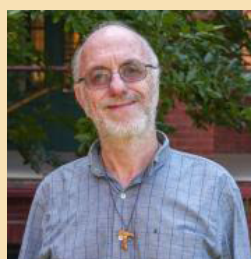
The Franciscan emphasis on the goodness of God and creation has many ramifications. Creation is the outpouring of God’s love into the universe. Creation reveals to us God’s love for us and God’s beauty which is why Franciscans call creation, beauty and goodness the mirror of God and that God has two books of creation—Sacred Scripture and creation.

Francis of Assisi looked at life and all creation through the lens of relationship and connectivity. He lived, preached and modeled this relational connection from which blossomed a perspective of deep empathy. He looked for ways to awaken within all people his way of seeing all life as integrally connected, especially concerning the care of those who were poor and marginalized and for Sister Mother Earth. Rather than viewing creation from ‘anthropocentrism,’ which literally means ‘human-centered,’ Francis saw creation as ‘biocentrism’ which means ‘life-centered.’

Francis of Assisi was bold and prophetic in his vision. He understood the interconnectedness of all creation. The New Green Deal reflects this same visionary thinking combined with an understanding of the relational nature of creation. In his Encyclical *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis also reflected this vision. He wrote: “New processes taking shape cannot always fit into frameworks imported from outside; they need to be based in the local culture itself. As life and

the world are dynamic realities, so our care for the world must also be flexible and dynamic.” (#144) Pope Francis also said: “All of this shows the urgent need for us to move forward in a bold cultural revolution...We do need to slow down and look at reality in a different way, to appropriate the positive and sustainable progress which has been made, but also to recover the values and the great goals swept away by our unrestrained delusions of grandeur.” (#114)

It is this type of bold visionary thinking that our nation so desperately needs today. Neither Congresswoman Cortez nor Senator Markey make claim to being Franciscan, but their vision as laid out in the Green New Deal clearly embraces the values and the vision of our Franciscan life and spirituality.



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Alexander of Hales
On the Significations
and Exposition of the Holy Scriptures

Introduction and Translation
by Aaron Gies

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Alexander of Hales, called “the irrefutable doctor and prince of theologians” by Pope Alexander IV, taught theology at Paris from ca. 1220-21 until his death in 1245. Upon his conversion to the Order of Friars Minor in 1236, he became the first Franciscan to hold a theology chair at the University of Paris, teaching influential friars such as Odo Rigaldus, William of Middleton, John of Parma, and probably Bonaventure, who called him “my master and father.”

On the Significations is known to survive in only two manuscripts, and was only authenticated and edited in 2009, by Aleksander Horowski. Yet its influence in the medieval period may have been broader than its survival suggests. Denis the Carthusian, writing about 1434, quotes extensively from it. Now that it has been rediscovered by specialists, Aaron Gies’s introduction and extensive notes aim to make the text accessible to any reader interested in medieval ways of reading and interpreting Scripture.

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Trinity and Creation: Vestigia Trinitatis in Alexander of Hales's *Glossa Sententiarum*

By Andrew Belfield

Trinity and creation—these central loci of Christian faith find particular expression in Franciscan theology and spirituality. One can find these points of emphasis as early as Saint Francis of Assisi himself, as the little brother's writings demonstrate a particular devotion to the Trinity,¹ and his rightly famous Canticle of Brother Sun sings of the kinship shared among all of God's creatures.² The works of Saint Bonaventure, the great Franciscan Doctor of the Church, also bear witness to this Franciscan sensitivity to Trinity and creation, evident not only in academic works like his *Commentary on the Sentences* and *Breviloquium* but also his more spiritual writings, particularly the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*.³ What's more, Bonaventure brings these two strands of Franciscan thought into a remarkable synthesis in his doctrine of the *vestigia trinitatis*, as he gazes into the created world and finds the "footprints" of God all around him. Bonaventure is not the first to see these footprints—Augustine sees them too⁴—but it is undeniable that the doctrine of the *vestigia trinitatis* finds a particular emphasis in Bonaventure's thought as a means of knowing

God and creation, and of ascending into union with the divine.

Yet any discussion of Franciscan thought and the *vestigia trinitatis* cannot pass over in silence the founder of the early Franciscan intellectual tradition, Alexander of Hales.⁵ Alexander of Hales and the school of theology bearing his name—crystallized in the massive *Summa fratris Alexandri*⁶—witness to what has been called a "comprehensive trinitarianism," whereby nearly every facet of theological thinking is characterized by a trinitarian bent.⁷ The *vestigia trinitatis* represent one instance of this comprehensive trinitarianism. Indeed, Alexander's *Gloss on the Four Books of the Sentences*, one of the earliest written engagements with Peter Lombard's textbook, sees an explosion of interest in the *vestigia trinitatis*, greatly expanding the Lombard's treatment and setting the stage for Bonaventure's later use of the trinitarian vestiges in his own *Commentary*.⁸ In this paper, I consider Alexander's *Gloss* and the account therein of the *vestigia trinitatis* as a key source for Bonaventure's treatment of the same issue in his *Commentary*. The remarkable similarity between their two lists of *vestigia* and the shared sources they cite give strong evidence for

¹ See, e.g., his *Regula non bullata* 23, 11: "Anywhere and everywhere, in every hour, and in every season, daily and continuously let all of us truly and humbly believe, and let us hold in our heart and love, let us honor, adore, serve, praise, and bless, let us glorify and let us exalt, magnify, and give thanks to the most high and supreme eternal God, trinity and unity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit" (my translation).

² See Francis of Assisi and Clare of Assisi, *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, ed. and trans. Regis J. Armstrong and Ignatius C. Brady, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 37–39.

³ The Latin critical edition of Bonaventure's works is *Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae S. R. E. Episcopi Cardinalis Opera Omnia*, 10 vols. (Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi): Ex Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1852–1911). For English translations of the works mentioned here, see *Commentaries on the First Book of Sentences of Master Peter Lombard Archbishop of Paris: On the One and Triune God*, trans. Alexis Bugnolo, Opera Omnia 1 (Mansfield, MA: The Franciscan Archive, 2014); *Breviloquium*, ed. and trans. Dominic Monti, Works of St. Bonaventure 9 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2005); *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, trans. Zachary Hayes, Works of St. Bonaventure 2 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2002). On Bonaventure's trinitarian theology, see Zachary Hayes's classic introductory essay in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, trans. Zachary Hayes, Works of St. Bonaventure 3 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1979), 11–103.

⁴ See, e.g., *De civitate Dei* XI.28: "As we run through all the things that he [sc. God] made in such marvelous stability, then, let us gather up the traces (*vestigia*) of himself that he left more deeply impressed in some places, less deeply in others." Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God XI–XXII*, ed. Boniface Ramsey, trans. William Babcock, The Works of Saint Augustine: A New Translation for the 21st Century, 1/7 (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2013), 29.

⁵ While scholarship has not passed over Alexander in utter silence, neither has it given Alexander his due. For an overview of Alexander's theology, see Kenan B. Osborne, "Alexander of Hales: Precursor and Promoter of Franciscan Theology," in *The History of Franciscan Theology*, ed. Kenan B. Osborne (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1994), 1–38.

⁶ Books 1–3 exist in critical edition across four volumes; *Doctoris irrefragabilis Alexandri de Hales Ordinis minorum Summa theologica*, 4 vols. (Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi): Ex Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1924–1948). Book 4 still awaits a critical edition.

⁷ On the "comprehensive trinitarianism" of the early Franciscan intellectual tradition, see Boyd Taylor Coolman, "A Cord of Three Strands Is Not Easily Broken: The Transcendental Brocade of Unity, Truth, and Goodness in the Early Franciscan Intellectual Tradition," *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition 16, no. 2 (2018): 555–80; Justin Shaun Coyle, "An Essay on Theological Aesthetics in the *Summa Halensis*" (Ph.D. dissertation, Boston College, 2018).

⁸ Petri Lombardi, *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae*, ed. Ignatius Brady, Editio Tertia, 2 vols., Spicilegium Bonaventurianum 4–5 (Grottaferrata (Romae): Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1971–1981); for English translation of Book 1, see Peter Lombard, *The Sentences Book 1: The Mystery of the Trinity*, trans. Giulio Silano, Mediaeval Sources in Translation 42 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2007). Alexandri de Hales, *Glossa in quatuor libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, 4 vols., Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi 12–15 (Quaracchi: Ex Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1951–1957). No published English translation of the *Glossa* exists.

Bonaventure's direct reliance upon Alexander's *Gloss* as he thought through the relation between Trinity and creation.

To appreciate how Alexander and Bonaventure take up the *vestigia trinitatis*, it is necessary first to understand the incipient form of that doctrine as found in Peter Lombard's *Four Books of Sentences*. The third distinction of the Lombard's first book of *Sentences* inquires into the possibility of knowing God through the created world. On the basis of Romans 1:19–20,⁹ he argues that human beings, by means of their natural reason, can observe God's works in creation, seeing the truth of God in these works and, thus, knowing something of God. In this way, human reason can access "the invisible things of God through the things which are made."¹⁰ Peter goes on to list the various modes according to which God is known through creation; these include through God's effects,¹¹ through reason,¹² in comparing spiritual and corporeal substances,¹³ and in comparing perceptible and intelligible things.¹⁴ From these various modes of knowing, different things are known of God (hence, the Apostle's plural *invisibilia*); as an illustration of this manifold knowing of God, the Lombard writes, "Indeed, from the perpetuity of creatures, the Creator is understood to be eternal; from the greatness of creatures, all-powerful; from their order and disposition, wise; from his governance over them, good. And all these things pertain to showing the unity of the Godhead."¹⁵



Having established the possibility of knowing God through created reality, the Lombard considers whether some indication of the Trinity can be obtained through created reality.¹⁶ He answers in the affirmative and quotes Augustine's *On the Trinity*, which explains that a "vestige of the Trinity shines forth in creatures," in their unity, form,

and order. "For each of these created things is some one specific thing, ... it is also formed in some form, ... and it seeks or preserves a certain order."¹⁷ Next Peter turns to Augustine's *On True Religion* to explain how this triad of unity, form, and order can be appropriated to the persons of the Trinity: unity to the Father, who, as the origin of the Trinity, is the source of all unity; form to the Son, who as the Father's truth is beauty and the one through whom all things are made; and order to the Holy Spirit, who instills in all creatures their proper disposition.¹⁸ The Lombard

ex ordine et dispositione sapiens, ex gubernatione bonus. Haec autem omnia ad unitatem deitatis pertinent monstrandam" (Brady 1, 70). The early Franciscan intellectual tradition picks up this power–wisdom–goodness triad, not only appropriating it to the persons of the Trinity but also understanding the divine substance itself to have a triune character. See Coolman, "A Cord of Three Strands Is Not Easily Broken."

¹⁶ *Sent.* I, d. 3, c. 1, n. 7: "Nunc restat ostendere utrum per ea quae facta sunt aliquod Trinitatis indicium, vel exiguum, haberi potuerit" (Brady 1, 70).

¹⁷ *Sent.* I, d. 3, c. 1, n. 7, quoting Augustine, *De Trin.* VI, c. 10, n. 12: "Haec enim quae arte divina facta sunt, et unitatem quandam in se ostendunt, et speciem, et ordinem. Nam quodque horum creatorum et unum aliquid est, sicut sunt naturae corporum, ac doctrinae vel artes animarum; et ordinem aliquem petit aut tenet, sicut sunt pondera vel locationes corporum, et amores vel delectationes animarum. Et ita in creaturis praelucet vestigium Trinitatis. In illa enim Trinitate origo est omnium rerum, et perfectissima pulchritudo, et beatissima delectatio" (Brady 1, 70).

¹⁸ *Sent.* I, d. 3, c. 1, n. 8, quoting Augustine, *De vera religione*, c. 55,

⁹ "Quia quod notum est Dei manifestum est in illis Deus enim illis manifestavit invisibilia enim ipsius a creatura mundi per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur sempiterna quoque eius virtus et divinitas ut sint inexcusabiles" (Vulgate).

¹⁰ *Sent.* I, d. 3, c. 1, n. 1: "Homo ergo invisibilia Dei intellectu mentis conspiciere potuit, vel etiam conspexit; per ea quae facta sunt, id est per creaturas visibiles vel invisibiles" (Brady 1, 69).

¹¹ *Sent.* I, d. 3, c. 1, n. 2: "Nam, sicut ait Ambrosius, 'ut Deus, qui natura invisibilis est, etiam a visibilibus posset sciri, opus fecit quod opificem visibilitate sui manifestavit'" (Brady 1, 69).

¹² *Sent.* I, d. 3, c. 1, n. 3: "Alio etiam modo Dei veritatem ductu rationis cognoscere potuerunt vel etiam cognoverunt" (Brady 1, 69).

¹³ *Sent.* I, d. 3, c. 1, n. 4: "Consideraverunt etiam quidquid est in substantiis vel corpus esse vel spiritum ..." (Brady 1, 69).

¹⁴ *Sent.* I, d. 3, c. 1, n. 5: "Intellexerunt etiam corporis speciem essen sensibilem et spiritus speciem intelligibilem ..." (Brady 1, 70).

¹⁵ *Sent.* I, d. 3, c. 1, n. 6: "Ex perpetuitate namque creaturarum intelligitur Conditor aeternus, ex magnitudine creaturarum omnipotens,

concludes this discussion of the trinitarian vestige in creation by noting that, while the Trinity is “in some measure” revealed through creation, “a sufficient knowledge of the Trinity cannot and could not be had by a contemplation of creatures.”¹⁹ That is, one can gain knowledge of the Trinity through the created *vestigia* only as in a mirror darkly—one can approach the knowledge that God is triune, but not anything about, for example, the personal properties of the members of that Trinity. Such knowledge requires revelation.

So *Sentences* I, d. 3 shows an interest in the trinitarian *vestigia* insofar as they might lead one to some, impartial knowledge of the Trinity. That the Lombard’s main concern here is epistemological is not surprising—after all, he sets out in this distinction to consider the possibility of knowing the invisible things of God through God’s visible effects. Peter does gesture at an analysis of creaturely existence by reflection on the *vestigia*—the trinity of unity, form, and order not only points us to the Trinity but also tells us that creatures are one, possess a particular form, and are ordered to some end—but the Lombard’s overarching concern is epistemological. How might one gain some knowledge of God by these *vestigia*? As we see shortly, Alexander asks the same question but also devotes more attention to what these *vestigia* reveal about creatures.

Like the Lombard, Alexander presents his discussion of the trinitarian vestiges within an epistemological framework—that is, by perceiving these trinitarian resonances in creation, one might perceive something of the triune Creator. In fact, Alexander explains the Lombard’s aim in distinction 3 as just this: “an investigation of the Trinity through its vestiges in creatures and then through the created trinity in the soul.”²⁰ Moreover, at various points in this distinction Alexander alludes to the Trinity as the exemplar cause of creation:²¹ insofar as the Trinity is the Creator, and

n. 113: “Summa autem origo, ut Augustinus ostendit in libro *De vera religione*, intelligitur Deus Pater, a quo sunt omnia, a quo Filius et Spiritus Sanctus. Perfectissima pulchritudo intelligitur Filius, scilicet ‘veritas Patris nulla ex parte ei dissimilis, quam cum ipso et in ipso Patre veneramus; quae forma est omnium quae ab uno facta sunt et ad unum referuntur. Quae tamen omnia nec fierent a Patre per Filium, neque suis finibus salva essent, nisi Deus summe bonus esset, qui et nulli naturae quod ab illo bona esset invidit, et ut in bono ipso maneret, alia quantum vellet, alia quantum posset, dedit. Quae bonitas intelligitur Spiritus Sanctus, qui est donum Patris et Filii. Quare ipsum Donum Dei, cum Patre et Filio aequae incommutabile, colere et tenere nos convenit” (Brady 1, 70–71).

¹⁹ *Sent.* I, d. 3, c. 1, n. 9: “Ecce ostensum est qualiter in creaturis aliquatenus imago Trinitatis indicatur. Non enim per creaturarum contemplationem sufficiens notitia Trinitatis potest haberi vel potuit, sine doctrinae vel interioris inspirationes revelatione” (Brady 1, 71).

²⁰ *Glossa* I, d. 3, n. 13: “Determinat modo de inquisitione Trinitatis per vestigium in creaturis, et deinde per trinitatem creatam in anima” (Quaracchi 1, 44).

²¹ See, e.g., *Glossa* I, d.3, n.10 (Quaracchi 1, 41–42); *Glossa* I, d.3, n.53, o (Quaracchi 1, 71). *Nota bene*: my mention of the Trinity as exemplar cause of creation here should not be read in a technical sense as synonymous with the doctrine of exemplarity, which for Bonaventure is a Christological doctrine. On this, see Zachary Hayes, *The Hidden Center: Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St. Bonaventure*, Theolog-

insofar as the Trinity creates all things in not only an efficient and final mode but also an exemplar mode, all of creation bears a sort of trinitarian stamp in the form of these *vestigia*. Alexander’s identification of the Trinity as the exemplar cause of creation furnishes an explanation of how it is that creation bears this triune mark. On this basis, Alexander argues that there may be some possibility of knowing the Trinity apart from revelation, though that knowledge will always be incomplete without faith. In fact, quoting Gregory the Great, Alexander charts an intellectual ascent of the soul starting from the observation of trinities in the created world, then to the trinity in the mind, finally ascending up to the Trinity above the mind.²² To prove the possibility of this ascent, Alexander declares, “The Trinity is placed in all creatures in many ways.”²³ Creation yields these trinitarian vestiges precisely because God, as exemplar cause, has placed these trinities in creatures. Alexander then lists eight trinitarian vestiges observable in creation.

First, he cites Wisdom 11 for the trinity in accord with which a creature is made: measure, number, and weight.²⁴ Second is that trinity according to which a thing exists: unity or eternity, truth, and goodness.²⁵ He finds a third trinity according to which a thing exists perfectly, drawing the triad of limit, species, and order from Augustine’s *On the Nature of the Good*.²⁶ Fourth, Alexander identifies the trinity of substance, species, and power in accord with which a thing is disposed to act.²⁷ Fifth, in accord with which a thing is in act, there is a trinitarian vestige of essence, power, and operation. This trinity he draws from Dionysius’s *On the Celestial Hierarchy*.²⁸ Sixth is that vestige according to which

ical Inquiries: Studies in Contemporary Biblical and Theological Problems (New York: Paulist Press, 1981). Whether Alexander of Hales has a doctrine of exemplarity and whether it is Christological or trinitarian remains an open question requiring further research. See Coyle, “An Essay on Theological Aesthetics in the *Summa Halensis*,” 154–93.41\|ucoll\|u8211\|42

²² *Glossa* I, d. 3, n. 28: “Saepe volumus naturam Dei considerare ... sibi quae anima de se ipsa gradus ascensionis facit. ... Primus gradus est ut se ad se colligat, secundus ut se videat, tertius ut super se ipsam in contemplatione auctoris invisibilis surgat. ... Quae sic est infusa corpori, ut, cum ipsa per naturam non diversa sit, per corpus tamen agit diversa” (Quaracchi 1, 50). Alexander believes he is quoting from *Moralia in Iob*, though the Quaracchi editors point out that in fact Alexander is quoting from *In Ezechiel* 2, 5, 8–9 (PL 76: 989f.), with many omissions. The similarities here to Bonaventure’s *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* are striking.

²³ *Glossa* I, d. 3, n. 29: “Ad evidentiam eorum quae hic dicta sunt, nota: multiplex ponitur trinitas in creaturibus omnibus” (Quaracchi 1, 50).

²⁴ *Glossa* I, d. 3, n. 29: “Prima est in re secundum quam fit, et sic accipitur haec, in 11 Sap., 21: Mensura, numero et pondere” (Quaracchi 1, 50).

²⁵ *Glossa* I, d. 3, n. 29: “Secunda trinitas est secundum quam rem est, et haec est unitas sive aeternitas, veritas, bonitas” (Quaracchi 1, 51).

²⁶ *Glossa* I, d. 3, n. 29: “Tertia est secundum quam res perfecte est: modus, species et ordo. De hac Augustinus, libro *De natura summi boni* ...” (Quaracchi 1, 51).

²⁷ *Glossa* I, d. 3, n. 29: “Quarta est secundum quam res disponitur ad actum: substantia, species et virtus” (Quaracchi 1, 51).

²⁸ *Glossa* I, d. 3, n. 29: “Quinta est secundum quod in actu est, et

a thing is disposed for knowledge: substance, species, and character.²⁹ Seventh is the vestige according to which a thing is in knowledge: that which is known, that which is fitting, and that which is distinguished. Alexander lifts this trinity from Augustine's *On Eighty-three Questions*.³⁰ Eighth and finally, Alexander finds a trinity in accord with which there is knowledge or love: existing, beautiful, delightful.³¹

Compared to the original text of the *Sentences*, one is struck by the sheer number of trinitarian *vestigia* Alexander reports here in his *Gloss*. Alexander lists eight trinities, drawing from Scripture, the Church Fathers, and even a pagan philosopher; the Lombard identifies just a single trinity. The liberty Alexander takes in glossing the *Sentences*—a reader, or at least this reader, is sometimes frustrated by Alexander's meandering and tangents through the Lombard's text—reveals something of Alexander's own theological concerns and interests. That he spends such time on the trinitarian *vestigia* reflects the comprehensively trinitarian way he views the created world.

Moreover, Alexander's aim in reporting this list of trinitarian vestiges seems slightly different from the Lombard's. As I have already discussed, for Peter the concern is primarily, almost exclusively, how the *vestigia* lead creatures to some knowledge of the Trinity (though he does note that the triad of unity, form, and order tells us something of the creature, too). Here Alexander ties each of his trinities to some aspect of creaturely existence: according to which a creature is made (its measure, weight, and number); according to which a thing exists (its unity, truth, and goodness); according to which a thing exists perfectly (limit, species, order); and so on. These *vestigia* therefore not only lead to some impartial knowledge of the Trinity, but they also lead to some knowledge of the very make-up of the creature as created trinitarianly. Thus, while Alexander still thinks the *vestigia* tells us something of God, he expands the knowledge they reveal to knowledge of creatures as well.

More interesting still is Alexander's list of trinities compared to Bonaventure's. He proposes to clarify the possible ways of enumerating trinitarian vestiges according to these three categories: insofar as any creature is considered in itself, in relation to other creatures, or in relation to God.³² Bonaventure groups six trinities under these three categories. Inasmuch as a creature is considered in or for it-

haec est: essentia, virtus, operatio. Hanc ponit Dionysius in *Hierarchia*, cap. *Quare angeli dicuntur virtutes*" (Quaracchi 1, 51).

²⁹ *Glossa* I, d. 3, n. 29: "Sexta est secundum quod ad cognitionem res disponitur: substantia, species, ratio" (Quaracchi 1, 51).

³⁰ *Glossa* I, d. 3, n. 29: "Septima est secundum quod est in cognitione, et sic haec: quod constat, quod congruit, quod discernitur. Hanc ponit Augustinus in libro *De 83 Quaestionibus* ..." (Quaracchi 1, 51).

³¹ *Glossa* I, d. 3, n. 29: "Octava trinitas est secundum quod est in cognitione vel affectu: exsistens, pulchrum et delectabile" (Quaracchi 1, 52).

³² *In I Sent.*, d. 3, p. 1, dub. 3: "Dicendum quod res creata habet tripliciter considerari: aut in se, aut in comparatione ad alias creaturas, aut in comparatione ad causam primam. Et secundum hos omnes modos contingit reperire trinitatem dupliciter" (Quaracchi 1, 78–79).

self, Bonaventure identifies first the trinity of matter, form, and composition, which make up the substance of its principles. Second, Bonaventure cites Wisdom 11 for a trinity according to a creature's conditions (*habitudines*): number, weight, and measure.³³ In the second category, a creature compared with other creatures, Bonaventure places Dionysius's trinity of substance, power, and operation (from *On the Celestial Hierarchies* c. 11) as the natural action of a creature, and for a creature's spiritual action he points to Augustine's trinity in *On Eighty-three Questions* of that whereby a creature is known, that whereby it is fitting, and that whereby it is distinguished.³⁴ Finally, insofar as a creature is referred to God, there is a trinity of manner, species, and order; insofar as a creature is referred and assimilated to God, there is a trinity of unity, truth, and goodness.³⁵

Note well the remarkable similarities of Alexander's and Bonaventure's lists. With just one exception, each of the six trinities Bonaventure identifies in his list can also be found in Alexander's list. (That one exception is the matter–form–composition triad, appearing at the top of Bonaventure's list.) Moreover, for three of the five trinities found in both lists, Alexander and Bonaventure each cite the exact same authorities. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, Alexander and Bonaventure are each doing the same sort of thing with their lists of trinitarian vestiges: that is, they both perform an examination of creaturely existence by way of the trinitarian vestiges. Even if they come to different conclusions about what these vestiges tell us about the creature (e.g., Alexander sees the measure–number–weight as explaining how a creature is made, whereas Bonaventure understands that triad to bear upon a creature's conditions), each of them extend the knowledge acquired by reflection on the *vestigia* to knowledge of the creature as well as of God. Given the remarkable similarities between these two lists, the identical sources cited for several of these trinities, and the similar spirit in which these two thinkers reflect on the *vestigia*, I find good reason to believe that Bonaventure relied directly upon Alexander's *Gloss* in his development of his own doctrine of trinitarian vestiges.

³³ *In I Sent.*, d. 3, p. 1, dub. 3: "Si enim consideretur quantum in se vel quantum ad se, hoc est, aut quantum ad substantiam principiorum; et sic est illa trinitas: materia, forma, compositio, quae ponitur in libro de Regula fidei; aut quantum ad habitudines; et sic est illa, Sapientiae undecimo: Omnia in numero, pondere et mensura disposuisti. In numero enim intelligitur principiorum distinctio, in pondere propria ipsorum inclinatio, in mensura eorum ad invicem proportio" (Quaracchi 1, 79). Interesting, Bonaventure here rearranges the order of the latter triad from its original ordering as found in Wisdom and Alexander's *Glossa*.

³⁴ *In I Sent.*, d. 3, p. 1, dub. 3: "Item, si consideretur una creatura in comparatione ad alias creaturas, hoc potest esse aut in quantum agit actione naturali; et sic sumitur illa trinitas Dionysii, substantia, virtus et operatio; aut in quantum agit actione spirituali; et sic illa Augustini, de octoginta tribus Quaestionibus, 'quo constat, quo congrui, quo discernitur,' et ultimum refertur ad animam" (Quaracchi 1, 79).

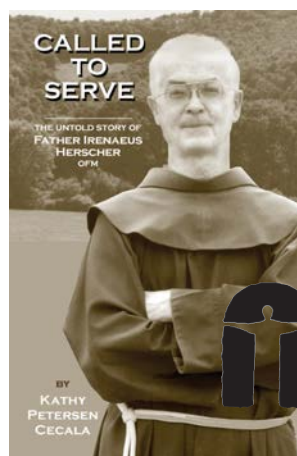
³⁵ *In I Sent.*, d. 3, p. 1, dub. 3: "Si autem considerentur in comparatione ad Deum, hoc potest esse dupliciter: aut in quantum referuntur tantum; et sic est illa, modus, species et ordo; aut in quantum referuntur et assimilantur; et sic est illa, unitas, veritas et bonitas" (Quaracchi 1, 79).

Of course, some differences should be noted in addition to these similarities. First, and most obviously, Alexander and Bonaventure present each of their lists according to different structures. Though there is a certain logic to Alexander's presentation, insofar as each triad builds on the previous one, Bonaventure reorganizes the list according to the three ways one must enumerate those vestiges. They are formally different, but materially still very similar. Note, too, that Bonaventure orders his triad from Wisdom 11 slightly differently, preferring number–weight–measure to Wisdom and the *Gloss*'s measure–number–weight. Similarly, Bonaventure reformulates Alexander's that which is known, that which is fitting, and that which is distinguished into ablatives: that whereby a creature is known, that whereby it is fitting, and that whereby it is distinguishes. Bonaventure's reformulation here perhaps reflects his placement of this triad into the second category of a creature related to other creatures.

Even in view of these differences, however, the similarities between Alexander and Bonaventure on the *vestigia* are striking. There is strong reason to believe Bonaventure relied directly upon Alexander—and even the *Gloss* itself—as he formulated his own doctrine of the *vestigia trinitatis*. This small study supports the growing consensus among those studying the early University of Paris that, without questioning Bonaventure's genius nor his theological innovation, nevertheless Alexander of Hales and the Halensian school of theology must be recognized as important sources for his work—especially when it comes to this “comprehensive trinitarianism” of the early Franciscan intellectual tradition.



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by Kathy Peterson Cecala

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St. Francis And Mental Health Challenges: From Stigmatization To Stigmata, Exclusion To Exaltation

By Ed Curran

How does a person go from stigmatization to stigmata? St Francis of Assisi was once a person who was excluded, ostracized, and ridiculed. Eventually this turned to exaltation, glorification, and canonization. Today he is one of the most popular saints among all Catholics. Despite his troubled beginning, Francis is an icon to Christians and non-Christians alike. Richard Rohr tells us that Francis “has the longest single entry of any one person in the Library of Congress”.¹ *Time* magazine listed Francis, along with others like Albert Einstein, Thomas Jefferson, and William Shakespeare, as one of the ten top contributors to the second millennium.²

Francis moved from failure to fame. Ironically, the one Francis followed moved in the opposite direction. Within one week, Jesus of Nazareth went from exaltation and glorification on Palm Sunday to crucifixion and execution on Good Friday. Today, both Jesus and Francis are revered by Christians and non-Christians throughout the world as models of holiness. What is the meaning of Francis’ transformation?

Patron Saint for Mental Health?

When it comes to superstars and famous people, we are aware of them in glory. We know them after they have achieved success. In this way, we generally have only a romanticized version of the struggles they had to endure to attain their fame. This same assessment applies to Francis. We think of him as founder and saint and yet he was a man who struggled and suffered. Because he rose to “stardom” and “saint-dom” over the course of eight hundred years, it is best to evaluate him retrospectively.

Francis has name recognition. Except for those in the Franciscan community and those who do scholarly research, most people only know Francis for his great feats. There is another side and dimension to Francis.

We know that Francis was severely criticized and much abused along the way of his conversion. As a young adult just home from war, Francis was locked up at home in a basement prison by his father in an attempt to control and reform Francis.³ Francis then hid from his father in a cave for a month. As one studies the early conversion pe-



riod of Francis’ life, one recognizes that he often exhibited many behaviors for which others are also ostracized. Francis’ comportment appears at times as mental illness or mental distress rather than mental wellness. Something is breaking down in him and others notice. He is the subject of much name calling. This type of victimization parallels what many today with mental health challenges experience. It leads me to wonder whether St. Francis might also be added with St. Dymphna, as a patron saint of mental health.

Despite a connection with mental distress and illness, Francis distinguishes himself. He is a testament to the proposition that mental illness or mental distress is not an impediment to saintliness. Francis’ transition from exclusion

¹ Richard Rohr, *Eager to Love: The Alternative Way of Francis of Assisi*. (Cincinnati, OH: Franciscan Media, 2014), xv.

² Time Staff, “Millennium Top Ten.” *Time*, Vol. 140, No. 27, 15 October 1992.

³ Donald Spoto, *Reluctant Saint: The Life of St. Francis of Assisi*. (New York, NY: Penguin Compass, 2003), 52.

to exaltation also involves disturbing behaviors. Perhaps if we list these disturbances and not suppress them as we tell the life of this saint, we can learn more about the way that those with mental health challenges live their lives and we can continue to help them with proper treatment.

Francis and Mental Health Challenges

Thomas Merton tells us that “very holy men have been exasperating people and are tiresome to live with.”⁴ The early biographies by Thomas Celano and St. Bonaventure provide examples of how exasperating and disturbing Francis could be. For example, Francis goes AWOL from military service because he heard a voice telling him “you cannot serve two masters”⁵. He hears a crucifix telling him to “rebuild my church.” He goes out to collect stones to begin a building project.⁶ Today some might become concerned about this apparently rash behavior and could question whether Francis was having some sort of command hallucinations.

There are other disturbing public behaviors. Francis removes all his clothes and stands naked in the town square in front of the bishop and others as he disowns and rejects his biological father.⁷ On another occasion, Francis commanded one of his Friars to disassociate himself from money by picking up a coin in his teeth and going outside and placing the coin in cow dung.⁸ At another time, Francis instructed a Friar to tie a rope with a bell around his neck while another Friar dragged him through the streets shouting at Francis that he was a sinner.⁹ Francis once ordered a Friar to preach in his breeches. Then, Francis followed the Friar into the church, also in his breeches.¹⁰ Odd behaviors! Once, Brother Bernard was instructed, while Francis was lying on his back, to put his foot on Francis’ throat and mouth, stepping back and forth three times, all the while mocking Francis.¹¹

Neglected Hygiene and Improper Nutrition

The mentally ill are sometimes depicted as those who are homeless, on the streets looking disheveled, haggard, and refusing shelter. We know that Francis left a financially secure family environment to go begging on the streets. He only allowed himself one piece of clothing and it was tattered. If he received something new, he put tatters on

the outside of it.¹² His nutrition was minimal. Francis refused food at times, and he would often sprinkle dirt on his food to spoil the taste.¹³

We know that Francis had dirty fingers and allowed blood from his fingers to drip on his food.¹⁴ Once when his clothes caught fire, Francis refused to allow his brothers to extinguish it, causing him to sustain burn marks.¹⁵ On another occasion, in the town of Spoleto, Francis kissed a man on the lips who had a disease eating away his lips and cheek.¹⁶

Incarceration and Mental Illness

The American Psychological Association reminds us that a person with a mental health diagnosis is three times more likely than the general population to be incarcerated and that 45% of the prison population have mental health symptoms.¹⁷ Other than his being a POW and being locked up in his own home, there does not appear to be any record of Francis’ imprisonment for his behavior. However, there is a record of Francis’ troubling behavior that could have had legal consequences. When he gave away his father’s clothing and sold a horse without permission, his father had grounds to prosecute. Once Francis took money from his father’s business and gave the money to the parish priest for the repair of his church. The priest, suspecting something unusual, saved the money, which prevented charges being brought against Francis by his father.¹⁸ There was another incident where Francis climbed a roof and was tearing shingles from the building because he didn’t want Friars to own property.¹⁹ And then, on another occasion, Francis refused to allow a building aflame to be extinguished, which frightened his Friars.²⁰ Despite the fact that his positive motives in all these instances were in keeping with the Lord, possible theft, destruction of property, and obstructing firefighting are “chargeable offenses” for which he appears to have been guilty.

Diagnosis

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 5*, or *DSM 5*, is the manual or scientific tool that Psychiatrists, Psychologists, and other Mental Health Professionals use to diagnose and

⁴ Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*. (New York, NY: New Directions Publishing Corp., 2007), 59.

⁵ St. Bonaventure, “Lives of St Francis,” in Marion Habig, O.F.M., ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources* (Cincinnati, OH: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), 637.

⁶ Thomas Celano, *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources*, 70.

⁷ Donald Spoto, *Reluctant Saint: The Life of St. Francis of Assisi*, 52.

⁸ Legend of the Three Companions, *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources*, 923.

⁹ Thomas Celano, *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources*, 366.

¹⁰ Thomas Celano, *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources*, 418.

¹¹ The Little Flowers of St Francis, *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources*, 1307.

¹² St Bonaventure, *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources*, 847.

¹³ St Bonaventure, *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources*, 805.

¹⁴ Legend of the Three Companions, *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources*, 999.

¹⁵ Legend of Perugia, *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources*, 1028.

¹⁶ St Bonaventure, *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources*, 644.

¹⁷ Doris J. James and Lauren E. Glaze, “Mental Health Problems of Prison and Jail Inmates.” *U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report*, September 2006.

¹⁸ St Bonaventure, *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources*, 796.

¹⁹ Legend of the Three Companions, *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources*, 987.

²⁰ Legend of Perugia, *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources*, 1028.

treat patients.²¹ To receive a proper diagnosis, an individual is reviewed across many categories over statistically proven periods of time.

It is tempting to match the behaviors of Francis, as these are recounted in the biographies of Francis, over against symptoms related in the diagnostic manuals today. One must be extremely cautious in this exercise, however. The biographies were written in a style and for a purpose that defies this type of symptomatological analysis. The biographies are hagiographical, that is, they use standard tropes found in the literature of the saints, often with exaggerated stories, events reminiscent of biblical stories, and other tales from ancient literature that recount stories in certain lights and in exaggerated forms for the purpose of accentuating a distance from the “ways of the world” or an attitude focused on heavenly values.

Attempts have been made and suggestions drawn that Francis may have suffered from a bipolar disorder, with manic and depressive symptoms, or that Francis might have suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder. We do not know and we cannot speculate, since the biographical data is an unreliable source for this kind of psychological or psychiatric speculation.

What we do know is that Francis’ behaviors were often disturbing and distressing. Francis’ conversion from adolescent party-boy to saint involved a severe break not from reality but, one might say, into the reality of greed and violence from which his society suffered. To those of his time and to many in our time, it looked like a mental and spiritual breakdown. From another point of view, it might appear as a mental and spiritual breakthrough. Whether breakdown or breakthrough, Francis suffers emotionally and this pain is exhibited in behaviors that are difficult and distressing. In this way, he shares a companionship with those today who suffer from mental illness.

So What?

In a discussion with a physician friend with a bipolar diagnosis and other clinician friends about the question of whether Francis suffered from a mental illness, the general reaction was, “So what?” These professionals reminded me of other major contributing figures to society such as Abraham Lincoln, Judy Collins, Michelangelo, Jane Pauley, Winston Churchill, and many more, who also appeared to suffer with mental health difficulties. Despite their challenges and their distress, they went on to serve humanity with distinction.

Francis exhibited many distressing behaviors. He was thoughtful and introspective about them. He probably asked himself many questions about his behaviors and his feelings. These incidents bonded him with others in distress

in his world. The question for us is this – can we make the connection between the Francis who suffered physically, emotionally, and spiritually and those in the mental health population who suffer stigma, isolation, misunderstanding, and rejection? Can our admiration for Francis turn to advocacy for those who suffer with mental illness?

Hopelessness Needing Acceptance

In talking with friends and other consumers who carry mental illness labels, shame and embarrassment are the emotions most frequently conveyed by them. These same feelings are also identified in the literature.²² We can’t know for sure what Francis felt, but we do know he was called different names: “lunatic, crazy, foolish, drunkard, stupid.”²³ Francis was mocked, jeered, and insulted. People laughed at him as he was begging for food. People spat on him and threw food when he walked the streets.²⁴ He was disconnected and isolated from his family of origin.

It hurts to feel stigmatized. This feeling of difference contributes to a poor self-image and reinforces self-repulsion. We know Francis put his trust in the Lord as he dealt with ridicule. What does a sufferer of mental illness do who is lonely and experiencing ostracism on a daily basis? What can others do who don’t have Francis’ faith and spirituality? Whether one has faith or not, constant reminders of one’s stigma wears one down. It can even cause the person to question if God even exists.

During our last presidential campaign, one candidate made mocking gestures of the disenfranchised while the audience laughed and cheered him on. Which is worse, the gesturer or the one cheering it on? These responses about our disenfranchised population can only stigmatize them further. I point this out not to claim superiority but to indicate that all of us, probably at some point, have been an initiator of jeering and/or spurred it on. We deride others because we are afraid and want to protect ourselves. During his young debauchery playboy days, Francis probably participated in this type behavior. We know Francis disdained lepers, when he was an adolescent. After his conversion, however, Francis became a strong advocate for others with differences. Francis felt it was his responsibility to strengthen the weak. We can only hope that all will someday have a conversion like Francis and be respectful and accepting of anyone who is less fortunate, becoming what Ilea Delio calls “compassion living in the spirit of St. Francis.”²⁵

²² S. Clement, O. Schauman, T. Graham, F. Maggioni, S. Evans-Lacko, N. Bezborodovs, C. Morgan, N. Rusch, J.S.L. Brown and G. Thornicroft, “What Is the Impact of Mental Health-Related Stigma on Help Seeking? A Systematic Review of Quantitative and Qualitative Studies.” *Psychological Medicine*, Vol. 45, No. 1, January 2015.

²³ Donald Spoto, *Reluctant Saint: The Life of St. Francis of Assisi*, 73.

²⁴ St Bonaventure, *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources*, 849.

²⁵ Ilea Delio, OSF, *Compassion Living in the Spirit of St Francis*. (Cincinnati, OH: Franciscan Media, 2011), 86.



To Do List

Each of us has had encounters in various settings such as home, work and within the community with someone with mental health challenges. What can we do? To begin, we must treat everyone with dignity and respect. To me, that involves a communication style modeled on non-judgement, reflective listening and not trying to change the other person.

A recent PBS Newshour episode had different consumers in the mental health community educating others on how they want to be treated. They spoke of wanting eye contact while in conversation. They also mentioned the importance of body language that shows engagement and acceptance. One person interviewed related a story about how some people would throw money at him showing their abhorrence and need to get away from him as quickly as possible. Those suffering from mental health challenges need and expect ordinary forms of closeness, warmth and understanding.

In our jails, 64% of the population have some form of mental illness.²⁶ Early preventive treatment could reduce our prison population significantly. Obtaining parity with behavioral health services and other medical conditions is imperative. Without it, there is a reluctance to pursue treatment due to prohibitive costs.

²⁶ Doris J. James and Lauren E. Glaze, "Mental Health Problems of Prison and Jail Inmates," September 2006.

All of us have had "bad days" at times. We may feel support when someone asks, "Having a bad day?" This is not what those suffering from mental illness are asked. Instead the mental health-challenged are asked, "Have you taken your meds?" Obviously, medications may be a necessary treatment for some individuals and these cannot be neglected. However, medications also have side effects, of which we should be knowledgeable and sympathetic. The use of psychotropic medications is a delicate, but necessary, balancing act of chemical reaction and responses. We should always be sympathetic to the difficulties of adjustment and sometimes to the tedium of side effects and the occasional forgetfulness that plague those who have suffered for many years. The mentally ill deserve our empathy and our respect.

Most, if not all of us, have had some street experience with a transient requesting alms. Clearly safety and security have to be concerns. Avoidance of enabling behavior for alcohol and other drugs is also a concern. What then are some options? A gentle word, a kind smile, looking the individual in the eye are always welcomed. One person told me that when time allows, he invites the requestor to a diner for a cup of coffee or a bite to eat. He remarked on how much he learns during the conversation that unfolds. He said when you meet one transient, you meet one transient because each is different.

When Pope Francis was asked about transients begging on the street, he said not to judge or analyze but give to them anyway.²⁷ Asked if he was concerned that the individual may use the money for alcohol, Pope Francis said this may be his only pleasure in life and do we deny him that opportunity.

St Francis never refused a beggar. St Francis literally lived the cliché "giving the shirt off his back." One time he ran after a thief who stole from the Friars to give him more because Francis said to his brothers that "he [the thief] needs it more than us."²⁸

Would that we could all be like the Pope and St Francis and be able to continually see Christ in others, especially in our interactions with the mental health challenged. Nevertheless, we could try to take a humanitarian approach. By that I mean we can, like Atticus Finch said in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, "put ourselves in that other person's shoes." This approach might guide us to treat others as we would like to be treated. We may even find that the individual responds back.

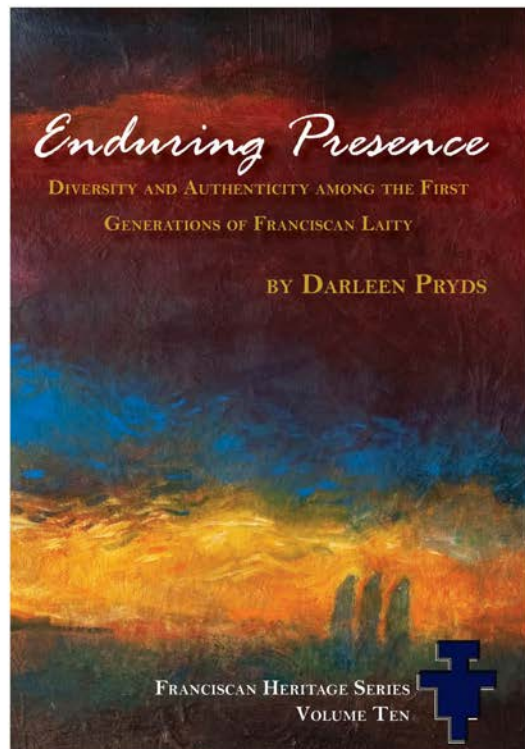
Conclusion

When Francis went to La Verna, he had a mystical experience we call the Stigmata. It is a long way from the

²⁷ Michael J. O'Loughlin, "Pope Francis Says Give to the Homeless, Don't Worry About How They Spend It." *America: The Jesuit Review*, published online at www.americamagazine.org, 28 February 2017.

²⁸ Legend of the Three Companions, *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources*, 912.

Enduring Presence: Diversity and Authenticity Among the First Generations of Lay Franciscans by Darleen Pryds



Written as a companion volume to *Women of the Streets: Early Franciscan Women and their Mendicant Vocation* (Franciscan Institute Publications, 2010), *Enduring Presence* offers more gritty stories of the faith journeys of lay men and lay women who helped create the Franciscan charism in the first generations of the Franciscan movement. Their unique contributions as “somatic theologians” or people who contributed to the Franciscan intellectual tradition by how they lived out the theology and spirituality are mapped out here in this volume and include work, marriage, hospitality, and service as spiritual practice.

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period of stigma that was his early conversion years. Two letters differentiate stigma and stigmata. Just as exclusion and exaltation begin and end with the same couple of letters, all of us begin and end life with the same nakedness. In between our nakedness, we need others. When Francis reached his exalted status with the stigmata, his need for others became more pronounced as he had to rely on his fellow friars for his basic needs. Our challenged mental health population needs our support, if they are going to reach their full potential.

Thomas Merton describes Francis as “mysterious and contemplative.” He also said “we come to know ourselves in God when we have the freedom to be ourselves without guile. We seek the self that God continues to create, the self that is of God and belongs to God.”²⁹

Many in the mental health population are contemplative as they walk alone with God. Oblivious at times to the nuances of life and sometimes struggling with life’s modern complexities and rush, they reflect on the simple meaning of life like Francis did. Can we model this contemplative behavior to gain inner peace and mental wellness?

The strange behaviors and disturbing rituals of Francis give me much inspiration. In showing some of his human

shortcomings, Francis raises his status rather than detracts. Just as St. Bonaventure talks about Jesus descending before ascending³⁰, Francis has to be human with faults before he can rise and be saintly with Christian greatness. It indicates to all of us, and especially to the challenged mental health community and other disenfranchised, that we can aspire to greater things. Francis is a true peacemaker and by identifying distressing behaviors in his life, we may forgive ourselves and learn how to be at peace internally. We can remove shame and embarrassment with Francis. Having faith with Francis, rather than doubt and despair, we can embrace hope within us. Who knows, we may discover that there are others among us like Francis.



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²⁹ Ilia Delio, OSF, *Compassion Living in the Spirit of St Francis*, 31.

³⁰ St. Bonaventure, *Saint Bonaventure Collection*. (Aeterna Press, 2016).

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The Seven Freedoms of St. Clare and the Power of Women in Transformative Health Care Today

By David B. Couturier OFM Cap.

The Challenge of Mission Integration

My task in this article is to talk about mission, its value and its complexities, in the complicated medical field where the volume and velocity of change have never been higher. I'd like to do this from a decidedly Franciscan perspective, because this is our heritage and legacy.¹

There is an inherent challenge in governing a social enterprise, such as a hospital, and managing its dual objectives: providing the *social value* of health care with the *economic value* of a not-for-profit enterprise. Social impact and reducing financial costs are not always easy to balance. The danger we face in our highly competitive markets is the ever-looming threat of "mission drift," when ideals become nothing more than slogans meant to prop up morale but that have very little directive power on how to manage the tensions between the social value and economic value of health care today.

Mission integration is that skill that works that intersection between our social and economic values. It is the passion that drives our institutions, because it is tied to our originating inspiration and purpose for being. Mission is what helps us weather times of confusion and transition. It is what sparks the energy for risk and innovation. Mission builds our organizational culture and the ethics that drives the way we treat one another as professionals dedicated to extraordinary service.

I want to focus in on that "Franciscan feminine" dimension of our Franciscan health care institutions. So much of our talk about mission, our concentration on spirituality and, frankly our art and imagery are focused understandably on Francis of Assisi. Little attention is given to the co-founder of the Franciscan movement, Clare of Assisi, even in communities and institutions that owe much to her prophetic innovations.

Thus, I want to delve into the entrepreneurial genius of St. Clare of Assisi, who followed Francis into his health care ministry with the lepers of Assisi. She was eighteen years old when she did so and he was 12 years her senior. I want to tell her story as an assertive, entrepreneurial and creative young woman that, I believe, warrants calling her a prophet of hope and a proto-feminist of freedom.

I do so for a practical reason. I want to offer Clare as a new beacon of organizational ethics, a feminine marker for branding Franciscan health care networks.

We know how important the feminine is to institutional branding today, especially in the health care industry where women are the primary decision-makers. In fact, a 2015 study by the Grey Health Group found that working mothers serve as decision makers in the health care of their families 94 percent of the time.² Given that reality, CEO Lynn Vos and other experts believe that institutions wanting a bigger slice of the estimated \$6.5 trillion global healthcare pie would be well served to take women's perspectives and experience into consideration as they plan and launch campaigns in the marketplace. We need to be asking – "does our work culture, do our programs, initiatives, and practices take seriously the complex and complicated lives that women engage in as they take up their work as chief medical officers for their families?"

To help us in our thinking, I want to introduce you to the Franciscan imagination of Clare of Assisi. This first Franciscan woman resisted the imposed structures of her day and blazed a trail of innovation and opportunity for women, the poor, the vulnerable and the sick of her day. However, her story is often silent or obscure ("oscura") even among the religious women who owe so much to her prophetic innovations.

Today I want to focus your attention on those feminine innovations from St. Clare that can give energy to your experience of mission, the pictures that give expression to the meaning and purpose of what you do together in governance. I'd like to do two things:

1. I want to speak about Clare of Assisi and what the story of this amazingly entrepreneurial woman meant to women and institutions in the 13th century;
2. I want to speak about institutions today and the implications of Franciscan mission in the 21st century. I want to speak of the "seven freedoms of Clare's life" and how they can bring

¹ This article is based on a public lecture given at the Governance Convocation of the *Hospital Sisters Health Systems* in Springfield, IL (March 1, 2019), "Chiara Oscura: Transformative Health Care and the Franciscan Feminine – Mission Integration Today."

² Lynn O'Connor Vos, "How the Medical Community Lets Women Down," accessed at: <http://fortune.com/2015/12/21/medical-community-fails-women/>; and the original study, The Center for Talent Innovation, "The Power of the Purse: Engaging Women Decision Makers for Healthy Outcomes," April 23, 2015 accessed at: <http://www.talentinnovation.org/publication.cfm?publication=1470>.

a new energy and focus to mission integration in a great hospital system founded on the vision of Franciscan women. I want to comment on the power of the “Franciscan feminine” to transform health care today.

I start with the over-riding conviction that the Franciscan movement, founded by St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi, began as a result of a *health care crisis* in the 13th century. The Franciscan movement erupted as a theological, pastoral, and medical response to the problem of leprosy and the inadequate and inhumane response of the Church and the medical community, such as it was, in Assisi at the time. Francis’ embrace of the leper marked not just a significant point in his personal conversion but, it should be noted, it also opened up a new ethical space by which persons suffering from Hansen’s disease would be treated in a more humane and relational way. In repairing the Church of San Damiano and turning it into a hospice where the “Lesser Brothers and Sisters” worked together to bring relief and comfort to the lepers of their day, Francis and Clare developed a new attitude regarding the care of the sick, one that was highly personal, deeply social, imaginative and compassionate.³ They built a fraternal life with those once shunned as society’s “permissible victims.”

Clare and the Franciscan Feminine⁴

While Francis was part of the merchant or working class of Assisi, Clare, twelve years younger than Francis, grew up with the status and privileges of the upper class as part of the nobility of Assisi. She lived a life that was protected, supervised, curfewed and controlled by the men in her family. That is until the day she decides to escape and forfeit her privileged lifestyle and become, at the age of eighteen, the first woman in the Franciscan movement, vowing absolute poverty and determined to live as austere and as generous a lifestyle as characterized Francis who was twelve years her senior.

She steals away in the middle of Palm Sunday night and walks through “the door of death,” (the castle door that was only used to transport dead bodies out of the castle and as an emergency escape during times of civil unrest). She makes her way to Francis, receives her tonsure and becomes the first woman in the Franciscan movement.

Her male relatives reacted violently to this brazen escape of a young woman trading in her nobility for a life among lepers. Eyewitness accounts from the time detail

Clare’s amazing courage and fierce determination to stand up to the violent methods her relatives used to bring her back to the castle. Those efforts failed. Clare wanted off the social grid.

Clare extracted herself from the domestic and protected life that nobility required of her. She refuses to follow the script of women in the Middle Ages that required women to be spoken for, curfewed, and accompanied. She refused to be bound by the gender norms of an arranged marriage and so she released herself to take on the total freedom of absolute poverty.

She had seen and heard Francis of Assisi from the window of her room that overlooked the square in front of the Cathedral of San Ruffino, where Francis often preached. It has been long held that she went searching for Francis, but historical research now tells us that it was Francis who went in search of the Lady Clare. He had heard of her holiness; he had listened to stories of her service to and love for the poor already at the tender age of sixteen. Clare’s holiness, goodness and compassion were well known throughout Assisi. Francis wanted to meet her.

They met in secret because her family would never have allowed her access to the strange son of Pietro Bernardone. As nobles they already had had experiences of the Bernardones’ strange plots to overthrow the noble class and establish the merchant class as a new form of entrepreneurial nobility in Assisi. Clare’s family had already had to escape for their lives to Perugia when the merchants of Assisi fomented an armed rebellion to overtake control of city government. No. They would not have allowed Clare access to this delusional son of their sworn enemy. They were concerned enough with Clare’s resistance to an arranged marriage, a polite and civil gesture that would solidify the family’s standing in the city and secure her inheritance for future use.

By the time Clare got to Francis and had received her tonsure, she had already given away her fortune and to the poor, no less. This was a gesture that her relatives could not stomach. As one of three girls, with no male heirs, the women had some control over their fortune but the men were used to steering women in the right direction, in the way the men wanted the women to act. Clare had other ideas.

She wanted to follow Francis and his way of absolute poverty, without limit and with no restrictions or special conditions because she was a woman. If men had to sell all that they had and give it to the poor, this is what Clare would do. The men in the family might have tolerated Clare joining a local abbey where her money could be held in a dowry in case she ever left the abbey and returned to her senses. But now, the money was gone. The land she owned was sold off and the money given to the poor, a humiliating gesture, for sure.

³ Daniel Sulmasy, MD, PhD, “The Blood of Christ: Towards a Franciscan Spirituality of Healthcare,” in Elise Saggau, OSF, ed. *Franciscans and Health Care: Facing the Future* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2001), 29-43.

⁴ A fuller presentation of Clare’s unique spirituality of the feminine can be found in my new book, *The Voice of Victims. The Voice of the Crucified. A Franciscan Perspective* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2019), “Clare as Proto-Feminist of Freedom,” 55-74.

For her protection, Francis brought Clare to the Benedictine Sisters at San Paolo della Abbadesse. The abbey was under the protection of Bishop Guido of Assisi, who had to be in on the plot to spirit Clare out of town. She had to go through the gate that the bishop's guard protected and only the bishop could have ordered the guard to let her pass unaccompanied at night.

She stayed there eight days, working as a servant. Clare did not like it. She did not want to be a monastic nun. She wanted Francis' lifestyle of absolute poverty and service. The monastery was under the Bishop's jurisdiction. In 1198, Pope Innocent III issued a ruling prohibiting under pain of excommunication anyone using violence there who was not acting on behalf of the bishop. It was Francis' intention to keep Clare safe there, at least for a short while.

However, the nuns did not want trouble with Clare's rich and powerful family. The family came to get her; there was some violence, but Clare invoked the right to sanctuary by holding onto the altar cloths. The family abandoned their quest to bring her home because of her own "unconquerable perseverance." They were stunned when Clare showed them her tonsure, a formal act of "being in religion."

Her sister, Beatrice, reveals that Clare sold her entire inheritance and gave the money to the poor. Clare and her sisters had the family inheritance: not just money, but property. Her relatives wanted that property. They wanted to buy Clare out. She believed the money belonged to the poor. Therefore, she would not give it to a religious community, as the Benedictines would. She would not hold onto it, in case her religious life didn't work out. She sold the property outright and gave all of the money to the poor.

The Conversion of Clare's Sister, Catherine (Agnes)

To make matters even worse, sixteen days after Clare's conversion, her sister, Catherine (later Agnes) follows Clare. The men in her family were even more furious and determined to get Catherine back. Having lost Clare to the insanity of Francis' movement, they were dead set on keeping Catherine from a similar fate. The account we have of their brutal efforts to get Catherine off the mountain of the convent where she and Clare were held up are terrifying.

Clare's uncle leads a posse of seven knights to the convent. They kick and beat Catherine bloody. They are literally dragging her down the mountainside, tearing out her hair in the process. Catherine screams to Clare for help and then suddenly something miraculous happens. Catherine becomes too heavy to drag anymore. The knights can't move her. Her uncle is ready to beat her to death, when his arm becomes paralyzed in pain. The men abandon the near-dead Catherine. She recovers and Francis tonsures her hair. She becomes an official penitent in the Church.

Why were the men so angry? As in all things, follow the money. As the daughters of a rich merchant, they inherited

a great deal of money and property. The men wanted that money and property for themselves. Having already lost Clare's fortune, they had no intention of losing Catherine's fortune in this silly religious fanaticism.

Matters would only "get worse" for them. Eventually, Clare's mother (Ortulana) would join the community with Clare, as well as her sister (Beatrice) some eighteen years later.

For the twenty-seven years that Clare outlived Francis, she never outgrew his memory or gave up on the fight to be an austere and poor community like the one Francis first created when he founded the Franciscan movement. She saw herself and her sisters as equal members of the First Order and of the original Franciscan movement. At the end of her life, she went on a hunger strike in order to protect her absolute poverty but also to secure the access her sisters had to the brothers of the First Order.

Canon law was being interpreted in such a way that would have restricted access of Franciscan brothers to the Lesser Sisters. This was inconceivable to Clare. How could sisters live without their brothers; how could the brothers survive in fraternity without their sisters? One needs to remember that, by this time, Clare had lived decades within the spirituality of Francis' "cosmic order," a cosmology of a "universal fraternity" that included lesser sisters and brothers, brother sun and sister moon, and mother/sister earth. One could not conceive of a world where brother sun refused to acknowledge or work in harmony with sister moon. Neither could Clare make sense of a Franciscan movement where access between sisters and brothers was rejected, neglected or canonically discontinued. Her hunger strike was a forceful and highly feminine way that she could reclaim the Franciscan movement as a bisexual reality, a gendered equality between women and men.

One sees Clare's radical courage and cleverness in using her body as a tool for resistance. Like Francis who regularly used his body as an important signifier of powerful doctrinal claims (i.e. standing naked in the public square, in the snow and on his deathbed), so Clare used her own body to shame the Church into recognizing and respecting the radical nature of discipleship for women.

She knew that men saw women's bodies as sites of nurturing and caring. Women's breasts fed the children. Women's hands tended the sick and the needy. Women's bodies rocked children to sleep and held the bodies of those in grief or distress to demonstrate kindness, compassion, and mutual charity.

A woman's body "on strike," in deep fasting, in resistance and protest was unthinkable and especially hard on men to comprehend or accept. Men are accustomed to "feminine space" as nurturing and giving, consoling and compassionate. They are not used to women's bodies that withdraw or withhold nurturance. It makes them sad, an-

gry, confused and paralyzed, so powerful are the contradictory signs being displayed.⁵

Clare knows this and plays it masterfully. She cannot protest in the streets. The men have cloistered her. She cannot preach from the pulpits. She cannot be ordained. She speak, however, from her bed and her chapel with the strongest force she has, her feminine body. Clare has fought her whole life so that her body, as a disciple of the Lord, is seen in a light and with a meaning that *she* gives it. She reads it in light of the Gospel and with her eyes constantly and intently on the Lord. She is not reading her body in secular terms or outside the biblical frame in which she has been educated. She is reading her body eucharistically and so she fasts to make a point about communion and the common good between with her brothers for the sake of the Lesser Sisters.⁶

She will refuse to eat until the Pope provides assurance that her sisters can live poverty as absolutely and as fully as the men do and that her sisters will have equal and unfettered access to the brothers, at her discretion and not by consent of some male cardinal protector.

Finally, Clare was granted "the privilege of poverty." She won the argument and saved her community only hours before she died.

The Seven Freedoms of Clare and the Transformative Mission of Franciscan Health Care Today

Now, let's get practical. What does all of this interesting historical material say to the challenges of mission integration in Franciscan institutions today? What difference does all this make to the way we do business and provide a truly transformative experience in our systems? Let me see if I can take the Franciscan values that emerge in Clare's amazing life and translate them into something that might be useful and helpful in the health care workplace.

Clare developed seven freedoms for herself and her sisters. A short meditation on each is in order.

1. Freedom to find God in her voice and through her experience

Clare grew up as a noblewoman in a rich and influential family whose castle overlooked the square in front of the cathedral of San Rufino. Her life was scripted by the conventions, customs and rituals that shaped cultural life in the 12th and 13th centuries. She learned the domestic arts and participated in them according to the level of her nobility (the servants did the hard work and drudgeries of daily life). She was educated not for debate and mutual conver-

sations but with the goal of securing a strong and secure husband. She was her father's property and he would determine who she would marry. Her adolescence had an obvious trajectory toward an arranged marriage and the repetition of the domestic arts she had learned in her family with the children and the heirs she was expected to bear. The God to whom she would have learned to pray was a God who blessed these cultural and religious requirements.

Clare, for her part, saw something else and hoped for something more for her life. She couldn't be squeezed into the domestic constraints of noble life. She rejected an arranged marriage. She was an amazingly prayerful woman, even as an adolescent. Her concerns went beyond the simple aspirations of an adolescent girl. Her thoughts revolved around the poor and their needs. She spent her "free time" taking care of them.

Clare's first freedom is to find God in her own voice and through her experiences and not simply to mimic the customs and conventions of her time. By the time she was eighteen, she had already such a rich, multiple and diverse experience with God that she realizes that she must make a break and a decisive one, at that.

Her experience of God does not allow half-hearted measures or simplistic maneuvers that would only accommodate some spiritual nod toward the divine. Her experience of God is radical and deep and it demands everything from her. She willingly gives it.

Palm Sunday night demonstrates this. She is the master of its intrigue; she is the scriptwriter of its ingenuity. She knows the inner workings of the castle in which she lives; she knows the creaking sounds of its movements. From her castle window, she also knows her surroundings, peoples' usual comings and goings.

She knows when and how she is to move. Amazingly, she knows that she is going to dispose of all her belongings, all her holdings and all her inheritance *before* she arrives for tonsure at the hands of St. Francis. She manufactures this radical maneuver, because it is *her* decision and no other's to follow Francis completely, without hesitation and with no turning back. She knows what she wants and she is going to achieve it, for the love of God.

What does this freedom imply for the Franciscan feminine in Franciscan institutions today? It asks us questions:

- Do we take women's experiences seriously in all our institutions, units, departments and programs? Do we take *all* women's experiences seriously? Do we regularly consult and converse about the increasingly complicated lives women in our health care network are expected to negotiate as professionals and patients?
- Are diverse groups included, empowered and treated fairly at all stages of the work cycle?

⁵ Rudolf Bell, *Holy Anorexia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

⁶ Noel Muscat OFM, "I will always Defend You: St. Clare of Assisi and the Eucharist," accessed at: http://i-tau.com/franstudies/articles/Clare_&_Eucharist.pdf

- In what departments or programs are women under-represented and perhaps underpaid?
- Do we name and follow through on the diverse needs of women today?
- Are we focused on the specific and distinct health needs of women and girls in all our social communities? Does the larger community understand and accept a specific commitment to women's health care needs?
- Does the imagery, iconography, art of our hospitals reflect the "Franciscan feminine" and engage both women and men in the power of the Franciscan feminine to innovate and create new ethical spaces for dialogue in a polarized world?

2. Freedom to live an intentional life of compassion and feminine "mutual charity"

We have hinted above that what Clare is pursuing above all is an *intentional life*. She is seeking to live a life of her own making, following pursuits of her own persuasions. She has lived all her life by the dictates of culture and convention. She has done what was required of her as a good Christian noble woman of faith. She wants more, not against the Church but deep within it. She does not intend to walk away from the faith in order to pursue her dreams. Her dreams lie deeply within the Church. They are so deep that not even the men and women of her time recognize their source. It will take time for the people and priests of her age to understand or appreciate how Clare's intentions make up a radical new spiritual charism in the Church; they speak and have deep resonance with the mystical traditions found in Eucharistic theology. Clare has insights into communion from a young age that will only bear fruit in generations to come.

Thus, Clare seeks to live an intentional life of compassion and a feminine form of mutual charity. As we have noted above, the forms of religious life current in her time were designed for hierarchy, the separation of powers, for control of the passions and the smooth conduct of the habits of religious living. Effective religious were taught to live by the law and order of religious decorum and to find God's will precisely and unequivocally in obedience to the commands of a religious superior.

Clare finds something else. She is abbess in title only; she runs her convent as a lesser sister who wishes to serve her sisters in humility and generosity. She builds that form of leadership and governance in deep meditation on the Incarnation of Christ and his service of "mutual charity."

This second freedom of *intentionality* speaks to the culture we create to provide for and respect new forms of *feminine agency* at all levels of our governance. Are the processes and procedures by which we consider options, discuss plans, and make decisions designed for "mutual

charity" (as a guiding principle) or are they still controlled by subtle dynamics of hierarchy and control? Do we foster leadership and governance models that are collaborative, cooperative, dialogical, and transformative in the best tradition of Franciscan "servant leadership?" Are women (and men) satisfied with the quality of *feminine agency* across all units and in all levels of the hospital system in our care?

3. Freedom to live a life of simplicity, outside the customs and norms expected of women

What Clare was looking for when she went through the "Door of Death" into that moonlit Palm Sunday night was the exhilarating fresh air of freedom. What enticed Clare into that break was what she saw in Francis' life and in the life of his brothers, as she watched them in the square and as she traveled to and from the churches of Assisi. She saw their simple freedom, the freedom to live in poverty, demanding nothing of anyone, depriving no one of anything. These were men who were generous because they had stopped requiring anything of others except kindness. They refused to fight for anything, because they were satisfied with whatever they had and hopeful for whatever might come from a good and provident God.

Clare knew the expectations placed on her from a very young age: an arranged marriage, a brood of healthy children, domestic chores, pleasant conversations, attendance at church, genial relations with servants, a protected life, an observed existence controlled by powerful men who promised (but sometimes didn't deliver) on the protections that women required.

Clare, on the other hand, wanted the air to breathe, the sun to warm her, the fields to feed her, and brothers and sisters who could converse with her about things that mattered to her: life and death, heaven and hell, saints and sinners, joys and anxieties, the Incarnate Christ and the Eucharist.

This third freedom speaks to a style of life that promotes a radical feminine simplicity, outside of the complex, complicated, exhausting and stress-inducing conventions that many women, especially poor and minority women, are expected to maintain (without complaint). One thinks of the unequal burdens that women are expected to take on in the home and in the workplace, as women take up the greatest portion of child care and elder care in their families, as well as an equal or more-than-equal share in the workplace. This third freedom requires us to think of women's work-life balance or, probably better-said, work-life rhythms, since balance might be a bridge too far. How does the hospital system provide for flexible work arrangements? Are women subtly penalized in their promotions for using more flex-time arrangements than face-time arrangements than men, even though women are society's expected primary care-givers at home?

This third freedom challenges us to look at the processes and procedures that support female advancement in the workplace by discussing varied ways that women can satisfy the social values and economic values of the workplace.

4. Freedom to live and express a direct feminine experience of the divine, using feminine expressions, signs and rituals

It amazes us how long it took for Clare to be listened to by those assigned to protect her and her community. The bishops and cardinal and even some of the lesser brothers found it next to impossible to understand the signs and rituals that Clare was trying to shape from within her feminine understanding of Franciscan discipleship. Clare's governance of her community was decidedly feminine. The imagery she used for her own mystical experiences, besides being deeply Eucharistic, emerged from feminine intuitions about intimacy, closeness, engagement, conversation, and caring. Long before the works of Gilligan and Belenky find their arrival in feminine consciousness, there are women like Clare already positing spiritual images that cross and bend gender enough to break open new insights about the Incarnation, Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord.⁷

In her monastery of San Damiano, Clare constructs a world where women can imagine God from within their own feminine experiences and can test these out because Clare has created a new ethical space where women can practice the arts of feminine discourse, dialogue, compassionate and attentive listening, reconciliation and abiding patience through difficult times.

The fourth freedom goes directly to the spiritual needs of women in all their richness and diversity. Do our hospitals provide programs that match women's spiritual needs? Do our hospitals provide for a holistic assessment of the spiritual needs of patients and treat them with requisite respect? Do we provide patients with what we believe we owe them to fulfill our "contracts" as health providers or do we supply them with what emerges as the most *caring* way to offer a holistic healing experience?

5. Freedom to live a spirituality of feminine strength that challenges cultural conventions of women as "the weaker sex"

Among her most amazing but often overlooked positive characteristics is Clare's spirituality of feminine strength. Clare proved herself a formidable adversary to popes and cardinals who underplayed or tried to undercut her com-



mitment to full Franciscan discipleship. She refused to be protected from Francis' absolute poverty. She refused any sort of exception or exemption, simply because she was a woman. She wanted and intended to follow Christ, not half-heartedly or half way. She saw nothing in the Gospel that shrunk the discipleship of women and she was not going to let ecclesiastical customs or social conventions get in the way of her resolution to prove that women were just as strong as men (if not stronger) and women could follow Christ as fully and as personally as men.

Clare challenged the overwhelming cultural convention that women were the "weaker sex" in the Church. Her fasting and her disciplines were just as strong and of even longer duration than most of the men's. She knew the Incarnate Christ; she revered his Gospel and his commands; she celebrated his humility, especially in the Eucharist. She made the Eucharist the centerpiece of her approach to feminine governance. She knew that Christ in the Eucharist was humble. She also knew that, under that

⁷ Carol Gilligan, *In A Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1984); M.F. Belenky, M.F., B.M. Clinchy, N.R. Goldberger and J.M. Tarule. 1986. *Women's Ways of Knowing*. Basic Books, NY.

form of bread and wine, Christ was strong. Clare's humility should never be confused with weakness.

Francis had taught the brothers that Franciscan strength was to be found in minority, in taking the last place and in serving the needs of those who were vulnerable and on the margins of society. Francis found his strength in the paradoxes of perfect joy, when he came to a friary late on a cold winter's night and was refused entrance. Even after announcing himself as Francis, the founder and minister of the Order, he was told not to disturb the community, to go away and not come back.

Francis found his strength in the absolute minority of forgiveness and in accepting the event as humbly and generously as he could in imitation of the rejection that Jesus felt out of love on the Cross.

Clare wanted that sort of strength, that kind of humility, and she practiced it in the chapters and discussions with her sisters.

This fifth freedom requires our hospitals to relish and delight in the multiple forms of *feminine strength* and to disown and dislodge all forms of sexism and harassment. Our work cultures must be free from all forms of sexism, both violent and (so-called) benevolent forms. All should be able to live in a work culture that is free of harassment and exploitation, with no privileges or exemptions given for seniority or age. Assertive attention to equity in promotion and advancement, especially among underrepresented minorities (especially women of color) should not be a begrudging accommodation, but a positive outflow of our Franciscan feminine mission.

6. Freedom to have economic independence and construct relationships of collaboration and generosity.

Of all the dimensions of the Franciscan movement that women and men misunderstand the most, it is the reasons and motives for Franciscan poverty. Too many people outside the Orders and some within think that the reason for poverty is penitential and ascetical. That view holds that we vow poverty to castigate the world in some way, declaring it evil, wicked and sinful, largely because of its material temptations. It holds that the world is largely, if not wholly wicked or unhealthy, because it traps us in material goods and sensual desires. Franciscanism understands poverty differently. Franciscans understand that the real purpose of poverty is relational, not ascetical.

This is what Clare learned from her window overlooking the cathedral square. She wanted a world of sisterly and brotherly relationships. She had learned that lesson long before she met Francis. She was already recognized as a holy young girl long before she ever met Francis. She already had a long and deep devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and the humility of Christ found therein. As a young girl, she had developed a strong incarnational spirituality

that joined all humanity and, indeed, all creation into a deep communion with God revealed as Father, Son, and Spirit.

The economic dependence foisted upon her by the customs and conventions of Assisi blocked her solidarity with the poor. She wanted to do more than offer them charity from the coffers of her rich father and uncles. She wanted to love the poor. She wanted to be compassion and mercy for them. She wanted to be the incarnate iteration of Christ's kindness in the Assisi of her time. She would never be able to do that in the protected and arranged world that she was handed. And so, she broke free and began to create an economic independence that would allow her to express her feminine love, compassion and generosity with her unique tenderness.

This sixth freedom of economic independence requires concerted and successful efforts at the elimination of all wage gaps between women and men, especially those that are part of a legacy from times when the ladders to feminine success and agency were too short for success and parity. We need to study these wage gaps especially in starting salaries, since they impact a woman and a family's whole life cycle.

Presumed in this freedom is the commitment to a Franciscan "fraternal economy" with its key values of transparency, equity, dialogue, accountability, solidarity and austerity. We will not develop the kind of relational economy that women want and need as long as our financial systems are opaque, unequal, non-accountability, and resistant to participation by all parties, especially the poor most affected by our decisions.

7. Freedom to develop a spirituality of the feminine body that upends the masculine definition of women's body as "evil" and "tempting." Focuses on women's bodies as "holy places" and not simply the site for men's desires.

We know the ancient and modern versions by which the feminine body is defined solely in terms of evil.⁸ Christian literature is surfeited with doctrines and documents that recount the power of the woman's body to tempt men and lead the world into sin. We know how easily women's bodies are "objectified" and reduced simply to being "play-things" and objects of men's desire, always under the voyeuristic glance and authoritarian control of men who are doing the viewing. One of the great advances of feminism is not have to have women's bodies defined by men's desires. One of the great leaps forward of the so-called first and second waves of feminism in the 20th century was the

⁸ Suman Chakraborty, Suman "Women, Serpent and Devil: Female Devilry in Hindu and Biblical Myth and its Cultural Representation: A Comparative Study". *Journal of International Women's Studies*, January 2017, 18(2), 156-165. Available at: <http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol18/iss2/11>

description of the social geography of feminine life, so that feminine bodies were no longer to be seen as men's territory, wholly controlled by them, but were to be seen as a woman's "site," defined for feminine meaning and ultimate purpose.⁹

One might argue that one of the advances that Clare's embodied mysticism suggests is that women's bodies are brought out from under the imagery of women's bodies as "evil" and "tempting." Instead, we learn that women's bodies are "holy places" capable of divine embraces, caresses, holy sensations that unite women to Christ and to the world.

What differentiates Clare's insights from much of today's feminist description is that Clare sees women's bodies as both sensual and holy sites. Clare refuses to allow her body to become a slate on which any man (or woman), company or corporation can write whatever they wish and define however much they want the limits and parameters of her deepest and most transcendent desires. Clare challenges the 21st century's reconstructions of gender by claiming the feminine body as simultaneously sensual and sacramental.

This last freedom requires us to treat women's lives, their issues, concerns, and challenges with a positive and holy respect. We should honor women's needs and encourage their expertise. No moment in a woman's life should be demeaned or disregarded and none of those moments should be an obstacle to full agency and promotion in the organization. I am thinking of the subtle ways that pregnancy discrimination plays into our perceptions of a woman's commitment to her job in many of our institutions.

Conclusion

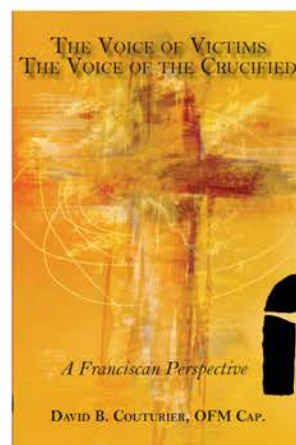
Clare of Assisi was an amazing woman. Her medieval mind was courageous, strong, forceful, empathic, consoling, compassionate and wonderfully feminine in imitation of the humble Christ and his simple disciple, Francis.

She provides a powerful model of the "Franciscan feminine" that I believe can offer a rich resource for sustaining and developing the amazing mission that our Franciscan institutions have today and that we wish to bring to new levels of authentic care in the years to come.



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⁹ The Boston Women's Health Book Collaborative, *Our Bodies, Ourselves* revised (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011).



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DAVID B. COUTURIER, OFM CAP.

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The Tau Paintings of Giuseppe Menozzi

By John Martone

As we learn from the Canticle of St. Francis, the things of this world are traces that lead us to God, vestiges. For Bonaventure, the contemplation of nature in its beauty was the first stage in the soul's journey (*itinerarium*) to God, a journey that moved progressively inward and upward. Reminding us that the Greek word for God (*theós*) derives from *theásthai*, to look, the contemporary theologian Anselm Grün, writes that beauty can offer the basis of a spiritual practice, for beauty always has something to do with God.¹

Franciscan poverty bares us to the beauty of a contingent world, the beauty of what barely is, and it is both astonishing and hardly surprising that the saint of poverty bequeathed a culture. This is surely the experience of anyone who stands below Giotto's frescoes in Assisi, where the boundary between the artistic and spiritual experience vanishes.

This Franciscan culture flourishes today in the work of Giuseppe Menozzi, one of Italy's great contemporary artists and a deeply Franciscan visionary, whom the Encyclopedia of Italian Art compares to Van Gogh and Turner.² His artistic career seems to have followed the stages of Dante's *Commedia*. His early cycles of paintings, *I cavalieri dell'apocalisse* (*The Horsemen of the Apocalypse*) has its origins in personal struggle and an unflinching look into the infernos of recent history. Perhaps nowhere more deeply than in his shocking *Sarajevo pagina rossa* (*Sarajevo red page*), a Guernica for our time, expressing the horrific war crimes of sexual violence during the war in Yugoslavia. But, in the depths of horror, Menozzi, like Dante, reorients himself and the starkest realism yields to an interior gaze. In 1996, after visiting the Franciscan sites, Menozzi abandoned representational work altogether in order to pursue an interior journey, and the *Tau* begins to appear on every canvas – the *Tau* of St. Francis, with its historical origins especially significant to Menozzi, as one who has come through:

Then he called to the man dressed in linen with the writer's case at his waist, saying to him: Pass through the city [through Jerusalem] and a T on the foreheads of those who moan and groan over all the abominations that are practiced within it. (*Ez. 9,3*)

At first, to encounter one of Menozzi's paintings is to be ravished by pure color, and for many that would be enough, but in true Franciscan spirit he calls his recent work *Nuove*



Giuseppe Menozzi, *Dialoghi (Dialogues)*

piccole verità or "New little truths," and speaks to us a distinctive visual language, if we look closely. Although he references the postmodern tradition of "white paintings" (the *Tau* in these paintings is white, on white), the image stands out in a paradoxically humble way from the background, to remind us that it is also the ground of the painting. It is the source of a white light that contains all colors.

Menozzi never lets us forget that these paintings are taking us on a journey. Often, in paintings like *Dialoghi* (*Dialogues*, fig. 1) a vertical white path, descends and ascends from and to the *Tau*, reminiscent of Christ's torso in the San Damiano cross, with those present at the crucifixion to either side. The *Tau* orients us, generating and resolving formal tensions in the work, as we clearly see in *Punto d'incontro* (Meeting Point, fig. 2), where a white crossroads reverberates with *Tau*, or in stunning *Grazia* (Grace, fig. 3)



Giuseppe Menozzi, *Punto d'incontro* (Meeting Point)

where the Tau's white light seems to infuse all life from its beginning.

People of Giotto's time brought their own way of looking to the typology of his frescoes, and we bring our own to Menozzi's paintings: not the logic of scholasticism but the associative freedom of Bachelard's *reverie*. Certainly, Francis would understand this way of beholding art by opening ourselves to it — didn't that magnificent icon, the cross of San Damiano *speak to him* in this way? And so, too, Clare beheld that same cross for forty years, until it became her mirror. As we dream upon and contemplate Menozzi's tides and flowerings of color and light in *Oltre il sogno* (Beyond the Dream, fig. 4), images of the human face arise, subtly as a pearl on a white forehead, to borrow Dante's image. At the end of Dante's poems, human presences in heaven emerge and recede in a kaleidoscopic spectrum, and so we might discover in Menozzi's *Il segno trovato* (The Sign Found) a rose window bearing the evangelists and seraphim. Again and again, he fills us with amazement *that we see*.

A sun was born on the earth, Dante tells us of the birth of Francis, *Nacque al mondo un sole*. That Franciscan sun



Giuseppe Menozzi, *Grazia* (Grace)

is, to paraphrase Psalm 36, the light in which Menozzi sees light. His non-figurative art is an art of surrender, of poverty, a gift that lets us see, and what we behold with from our own spiritual poverty transforms us.

Bibliographic note

Two collections of Menozzi's Tau paintings have been published in Italy, *Tau/Tau*, Mantua: Il Rio, 2018 and *Giuseppe Menozzi, Nuove piccole verità*, Montecatini Terme: Studio d'Arte Moderna il Fiore, 2017. Although the text is exclusively in Italian, a good representation of Menozzi's work can be viewed at his personal site, <http://giuseppemenozzi.com/>



John Martone is a poet and publisher



Giuseppe Menozzi, *Oltre il sogno (Beyond the Dream)*

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Hearing the Voice of Our Elder Sister: Ursula de Jesús

By Kevin C.A. Elphick, OSF

During his papacy, Pope Francis has repeatedly reminded us to listen¹ to the voices of the poor and marginalized. In a letter addressed to the young people of the Church, Pope Francis wrote: "The Church also wishes to listen to your voice.... Make your voice heard..."² He upbraids a Church "which so often failed to hear all those cries ..." ³ those voices which echoed Christ in their shared suffering. Emphasizing "especially those marginalized and excluded," the Holy Father urges that we "give them a voice, listen to their stories, learn from their experiences and understand..."⁴ If the Lord hears the cry of the poor (Psalms 34:7), are we not likewise obligated to listen keenly and attentively?

We have the unique opportunity to hear the voice of an Afro-Peruvian Franciscan of the 17th century, who began her life born into slavery. Her voice is preserved in the diary she kept after she entered a Poor Clare convent. Her diary is an opportunity to hear her voice from among the poorest and most oppressed, shaped by her experience of slavery, as well as her Franciscan vocation and profession. Ursula de Jesús was born to her enslaved, 20 year old mother in Peru in 1604. Now, some 400 years later, Professor Nancy van Deusen of Queens University has published an English translation of Ursula's diary, giving us the unique opportunity to newly hear Ursula's vital voice. In the introduction to the translation, van Deusen notes: "Until now, the life of the religious servant (*donada*) Ursula de Jesús (1604-66) has remained one of the best kept secrets of colonial history. She could easily have remained in relative obscurity..."⁵ Instead we can now hear her voice and tell-

ing experiences recorded in her diary, truly a treasure for contemporary Franciscans and a contribution to the field of women's studies. Emphasizing the uniqueness of Ursula's writings, van Deusen observes: "Ursula de Jesús may be considered extraordinary because she is the only known woman of color urged by her confessors to record her mystical experiences."⁶ Regarding Ursula's diary, Valerie Benoist notes that: "Today her narrative constitutes the first known *vida* [sacred biography] dictated by an Afro-Latin American woman in colonial Spanish America."⁷ Roberta McKelvie had observed that "Franciscan women's history, whether Third Order or Poor Clare history, clearly is under told."⁸ She advocates that we "move toward repairing the imbalance of traditional scholarship in that area."⁹ Ursula's diary represents an invaluable, restored gift of Franciscan women's history and gives voice to what otherwise might be forgotten experiences within the Franciscan family.

Ursula spent the first six years of her life in the household of Gerónima de los Rios, her mother's owner. In 1612, she was separated from her mother and was sent as a young girl to live with the *beata*, Luisa de Melgarejo Sotomayor until 1617. During these formative years, Ursula would learn from Luisa, a Franciscan tertiary, and grow to share her spirituality. Prior to Ursula's arrival, the missionary friar, St. Francis Solano (1549 - 1610) had served as Luisa's spiritual director. Luisa was also an intimate friend and confidant of St. Rose of Lima, being present even at her deathbed, where she brought comfort to the saint's final hours by playing the guitar and singing to her. She would later testify in Rose's beatification process. The same year that Rose died, Ursula was sent to the Convent of Santa Clara, indentured to Gerónima's niece there, Inés del Pulgar. Ursula remained a slave until 1645 when one of the Convent's nuns purchased her freedom for her. Two years later, Ursula would make her solemn profession there as a Poor Clare on the Feast of the Holy Trinity. At the direction of her confessor, Ursula kept a journal of her religious experiences, writing from 1650 until 1661.¹⁰

¹ The Interim Director of the Vatican Press Office, Alessandro Gisotti, recently characterized it this way: "The theme of listening is very present in this pontificate... In Spanish they call it 'la terapia de la escucha,' listening therapy." <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2019-01/world-youth-day-2019-interview-gisotti-pope-francis-lunch.html>

² Letter of his Holiness, Pope Francis to Young People on the Occasion of the Presentation of the Preparatory Document of the 15th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170113_lettera-giovani-doc-sinodo.html

³ Homily at the Holy Mass and the Consecration of an Altar at the Cathedral of Santa Maria La Antigua, Panama on the 26th of January 2019. <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-01/pope-francis-panama-wyd-2019-cathedral-mass-homily-text.html>

⁴ Greeting of his Holiness, Pope Francis to Participants of the Fortune-Time Global Forum https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/december/documents/papa-francesco_20161203_impresditi.html

⁵ Nancy van Deusen, *The Souls of Purgatory: The Spiritual Diary of a Seventeenth-Century Afro-Peruvian Mystic, Ursula de Jesús* (Albuquerque:

University of New Mexico Press, 2004), 1.

⁶ Ibid., 50.

⁷ "From Sister Ursula de Jesús' Colonial 'Imagined Community' to Modern Day Communities She Has Inspired" in the Journal, *Contra Corrente*, Vol. 14, Num. 2 (Spring 2017), 239.

⁸ Roberta Agnes McKelvie, O.S.F., *Retrieving a Living Tradition: Angelina of Montegiove, Franciscan, Tertiary, Beguine* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1997), 7.

⁹ Ibid. 9.

¹⁰ van Deusen, 5.



photo courtesy of Bernardo Mattos Battifora, Venerable Úrsula de Cristo

Themes in Her Diary

Reading Ursula's diary, one should not expect to find a diary like to that of St. Teresa of Ávila or St. Faustina Kowalska. Nancy van Deusen forthrightly describes Ursula's diary as "unpolished."¹¹ Similar to the spirituality of Mother Juana de la Cruz (1481-1534), Ursula frequently recounts colorful incidents in which she directly intercedes on behalf of souls in Purgatory.¹² Her spirituality also embraces heavenly voices which give her guidance and support. As a mystical experience, Ursula's voices are not dissimilar to the guiding voices heard by Joan of Arc. But Ursula's diary offers no systematic theology or apologetic for her spiritual way of life. Instead, her -at times disjointed- diary reads like the recollections of someone recovering from a life of deep trauma, a narrative inevitable from a marginalized woman experiencing slavery and servitude firsthand. Abuse, devils,

and ghosts haunt her diary's pages. Yet inevitably, her Franciscan vision and vitality prevail throughout.

Reflecting this Franciscan tradition, Ursula recognized the centrality of the Incarnation. When she made her intercessory prayers, she knew to "ask the Father in the name of the Incarnation of his Son on their behalf."¹³ She emphasizes in her diary the efficacy of the Incarnation, writing: "Yes, in the name of the Incarnation... Had he not become flesh, been born, suffered, and died for our redemption?" Ursula attributes answered prayers to "faith in His Son's Incarnation, and in the love with which the Virgin Mary gave Him to us for our redemption from her very womb."¹⁴ Unique to Ursula is her belief that Mary felt great pleasure in the moment of the Incarnation. This observation upends a solely ascetical image of the Virgin, and replaces it instead with Mary's bodily pleasure at the Incarnation: flesh delighting in God taking flesh. God so approves of Mary's pleasure that "The Virgin Mary's requests to God are always granted because of the great pleasure she felt when the Word became flesh in her womb." The moment of the Incarnation is thereby an earthly encounter, first marked as an experience of pleasure and bliss which inaugurates our salvation.

A similar earthiness is present in a vision she has of St. Francis. In this vision St. Francis inquires of her if she herself or earth was better. Ursula answers: "Earth." Affirming her answer, Francis responds "Yes, because what is essential comes from it, and things are built from it."¹⁵ Ursula then asks Francis: "What can I do to please God?" Francis then answers: "... be humble like the earth..."

This earth-like humility characterizes for her the Franciscan vocation. She observes that "Saints Francis and Clare were always extremely humble." At the heart of this humility was an inversion of the social order. Ursula explains that this humility changed their relational perspective with others. "They saw themselves as the least important people in the world. All the people they saw, whether common or great, seemed better than they."¹⁶ In this vocational humility "one should always strive to imitate our Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁷ Her own family disrupted by slavery, Ursula newly knew intentional family as a daughter of "our father Saint Francis, and our mother Saint Clare."¹⁸ Freed from the constraints of enslavement, Ursula co-opts the language of slavery to express her new kinship as a Franciscan. "Remember me, Lord? I am the little slave of my mother, Saint Clare."¹⁹ She explains then this relational inversion: "The more you lower your head, the higher you can ascend."

¹¹ Ibid., 60.

¹² See Ronald Surtz's chapter on Juana's Purgatorial spirituality, "The Mother Hen" in *The Guitar of God: Gender, Power, and Authority in the Visionary World of Mother Juana de la Cruz (1481-1534)* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 37-62.

¹³ van Deusen, 82.

¹⁴ Ibid. 113.

¹⁵ Ibid., 141.

¹⁶ Ibid., 103.

¹⁷ Ibid., 104.

¹⁸ Ibid., 84.

¹⁹ Ibid., 133.

Here Ursula appears to have intuited the aphorism of Bl. Giles of Assisi, "The way to go up is to go down."²⁰

Ursula's re- conceptualizing of family extends also to God. She writes that after eating food, she thanked God for this nurturance, the "many gifts He gave me. I told Him He was my father and mother..."²¹ God is nurturer and parent to her. Looking into the ciborium, she sees Jesus "alive and large as life." In this Eucharistic vision, Christ is nursing mother: "His breasts looked like they would overflow with milk."²² Ursula notes that mothers are wont to say "For nine months I carried you in my womb." To Ursula God says "For thirty-three years I carried you on my shoulder..."²³ These maternal images appeal to Ursula and she likewise experiences them with mother- bird metaphors. On the cross, Jesus "[w]ith His arms spread, He was like an eagle. Just as the eagle had its wings extended, so he would extend His... inviting and watching over us..."²⁴ Here Ursula merges the image of the Crucified with the maternal eagle protecting Israel in Deuteronomy 32:11. Similarly she uses the Gospel image of Jesus as mother-hen, writing: "Have you not seen how a hen gathers her chicks? The Lord Jesus opens His arms to receive."²⁵

Keenly conscious of the racism of her time, still Ursula transcended racial constructs and prejudices of her day, emphasizing instead the oneness of all humankind. "Although He raised us as different nations, the will of blacks and whites is the same. In memory, understanding, and will, they are all one. Had He not created them all in His image and likeness and redeemed them with His blood?"²⁶ In a vision of St. Francis, the saint himself takes up the topic, noting of Ursula's Poor Clare sisters that "There is a difference because the nuns are white and of the Spanish nation, but with respect to the soul, all is one."²⁷ Valerie Benoist will refer to this common kinship of Ursula's vision as the "imagined community," in which she was "redefining the conflicted relationships"²⁸ between races and classes. All are one by virtue of the Incarnation, redeemed by Christ's blood which evidences his shared, blood-kinship with all humanity. For Ursula, God "casts no one aside."²⁹ Firmly grounded in the Franciscan tradition, Ursula attests that there are no outcasts in the human family. Kinship and family are the defining constructs of this re-imagined family. By naming God as both mother and father, Ursula evidences her grasp of the Franciscan notion of universal

kinship, that we are all sisters and brothers of the one God. And amidst a Poor Clare community which complicity participated in the evil of slavery, Ursula announced the good news of the Beloved Community in which all are one, in spite of her prior decades living among them as an owned slave. Ursula prophetically voices the impending "kin-dom" where God is mother and father, and all people are hence kinfolk, sisters and brothers.

Ursula's vision has commonality with Martin Luther King's oft-quoted phrase: "they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."³⁰ When she writes in her diary that St. Francis claims that "all is one", the narrative concludes with this summation by him: "Whoever does more, is worth more."³¹ For both, what is valued -what is worth more- are peoples' actions, exhibiting the content of the character. Here, Ursula's vision of the realized family of God is not ethereal, but practical.

Throughout her diary, Ursula describes her mystical experiences as "the voices." She writes: "The voices said that for those who love one another, the more they communicate, the more their love grows."³² Clearly, Ursula as prophetic author values and entwines communication with fruitful love. We do well to attend to her voices. Communicated to us across the chasm of 400 years is the voice of our sister, Ursula de Jesús. With an overall underrepresentation of Franciscan women's history, we are especially privileged today to be recovering Ursula's Franciscan voice, all the more so as a marginalized Franciscan woman of color. Speaking recently in Latin America, Pope Francis reminded us: "Brothers and sisters, may we not allow ourselves to be robbed of the beauty we have inherited from our ancestors. May it be a living and fruitful root that will help us continue to make beautiful and prophetic the history of salvation in these lands."³³ The voice of our Franciscan ancestor, Ursula de Jesús is a good place to begin appreciating this beautiful and prophetic inheritance.



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²⁰ "The Sayings of Brother Giles" in *The Little Flowers of St. Francis*, translated by Raphael Brown (New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1958), 265.

²¹ van Deusen, 152.

²² Ibid., 125.

²³ Ibid., 121.

²⁴ Ibid., 106.

²⁵ Ibid., 129. In this metaphor, Ursula has strong affinity with Mother Juana's use of the Mother Hen image. See Footnote 12 above.

²⁶ Ibid., 151.

²⁷ Ibid., 121.

²⁸ Benoist, 251.

²⁹ van Deusen, 151.

³⁰ Martin Luther King, Jr. "I Have a Dream" Speech delivered on August 28th, 1963 at the Lincoln Memorial.

³¹ van Deusen, 121.

³² Ibid., 89.

³³ *Homily at the Holy Mass and the Consecration of an Altar at the Cathedral of Santa Maria La Antigua, Panama on the 26th of January 2019.*

The Double Entry of God

Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas

By Emmanuel Falque

Inchoandum est ab exordio – “we must begin at the source,” declares Saint Bonaventure as he begins his *Breviloquium*.² But what is this beginning and with whom or with what must we begin? Because in theology, perhaps more so than in philosophy, we must recognize it with Socrates in the *Republic*: “don’t you know that in all things, the beginning is what matters most?”³ It all depends more in the way we say it, than on what we say. Better yet, from that by which or from which we say it. This is indeed the case with thinking, with writing and with life. From the moment we start, we do not finish, and we will never finish. But all we say and all we live at every moment always depends on that starting point. *Attention to the beginning*, in philosophy, in theology, as simply in existence, is fundamental: “tell me where you start, and I’ll tell you who you are.”

But the beginning is never a simple point of departure. Most often, it marks an origin. Not only a moment in time where a thought, a text, or even the world in its creation begins, but also the dependence upon an “origin” which makes it such that this beginning is not only *original* but also *native*. The starting point, the origin, varies depending on whether we begin with God or whether we begin with man, and so too varies the thought that follows. That is not to claim that there is no man-God (or Christ), in Christianity of course, who holds together the two extremes, because taking one side rather than the other is not to deny one part at the expense of the other, but to privilege one “entrance” instead of another. There are multiple *ways of entering* thought and to be oriented therein. But before any start, depends on the meeting point. Because it is from there that the crossing is determined.

Hence the famous question posed by Martin Heidegger in his well-known text entitled “*The ontotheological constitution of metaphysics*” (1957), and which in its very questioning will guide the whole of contemporary philosophy: “How does God (or the god) *enter* philosophy? We can reach the bottom of this question only if at first a *region* has been sufficiently determined, the one where God

(or the god) must arrive: *philosophy* itself.”⁴ If the question has relevance – because it is indeed the “entrance of God” and therefore of a thought about the beginning – the answer is not obvious. Better still, we can only be astonished to see the philosopher of Freiburg determine *in advance* the “*region*” where God (or the god) must arrive, because nothing indicates it or presupposes it by himself. It is not because it is said, or that it would be said, that in the history of thought God “enters” or “entered” it, that he necessarily came there, and in priority, “in philosophy itself.” The famous “ontological constitution of metaphysics” depends less on the framework it imposes – the subordination of beings to the being of God understood as a principle – than on its way of entering into thought. In the words of Martin Heidegger, indeed, all philosophy would have reduced God to a pure principle, and we would then have no other choice than to accuse him, even to reject its validity, to refer to another a divine figure, which would be all the more pure because it would be purely revealed. In other words, the separation of orders – philosophy and theology – would be less of their possible distinction or completeness (which is still the case with Bonaventure), or of their interaction (which is the originality of the Aquinate), but of an alleged competition between them (which begins strictly speaking with Luther, according to a bias that borrows massively Martin Heidegger himself following Karl Barth).⁵

The question of the “entrance of God” – in theology and / or philosophy – is not just a matter of the history of philosophy. It concerns philosophy *itself*, in its meaning and destiny when one wonders whether or not there is in man a capacity to say God, or whether one admits or not that his thought can at least get ready without necessarily denying the concept. Most surprisingly, in the Heideggerian gesture of the breaking of orders reproduced by most of the phenomenology in France, is that it does not actually belong to any of the two great thoughts which, according to Étienne Gilson, make history of Christianity, even of Catholicism itself. For if the two doctrines of Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas “are organized according to two different initial concerns,” to follow the finale of the master book on Saint Bonaventure by Étienne Gilson [*The Philosophy*

¹ Lecture in the Department of Philosophy and the Center for Medieval Studies, Fordham University, New York. Text based on the English edition (and renewed) of our book on Saint Bonaventure: *Saint Bonaventure and the Entrance of God in Theology*, with Afterword: *Saint Thomas Aquinas and the Entrance of God in Philosophy* (St Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2018).

² Saint Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, Paris, Éditions franciscaines, 1996, Prologue n° 5, p. 89 (V, 202a).

³ Plato, *The Republic* II, 37a.

⁴ M. Heidegger, « La constitution ontothéologique de la métaphysique » (1957), *Identité et différence*, dans *Questions I*, Paris, Gallimard, 1968, p. 290 (nous soulignons).

⁵ Voir sur ce point l’ouvrage de Ch. Sommer, *Heidegger, Aristote, Luther : Les sources aristotéliennes et néotestamentaires d’Être et temps*, Paris, PUF, coll. « Epiméthée », 2005.

of Saint Bonaventure (1923)],⁶ it is not to oppose faith and reason, nor to condemn reason in the name of faith, nor to seek a reason proper to faith – but to consider otherwise the relation of reason and faith: “perfect wisdom begins here where ends the philosophical knowledge (*incipit ubi terminatur cognitio philosophia*),” emphasizes Bonaventure in the *Breviloquium* (1257),⁷ whereas “nothing prevents (*nihil prohibet*) that the very objects which treat the philosophical sciences, according to which they are knowable by the light of natural reason can still be considered in another science (*and aliam scientiam tractare*), as they are known by the light of divine revelation,” indicates at the same time or nearly Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologica* (1266).⁸ These two options are less contradictory than different, less competing than in a possible alternation.

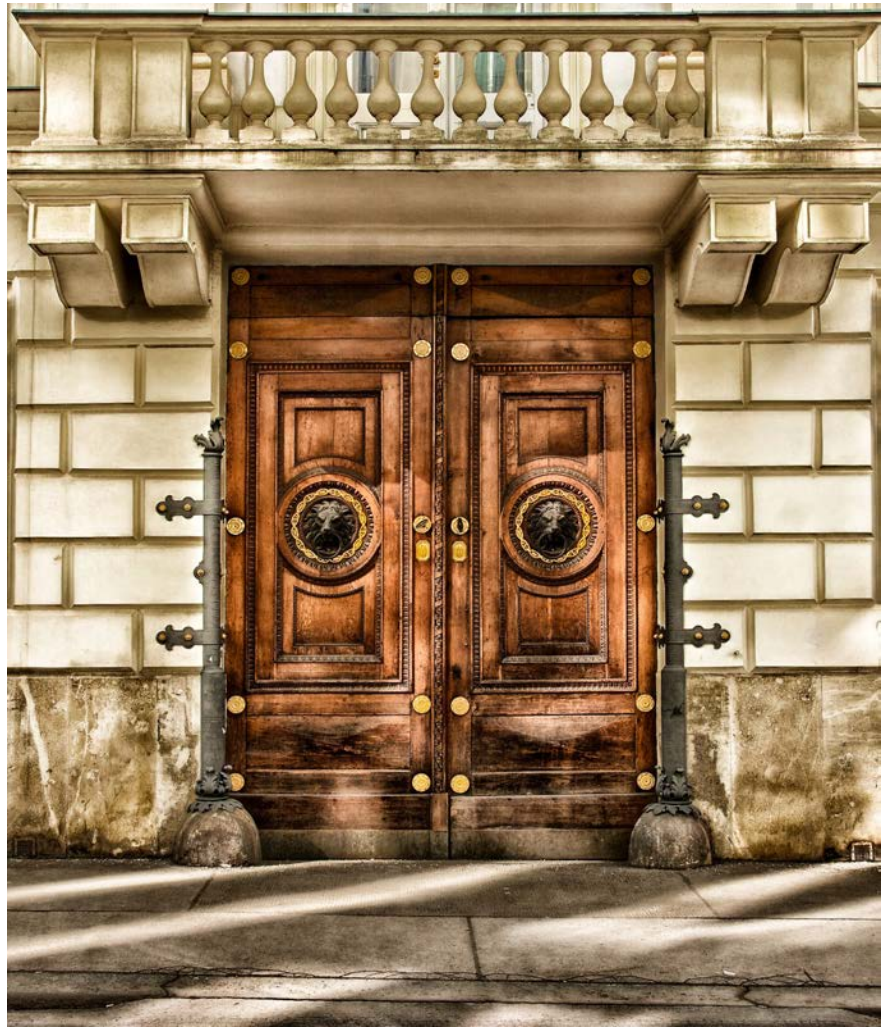
Where one (Bonaventure) enters theology, or makes the entrance into theology the independent porch, or the relay structure, the access of man to God, the other (Thomas Aquinas), consecrates philosophy itself as the main portal by which to reach the nave and the heart, even though God would stand mainly at the end, but without denying nevertheless this beginning or this point of departure. *God’s entrance into theology* (Bonaventure) determines God himself, or rather the Trinity, as the incipit of all thought dealing with God, whereas the entrance of God into philosophy (Thomas Aquinas) exalts the man with rank of a creature, or even of a nature, capable at least partly of reaching the divine. There is no conflict or struggle here – whether they are Franciscans and Dominicans, or theologians and philosophers – but two *different* and not opposed *ways* of seeing the world. It is to have forgotten it, that we have, and still may continue to foment a conflict that dies to stick to his meadow, while the difference is only intended to feed what cannot, and perhaps does not, unify. Only the holistic or totalizing conception of philosophy and theology will falsely lead us to believe that we have to choose, while the diversity of the ways must enrich us, and even show the originality, of each of the exposed parties.

I. The Entrance of God in Theology

⁶ É. Gilson, *La philosophie de saint Bonaventure* (1923), Paris, Vrin, 1978², p. 396.

⁷ Bonaventure, *Brev. I*, 1, n° 3, op. cit. p. 31 (V, 210a-b).

⁸ Thomas d’Aquin, *Somme théologique*, Paris, Cerf, 1983, Ia, q. 1, a. 1 [« La doctrine sacrée est-elle nécessaire ? »], ad. 2, p. 154-155.



The First Principle

What characterizes God’s entrance into theology, and therefore the Bonaventurian aim, is the determination of a conception of theology understood directly as Trinitarian. For the question here is not only to begin with God rather than man – the *Summa theologiae* and *Contra Gentiles* of Thomas Aquinas also begin with God – but to begin with the principle which is the God not understood as concept (the word, the idea or the essence of God), but directly as Trinitarian (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit): “theology treats principally (*principaliter*) of the first principle God three and one”.⁹

The “principal” here is not the “principal.”¹⁰ It is not a question of speaking “primarily” of God, even if it is the first principle or the highest, but to treat “principally” God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If God is “principle” for Bonaventure, it is not in the sense of the *archê* who begins and who commands, but in the sense of the *princeps* or the “chief” who is the source of a long filiation, like of Abraham

⁹ Bonaventure, *Brev. I*, 1, n°1, p. 59 (V, 210).

¹⁰ Selon une erreur de traduction heureusement corrigée dans la nouvelle édition (en un volume) du *Breviloquium* aux Éditions franciscaines (2017).

and his innumerable generation. The principle or the *principium* is therefore the Father in his fountal fullness (*plenitudo fontalis*), from whom everything comes and in which everything is rooted or originates – eternally bound to the Father as well as to the Son: “we must begin at the beginning (*inchoandum est ab exordio*), that is to say, to reach a pure faith to the *Father of the lights*, bending the knees of our heart, so that *by his Son and his Holy Spirit*, he gives us the true knowledge of Jesus Christ and, with his knowledge, his love.”¹¹

The Door of Theology

The exercise of theology in this sense has not, or never, separated from the “influence of the Blessed Trinity.” This is why theology combines with Scripture to explain what it describes. There is no opposition or discontinuity between the reader of *Sacra scriptura* and the author of *theologia*. Both are partners and custodians of a “single source,” the Trinity itself: “Holy Scripture or theology (*sacra Scriptura sive theologia*) is the science that gives sufficient knowledge of the first principle, to know the God three and one (*de primo principio scilicet de Deo trino and uno*).”¹² Thus there would be, for one who recognizes that God first enters into theology, an *almost inspired* or *prophetic* function of theological thought itself. Not that the theologian has to confuse himself with the evangelist and the prophet, far from it. Nor that its material comes to him exclusively from the revelation. But in that he “exposes” what Scripture “describes.” The theologian, to say it in terms certainly anachronistic and yet so convenient to him, is already working in Bonaventure as a phenomenologist “and” an interpreter. It *leads to the light* and *gives the keys of interpretation* in its own (conceptual) language what Scripture says in its language (symbolic and metaphorical): “since the Scripture (*Scriptura*) hides under a single letter a multiple sense, he who exposes it must bring to light what was hidden (*abscondita producere in lucem*) and manifest (*manifestare*) what is thus brought to light by another clearer text (*per aliam scripturam magis patentem*).”¹³

To be a theologian, or *to let God enter into theology*, it is then, and as a simple believer, to become the receptacle of the Trinity itself. Certainly, God is a word, certainly God is a name, certainly God is an idea, a concept or an essence. But he is primarily or “principially” a source (*fons*) – and we

are his creatures who, in his Son, can otherwise receive him, at least in part to welcome and manifest him. Man is “capable of God” (*capacem Dei*), to follow the finale of the whole *Breviloquium* (Brev VII, 7), only to the extent that he is at the same time “capable of the Blessed Trinity” (*capacem ipsius beatissime Trinitatis*).¹⁴

The Trinitarian Argument

The reworking of St. Anselm’s ontological argument resolves then the enigma, or deliver the cutting edge, of this *Trinitarian* entry of God into theology in St. Bonaventure. One can certainly recognize that St. Bonaventure does not fail to try to “prove” the existence of God, when he is forced to do so, in the *Commentary on the Sentences* for example. But any evidence, and even any evidence of “evidence” or “pathways,” is totally absent from the *Breviloquium*. Because in this *Brief Treatise* (*Breviloquium*) seeking to expose “something short” in a “sum” – in which he can compete with Thomas Aquinas’s *Theological Summa* – he seeks there not first all “the truths to believe,” but only “the most useful”: “prayed by confreres to say with our poor little science something short (*aliquid breve*), in a sum (*in summa*), on the truth of theology, and yielding to their prayers, I consented to write a *Breviloquium*, in which I treated briefly (*breviter*) not of all the truths to believe (*non omnia*), but only the most useful (*sed aliqua magis opportuna*), adding some explanations depending on the circumstances.”¹⁵

And if by chance it was necessary to “prove God” or to clear “ways to go to God,” which therefore begins to become an obligatory passage in the *Commentary on the Sentences*, then the only proof is that we do not need of proof, or that God is in reality “so manifest” or “always and everywhere present” that all proof will serve only to make clear what is always already seen to those who can decipher it, in the *Cantic of the creatures* for example: “God is always and everywhere (*semper et ubique*), and absolutely always and everywhere (*et totus semper et ubique*), one reads the first book of the *Commentary on the Sentences*. For this reason, we cannot think that he is not (*ideo non potest non esse*). This is the reason given by Anselm in his book against the fool.”¹⁶

What is surprising here, to whom the thought of Saint Bonaventure and medieval theology is concerned, is not that God is “always and everywhere present,” or even that “we cannot think that he is not” and therefore it is useless to prove it. What is astonishing is rather to hear, or rather to read, that such is “the reason given by Anselm in his book against the fool.” For there seems to be a world, or rather a reinterpretation, between what we have for our part called the “theophanic argument” in St. Anselm,¹⁷ and

¹¹ Bonaventure, *Brev. Prol.* n° 5, p. 89 (V, 202a-b).

¹² Bonaventure, *Brev. I*, 1, n°2, p. 61 (V, 210a).

¹³ Bonaventure, *Brev. Prol.*, § 6, n°1, p. 115 (V, 207a-b). Sur cette double dimension à la fois « phénoménologique » et « herméneutique » du *Breviloquium* de Bonaventure, non pas en son commencement seulement (*Saint Bonaventure et l’entrée de Dieu en théologie*), mais dans l’ensemble de cette « brève somme de théologie », nous renvoyons à notre texte : « Saint Bonaventure actuel ou intempestif ? Le poème du *Breviloquium* », dans A. Begasse, E. Galli, M. Malaguti, R. Pascual Carlos Salto Sola, *Deus summe cognoscibilis, The current theological relevance of saint Bonaventure*, Actes du congrès international, Rome, 15-17 Novembre 2017, p. 11-37.

¹⁴ Bonaventure, *Brev. VII*, 7, n°3, p. 113 (V, 289b).

¹⁵ Bonaventure, *Brev. Prol.*, § 6, n°5, p. 121 (V, 207b).

¹⁶ Bonaventure, *I Sent. d.* 8, p. I, a. 1, q. 2, concl. (I, 154b).

¹⁷ E. Falque, *Le livre de l’expérience, D’Anselme de Cantorbéry à Bernard de Clairvaux*, Paris, Cerf, 2017, 1^{ère} partie, p. 42-149 : « L’argument

what we would call here the “Trinitarian argument” of Saint Bonaventure. The questioning of the fool in the *Proslogion* of Anselm cannot be clearer: “If you are everywhere present (*if autem ubique es*), why do I not see you everywhere present (*cur non video presentem*)?”¹⁸ Certainly Anselm does not deny that God is everywhere present, and that his argument is therefore strictly speaking “theophanical.” But the fool is the one who comes to somehow question, or at least strike out, the theophany of the argument, or in other words the manifestation of God.

There is none of this in Bonaventure. On the one hand, because he has no adversary, he does not build an adversary, even if it is purely formal and methodological (the fool). But on the other hand and above all because the evidence of God or his pure manifestation does not come first of all from the greatness or the originality of a “God who comes to the idea” as an experience in thought, but it comes from the Trinitarian donation itself: “this diffusion is pushed to such a point (*haec diffusio is ultimata*), specifies a remarkable passage of the *Hexaëmeron* this time, that the one who produces (*ut det producents*) gives all that he can (*quidquid potest*). But the creature cannot receive all that God can give (*creatura recipere non potest quidquid Deus dare potest*) [...]. It is therefore necessary that this diffusion in all its power be in someone (*in aliquo*) that cannot be thought greater than oneself (*quo maius cogitari non potest*) [...]. Therefore, if nothing greater can be thought than the Father (*si ergo Patre nihil maius cogitari potest*), it is the same of the Son (*ergo nec Filio*).”¹⁹

Without going into the details of a comment that could, or should, make a thesis, or even a book, in the gap between Anselm’s “theophanic argument” and Bonaventure’s “Trinitarian argument,” let us note only that the God named as “what nothing greater can be thought of” (*aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari possit*), is not God as a concept, nor even as an idea, but God as Father in search of his proper receptacle for the to receive. When God enters into theology, it is the source (*fons*) or excess (*excessus*) of the Father who gives himself to the world. But because of the creature’s limit to the Creator – in which it cannot truly receive it – only the Son who is the equal of the Father, and “in whom” we are, is able to welcome the flow of his absolute donation. In other words, Bonaventure’s Trinitarian argument takes over Anselm’s theophanic argument, in that the Seraphic Doctor names, as Trinitarian, what the abbot of the Bec sought as a “something” (*aliquid*) or a “someone” (*aliquis*), admittedly recognized as the Father, but whose first object it is not to identify in his dialogue with the fool: “when we say three people, what do we want? we say if not *three someone* (*tres aliquos*)?” recalls Richard of Saint-Victor in his *De Trinitate* taken up by Saint Bonaven-

théophanique ou l’expérience en pensée » (Anselme de Cantorbéry).

¹⁸ Anselme de Cantorbéry, *Proslogion*, Paris, Cerf, 1986, t. I, ch. 1, p. 239.

¹⁹ Bonaventure, *Les six jours de la création (Hexaëmeron)*, Paris, Desclée / Cerf, 1991, XI, 11, p. 282-283 (V, 382a).

ture.²⁰ “O my God [...], you called me by my name ... and here you are suddenly!” exclaims Paul Claudel in his *third Ode* on the day of his conversion.²¹

A Thought of Excess

The true knowledge of God, because God *enters into theology* directly as Trinity in Bonaventure, thus becomes an “ecstatic fashion knowledge,” certainly overflowing the horizon in which the Trinity appears, but without omitting however that for the Franciscan Doctor (Bonaventure) the limit of the newborn in the crib takes precedence over the pure ecstasy of its dazzling glory (Denys). Better, if there is excess, it is not reduced to the only passing of the known on the knowing (saturation), but it marks the transport by which the subject is modified or trained where he did not know to have or to be able to go (transformation): “I call knowledge of ecstatic mode (*excessivum modum cognoscendi*),” we read paradigmatically in the *De scientia Christi*, “that not where the knowing subject exceeds the object he knows (*non cognoscens excedat cognitum*), but the one in which the knowing subject is intellectually *drawn* to an object of intellection that surpasses him (*sed quo cognoscens fertur in objectum excedens*), according to an ecstatic mode that elevates him beyond himself.”²²

Thus, including in excess, the Bonaventurian perspective is of the order of transit and even of the “backward path” – of a God coming to me rather than me going to him. Hence the cataphatic and not apophatic aim of the Seraphic Doctor, of the order of an affirmative theology and not of a negative theology. From Denys the Areopagite to St. Bonaventure the distance is great, even inverse, despite its close link with mystical theology. One finds there a same excess certainly, but of the order of the “condescension” (*condescensio*) rather than of the “elevation” (*elevatio*), of the kenosis more than of the glory: “The trinity with the seraphic Doctor,” the theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar points out, “is no longer like with Dionysius, which is quite remote and unknowable, [...] but it is the foundation and the *a priori* of all earthly reality.”²³

God *enters into theology* in Bonaventure because *we enter, or have always already entered*, into him. Trinitarian monadology – or the Trinitarian inscription of man in God as son in the Son – serves here as a key or leitmotif to a Franciscan understanding of a divine enthusiasm in which he holds us in him or leads us into him (*en-theos*). Trinitarian monadology means that nothing happens in man that does not happen first in God, except sin. This is the leitmo-

²⁰ Richard de Saint-Victor, *La Trinité (De Trinitate)*, Sources chrétiennes, n°63, Paris, Cerf, 1958, L. IV, ch. VII, p. 245.

²¹ P. Claudel, *Cinq grandes odes*, in *Œuvres poétique*, Paris, Gallimard, Pléiade, 1967, Troisième ode, Magnificat, p. 249.

²² Bonaventure, *Questions disputées sur le savoir chez le Christ (De scientia Christi)*, Paris, Sagesse chrétienne, 1985, p. 174-175 (V, 40).

²³ H. Urs von Balthasar, *La Gloire et la croix*, t. II (Styles 1), Paris, Aubier, 1965, p. 238.

tif by which to think, in that in God we are transformed and modified: “the union is such in the person,” one reads in the *Breviloquium*, “that all that is said of the Son of God (*ut quidquid dicitur de Filio Dei*) is said of the son of man and vice versa (*dicatur de filio hominis, et e converso*), except what the union is expressed in that which contains a negation.”²⁴ So are we in God, or are we running in God, like the “good angels” infinitely participating in the movement, or the dance, of the Trinitarian perichoresis: “contemplating God face to face, wherever they are sent, it is always in God that the (good) angels run (*quocumque mittantur, intra Deum currunt*).”²⁵

II. The Entrance of God in Philosophy

The Peregrine Man

With Thomas Aquinas, things change, or rather reverse. Admittedly, God’s entrance into theology, and therefore the directly Trinitarian name of the God of Christians, is essential, but it allows itself to be preceded, rightly or wrongly, by a determination of God as essence or as a concept – *God’s entrance into philosophy*. The thing is known. *De Deo Trino* (la 27-43) is prepared by *De Deo Uno* (2-26) in the *Summa Theologiæ*. What makes the misfortune of some (the Franciscans) makes the happiness of others (the Dominicans). Where some privilege the Trinity as the first name of God, others call upon the dignity of man, his experience and intelligence, to access or at least prepare for it. But must we stick to this trivial alternative? Is there nothing better than simply opposing the Trinity on one side and the concept of God on the other, the icon and the idol, God’s entrance into theology, and the entrance of God in philosophy? For, in reality, if “the great deal is the beginning” (Plato, *supra*), would there not be two ways to enter or access the same God? The “double entrance of God” marks two doors less than two ways of coming and going from one room to another in the same house – like a double door that would let one and the other enter without having to bump themselves, and even where they could cross each other, even greet each other. A single “double door” but “two openings” – one that goes directly from the Trinity to the man contained in it (Bonaventure), and the other preferring to go first by the man to go to God (Thomas Aquinas). This is, in fact, the meaning for today also of what Étienne Gilson called “the two most universal interpretations of Christianity.”²⁶

There are thus two ways, or rather *two ways* to consider the same way. But the *via* which for one is *itinerarium* (Bonaventure) becomes *status* for the other (Thomas). In other words, the same term of “paths of knowledge” to go

to God is “elevation” and “condescension from the Trinity” in the Franciscan purpose, while it becomes “state” or “being there of man” in the Dominican vision. *Deus non est primum quod a nobis cognoscitur* – “God is not known to us first.”²⁷ The famous formula of the *Theological Summa* does not say that God is not or would not be knowable “in itself” (*in se*), but that he is not such at least “for us” or “by us” (*a nobis*), *in via* as a peregrine man or in the present state.

The Limit

We will thus find the same consideration of the “limit” or the “limited” in Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas, since both make the *limit of God in man* – the newborn in the manger for the Franciscan and the taking into account of the state or status of man for the Dominican – the first requirement of a theology which far from being satisfied with the unlimited or the infinite of the glory (Denys) goes first by the limit of our being (Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas). The opposition, or rather the distinction, between Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas passes therefore less between the saturated and the limited, according to a too quick reading of the Seraphic Doctor and the Angelic Doctor, that in *two different ways of considering the limited*: either in the movement of the kenosis of the Trinity in the Incarnate Word (Franciscan theology), or in restraint or the point of departure of the divine in the human because God has incarnated in it (Dominican theology). Thus both, the Franciscan Master and the Dominican Master, are the proponents of the “limited phenomenon” rather than “saturated,” according to an interpretation which also sticks to a certain reading of the phenomenality: “As much as we know *in via* what we believe *in via*,” insists Édith Stein, disciple of Husserl and commentator here of Thomas Aquinas, “we know it otherwise once reached the goal. The possible measure of our knowledge *during our pilgrimage on earth* is fixed: we cannot *push back the limits*.”²⁸

The limit is therefore good, and even desirable. This is what Thomas Aquinas teaches us, and how the “theological limit” leads us to “phenomenological finitude.”²⁹ In such a rapprochement, the same contingency passes through the Thomian theology and the Heideggerian philosophy, but according to two inverse movements. Where the one (Thomas Aquinas) makes the limit of the created that which is *wanted* and *desired* by God in the gap between

²⁷ Thomas d’Aquin, *Somme théologique*, Paris, Cerf, 1984, la q. 88 ; a. 3, resp. : « Dieu est-il notre premier objet de connaissance ? ».

²⁸ É. Stein, « La phénoménologie de Husserl et la philosophie de saint Thomas d’Aquin » (1929), dans *Phénoménologie et philosophie chrétienne*, Paris, Cerf, 1987, p. 34.

²⁹ Nous renvoyons ici à notre essai : « Limite théologique et finitude phénoménologique chez Thomas d’Aquin », *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* (RSPT), Juillet-Septembre 2008, t. 92 n°3 (numéro du Centenaire), p. 527-556. Reproduit en annexe de la traduction de *Saint Bonaventure and The entrance of God into Theology*, op. cit. (Franciscan Institute Publications), sous le titre : « *Saint Thomas Aquinas and The entrance of God into Philosophy* » (p. 219-257).

²⁴ Bonaventure, *Brev.* IV, 2, 2, p. 65 (V, 242).

²⁵ Bonaventure, *Brev.* II, 8, n° 2, p. 99 (V, 226a).

²⁶ É. Gilson, *La philosophie de saint Bonaventure* (1923), op. cit., p. 396.

the creature and the Creator, the other (Heidegger) starts only from the *observation* of the limit in “being for death,” certainly without drawing it or making it depend on the unlimited (any eternity or immortality), but without holding anything else, nor the horizon of immanence in which we are immersed. There is a double immanence in Thomas Aquinas and Heidegger – one “wanted” by God and the other “ascertained” by man – which certainly differentiates them as to the *origin* of finitude, but not as to its *nature* or its *limit*. Thus, we will not be too quick to separate the theologian on one side (Thomas) and the phenomenologist on the other (Heidegger).

The “man only” (the *Dasein*) or the “man purely man” (*homo purus*) are thus absent neither from phenomenology nor from theology, without, however, deducing any “pure nature.” The mankind of man makes it clear that for Thomas Aquinas there is precisely no other point of departure, or beginning, than the man “here below” – hence the *entrance from God in philosophy* this time: “a man purely man (*ab homine puro*),” remarkably emphasizes the Aquinate from the first beginnings of the *Summa Theologiæ* [Ia q. 12], “cannot see God by his essence *unless he leaves this mortal life (nisi ab hac vita mortali separetur)* [...] Our soul, *as long as we live in this life (quandiu in hac vita vivimus)*, has its being in a corporeal matter and therefore, by nature, only knows things whose form is united with matter [...]. It is therefore impossible for the human soul, *as long as it lives here below (secundum hanc vitam viventis)*, to see the divine essence [...]. That the soul is elevated to the intelligible transcendent that is the divine essence, cannot be, *as long as one is in this mortal life (quandiu hac mortali vita vivitur)*.³⁰

The Door of Philosophy

We cannot be clearer, at least for the Aquinate. The path of man is not, as far as the “here below” is concerned, the path of the angel. Better, it is not, and will probably never be. For it is not by deficiency, by failure or by default, that man does not directly access God for the Aquinate, but because of the “measure” and “limit” of our created being. There is certainly a “weakness of the human intellect (*debilitatem intellectus nostri*)” or a “weakness of our mind (*defectum intellectus nostri*)” to follow here one of the most famous questions of the *Summa Theologiæ* [“is the sacred doctrine superior to other sciences?”].³¹ But this deficiency (*defectum*) is not just a failure. It is also, or even above all, “weakness” (*infirmetas*) in the sense of the limit of our mind having no other way than to rely on its own limit, or on creation, to go back to God. The gap between the Creator and the creature does not first show that man has sinned (Augustine) or that God is inaccessible (Denys), but that here we can reach him only by the limit of our created being or

our constitutive finitude: “the man according to his nature (*secundum suam naturam*) is not like the angel,” Aquinas says in his treatise of the angels but in reality to define the man. “It is not given to him to reach immediately (*statim*) his ultimate perfection. This is why he must travel a longer path than that of the angel (*longior via data est quam angelo*) to deserve bliss.”³²

We then understand, and in the other gap this time with St. Bonaventure, the reason for the famous “evidence” or rather “ways” to access God in Thomas Aquinas. Certainly, the five ways of Aquinas have never wanted to “demonstrate” God, that is well known. But no more do they only want to find ways to reach God. Rather than speaking of the Creator to join, they speak of the creature who seeks to reach God. More than to tend towards the unlimited, they reach the limit and our limited being. Paradoxically, and this is our hypothesis, the *cosmological paths* in Thomas Aquinas are only the relief or the second best of the *ontological way*, to return and here again to Anselm of Canterbury. This is no longer a Trinitarian argument (Bonaventure) with regard to the theophanic argument (Anselm), but cosmological paths (Thomas Aquinas) in view of the ontological path (Anselm). God *enters into philosophy* through concepts – movement, cause, contingency, perfection, finality – not because the concepts are first in the Aquinate (hence all the false post-Heideggerian accusations of a construction of the divine), but rather, because they are seconds. God *enters into philosophy* because he *does not enter*, or *cannot enter*, directly *into theology*. The determination and the immediate vision of God in his essence (Anselm) is certainly desirable but impossible, or impracticable here below (Thomas). The ontological argument is not false, but unrealizable in our status, or our state, as a peregrine man.

Also Thomas Aquinas delivers, and in some way, a new passage. Privileging access through the *door of philosophy*, one will go naturally, and even more easily, from philosophy to theology, since this door with “double shutters” crosses and opens more easily from the man to God. Or again, since it is the man down here who passes by (through the existence of God), without dwelling in the lures of an issue which, as such, is not reserved for him (the essence of God): “I say that this proposition ‘God exists’ is *self-evident (in se)*, because the predicate is identical to the subject [...]. But since we do not know the essence of God (*sed quia nos non scimus de Deo quid est*), this proposition is not obvious to us (*non est nobis per se nota*); it needs to be demonstrated by what is better known to us (*quoad nos*), even if it is, by nature, less known, namely by the works of God (*scilicet per effectus*).”³³

³⁰ Thomas d’Aquin, *Summe théologique*, Ia, q. 12, a. 11 : « un homme peut-il en cette vie voir l’essence de Dieu ? ».

³¹ Thomas d’Aquin, *Summe théologique*, Ia, q. 1, a. 5, ad. 1 et ad. 2.

³² Thomas d’Aquin, *Summe théologique*, Ia q. 62 a. 5 ad. 1 (trad. modifiée [relativement à l’éd. du Cerf]) : « les anges ont-ils obtenu la béatitude aussitôt après le mérite ? ». Une dérive de l’angélisme toujours évitée par Thomas d’Aquin, dont on trouvera la trace dans notre ouvrage : *Dieu, la chair et l’autre, D’Irénée à Duns Scot*, op. cit. ch. VIII, p. 393-428 : « L’altérité angélique (Thomas d’Aquin) ».

³³ Thomas d’Aquin, *Summe théologique*, Ia, q. 2, a. 1, resp.

The *ways for God* are thus and in reality rather *ways for man*. Or better, Thomas Aquinas gives less opportunity for man to positively access God, that he does not see the *negative* impossibility of receiving immediately as essence (Anselm) or directly as Trinity (Bonaventure), without accepting to also, or even first, pass through the man to reach God. God's *entrance into philosophy* (Thomas) and God's *entrance into theology* (Bonaventure) again are not contradictory. They belong to the same century of scholasticism where the measure of man always remains first – whether it be “humility and limitation in the flesh” (Seraphic Doctor) or “held and restrained in the mediations of the created” (Angelic Doctor). Everything is a matter of starting point or beginning, of “gateway” in theology and / or in philosophy, and not of opposition or contradiction. Far from dividing, the debate calls rather to diversify the orientation by which God is reached or aimed: “in the doctrine of philosophy (*in doctrina philosophiæ*), specifies the *Summa against the Gentiles*, we study the creatures in themselves (*secundum se*), and from them (*ex eis*) one is led to the knowledge of God. We study [therefore] the creatures first (*prima est consideratio creaturis*), and God last (*et ultima de Deo*). But in the doctrine of faith (*in doctrina vero fidei*), creatures are only considered in their order to God (*non nisi in ordine ad Deum*). We study [therefore] first God (*primo is consideratio Dei*), and only afterward creatures (*et postmodum creaturarum*).”³⁴

It is then not, or not only, “by the end” that one will then strive to read the five ways to access God – *quod omnes dicunt Deum* (“what all name God”)³⁵ – but rather “by the beginning”: “the most manifest (*manifestior*),” namely and from the beginning, “what our senses attest,” in the first way by the movement for example.³⁶ Indeed, in the *Summa Theologica*, the five ways have never wanted to demonstrate a God that all listeners already believed – the *incipientes* or the “beginners” – but only to show the coincidence of the God “discovered by reason” and the God “believed by Revelation.” This is also true of the last part of the *Summa Against the Gentiles* (Revelation), to mark here again the coincidence or the highest degree of conformity with the other parts of the natural light of the reason (God, creation and providence).³⁷

In this sense, to think of a gap between the God discovered in the end as a concept with the God posed or be-

lieved at first as a revelation is to create an opposition that does not exist, as if the outcome of the evidence disqualified the act of the proof itself, or the attempt to also reach *something of God* (existence for example) from our simple nature. Bonaventure on one side does not prove God because it is “useless” to prove God (*supra*), and Thomas Aquinas proves God because it “comforts” us to show or to access God. In both cases, the concept of God is not, strictly speaking, suppressed or crossed out – which, as we have said, will be more the responsibility of Protestantism than of scholasticism – but otherwise placed or displaced: as another study which is distinguished on one side (the relay of philosophy by theology), or partially covered with the other (the tiling of philosophy and theology).³⁸ Reading the ways backwards, or rather forwards, that is to say in the beginning in our limits rather than in the disqualification of its concept, thus restores Thomas’ vision in its true right – including in his step aside, and not his opposition, with Bonaventure’s aim. This right, or rather this legitimacy, this time to anchor us definitively in the finitude of our own limit, and to lead us from the limit not to the unlimited, but to the respect of our own creature state in its final difference and constitutive with the Creator: “the radical distinction between the created and the uncreated [...] is the fundamental ontological hiatus that Thomas puts at the source of all the differences.”³⁹

The Honor of the Theological

There is thus a *common honor of the theological* in Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas, but differently considered and also formulated. The sacred doctrine as revealed theology is certainly of “another kind” (*differt secundum genus*) of theology which is a part of philosophy in the Angelic Doctor. So, there is no confusion between the theology which, in its source, comes from above or the “light of the divine revelation” (*lumen divinæ revelationis*) and the philosophy which, as such, always comes from below or from the “light of natural reason” (*lumen naturalis rationis*). But “nothing prevents” (*nihil prohibet*), as we have said, and continues this famous initial question of the *Summa Theologica* [“Is sacred doctrine superior to other sciences?”], that the objects treated “by philosophical science” (existence, unity, infinity, etc.) can *also be reached immediately* by the “theological science” (“I am who I am” [Ex 3:14]).⁴⁰

When God *enters into philosophy* (Thomas Aquinas), certainly as a concept but not against revelation, there is no contradiction with the idea that God *enters into theology* (Bonaventure), first as Trinity rather than as a concept

³⁴ Thomas d'Aquin, *Somme contre les Gentils* (*Contra Gentiles*), Paris, Garnier-Flammarion, 1992, t. 2 [La création], II, 4, p. 86 (trad. modifiée).

³⁵ J.-L. Marion, *L'idole et la distance* (1977), Paris, Livre de poche, Biblio/Essais, 1991, p. 25 : « En un mot, la question de l'existence de Dieu se pose *moins avant la preuve qu'à son terme*, quand il ne s'agit plus seulement d'établir que quelque concept se peut nommer Dieu, ni même que certain étant mobilise ce nom, mais plus radicalement que ce concept ou cet étant *coincident* avec Dieu même [‘ce que tous nomment Dieu’] » (nous soulignons).

³⁶ Thomas d'Aquin, *Somme théologique*, Ia, q. 2, a. 2.

³⁷ Ainsi s'énoncent les quatre parties de la Somme contre les Gentils, écrite d'ailleurs avant la Somme théologique par le Docteur angélique : Dieu, la Création, la Providence, le Révélation.

³⁸ Sur cette double position, voir Passer le Rubicon, Philosophie et théologie, nouvelles frontières, § 17, p. 159-153 : « Du tuilage ou du recouvrement ».

³⁹ L. Renault, *Dieu et les créatures selon Thomas d'Aquin*, Paris, PUF, 1995, p. 38.

⁴⁰ Thomas d'Aquin, *Somme théologique*, Ia, q. 1, a. 2, ad. 2.

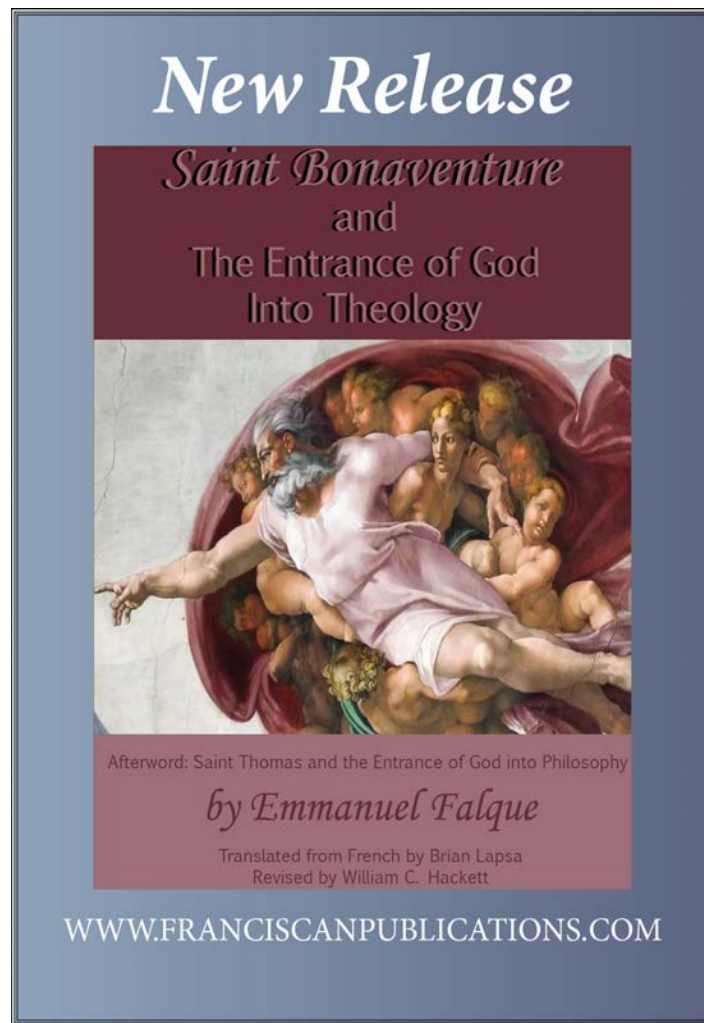
or essence. In both cases, the approach is different but not contradictory. Far from wanting to leave the “God principle” or the so-called ontotheology, everything will in fact depend on what the “*principium*” here means, moreover without ever condemning or transcending it: the Father principally at the source of creation (Bonaventure), or God reached by man as a concept adequate to the revealed God but not able to fully signify it (Thomas Aquinas).

The Franciscan purpose is not in conflict with the Dominican vision, any more than phenomenology is, or should be, at war with metaphysics. Philosophy is “servant of theology” (*ancilla theologiæ*) in that “wisdom has called its servants on the heights” (*ancillas suas vocare ad arcem*).⁴¹ But “service” is not a “serfdom” or a form of slavery, neither for Bonaventure nor for Thomas Aquinas – service or ancillary function that remains on the threshold of the master’s house for one (Seraphic Doctor) and who enters into certain parts of his house for the other (Angelic Doctor). But the honor of the theological is the same for both, for Bonaventure in the immediate revelation of the Trinity, and for Thomas Aquinas in the mediation of humanity. There is neither petition of principle, nor opposition, nor contradiction, even the same search for an “anchored theology” in its starting point or its beginning (Trinity and / or humanity), finally putting an end to the old and false debate on the “separate philosophy.”⁴²

Translated from the French by Jean-François Godet-Calogeras and Pablo Irizar.

⁴¹ Thomas d’Aquin, *Somme théologique*, Ia, q. 1, a. 5.

⁴² Formule et déploiement de cette hypothèse d’une « philosophie ancrée » face à la « philosophie séparée », que l’on trouvera dans notre débat avec Étienne Gilson : « Autour de saint Bonaventure. Un essai de confrontation avec Étienne Gilson », *Études franciscaines*, Janvier-Mars 2009, t. 2, fasc. 1, p. 7-20. Traduit en ouverture de *Saint Bonaventure and the Entrance of God into Theology*, op. cit. (Franciscan Institute Publications), p. XXV-XLI : « Opening : Confrontation with Étienne Gilson ».



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