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## ***Contents***

- Editorial
- Events in the Life of St. Francis in 1222 according to Luke Wadding (II)
- Jacopone da Todi: The Poet with a Cause
- Some Patristic Influences on Franciscan Thought
- The Chronicle of Nicholas Glassberger

140

## ***Editorial***

### **SYNODALITY IN THE ORDER**

The guidelines for the Sexennium 2021-2027 state: “The next few years will be marked for the whole Church by the synodal journey that has just begun. We Friars Minor are also living in this environment. For this reason, we want to launch a synodal journey that involves us friars and the sisters and brothers we meet every day. This synodal journey is deeply rooted in our identity as lesser brothers a *contemplative fraternity in mission*.” [n. 4]

These expressions underline the vocation of us, Friars Minor, as part of the Church. The synodal journey that the ecclesial community has embarked upon is precisely the sincere effort at becoming more aware that we cannot do it alone, that we are walking along the same road, that we are, to put it in Pope Francis’ words, “in the same boat.”

In our long history as one of the main religious movements of the Catholic Church, we Franciscans have been instrumental in fostering an ecclesial spirit, particularly in our evangelising mission. This does not mean that we have not gone through turbulent times. Our identity has often been misunderstood by the institutional framework of the Church, and we also have often tended to feel autonomous to the point of becoming a self-sufficient institution on our part.

Times have changed. We are becoming ever more aware that we cannot continue to feel so secure in our self-sufficiency. Our foundations are being shaken to the core, for a varied number of reasons that have become a litany of every chapter: dwindling numbers, aging of the brothers, need for refounding, crises of identity,

unfaithfulness to our calling even after years of religious life. We tend to feel discouraged because of all these factors. What we fail to notice is that the whole world is in the same crisis, that the whole Church is facing the same crisis. Most of the time it is a question of not knowing how to walk together, how to listen to one another, how to be attentive to the signs of the times.

Synodality implies humility. Humility to be able to learn, to listen, to feel empathy, to be open to the needs of others, to do away with prejudices and with set patterns of thought. This is the challenge that we are facing as an Order. If we truly want to become a contemplative fraternity in mission we need to embark upon a radical conversion of mentality and practice. We need to open ourselves to the Spirit of the Lord who works outside our confined spaces. That is why the Order is inviting us to listen to our sisters and brothers who we meet every day. They are the pulse of society and of culture.

Let us be frank. Most of the time we, as friars, are feeling threatened by a strange world and would like to cocoon ourselves in our egocentric safety so that we will “age and die with dignity.” Many Provinces are experiencing this feeling of insecurity and fear. Some are even afraid to admit that it exists, and yet the signs are clearly visible to all, if only we open our eyes!

We need to learn how to listen. We are always presiding over others, teaching others, maybe also playing power games among ourselves in order to secure a “peaceful coexistence” based upon mutual tacit agreement not to disturb one another. This is not synodality. It is an entry gate to individualism and collective death.

Walking together along the same road implies the courage to have clear objectives to reach together. It implies the courage of a relational experience of fraternity with “the other” who thinks, speaks and acts differently from us. Synodality does not mean that we have to betray the ideals we embrace, but that we incarnate them in the

world in which we live, in the Church of which we are part.

Are we still convinced that the Church needs us Franciscans? It might not necessarily need many of us to have competent professionals in the Roman Curia, or to be bishops or scholars or university professors, even though these services are also part and parcel of being part of the Church. The Church, however, needs many of us, as it has always done, to be pioneers in the frontlines of evangelisation, to let go of our securities and take the risk of reaching out. It does not matter if we are already old, if we do not have youthful strength. Evangelisation is not about age but about the throbbing of the heart. As Pope Francis reminds us in continuation, citing *Evangelii nuntiandi*, “the Church exists in order to evangelise.”

In order to evangelise in an effective way we have to remember our calling as a contemplative fraternity in mission. This means that prayer and active mission are part and parcel of our identity in such a way that they cannot exist without each another. Contemplation, however, does not imply a lifestyle of silent reflection in some remote hermitage, although this can be also, occasionally, part of our Franciscan calling. It means a sharing in the contemplative mission of the ecclesial community, in our striving to pray with God’s people, to listen to the prayer life of the persons we meet every day. It implies a journey along the same road of faith searching, of searching for meaning, just like the disciples of Emmaus did when they met the stranger on the road.

What can we learn from God’s people? What can we learn from the world outside? What can we learn from the poor and marginalised of our world today? That is where synodality is rooted and where it starts to bear fruit.

Noel Muscat ofm

# EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF SAINT FRANCIS IN 1222 ACCORDING TO LUKE WADDING (II)

Noel Muscat OFM

## **Saint Francis in Bologna (15 August 1222)**

One of the lesser known sources regarding particular events in the life of Saint Francis is the witness of Thomas of Split, archdeacon of his native town in modern day Croatia, on the Dalmatian coast. Thomas was a student in the university city of Bologna. He recounts how, on 15 August 1222, feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, he was present in *Piazza Maggiore* of Bologna and heard a sermon by Saint Francis, who happened to be passing through this important academic centre of learning. This is the account by Thomas of Split:

“In the same year (1222) on the feast of the Assumption of the Mother of God, when I was residing at the *Studium* in Bologna, I saw Saint Francis preaching in the square in front of the town hall, where almost all the inhabitants of the city had assembled. The theme of his sermon was: ‘Angels, People, Demons.’ He spoke so well and so clearly about these three kinds of rational creatures that this unlettered man’s sermon became the source of not a little amazement for the many educated people who were present. He did not, however, hold to the usual manner of preaching, but spoke like a political orator. The whole tenor of his words concerned

itself with abolishing hostilities and renewing agreements of peace. His habit was filthy, his whole appearance contemptible, and his face unattractive; but God gave his words such efficacy that many factions of the nobility, among whom the monstrous madness of long-standing enmities had raged uncontrollably with much bloodshed, were led to negotiate peace. There was such great popular reverence and devotion towards him, that a mob of men and women crowded in upon him, jostling about either to touch the fringe of his habit or even tear off a shred of his ragged clothing.”<sup>1</sup>

Thomas was born around 1200 in Split. As a young man he went to Bologna to study law at the famous university. Back in Split he was a notary public from 1227 to 1232, and as a priest he became archdeacon of Split in 1230. His career developed along the juridical practice of the *ars notaria* and he often participated in peace-making efforts among the towns of Split and Trogir on the Dalmatian coast, even participating in the missionary preaching efforts of the Franciscan Gerard of Modena. Pope Innocent IV entrusted him with delicate missions. After retiring to write his historical work, Thomas died on 8 May 1268 and was buried in the Franciscan church of Split.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> THOMÆ SPALATENSIS, *Historia Pontificum Salonitanorum et Spalatensium*, in *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica: Scriptores*, XXIX, edited by

L. Von Heinemann, Hannover 1892, 580. English text in FAED II, 807-808.

<sup>2</sup> ARCHDEACON THOMAS OF SPLIT, *History of the Bishops of Salona and Split*. Latin text by Olga

Luke Wadding does not include this episode in his *Annales Minorum*. He does speak about a preaching episode in Bologna, but places it in 1223. He states that Francis preached to the people in the public square. He admonished the citizens of Bologna regarding their relaxed customs, and even prophesied that a strong earthquake would occur.<sup>3</sup>

This earthquake, whose epicentre was at the town of Brescia, occurred in 1222, and we find a reference to the episode of Francis' prophecy in Thomas of Eccleston:

"[Brother Martin of Baron] told us also that a certain brother who was standing at prayer at Brescia on Christmas day was found unhurt under a ruin of stones when an earthquake struck and the church collapsed; an earthquake that Francis had foretold and by a letter in which there was bad Latin had caused to be announced through all the schools of Bologna. This earthquake happened before the war of Frederick and lasted for forty days, so that all the mountains of Lombardy were shaken."<sup>4</sup>

The establishment of the first Franciscan house in Bologna goes back to 1211. Brother Bernardo da Quintavalle was sent there by Saint Francis, and obtained a house at Santa Maria delle Pugliole, close to what is now the church of San Francesco in Piazza Malpighi, Bologna. It was in this house that Francis probably stayed during his preaching tour in Bologna in 1222. The episode of the foundation of the first Franciscan house in Bologna is narrated in the *Little Flowers of Saint Francis*, c. 5.<sup>5</sup> The episode goes that Brother Bernardo took with him the primitive Rule of the friars Minor and preached in the central square of Bologna, but was ridiculed by the local population. However, a lawyer from

the town, which was a centre of learning for jurisprudence, and who was later on identified as Nicolò Pepoli, approached Bernardo and asked him to explain his way of life. When he read the few contents of the primitive *forma vitae*, the lawyer was impressed by the simple honesty of Bernardo's life, and offered him hospitality. That was how the first friars Minor settled in the university town, close to the church of Santa Maria delle Pugliole I the ancient Roman ruins of Bologna.

We do not know anything regarding this first house of the brothers. What we do know, from the *Memoriale in desiderio animæ* of Thomas of Celano and the *Speculum Perfectionis* (Sabatier edition) is that, on one occasion, maybe in the summer of 1220, when Francis was returning from the East via the Adriatic coast and Venice, he stopped in Bologna and commanded the brothers to leave "the house of the brothers" they had built, and even went as far as commanding the sick brothers to leave the place. The situation was solved by Cardinal Ugo of Ostia, who was Papal Legate in north Italy at that time, and who convinced Francis that the house was not the property of the brothers, but of the *Comune* of Bologna.<sup>6</sup>

The fact that the brothers established themselves in Bologna is significant, since Bologna was a famous university town and was certainly attractive for those learned brothers who wanted to study law or theology. One of these brothers was Bonizio of Bologna, who was instrumental in helping Francis compose the *Regula bullata* of 1223 in the hermitage of Fonte Colombo.<sup>7</sup> Very little is known about him, except for the fact that he studied law and therefore was instrumental in helping

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Perić. Edited, translated and annotated by Damir Kabrić, Mirjana Matijević Sokol and James Ross Sweeney, Central European University Press, Budapest 2006.

<sup>3</sup> WADDING, *Annales Minorum*, Tom. II, XXVII, ad ann. 1223, p. 75.

<sup>4</sup> THOMAS OF ECCLESTON, *The Coming to England of the Friars Minor*, c. 6, in *XIII<sup>th</sup> Century*

*Chronicles. Jordan of Giano. Thomas of Eccleston. Salimbene degli Adami.* Trans. Placid Hermann, Chicago 1961, 126

<sup>5</sup> FAED III, 575-576.

<sup>6</sup> 2C 58 (FAED II, 286) MP 6 (FAED III, 259).

<sup>7</sup> CA 17 (FAED II, 131).

Francis to compose the *Regula bullata* in a more juridical style than that used in the *Regula non bullata* of 1221.

### **Saint Anthony of Padua in Bologna**

Luke Wadding dedicates special attention to the figure of Anthony of Padua, who had entered the Franciscan Order in 1221 after having been a Canon Regular of Saint Augustine in the Monastery of Santa Cruz in Coimbra, Portugal. Moved by the example of the first Franciscan martyrs in Morocco, Saints Berardo, Accursio, Adiuto, Ottone and Pietro, he became a Franciscan and went to Morocco to die as a martyr. An illness prevented him from achieving this aim, and on his way back to Portugal his ship was driven by a storm to Sicily. From Messina Anthony travelled to Assisi and was present for the Chapter of Pentecost of 1221. Brother Graziano, Minister of Romagna, took him in his province and sent him to the hermitage of Monte Paolo, above Forlì. After a short period of humble presence there among a fraternity of lay brothers, Anthony revealed his profound knowledge of Scriptures during a sermon he was obliged to preach in Forlì in 1222.

At this point Anthony was sent to Bologna. Luke Wadding dwells upon this moment of Anthony's life and states that he was sent to this university town in order to teach Sacred Theology to the brothers, who at the time were staying in the new friary of the Annunciation.<sup>8</sup>

Bologna did not possess a faculty of theology, and therefore the brothers who studied theology did so in their own house. Anthony was the first *lector* of Sacred Theology in the Order. According to Wadding, it was Thomas Gallus, the Abbot of Vercelli (ca. 1200-1246) who contacted Saint Francis in order to inform him of the

great wisdom and learning of Anthony, and of the great advantage of his presence in Bologna as master of theology in order to prepare the brothers for the ministry of preaching. Wadding is of the opinion that Thomas had also been a master of theology for Anthony when the latter was still a Canon Regular of Saint Augustine in Coimbra.

The result of this letter of recommendation on the part of this famous exegete and theologian, expert especially on the works of the *Pseudo-Dionysius*, was that Francis gave permission to Anthony to lecture Sacred Theology to the brothers in the *studium* of Bologna. The permission was given in the form of a very short letter written by Francis to Anthony, whom he calls "my bishop."<sup>9</sup>

There is, however, a problem regarding the dating of this letter. Although Wadding places it in 1222, the fact that Francis quotes a text from the *Regula bullata* of 1223 would rather point to this later date as the time in which Francis gave permission to Anthony to teach theology. The expression *huius studium sancte orationis et devotionis spiritum non exstinguas*, would refer to chapter 5 of the *Regula bullata*, where Francis speaks about the work of the brothers that should not extinguish the spirit of prayer and devotion.

This expression shows that Francis considered the teaching of Sacred Theology as a permissible work for the brothers, even though Anthony was still the exception to the rule at this stage, since there were no theologians in the Order. Francis considered study as an important work among so many others that the brothers could exercise, as long as this work would help them to preserve the attitude of humble prayer and devotion, that is, would not be a pretext for self-esteem or to dominate over others, but a humble service rendered to God in order to meditate the Holy

<sup>8</sup> WADDING, *Annales Minorum*, Tom. II, ad ann. 1222, p. 48.

<sup>9</sup> Critical edition of the *Epistola ad Fratrem Antonum* in FRANCESCO D'ASSISI, *Scritti*.

Edizione critica a cura di Carlo Paolazzi, Grottaferrata 2009, 168-171. English text in FAED I, 107).

Scriptures and form the brothers for the office of preachers.

Although we cannot speak correctly of the foundation of a specific house of studies in Bologna in 1222, just because Anthony was present and was lecturing Sacred Theology, it is important to note that the development of the *studium* in the city progressed fairly rapidly from this point onwards.

“The existence of a university in the city of the convent increases the possibility that the convent’s *studium* was a *studium generale*. The major *studia generalia* of the Order, such as Paris, Oxford and Bologna, were all founded in cities where great medieval universities existed. However, the relations between Franciscan *studia* and universities are probably more complicated than scholars so far have considered them to be. There is a need to make a distinction between a Franciscan *studium* that was incorporated in a university with a theology faculty and a Franciscan *studium* that was incorporated in a university without a theology faculty.”<sup>10</sup>

One of the historic inaccuracies made by Luke Wadding in his *Annales Minorum* regards the date of entry of Alexander of Hales in the Franciscan Order. According to Wadding this *magister regens* of the faculty of theology in the University of Paris entered the Order in 1222,<sup>11</sup> but this is not correct, since at that time Alexander was still a secular master and only entered the Order in 1236, when he was master of the young Bonaventure who, like him, commented on the *Liber Sententiarum* of Peter the Lombard.

### **Concluding remarks**

The year 1222 does not mark a particularly intense moment in the life of Saint Francis. Yet it is important in the sense that it marks a turning point in the life

of the Poverello and in the development of the Order. For Francis the year 1222 marked the beginning of the final phase of his life, which saw him relinquishing the role of superior of his Order. The achievements of the chapter of 1221, especially regarding the *Regula non bullata*, coupled with Francis’ state of heart regarding the Order after his return from the East in 1220, all played a vital role in convincing him that he had to give way to persons whose expertise could help the Order develop along more juridical lines.

Indeed, from the year 1223, and probably with the insistence of Cardinal Ugo and the learned brothers of the Order, Francis felt the need to draw up a definite rule for his Order which would receive papal confirmation. This is precisely what he accomplished in 1223 with the *Regula bullata*.

The gospel ideals which were so dear to Francis, however, remained rooted in his personality to the point that he would never concede any compromise regarding the safeguarding of the purity of the *apostolica vivendi forma* that he embraced. Although having to concede to the brotherhood a more organised system of life and government, Francis continued to insist upon the original *intentio* of his calling to the very end.

In the coming years we will be seeing how Francis had an uphill drive to defend his ideals while he developed a mature attitude of letting go of his juridical authority in favour of a more spiritual and moral authoritative presence. The preaching tours he undertook in 1222, particularly in southern Italy, were to open up a new way of being present to the brothers, a way that was to become a tangible sign of a Christ-like presence after the episode of the stigmatisation, when Francis was carried around half-dead to preach Christ crucified not with words but with his physical presence.

<sup>10</sup> NESLIHAN SENOCAK, *The Franciscan Studium Generale: A New Interpretation*, 5, in [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu)

<sup>11</sup> WADDING, *Annales Minorum*, Tom. II, ad ann. 1222, p. 45-46.

## JACOPONE DA TODI: THE POET WITH A CAUSE

Anthony M. Carrozzo OFM

In a feast day reflection on Francis of Assisi, the ever challenging Franciscan Sister and Scholar Ilia Delio wrote that when “Faith is daring and adventurous, creative and spontaneous, well, such faith is a game changer... without an adventurous faith we have mediocre religion, mediocre church, and mediocre piety, all of which is banal, vacuous and an enervating of life.” Ilia sums up what mediocrity can do to our faith life both personally and institutionally.

Jacopone da Todi, a Franciscan poet, would readily agree with Sister Ilia’s remarks. There was no mediocrity in Jacopone da Todi. Take, for example, his satirical poem about the state of Franciscan theology. He states unambiguously “Paris has destroyed Assisi stone by stone,” (31) an outright attack on Bonaventure and his fellow friar teachers in Paris. Yet, on reading and studying his poems, we discover much of the thinking of Bonaventure in them. But then consistency may not make a good poet. What Jacopone could not escape is that Bonaventure and he shared the souls of poets.

What makes the soul of a poet? Perhaps one of the translators of Jacopone’s poems Serge Hughes puts it best in his introductory remarks to the translated texts Poetry, he claims, combines “music, images, and conviction” (1) to create a new appreciation for what most of us take for granted. So we turn to poets like we turn to mystics: to provide that moment when we are stopped in our tracks because we see a flash of truth.

There are those who claim that poetry and prayer are allies. I am one of them. Poetry can be prayer, very eloquent prayer. Isn’t that what attracts us to the psalms? We

gain untold insight by repeating psalms and suddenly realizing “I never thought of that before” even though we have prayed those same psalms over and over again. That is what poetry and prayer have in common: often repeated, often memorized, often heard anew.

Francis of Assisi is a poet as his many prayers, canticles, and gestures show, especially but not exclusively his *Canticle of Creation* which includes all of creation in his fraternity. Bonaventure is a poet in his spiritual writings and often in his theological writings especially in *The Soul’s Journey into God* which often bursts into song as the soul advances toward its graced goal. Jacopone da Todi is a poet as we shall see. So the three friars are not only brothers but they are also the poets of the Franciscan Tradition. Jacopone certainly disagreed with the direction the Order was taking under Bonaventure’s leadership but he could not deny their common vocation to use music, images, and conviction to garner new insight for us into the mysteries of our faith and our Franciscan vocation.

What most obviously unites them is their insistence on the centrality of love in our lives. For Francis this seems simply to be part of his being. He was a lover who finally found his true love in Lady Poverty. Bonaventure, on the other hand, was a thinker who had to come to love his brothers through the solitude he sought at La Verna during which time he penned the *Soul’s Journey*. Jacopone was more of a feeler who came to embrace love slowly and cautiously as he himself tells us in *Silent Love* “Wordless love hidden in silence, unheard by those without/Hide your riches beyond the reach of the wiliest thief” (77). Why “hide” this love? There is

a clue in his first poem which is addressed to Mary: “O gracious Queen, heal, I beg of you, my wounded heart/Despairing. I come to you, confiding in you alone/Without your help, I am ashes.” (1) A wounded heart needs and seeks protection. Often enough the loss of love, even when confused with lust, ends up with a locked heart. It is only slowly, carefully and painfully that the soul can learn to love again in newer and deeper ways. So in a poem entitled “Divine Goodness and The Human Will,” Jacopone cries out: “Tell me, o most noble souls, what do you see.../a life well-ordered in every respect/And a heart, once impure and lower than Hell,/Now the abode of the Trinity, a bed made holy.” (79). Only a poet could express such anguish and transformation in so few words. Jacopone knew many forms of love before he could write: “Generous Love/gracious Love,/your riches are beyond imagining/Freely give Love,/Full of delights, gentle Love/That satisfies the heart!” (81) Jacopone has finally discovered that true Love is Divine Love.

It is not only Love that unites these three poets. It is also the sense of wonder they share about creation. Obviously Francis leads the way with his *Canticle of Creation*. Bonaventure follows suit notable in the *Soul's Journey* when he finds God in all creation. Jacopone is very much part of the Franciscan heritage when he discovers at the beauty of God's creation. He writes in his poem “On Holy Poverty, Queen of Creation” (59): “Lakes, rivers, and oceans teeming with fish,/Air, winds, birds – all pay me joyful homage./Moon and sun, sky and stars, are but minor treasures:/The treasures that make me burst into song/Lie beyond the sky that you can see.” Jacopone uniquely unites this wonder with poverty: “Poverty is having nothing, wanting nothing,/And possessing all things in the spirit of freedom.” I am not sure that “possessing” is the appropriate word. After all, Franciscans do not take a vow of poverty but a vow to live *sine proprio*, that is without anything of their own. Perhaps

“enjoying” would be the better word. The poor possess nothing but they may then have the freedom to simply enjoy the creation they cannot possess. Thinking that we possess creation has led us to a climate crisis. Jacopone certainly captures the feeling of Francis and the thoughts of Bonaventure about discovering God in creation.

Another area of commonality is devotion to the Passion and Death of Jesus. Both Francis and Bonaventure emphasize our commitment to Christ Crucified, Jacopone gives us a touching poem “The Lament of the Virgin,” (93), which is a retelling of the passion account from Mary's point of view. At one point Mary exclaims: “Oh, let me begin to chant the dirge,/My son has been taken from me./O Son, my fair Son,/Who was it that killed You?/Oh, that they had ripped out my heart,/That I might not see Your torn flesh/Hanging from the cross!” Who can read this and not be moved with pity toward Mary for what is being done to her Son? Francis received the Stigmata, Bonaventure wrote eloquently of the Crucified Christ, but only Jacopone has captured such deep feelings from the very heart of His Mother. Only poetry can express such feelings so succinctly.

We cannot forget, however, the mystery that is central to all Franciscan thought: the Incarnation, God made flesh among us, to be one of us. We are all aware of Francis's dramatization of this event at the little hermitage in Greccio, where Francis put on the first Nativity play only to be outdone by Jesus Himself Who became a living presence in the play. Bonaventure writes beautifully of the event in his *Life of Francis* but what Jacopone would recall is something visitors may miss. The site where the drama took place is carefully kept intact but if you were to go upstairs you will see the first choir-stalls for praying the Divine Office monastically. This was Bonaventure's addition as was the prison-like hermitage in which John of Parma was placed there. A far cry from Francis's Rule

for Hermitages for John was isolated from all his brothers. This had to annoy the Spiritual Franciscans who missed John of Parma. Jacopone does not allude to this in his “Canticle of the Nativity” (64). Rather he sings of the feast. ‘Anew canticle I hear/To dry the tears of the afflicted!/I hear it begin with a piercing tone,/Whence it slowly descends several octaves,/For it celebrates the coming of the Word. Never was heard/A descending scale of such exquisite melody!’” What a beautiful image as he invites “the votive of Stephen,..John the Evangelist...the Holy Innocents ... sinners and just men ... to come and sing.” This certainly captured the desire of Francis that even the walls be rubbed with meat on the feast of the Incarnation. Yet we cannot help but wonder if Jacopone included himself among those afflicted. Nowhere else has a Spiritual Franciscan been more vocally pained by what they saw as lost innocence in the Franciscan Movement even if it was very much a pain of their own making for their inability to accept the

Incarnational nature of the new movement. To be enfleshed means to change and to adapt.

So, yes, Jacopone was a Spiritual Franciscan longing for the early days of the Movement but that did not make him less Franciscan as his poems reveal a very ordinary man struggling with developing a selfless love life, embracing a poverty that gave him freedom from possessiveness, singing a new Canticle of Creation and another the Canticle of the Nativity, and learning to embrace the cross as Francis embraced the leper so that what was bitter to him became sweetness.

**Source:**

Illia DELIO, *October Newsletter 2021*, online at Cener for Christogenesis.

JACOPONE DA TODI, *The Lauds*, trans by Serge and Elizabeth Hughes (New York: Paulista Press, 1982).

# SOME PATRISTIC INFLUENCES ON FRANCISCAN THOUGHT

Kevin Tortorelli OFM

## Introduction

The Patristic period vigorously encountered the Revelation that is Holy Scripture. It transported this encounter into sets of meaning and values of classical science and philosophy, especially metaphysics. In its teaching on grace and freedom, Patristics set itself against the ‘naturalism’ of antiquity (as, eg., the thought of Aristotle). In its sacramental insight it opposed various Gnostic systems that tended to debase creation and matter. Patristics understood the intellectual life as a dimension of spirituality and thus integral to growth and holiness.<sup>1</sup> Their achievement enhanced the intelligibility of the Faith as a value and as a goal. It became possible to speak of a Christian humanism alongside Classical humanism. This Christian humanism produced a welcome fruit, eg., in Clement of Alexandria, Origen, the Cappadocians, Maximus Confessor. In the West, Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose and Hilary exercised a strong influence on the Middle Ages. Happily, it is a long list. These broad brushstrokes helped shape Franciscan thought a thousand years later. As influences they do not relate to Franciscan thought as cause to effect. The image is rather of a stream fed by various water courses to achieve continuous depth and purity (cf. Ez 47: 1-12). That stream immerses Patristics and Franciscan thought and connects them. In particular there are three Patristic motifs that are relevant to Franciscan thought: the anti-Gnostic motif; the Recapitulation of All things in Christ;

and Paideia or the community.

## Gnosticism and a Franciscan Theology of Creation

Gnosticism is at home in the Hellenistic world. It is an inclusive term embracing both an attitude and several technical Gnostic schools.<sup>2</sup> But in fact Gnosticism was never a philosophy with its concern for the real from which emerged recognizable terms – substance or essence, potency and act, form and matter, the investigation of causes, the establishment of first principles. Instead Gnosticism reverted to a myth with an elitist, secretive, knowledge of the *Ogdoad*. In this myth Gnosticism founders badly. It posited a crude opposition between body and spirit where the body opposes the divine. By means of this secret knowledge, the Gnostic strips away the bodily and material. Such a devotee is now redeemed and becomes a pure spirit through this secret knowledge. The way is open to return to the super worldly regions of the spirit from where the Gnostic once fell. Gnosticism was a fundamental failure to articulate Being itself, a failure to speak cogently of the relationship between Uncreated Being and created being.

Finite reality is at once similar to the being of God within a greater dissimilarity. Therefore finite reality really ‘is’ as a union of existence and essence but it is dissimilar to the being of God in Whom there is a

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<sup>1</sup> K. TORTORELLI, *Christology with Lonergan and Balthasar*, (Ely, Cambridgeshire: Melrose Books, 2005), 33-38.

<sup>2</sup> The literature on Gnosticism is simply vast. For the ancient Gnostic Schools see IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Adversus Haereses*, II.

radical identity of existence and essence.<sup>3</sup> For Bonaventure, the finite expresses and mediates the infinite in the experience of the beautiful. The finite in the experience of the beautiful has the character of a free gift, the self-expression of an infinite love. Without reflection on the experience of the beautiful, God is simply alien to the world. God is exchanged for the Pleroma. Creation is identified as pure opposition to God, with nothingness. Indeed the world is the creation, not of God, but of an inferior Demiurge. What is at stake here is the openness of nature to receive Grace and Revelation. For Bonaventure what is equally at stake is the structure of beauty and of form in which reality gives itself in its depth as good. Beauty and form give us the depth of being as light.<sup>4</sup> Our response to this light is contemplative.

Contemplation receives this light of truth. The height of contemplation stands before the form of Christ Incarnate and 'sees' the invisible love of God. In this experience the soul is enraptured and rejoices in the widespread continuity between nature and grace, creation and salvation, Adam and Christ, Old Testament and New Testament, Word and Church.

Gnosticism mythologized the notion of Being and ravaged the dignity of creation, splitting and fracturing it. By contrast, Franciscan thought has cherished the unity of creation in Christ. It has depicted that unity in terms of light, beauty, truth and the good. *A Gnostic could never had written the Canticle of the Creatures.*<sup>5</sup> The icon of this unity is the Stigmata event that gathered Francis into love for the crucified Jesus by imitating the Lord in His humility and poverty, the *minoritas Christi*. The effect is a palpable joy.

Perhaps in our time the Gnostic view of creation has once again asserted itself. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis identifies this Gnostic view (though I don't think he uses the word) in his analysis of our planetary crisis. We have removed creation from its dignity as a sacrament of life, growth and development. In its place we look out on a scene of degradation, extinction, harmful climate change, policies of unsustainable growth, disconnection. The Franciscan tradition celebrated Creation with profound and energetic joy and understanding. It may be called on to do so again.

### **Recapitulation in Christ**

In antiquity, being began as *Hen*, the One and descended through *Nous* or *Logos* down to *psyche* or *the soul* and down again to *physis* or *matter*. Below *matter* lay *apeiron*, what is without limit. It is nothingness. This structure had strong roots in Plotinus, Porphyry, the later Alexandrians (Clement and Origen) and Augustine.<sup>6</sup> But, as Augustine observes, I did not read in the philosophers that the Logos became flesh and dwelt among us nor His mission humbly to redeem us. With this observation Augustine identified the passage from philosophy to the Revelation of the Scriptures. It is an insight that established the Logos, the Incarnate Christ, as the center of reality. It is a short distance (backwards in time!) to Irenaeus<sup>7</sup> who expressed this movement of the cosmos toward fulfillment as Recapitulation (*anakephalaiosis*, Eph 1:10). It gave form to temporal and historical progress, making it intelligible and visible and adding meaning to the passage of time because

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<sup>3</sup> Scotus famously rejected this distinction between essence and existence.

<sup>4</sup> For Bonaventure on the nature of beauty see his *Itinerarium in Deum*, II.

<sup>5</sup> Bonaventure on the significance of the Canticle, see *Legenda Maior*, 9. and on the general significance of Creation in Franciscan thought see T. JOHNSON, *Francis and Creation*, The Cambridge

Companion to Francis of Assisi, Michael Robon ed., Cambridge University Press, 2012), 143-158.

<sup>6</sup> *Confessions*, VII, 9, 20

<sup>7</sup> For Irenaeus on Recapitulation see *Adversus Haereses*, V, 21-24.; I am reminded here of Maximus Confessor on *eros* as the 'tending' of the universe toward God. See R. WILLIAMS, *Christ the Heart of Creation* London, 2018, 107-108, 120-121.

form (Recapitulation) and content (Revelation) are inseparable.

Recapitulation lays claim to a force that inheres in the flow of time, conferring meaning and direction, goal and duration on that flow. Recapitulation sets time itself in Christ and so in the presence of the eternal. We find here many distinctive but analogous historical and theological layers. They impart a dazzling profusion as everything converges in Christ, achieving synthesis, integration and fulfillment. In Recapitulation Christ draws everything to Himself by virtue of the primacy of His cross. Everything is summed up in Him. He recapitulates in Himself our death because He assumes Adam into Himself. In Irenaeus in particular the numerous correlations between the Old Testament and the New find sturdy echoes in Bonaventure. The movement of *egressio* (from the Creator) to *regressio* (back to the Creator) is the general form of Recapitulation and is strongly reflected in Bonaventure.<sup>8</sup> Seeing what is thus recapitulated embraces contemplation of their unity in diversity and their diversity in unity.

Recapitulation happily combines a theology of creation and a theology of history as expressions of the primacy of Christ to draw all things to Himself. John Duns Scotus gives this expression of the primacy of Christ profound expression within the tradition of Recapitulation or summing up. For Scotus, God expresses His love for creation by being united with it in the Incarnation of the Word (Logos) in

the Lord Jesus. The Incarnation expresses the eternal goodness of God as distinct from its role as redemption from sin.<sup>9</sup> The Incarnation belongs to the divine plan before Original Sin and the fall of our first parents. In this joy we hear that the Kingdom of God has come to us (Lk 10:9).

### **Paideia and Franciscan culture**

*Paideia* defines the idea of Greek culture as a whole and of education within the whole tradition of Greek literature. It pertains to the formation of a person in terms of a normative ideal.<sup>10</sup> It early became a theme in Patristics in connection with education as a *preparatio evangelica* and in terms of the economy or plan of salvation (Eph 1:10). Augustine gives us a vivid picture of *paideia* in the little company gathered at Cassiciacum from July, 386 to Easter, 387.<sup>11</sup> They were devoted to the life of wisdom that seeks the truth that is Christ. This seeking together made them friends. They share restless hearts.

Friar Roger Bacon (1214-1294) proposed the careful, descriptive study of the natural world as an education proper to the study of Scripture.<sup>12</sup> Ancient *paideia* embraced Aristotle's natural philosophy, the atomist school (Lucretius, Epicurus) of irreducible particles (*atoma*) with its infinite vacuum and the Stoic emphasis on a continuum of space, matter and continuity in the fashioning of physical phenomena.

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<sup>8</sup> I recommend highly the monograph of HANS URS VON BALTHASAR, *Bonaventure*, various transl., *The Glory of The Lord A Theological Aesthetics* Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 260-362 and my article *Hans Urs von Balthasar as an Interpreter of St Bonaventure*, in: [FranciscanConnections.com](http://FranciscanConnections.com) (July, 2021). Bonaventure's theology of history is laid out in his formidable *Collationes in Hexaemeron*.

<sup>9</sup> JOHNSON, *The Cambridge Companion*, 155. And see M.B. INGHAM, CSJ, *Understanding John Duns Scotus, Franciscan Heritage Series*, Vol 9., St Bonaventure University, Franciscan Institute Publications, NY 2017, 8, 140-143; VON

BALTHASAR, *Theodrama Theological Dramatic Theory III. Dramatis Personae: Persons in Christ*, Graham Harrison transl., Ignatius Press, San Francisco 1992, 253, footnote 71.

<sup>10</sup> W. JAEGER remains a classic text. See his *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia*, Oxford University Press, 1969.

<sup>11</sup> Conf IX; and see *Contra Academicos II,III*.

<sup>12</sup> JOHNSON, "Wisdom Has Built Her House; She Has Set Up Her Seven Pillars." Roger Bacon, *Franciscan Wisdom and Conversion to the Sciences*. The English Province of the Franciscans (1224-c.1350), (ed.) Michael J.P. Robson Leiden, 2017, 296-315.

Astronomy and geometry were particularly advanced but there was no experimentation and no concept of probability.<sup>13</sup> Very broadly, Roger Bacon is heir to this form of *paideia* as education in the sciences.

The Franciscan emphasis on *paideia* maintained the ancient Christian sense of *praeparatio evangelica* in the Order's emphasis on preparation to preach penance. Without this commitment, the necessary basis for the preaching of the gospel would be lacking. In particular, in his *Hexaameron*, Bonaventure models the activity of reading within the learning process in an effort to form the identities of both the individual brothers and their communities.<sup>14</sup>

The *Hexaameron* is very much devoted to the *paideia* (formation) of the friars in terms of the Old Testament, the gospels and eschatology. Bonaventure employed the communal practice of *collationes* to model for his brothers how to read with *affectus* and *intellectus* so they could learn to read as contemplatives capable of intergrating philosophical knowledge and theological understanding with the wisdom of

Scripture.<sup>15</sup>

I believe it is this notion of *paideia* (formation, education, beauty and befriending<sup>16</sup>) that can guide us through the historical perplexities the friars have experienced regarding poverty and education, humility and learning.

## Conclusion

This article celebrates a *humanism* that joins Patristic theology and Franciscan theology, to which each is heir and to which each has contributed. In particular, this humanism is constructed of the openness of creation to the Incarnation of Christ and to its goal and vocation in the Primacy of Christ. In a different key, transcendence names this openness of created being to a development in which creation arrives at its integrated completion. Along the way one notices the emergence of human freedom and spontaneity and a consciousness that humbly knows its dignity and high calling.

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<sup>13</sup> S. SAMBURSKY, *The Physical World of the Greeks*. Martin Dagut transl., Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1960; and see JOHNSON, *Cambridge Companion to Francis of Assisi*, 153-155.

<sup>14</sup> J.M. HAMMOND, *Collations on the Hexaameron* St Bonaventure University, Franciscan Institute

Publications, NY 2018, 2.

<sup>15</sup> HAMMOND, *Hexaameron*, 26.

<sup>16</sup> Ingham notes that for Scotus the fullness of freedom is expressed in the love of friendship and that friendship is the perfection of human life in heaven. Cf. pp. 7, 95 and 102.

# THE CHRONICLE OF NICHOLAS GLASSBERGER

Noel Muscat OFM

This is a continuation of a partial translation of texts taken from the Chronicle of Nicholas Glassberger, with some explanatory notes, which can be found in the critical Latin edition: *Chronica Fratris Nicolai Glassberger Ordinis Minorum Observantium*, in *Analecta Franciscana sive Chronica aliaque varia documenta ad Historiam Fratrum Minorum spectantia*, edita a Patribus Collegii S. Bonaventuræ, Tomus II, Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi) prope Florentiam, ex typographia Collegii S. Bonaventuræ 1887.

*Page numbers are indicated in square brackets.*

## **The Translation of [the relics of] Saint Francis**

[48] In the year of the Lord 1230 brother John of Pian del Carpine, Minister of Germany, went to the general chapter that was held in Assisi. Before leaving he celebrated his last provincial chapter in Cologne, in which brother Simon the Englishman went as Vicar.

In the same year of the Lord 1230 the lord [49] Pope Gregory the Ninth convened the general chapter in Assisi. During this chapter he celebrated the translation of [the relics of] blessed Francis from the church of San Giorgio to the basilica that was built in his honour. The same lord Pope had decided personally to have the said translation celebrated before the brothers convened, even though the brothers had wanted and should have had the right of being present at the same chapter. Brother Elias, who presided over the arrangements with the help of the secular authorities,

arranged to have the translation of blessed Francis celebrated secretly, even though brother John Parenti was presiding over the Order. Elias did not want any one of the brothers to know where the sacred body of the Saint was buried in the church. Because of this reason, when the chapter met, all the brothers were indignant. Among them there were brother John of Florence, General, and brother John of Pian del Carpine, Minister of Germany, brother Albert of Pisa and Saint Anthony, together with many famous men. All of them were sad since they were not allowed to take part as they had so ardently desired in the translation, and could not see [the relics]. Nevertheless the chapter was celebrated with such a great solemnity, and there were so many persons who gathered in that place from the neighbouring towns, that the city could not hold them all, and they had to camp in the open fields like sheep. The lord Pope had wanted to be present in the translation, but he was impeded from doing so. So he sent Apostolic letters and special nuncios to the chapter, who not only declared the reason for the necessary absence [of the Pope], but also declared that a dead man in Germany had been raised by the merits of blessed Francis, and this made the other brothers full of gladness. The same nuncios brought with them a golden cross encrusted with precious gems, in which was enshrined the wood of the holy Cross. They also brought ornaments and sacred vessels pertaining to the service of the altar, together with solemn vestments and sacred furnishings for the church of Saint Francis. These were sent by the Pope to the same church of which he had laid the foundation stone,

and which he declared exempt from all other jurisdiction, except his own.

Two thousand brothers were present for this general chapter.

During the same time many doubts were raised among the brothers regarding issues in the rule. The Minister General brother John carried the rule in his hands, and asserted that it was clear and could be observed to the letter by all. When the chapter ended, the lord Pope Gregory IX was consulted regarding the need to issue a declaration on the difficulties that had been raised. [50] Since he knew very well the intention of Saint Francis and had been close to him when he was trying to have the rule confirmed, he issued a declaration to solve all the doubts on the fourth day of the calends of October, in the year 1230, the fourth year of his pontificate.<sup>1</sup>

In that same chapter brother John of Pian del Carpine was absolved from the office of Minister of Germany and was sent as Minister of Spain. During the time when Simon the Englishman, first lector at Magdeburg, was minister of Germany, and brother Otto the Lombard was expert in jurisprudence, both were substituted, and the administration of the same province was divided into two sections, one in the Rhineland and the other in Saxony. Brother Otto became minister of the province of the Rhineland, whereas brother Simon became minister of Saxony; however, brother Simon died suddenly and he never exercised that office.

In that same chapter the Breviaries and Antiphonals according to the rite of the Order were sent to the Provinces.

### **Brother Elias**

Brother Elias had greatly offended the fathers and brothers of the aforementioned chapter, during which the relics of the body of blessed Francis were secretly translated.

During the same chapter he published many privileges of the Apostolic Orders, which had been requested by the brothers. These regarded dispensations regarding the purity of the rule, particularly letting the brothers receive money offerings through other persons. He had requested such privileges through surreptitious manners. He had convinced [the Pope] to concede these dispensations with many pleasing and coloured reasonings. Since he was eloquent and capable in persuading others, with this same coloured language and golden words as well as with terror he induced many of the simpler and more fearful brothers to give him their consent with extortion, given that they did not have the courage to contradict him. In their midst, however, there were to glorious luminaries of the Order who openly opposed him, namely Anthony of Padua and brother Adam of Marsh, who resisted him courageously.<sup>2</sup> They faced him and told him plainly that they would never give their consent to those kinds of privileges, which were a plain and gross subversion of the rule and of the Gospel life, which they had vowed to observe. Many other brothers secretly supported these two friars, among whom especially there were Brother Albert of Pisa, at the time Minister of England, and brother John Bonellus of Florence, who was then Minister of Provence. During the chapter which was held in Arles, in which Saint Anthony was preaching about the title on the Cross, blessed Francis appeared in the air blessing the brothers. Among all the other brothers, then, there was one who dared to oppose brother Elias openly. Against these two brothers who were strenuous defenders of the rule, namely Anthony and brother Adam, a great tumult of the friars ensued, since they were accused of being schismatics [51] and dividers of the unity of the Order, whereas in truth they were the principal and constant

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<sup>1</sup> The Bulla *Quo elongati*, issued on 28 September 1230 by Pope Gregory IX.

<sup>2</sup> The facts narrated here did not occur during the 1230 chapter, since Elias was not Minister General

then, but they refer to the chapter of 1239, at the conclusion of Elias' mandate (1232-1239).

conservators and defenders of its unity. When they realised that brother Elias was regarding them as accomplices in personally persecuting him, driven through necessity, they appealed the grave matter to the Apostolic See. When they presented their legitimate appeal, brother Elias tried to hold them under his power by force. With the protection of the Lord, in whose case they were acting, and with the help of a certain brother from Genoa, who was penitentiary and confessor of the lord Pope, they escaped and with this brother they presented themselves in front of the lord Pope. When Elias came to know of their escape he was terrified, and he ordered them to be caught and brought before him as fomenters of division in the Order. But it was all in vain. They safely arrived at the Pope's presence, and he welcomed them kindly while they humbly presented their appeal and recourse to the Apostolic See.

After having listened to them, the lord Pope convened all the brothers to come to the chapter which he presided. The brothers gathered with great haste, and after both parties [of the brothers] had assembled, the aforementioned brothers Anthony and Adam began to explain how they could not sustain such a ruin and subversion of the rule and of the evangelical way of life as a result of the aforementioned privileges, which were not healthy to the spiritual well-being of the brothers. They also explained how they were compelled to appeal to the Apostolic See because of the grave wrongs and personal persecutions that they endured, and because they could not believe that the lord Pope would concede such privileges to brother Elias, in such a way as to prejudice his vows and the evangelical rule, except in the case that he was deceived by Elias' crafty and wicked instigations and surreptitiousness. They told him: "Your Holiness, most blessed

Father, we accuse brother Elias that he is compelling the brothers to accept money and hoard riches, and that he does not care at all about the rule, but that, as far as he is able to, he wants to destroy it. He is doing so against the intentions of Saint Francis, who before he died foresaw what would happen, and therefore he prohibited the brothers to ask for any privileges. Instead [Elias] is trying to acquire these dispensations and was fomenting division, and he wants to make a new explanation of the rule which would be an extortion of what blessed Francis had said and wanted the brothers to do" etc.

When these had finished their speech, brother Elias, who up till that moment had pretended to be humble, all of a sudden flared up in anger, and in the presence of the Pontiff he accused the holy Anthony and said: "You are a liar and you are speaking falsely."<sup>3</sup> In front of this indecent response, the lord Pope was confused and he commanded the brothers to keep silent. He then spoke with Saint Anthony and with the brothers who came with him, and said: "Unless you do not want brother Elias to strike you with the sentence of excommunication, you have to prove your case with strong arguments, on account of the canonical appellation which you presented." The Pope recommended blessed Anthony and those who were united with him and said [to Elias]: "With the fulness of the Apostolic powers I absolve you [from your office] and, as to you brothers, I confirm you in the constancy of your zeal for your Order." "And you, brother Anthony, arc of the covenant,<sup>4</sup> in which the tablets [52] of the law and the treasures of wisdom reside, I want to free you from all the persecutions inflicted upon you by the Order, and I declare you and all the other brothers to be exempt from them. I beg you in all charity to indulge in

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<sup>3</sup> According to Thomas of Eccleston, *De Adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam*, it was not Saint Anthony who presented the case against Elias before Pope Gregory IX, but rather brother Haymo of Faversham.

<sup>4</sup> Pope Gregory did not give this title to St. Anthony during the chapter of 1239, but on a preceding occasion when Anthony preached in front of the Cardinals and the Roman Curia.

contemplation and in the composition of your sermons, and for this reason I would like you to stay with me and invite you kindly to remain here.”

The blessed Anthony humbly declined to accept the honours of the Curia, since he wanted to work for the fruits of souls. So, he chose for himself Mount La Verna,<sup>5</sup> and was given leave by Apostolic blessings, so that wherever he would be, he would live in penance and preaching. The servant of God saw that he had still much work ahead of him in order to bear fruit. Because of his natural tendency to obesity, he could not travel and therefore he went to Padua, where he died in that same year.<sup>6</sup> The same Pontiff, after some days had passed, inscribed him in the catalogue of Saints in Spoleto, because of the merits of his life and the radiance of his miracles.

Furthermore, brother Elias said that he had been received in the Order under the first rule that had been approved by the lord Pope Innocent, and which stated that he could receive money. Therefore, he was obliged to profess the rule that had been confirmed by Pope Honorius. When this discussion in front of the Pontiff was concluded, and the brothers returned full of joy to their Provinces, brother Elias made believe that he was living in great humility, in such a way that he appeared to be a changed man. He left his beard and hair to grow, and he would wear a worn-down habit and retreated to a hermitage, and in this way by dissimulating to live in penance he convinced many brothers of his false humility. [...]

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<sup>5</sup> On La Verna there is a tiny chapel underneath the place of the stigmatisation of St. Francis, which is dedicated to St. Anthony and commemorates his presence in this hermitage.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony suffered from dropsy towards the end of his life. He died outside Padua on 13 June 1231. Although this date corresponds to the events narrated regarding the general chapter of Assisi in 1230, it certainly does not correspond to the section

## **The brothers in Germany**

[53] Brother Jordan [of Giano]<sup>7</sup> returned to Assisi and went to see brother Thomas of Celano, who full of joy gave him some relics of blessed Francis as a gift. After having received this gift, namely the relics of some hairs and fabric of clothes worn by Saint Francis, brother Jordan returned to the Province of Saxony. The brothers of Thuringia, when they came to know that brother Jordan, their Custodian, had returned, sent him a letter in which they told him not only that they desired to see him, but that it was necessary for them to speak to him. This meant that they asked him to come to the house of the brothers to visit them. He did precisely this. When he arrived in Würzburg, he sent for the brothers of his custody, telling them that if they needed to talk to him, they would meet him in Eisenach, since he would pass from there. The brothers were full of joy and gathered in that place, telling the doorkeeper that, when brother Jordan would arrive he was not to let him in, but he had to hold him outside for a time. Brother Jordan therefore came and knocked on the door, but he was not admitted in the house immediately. The brother who was the doorkeeper ran to inform the other brothers that brother Jordan was at the door. The brothers, full of joy, send him back to tell [brother Jordan] that he could not enter from the door of the house, but rather go to the entrance of the door of the church. In the meantime, the brothers were inflamed with devotion, and with a joyful spirit they gathered in the choir, holding the cross, the censer, palm branches and burning candles, and they left the choir and entered the church two by two in procession. Then they

regarding the problem of brother Elias, who was deposed from Minister General in 1239, when Anthony was already dead for 8 years and a canonised saint for 7 years (canonised on 30 May 1232 by Pope Gregory IX in Spoleto).

<sup>7</sup> Jordan of Giano was a missionary to Germany and is author of a *Chronicle* on the early history of the Order, and especially on the mission in Germany.

turned facing the choir and opened the door of the church, and when brother Jordan entered they received him with great joy and exultation, singing the responsory: *Hic est fratrum amator*,<sup>8</sup> and introduced him solemnly in the choir in this special way and welcomed him with a fervent spirit of devotion. [...]

[54] In the year of the Lord 1231, after he had returned to Saxony, brother Jordan sent brother John of Penna and brother Deodat of Paris to brother John the Englishman, the Minister, and brother Bartholomew was instituted lector in Saxony. These brothers were sent to introduce them with honours to Saxony.

In the same year, on a Friday, on the thirteenth day of June, the blessed Father Anthony of Lisbon departed from this life to Christ, full of shining virtues.

Similarly, in that same year, on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the calends of December, blessed Elizabeth died in the town of Marburg. She was the widow of a certain illustrious prince called lord Louis, landgrave of Thuringia, and she was buried in the church of the friars Minor, which she herself had built them with her own money. She remained buried there until the seventh year of the pontificate of the lord Innocent IV, and then her remains were translated to the hospital [she had also built] by the lords of the Teutonic Order.

In the year of the Lord 1232, on the sacred day of Pentecost, Saint Anthony of Padua, shining with great miracles, was canonised in Spoleto by the lord Pope Gregory IX, on the sixth year of his pontificate. The Pope also commanded that his feast be solemnly celebrated on the day of his death.

### **Brother Elias second Minister General after blessed Francis**

[55] In the same year, during the general chapter celebrated in Rome,<sup>9</sup> brother John Parenti was absolved from the office of minister general. He was succeeded by brother Elias, who had been the Vicar of blessed Francis. This same brother Elias was hardly elected in a canonical way. In fact, during the chapter celebrated in Rome, in which the aforementioned General Minister and Ministers Provincial and Custodians were gathered, the brothers who were supporters of brother Elias were asked to come over. They broke down the door of the [chapter] hall, and carried Elias on their shoulders, and placed him in the chair of the General Minister, while they shouted loudly that they wanted him to be General Minister, according to what Saint Francis himself had wanted before dying regarding the General [who would succeed him].<sup>10</sup> Upon seeing this, brother John rose from the midst of the brothers who were clamouring to support him, and he took off his tunic and prostrated himself on the ground, asserting that he was unworthy of his office. Thus weeping, he humbly resigned from the office of general minister and, after wearing his tunic once more, he went out. Thus, brother Elias was elected more as an intruder than as General Minister.<sup>11</sup> And since brother Elias had a worldly and crafty way of dealing with people, in order to publicise his election, he began to falsely excuse himself since he asserted that he had to accept such a cumbersome office. He asserted that he did not want to take such office upon himself, since he was weak and was not strong enough to walk, and therefore he could not follow all the requirements of life in the

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<sup>8</sup> The responsory reads: *Hic est fratrum amator qui multum orat pro populo suo*: This is a man who loves his brothers and ever prays for them.

<sup>9</sup> According to Thomas of Eccleston, the chapter in which Elias was elected was that of Rieti (1232).

<sup>10</sup> This episode happened during the Chapter of Assisi in 1230, and not in 1232, as Glassberger states.

<sup>11</sup> Again, these details are not correct. John Parenti was reinstated by the brothers in the general chapter of 1230. It was only in 1232 that Elias became minister general.

community. O teacher called hypocrisy, the artefact of ambition! “Brothers, give this office to someone else.” So, all the brothers who supported him, since they already had arranged everything with him, began to shout that he could have a horse and could even eat gold, as long as he would lead the Order, since before dying blessed Francis had recommended him.

Since the general chapter had been disrupted, in which some brothers had wanted the aforementioned John [Parenti], while a multitude of brothers wanted Elias, before the chapter was concluded, in which the same Elias was subordinated, a report was sent to the lord Pope Gregory IX, who was living in Spoleto, close to Assisi. The report sadly stated that, while some brothers had wanted brother John as General Minister, the community had clamored for Elias, who did not accept the result of the election and who did not want to accept the office, but who rather showed great sorrow because of his promotion to the office, to which the brothers were forcing him. This false account of the facts was confirmed by the presiding Pontiff, since the same Pope believed that what had been suggested to him regarding Elias was true. Having accomplished this, the supporters of Elias were overjoyed and began to inflict great persecutions upon the zealous brothers of the Order.

[56] In that same chapter brother John the Englishman from Reading, who was Minister of Saxony, was relieved of his office and brother John of Pian del Carpine entered into his place. Brother Leonard, Custodian of Saxony, died in Cremona, his home-town, during his return journey from the chapter; he was substituted by brother Berthold of Höxter. When brother John of Pian del Carpine came to Saxony, he sent brothers to Bohemia, Dacia and Poland.

When the chapter was concluded, brother Elias went to the lord Pope and

began to request many money offerings, graces and privileges for the church [that was being built] in Assisi, and especially the permission to be able to receive money through third persons.<sup>12</sup> For this reason he immediately sent visitators to the entire Order, who overburdened the brothers with unlawful orders, and forced them to collect funds and money offerings in order to contribute to the collection, from whichever source they could look for them. Brother Elias thus began to hoard money. He possessed horses, together with servants, and he led a most comfortable life, as if he were a great prince. He governed the Order by keeping it in servitude, against the admonitions and strict statutes that blessed Francis had given to the brothers, and thus he stained the Order with all kinds of impure customs. In order to be sure of this truth, we can refer to these words of brother Jordan, Custodian of Thuringia, who reported thus regarding Elias: “Brother Elias, as soon as he became Minister General, began to build the great monument to Saint Francis in Assisi, and he wanted to burden the entire Order with the responsibility of bringing to conclusion the work that he had begun. He had the whole Order under his power, just as blessed Francis and brother John Parenti did before him. Through his own will he placed the Order in great difficulties. In the space of seven years he never held a general chapter and he sent those friars who opposed him to far off places.” [...]

### **Agnes of Prague**

In the year of the Lord 1234 the Friars Minor entered into Prague, in Bohemia, with far greater numbers than they were before.

During this time, the virgin devoted to Christ, namely the lady Agnes, daughter of king Ottokar and sister of Wenceslas the

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<sup>12</sup> The church of St. Francis in Assisi was built with the explicit orders of Pope Gregory IX. Brother Elias was chosen by the Pope himself as the one who would oversee the building process during the

period 1227-1230. He continued this work also as Minister General between 1232 and 1239. The scandals regarding the building of this church refer to this second period and not to 1230.

fourth, king of Bohemia, upon hearing news regarding Saint Clare and blessed Francis, [57] who had just been glorified in heaven, especially how he had repaired three Churches as a symbol [of the three Orders], following his example she built three great churches in Prague with her own money. The first church was built at the feet of the bridge of Prague in the hospital building she founded, and which she endowed with generous incomes and possessions in favour of the sick, just as her cousin Elisabeth had done. She also built a church in honour of Saint Francis, in which she placed the Cross-bearers of the Red Star, who were instituted by the same virgin Agnes upon request of the Friars Minor, so that they could serve the sick and provide them with all their needs. The second church was built in honour of the Saviour. She decorated it with precious relics of the Saints, with holy vessels and ornaments for the divine liturgy, and afterwards she entered that [enclosed monastery] with her sisters. The third church was that of the holy Mother of God and Saint Francis, which she built close to her monastery for the Friars Minor, commanding them to celebrate the divine liturgy for her and for her sisters.

In the year of the Lord 1235, Saint Elizabeth, widow, once landgrave of Thuringia, shining with many miracles and signs, was canonized in Perugia by Pope Gregory IX, on the ninth year of his pontificate, on the sixth day of the kalends of June.

During that same year five sisters of the Order of Saint Clare came from Trent to Prague. They were sent by the lord Pope Gregory the ninth to the aforementioned lady Agnes who had requested them. They were welcomed with joy and she introduced them in the monastery of the holy Saviour. During the feast of Saint Martin other seven virgins from noble families of the kingdom of Bohemia, willing to be united to the

spouse of virgins through virginal chastity, took the habit and joined the community of the sisters we have just mentioned. As a prudent virgin Agnes considered and reflected upon the danger of ending up shipwrecked among the storms of the mortal life, and since she was willing to dedicate herself to the contemplation of the heavenly realities in order to escape from mundane confusion, inflamed with an ardent love for heaven, she also joined the community on the following feast of Pentecost.

In the year of the Lord 1236, in the presence of seven Bishops and of the lord king Wenceslas, who was Agnes' brother, and of queen Kinga (Cunigunda), daughter of a certain Philip, king of the Romans, together with many princes, barons, and a great multitude of persons from both sexes and from various nations, after having left behind her the riches of the kingdom and despised all the glory of the world, together with seven other most noble virgins, [Agnes] flew like an innocent dove escaping from the flood of secular evil, and entered the ark of the holy Religion. While in the monastery, she was tonsured, she deposited her royal garments, and with weeping and sorrow, like another Esther, she put on the habit of her poor mother Clare, and she conformed her life to her in the habit and in her actions. Thus, she escaped from the stormy waves of the world, and faithfully placed her salvation and hope firmly like an anchor upon the rock who is Christ. She closed herself until the day of her death in the cave of the love of the poor Christ and of His most sweet Mother, [58] namely for 55 years like a chosen myrrh diffusing the fragrance of holiness. The holy virgin Clare sent to this virgin of Christ many letters full of consolation and instruction.<sup>13</sup> Her life in virginity and modesty, as well as her holiness and singular miraculous actions

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<sup>13</sup> Four of these letters from Clare to Agnes of Bohemia have survived. Cfr. *Clare of Assisi: Early*

*Documents*. Revised edition and translation by R.J. Armstrong, New City Press, New York 2006, 39-58.

are described in the Legend in the great chronicle. [...]

In the same year [1237], while in many parts of the world many persons hardened their souls and would not accept the fact of the sacred stigmata of blessed Francis, and with false tongues prohibited those who would preach publicly about them, the lord Pope Gregory IX, on the 11<sup>th</sup> year of his papacy, sent strong letters to all the Prelates of the Church regarding the sacred stigmata of blessed Francis, and certified the true testimony regarding them.<sup>14</sup>

In that same year brother Elias, Minister General, sent visitators of his choice who supported him to the individual Provinces. The brothers were greatly troubled instead of being consoled, and this all because of their inordinate visitations. Indeed, those brothers who were full of zeal for the regular discipline and resisted the deed of Elias, were dispersed in various regions. They took counsel, and they decided and decreed together that they needed to address this problem in the Order. In this counsel the most outstanding among the brothers were [59] brother Alexander of Hales and brother Jean Rochelle, who at the time were both masters in Paris.

In the year of the Lord 1238 brother John of Pian del Carpine, from Lombardy, and Minister of Saxony and Poland, held the chapter in Prague at the church of Saint James.

In that same year the Order of the Friars Cross-bearers of the Red Star was confirmed by the lord Pope Gregory the ninth, and was given the rule of Saint Augustine. This Order was founded by the most Christian virgin the lady Agnes, daughter of king Ottokar, who at that time was still alive.

### **The deposition of Brother Elias**

In that year the brothers of Saxony appealed to the General Minister brother Elias against the visitator. Having sent their nuncios, they obtained nothing. Therefore they were compelled to appeal to the lord Pope. They went from Saxony together with brother Jordan, and after having saluted the Pope, he begged them to retreat. Brother Jordan, however, did not want to go out, but went running full of joy to the Pope's bed, and having taken the Pope's foot in his hands he kissed it and said to his companion: "Look, in Saxony we do not possess such relics!" When the lord Pope still begged them to go out, brother Jordan said: "No my lord, we have not come to request anything from you. We abound with good things through you and we are fine. You are the father, protector and corrector of our Order; we have only come to see you." Thus, the lord Pope felt better, sat up in his bed and asked them why they had come, and added: "I know that you have appealed; in fact brother Elias came to me and told me that you had appealed without recurring to his authority, and we answered him that an appeal to our person absorbs all other kinds of appeals." Brother Jordan began to explain to the Pope why they had appealed, and the Pope answered by saying that they had done a good thing to present an appeal. Therefore, the brothers were convened to the Curia in order to proceed with their appeal, and after a long discussion, the majority of them were of the opinion that there was nothing else to do, but to go to the root of the problem, namely to act directly against Elias.

Among all those who were seated for the meeting, a vote was taken, and each one was asked what he could know and prove regarding facts relating to the fame against Elias. After having presented all this to the Pope, they discussed their proposals before

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<sup>14</sup> Glassberger is referring to the Bulla *Confessor Domini* by Pope Gregory IX (5 April 1237). Latin text in *Bullarium Franciscanum*, ed. Joannes Hycinthus SBARALEA, Tomus I, Romæ 1759, 214.

A. VAUCHEZ, *The Stigmata of Saint Francis and Its Medieval Detractors*, in *Greyfriars Review* 13 (1999), 61-89.

him. The lord Pope calmed down the discussion and said: "Go forth and discuss among yourselves and present your objections and responses by writing them down and sending them directly to me, and I will pass judgment." And that was what was done. Then the lord Pope, after having listened to the objections and responses, commanded that the brothers should all go back to their Provinces and that the various Provinces should suggest what was necessary and especially what pertained to the reform of the Order. He also told them to send twenty mature and discreet brothers, who four weeks before the general chapter would gather in Rome, and enact laws regarding the status and reform of the Order. In that discussion which was done among the brothers, among other [60] things it was stated that brother Elias for nearly seven years had never convened a chapter, and that he had built the double church of Assisi with the bells and bell-tower to the great detriment of the brothers and against the purity of the rule. Moreover, they wrote to the Pope the following testimony and said: "Your Holiness, we accuse this General brother Elias because he keeps many horses, has servants, violently extorts money offerings from the brothers and commands the brothers with great sin to procure great amounts of money and treasures, and he does not care at all about the rule and is keen in doing everything he can to destroy the same rule. Therefore, holy Father, since he is not our pastor, and is destroying the Order, we cannot sustain his astuteness and we have made recourse to our holy mother Church, as your Holiness has reverently exhorted us."

When they had said these words and everybody was in silence, brother Elias answered and said: "Most blessed Father! When the brothers wanted to make me General, they did not listen to my excuses, namely that I am physically weak, and I cannot withstand the harshness of life of the Order. With a common consent the general chapter gave me permission to eat gold and

to keep a horse, as long as I could govern the Order. The horse needed a servant, and the servant has to be paid with money, and without money I cannot have these necessities. And since I have done all this in good conscience, I made recourse to your holy See, so that, according to the intention of Saint Francis, which I secretly know, and which you also, holy Father, partly know, I could provide for your basilica and for the poor brothers." And he began to excuse himself openly in so many things that it seemed that everyone was marvelling at the ability of his eloquence. At that point the companions of Saint Francis answered him in front of the Pope and said: "Most holy Father! Even if it was necessary for him to eat gold and speak in that way, he did not have any permission to hoard a treasure. And if it was necessary for him to have a horse, he did not have permission to keep and feed palfreys, and to despoil the entire Order, and compel the brothers to act against the rule and ask for money in order to contribute to his collections, and to have food and meals and vessels and servants like one who is not living as a Friar Minor, but like a great secular prince, without any discipline and giving scandal to the Order and to the profession of the evangelical life. Most holy Father," they added, "this was the way of life of that man."

At that point the Pope preached on the words of Daniel: *You, o king, saw in your bed those things which will happen in the future: And you saw before you a statue, whose head was made of gold, etc.* (Dan 2:29). [The Pope] applied all this vision to the state of the Order of blessed Francis and said: "The king is Christ, the bed is the cross, the statue is the Order, the golden head is blessed Francis." And he continued to explain the vision right down to the feet. And after many words he directed his sermon against brother Elias, and said: "When we made him General we believed that it was pleasing to the entire Order, because of the familiarity that he had with blessed Francis, but now we are manifestly

seeing that he is destroying and confusing the Order.” Therefore

In the year of the Lord 1239, with the command of the lord Pope Gregory IX, a general chapter was convened in Rome by brother Elias, Minister General. Before the general chapter the *Discreti* from various Provinces were sent, so that, as the same Pontiff commanded that, with the will of the lord Pope and with the approval of the general chapter, the elections of the Ministers, Custodians and Guardians be held, as well as other matters be decided upon, which serve the Order to this very day. They also established that each Minister would hold a chapter in his Province. [...]

After all the aforementioned propositions regarding brother Elias, Minister General, were made, the Pope said: “With our authority we absolve him from the office and we declare him absolved. And we will that you immediately proceed to elect another [minister general] in our presence.”

In that same year, in the general chapter in Rome, in the place of brother Elias was elected as Minister General brother Albert of Pisa, who had been once Minister of Germany, and who had been sent together with brother Agnellus by Saint Francis to England. The lord Pope immediately confirmed [the election].

## *Latin Abbreviations*

### *Writings of St. Francis*

Adm	Admonitiones
CantAudPov	Canticum Audite Poverelle
CantSol	Canticum fratris Solis
LaudDei	Laudes Dei Altissimi
BenLeo	Benedictio fratri Leoni data
EpAnt	Epistola ad S. Antonium
EpClerI	Epistola ad Clericos
EpCust	Epistola ad Custodes
EpFid	Epistola ad Fideles
EpLeo	Epistola ad fratrem Leonem
EpMin	Epistola ad Ministrum
EpOrd	Epistola toti Ordini missa
EpRect	Epistola ad rectores
ExhLD	Exhortatio ad Laudem Dei
ExpPat	Expositio in Pater noster
FormViv	Forma vivendi S. Claræ
Fragm	Fragmenta alterius Regulæ
LaudHor	Laudes ad omnes horas
OffPass	Officium Passionis Domini
OrCruc	Oratio ante Crucifixum
RegB	Regula bullata
RegNB	Regula non bullata
RegEr	Regula pro eremitoriis
SalBVM	Salutatio Beatæ Mariæ Virg
SalVirt	Salutatio Virtutum
Test	Testamentum
UltVol	Ultima voluntas S. Claræ

### *Sources for the Life of St. Francis*

FAED I	<i>Francis of Assisi. Early Documents. Saint</i>
FAED II	<i>Francis of Assisi. Early Documents. Founder</i>
FAED III	<i>Francis of Assisi. Early Documents. Prophet</i>
1C	Celano, <i>Vita beati Francisci</i>
LCh	Celano, <i>Legenda ad usum chori</i>
VB	Celano, <i>Vita brevior S. Francisci</i>
2C	Celano, <i>Memoriale in desiderio animæ</i>
3C	Celano, <i>Tractatus miraculorum</i>
LJS	Julian of Speyer, <i>Vita S. Francisci</i>
OR	<i>Officium Rhythmicum</i>
AP	<i>Anonymus Perusinus (De Inceptione)</i>
L3C	<i>Legenda trium sociorum</i>
CA	<i>Compilatio Assisiensis</i>
LMj	S. Bonaventura, <i>Legenda Maior</i>
LMn	S. Bonaventura, <i>Legenda Minor</i>
SPMaj	<i>Speculum Perfectionis (Sabatier)</i>
SPMin	<i>Speculum Perfectionis (Lemmens)</i>
ABF	<i>Actus beati Francisci et sociorum eius</i>
Fior	<i>Fioretti di San Francesco</i>



**Cover page:** *Maestro delle Vele (Angioiello da Gubbio?): Allegory of Poverty: detail (Basilica St. Francis)*