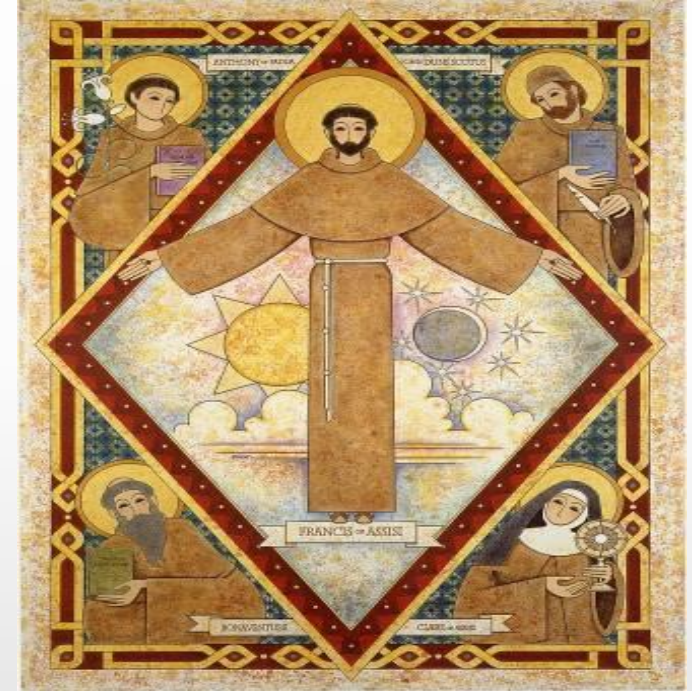


The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition in Your Course

Would you believe/welcome an intellectual tradition that:

1. **Addresses** the deepest concerns that tear at the heart of humanity today?
2. **Confirms** the inviolable dignity and inalienable rights of the human person no matter what *spiritual or cultural* household?
3. **Gives** Franciscan vision of what it means to be human?



Custodians of the Tradition

Would you believe/welcome an intellectual tradition that:

4. **Experiences** creation with awe and reverence acknowledging that each creature expresses something of God that can be expressed by no other?



5. **Creates** no other possibility but to be “ecologically literate” in the healing of the earth?

This course is designed to offer AFCU Faculty an opportunity to learn some foundational information about the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition and how to incorporate that tradition into courses that they teach. Participants will learn what the FIT is and gain an understanding of resources that offer them and their students a better understanding of the tradition.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The faculty member will be able to:

1. articulate the key elements of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition;
2. locate and utilize resources in the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition;
3. identify options for including the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition in a specific course that they teach;
4. access, share, and collaborate on Franciscan Teaching Resources.

COURSE OUTLINE

The course is organized into the following modules.

- Module I: Saint Francis: A Brief Look into His Life (Slides 8-43)
- Module II: Development of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition (Slides 44-86)
- Module III: Saint Francis as a Student and Teacher (Slides 87-103)
- Module IV: Francis as a “Vernacular Theologian” (Slides 104-127)
- Module V: Sample Courses Utilizing the FIT (Slides 128-143)
- Module VI: Developing Learning Activities (Slides 144-177)

WORKING THROUGH THE COURSE

You should be able to complete each module in about a week's time within your normal workload. Of course, you may choose to accelerate this pace or take more time with each module, depending on your particular needs and interests.

There are reflection questions interspersed through the course. You may find it helpful to keep a journal of reflections to guide your application of the FIT to your courses.

You might also find it helpful to keep a record or chart of connections you see between the FIT and what you are already teaching.

There are links to other resources that will require an internet connection.

You may work through the material in any way you see fit, but the presentation is designed to promote reflection. We recommend you view the presentation in Slide Show mode and click to advance individual slides. Animations are set to occur automatically on each slide to emphasize individual points and encourage engagement with the material.

If you have questions about the course while working through the material, you can email them to afcu@felician.edu.

St. Francis

A Brief Introduction to His Life

Potential Problems in Learning about Francis

- The “Franciscan Question” — any attempts to reconstruct a life of Francis are necessarily interpretations. Our questions and interests shape how we see Francis.
- He was a Catholic saint, so finding the “true” Francis requires digging behind the hagiographies of his time, and of ours.
 - As a saint, he can seem so holy that he is impossible to imitate.



Potential Problems in Learning about Francis (continued)

- There is always a temptation to use Francis as a mouthpiece for our own ideas. We often try to domesticate him for our own purposes.
- An in-depth investigation into Francis can make us uncomfortable, as there is much about him that is deeply challenging to the lives we live.



Early Life



- Born in winter of 1181/1182 to Pietro and Pica Bernardone, in Assisi. Mother named him Giovanni (John), but Pietro named him Francesco (“Frenchy”).
- Received a basic education and became fluent in French.

Early Life



- Around age of fourteen began to work in father's cloth business.
- Known for friendliness, generosity, and charisma with friends, as well as his enjoyment of partying.

Francis the (failed) warrior

- In November of 1202, Francis joins the war between the cities of Assisi and Perugia.
- Captured in the battle at [Collestrada](#).
- Held as prisoner of war in Perugia for a year, until father ransoms him.
- Comes back a changed man, slightly withdrawn from his former life.



War again?



- In spring 1205, he prepares to go back to war in southern Italy.
- Gets to [Spoleto](#), has a mystical dream from God, abandons trip to the war, sells his war gear, and returns on foot to Assisi.

Beginnings of a new life (1205)

- On way back to Assisi he stops at [San Damiano](#) church, a run-down church outside of Assisi.
- Francis spends the night there and leaves the money from the sale of his horse and armor on one of the windows of the church.
- Continues to withdraw from life in Assisi. Begins to engage in frequent [almsgiving](#).



New beginnings



- Makes a pilgrimage to Rome and continues almsgiving there.
- Begins to visit San Damiano frequently, praying before the [crucifix](#).

Confrontation and Renunciation (1206)



- His family becomes worried about Francis's increasingly erratic behavior and goes looking for him, but Francis hides from them.
- Finally, Francis returns to Assisi, where he is met with scorn by its citizens and where his father asks the bishop to intervene
- In a public confrontation with his father and in the presence of the local bishop and the citizens of Assisi, Francis strips off his clothes, gives them to his father, renounces his inheritance, and declares that his only Father will be his Father in heaven.

Conversion

- Naked and poor, Francis wanders in the snow around Assisi until he settles with some [lepers](#) outside of Assisi and begins to care for them.
- Francis locates his time with the lepers [as the beginning of his conversion.](#)



Quiet years – 1206-1208



- Francis spends the next two-three years as a penitent.
- Lives and works among the lepers.
- Repairs the church at San Damiano.

First Brothers

- In the spring of 1208, [Bernard of Quintavalle](#) approaches Francis about joining him.
- Wealthy Bernard sells his possessions and begins to follow Francis, along with another man, Peter.
- Francis and his new followers consult an altar [missal](#) and randomly find three verses that shape Francis's understanding of his incipient brotherhood.



Biblical Basis of Brotherhood



- [Mark 10:21](#) — “Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.”
- [Luke 9:3](#) — “He said to them, “Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money—not even an extra tunic.”
- [Matthew 16:24](#) — “Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”
- These verses are the foundation of what will become in a more fully developed way the Franciscan rule of life.

Initial Approval



- Francis and his followers travel to Rome to get initial approval for their way of life.
- In an audience with [Pope Innocent III](#), he gives them provisional approval to continue and commissions them to preach penance.
- Francis and his followers receive the tonsure and return to Assisi, settling initially in an abandoned shed in Rivo Torto, about two miles from Assisi and close to the leprosarium of San Lazzaro.
- New recruits begin to join and Francis re-settles the group at a ruined chapel, Santa Maria deli Angeli in the [Portiuncula](#).

Early Expansion

- Brothers begin to wander throughout Italy, working, begging, worshipping, and occasionally preaching.
- Content of their preaching was repentance, moral reform, peace and reconciliation.
- Francis begins to develop a reputation throughout Italy as an especially holy person, adept at spiritual direction.
- Francis attempts to travel to the Holy Land to preach, but bad weather forces him back to Italy.



Clare of Assisi



- In 1212, Brother Rufino, a cousin of [Clare of Assisi](#), approaches Francis to tell him that Clare wanted to meet him.
- Only 18 at the time, Clare came from a wealthy Assisi family.
- After several chaperoned clandestine meetings Clare escapes her family enclave on Palm Sunday 1212 and meets Francis and his brothers at the Portiuncula.

First Convent, Second Order

- Clare stays with the Benedictines during Holy Week and later with a beguinage community before taking up permanent residence at San Damiano, which became the first Franciscan convent.
- Francis gives her a form of life similar to what the brothers followed. Clare would not get a [formal rule](#) approved for her order until the end of her life.



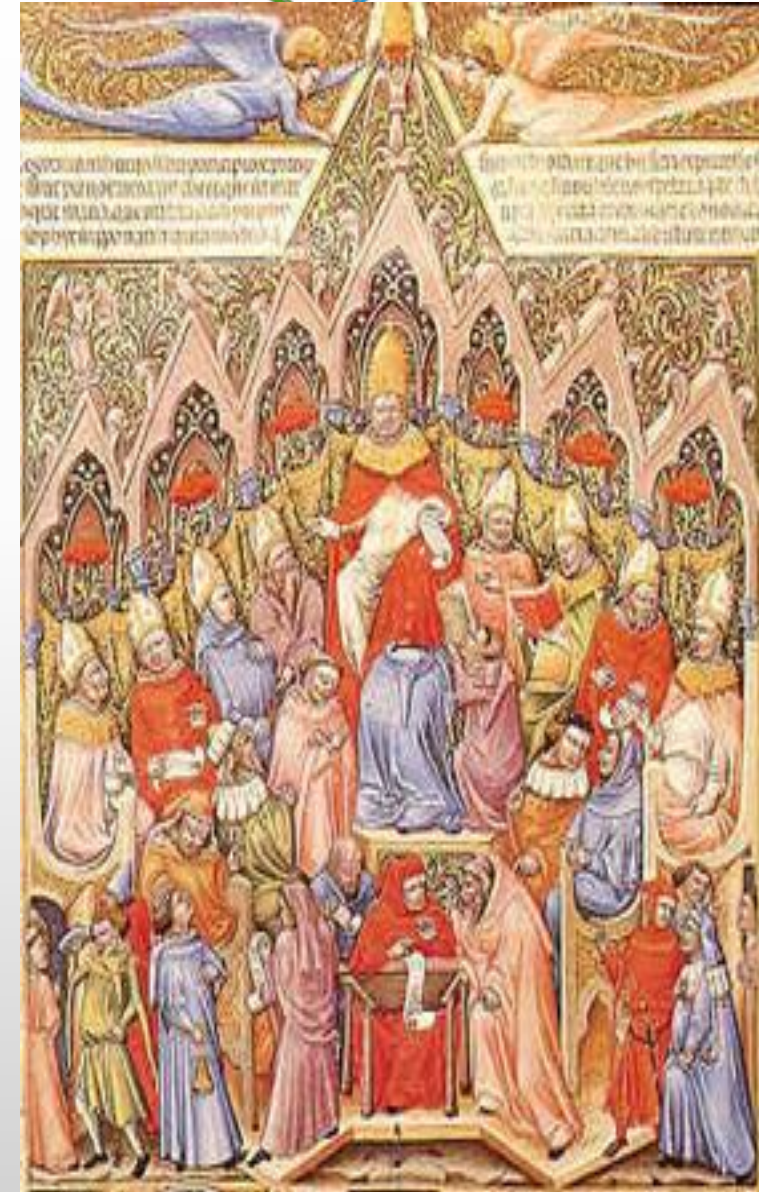
La Verna

- In May 1213, Francis receives a gift of land on Mount La Verna, which he will use as a spiritual retreat for the rest of his life.



Fourth Lateran Council

- In 1215, Pope Innocent III convened the Fourth Lateran Council, which Francis may have attended.
 - Calls for religious orders to meet regularly as “chapters”. (#12)
 - Allows for bishops to appoint persons to preach and take confession, tasks which Franciscans will begin to enact. (#10)
 - Forbids the formation of new religious orders, though the Franciscans seem to have been exempt from this requirement, perhaps because of their prior approval. (#13)
 - <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Councils/ecum12-2.htm>



Mission Work



- By 1217, there were probably fewer than 800 Franciscan brothers.
- Brothers begin mission work throughout Europe, without much initial success.
- In his travels, Francis meets Cardinal Hugolino of Ostia, who would have a major influence on the Franciscans as Cardinal and later as [Pope Gregory IX](#).

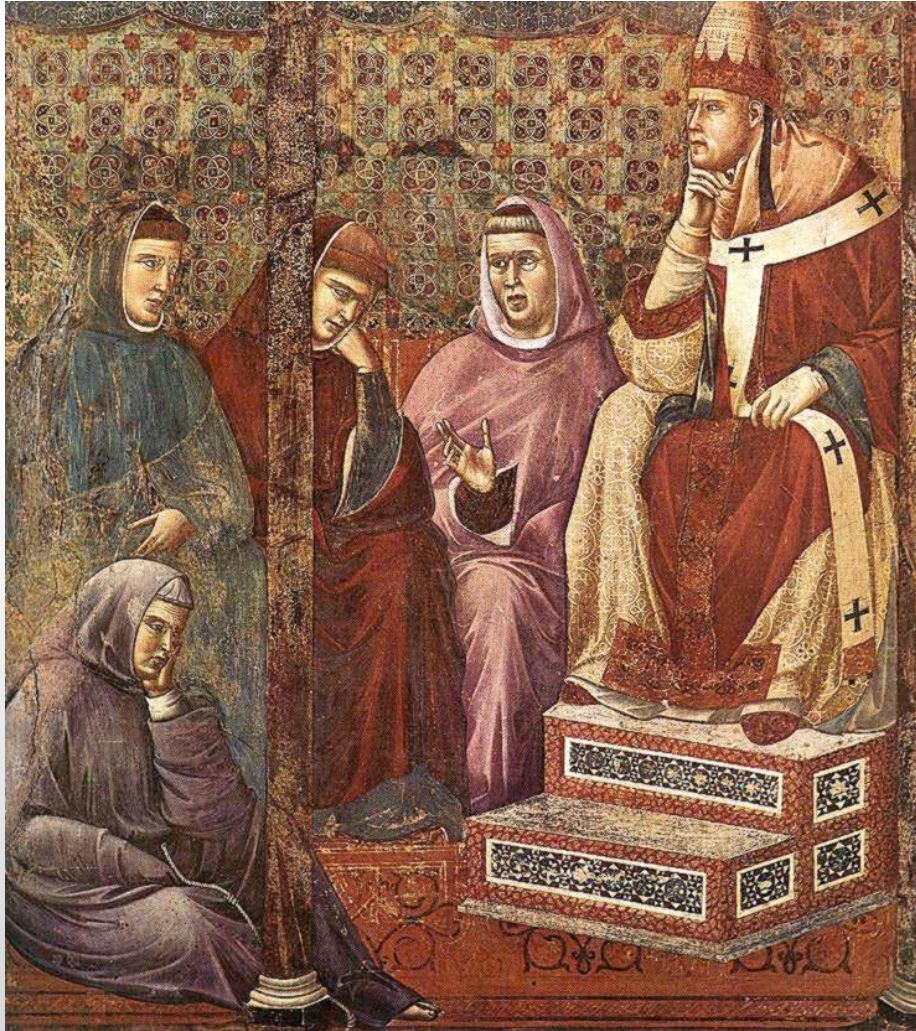


Francis and the Sultan

- In June 1218, the [Fifth Crusade](#) lays siege to Damietta.
- In fall 1219, Francis arrives at Damietta with some companions.
- Francis crosses enemy lines and preaches to the Muslim Sultan, Malik al-Kamil.
- While conversion to each other's religion is not the focus, a mutual respect develops. Francis's courage attracts several priests who are at the siege, who join his movement.
- Receiving word of problems in the Order in Italy, Francis returns home.



1220-1221



- Faced with brothers trying to change the order away from Francis's original vision, Francis asks [Pope Honorius III](#) for assistance.
- Honorius appoints Cardinal Hugolino as protector of the order.
- Honorius exerts authority on behalf of Francis, so that Francis can maintain his emphasis on minority.

Revisions of life

- Honorius writes a letter, *Pro Dilectis Filiis*, on behalf of the brothers, asking prelates to allow the brothers to preach without opposition.
- New members must now complete a year-long novitiate.
- Francis begins work on a new version of his rule of life.



A Second Stripping



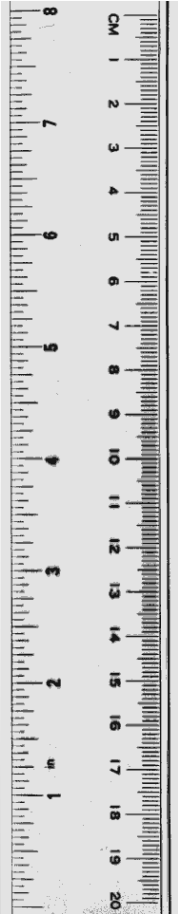
- In the fall of 1220, Francis relinquishes all leadership responsibilities for the Order, turning the reins over to Brother Peter of Cataneo.
- Francis asks for a novice to be in charge of him, someone he must obey.

Sickness and withdrawal

- In the meantime, Francis struggles with what is probably malaria, which he had contracted on his trip to Egypt.
- Francis begins to withdraw from the Order, spending more time in solitude.
- Brother Peter dies after six months and [Brother Elias](#) takes over as administrator for the Order.



New Rule



- In November 1223, the final form of Francis's life, "[The Later Rule](#)", would be approved by Pope Honorius III. It remains the primary organizing document for Franciscan life today.
- Elements:
 - Living the Gospel in obedience, without possessions, and in chastity.
 - Brothers are exhorted to "be meek, peaceful, modest, gentle, and humble, speaking courteously to everyone."
 - Brothers are forbidden from receiving money, but they are called to work so as to avoid idleness.
 - Brothers are to care for each other as family members, and confess their sins. Fraternal correction is urged to be undertaken with charity and goal of spiritual growth.
 - Brothers may only preach with permission from local prelates or ministers of the Order.

Christmas

- In December 1223, Francis leaves Rieti to visit Greccio for Christmas.
- Francis reenacts a live [Christmas crèche](#) created near the local church's altar.
- Francis appreciated the [humility of the Incarnation](#), but also saw the manger scene, with its animals, as pointing to how all of creation participates in Christmas.
- In failing health, Francis stays in a hermitage in Greccio through the following spring.



Mount La Verna



- By Summer 1224, Francis is well enough to travel to Mount La Verna, where he lives in his mountain hermitage.
- Finds himself engaged in spiritual combat with demonic forces.
- Francis has vision of a six-winged [seraph](#) (angel).

Stigmata

- After the vision, Francis begins to manifest the [stigmata](#) — fleshly protuberances on his palms and feet in the shape of nails, and a suppurating wound on his side.
- Out of humility, Francis hides these marks from all but his closest confreres for the rest of his life, though there were many eyewitnesses to them after his death.



Return to Assisi



- In fall 1224, in even worse health, Francis leaves La Verna and returns to a hut attached to San Damiano.
- He writes the first verses of “The Canticle of the Creatures” in the midst of his ill health and a severe eye disease. It is a poetic expression of praise for God in the midst of suffering.
- In June 1225, he heads back to Rieti for medical treatment.

Progressively worse

- In Rieti, Francis refuses medical treatment (he was a very difficult patient).
- Finally, Brother Elias has to command Francis under his oath of obedience to receive care.
- His eye disease is treated by cauterizing his eye with a red hot iron poker. It did not improve his situation.



Last Days



- In spite of his ill health, visitors come to him for various healing miracles, prayer, and care.
- Francis is moved to Siena, then Celle, and then finally back to Assisi in July 1226. He stays at a newly constructed Franciscan house at Begnara.
- Doctors tell him he is dying and give him just a few months to live.

Death

- In September 1226, Francis asks to be taken to the Portiuncula, one of the original locations of his Order.
- On his death bed, Francis is surrounded by brothers and priests, but rarely receives outside visitors.
- Francis dies on October 3, 1226.



Sainthood



- His body is carried to Assisi, with a stop by San Damiano, where Clare and her sisters pay their last respects.
- His body remained at the church of San Giorgio for four years, until a basilica was built and his body was permanently interred.
- Cardinal Hugolino is elected pope in March 1227 and as Gregory IX makes Francis a saint in July 1228.
- [Webcam of St. Francis's Crypt](#)

For Further Reading

Francis of Assisi: The Life, by Augustine Thompson, O.P.

Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of Medieval Saint, by André Vauchez

Francis & His Brothers: A Popular History of the Franciscan Friars, by Dominic V. Monti, O.F.M.

Development of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition (FIT)

- I. Franciscan Movement of Co-Founders Francis and Clare
- II. Retrieval of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition
- III. Some key contributors of the FIT
- IV. Some key components of the FIT and some "Contemporary Perspectives" on Franciscan Education

Franciscan Educational Approaches

- Franciscans in the thick of life's problems as well as in academic circles to address issues, e.g. Oxford, Paris, Cambridge and Cologne
- Franciscans stepped back to reflect and analyze patterns within a distinctive theological perspective
- Franciscans exercise freedom and resources to facilitate scientific experimentation
- Franciscans intend to make learning practical and to ever improve daily living
- FIT invested today at 24 colleges and universities in United States (AFCU members)

I. Franciscan Movement Co-Founders Francis and Clare



A Franciscan Movement



- Francis
 - Architect
 - Vernacular theologian
 - Poet and Song writer
 - Reverence for environment
- Clare
 - Gardener and image maker
 - Incarnational Leader
 - Mentor and model
 - Formator in contemplative prayer
- “and the Lord, God, gave me brothers...”
- Shaped by the examples of Clare and Francis
- Grounded in the gospels, i.e. evangelical form of life
- Tradition took root in the great medieval universities
- Distinct but not static perspective

Francis's Letter to Brother Anthony



Anthony preaching to the brothers

*I Brother Francis send wishes of health to Brother Anthony, my bishop. **It pleases me that you teach sacred theology to the brothers,** as long as in the words of the Rule you "do not extinguish the Spirit of prayer and devotion" with study of this kind.*

Franciscan Intellectual Tradition



A set of values, *theologically informed*,
that comprise a *distinct* view of
the world,
one that takes as its basis the
theological *intuitions* of Francis
of Assisi

Historical Rediscovery

Part I: Historically accurate portrait of **Francis**

- Francis wrote at least twenty-eight documents and dictated five others
- passionate love for Jesus Christ and the desire to follow him
- contemplative prayer
- ongoing conversion of life
- spirituality of *fraternitas* with everyone and everything as sister/brother
- Inspired by itinerancy of Jesus
 - devotion to the Incarnation
 - love of the Gospel and Eucharist
 - spiritual vision of the human family
 - public preaching of God's love and peace
 - practice of deeply listening to the Gospel
 - receiving the Eucharist
 - weaving periods of contemplative prayer in wilderness hermitages with public proclamation of God's love in the vernacular language

Historical Rediscovery

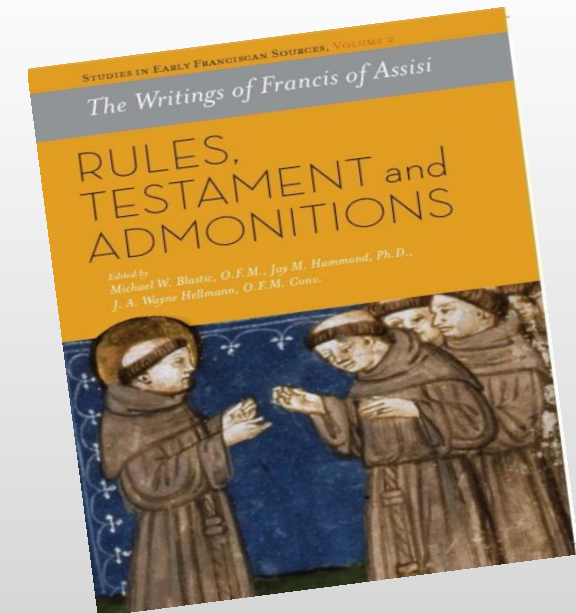
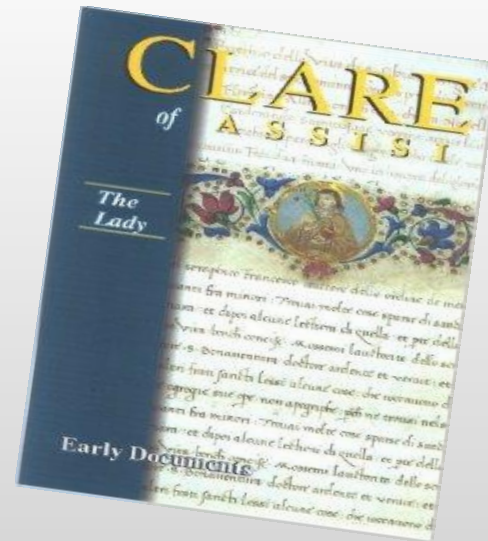
Part I: Historically accurate portrait of Clare

- Born into a noble family dominated by women
- Clare joins Francis and the brothers at Portiuncola
- Clare is enclosed at San Damiano; accepts the duties of abbess
- Clare thwarts off the invading Saracens to save San Damiano Convent and the city of Assisi
- Records of multiple healings
- Described as Co-Founder of Franciscan movement more than Francis' "little plant"
- Spirituality
 - Incarnational leadership as sister
 - Contemplative prayer: gaze, consider, contemplate as desire to imitate
 - Grounded in Eucharist
 - Lived poverty daily
- Writings
 - Five letters (4 to Agnes of Prague)
 - Request for the *Privilege of Poverty*
 - *Testament*
 - Approved Rule (Form of Life) written by Clare (Ch VI Francis piece)

The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition

- rooted in Gospels
- reflected in Book of Scripture and “Book of Nature”
- praxis for love, virtue, and moral living
- articulates a vision for living, loving, and knowing into the future

II. RETRIEVAL of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition



Overcoming History



1879	1917	1966	1993
<p>Leo XIII in <i>Aeterni Patris</i> gives “pride of place” to Thomism</p>	<p>Code of Canon Law revised</p>	<p>Ecclesial nod!</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “spread the teachings of Thomas far and wide for the defense and beauty of the Catholic faith, for the good of society and the advantage of all the sciences” - “those who assail it will always be suspected of error” - bound by statutes of Benedictines, Carmelites, Augustinians, Jesuits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explicit affirmation of methods, teaching, and principles of the Angelic Doctor - Thomism is the carrier of Catholic Orthodoxy - Franciscans trained as Thomists 	<p>Paul VI Apostolic Letter – <i>Alma Parens</i></p> <p>“Scotus develops to its full height the Gospel truth which St. John the Evangelist and St. Paul understood to be pre-eminent in the divine plan of salvation”</p>	<p>Beatification of John Duns Scotus</p> <p>Pope John Paul II</p> <p>“The teachings of Scotus energetically builds up the church, sustaining her in her urgent mission of the new evangelization of the people of the earth”</p>

Commission on the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition Retrieval (2001!)

- “Our purpose in retrieving and revitalizing the tradition is thus subordinate to our mission to give people hope, speak to their fears, and present a coherent intellectual pathway which strengthens faith and encourages just action for our neighbors.”
- understand the beauty and the wealth of our intellectual tradition
- help the Church see this tradition as valid and meaningful for today’s society
- look seriously at the preeminence of charity, and the use of charity in our teaching of theology to those who have difficulty in belief...focus on the ecumenical ramifications of this primacy of charity
- look seriously again at the primacy of Christ and the motives of the Incarnation

Retrieval

Part II: Re-examination of Franciscan Tradition

Since 1993, the focus of Franciscan scholarship has expanded to

- investigate how Francis's religious intuition has shaped the practice of Franciscan
- spirituality as a broad tradition in diverse expressions: in living, prayer, preaching,
- thinking, and acting for the past eight centuries across the world
- open up fresh perspectives on how to live out the Franciscan stance today
- most surprising rediscovery—was the recognition of a distinctly Franciscan approach to philosophy, theology, and now, more broadly, to the intellectual life
- Identifying distinctive Order/sponsor particularity

Retrieval

Part III: Encouraging application in institutions/classroom

- FIT might seem counterintuitive to popular “poor man from Assisi”
 - creative continuity through institutionalization rather than the purity of Francis’s primitive vision corrupted by academic institutions
 - purpose is not merely to mimic Francis
 - FIT is a philosophical and theological expression of the Catholic faith
- FIT complements the other two major intellectual traditions within western Catholicism, the Augustinian and Thomistic (or Dominican)
- All three respect the fundamental teachings of Scripture, tradition, and magisterium.
 - All three traditions have received the blessings of popes and scholars
 - All reinforce each other on the essential elements of the one Catholic faith yet in their diverse interpretive approaches, they complement each other



Reflection

How can you continue the retrieval by incorporating the FIT into your classes?

III. KEY CONTRIBUTORS

Those like ourselves who are immediate heirs of the tradition inspired by the spirituality of Francis [and Clare] might better see ourselves as responsible stewards of a treasure that has much to offer for the healing of humanity and of the world at large.

Zachary Hayes O.F.M.

Bonaventure Fest, 2003, Aston, PA



Primary Franciscan Contributors

- **Anthony of Padua** 1195-1231 Teacher of the Gospels, preacher
- **Bonaventure of Bagnoregio** 1217-1274 Teacher, commentaries of Scripture emphasis on “literal” vs “allegorical” sense, meaning of history (*Collations on Hexameron*)
- **Roger Bacon** 1214-1294 Teacher, studies optics, light, philosopher for emphasis on empirical methods, sciences as preparation for theology, credited as one of the earliest European advocates of the modern scientific method
- **John Duns Scotus** 1266-1308 Philosopher and theologian left a mark on the nature of human freedom and dignity of human person: “haecceitas”
- **William of Ockham** 1288-1348 Teacher contributes principle of economy known as “Ockham's Razor” (do not multiply entities without necessity)
- **Haymo of Faversham** 1175-1244 Teacher, Master of Divinity
- **Alexander of Hales** 1185-1245 Teacher, exceptional lecturer, author of *Summa Theologiae*
- **John Peckham** 1225-1292 Poet, philosopher, and theologian, Archbishop of Canterbury debated T. Aquinas
- **Peter John Olivi** 1248-1298 Commentaries on Scripture, on Franciscan way of life, on poverty of Christ
- **Angela of Foligno** 1248-1309 Teacher of Theologians, Mystic

Secondary Franciscan Contributors

- **Bartholomew de Glanville** 1220-1240 **encyclopedist** writing a 19-volume encyclopedia *On the Properties of Things* and was the first to make readily available the views of Greek, Jewish, and Arabic scholars on medical and scientific subjects
- **Bernardine of Siena** 1380-1444 Business and banking, “economy of gift”, notion of “just profit” founder of **pawnshops** for the poor
- **Luca Pacioli** 1445-1517 Mathematician documents and spreads double entry **bookkeeping** system of debits and credits to organize finances and break out of cycle of poverty
- **Bernardino de Sahagún** 1499-1590 New world missionary and **anthropologist** compiled information about Aztec religion and culture and of the *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* , regarded as being one of the "fathers of **ethnography**" and creator of the first encyclopedia of the new world
- **Ramon Lull** 1232-1315 Linguist and founder of School of Languages, encyclopedic work
- **Bernardino de Laredo** 1492-1540 Pharmacist, physician
- **Vincenzo Coronelli** 1650-1718 Cosmographer , Engineer provides first description of known world
- **Laurent Receveur** 1757-1788 Geologist , Botanist travels three years around the globe collecting specimens



Contemporary Franciscan Contributors



- **Joe Chinnici, OFM**

- The *vital* time for the recovery of our Franciscan intellectual tradition in its *compatibility* with elements of
 - postmodern thought
 - affinity for science
 - valuation of creation
 - focus on freedom and the person

- **Bill Short OFM**

- Serious work on the interface of **ecology, creation & nature**
- Involvement in the disciplines of **economics, technology, politics, cosmology**, etc, *so as to take the Incarnation in its demands on our intellectual reflection seriously.*





Contemporary Franciscan Contributors



- **Ilia Delio**

- *For the intellectual mind can never behold the depth of God. Only the heart can enter into the incomprehensible mystery of divine love.* [The Humility of God: A Franciscan Perspective](#)
- *The Good News of Jesus Christ, as the Franciscans understood it, is that we do not “go to God” as if God sat in the starry heavens awaiting our arrival; rather, God has “come to us” in the Incarnation. “The eternal God has humbly bent down,” Bonaventure wrote, “and lifted the dust of our nature into unity with his own person.” We move toward God because God has first moved toward us—this is the Franciscan path of prayer.* [Franciscan Prayer](#)

- **Zachary Hayes**

- *Those like ourselves who are the immediate heirs of the tradition inspired by the spirituality of Francis might better see ourselves as **responsible stewards** of a treasure that has much to offer for the healing of humanity and of the world at large.”.*



Reflection

How can you encourage your students and colleagues to be responsible stewards and live the Franciscan virtue of poverty in your class?

IV. SOME KEY FIT COMPONENTS and "Contemporary Perspectives" on Franciscan Education



<http://franciscancollegesuniversities.org/>



Franciscantradition.org

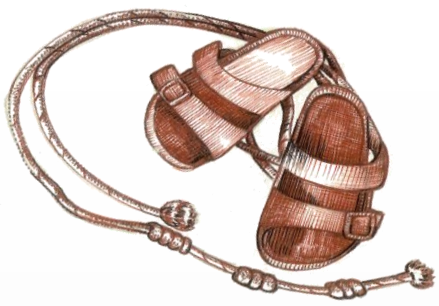
The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition

What are the key distinctive components of FIT we will consider?

- Communion of Trinity
- God as *Bonum*/Goodness
- Christology
 - Primacy of Christ
 - Love, Passion of God
 - Humility/Humanity
 - Incarnation
- Canticle of the Sun
 - Sense of creation as family
- Dignity of the Human Person
 - *haecceitas*: particularity
 - *minores*: role of the human person not over but under and with
- Ethics, Moral Vision as “responding to God’s love”
 - Development of a moral integrity

Communion of Trinity Mystery of God as Love

- God is relational; goodness, love expressed outwardly
- Communion of Persons
 - *Plenitudo*: fullness
 - *Fontalis*: source of water
 - Fountain-fulness expressed outwardly
 - Father sends, gives life
 - Son, Word, “Beloved”
 - Spirit as “Co-Beloved”
- Image of God: expressing goodness in relationship with others
- Christ sent from this God (as beginning, center, end)
 - Reveals we are image of God
- All creation image of good God
 - Home, future is in good God
 - Relational, optimistic



Reflection

In what ways can I get my students and colleagues to be thankful for all that we have and to be committed to passing on good to others, and in particular those in need?

God as Good:

In the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition, a relational Triune God is consistently seen as the basis for God's own nature, which is love and goodness. The medieval axiom: *bonum est sui diffusivum* ("goodness is diffusive of its very self") lies at the heart of Franciscan theological discussion on God. (Osborne)

“Peace and Good” (Pax et Bonum or Pace e Bene) was the greeting Francis used, but more than that it is a description of being with God. (Short)

God as Good:

- Francis
 - “Let us refer all good to the Lord God Almighty and Most High, acknowledge that every good is His and thank Him, from Whom all good comes, for everything.” - *The Earlier Rule*
 - “You are Good, all Good, supreme Good...” *The Praises of God*
- Clare
 - Clare demonstrate a similar understanding of God as she expressed in some of her last words, “Go calmly in peace, for you will have a good escort, because He who created you has sent you the Holy Spirit and has always guarded you as a mother does her child who loves her. O Lord, may You Who have created me, be blessed.”
- Bonaventure
 - “For Bonaventure, the creative and sustaining principle of all created reality is a mystery of orderly love, not of arbitrariness or domination or control. Such an understanding views power as the ability to call forth through love the good in the other. If this is so, we are invited to shape our relationships with all of created reality in a familial way, grounded as we are together in the mystery of God’s creative love.” (Hayes)

Christology

Primacy of Christ



- Knowing Christ gives glimpse of something more, God
 - Beginning of knowledge of God and ourselves
 - Encounter through words of the Gospel
 - Word takes flesh in our lives
- Christ is the beginning
 - Alpha
 - Christ is the end
 - Omega
 - Christ is the center
 - Middle (sent from Trinity)

Christ as the Center

- Christ is alpha (original) of all creation
 - the origin of all things (Prologue of John's Gospel)
 - the Wisdom of God
 - the Love of God, incarnate, crucified (Bonaventure)
 - Primacy of Christ, before all else
- Omega (fulfillment) of all things
 - All things have Christ as goal (Revelation)
 - Future is fulfillment in Christ not annihilation
- Christocentrism (purpose) of all things created
 - Christmas at heart of cosmos
 - Image of God as child – helpless, poor, dependent

Humanity of Christ

Love of the Passion (Suffering & Death of Jesus)

Core element of spiritual vision – insight into depth, height, width, length of the Incarnation

- This spiritual vision encompasses two realities:
 - The **humility of the incarnation**
 - God lowered himself to the very dregs for our sakes
 - We need to wash each other's feet just as Jesus did. (Love others as He loved us.)
 - Especially those at the margins of society
 - Called to reflect God through witness as *minores*
 - The **love of the passion**
 - Jesus loved us to the end (Jn. 13:1)
 - But this is a cause for joy



*With Scotus there is a shift in the way we look at the world.
What was in the background (joy) moves to the foreground.
What was in the foreground (sin) moves to the background.
(Mary Beth Ingham)*



The Incarnation Is...

... for Anselm

- God's response to sin
- A divine reaction
- No sin, no Christ
- *Felix culpa* (Oh happy fault!)

... for Scotus

- ☞ God's Design
- ☞ A divine initiative
- ☞ Christ in plan
- ☞ No one rejoices in sin

Dignity of the Human Person

“The beauty of things in the variety of light shape color in simple, mixed and even organic bodies such as heavenly bodies clearly proclaims the power, wisdom, and goodness of God”. - Bonaventure

- “For Scotus, however, such familial relationships always reverence and respect the inviolable uniqueness of each individual creature coming as gift from the hand of this loving Creator, a metaphysical notion which he identifies using the Latin term **haecceitas**.” (Hayes)
- *Haecceitas* or “thisness” refers to the uniqueness that makes-up each individual and all of creation. It references the distinctive essence of a being, and the absolute and irreplaceable value of each being (Ingham). The countless varieties in the universe reflect the attributes of God. This sacred diversity is a bountiful gift from God, and without it we are all diminished.



Reflection

In your discipline, what are some ways in which you can teach about the infinite human dignity of the person?

Sense of Creation as Family

“For His praise, I wish to compose a new hymn about the Lord’s creatures, of which we make daily use, without which we cannot live, and with which the human race greatly offends its Creator.”

St. Francis’s reason for composing the *Canticle of Brother Sun*



A musical interpretation of the original 9 verses: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LB1hO0i-yVc>

The Canticle of Brother Sun¹

¹Most High, all powerful, good Lord, Yours are the praises, the glory, the honor, and all blessing.

²To You alone, Most High, do they belong, and no man is worthy to mention Your name.

³Praised be You, my Lord, with all your creatures, especially through my lord Brother Sun, who is the day; and through whom You give us light.

⁴And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor; and bears a likeness of You, Most High one.

⁵Praise be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven. You formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

⁶Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind, and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather through which You give sustenance to Your creatures.

⁷Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water, which is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

⁸Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you light the night and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

⁹Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Mother Earth, who sustains us and governs us and who produces varied fruits with colored flowers and herbs.

¹⁰Praised be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for Your love, and bear infirmity and tribulation.



¹¹Blessed are those who endure in peace for by You, Most High, they shall be crowned.

¹²Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no living man can escape.

¹³Woe to those who die in mortal sin. Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will, for the second death shall do them no harm.

¹⁴Praise and bless my Lord, and give Him thanks and serve Him with great humility.

AMEN

Historical Significance



- The *Canticle* was written in Italian with music composed for it in order “to communicate a distinctive experience of God to everyone.”²
- Composing the *Canticle* in Italian is significant because written works at that time were in Latin, including most of Francis’s writings, but Italian was the language of the people.¹
- It was written at 3 different times¹:
 - verses 1-9**—after Francis received the stigmata and was experiencing intense suffering.
 - Verses 10-11**—were added when Francis sent the brothers to sing it to quarreling civil and religious authorities
 - Verses 12-13**—on his death bed
 - Verse 14**—may have been a refrain used after each verse.

Why is *The Canticle* Important?

- To know creation is to know God.
- God's image is in creation

While these statements seem obvious, in Francis's time it was somewhat revolutionary to consider seeking God within the world, the people, and the relationships around you.

- God's goodness and all loving nature can be understood through all of creation.
- In creation, God brought something from nothing.

God created not because God is all powerful but because God has unlimited love and freedom. In *The Canticle*, we are to understand that we are created in relationship: relationship to one another, to the sun, to the moon, to the water, to all of the earth and even to death. We are siblings with all that God has created.

Another way to look at this is to think of God's presence as completely enveloping us—each of us reflect some aspect of the divine fullness. Collectively, we create a picture of a beautiful, loving God who created us not to be alone but to be in relation to all that is around us, which in turn puts us in relationship with God.

The *Canticle of Brother Sun* in the Classroom



"If things created are so full of loveliness, how resplendent with beauty must be the One who made them!"
St. Anthony of Padua



Reflection

What aspect of the Canticle might you incorporate into your class?

The Franciscan Moral Vision... (Responding to God's Love)

- is a Catholic Trinitarian **wisdom tradition** that
 - acknowledges real-world tensions (e.g. institutional/charismatic, past/future, universal/particular, act/person),
 - understands human failings and growth in context of time, history & human contingency,
 - recognizes the human limitations of reason & philosophy, also the reality of sin,
 - embodies a distinct social vision connecting personal/political, individual/communal, singular life of virtue/anticipation of Reign of God for all.



The Franciscan Moral Vision...(Responding to God's Love)



- is a **response to the reality of God's love** by
 - developing free & self-giving relationships with others,
 - respecting every person profoundly as an Image of God,
 - embracing dynamic realization of creative & loving freedom,
 - imitating Christ as Moral Exemplar in context of a universal vision that includes all creation.
- is an **aesthetic vision**: moral life is good/beautiful because God and creation are good/beautiful.

“... is an aesthetic moral vision in which humanity is called to reflect the beauty [and extravagant love] of God.”*



Merged stained glass windows in San Damiano

- God is good; Creation is of God, and is therefore good.
- As moral agents, people are to be seen first and foremost as mirrors of God in the context of creation.
- Focus on sin--you will find and perpetuate it; focus on goodness--you will find and perpetuate it.
- Individuals have community and nature to help and support each person, to learn not to “be good,” but learn *goodness* itself as a gift of Creation and come to desire goodness.
- God’s love creates the possibility for our response, in imitation of God’s Incarnated Example. The beauty of Nature is a sign of God’s love.
- “In beautiful things [Francis] discerns/sees Beauty Itself.” (2C165; full reference in notes below.)

* See notes for slide 84: *Characteristics*.



Reflection

Teaching could be considered a very Franciscan endeavor. As faculty, we strive to challenge our students, to push them beyond the limitations, and to support them when they fail. We want them to see ways in which they can bring good to communities in which they live. Consider how in your teaching, both within and outside the classroom, what you do could be modeling or connecting with the Franciscan ideal that we are the ones who model and bring into reality goodness.

Saint Francis of Assisi as Student and Teacher

The Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi
Located on the site known as the “Hill of Hell” to become known as
the “Hill of Paradise”



Introduction to Saint Francis: Resources



1. Read the link on St. Francis's life <http://198.62.75.1/www1/ofm/fra/FRAlife1.html>
2. Watch the short video overview of Francis <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kW1LDSV23zA>
3. How did Francis learn and grow by reflecting on his experiences?
4. How did Francis engage in “self-assessment” as part of his process of learning and growing spiritually?
5. Name some of St. Francis's values and how they relate to his understanding of Jesus and his Catholic Christian faith

The Education of Francis the Student

- As a child Francis attended school at his church and learned to read, write, and the basics of his Catholic faith
- His youthful experiences with working class people—his father was a cloth merchant—enabled Francis to appreciate the material value of creation; working with raw materials by hand gave him a closer connection creation.
- He developed a positive, biblical understanding of creation as a source of wisdom—creation reveals God (e.g. Psalms 19:1-7; 104:24)
- For Francis, the pursuit of knowledge must lead to a deeper love of God
- Francis’s love for creation developed gradually as he deepened his love for God: conversion from sin and its destructiveness to a deeper awareness of the sanctity of all human life and creation
- His biographer, Celano, and St. Bonaventure describe Francis’s conversion through his ever-growing relationship with Jesus Christ
- The Crucified Christ becomes central to Francis’s understanding of the transformative power of LOVE
- Creation created by God’s Word, manifested in Jesus Christ, led him to view all creation as good, with our ultimate goal as heaven—the “Garden of Innocence” (Genesis 1-3)

Learning through Life

Francis experienced the church and world as a man of his time and culture

- Francis's high ideals to be a knight were dashed when he became a prisoner of war; he suffered health problems, and eventually went to work for his father and lived a life of "pleasure," which soon proved unfulfilling.
- In his contemplative treks to the countryside he encounters a leper and reaches out to him
- He has his vision in the dilapidated church of San Damiano and gathers resources from his father's store to "pay" for its restoration—but the priest rejects his offer
- Francis begins to live as an "oblate" and deepens his spiritual life
- This leads to open conflict with his father



Reflection

How does Francis learn from his own mistakes?

What makes him reject wealth and privilege to embrace a life of voluntary poverty?

How does his outward work of repairing churches lead to an inward conversion?

Why do you think he joyfully internalized Jesus' call to his apostles to go forth and preach, living a life of simplicity and poverty?

Francis's Nature Mysticism

Contemplation of creation deepens his consciousness of God and the unity and sanctity of all life as a sacrament—a visible sign of God's transcendence and grace

Francis embraces a biblical view of the mystery of suffering as an essential aspect of our humanity—the suffering of Jesus illuminates and explains human suffering as redemptive

Francis's conversion centers on three images:

The Crib—the Incarnation of Jesus

The Way—the ministry and mission of Jesus

The Cross—the death of Jesus as the fulfillment and completion of his ministry (Mark 15:38)

The Suffering of Jesus enables us to encounter the love of God



Contrast: The Cathars

A dualistic sect that held a negative view of creation emphasizing the dichotomy between matter and spirit

The Cathar movement was popular in Francis's time and even in his city

Emphasizes an escape from the hardships of life by focusing on escaping the material world to enter the spiritual world

Cathars respond to suffering by rejecting the value of creation and opposing the physical and spiritual

Francis learns from Jesus: applying the Gospels

- Francis embraces a life of poverty, living simply and dedicating himself and his community to a life of prayer and service
- Care for the needy becomes a central aspect of Francis's and the Franciscan movement
- Care and love for creation and humanity go hand-in-hand; the call to love and steward all creation is rooted in his understanding of all creation as good, reflective of its divine source, and that humans are created in God's image and likeness
- Jesus embraced his Jewish values to teach that we must love one another and have a special care for the poor and needy
- Matthew 25:31-46 a parable in which Jesus describes the final judgment, when God, a "shepherd" and "king" will judge people based on how they treated others:
- *Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters, so you do unto me*

Francis learns from Jesus: applying the Gospels

- Jesus heals the leper (Mark 1:40-45). Lepers were considered “unclean” and sinners who must be avoided lest one be contaminated by them. Jesus embraces and heals the leper, breaking societal taboos and showing his love for the dignity of all human beings
- Jesus’ self-giving love manifested in his humanity, teaching, healing, Cross and Resurrection reflects the love of God for all humanity and creation
- The Risen Jesus empowers his disciples to continue his transformative mission (Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 2)
- Francis encounters a leper; previously Francis loathed lepers and avoided them but encounters a leper on the road and is moved with love and compassion to give him alms.
- Francis’s reflection on the humility of Christ reflected in the Incarnation and self-giving of the Cross moves him to love give his love and care for the suffering.
- Francis receives a mystical vision and call to repair the Church; he begins by repairing a dilapidated church in Assisi and then broadens his mission by dedicating his life to repairing the Church by establishing a community dedicated to bringing the love of Christ to all people.

Francis's Biblically based View of Creation



Psalm 19:2-7

- The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament proclaims the works of his hands.
- Day unto day pours forth speech; night unto night whispers knowledge.
- *There is no voice, no words; their voice is not heard.*
- A report goes forth through all the earth; their messages to the ends of the world. He has pitched in them a tent for the Sun.
- It comes forth like a bridegroom from his canopy; and like a hero joyfully runs its course.
- From one end of the heavens it comes forth; its course runs through the other; nothing escapes its heat.

Saint Francis's "Canticle of the Creatures" is one of his most famous prayers, composed later in his life. Click the link below to read the prayer and get background on its composition

<http://www.custodia.org/default.asp?id=1454>

Reflection

How does Francis's prayer reflect biblical values as found in Psalm 19 or Genesis?

Why do you think Francis personifies elements of creation as "brother" and "sister"?

How does his understanding of creation reflect his view of death?

Discuss: how can Francis's views of creation inspire us to better care for human life and our environment?

Francis's life experiences were an ongoing source of transformation and learning; the Canticle of Creatures, for example, was written later in his life.

Discuss how Francis's ongoing transformation and learning can serve as a source of inspiration for our ongoing spiritual and intellectual growth.



Francis the Teacher

Student: Clare of Assisi

- Read the link below for background on Clare's life and works

<http://198.62.75.1/www1/ofm/fra/FRAwrc01.html>

- Click the link below to access an article from Franciscan Studies recounting how on Palm Sunday, 1211, Clare left her home and entered the Franciscan community at the Portiuncula chapel

http://i-tau.com/franstudies/articles/St_Clare_Palm_Sunday.pdf



- Clare lived from 1193-1254 and came from a noble family in Assisi.
- She desired to join Francis's movement and eventually escaped from her family home and found refuge with Francis, received the habit, and eventually started her own community under Francis's patronage.
- She represents the "feminine" expression of Franciscan ideals.

Clare's Spirituality and Mysticism

- Clare and her sisters lived in close proximity to Francis and his friars; they were cloistered and embraced voluntary poverty
- Clare resisted attempts by Church officials, including Pope Innocent IV, to control the sisters' way of life—Clare insisted on poverty and created her own rule which was eventually accepted by the Pope
- Clare was a mystic; her four *Letters to Agnes of Prague* provide insight into her mystical practices.
- “The Mirror” is an image Clare used to contemplate Christ
- Clare's spirituality is influenced by Francis but reflects her own unique mystical and communal experiences as a woman living in community with her sisters.
- Clare provides an example of a strong woman of faith who bravely stood up for her beliefs—even resisting papal efforts to exercise control over her community.
- She models the values of simplicity of life and contemplation—aspects of her spirituality that remain relevant in our contemporary world. See the link below for more on Clare and her Letters: <http://198.62.75.1/www1/ofm/fra/FRAwrc02.html>

Francis the Teacher



Student: Bonaventure

- See the link below for an artistic image of Bonaventure http://allart.biz/up/photos/album/B-Vittorio%20Crivelli/vittore_crivelli_4_saint_bonaventure.jpg
- Read the link below for background on Bonaventure's life and works: <http://www.franciscan-archive.org/bonaventura/>
- Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (1217-1274) believed he was miraculously cured by St. Francis as a child; he later studied at the University of Paris and became a Franciscan in 1243. He received advanced degrees and became a theologian who composed many biblical, theological and mystical works. He became Minister General of the Franciscan order in 1257 and was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1588 by Pope Sixtus V—the “Seraphic Doctor.”

Bonaventure's Spirituality and Mysticism



- During a visit to Mt. Alverna, where Francis experienced a vision of a six-winged seraph, Bonaventure himself had a mystical experience which led him to compose *The Journey of the Mind to God*. He begins by mentioning his mentor, Francis, and how he had a vision of the six-winged seraph, which he interprets in terms of six stages of ascent to communion with God. The following link provides an introduction and English translation: http://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/library_article/666/Journey_of_the_Mind_into_God_St_Bonaventure.html
- The “ladder” of spiritual ascent begins in the created world, where the purified mystic enters into the way of God’s truth through devotion and contemplation of God’s name
- One enters “our own mind” which is “God’s image” and ascends to what is “eternal, totally spiritual, and above”
- The six wings are likened to the six days of creation leading to the Sabbath rest
- The Ark of the Covenant is an image of Christ as the “door” and “staircase” to God’s presence
- One enters the “Sabbath” rest of divine darkness and a “rapture of pure mind”

Summary: Franciscan Intellectual Values

- We learn from our experiences and observations
- The pursuit of knowledge should lead to a love of God and all creation
- Scientific knowledge promotes harmony with God and creation
- Morality and wisdom underlay the holistic Franciscan approach to learning
- Knowledge enables us to respond positively and constructively in response to problems as we better appreciate the sanctity of all creation as divinely-ordered and therefore become better stewards
- Three points: 1) Nature is Good because it is of God and can lead us to God; 2) the pursuit of knowledge is a communal activity, working in dialogue and collaboration with others; 3) the pursuit of knowledge must have a moral purpose—to promote the common good.

Beauty in the Franciscan Tradition

Creation serves as the starting point for a “ladder” of spiritual ascent to communion with God

The beauty of creation provides a “sacramental” experience of the ineffable Creator

Awareness of God through the beauty of God’s creation leads us to the ultimate beauty and joy

Creation is *eschatological*: it points to our ultimate end and goal of communion with God

Three Movements in the Spiritual Ascent

Awareness: We experience beauty through observation and experience in our daily lives

Unfolding: We contemplate our experiences internally and draw closer to God as its source

Embrace: We experience self-transcendence and are enveloped in the overwhelming love of God

Incarnational Theology

All creation and humanity is a reflection of God as its source

The Incarnation of Jesus Christ is the ultimate expression of God’s love for and union with humanity

The self-giving love of Jesus is reflected in his redemptive suffering

We unite ourselves to the Cross of Jesus as the ultimate source of meaning and hope

We love and care for all humanity and all creation as sacred

Francis's “Vernacular Theology”



The 13th century: The Flowering of Mysticism

The 13th century was a period when mysticism “flowered” among the laity. Spirituality became more democratized and secularized. The focus of this movement was the experience of God in the lives of the literate as well as the illiterate, the wealthy as well as the poor.



Francis of Assisi was a crucial player in the growth of this spirituality in that his preaching was accessible to the “ignorant” and “uneducated” (among which Francis counted himself).



“Vernacular Theology”



- This term was coined by theologian Bernard McGinn to refer to a theology focused on reaching an audience of these “ordinary” people who seek an experience God in the routines of their daily lives.
- Since Francis was so adept at facilitating this, he is referred to as the first “vernacular theologian.” He had the gift of being able to articulate the profound experience of God in the vernacular language of his audiences.

A “vernacular theologian”

- A “vernacular theologian,” then, is one whose writing and life demonstrates that ALL persons can and do experience God in the midst of the world. The vernacular theologian’s mission is to communicate this truth to the ordinary person.
- The thirty or so works Francis left behind (mostly prayers and letters) illustrate this focus. Even though most of these are in Latin, they still can be classified as examples of “vernacular theology” since it is apparent that Francis developed these thoughts in Italian and only then tried to articulate them in Latin.

Francis's view of God and creation as reflective of vernacular theology

- Francis considered everything in his life to be a gift from an all loving and all good God.
- The limitless goodness of God exists within the relationship of the three persons of the Trinity and cannot but overflow into all of creation.
- It is in this light that we can be called “sons and daughters of God” since we have been incorporated into the very relationship that is the essence of God.

Francis's view of God and creation as reflective of vernacular theology

- This relationship is reflected in Francis's use of plural pronouns in his prayers recorded in the Early Rule.
- “With our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole mind, with our whole strength and fortitude, with our whole understanding.... Let us all love the Lord God, who has given and gives to each one of us our whole body, our whole soul, and our whole life, who has created, redeemed, and will save us by His mercy alone, who did and does everything good for us.” (Ch. 23)

Holy Spirit as our “spouse”

- Our incorporation into the relationship that constitutes the triune God can be seen in Francis’s habit of referring to every committed Christian as “Spouse of the Holy Spirit.”
- The Spirit is the bond of love. Therefore, all Christians are called to being open to the power of the Holy Spirit (love) and thus willing to be transformed into what God desires.

Significance of Holy Spirit as “spouse”

Theologian Dominic Monti calls Francis’s image of the Holy Spirit as spouse one of the most profoundly original contributions of Francis as a vernacular theologian.

The Canticle of Brother Sun as an example of Vernacular Theology

- Francis wrote this canticle in Italian (the common language of his audience). The fact that he composed music for it indicates that he wished it to be circulated that way. This would make it accessible to the uneducated laity.
- The canticle of the sun is considered the first great poem of the Italian vernacular. In fact, it has even been called the most ancient spiritual poem in any vernacular language.
- The canticle clearly shows the focus of vernacular theology: that God is encountered by and through the beauty of the natural world around us which reflects the perfect goodness of God.
- Throughout the canticle, Francis writes of his experience of God through his brotherhood with the elements of creation.
- The constant repetition of the terms “brother and sister” illustrate the intimate relationship all of creation shares with the all-loving, all-good, all-powerful God. This harkens back to the primacy of relationship which can be seen within the triune God.
- Each creature is called upon to praise God since each is a beautiful expression of God’s presence.



... a theme which is repeated in Francis's Admonitions...

“... And all creatures under heaven serve, know and obey their Creator, each according to its own nature, better than you.” (Admonition 5)



The structure of the Canticle of the Sun

- Consisting of 14 stanzas (which is seen by some to symbolize the 14 stations of the cross) and 33 lines (perhaps signifying Jesus' age at the crucifixion), the poem is divided into three distinct parts.
- The first 5 stanzas deal with the heavens. The next 4 stanzas focus on the earth. The final 5 stanzas concern human beings.

Significance of the Canticle....

- The perfect symmetrical structure reflects the medieval sense of the order which was thought to indicate proximity to the Divine.
- Bernard McGinn considers this piece Francis's most strikingly creative contribution as a vernacular theologian.

The Canticle of Brother Sun

- Most High, all powerful, good Lord,
Yours are the praises, the glory, the honor,
and all blessing.
- To You alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no human is worthy to mention Your name.
- Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures,
especially through my lord Brother Sun,
who brings the day; and you give light through him.
And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor!
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.



- Praise be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven you formed them clear and precious and beautiful.
- Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind, and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather through which You give sustenance to Your creatures.
- Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water, which is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.





- Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you light the night and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.
- Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Mother Earth, who sustains us and governs us and who produces varied fruits with colored flowers and herbs.
- Praised be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for Your love, and bear infirmity and tribulation.
- Blessed are those who endure in peace for by You, Most High, they shall be crowned.

- Praised be You, my Lord,
through our Sister Bodily Death,
from whom no living man can escape.
- Woe to those who die in mortal sin.
Blessed are those whom death will
find in Your most holy will, for the
second death shall do them no harm.
- Praise and bless my Lord,
and give Him thanks
and serve Him with great humility.



Reflection



Which verse of the Canticle has given me a new perspective on the element of nature that Francis is describing?

How does that verse reawaken in me an appreciation for creation as a vehicle of God's communication and love?

A summary of the characteristics of vernacular theology:

- Accessible to the ignorant and uneducated
- Designed to reach an audience seeking an experience of God in their daily lives
- Written in the common language of the time
- The created world is a vehicle of God's communication; that is where we encounter God
- The limitless goodness of God overflows into all of creation
- We are sons and daughters of God because we have been incorporated into this relationship of goodness and overflowing love
- As such, we are also "spouses of the Holy Spirit"

Outline of the Methodology of Vernacular Theology

- Vernacular theology reflects the belief that one “knows” not only by the head, but also by the heart.
- The vernacular theologian appreciates this and attempts to make the experience of God accessible to all people.
- In this sense, they engage in a theology that is “practical” in that it is accessible to and can be experienced by all.

Examples of Vernacular Theology from Francis's Admonitions....



Where there is charity and wisdom,
there is neither fear nor ignorance.

Where there is patience and humility,
there is neither anger nor disturbance.

Where there is poverty with joy,
there is neither greed nor avarice.

Where there is rest and meditation,
there is neither anxiety nor restlessness.

Where there is fear of the Lord to guard
an entrance,
there the enemy cannot have a place to
enter.

(Admonition 27)

Do we speak their language?

Joseph P. Chinnici, OFM described a Franciscan intellectual as ...

“ascending *low enough* so as to enter into a community of teachers and learners; a community that values the **languages of life**, the many different languages of those **who speak God.**”

(from talk given at Washington Theological Union, May 2001.)

Reflection

- Can we as faculty members speak “the language of God” while transmitting the content of our disciplines?
- Are the two mutually exclusive?
- What is the one concept in my own discipline that best lends itself to a theological articulation that might bring my students closer to an understanding of God?



Resources

Read “Francis as Vernacular Theologian” by Dominic Monti OFM

[http://www.franciscantradition.org/images/stories/custodians/03_Francis as Vernacular Theologian.pdf](http://www.franciscantradition.org/images/stories/custodians/03_Francis_as_Vernacular_Theologian.pdf)

For further reading: *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism* by Bernard McGinn (NY: Crossroad, 1998)

Sample Courses Infused with Franciscan Intellectual Tradition



How to Infuse Your Course with the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition

- The following slides offer examples of courses from different areas of study.
- Each course has an element of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition incorporated in the content.
- These slides show the course subject and the way in which the FIT can be infused in such a course.
- The courses also include special first year seminar topics for those schools that offer such courses.
- The slides include information about which materials will aid in the presentation of this content.

Intercultural Communication



- View lecture: *The Saint and the Sultan*
<http://learn.ctu.edu/content/duns-scotus-lecture-saint-and-sultan>
- Conduct discussion on the applications of the story concerning ethnocentrism, cultural relativism, communication with the “other,” dialogue, and mindfulness.
- Students write a reflection on this story in relation to other intercultural communication scenarios

Writing and Activism



- Discussion of Compassion in relation to Poverty.
- Francis on Poverty: Readings on the Rule and thoughts on Lady Poverty
- Visits to House of Peace Capuchin Ministries and St. Ben's Community Meal Program
- Written reflection on Poverty, Compassion, and our activist responses

Persuasion

- Present the topic of what constitutes ethical approaches to persuasion
- Review the Franciscan teacher and philosopher John Duns Scotus on the construct of *haecceitas*, thisness or the unique quality or identity which makes each one unique.
- If each member of creation bears this uniqueness, how should we treat each person in trying to persuade?



Spanish: Multicultural Studies

- Students identify a group suffering from oppression, discrimination, and/or persecution, e.g. undocumented children in immigration detention
- Students read current Franciscan thoughts on compassion
- Students read and discuss segments of the Earlier Rule: Chapter XVII: Preachers (“preach by their deeds” and “humble themselves in everything.”)
- Students incorporate these ideas into their presentations on the group identified



General Psychology



- Examine stories from biographies of Francis, such as the *Fioretti*, about bettering a community, e.g. expulsion of demons from Arezzo; the Wolf of Gubbio; "Canticle of the Creatures"; the segment on peace addressed to the Mayor and Bishop of Assisi
- Students apply principles of psychology (such as classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and observational learning) to creating a more caring community and identify these in the stories of the *Fioretti*.

Computer Science: Social Media Behind the Scenes



- Discussion of emotional contagion of social media
- Discussion of ethics in relation to usage of social media, especially in relation to Francis and the Canticle and John Duns Scotus and *haecceitas*.
- Students present social media experiments and discuss ethical issues

Music: Sacred Sound



- Focus on cross cultural awareness in worship music
- Emphasize reverencing all of creation with reference to the "Canticle of Creation" as song
- Have students visit two worship services and reflect in writing on their experiences in relation to music, cross cultural awareness, and having compassion for other traditions.
- Provide regular listening quizzes to allow students to identify various important chants and devotional songs from different religious traditions

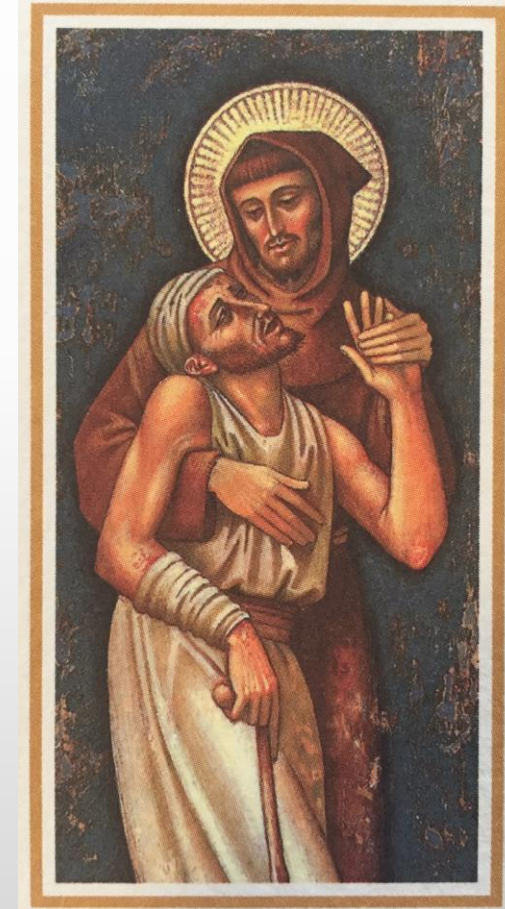
Mathematics for Elementary Teachers

- Helping children find the joy in math
- Patterns, Perspective, Math tricks
- Story of Luca Pacioli, OFM, the Father of Accounting and Bookkeeping.



First Year Seminar with Special Topics: Body Language

- Focus on Reverencing Creation
- Present story of Francis and the Leper
- Witness repulsion change to Love
- Consider Francis's declaration: "What was bitter is now sweet."

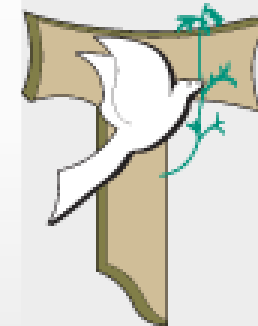


First Year Seminar with Special Topics: Martyrs, Mystics, and Women of the Street



Association of
Franciscan
Colleges and Universities

- Discussion of "The Great Idea" in relation to Francis. Why is what he did such a *great idea* that so many follow him?
- Discussion of "rebuilding the Church" and the story of San Damiano
- Discussion of Franciscan women preaching in the streets (Rose of Viterbo, Margaret of Cortona, Angela of Foligno, Elizabeth of Hungary)
- Visit to Franciscan organizations in the city serving the underserved and women trapped in human trafficking.
- Students write reflections on these experiences



**FRANCISCAN
PEACEMAKERS
STREET MINISTRY**

Spanish: Latinos in the US

- Focus on Peacemaking
- Stories of Francis and, first, his participation in war, then his rejection of war
- Present guest speakers from the Latino community
- Visit the Latino community center in the city and offer to volunteer
- Students write reflections on these experiences in relation to peacemaking



Psychology of Gender



- Focus on creating a caring community
- Story of Francis and the Leper
- Examine issues surrounding gender, sexism, feminism, sexual orientation, transgender identity
- Student journals reflect on the issues in conjunction with creating a caring community

Mediation

- Students watch video of *In the Footprints of Francis and the Sultan* from Franciscan Media
- Class discussion of Francis and war, the Wolf of Gubbio, presenting the “Canticle of the Creatures” to the mayor and bishop of Assisi during their dispute
- Students apply concepts of Franciscan peacemaking to a mediation scenario



Social Media

- Presentation of content on writings of and about Francis
- Students learn how to find content from the Early Documents
- Students examine a public personality's use of social media in relation to Franciscan values
- For example, what do the Admonitions say? How does that connect to the way this person uses social media?



Developing Learning Activities



Association of
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Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre



CONFLICT & GOOD NEWS

One approach to [Western] theatre is that it is constructed on **conflict**. That is, the behavior of the [main] characters is driven by an attempt to resolve a conflict in which they find themselves. In other words, what causes the action of the play to occur is something that prevents the characters from attaining something they want. Without conflict, there may not be much of a play. That is, if the characters' every wish is fulfilled, they may be happy, but there may not be much for the audience to witness or to contemplate.

The conflict may take many forms: individual v. individual, group v. group, individual v. group, individual/group v. outside forces, etc.

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre

CONFLICT & GOOD NEWS

Dramatists have approached this in many ways, but consider a few examples.

- Two sons of a king fight on opposing sides of a war and kill each other in battle. The king declares that the son who fought for the winning city-state will receive a state burial. The son who fought for the opponents will be left to the elements, an ignoble fate. Their sister decides to bury her disgraced brother to follow the directives of the gods. (Sophocles, *Antigone*)
- Two young people meet and fall in love. They would like to get married, but their families, currently involved in a feud that is roiling their town, would never accept this. (William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*)
- A man takes in his friend after his wife informs him that she wants a divorce. Although their friendship is strong, they find themselves constantly at odds over cleanliness, food, dating and schedules. (Neil Simon, *The Odd Couple*)

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre



CONFLICT & GOOD NEWS

While students often find this notion of conflict driving a play relatively easy to grasp, they also frequently find it difficult to find ways of embodying this on the stage in ways that don't simply devolve into shouting matches, aggressive gestures or stony silences.

The difficulty, I think, lies in a misperception: that because conflict is the central element in the encounter, it is the element that should be *played*.

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre

Character/Group/Force
A

Character/Force/Group
B

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre



CONFLICT & GOOD NEWS

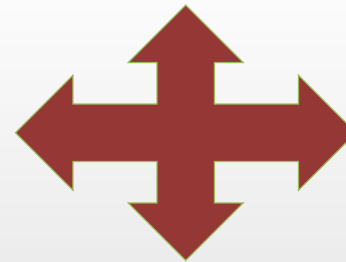
However, if you look at the situations described, the characters do not want to be in conflict; they are pursuing what are in their minds positive goals, which are somehow opposed by others, who have their own positive goals.

The key is to help the students learn that by pursuing the characters' positive goals as strongly as possible, the conflict will inevitably arise. However, it will play out in a way that is much more theatrically engaging because it is rooted in a desire to deliver "good news" to the other(s).

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre

Character/
Group/Force B



Character/Group/
Force A



Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre



CONFLICT & GOOD NEWS

The following exercise is structured primarily for an acting class, in which students must learn how to convey the elements of “good news” through specific bodily and vocal choices. However, it could also be utilized in other classes devoted to directing, textual analysis or a general introduction to theatre.

[The specific scene utilized is for the purposes of example. The actual material would be scenes chosen for study for the particular course.]

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre



Prepare the short scene from *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller [near the end of Act 2, beginning with with Willy planting and ending with Willy’s line, “That boy—that boy is going to be something.”]

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre



Elements student actors often focus on

Stage Directions

Seething with hurt

Erupting fiercely

Turns sharply

With full accusation

Whips the rubber tube out

Sobbing

In his fury

Uncontrolled outburst

On the verge of attacking

Dialogue

May you rot in hell if you leave this house!

I won't take the rap for this.

You cut down your life for spite!

You're practically full of it!

Stop crying, I'm through with it.

That's whose fault it is!

For spite, hang yourself!

You vengeful, spiteful mutt!

I'm nothing!

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre



This will often lead to a scene of “battle,” which might be quite engaging in its own right.

However, focus on the following bit of dialogue.

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre



BIFF: Pop! I'm a dime a dozen, and so are you!

WILLY (*turning on him now in an uncontrolled outburst*): I am not a dime a dozen! I am Willy Loman, and you are Biff Loman!

(Biff starts for Willy, but is blocked by Happy. In his fury, Biff seems on the verge of attacking his father.)

BIFF: I am not a leader of men, Willy, and neither are you. You were never anything but a hard-working drummer who landed in the ash can like all the rest of them! I'm one dollar an hour, Willy I tried seven states and couldn't raise it. A buck an hour! Do you gather my meaning? I'm not bringing home any prizes any more, and you're going to stop waiting for me to bring them home!

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre



Now, try to act this with the idea that Biff and Willy are not trying to fight or win some battle but to deliver an important truth—good news—to the other man. Try to get the other man to understand and accept your point of view.

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre



This will often lead to a very different set of acting choices—ones no less powerful, and often more so, than those based on “fighting.”

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre



SO WHAT?

This may lead to a more engaging scene—or at least a theatrically satisfying one. But what does it have to do with the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition?

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre



The analysis of the scene can open to a dialogue regarding various theories of acting or human psychology. It can also lead to an examination of Franciscan anthropology.

At the core of the conflict between Willy and Biff lie different approaches as to how to evaluate a human being who on the surface appears to be nothing extraordinary.

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre



Biff seems to be liberated by his apprehension that acknowledging the “ordinariness” of his existence and his lack of what is normally considered greatness allows him to begin to live life on his own terms.

Willy wants the world to know that he and his son are human beings worthy of respect and should be afforded dignity even if they have not achieved prominent positions, fame or great wealth.

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre



Francis of Assisi, *Admonition V*

Consider, O human being, in what great excellence the Lord God has placed you, for He created and formed you to the image of His beloved Son according to the body and to His likeness according to the Spirit. (Willy?)

In what, then can you boast? Even if you were so skillful and wise that you possessed all knowledge, knew how to interpret every kind of language, and to scrutinize heavenly matters with skill: you could not boast in these things. For, even though someone may have received from the Lord a special knowledge of the highest wisdom one demon knew about heavenly matters and now knows more about those of earth than all human beings. In the same way, even if you were more handsome and richer than everyone else, and even if you worked miracles so that you put demons to flight: all these things are contrary to you; nothing belongs to you; you can boast in none of these things. But we can boast in our weaknesses and in carrying each day the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Biff?)

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre



Another angle you can take on the matter utilizing the FIT draws on John Duns Scotus's discussion of universals and individuation.

Scotus argues that there is a common nature (*natura communis*) that allows one to predicate the same thing (e.g., humanity) of more than one distinct individual. At the same time, there is a principle of individuation (*haecceitas*) by which the common element has existence only in the particular things in which it exists (e.g., Willy, Biff).

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre



In what ways are Willy and Biff alike (“a dime a dozen”)?

In what ways are they different (I am Willy Loman, and you are Biff Loman!)

Another interesting way you can ask this question is, what is the “Loman” and what the “Willy” and “Biff”?

And in performance, can you make acting choices that demonstrate both the common and individuated elements, which can heighten the conflict even further, as each man struggles not only with the other but also with himself?

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre



This could also be an opportunity to explore the conflict of Francis with his father. [cf. 1Celano, Book I, Chapter 6; *The Major Legend* by Bonaventure, Chapter 2]

Like the conflict between Biff and Willy, this could be seen as a contest *between* two individuals. However, if we take the “good news” approach, we can examine this as what occurs when Francis tries to embrace a new relationship with God while his father tries to preserve the life he has built for his family.

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre



Look!

Now he wrestles naked with the naked.
After putting aside all that is of the world,
he is mindful only of divine justice.

Now he is eager to despise his own life,
by setting aside all concern for it.

Thus

there might be peace for him,
a poor man on a hemmed-in path,
and only the wall of the flesh would separate him
from the vision of God.

[1C 1 6:15]

Biff: Pop, I'm nothing! I'm nothing, Pop. Can't you understand that? . . . I'm just what I am, that's all.

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 1 - Theatre



It is certainly possible to teach this lesson without reference to the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition, but the FIT is also a rich way to explore the issues at stake.

Neither Biff nor Willy is “correct” in terms of a definitive position of the human person within the Franciscan tradition. However, they both seem to be aware of a deeper dimension to human existence that is worth some effort to communicate—and to live.

These perspectives, whatever their foundation, can make the scene more powerful for an audience, but the ideas, embraced by the tradition, are worth imparting to students to make their experience of theatre and of life more fulfilling.

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 2 - Theatre



STAGING A STORM

Here is another example of linking a basic exploration of theatre technique to the FIT.
This one concerns stagecraft.

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 2 - Theatre



STAGING A STORM

There are a number of plays that include scenes which take place in a rain storm, e.g., *King Lear*, *The Night of the Iguana*, *The Grapes of Wrath*. If you were asked to stage these scenes, how would you handle the storms? Consider the variety of solutions available to you. How does the style of the different plays affect your choices. Think about how these scenes might be staged in (a) a proscenium theatre (b) an arena stage (c) an outdoor performance on campus. In thinking about your staging, clearly articulate the problems you see in presenting a storm on the stage.

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 2 - Theatre

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! Rage, blow!
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!
You sulph'rous and though-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers of all-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all shaking thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity o' th' world!
Crack nature's moulds, all germains spill at once
That make ingrateful man!
Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! Spout, rain!
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire are my daughters.
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness,
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
You owe me no subscription. Then let fall
Your horrible pleasure. Here I stand your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man;
But yet I call you servile ministers,
That will with two pernicious daughters join
Your high-engender'd battles 'gainst a head
So old and white as this. O, ho! 'tis foul.



Developing a Learning Activity

Example 2 - Theatre

Shannon and Nonno turn and face toward the storm, like brave men facing a firing squad. Maxine is excitedly giving orders to the boys.

The German party look on the storm as a Wagnerian climax. They rise from their table as the boys come to clear it and start singing exultantly. The storm, with its white convulsions of light, is like a giant white bird attacking the hilltop of the Costa Verde. Hannah reappears with her water colors clutched against her chest.

[Shannon] moves away from the wall to the edge of the verandah as a fine silver sheet of rain descends off the sloping roof, catching the light and dimming the figures behind it. Now everything is silver, delicately lustrous. Shannon extends his hands under the rainfall, turning them in it as if to cool them. Then he cups them to catch the water in his palms and bathes his forehead with it. The rainfall increases. The sound of the marimba band at the beach cantina is brought up the hill by the wind. Shannon lowers his hands from his burning forehead and stretches them out through the rain's silver sheet as if he were reaching for something outside and beyond himself. Then nothing is visible but these reaching-out hands. A pure white flash of lightning reveals Hannah and Nonno against the wall, behind Shannon, and the electric globe suspended from the roof goes out, the power extinguished by the storm. A clear shaft of light stays on Shannon's reaching-out hands till the stage curtain has fallen, slowly.



Note: In staging, the plastic elements should be restrained so that they don't take precedence over the more important human values. It should not seem like an "effect curtain." The faint, windy music of the marimba band from the cantina should continue as the houselights are brought up for the intermission.

(Stage directions from *The Night of the Iguana* by Tennessee Williams)

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 2 - Theatre



Thunder cracks. The women work over Rose of Sharon, and the rain drums down. Pa jumps in the water and drives his shovel into the mud. The other men do the same.

Rose of Sharon screams over the thunder. The men begin to pile sandbags along the bank of the stream.

A terrific crack and a flash of lightning. A ripping crash tears the air. It is the sound of a great cottonwood toppling. The men stop to look out, their mouths open. They watch the great tree split and thunder into the boiling stream.

Uncle John takes the shovel and slips out the door. Thunder. He comes down to the trough of water and puts his shovel down. Holding the box [containing the stillborn baby] in front of him, he edges into the swift stream. Thunder. For a time he stands watching the water swirl by, leaving its yellow foam among the willow stems. He holds the apple box against his chest. And then he leans over and sets the box in the stream and steadies it with his hand.

[Uncle John] guides the box gently out in to the current and lets it go, then grabs the shovel and returns to the boxcar. The rain is now a gentle drizzle.

(Stage directions from *The Grapes of Wrath* by Frank Galati)



Developing a Learning Activity

Example 2 - Theatre



Much can be said about how the storm is characterized in each of these plays. Note, though, that this is what is taking place—the storm takes on the role of another character in the play.

“Rumble thy *bellyful!*”

“servile *ministers* that will with two pernicious daughters join”

“like brave men facing *a firing squad.*”

“like *a giant white bird* attacking the hilltop”

“the rain *drums down*”

“A ripping crash *tears the air.*”

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 2 - Theatre



Now consider how Francis also characterized creation.

**Praised be You, my Lord through Brother Wind,
and through the air, cloudy and serene,
and every kind of weather,
through whom You give sustenance
to Your creatures.**

The Canticle of the Creatures

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 2 - Theatre



How can a view of natural elements as fellow creatures (brother, sister) affect our experience of nature?

How do the human characters in the play respond to or interact with natural elements that are “mere” physical phenomena?

Is there anything “behind” nature?

Developing a Learning Activity

Example 2 - Theatre



When the Word is uttered in time, the canvas of creation unfolds. The triune God is then revealed as a divine Artist, and creation is the finite expression of the Artist's infinite ideas.

As a work of art, creation is intended to manifest the glory of the Artist-Creator.

*(Ilia Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*)*

Developing Learning Activities



If you'd like some guidance on how the FIT might be applied to your own discipline, you might consult the articles listed here:

<http://franciscancollegesuniversities.org/resources/discipline-specific-resources/>

These might give you some lines along which you might develop your own learning activities.

Developing Learning Activities



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You might also view these videos about utilizing the FIT in specific disciplines:

Communications:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0w7zxGK73_A&feature=youtu.be

Religious Studies: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbzhfBmRxJs>

Philosophy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kb8nEzTWR94>

MOVING FORWARD

We hope you have found this course beneficial and that you will find the material useful in incorporating the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition into your teaching.

We would be interested in your feedback about the course. You can access a brief survey about the course here: [Survey of FIT in your course](#)

Again, if you have questions about the course or next steps, you can send an email to afcu@felician.edu.