FRANCIS AND THE FEMININE:
A STUDY OF WOMEN AND THE BLESSED MOTHER IN THE LIFE OF
ST. FRANCIS

A DOCTORAL DISSERTATION IN SACRED THEOLOGY IN MARIAN STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF SACRED THEOLOGY

DIRECTED BY
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### Standard Abbreviations used for Early Franciscan Sources

#### I. Writings of Saint Francis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adm</td>
<td>Admonitions</td>
<td>LaudDei</td>
<td>Praises of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BenLeo</td>
<td>Blessings for Brother Leo</td>
<td>LaudHor</td>
<td>Praises To Be Said at All the Hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>CantSol</td>
<td>Canticle of Brother Sun</td>
<td>OffPass</td>
<td>Office of the Passion</td>
</tr>
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<td>CantExh</td>
<td>Canticle of Exhortation</td>
<td>OrCruc</td>
<td>Prayer before the Crucifix</td>
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<tr>
<td>EpAnt</td>
<td>Letter to St. Anthony</td>
<td>RegB</td>
<td>Later Rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EpCler</td>
<td>Letter to the Clergy</td>
<td>RegNB</td>
<td>Earlier Rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1EpCust</td>
<td>First Letter to the Custodians</td>
<td>RegEr</td>
<td>Rule for Hermitages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2EpCust</td>
<td>Second Letter to the Custodians</td>
<td>SalBVM</td>
<td>Salutation of the Blessed Virgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1EpFid</td>
<td>First Version of the Letter to the Faithful</td>
<td>SalVirt</td>
<td>Salutation of the Virtues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2EpFid</td>
<td>Second Version of the Letter to the Faithful</td>
<td>Test</td>
<td>Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EpLeo</td>
<td>Letter to Brother Leo</td>
<td>TestSen</td>
<td>Testament Written in Siena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EpMin</td>
<td>Letter to a Minister</td>
<td>UltVol</td>
<td>Last Will Written for St. Clare</td>
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<tr>
<td>EpOrd</td>
<td>Letter to the Entire Order</td>
<td>VPLaet</td>
<td>Dictate on True and Perfect Joy</td>
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<td>EpRect</td>
<td>Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples</td>
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<tr>
<td>ExhLD</td>
<td>Exhortation to the Praises of God</td>
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<tr>
<td>ExpPat</td>
<td>Prayer Inspired by the Our Father</td>
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<tr>
<td>FormViv</td>
<td>Form of Life for St Clare</td>
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## II. Writings of Saint Clare

| 1LA<sup>g</sup> | First Letter to St. Agnes of Prague | L<sub>Er</sub> | Letter to Bruges of Ernemtrude Bruges |
| 2LA<sup>g</sup> | Second Letter to St. Agnes of Prague | RCI | Rule of St. Clare |
| 3LA<sup>g</sup> | Third Letter to St. Agnes of Prague | TestCL | Testament of St. Clare |
| 4LA<sup>g</sup> | Fourth Letter to St. Agnes of Prague | BCI | Blessing of St. Clare |
### III. Other Early Franciscan Sources

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1Cel</td>
<td>First Life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2Cel</td>
<td>Second Life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3Cel</td>
<td>Treatise on the Miracles by Thomas of Celano</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Anonymous of Perugia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IdV</td>
<td>Witness of Jacques de Vitry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3S</td>
<td>Legend of the Three Companions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LegCl</td>
<td>Legend of St. Clare</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fior</td>
<td>Little Flowers of St. Francis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LM</td>
<td>Major Life of St. Francis by St. Bonaventure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMin</td>
<td>Minor Life of St. Francis by St. Bonvenature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP</td>
<td>Legend of Perugia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proc</td>
<td>Acts of the Process of Canonization of St. Clare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Sacrum Commercium</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Mirror of Perfection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


AF: *Analecta Franciscana*
I. Writings from 1205 and 1223

1. 1205/1206  The Prayer before the Crucifix
2. 1212      The Form of Life Given to Saint Clare and Her Sisters
3. 1213-1221 The First Version of the Letter to the Faithful
4. 1217-1221 The Rule of Hermitages
5. 1219      A Letter to the Clergy
6. 1219      The First Letter to the Custodians
7. 1219      The Second Letter to the Custodians
8. 1219      A Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples
9. 1209-1221 The Earlier Rule
10. 1219-1221 The Second Version of the Letter to the Faithful
11. 1222      A Letter Written for the Citizens of Bologna
12. 1221-1223 A Letter to a Minister
13. 1223      The Later Rule

II. Writings between 1224 and 1226

1. 1224      A Letter to St. Anthony
2. 1224 Sept The Parchment Given to Brother Leo
3. 1225 Spring The Canticle of Brother Sun (Part I)
4. 1225 Spring The Canticle of Brother Sun (Part II)
5. 1225-1226 A Letter to the Entire Order
6. 1226 April The Testament Written at Siena
7. 1226 Sept The Canticle of Exhortation to Saint Clare and Her Sisters
8. 1226 Sept The Last Will Written for Saint Clare and Her Sisters
9. 1226 Sept The Blessing Sent to Saint Clare and Her Sisters
10. 1226 Sept The Testament
11. 1226 Oct The Blessing Dictated for Brother Bernard
12. 1226 Oct  The Canticle of Brother Sun
               (Part III)
13. 1226 Oct  A Letter Written to Lady Jacoba

III. The Undated Writings.

1. The Admonititions
2. The Exhortation to the Praise of God
3. A Letter to Brother Leo
4. A Letter Sent to the Brothers in France
5. The Office of the Passion
6. The Praises to Be Said at All the Hours
7. The Prayer Inspired by Our Father Virgin Mary
8. The Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
9. The Salutation of the Virtues
10. True and Perfect Joy
# Introduction

### I. Purpose of Study

### II. Plan of Study

## Chapter 1

**The Franciscan Question**

### I. Origin of the Franciscan Question

### II. Franciscan Texts

## Chapter 2

**The Feminine and Its Symbols as Spiritual Images in the High Middle Ages**

### I. Ancient Symbols of the Feminine

### II. Scriptural uses of feminine symbolism; response and mission (Mary's response to God)

### III. The feminine image in the life of St. Bernard

#### A. The Union of Carnal and Spiritual Love

#### B. Christ and His Church in Monastic Writings

#### C. Bernard's Respect and Concern for Women

#### D. Rejection of Human Friendships in Monastic Spirituality

#### E. Use of Feminine Symbols by Monastic Writers

### IV. Conclusion
Chapter 3

Lady Poverty as the Primary Feminine Symbol of the Franciscan Vocation

I. The spouse of God as symbol of Francis' conversion 35

II. Lady Poverty and courtly love 40

III. The Identity of Lady Poverty 48
   A. Lady Poverty as Spouse 53
   B. Francis as Lady Poverty 54
   C. Lady Poverty as Mother 60

IV. Francis' image of the feminine in its cultural context 61

Chapter 4

Francis and His Ministry to Women

I. Francis and the Mothers of the Order 75

II. Francis as a Model of Virtue toward Women 77

III. Francis as Model of Discretion 78
   A. Francis' Parable of the Two Messengers 79
   B. Francis and the Dangers to the Order 83

IV. Francis' love for the Poor Ladies 84
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Discretion Toward the Poor Clares</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Francis the Role Model</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Friendship as a Source of Spiritual Growth</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Three Women in the Life of Francis</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Lady Pica as Seen in the Primary Sources</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Francis in the World Before His Conversion (First Celano)</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. How Francis' Mother Freed Him (First Celano)</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. How Francis's Mother Prophesied Concerning Him (First Celano)</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Concerning Francis' Birth (First Celano)</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Birth of St. Francis (L. Wadding)</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. Lady Clare</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Primary Sources</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The form of life given to St. Clare and her sisters</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Canticle of Exhortation to St. Clare and her sisters</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Last Will Written for St. Clare and Her Sisters</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A Prediction for Lady Clare</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Legend of Perugia</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. First Celano</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rule of Clare (Chapter 6)</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Celano's First Life (The life of the ladies who lived at San Damiano)</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The Canonization Process (Twelfth Witness)</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Celano's Second Life (Of the Sermon Francis Preached More by Example than by Words)</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Bonaventure Major Life the Inspiration of Clare</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Little Flowers (Clare advises Francis)</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Clare, the Bride of Christ (Francis, the Skillful Agent of the Groom)</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Signs of conversion in Francis' and Clare's relationship</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. The Canticle of Brother Sun</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. Lady Jacoba</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Our Lady and the Lamb</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Bonaventure, Major Life</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. First Celano (Francis' Gift of a Lamb to Jacoba)</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Death of Francis</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Second Celano</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The Last Visit of &quot;Brother&quot; Jacoba</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
c. The Mirror of Perfection
On the Food and Cloth He wanted
At His Death 139

d. Little Flowers
Consideration on the Holy Stigmata
(Fourth Consideration): 142

4. Little Flowers
How the Lady Jacoba Visited Brother
Giles 144

B. Biographical information 145

C. Lady Jacoba, Brother Lamb 145

D. Jacoba, The Friend of Francis 146

IX. Conclusions 151

Chapter 5

The Feminine Dimension of the Personality of Francis
in His Understanding of the Church

I. Francis' Use of Creative Feminine Terminology 194

II. Francis as Nurturer 198

III. Conclusion 211

XI
Chapter 6

Mary in the Life and Writings of Saint Francis

I. Contemporary Studies of the Mariology of St. Francis

II. Francis' Marian writings, Marian devotion, Marian practices

A. Mary and the Incarnation as seen by Francis
B. Mary the Mother of Jesus
C. Mary the Poor Lady
D. Mary and the Trinity
   1. Mary, The Daughter of the Father
   2. Mary, The Mother of the Son
   3. Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit
E. Mary as Queen of Angels and Saints
F. Mary as Virgin made Church
G. Mary as Mother of Mercy for Sinners and Model of Spiritual Motherhood
   1. Mary as Mother of Mercy for Francis
   2. Mary as Advocate

III. Conclusions
## Conclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. What is the Feminine?</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Francis and the Feminine</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Mary and the Feminine</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. The Feminine and Francis</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APPENDIX**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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**WORKS CITED**

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</tr>
</thead>
</table>

XIII
Introduction

I. PURPOSE OF STUDY

The study reviews the extant biographical information on Francis with a view to determining the place of Mary in his life and work. To what extent did his views on Mary correspond with those of his contemporaries, and to what degree and in what ways were his teachings on her original? The evidence suggests that his ministry to women was deeply affected by his views on Mary; similarly, his views on women were a reflection of his devotion to Mary. This paper will also examine the sources of Francis Mariology. Fourteenth Century Franciscans saw Francis as a model of Marian devotion. If this is correct, it is important to discover the source of Francis' understanding of the place of Mary and how Francis creatively used these insights.

This study will also examine the life of Francis of Assisi with particular emphasis on his interaction with women, their influence on his personality, and his views both personal and as a religious superior toward women. This is an important consideration because if Francis' understanding of women is flawed his view of Mary would also be flawed.

The role of the feminine in the life of Francis, both as a symbol of societal values and as religious symbol, surfaces in his contact with the world of the feminine and use of feminine figures. Did Francis' treatment of women reflect the attitudes of society, or to what extent did his behavior show an independent, even revolutionary, attitude toward women? Today, in an age when the place of women in the Church is a matter of discernment and sometimes painful discussion, this study of Francis attempts to demonstrate how one individual responded to the call of God and what part women played in his vocation.

The beginning of the author's interest in Saint Francis began at thirteen while reading an article in a World Book Encyclopedia on Religious Orders which mentioned the Capuchin branch of the Franciscan Order. The description of the austere lifestyle of these men kindled an interest in the Franciscan Order, especially in its more colorful manifestations, such as the Spirituals, the Fraticelli Movement, and the historical studies of the English Capuchin Father Cuthbert Hess.
It was this interest in the Franciscan Order that led to its founder, Saint Francis. It is not so much his personality which was appealing. Rather, Francis, with his deep faith, and his intuitive grasp of God's love for us, has proven to be someone whose identity is constantly evolving for me. Each of these contacts with him illustrated another side not previously discovered. It was striking that among the most complex aspects of his life was his relationship with women. This was made more difficult to analyze because of several factors, including ecclesiastical censorship, which would include the Medieval hagiographers' tendency to make "the saint ever more saintly," even to the point of suppressing information.¹ Even in modern times research may have been limited by a need to present Francis as without flaw.²

Pope John XXIII noted in his encyclical Pacem In Terris "Since women are becoming ever more conscious of their human dignity, they will not tolerate being treated as inanimate objects or instruments, but claim, both in domestic and in public life, the rights and duties that benefit a human person".³ Taking the words of John XXIII as a starting point, a study of Francis and women is useful in understanding how the feminine was valued by a creative individual as he grew in his relationship with God.

II. PLAN OF STUDY

Chapter one begins with a brief discussion of Franciscan literature as a means of evaluating the use of primary sources. Because of the stormy history of the primary sources, this paper begins with a brief overview of the Franciscan question and its implications for this study. This will include the development of "The Franciscan Question," which deals with the controversy about which sources are most likely to reveal the "historical Francis."

Chapter two lays the ground work for the study of the feminine with an examination of the period immediately preceding the foundation of the Franciscan Order, the era of Saint Bernard. The foundation of new monastic families initiated a new spirituality characterized in part by a creative use of feminine symbols. The chapter will begin a discussion of feminine symbolism in the spiritual literature of the High Middle Ages including its historical background.
It is necessary to examine this period in order to establish how the Franciscan use of feminine imagery developed from the era of new monasticism and to what extent the Franciscan movement was based on its own unique construction of feminine symbolism.

In Chapter three the primary Franciscan feminine symbol, Lady Poverty, is introduced. Using the information from the chapters on the Franciscan Question and feminine symbolism, Lady Poverty is examined in her many aspects.

Chapter four will deal with Francis' dealings with women in general as described in the primary sources. These sources narrate these anecdotes in the context of Francis' religious vocation and also examine the ministry of Francis to women in the context of medieval society's views of women. Francis' attitude toward women is examined in the context of his ministry to women. The restraints Francis put on himself and the possible reasons for his behavior are examined in this chapter.

Having established in Chapter four Francis' relationship in general with women, the next section reveals his relationships with the most important women in his life: Lady Pica, Lady Clare, and Lady Jacoba.

In Chapter three the use of the feminine symbol by Francis and his contemporaries. Chapter five investigates these images as a reflection of an aspect of his personality.

Having presented in the previous five chapters Francis' views of the feminine and his interactions with women in the context of his environment, Chapter six examines Francis' understanding of Mary's place in salvation history and the reflection of Francis' understanding of the feminine in his image of Mary, the poor woman; Mary, Our Mother, and Mary, Our Advocate and Francis' Mariology in the context of contemporary Mariology.

The themes common to the feminine found in the life of Saint Francis of Assisi will be reviewed in the conclusion.


CHAPTER ONE

THE FRANCISCAN QUESTION

I. ORIGIN OF THE FRANCISCAN QUESTION

The contemporary (up to 1343) biographies of Francis are the basis for this study. Because of the controversy which has surrounded these documents, it would be valuable to briefly examine them in the context of their historical critical value. In the 1890's, Paul Sabatier, a Protestant minister, studied the documents available on Saint Francis of Assisi in order to establish the historical critical value of each.¹ Sabatier held that the portrait found in the writings of Thomas of Celano and Saint Bonaventure was inaccurate because it has been knowingly distorted in the name of the Franciscan Order.² Sabatier claimed that Celano and Bonaventure were mandated by the Pope and the leadership of the Order to write their biographies and were thus under the influence of preoccupations of the Order to produce a plaster saint rather than showing the "historical Francis."³ For the true portrait of Saint Francis, Sabatier went to Brother Leo, the person held to be the author of the Speculum Perfectionis, an early biography of St. Francis.⁴

According to Sabatier the Roman Curia misrepresented Francis' ideals and estranged him from the Order.⁵ It was Sabatier's view that in his Testament, Francis tried in vain to protest against the distortion of his hope for a brotherhood based on poverty and simplicity. The result, in the eyes of Sabatier, was the tragedy of the last years in the life of Saint Francis in which he witnessed his Order being clericalized and devoting itself to scholarly studies and the acquisition of power.⁶

The publication of Sabatier's views on Francis gave rise to a vigorous movement of criticism and research.⁷ Undoubtedly, the valuable description in the Speculum Perfectionis and the Legend of the Three Companions, which were the main works upon which Sabatier based his theories, has withstood the test of time.⁸

The major weakness in Sabatier's argument was his insistence that the Speculum Perfectionis was written at the early date of 1227 instead of the now accepted 1318.⁹

Sabatier subjected the documents on Saint Francis to a
serious examination in order to establish the relative historical critical value of each of them. He noted that a gap seemed to exist between lines 67 and 68-73 in the Legend of the Three Companions. To explain this gap, he formulated the hypothesis that the texts to which scholars had access had been mutilated. As mentioned above, they, therefore, did not represent the original in its entirety. However, Van Ortroy's study has failed to convince scholars that the Legend of the Three Companions was not an authentic compilation of sources from early companions of Francis. 10

Father Van Ortroy answered Sabatier in his famous article "La Légende S. Francois d' Assise dite 'Legenda trium sociorum,'" 11 which subjects the Legend of the Three Companions to devastating criticism. Van Ortroy held that the Legend of the Three Companions was nothing more than a parody of biographies called legends, dating from the last part of the thirteenth century or even later. 12 When the term legend is used throughout this dissertation it refers to the medieval genre of legenda; for example, an account of the deeds of a saint meant for the edification of a public who would hear the account read to them. 13

Paul Sabatier answered Father Van Ortroy with an article titled "The Authenticity of the Legend of Saint Francis by the So-Called Three Companions." 14 In this article Sabatier states that the Legend of the Three Companions reflects an "authentic Francis," which is historically correct, and being "... without the cosmetic and establishmentarian touches of Celano and Bonaventure." 15

These articles were the source of the controversy known as "The Franciscan Question," centered on a critical evaluation of the Franciscan sources. In other words, it deals with the question: How does one find the "historical Francis" and which of the Franciscan sources are trustworthy? Which parts of specific sources can be trusted and which can not be trusted? This controversy did not have any victor. Studies regarding the Franciscan Question are marked by two distinct approaches. The first approach is an attempt to chronologically reorder the sources for the life of St. Francis. The second is an effort to reconstitute the testimonies of the saint's companions. 16

A distinction is made between official and unofficial works. Official legends or collections are written upon request. In this situation the hagiographer reworks his own
memories and observations, verbal descriptions of witnesses or written materials placed at his disposal. The unofficial sources are materials which may have either a long or short tradition behind them, but which have been neither developed nor reworked in the strictest sense of the terms. Fundamentally, the unreworked text should be given preference. The following categorization shows the status quo of the Franciscan question regarding official and non-official sources (or legends):

I. Official Legends
A. Thomas of Celano: First Life
B. Thomas of Celano: Legend for Choral Use
C. Thomas of Celano: Second Life
D. Thomas of Celano: The Book of Miracles
E. Bonaventure: The Major Life of Francis (Legenda Major)

II. Unofficial Legends and Collections
A. Systematically Organized
   1. Julian of Speyer: Life
   2. Legend of the Three Companions
   3. Bernard of Bessa: Book of the Praises of St. Francis
   4. The Mirror of Perfection
B. Not Systematically Organized
   1. Compilation of Perugia [Legend of Perugia]
   2. The Minor Mirror of Perfection
   3. The Collection, "Fac secundum exemplar"
   4. Actus of St. Francis and his Companions
   5. The Collection of the Little Manuscript

The three works composed by Thomas of Celano -- First Life, Second Life, and also the Book of Miracles -- count as some of the most important sources for the history of St. Francis, for foundational Franciscan history and for the development of the original brotherhood into a worldwide order. This recognition is relatively recent, but it is hardly contested today. From 1266, when it was removed from circulation, until the last century, Celano's trilogy on Francis remained completely in the shadow of St. Bonaventure's Major Life of Francis. However, from the beginning of the 14th century on a number of individual episodes from Celano's Second Life surfaced in various collections of legends by way
of oral tradition.\textsuperscript{18} 

The entire body of critical literature concerning the Franciscan Question up to 1945 stood either for or against Sabatier's thesis.\textsuperscript{19} This goes far beyond the question of whether a few sentences have been removed from The Legend of the Three Companions as Sabatier had thought. It concerns the methods used to arrive at historical truth.

The Franciscan Question centered on the revaluation of the original Speculum Perfectionis and Legenda Trium Sociorum which Celano used when revising the Vita Secunda. It was determined that the Speculum Perfectionis could not be the work of an individual, but had to be a collectively authored work of Franciscan provenance. Beginning in the 1950's German Franciscan scholars Cajetan Esser, Sophronius Clasen, and Lothar Hardick gave primary attention to Francis' own writings. This approach has been used till the present.\textsuperscript{20}

Thus, the image of Francis, based on his own writings, gives the original picture of the Saint. It can be used as a standard by which the legends are judged. From his writings we can observe, for example, that even though Francis had no master plan for the Order, he did envision its expansion and did, according to his abilities, contribute to its formation. He also approved of the Order's evolution from its beginnings to its juridical establishment.\textsuperscript{21}

Lorenzo D. Fanzo has developed the thesis that there are four approaches to the Franciscan Question.\textsuperscript{22} The first approach is foundational, while the other three deal with the relative value of "un-official Leonine" sources. In the first approach, the key elements of date, author, and the reliability of the source are essential. Is there a reason for the ordering of the sources in the Saint Francis of Assisi Writings and Early Biographies, English Omnibus for the Life of Saint Francis?\textsuperscript{23} The ordering is based on authorship and date of composition. First come those works whose dates and authors are known, followed by those whose author and/or dates are as yet disputed. For example, in the Omnibus the two biographies of Celano are followed by the Legenda Major and Legenda Minor of Saint Bonaventure, and all of those whose dates of composition and authorship are known. Last, in the Omnibus, is the Sacrum Commercium whose authorship and date are very much disputed.

According to modern historical research methodology, the most valuable source is always the earliest because it is
closer to the actual event.\textsuperscript{24} Although being by far the earliest (1228), it was written at a time of celebration when Francis was being canonized. It may be argued that it primarily states what Pope Gregory IX wanted to hear.

This will be demonstrated in the discussion of the writings of Thomas of Celano later in this chapter, as well as the analysis of Thomas' treatment of the last visit of Lady Jacoba to Francis as recorded in his \textit{Tractatus de Miraculis}. On the other hand, as will be shown, Saint Bonaventure in his works states primarily what the Order wanted to hear. Like many medieval hagiographers, Bonaventure writes to make his saintly subject more saintly.\textsuperscript{25} Thus the question remains: What value do the biographies by Celano and Bonaventure have as biography and history?

Related to this question another may be asked. If something is genuine, does that mean it is authentic? No. Webster's \textit{New Collegiate Dictionary} defines \textit{authentic} as authoritative, worthy of acceptance or belief as conforming to fact or reality. Genuine implies accordance with an original or type without counterfeiting, admixture, or adulteration. A genuine biography of Saint Francis would be one whose sources originate with information received from the contemporaries of Saint Francis. The same biography would be authentic if it conveyed a true image of the historical Francis.

It would be useful to look now at the secondary approaches to the Franciscan Question. According to Di Fonzo, the Franciscan Question seeks to locate the personality, facts, and thoughts (ideas) of the Saint; therefore, one is dealing on several levels when analyzing the sources.\textsuperscript{26} In searching for the personality of the Saint, one cannot ask more of a source than it is willing to give. For example, the end of \textit{The Mirror of Perfection} reads as follows:

\begin{quote}
Here ends the \textit{Mirror of Perfection}, which tells of the state of the Friar Minor, and in which the perfection of his vocation and profession may be seen accurately reflected.\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

This indicates that the author had no intention of writing a biography as such of Saint Francis. Instead, the intention was to mirror what the most perfect friar should be and what he would be like as reflected by the use of \textit{acta} and \textit{dicta} in the life of Francis, the \textit{acta} being his deeds while
the *dicta* are the words spoken by him.

One must realize when reading the *dicta*, that one is not always reading Francis directly, but rather Francis through Celano or Bonaventure or whoever wrote that particular biography. The *dicta* in particular, although authentic in that they do reflect the true thought of Saint Francis, are not necessarily written by the Saint himself. The author will use Saint Francis to convey a lesson that is valuable and that he considers to be important. Taking this method of inquiry one step further, the study of the Franciscan Question on specific texts comes down to the study of two sources: *The Legend of the Three Companions* and *The Legend of Perugia*.

II. FRANCISCAN TEXTS

It would be valuable to examine the texts which have played such a prominent role in the Franciscan Question in the context of modern scholarship. *The First Life of St. Francis* by Thomas of Celano was written in 1228. According to the Franciscan historian Kajetan Esser, Celano's book:

... eulogizes with great fervor Pope Gregory IX, who, as Cardinal Hugolino, was very closely associated with St. Francis and his work. Nevertheless, it draws a true-to-life picture of the beginnings of the Order, despite all the rhetoric of the learned author. It appeared at a time when the first enthusiasm barely let the inner difficulties of the developing Order show through. In addition, one should not overlook the fact that, in the prologue to this *Vita*, Celano expressly states that he would strive to report what "he himself has heard from the lips of the Saint or has learned from trustworthy and reliable witnesses." For this reason, his account merits more attention than has been accorded it in recent times, particularly since the appearance of Sabatier's thesis, which is still fundamentally unproven.\(^{28}\)

The work of Celano, like all Franciscan sources, must be placed in its medieval context to understand the controversy which surrounds it. Medieval biography is exemplary in nature.\(^{29}\) All of those biographical features which the modern mind expects to find, such as the subject's personality,
education, and family background, are lacking. The medieval biographer had a single mission -- to show the sanctity of his subject in as useful a way as possible. It was not unusual for the author to use a "parent book," such as the Bible, the Confessions of Saint Augustine, or the Vita Antonii. We find, for example, in the first two paragraphs of the Vita Prima, at least twenty scriptural borrowings, two overt allusions to the Confessions of Saint Augustine, and a formal citation of the Moral Epistles of Seneca.

Thomas of Celano must be understood in the context of his own mentality, that is the demands of the commissioning authorities, i.e. Gregory IX and the leaders of the Franciscan Order, and the expectations of the recipients.

The Second Life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano, was written at the request of the Minister General, Crescentius of Jesti. This was to be a supplement to what Celano had written 20 years earlier. It was based on contributions of new material submitted by those who had known Francis. It was written between 1246 and 1247. It is noteworthy that Thomas becomes much more outspoken concerning controversies such as poverty, relations with the secular clergy, and the interpretation of the Rule and Testament of St. Francis. Celano demonstrates an identification with the Spiritualist viewpoint.

Legenda ad usum chori, by Thomas of Celano, was written about 1230. This is a brief liturgical legendary of special importance for the biographical details it adds to the Vita Prima, such as the Seraph of the Stigmatization speaking secret words to Francis.

The Tractatus de Miraculis by Thomas of Celano is in fact a supplement to the Second Life. This supplement was requested by the Minister General, John of Parma. Scholars agree it was written between 1250 and 1253. A catalog of miracles grouped according to subject matter, it has been a popular source of inspiration for painters and writers. The most important sections deal with the stigmata, where Celano slightly alters his previous statements, and the account of the arrival of Jacoba de' Settesoli at the deathbed of Saint Francis.

It is here that we find Thomas of Celano most outspoken in his expression. He begins the Tractatus by describing what he considers a major miracle, "the fecundity of a sterile woman," an allusion, on the literal level, to the birth of the
prophet Samuel, but whose allegorical meaning illustrates Francis' giving birth to the Franciscan Order in the midst of a corrupt and maimed Church. Clearly Celano's style had confidently evolved from his overly "official" rigidity.

How correct was Sabatier in questioning Celano as a reliable source? Did the early Thomas of Celano reduce the complexity and controversial portions of the subject in order to make it acceptable to the Church and the Order? One may be sure that the first two lives of Francis by Celano were written, initially, to edify. However, modern research indicates that Celano was a careful and loving writer who was following the conventions of his day. In the two biographies by Thomas of Celano we find the specific biographical details by which Francis is best known: his heroic poverty, his stupefying humility, the eccentricities of his behavior which inspired embarrassment, shock, outrage, and, above all, awe, wherever he went. The existence of The Second Life by Celano, as well as the Tractatus de Miraculis, is proof that Celano was open to new information and allowed his image of Francis to develop.

The Sacrum Commercium, translated by the Omnibus as Francis and his Lady Poverty, was completed in July 1227. It was composed ten months after the death of Francis, possibly written by Thomas of Celano. It is an allegory which shows Francis winning Lady Poverty, the personification of a virtue treasured by Christ.

The Major Life of St. Francis by Bonaventure was written at the request of the General Chapter of the Order in 1260 and was approved in 1263. It is a work surrounded by controversy. The years since the death of St. Francis had been years of strife and controversy for the Franciscan Order. Its leadership desired a biography of St. Francis which would be a basis for unity in the Order. The very existence of the Order was challenged by controversies with the secular clergy. Francis and his ideals had to be presented in a clear and attractive way. Many felt the image of Francis was being lost in the various writings from the various parties in the Order. A complete and understandable easily accessible popular work was needed. The General Council felt St. Bonaventure was the ideal candidate to author the biography of St. Francis which would best fulfill the Order's needs.

The primary purpose of Bonaventure was to present in a forceful manner Francis as a peacemaker, thus showing how
illogical it was for Franciscans to quarrel. He recognized in his writings the sanctity of the first companions of Francis and the great representative of Francis' ideals, St. Clare.

Unfortunately, Bonaventure drops certain details concerning Francis' personality and life which might be considered undignified. He quotes all of Celano's passages in which Francis warns against familiarity with women but omits Lady Jacoba's visit to Francis. None the less the truth is served by Bonaventure, but the needs of the contemporary Order were also served in the *Major Life* by Bonaventure.

The *Minor Life* is a distinctly theological work. The Life of St. Francis is placed in a rigorous speculative structure. In spite of its shortcomings it is a work of love by one of the greatest Franciscan writers.

The *Major Life* by Bonaventure is a model liturgical work used for reading in the Divine Office reducing the information found in the major work of Bonaventure to seven chapters of nine paragraphs. It was written before 1269.

The *Mirror of Perfection*, probably dated from 1318, was written by an unknown friar drawing on the recollections of Brother Leo and the first friars as well as the *Second Life* of Celano. It offers no original information but it is valuable in that it is written from a friar's point of view, looking back to a mythical golden age of Franciscan history, telling the story of Francis in the context of the early Order.

The *Fioretti-Actus* was written by Ugolino di' Morte Santa Maria around 1320-1335 and rewritten by an unknown Tuscan scribe fifty years later. It is the most popular of all Franciscan works. It is a collection of anecdotes, usually of an extravagant nature, concerning St. Francis and his first followers.

The *Legend of the Three Companions* is a rustic legend. Brother Angelo has been put forward as the author. It has many first-hand anecdotes. The date of the work, which is also controversial, may be placed at 1246. Today the material in the *Legend of the Three Companions* is thought to have come from Leo, Rufino, and Angelo, three of Francis' earliest and closest companions.

The *Anonymus Perusinus* was written by an unnamed second-generation Franciscan. It was originally believed to have been written between 1275 and 1280. It contains no information of any scholarly import not found in the *Legend of
the Three Companions. However, there has been great interest in this work in the last twenty years due to the research of Pierre Beguin.\textsuperscript{56} Beguin concludes that the correct time frame for the Anonymus Perusinus is before 1246.\textsuperscript{57} It would thus predate Second Celano and would therefore be moved into the category of early Franciscan writings.

Not to be confused with the Anonymus Perusinus is the Legend of Perugia, so called because it was discovered in a fourteenth century manuscript now in the library of Perugia.\textsuperscript{58} The Legend of Perugia is the likely candidate for the Life written by Brother Leo, which is often referred to by friars of the 14th century. The work is an anthology of colorful, warmly told anecdotes from Francis' life. It is dated with great probability at 1311. The unknown compiler shares the rustic style of Brother Leo.\textsuperscript{59} It is a source for the Second Life by Celano. It is valuable in that it shows that Celano left out nothing of importance when using this source.

Several years ago scholars would have tended to conclude the dates of the composition to be 1305/10, but now most research verifies the date as of 1246. This shift in dates occurred when Di Fonzo published the Anonymous of Perugia in 1970, with extensive research showing that it in fact predates the Legend of the Three Companions. The Legend of the Three Companions is actually an expansion of the Anonymous of Perugia. Although Di Fonzo was convinced that the Anonymous of Perugia was written before the Legend of the Three Companions, The Treatise on Miracles by Celano and The Legend of Perugia, he could not justify an earlier date than 1262/70. Thanks to the research of Desbonnets and Beguin, the date of the Anonymous of Perugia was placed as early as 1241. Hence, it would predate The Treatise on Miracles, which means that both biographies predate The Second Life of Celano written in 1248.

This does not alter the fact that there is material in The Treatise on Miracles and The Legend of Perugia that originated after The Second Life of Celano. In The Legend of Perugia, the Intentio regulae is found in verses 66-77 and the Verba, a collection of Saint Francis' sayings, in verses 111-115. The authorship of these works is in question. Some authors give the credit to Brother Leo. The consensus of opinion, however, is that the Intentio regulae was written by Brother Leo, while the authorship of the verba is disputed because the dating of the manuscript has not been established.
Therefore, until the date of the verba is established, the authorship will also be in contention. If one notes that the Mirror of Perfection dates circa 1318, and that the statements attributed to Francis seem to be from a much later period, we may conclude that Brother Leo could not be the author.

The most controversial "Leo source text" is the Speculum Perfectionis. It is the crucial document of the "Franciscan Question." Discovered and published by Paul Sabatier, he claimed for it the subtitle "The Memories of Brother Leo." The most probable textual analysis establishes the date at 1318, not 1227 as Sabatier claimed. It was written at the height of the poverty debate. Brother Leo is "author" only in a general sense. Its unknown editor intended it to be "... a work compiled in the form of a legend following those things which the companions of Francis, Brother Leo among them, once wrote or had written ..."61

Basically, it may be said that the hotly debated distencion division between the official and non-official biographies has now been significantly relaxed. Because so much has been lost, both of the original writings of Francis and the sources of the lives of Francis, the "Franciscan Question" can never be conclusively answered. A chronological listing of the writings of Saint Francis' undated writings and a list of his writings which have been dated between 1224 and 1226 can be found at the end of the study at the end of the study. Obviously, this does not mean the question is of little value, because it is necessary to understand the different points of view in the various sources. The "Franciscan Question" will probably be debated endlessly, as long as scholars search for the historical Francis. AWhen all is said and done the Franciscan Question boils down to a search for the link between various documents that take us back to the original documents and those that are dependent on them."62

Or to put it differently: "When we relate the documents to the troubled circumstances of their birth, some of them lose a bit of their authority. Others that have been neglected as contradictory to the quasi-official testimonies suddenly gain a hearing, and all of them gain a new life that makes them doubly interesting."63

Sabatier is correct in that the battles of the Franciscan Question can be seen in a positive light. A discussion is
judged fruitful by the doors it opens or leaves open.

The following assumptions based on the discussion on primary Franciscan sources in this chapter will be used in the remainder of this study. Each author told the truth as he saw it. That is to say, each document has its own history. In some cases, such as Second Life of Celano, The Legenda Major, and the Mirror of Perfection, there is an ulterior motive to present a very specific Francis who supports a determined style of life for the Friars. The Second Life shows Francis involved in poverty, while The Legenda Major shows him as an ascetic man. 64 Each one reflects the mentality of its author, the circumstances of its evolution, the role it was to play in the history of the Order, and the reaction it displays toward certain events. 65 Each source, therefore, has value within the context of its own evolution. In the following chapters these sources will be used in the context of the particular insights they offer concerning Francis and his interactions with women and his relationship with Mary.
CHAPTER ONE

END NOTES


3Ibid, 368.


6Ibid.

7Ibid.

8Ibid.


11Ibid.


16 Ibid.


18 Ibid.


22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.


26 Marion Habig, ed., "Mirror of Perfection," *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies*, English Omnibus of
Sources for the Life of St. Francis (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1972), 1265.

27 Esser, Origins, 5-6.

28 Fleming, Introduction, 37.

29 Ibid.

30 Pelligrini, "Century," 333.


34 Fleming, Introduction, 39.

35 Ibid., 40.

36 Moorman, Sources, 127.


38 Fleming, Introduction, 40.

39 Moorman, Sources, 63.

41 Fleming, Introduction, 38.

42 Moorman, Sources, 121-127.


46 Moorman, Sources, 147.

47 Fleming, Introduction, 46.


49 Fleming, Introduction, 46.

50 Ibid.

51 Fleming, Introduction, 60.

52 Ibid., 53.


55 Ibid., 5.

56 Ibid., 18-20.

57 Fleming, Introduction, 53.


60 Ibid.


62 Sabatier, Life of Saint Francis, XLVII-XLIX.

63 Pattee, Letter.

64 Ibid.
CHAPTER TWO

THE FEMININE AND ITS SYMBOLS AS SPIRITUAL IMAGES

IN THE HIGH MIDDLE AGES

Because of its importance in the study of Saint Francis, this chapter will examine what is specifically meant by feminine symbols in the time of St. Francis. The chapter will also examine why feminine symbols play such an important role in religious imagery.

What was the image of woman as it appeared in religious and courtly literature, and what part did it play in forming social opinion? In asking these questions, the groundwork is laid for an examination of how the use of contemporary feminine symbolism reflects positively or negatively in the life of Saint Francis.

I. ANCIENT SYMBOLS OF THE FEMININE

It is noteworthy that the use of feminine images as religious symbols is present already in ancient history. Central to the use of feminine symbolism in religion is the image of giving birth as found in the image of the Goddess of Virgin-goddess.

The power of giving birth is a powerful symbol of creative dynamism as well as a manifestation of it, while at the same time not totally defining the feminine. The divine work of the life-giving Spirit is seen as investing matter and personifying it. The meaning of this power has been perceived as something well beyond human generation. Woman, by a duality which is unique to her, is made analogous to the generative forces of physical nature, and, as the noblest expression of it, recapitulates through the symbolism of her image the totality of nature's forces. The work of the gods is brought together in the womb of a woman. This image of cyclic renewal is an important religious symbol. In its Christian experience it will play a creditable role in the creation of the feminine in and for Francis.

A study of ancient history shows that goddess-worship was an important aspect of human religion from earliest times. Christianity did not add new symbols when it introduced into

22
its theology such images as "virgin" and "mother"; rather it sharpened and refined images that already existed in numerous forms in pagan mythology by merging them with elements peculiar to itself.\(^4\) Benko holds that reverence for motherhood and childhood are basic principles of Mariology, a principle which Christianity inherited from its pagan forerunner. Mariology, rather than being a "regression" into paganism, is a progression toward a clearer and better understanding of the role of the feminine in salvation history. Christianity did not simply adapt pagan ideas and cult practices, but transformed them.\(^5\)

II. SCRIPTURAL USES OF FEMININE SYMBOLISM
RESPONSE AND MISSION (Mary's response to God)

Scripture in particular uses feminine symbolism liberally to represent the human response to the initiative of God and particularly in the New Testament as mediator of God's life-giving power.\(^6\) This responsive dimension of feminine symbolism appears first in the prophet Hosea who describes the Covenant as Yahweh's espousing of the Jewish people, His bride, "So I will allure her, I will lead her into the desert. Before she comes to labor she gives birth."\(^7\) These two images bridal and maternal are repeated in Jeremiah 2:2 and developed into a lengthy allegory in Ezekiel 16:1-63. This symbolism is found in the New Testament also: John 3:29 the friend of the bridegroom; Matthew 25:1-13 the story of the wise virgins; Ephesians 5:25-27 husbands love your wives; Revelations 21:2,9 Jerusalem adorned as a bride. There are two pivotal foundations of feminine imagery: response and mission, which in the New Testament are found in their most perfect representation in Mary. Mary, however, is not a metaphysical appendage of God.\(^8\) There is nothing in Mary that she has not received because her maternal love is first of all God's love.\(^9\)

It is as a woman that Mary responds to God. For the Catholic Christian, Mary, Mother of Jesus, takes on by her faith the role of Spiritual Motherhood and becomes the Mother of all believers, the Mother of those who were saved and those who were free. Saint Irenaeus of Lyons explains the universality of this maternity in the following passage in a
very early postscriptural work. Looking at Genesis 2:16-3:15 and Luke 1:38, Iranaeus states:

Mary, the wife of a predestined man, became, through her obedience, for herself and the whole human race, the cause of salvation. Life is traced back through Mary by undoing all the knots in such a way that the first are untied thanks to the second or, in other words, that the second liberated the first. The knot that Eve's disobedience had tied was undone by Mary's obedience: What the virgin Eve had "knotted" (tied) by her incredulity, the Virgin Mary had unbound through faith.10

III. THE FEMININE IMAGE IN THE LIFE OF SAINT BERNARD

The use of feminine religious symbolism appears in a particularly prominent role in the spiritual writings of the twelfth century, especially in Saint Bernard.

Although feminine religious metaphors were not unknown in the Patristic period as we have seen in St. Irenaeus, their use in the twelfth century is influenced by affective spirituality which includes and promotes the feminization of religious language.

The influence of both scripture, especially the Song of Songs, and courtly love literature in the development of the new monastic spirituality, is well established. Both of these sources are recognized by both Jean Leclercq and Caroline Walker Bynum. For the purpose of this study we will accept these sources in the development of new monastic spirituality as givens.

In the twelfth century, a new monasticism arose. Principally, the Cistercians began to recruit adults, as opposed to older forms of monasticism which were dependent, for the most part, on child oblates, children "offered" by their parents.11 The new orders, for the most part, recruited adults primarily because of a greater desire for asceticism.12 These adults often had been students at the cathedral schools, as opposed to the monastic schools.13 Many were knights or nobles, or had some experience of life at court or manors. Sometimes they had been married.14 These monks and nuns came to their new life with a definite knowledge of secular love, either through experience or through reading courtly love
literature.\textsuperscript{15} Thus celibacy and chastity had been presented to them in an analogy of married love, which brings out the ultimate fruitfulness of celebrant love.

Leclercq states that more than any other monk, Saint Bernard employed the allegory of married love for love of God. Especially in his later writings, he speaks of marriage, weddings, and symbolic aspects of love such as embraces to describe spiritual union with God. Although the Saint uses scriptural language, specifically influenced by the \textit{Song of Songs}, he makes it clear that he is speaking allegorically of married love. Such love is chaste, and commitment is complete. It is permanent. Adultery is unthinkable. Everything is focused on the groom's "virtues."\textsuperscript{16} The bride loves chastely, she who seeks the one she loves, and him alone. It is only this sort of love which has access to intimacy. Throughout his sermons he draws a constant contrast between the "bride," her young maidenly companions, and other women. She alone shares her husband's house; she alone is found pleasing and is introduced to his chamber, which has been reserved for her alone, and she enjoys his secret presence. Everything pivots around the one and only bride. While it is true that the \textit{Song of Songs} is vague and does not leave room for clear and sure mention of the married state of the two lovers, Saint Bernard mentions the "affinity" of the habits and love of the two spouses \textit{more et amore sponsorum}, the marriage \textit{nuptiae}, the social contract of the bride and groom.\textsuperscript{17}

A. THE UNION OF CARNAL AND SPIRITUAL LOVE

Saint Bernard also draws a close parallel between "carnal union" (\textit{carnale connubium}) and the spiritual marriage (\textit{spirituale matrimonium}).\textsuperscript{18} This analogy is used on three planes: first, the love between three divine persons, then, the love between Christ and his Church, and the love of Christ for each member of his Church.\textsuperscript{19} The use of marriage as a theological symbol is an ancient one. In the Old Testament, sin is a violation of the covenant through which God has united himself to Israel in an enduring bond of love, which the prophets compare to the marriage bond. To the monk, the wedding feast is the symbol of the consummation of the union with God, which will take place in the coming of the Messianic

25
Kingdom. Saint Paul develops this idea in two passages: "I betroth you to one spouse, that I might present you as a chaste Virgin to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2). And again, "This is a great mystery, I mean in reference to Christ and to the Church" (Ephesians 5:32).

B. CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH IN MONASTIC WRITINGS

To Bernard, the ultimate end of Christian life was to achieve union with Christ. Marriage is a means to this end. If that end can be achieved in another way, then marriage can be dispensed with, and this state will be a superior one, for it will attain the supreme value directly, without passing through the medium of a carnal union, which is a symbol and preparation for the eternal union. Because virginity attains union directly, bypassing the means to it supplied by the natural order, the early Church Fathers referred to the virgin as the Bride of Christ. The virgin does not reject the value of marriage. He or she desires it more than others, but knows that the real value of marriage is in the supernatural sphere.

The monk is married, but it is a spiritual marriage to Christ, without the need of a human intermediary. He can not be satisfied with a symbolic union of Christ and his members. He must have a union that is real. The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is the great feast of the Union of the Church, the Virgin Bride, with her heavenly Spouse. Cleansed in the nuptial bath of the Jordan, she advances to meet her Bridegroom in the mystery of Cana, attended by the wise men bearing their wedding gifts.20

Adult recruitment fostered two new categories of writings. The first was a literature, which introduced the adult novice to spiritual theology. The second comprised spiritual writings influenced by the Song of Songs. This use of the nuptial symbolism did not originate with the new monastic orders, but can be found in Hyppolytus, St. Ambrose, St. Cyril of Alexandria, and others.21 The love of God was to be expounded explicitly in love poetry and books. "The assumption in this literature, specifically in Saint Bernard, is that it never says or assumes that the love which tends to union with God excludes an accompanying love between human persons, as long as it remains within the order of charity or 'charity in order'."22
Leclercq, in his book *Women and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux*, analyzes the letters which Saint Bernard wrote to women. He points out that these letters explore the affection between two human beings with hearts capable of love. They presuppose and teach a spiritual formation of love. Affection is to be acknowledged and not repressed. It is to be purified, lifted up, and transformed into a condition of renunciation. When affection exists between two persons, each gives and receives to the fullest, going beyond self and helping the other to do the same. Thus affective spirituality helped monks and nuns visualize their relationship to God in terms they understood.²³

One question which may be asked is what views of women can be found in what Bynum calls the feminization of religious language? Bernard saw Mary as the summit of womanly qualities. Affection for women could be a value for the monk, especially affection for Mary, the fulfillment of womanly virtue. This would lead to the greater use of feminine symbols.²⁴

The twelfth century was a period when increasing importance was given to Mary and other female saints.²⁵ The twelfth-century Cistercians, for example, felt a particular devotion to Mary.²⁶ Aelred of Rievaulx wrote "It is she who has given us life, who nourishes and raises us she is our mother much more than our mother according to the flesh."²⁷ Between 1215 and 1500, in contrast to the early Middle Ages, there were more female saints canonized than male saints.²⁸

She puts forth the theory that there is little evidence that the popularity of feminine and maternal imagery in the high Middle Ages reflects an increased respect for actual women.²⁹ John F. Benton agrees and notes that "This literature, in which women are frequently honored by poets, was written for men, in a man's world. It does not form an authentic respect for women as individuals."³⁰ The lives of saints might romanticize mothers, but there was in society at large no mystique of motherhood. Rather, the difficulties of marriage and the repugnance of actual childbirth were dwelt on in exhortations to asceticism.³¹ The males who had spoken in such glowing terms of women were celibates. Bynum tells us that this is what Bernard meant when he described monks as mountebanks walking on their hands: "Their life and their images invert the values of the world".³² According to Bynum to call monks women, as Bernard did, is to use the feminine as
a positive image of humility, while implying that such is not the opinion of society.\textsuperscript{33}

C. BERNARD'S RESPECT AND CONCERN FOR WOMEN

Leclercq does not answer Bynum's views directly in his book \textit{Women and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux}. On the other hand, he does demonstrate that St. Bernard was quite capable of showing real human affection and concern for women. However, Bynum brings up several valuable points -- specifically, that the use of feminine imagery does not necessarily presuppose a positive view of real women. This question will be examined in more detail in the chapters dealing with Francis' interactions with women.

D. REJECTION OF HUMAN FRIENDSHIP IN MONASTIC SPIRITUALITY

Bernard, Bynum points out, was well aware that the image of woman is not the same as the reality of women's lives. Writing about heretics, who went about preaching accompanied by women, he wrote in "\textit{Sermon LXV}": "To always be with a woman and not to have sexual relations with her is more difficult than to raise the dead. You can not do the less difficult. Do you think I believe you can do what is more difficult?"\textsuperscript{34} And again in the same homily, "He (Christ) will be your own mother . . . but a man will find his enemies under his own roof" (i.e. his actual family) (Matthew 10:36). "These are those who love not you, but the satisfaction they derive from you . . . and now hear what the blessed Jerome says: 'If your mother should lie prostrate at the door (to prevent a vocation to the monastery), if she should bare her breasts, the breasts that gave you nourishment . . . yet with dry eyes fixed upon the cross, go ahead and tread over your prostrate mother and father.' Bernard states in his \textit{Epistola CCCXXII}, 'It is the height of piety to be cruel for Christ's sake'.\textsuperscript{35} Isaac of Stella in his \textit{Sermon XXIX} explains, "I am not the son of my father and mother . . . we have no father on earth for our Father is in heaven and our Mother is a Virgin".\textsuperscript{36} This attitude of rejection of human relationships for heavenly ones begs the question: How meaningful and realistic was this use of feminine images?
E. USE OF FEMININE SYMBOLS BY MONASTIC WRITERS

Recognizing that these statements are inflammatory and insulting, Bynum has concluded that neither the somewhat sentimentalized maternal imagery nor the image of the mother who keeps her child from a religious vocation, as depicted in the religious writings of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, tells anything meaningful about the lives of, or attitudes toward, real women. Against this backdrop, Bynum suggests three characteristics of feminine imagery used by twelfth century male Cistercians in their writings, which differ at least in emphasis from that of the Greek and Latin Fathers. 37

Bynum states that the first characteristic of twelfth-century Cistercian spiritual writers was their use of the theme of Jesus as mother. 38 In this genre, Jesus -- the figure of authority -- is presented as maternal and caring while men are referred to as mother, and are described as nursing, conceiving, and giving birth. Many of these are authority figures, such as bishops and abbots. 39 This theme often links the concept of the Motherhood of God with the burdens of pastoral responsibility. 40

Thus, Bernard, writing on the Song of Songs, tells bishops and abbots: "Learn you who rule the earth . . . let your bosoms respond with milk, not swell with passion." 41 Often these maternal passages compliment a paternal reference.

According to Bynum, the second general characteristic is consistency of gender stereotypes, in which certain characteristics are seen as masculine while others are considered feminine. 42 Authority, judgment, command, strictness, and discipline are male, while gentleness, compassion, tenderness, emotion and love, nurturing and security are female. "Instruction, fertility, and engendering (as both begetting and conceiving) are seen as both masculine and feminine." 43 Furthermore, these stereotypes remain the same whether they are evaluated positively or negatively.

The third characteristic of the monastic use of feminine symbolism is that nurturing is much more prevalent than conceiving or giving birth. 44 In any event, both suckling and giving birth are primary images of union with God or dependency on him. The mother, through suffering and risking death, brings new life into the world and through the gift of her life's blood sustains that life.
This tendency is most clearly seen in Saint Bernard who uses feminine imagery to describe pastoral responsibility or discipline. Feminine imagery of this kind is used by almost the entire gallery of twelfth-century writers to complement the authority of bishops and abbots. These spiritual writings reflect the intense concern with the proper use of monastic authority. Monastic writers were both faced with new problems and supported by a new affective spirituality. Thus, Cistercian abbots were increasingly called upon to respond creatively to new administrative and managerial roles with qualities medieval men considered feminine. Cistercians in authority tried to combine authority with compassion and "mothering." This image is uniquely a male invention. According to Bynum, female writers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries did not use the idea of God as mother to join authoritative judgment with the need to nurture.

Bynum renders the following conclusion concerning these three characteristics:

Recent interest in women and their history led scholars first to study an aspect of male history. That is male conceptions of, and definitions of women and the female. However, a simple distinction was often lost sight of: feminine and woman are not the same. A woman is a person of one gender. Feminine may be an aspect of a person of either gender. Thus the attitudes of a man toward the feminine (as distinct from woman) may reflect not so much his attitudes toward his mother, his sister, and the women in his community, as his sense of the feminine aspects of himself.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the feminine imagery characteristics Bynum found used in the High Middle Ages by spiritual writers were:

1. The image of Jesus or an authority figure as mother

2. Consistency of sexual stereotypes, i.e. authority and judgment are masculine while compassion and tenderness are seen as feminine
3. Breasts and nursing are more frequent images than giving birth

Francis' use of feminine imagery will be discussed to see to what extent his use of feminine imagery is consistent with Bynum's conclusions, and secondly, to what extent Francis was an innovator. If one accepts Bynum's conclusions it might be possible that Francis was simply using the theological language of his time to communicate without any explicit intentions to create a specificity feminine typology. Clearly, one must examine Francis in his actual dealings with women, as well as his use of contemporary language and ideas.

As noted, especially in Bynum and Leclercq, there are different views concerning the meaning and the use of feminine symbols.
CHAPTER TWO

END NOTES


4Ibid., 12.

5Ibid., 15.

6George Montague, Our Father, Our Mother (Steubenville: Franciscan UP, 1990), 59.

7Ibid., 61.

8Ibid., 139.

9Ibid.


11Leclercq, Monks on Marriage, 9.

12Ibid., 10.

13Ibid., 11.

14Ibid., 12.


17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., 73.


21 Leclercq, Monks on Marriage, 37.

22 Ibid., 22.


24 Ibid., 22-23.

25 Caroline Walker Bynum, Jesus as Mother, Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 137.

26 Ibid., 143.

27 Aelredus Rievallensis, "Sermo XX, in Eadem Solemnitate II," Patrologia Latina, 195, 323 A.

28 Bynum, 144.

29 Ibid., 143-144.

30 John F. Benton, Trotula, Women's Problems and the Professionalization of Medicine in the Middle Ages (Berkeley: Medieval Academy of America, 1983), 19-42.

31 Bynum, 143-144.

32 Bernardus Clarae-Vallensis, Epistola LXXXVII, P.L., 182, 217 D.

33 Bynum, 143-144. See also Bernardus Clarae-Vallensis, Epistola CCCXXII, ad Hugonem Novitium, P.L., 183, 527 D.

35 Bynum, 147.


37 Bynum, 147.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid., 146.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., 150.


46 Ibid., 158-159.

47 Ibid., 167.

48 Ibid., 167-168.
CHAPTER THREE

LADY POVERTY AS THE PRIMARY FEMININE SYMBOL OF THE FRANCISCAN VOCATION

Chapter two discussed the new monastic spirituality of the twelfth century in order to show the development of the feminine image by early Franciscans. This chapter will discuss the use of the feminine image. As in the previous chapter the influence of courtly love literature and Scripture are given. The question is, in what ways did they affect Francis? We will explore how Francis and his biographers used the image of woman in new and creative ways.¹

This chapter will focus specifically on the Franciscan use of the feminine image, especially Lady Poverty. As will be demonstrated, Lady Poverty is the central feminine symbol of the Franciscan Order and plays an important role in the understanding of Francis' view of the feminine.

1. THE SPOUSE OF GOD AS SYMBOL OF FRANCIS' CONVERSION

Especially significant in this regard is the period of conversion in the life of St. Francis. Francis underwent a conversion experience that lasted from the fall of 1205, when he received the vision of Spoleto, until February 24, 1209, when he heard the Gospel "Take no gold or silver in your belts" (Matthew 10:5-14) read at Mass.² During this time he saw a vision which included a beautiful woman whom he described as the spouse of God.³

There were often encounters with the feminine when Francis sought refuge in caves and grottos, often seen by writers as symbolic of the womb. Raya, for example, states: "Mary is the mystic grotto wherein heaven came down to earth: where heaven became a grotto and a grotto became heaven."⁴

During this period of conversion it was also revealed to him that women with religious vocations would return to worship God at the Church of San Damiano which he was repairing.⁵

In these incidents of prayer and visions appear the first feminine symbolism to represent Francis' vocation. The vision of a beautiful woman, the returning to the spiritual womb of prayer, the promise of the spiritual help of women are
examples of the feminine which did not originate with Francis but developed out of historical, biblical, and theological sources familiar to the Saint, and which would have special significance for the Franciscan Order.

When Christ died on the cross, "He drew Lady Poverty to himself that He might die in her arms, stripped of everything, poor and abandoned." This quote from the Sacrum Commercium suggests the importance for the early Franciscans of allegorical love in courtly literature. It demonstrates the degree to which Franciscan spiritually developed around feminine images.

It would be useful at this point to examine the allegorical Sacrum Commercium Sancti Francisci cum Domina Paupertate. Kajetan Esser translates the title as "The Bond Between St. Francis and Lady Poverty." According to Conrad Harkin, this allegory represents a romance which has been raised to a spiritual level by St. Francis. Thus, the analysis of the Sacrum Commercium is central to the study of feminine symbolism in the life of Francis. John Rathschmidt notes "There is no more powerful picture of Francis than the romantic courtly love literature of Thomas of Celano which was succinct, perceptive, forceful, and appropriate."7

The Sacrum Commercium is a work of very early Franciscan origin. Six of the thirteen extant codices of the work are assigned the year 1227 as the date of composition. The following declaration is given at the end of these documents: "This work was completed in the month of July after the death of blessed Francis, in the year one thousand two hundred and twenty-seven after the incarnation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." While some dispute this date, there is no solid evidence against it.8 Among the possible authors is John of Parma, minister general of the Franciscan Order from 1247-1257. Father Luke Wadding, on the other hand, attributes the work to Bishop John Peachham, an English Franciscan, who was ninth English Provincial and later Archbishop of Canterbury. Recent scholars have suggested that Thomas of Celano should also be considered because of similarities between Celano's known works and the Sacrum Commercium.9

The Sacrum Commercium may be regarded as an insightful source to the study of the Francis' feminine image. The Sacrum Commercium is an allegorical work of six chapters. Its premise is that poverty is the basis of all virtues. Poverty was embraced because Christ was poor and because Jesus
preached on poverty more than any other virtue, i.e. "Blessed are the poor in Spirit," and "Take neither gold nor silver with you" (Matthew 5:3).

Chapter one opens with Francis seeking the one "whom his heart loved" without success. Francis, following the advice of two men, representing the Old and New Testaments frees himself of his possessions and goes to seek Lady Poverty.

The identity of Lady Poverty is a matter of serious difficulty and debate. Rathschmidt identifies the Franciscan symbol of Lady Poverty as the immaculate spouse of Christ. The image of Lady Poverty, as found in the Sacrum Commercium seems to support this conclusion. In chapter two, for example, Francis and his companions climb the mountain which is the home of Lady Poverty of whose beauty the Son of the most high Father became enamored. In chapter three, Lady Poverty praises Francis and then recounts her own story. She also praises Lady Persecution, her powerful friend.

In chapter four, Lady Poverty becomes extremely critical in regard to Avarice and Sloth. Avarice and Sloth are described by Lady Poverty as being capable of destroying the love of God and Lady Poverty whom Francis desires. Francis promises to reject them.

In chapters five and six, Lady Poverty invites Francis and his companions to follow her way of Poverty. Lady Poverty, no longer able to restrain herself, runs to Francis and gives him and each of his companions the kiss of peace. A banquet follows with Francis offering Lady Poverty a meal of bread and water. The allegory ends with Lady Poverty's telling the brothers to persevere in poverty.

The Sacrum Commercium is a lovely medieval allegory that look its inspiration from Francis' own personification of poverty as a lady with whom he had a romance and had wed, a story later recounted by Thomas of Celano in the Vita Prima and by the unknown author of the Legend of the Three Companions. This work, the earliest biography of Francis, was to have a profound influence in preaching and projecting the image of Francis the Knight in pursuit of his Lady Poverty.

It was the belief of Francis' early biographers, especially the author of the Sacrum Commercium, that it was only in the context of its chivalric culture of his time that Francis could be best understood.
Because feminine imagery is central to the cult of chivalric literature, and in order to understand how chivalry might have affected Francis' views on women and his interaction with them, it is helpful to examine Francis in his role as "the knight errant of Assisi 17 and the role of Lady Poverty as the symbol of Francis' vocation.

However, in what way is Lady Poverty the symbol of the Franciscan vocation? How does the spousal relationship develop and what are the values we find in her imagery?

As we have noted, the Sacrum Commercium is the first biography of Saint Francis. It is significant that it is in this book that Lady Poverty would play her most prominent role. Disappointingly, she only appears ten other times in other early Franciscan literature. Rather late in First Celano she appears in Paragraph 51 which states, "With all zeal, with all solicitude, he (Francis) guarded Lady Poverty, not permitting any vessel of any kind to be in the house . . . ."18 Perhaps, as noted above, Celano was constrained to write an edifying life of a saint in First Celano.

Here Celano uses Lady Poverty as the ideal of poverty. By enforcing the role of Poverty, Francis "guards" Lady Poverty. Paragraph 215 at the end of Second Celano, states that the saint (Francis) rejoiced and was glad out of the gladness of his heart, for he saw that he had kept faith with Lady Poverty. This beautiful description of the end of Francis' life is the last reference to Lady Poverty in Celano's books. If Celano is indeed the author of the Romance of Saint Francis and Lady Poverty, it is sad that he made so little use of her image in his biographies of Francis.

Another use of the term Lady Poverty is found in Bonaventure's Major Life. He relates the story of Saint Francis being greeted by three women on the road to Siena.19 He develops this same theme by telling us that the appearance of the three women indicated that Francis observed gospel perfection equally in his poverty, chastity, and obedience, although he had chosen the privilege of poverty for his special boast, calling it his mother, his bride, and his Lady Fair. All three views of Lady Poverty will be examined in this chapter.20

Saint Bonaventure also tells us that at his death Saint Francis was delighted and his heart overflowed with happiness; this (the fact that his superior had to lend him a habit)
proved that he had kept his faith with Lady Poverty to the end.

One of the most beautiful descriptions of the effect of Lady Poverty, mentioned only in passing in First Celano as "a more noble and more beautiful spouse than you have ever seen," the "immaculate spouse of God is the true religion;" and mentioned in Second Celano as "a most beautiful bride" is developed in the Legend of the Three Companions. The friends of Francis, while on the way to a banquet Francis is paying for, discover Francis is no longer walking with them. When they discover him missing they go back to find him totally immobilized by the sudden love of God. He reports that he could feel and hear only this overwhelming sweetness which cut him off from all other physical sensations.

His companions were amazed when they saw he was "transformed into another man, so they asked him, 'What were you thinking of? Why didn't you follow us? Were you thinking of getting married?'' Francis answered them in a clear voice: 'You are right: I was thinking of wooing the noblest, richest, and most beautiful bride ever seen.' His friends laughed at him saying he was a fool and did not know what he was saying; in reality he had spoken by divine inspiration. The bride is none other than the true religion which he embraced; and which, above any other, is noble, rich, and beautiful in its poverty." It is possible to see in this image an antidote to the frightening image of "a certain woman who was monstrously hunchbacked, an inhabitant of this city (Assisi), and who was a hideous sight to all." Celano, in his Second Life tells us the devil threatened to make Francis like her if he did not leave off what he had begun. The Lord countered this by strengthening Francis and telling him "what you have loved carnally and vainly, you should now exchange for spiritual things, taking the bitter for the sweet . . . ." Perhaps the sweetness of the love of Lady Poverty is the sweetness our Lord is referring to. The Legend of the Three Companions goes on to tell of two of the early Franciscans who, being taken for thieves, were refused hospitality and had to sleep outdoors covered only with the blankets of Lady Poverty. This humor is as good as any found in early Franciscan literature. In the Legend of Perugia Francis is shown begging in the early days of the order for the edification of the brothers and because of the "nobility and dignity of Lady Poverty." This statement may be interpreted
as a direct reference to courtly love literature, and specifically the concept of doing Lady Poverty a courtesy, that is, an act of sacrificial love. In the *Mirror of Perfection* we find the same story almost word for word. Also in the *Mirror of Perfection* is the statement by Francis that the brothers should sew his body in sack cloth as a sign of holy humility and a sign of allegiance to Lady Poverty. Thus, at the end of his life Francis directed his thoughts and those of his brothers to Lady Poverty. These references show neither chronological development nor creative progression. Rather, they are used to make rather general observations on the concept of poverty.

In order to understand Lady Poverty one must examine the concept of chivalry which permeated high medieval social consciousness as Saint Francis grew into manhood.

II. LADY POVERTY AND COURTLY LOVE

Very often the early biographers of Francis chose to call him a knight. Thomas of Celano calls him "the zealous knight of Christ." Saint Bonaventure also calls him a "soldier of Christ," "a new champion of Christ," and "the captain of the knights of Christ." In what capacity was Francis a "knight?"

Since the ninth century, noble warriors of the West had gone into battle almost exclusively on horse. They were called knights or chevaliers, a word from the French *cheval*.

Keen defines a knight as a man of aristocratic standing and probably of noble ancestry, who is capable, if called upon, of equipping himself with a war horse and the heavy arms of a cavalryman, and who has submitted to the rituals in which he has been "dubbed a knight." However, as Keen also points out, chivalry, an abstraction of chevalier, is not so easily defined. It is a word that means different things in different contexts and different times. Chivalry was associated with the warrior class, which defended the state and the Church. Chivalry was aristocratic because it was increasingly made up of men from wealthy, land-owning backgrounds, and by the time of Francis, it carried ethical and/or religious overtones.

Italy had its own distinctive type of chivalry. The main reason for this is that the Italian nobility was predominantly urban, unlike that of Germany or France. The Italian bankers and merchants comprised the ruling class and were also...
essentially landowners. Like the nobility of northern Europe, the ruling classes of Italy, fighting against both emperor and pope, needed to field their own military forces including their own horsemen equipped as knights. For this, they depended on the men of wealthy families. Otto of Freising, writing in the twelfth century about the cities of Italy, explains that:

In order that they may not lack the means of subduing their neighbors, they do not disdain to give the girdle of knighthood or the grades of distinction to young men of inferior status and even to some workers of low mechanical crafts whom other people bar like the plague from the more respected and honorable pursuits.

The Genoese chronicler Gaffaro tells how in 1173 the city councils, despite the labor and expense involved, created more than a hundred knights from within and outside Genoa. In 1211, the city created 200 more knights, and in 1285, 300 knights were created in Florence. It would, therefore, not be unrealistic for the son of a wealthy cloth merchant such as Francis to aspire to knighthood.

Only in rare instances was the future knight brought up in his father's house. Custom decreed that his father entrust him, while still a child, to his liege lord. In the house of this lord the future knight (starting at about age seven) was taught "to obey before he governs." Otherwise, he would not appreciate the nobility of rank when he became a knight. These youths were called pages, varlets, or valets. While performing the duties of a page, the boy received instruction in the arts of hunting, war, and courtly manners.

As a balance to military training, but also as an integrated part of this training, women prepared the future knight for his life in court. This experience of courtly life, far from being abandoned as the knight matured, played an important part in his later life.

"We shall yet talk this day in ladies' chambers," said the Count of Soissons at the battle of Mansurah, implying the central place of courtship and the company of ladies in the thoughts of the knight even before battle. Indeed, by the twelfth century, women were exercising great influence, and the knight sought to outshine his rivals with his manners as well as his deeds on the battlefield.
This role of women in the life of the knight was also seen as a religious role. One of the most widely read authors of the period, Andreas Capellanus, wrote:

I hold as certain that all good things are given by God and women. It is absolutely certain that men are nothing if they cannot drink from the source of good, that is to say, if they are not attracted to women. Women are the origin and source of all good and thus God has given them this great privilege. . . . it is manifestly clear that men should make every effort to serve women so that they might be illumined by their hearts, to honor what is good by their merits and actions. 42

That the ideas of courtly love may have influenced Francis is more important than whether or not they reflect actual social behavior. Modern scholars such as Maurice Valency, in his book *In Praise of Love*, stressed the literary nature of courtly love and points out that its mode of behavior is contrary to all the evidence available about relationships of men and women during the Middle Ages. "However," as he points out, "there may be some connection between literary forms and social ideas." 43 The ritual of courtly love at least in theory follows a well-defined social order. The lady is ordinarily superior to the knight socially and is usually presented as a paragon of beauty and virtue. The knight offers his song and service in hope of winning his lady's regard, her grace, and perhaps ultimately her love. 44

Celano, Bonaventure, and the Leo sources are in agreement that Francis was a "Man of Highest Ideals" even before his conversion. 45 Francis was always loving, courageous, and courteous. 46 The whole ethos of chivalry, with its implied promise of spiritual fulfillment, as well as its very real social advantages, would have had a great appeal.

By modeling the forms of love on those of chivalric service and homage, the poets made a change of unprecedented novelty. It was a truly moral creation, a type of love entirely separated from the reproduction of the species. Woman became a religion, that is an object of devotion. 47

The process of love is also rigidly conventional. The lover is struck at first sight by the physical beauty
of the lady. His passions are aroused at once and further stimulated by dreams in which she appears to him. He eventually declares his love, offers his service, and tries to prove his worthiness by his virtues, not the least of which is fortitude in dangerous ventures. The lover is restrained in his behavior and discreet in the conduct of his suit. Indeed the highest form of courtly passion is so refined that it refuses ultimate physical fulfillment. Since courtly love is an imitation, as its imagery and ritual show, of both divine love and its social manifestations in the ideas of honor and friendship, it is presumed to produce virtue in those who practice it. The cardinal virtues of justice, wisdom, temperance, and fortitude are all involved. Certain images always appear. The affair normally begins in the spring. Trees come to life, flowers bud, birds sing. The earth is warmed by the breeze and quickened by the rain. The lover . . . is in exile, but always in hope of mercy, grace, and reward which will compensate for his miseries and crown his service with unspeakable joy. 48

Thus the role of the lady is that of the source of comfort and pleasure.

In the conversion experience of Saint Francis is a reflection of the secular phenomenon of chivalry with its emphasis on youth, beauty, and generosity. In the Legend of the Three Companions (chapters four and five), and Celano's Second Life (chapter four), Francis appears as a popular leader of the youth of Assisi. Central to his life was his love of beauty. 49 Knighthood was not only possible but fitting. The Legend of the Three Companions reveals that Francis was gentle and kind and accepted by the nobles of Assisi as and equal. In Second Celano is found:

A few years later an Assisian nobleman was planning to start for Apulia on a military expedition which the nobleman hoped would bring him money and honors. Hearing of this, Francis was fired with the wish to accompany him and to get knighted by a certain Count Gentile. He prepared magnificent equipment; and, though his fellow citizen was a nobleman, Francis was by far the more extravagant of the two. He was absorbed in his plan and keen to set out, when one night he was visited by the
Lord, who, seeing him bent on honor and glory, drew him to himself by means of a vision. While Francis was asleep, a man appeared who called him by name and led him into a vast palace in which the walls were hung with glittering coats of mail, shining bucklers, and all the weapons and armor of warriors. Francis was delighted, and reflecting on what could be the meaning of all this, he asked for whom the splendid arms and beautiful palace were intended; and he received the answer that they were for him and his knights.

On awakening, Francis rose gleefully, thinking, after the manner of worldlings (for he had not yet tasted the spirit of God) that he was destined to become a magnificent prince and that the vision was prophetic of great prosperity. What he had seen spurred him on to start for Apulia and to get himself knighted in the following of Count Gentile. His glee was such that people, in surprise, asked the reason of his delight and received the answer: "I know that I shall become a great prince."

One day immediately preceding this vision Francis felt unwell on arriving at Spoleto: and thinking with apprehension about the journey, he went to bed; but half asleep, he heard a voice calling and asking him where he was bound. He replied, telling of his plan, Then he, who had previously appeared to him in sleep, spoke these words: "Who do you think can best reward you, the Master or the servant?" "The Master," answered Francis. "Then why do you leave the Master for the servant, the rich Lord for the poor man?" Francis replied, "Oh Lord, what do you wish me to do?" "Return to your own place," he was bidden, "and you shall be told what to do. You must interpret your vision in a different sense. The arms and place you saw are intended for other knights than those you had in mind; and your principality too will be of another order."

The images of knighthood, nobility, and warfare appear in this vision. God does not destroy Francis' ideal but transforms it. Francis does not reject his ideals but sees them transformed. The symbols found in this vision are further developed in Second Celano:
Now Francis was soon shown in a vision a splendid palace in which he saw various military apparatus and a most beautiful bride. In the dream Francis was called by name and enticed by the promise of all these things. He attempted, therefore, to go to Apulia to win knighthood; and after he had made the necessary preparations in a lavish manner, he hurried on to gain that degree of military honors. A carnal spirit prompted him to make a carnal interpretation of the dream he had while a far more glorious interpretation lay hidden in the treasures of God's wisdom.

Accordingly, while he was sleeping that night, someone addressed him a second time in a vision and questioned him solicitously as to whether he had intended to go. When he had told his purpose to him who was asking and said that he was going to Apulia to fight, he was asked earnestly who could do better for him, the servant or the Lord. And Francis said, "The Lord." The other answered, "Why then are you seeking the servant in place of the Lord?" And Francis said, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" And the Lord said to him, "Go back to the place of your birth for through me your vision will have a spiritual fulfillment." He went back without delay, for he had already become a model of obedience and, giving up his own will, he became a Paul in place of a Saul. Saul is thrown to the ground and heavy blows beget sweet words. Francis, however, changes his carnal weapons into spiritual ones and in place of military glory he receives the knighthood of God. Therefore, to the many who were astounded at his unusual happiness, he said that he was going to be a great prince. 51

The symbol of the beautiful bride shows the vision is not just a reflection of spiritual warfare, but of spiritual chivalry. The image is that of a spiritual quest. The knight suffers much to prove his love. Celano's insight is especially useful in examining Francis' conversion experience. This is not a rejection of knighthood, but a spiritualization of chivalry and a sacred exchange of Francis' ambitions for more elevated goals.

Instead of rejecting chivalry, Francis saw it transformed into a vision, to a symbol of spiritual conquest. 52
In First Celano 7 it is recorded that after the vision of the Immaculate Spouse of God, people thought he wished to take a wife and asked him, "Francis, do you wish to get married?"\textsuperscript{53} But he answered them saying, "I shall take a more noble and beautiful spouse than you have ever seen; she will surpass all others in beauty and will excel all others in wisdom." Then, with great insight Celano adds, "Indeed, the immaculate spouse of God is the true religion which he embraced; and the hidden treasure is the kingdom of heaven which he sought with such great desire; for it was extremely necessary that the gospel calling be fulfilled in him who was to be the minister of the gospel in faith and in truth."\textsuperscript{54} The "Immaculate Spouse of God," as Celano calls her, as seen in the vision, would logically, to anyone familiar with the conventions of courtly love, be recognized as the wife of the Great Lord. The key to understanding the vision of Spoleto is the Franciscan concept of exchange or commercium. The things of this world, such as honor, riches, and power, are exchanged for similar rewards in heaven.\textsuperscript{55}

Conrad Harkins describes Francis before his conversion as being at war with himself. Francis is characterized as "The pampered son of a rich merchant who never ate anything he did not like, who could live only surrounded by attention, who could not bear to look at the house of lepers from a distance of two miles without holding his nose." Francis then heard the challenge of the gospel: "If a man wishes to come after me, he must deny his very self, take up his cross and begin to follow in my footsteps."\textsuperscript{56} Describing this conversion experience in his "Testament," Francis declares:

The Lord granted me, brother Francis, to begin to do penance in this way: While I was in sin, it seemed very bitter to me to see lepers. And the Lord himself led me among them and I had mercy upon them. And when I left them, that which seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness of soul and body; and afterward I lingered a little and left the world.\textsuperscript{57}

Thus, one modern biographer writes:

... now he rendered humble service to the lepers with human concern and devoted kindness in order that he might completely despise himself, because of Christ
crucified, who according to the text of the prophet was despised as a leper (Isaiah 53:3). He visited their houses frequently, generously distributed alms to them, and with great compassion kissed their hands and their mouths. 

The attitude of Francis is all the more striking when compared to that of the French crusader Joinville when asked by St. Louis: "Which would you prefer: to be a leper or to have committed some mortal sin?" The honest knight reports, "I, who have never lied to him, replied that I would rather have committed thirty mortal sins than become a leper." To the people of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries physical deformity was particularly abhorrent. Francis, too was terrified of physical deformity. Thus, this self-conquest regarding lepers was the beginning of the insight that if Christ accepted suffering there must be some potential sacredness and nobility in suffering.

The followers of Francis were expected to undergo a similar experience of overcoming self-love called "leaving the world," or "renouncing the world": "In them, as in a crystal clear mirror, the observer sees reflected, true contempt for the vanity of the world." This conversion had to be a sincere turning away from worldly values. It is shown by the story found in the Legend of Perugia, of Francis' rejecting a postulant who gave his possessions to his family rather than to the poor. However, Francis was able to gain food in the village of Sartriano when no food could be bought by convincing the knights escorting him to beg for food. By asking for alms they gained with love what power could not avail.

For Francis, the knighthood was an end both possible and appropriate for the son of a successful merchant in thirteenth-century Italy. His courtesy and generosity showed his natural nobility. When his quest for glory was spiritualized, the "Lady" would fulfill the role ascribed to her in courtly love. It would be "Lady Poverty" who would teach him the courtesy of the court of heaven and inspire him to great deeds of chivalry for the glory of the kingdom.
III. THE IDENTITY OF LADY POVERTY

The concept of Lady does not easily lend itself to the concept of Lady Poverty. The follower of the feudal noble woman increased his status by his romantic pursuit. Francis and his followers demeaned themselves by begging and wearing patched clothing. It would be helpful to examine these apparent contradictions.

The title "Lady" implies a courtly usage which is completely at odds with "poor but beautiful," often used by Francis. Living at court, the Lady, is pursued by the knight, surrounded by poetry and music, and treated with courtesy and has nothing, it would seem, in common with the "poor woman." At court the Lady enjoys a privileged role, as the ideal of the warrior poet, who must win her over by song and feats of arms. For her the knight struggles against evil and injustice. For her he weeps and sings. While she is his reason for all life and action, she is also inaccessible. This courtly love did not exclude erotic love. It did refuse to be defined or carried away by it. The great discovery of courtly love was that love could be something other than consuming physical passion. Respect, consideration, and tenderness are words which give subtle nuances and colors to courtly-love. To be courtly was to be moved by the love found in a tender glance.

In the medieval world, however, land was synonymous with power. Spouses were chosen because of the land that came with their dowry. Marriages were arranged because of family interests; therefore, courtly love was not married love. The lady of the manor is the object of a loving cult that is secret, loving, and independent of her spouse. If her jealous husband happens to discover her secret, her relationship is destroyed by a society that cannot tolerate it. Thus, there is born a sense of mystery, as we have noted elsewhere. It was this courtly love language which Saint Bernard and other spiritual writers appropriated. This mixing of the sacred and the profane enabled the troubadour to attain a highly developed sense of beauty which makes him of interest to this study. It is for her that everything he does is accomplished. In a still more profound sense, everything is accomplished through her. One troubadour, Arnaud de Mareville sur Belle, proclaims, "Everything I do or say good comes from you, my Lady."
Francis possessed, with a rare depth and refinement of sensitivity and perception, the courtly phenomenon in whatever form it reached him. "Attracted by all forms of being, Francis sought everywhere the inner language of things, people, and himself." This is apparent, for example, in First Celano 2, where his love of clothing is discussed. It is related in the Legend of the Three Companions that, having turned away a beggar, who in the name of God asked for alms, he resolved in his heart never to refuse anything asked of him in the name of God. This is a first step in this new understanding of courtly behavior. Gagnan asks:

How can one be surprised at the importance he placed on the cult of Lady Poverty since it was through courtliness shown to the poor that he perceived the true meaning of honor and justice? Not only was the courtly mentality never again questioned in the life of the Saint but it also remained at the heart of his seeing and living. It was to make it possible for him to formulate the great spiritual perspectives of Franciscan life. If his practice of contempt for the world eliminated from his life an artificial and false way of feeling . . . it had not made him forget courtliness. This very important factor permits one to measure both qualitatively and quantitatively the degree he was bonded to courtliness. 72

Elio LeClerq agrees that it is precisely this detachment which allowed Francis to recognize what was of value in courtly behavior and to value it as a source of spiritual teaching. Hence:

He who called himself God's troubadour, and, as long as he lived, loved to sing the songs of the French Trouveres (poets of the North), he who, in his relationship of indefinable tenderness with Saint Clare, seemed to conform to this past ideal, even after he had become the rigorous and heroic ascetic that he was. In short, Saint Francis, with an exemplary, involuntary, and unselfconscious art, knew how to strip the great historic emotion of the Provencal movement (with which he was thoroughly impregnated) from its weight and its attachment to the earth and to woman, to such a point that he conserved only the rhythm exempt from all

49
sensation and materialism. And this emotion, thus spiritualized, was connected to a personal, a cosmic love of God and Jesus. And he did this in such a way that this Christian heritage became a source of extraordinary exploits, taking on ever greater vigor in the proportion that the emotion of Provencal origin spiritualized and became Christian. Becoming spiritual and Christian, the emotion assumed, more and more, a functional role and, detaching itself from the woman, who was its original objective, extended to all nature and became a psychic key giving access to its mysteries. 73

In this description the unique quality of Francis' spirituality emerges. Gagnan indicates that one third of the troubadours about whom specific information is available finished their lives in monasteries after a late conversion. 74 Gagnan points out that after their conversion, these men stopped writing. That is, they did not use their skills to write on mystical subjects. Gagnan suggests that the two sets of values, courtly love and spiritual love, were too contradictory to permit continued production. Gagnan holds, therefore, that contrary to tradition, Francis is a troubadour neither in fact nor in spirit and that it is precisely because of this that he was able to use courtly values to express spiritual values. He was not enslaved to courtly (worldly) mysticism. He was, therefore, able to go beyond the poetic to the reality that poetry could not express.

Thus, for Francis, the whole texture of courtly language became not only possible but real and even proper. Courtly language was reformulated with a view toward the eternal kingdom ruled by the King of the Universe. Lady Poverty and the courtiers (the poor) of the Great King all existed for Francis and brought about a new cultural awakening through Francis. By avoiding the formal establishment of distinctions, which of themselves would have brought a rigidity to his insights, Francis brought the Spouse, in the form of Lady Poverty, out of the classical cloister in order to give her a new cloister of all creation. Lady Poverty reigns over the court of the Great King and not just over the court of the Lady Poverty. 75

Francis, using the beautiful language of courtly love in this manner, recognized that intimate language can be used in pursuing the glory of the cross. Finally, Francis recognized
that the service of this lady is joy, a profound and total joy, a joy which becomes perfect when the courtly lover becomes himself the song of praise, totally consecrated to the worship of his lady.

Who, then, is "Lady Poverty"? It may be inferred that Lady Poverty is a symbol of the poor Christ. The idea that governed Francis and the first Franciscans was "The Poor Christ"; not the distorted, politicized poverty of the sects, but Jesus Christ, who in his earthly poverty identified with and loved the poor. The distinction, as Father Cuthbert points out, is of primary importance because it separates Francis from the medieval sects. The emphasis for Francis is Christ, not poverty. Lady Poverty is not a discipline or an external program because she is "the immaculate spouse of God."  

In the High Middle Ages abstract entities were often personified as women. At the same time, in the study of Sacred Scripture, historical and fictional women were also considered and treated as abstractions. An example of this would be Idleness who becomes a woman in Guillaume de Lorris' Roman de la Rose. In courtly literature we find the real women and symbolic concepts combined. Secular courtship leading to marriage requires a real woman. The troubadours or courtly poets were concerned with the conflicts of the knight and the forces, which create conflicts; these conflicts proceeded from the lady's being the incarnation of Love. In the typical courtly lyric, Lady and Love become virtually interchangeable. This was intentional. The poet incarnated love in the image of a woman and attributed the qualities he valued to that image.

Lady Poverty likewise became the image with many facets. Lady Poverty was made the spouse of God. She represents lady, spouse, and mother.

As will be demonstrated in the chapter on Francis and Mary, a case can also be made for Mary as an incarnation of Lady Poverty, the Poor Woman. Francis says in his Letter to all the Faithful that Jesus "though he was rich beyond measure, he and his holy Mother chose poverty."  

Francis may also have seen Clare as an incarnation of Lady Poverty. The editorial emphasis on the fact that Francis "always had charge of her (Clare) and her convent" implies a relationship not found with the "sisters" who were forced on him. The basis of this relationship was Clare's understanding
of the value of poverty. Clare tells us, "When the Blessed Father (Francis) saw that we (the poor ladies of San Damiano) had no fear of poverty, hard work, trial, shame, or contempt of the world, but instead regarded such things as great delights, moved by compassion he wrote a form of life for us . . . ."81 "Afterward he (Francis) wrote a form of life for us, especially that we always persevere in holy poverty."

Clare also wrote, "While he (Francis) was living he was not content to encourage us with many words and examples to the love of holy poverty and its observance, but he gave us many writings that, after his death, we would in no way turn away from it."82 It is because of her courageous defense of poverty that Armstrong and Mooreman agree that Clare's greatest contribution to Franciscan tradition and spirituality was her untiring defense [sic] of the charisma of poverty.84

It is noteworthy that the keystone of this relationship was an emphasis on poverty, which Francis had communicated to Clare and the poor ladies. After the death of Francis, Clare became, because of her relationship with him and her individual strength of character and judgment, the symbol for the Church of Franciscan evangelical poverty.85 Her loyalty to Francis' ideal spread quickly and was recognized by the early Franciscans who styled her "The perfect reflection of St. Francis in the observance of evangelical perfection."86 Cuthbert points out that had Clare been less secure in her vocation, less a mistress of its significance, or less possessed by its purpose, she might have been blamed for setting out on a path untrodden by any woman.87 Thus, in her journey on the path of poverty, we see in Clare a reflection of Lady Poverty:

Brother Stephen used to say that the Blessed Francis would never be intimate with any woman nor would he accept familiarity from any of them. Saint Clare was the only one for whom he showed any affection. But when he spoke to her or about her he would never use her name, but called her simply "Christiana." He always had charge of her and of her convent. Nor would he ever allow any other convent to be made, although during his lifetime other houses were in fact founded by the influence of others. And when Saint Francis heard that the women who lived in these convents and were called "Sisters," he was greatly disturbed and is believed to have exclaimed:
"God has taken away our wives, and now the devil gives us sisters." Now the Lord Ugolino, Bishop of Ostia, who was Protector of the Order, loved these sisters very dearly. One day he said to Francis as he was leaving his presence: "My brother, let me commend these ladies to you." Then Saint Francis, with a merry look, replied: "That's right, Father, in the future they shall not be called 'lesser sisters', but 'ladies', as you now term them in commending them to me." And from that day they were known as "ladies", not "sisters".

Francis' special relationship with Clare was based on Clare's understanding of the charisma of poverty. The image of poverty as lady did not exclude other feminine images. Lady Poverty manifested herself not only as lady, but as spouse and mother.

A. LADY POVERTY AS SPOUSE

Having examined Lady Poverty both in her similarities to the Lady of Chivalry and as a spiritual symbol, it would be useful to look at Lady Poverty as spouse or bride and as mother. Dominique Gagnan claims that historians have failed to grasp the significance of this first story which Saint Francis told to Innocent III when the Pope hesitated to approve the Franciscan Order:

A poor but beautiful woman lived in a desert. A king married her and gave her many sons. When they were grown the woman sent them to the King who recognized them.

The image of spouse reflects Francis' emphasis on God and God's effect on the spirit which leads to spiritual maternity. The images of spouse and mother, which reveal rather than demonstrate, are vitally important to understanding the Franciscan charisma and can hardly be determined or rephrased through conceptual language. Francis recognized "The Parable of the Woman in the Desert" and the essential continuity between Christian sonship and material maternity, a conformity he wished to unite in Franciscanism. The very way in which he conceived his role as founder reveals this desire. Preferring to reserve for God alone the symbolism of
paternity, he not only appropriated for himself the symbolism of maternity but also described this maternity with the same image of giving birth he used to signify the maternity of the Virgin. 91 We should note in passing that this analogy between Francis and the Virgin probably constituted the structural underpinning of Celano's interpretation of the parable. The biographer identified Francis with the woman in the desert, wife of the great king. It was Francis whom he (God) chose to be the "mother" of his regenerative work. Francis conceived his role as one of giving birth to sons as handsome as their father and of bringing them up, of teaching them the laws of combat, then of sending them to their proper lodging, the court of the kingdom. Francis, according to Gagnan, is this "mother source of the sons of God; a mother of gods, be they saints or heroes; mother of the only free men in history, the only men capable of acceding to the fullness of the creative design concerning humanity." 92 Without her, the desert would be merely desert, a diametrical opposite to the kingdom, an absurd chaos totally void of meaning. But in the desert, which is her abode, she gives birth; she gives life to royalty; and this birth manifests, in this place, the reality of time and space, and makes the meaning of these realities intelligible. 93

B. FRANCIS AS LADY POVERTY

It would be valuable present an incident in the life of Francis where the virtues became visible:

I will narrate in a few words something that is of doubtful interpretation but most certain as regards the fact. When the poor man of Christ, Francis, was hurrying from Rieti to Siena to find a remedy for his eye trouble, he crossed a plain near the town of Campiglia in the company of a certain doctor deeply attached to the order. And behold, three poor women appeared beside the road when Francis was passing. They were all so similar in stature, age, and appearance that you might think that a threefold matter had been perfected by a single form. When Francis approached, they reverently bowed their heads and praised him with this new greeting: "Welcome," they said, "Lady Poverty." Immediately the saint was filled with exquisite joy, in as much as there was
nothing in him that he would rather have men salute than what these women had chosen. And at first Francis thought they were really poor women and he turned to the doctor who accompanied him and said: "I ask you, for God's sake, give me something that I might give it to these poor women." Very quickly the doctor got out some money and leaping from his horse, he gave some to each of the women. They, therefore, proceeded a little farther along their way, and when the brothers and the doctor looked around immediately, they saw that the plain was completely empty of any women. They were greatly surprised and they then considered the happening among the miracles of the Lord, knowing that these were not women who had flown away more quickly than birds.\textsuperscript{94}

This is not a fantasy or a dream but a vision in broad daylight on the road. To mark clearly its historical basis, after affirming its incontestable authenticity, Celano established its time and place precisely and underscored the presence and role of witnesses. Celano emphasized the reality of the event by the witness of the doctor and by physical details such as the doctor leaping from his horse and the surprise of Francis and the doctor. This encounter leaves Francis and the doctor shocked and confused.

This episode obviously threw Celano into confusion. He remarks at the beginning of the chapter, "I will narrate in a few words something that is of doubtful interpretation but most certain as regards the facts.\textsuperscript{95}

Gagnan remarks that Celano, "usually so very careful in matters of logic, the writer who never fails to explain the actions and words of Francis with comparisons drawn from Holy Scripture or the writings of the Church Fathers, limits himself" to the basic facts.\textsuperscript{96} The fact which silenced even Celano is that feminine symbols have become real women on the road to Siena.

Accepting the interpretation by Saint Bonaventure that these women symbolize Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience.\textsuperscript{97} Nothing comparable even occurred to Bernard or Dominic. This is the feminine symbol seen with the eye and heard with the ear. The feminine symbol for Francis was no longer simply an intellectual concept. In fact, Gagnan noted that Francis was not "literary." When Francis started out he was not looking for the "spiritual spouse" of Saint Gregory, nor was he aware

55
of the precise and detailed image of her found in the 86 sermons of Saint Bernard. The origin of the feminine symbol in Francis' life, the beautiful bride, was connected to two other images, that of mystic king and knight, which appear in his initial Dream of Spoleto, in which the king spoke to him as he was shown both the bride and military arms. The image of the feminine for Francis was the one of courtly love raised by God in a vision to represent spiritual conquest and spiritual love.

What Francis received symbolically, he transmitted symbolically. People thought he wanted to marry and asked him: "Are you thinking of taking a wife, Francis?" He answered, "I will take the most beautiful and most noble wife you have ever seen. Superior to the others by her beauty, she surpasses them in wisdom." In fact, she whom he had chosen as the guide of his religious life, is indeed the immaculate Spouse of God. This image of Lady Poverty as spouse is one rich in meaning.

A number of modern Franciscan authorities have examined the process of the development of feminine imagery in the life of Saint Francis. It would be useful here to examine their research, especially the work of Dominique Gagnan. Gagnan believes the concept of spouse is the beginning point of Francis' struggle with obstacles impeding his journey to the Father. Gagnan also holds that this nuptial imagery had developed since Bernard, and especially holds Innocent III responsible for its increased popularity. Whatever the source, Francis was to make Lady Poverty as spouse something which reflected his own unique spiritual insights.

Gagnan holds that the image of spousal relationship owes its basis not so much to courtly poetry as to biblical imagery, especially the Song of Songs. The image was understood in four different ways: historical, allegorical, theological, and analogical. It applied accordingly to nuptial marriage and the legitimate wife, the marriage of Christ and the Church, of God and the just Soul, and of the Word of God and human nature. The literal sense is the foundation on which the allegorical story is based. Ambrose, Jerome, Saint Hilary, Rupert of Deutz, all using Psalm 127 as a source, develop the image of spouse into a theological symbol. Saint Augustine, writing on the Gospel of John, and Peter Lombard, in his comments on
Psalm 128, also use the same image. Bruno d'asti uses both the image of spouse from the Song of Songs and the image of the strong woman found in the Book of Proverbs. He develops the concept of the splendor of the spouse sought by Solomon.

Gagnan's study traces this spousal imagery to Genesis 2:24: "This is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife and they become one flesh." The whole book of the prophet Hosea is based on this spousal relationship. Francis was faithful in his writings to the traditional use of spouse which Gagnan finds in patristic writings.

Gagnan believes that Francis saw himself as the spouse whose human nature was progressively brought to conform to the cross by means of spiritual nuptials. No one possesses God unless he is possessed by God, unless God is loved above all and is loved in a spousal relationship. No one is loved who is not adopted as son in sanctifying grace.

Bonaventure describes Francis as a man who burned with "a love worthy of the seraphim." Gagnan suggests that courtly imagery would only have obscured the reality of Francis' experiencing the reality of the three virtues Francis meets on the road to Siena. Father van Asseldonk concluded that Francis did not take Poverty as his spouse but as his lady, as she was already spouse of the Lord.

Francis grasped that the whole dynamism of courtly romantic love was a reflection of the perfect love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

What is so striking is that Francis renewed this use of effective language at a time when, according to John Baswell, negative attitudes toward sexuality, at least among the religious, probably increased.

The spousal relationship is one of total devotion of the soul to God. Bernard tells us "Love is all-sufficient for itself. Whithersoever love comes, it subjugates and renders captive to itself all other affections. Consequently the soul that loves knows nothing else but love . . . it simply loves and knows nothing. Such is the strength of this bond that it overcomes the most intimate union [parent and child] which nature forms . . . ." Gagnan holds that too many references to spouse fill the early life and writings of Francis to doubt the effect of this imagery on his spirituality. In fact, he notes, if all direct references were eliminated to spouse, there would still be
numerous implied references. In other words, the spirituality of Francis is based on "spousal logic." Bonaventure developed this theme for all Franciscans in his *Major Life*:

"Jesus Christ crucified always rested like a bundle of myrrh in the bosom of Francis' soul and he longed to be transformed into him by the fire of ecstatic love." We read in *Second Celano* 94:

Although the Man of God, Francis, was exiled from the Lord while in the body, he strove constantly to have his spirit present in heaven . . . . His whole soul thirsted after Christ and he dedicated not only his whole heart but his whole body as well to him . . . He always put something between himself and the bystanders, lest they should become aware of the Bridegroom's touch . . . Indeed, that he might make his whole being a holocaust in many ways . . . .

And in *Second Celano* 165, we read:

With respect to the world rulers of this darkness, he used it as a field of battle; with respect to God, he used it as a very bright image of his goodness . . . He rejoiced in all the works of the hands of the Lord and saw behind things pleasant to behold, their life-giving reason and cause. In beautiful things he saw beauty itself; all things were to him good. Bonaventure, making allusion to the symbol of the seraphim, develops the meaning of spouse: Prayer was a delight to this contemplative who had already become a fellow citizen of the angels and who, making the rounds of the heavenly mansions, sought with burning desire, that Beloved from whom he was separated only by the wall of the flesh.

Thus Lady Poverty as spouse symbolizes for Gagnan the desire for God and the feeling of separation which Francis felt. Gagnan tells us that Francis had chosen the "Spouse of God," who is superior in wisdom, as the guide of religious life.

In the Song of Songs 4:8, is found "Come from Lebanon, my promised bride." This bride was sought by Francis, according to Gagnan, because she was beautiful, wise, noble and loved by God, the Master of the Universe. Celano quotes Francis in
First Celano 7, "I shall take a more noble and more beautiful spouse than you have ever seen. She will surpass all others in beauty and excel all others in wisdom." There is no equivocation over the one Francis has chosen as his guide in religious life. She is the Immaculate Spouse of God. From that moment, he tramples the goods of this life and leaves his family. This vision of spouse which compelled Francis to give a bill of divorce to this world, leads him to experience the Cross of San Damiano from which Francis receives a visit of Christ and is touched by grace. The words from that cross which will later be impressed in his flesh, are first impressed on his mind. He is frightened and stupefied. Henceforth the cross is always before his eyes and tears constantly wash his face. The cross was his foremost companion. The way of the cross was fully rooted inside him.122

Gagnan holds that the theme of a spousal relationship originates not so much in romantic imagery as in biblical inspiration, especially the Song of Songs. In this he sees a strong patristic influence in the life of Francis.123

Gagnan emphasizes that when Francis spoke to Innocent III, he carefully crafted his description of the woman who was poor but beautiful. Everyone listening would have been familiar with the phrase from the Song of Songs, "black but beautiful." The inference is too obvious for the curia to overlook the commentary on the Song of Songs with its explanation of spousal imagery.124

Bernard, in his "Sermon on the Canticle of Canticles XXVIII," clearly shows that the darkness of the bride refers to the poverty of Christ; that it was necessary for the splendor of God to be darkened in order to give life to the flesh.125 It was necessary that the most beautiful Child of Man lose his brightness in the passion in order to illuminate the children of men. It was necessary for Christ to be disfigured and covered with pallor so that men might be enlightened. While the senses might perceive Christ as black, faith shows he is white and beautiful. He is black only to those without spiritual sense. The centurion, a man of faith, cried out, "Surely this was the Son of God."126

Saint Paul developed this same theme speaking of the splendor and richness and wisdom of God. In the nuptials of the cross, therefore, the wisdom of God is espoused. Human nature is espoused by God who makes himself dark in order to
purify the flesh and liberate us from slavery. Gagnan notes that the use of the word "but" in "black but beautiful" indicates the allegorical sense of the story which is a passing from desert to kingdom.¹²⁷

The Poor Lady engendered Truth, Light and Life in and through the faith of the Church.¹²⁸ Christ's own poverty engenders in the heart of man conformity with salvation. It gives birth to a royal kingdom. Lady Poverty is not God but a means given by God enabling Francis to follow the Poor Christ in a most perfect manner.¹²⁹

With logic appropriate to the spousal symbolism he adopted, Francis described the elevation of this natural poverty through the images of dowry. The brothers' portion, as he calls it in the sixth chapter of his Second Rule, the dowry of Lady Poverty, is not received at the time of the wedding but is rather a hope which works through time by means of a promise. Thus Francis expected the dowry of Lady Poverty not in this life but in the next.

For Francis the relationship with Lady Poverty as spouse was not an end in itself, but led to an expanding and fruitful end where Lady Poverty is seen as spiritual mother.

C. LADY POVERTY AS MOTHER

The spouse becomes mother to those who pursue her with passion. Because she is queen, she remembers her sons in the resemblance of the King, her Spouse. She makes these new sons into the poor of Christ. She makes of them wise men of the cross. This recreation is a rebirth of water and the Spirit which the royal seraphim symbolize. These sons are pilgrims and strangers in the secular kingdom. Their whole nobility consists of fidelity to the virtues of this mother to whom they are totally attached, and they have for their original guide her motherly education. It is she who leads them along the royal way.¹³⁰ Thus it is of the utmost importance to become sons of this wisdom and to remain faithful to it. In order to do this, the saint recommends to his brothers two complementary and interdependent actions: practice poverty and practice it in a prayerful spirit.

The Friar was to rid himself of all earthly inheritance according to the classical vow of poverty. But Francis insisted that once the brother had accomplished this act that he remain a perpetual witness to poverty. "I wish," he said,
"that my brothers prove themselves to be sons of one Mother and that if anyone ask them for a tunic or a cord or anything else, the other should give it to him in generosity."\(^{131}\)

Only in the saving power of the poor Christ is the source of the power of poverty. Only this royal poverty permits the spouse to become mother.\(^{132}\)

IV. FRANCIS' IMAGE OF THE FEMININE IN ITS CULTURAL CONTEXT

Out of respect for the power of God the Father, Francis refused to give the title of father to any superior, but he recognizes the maternity of the faithful soul. Gagnan suggests that the image of the mystical marriage is of ancient usage which is brought to the medieval cultural heritage as the archetype of Christ through the typology of the Virgin Mother:\(^{133}\)

The historic interventions of God in Jewish epics were to realize the myth of regeneration by manifesting the integration of history in creative love revealed as absolutely unique and omnipresent. Addressing himself both in time and space to the worldly men of history, God demonstrates to men his complete power over creation and thus the integral connection of history to his creative will . . . .\(^{134}\)

Francis, with his intuitive orthodoxy and creative ability, recognized himself in the Woman of the Apocalypse (the woman in the desert) who had been raised up and protected from evil by the loving hand of Christ the King.\(^{135}\) Worn out with his austerities, Francis returned to Christ the sons Christ had given to him.

It is in the Book of the Apocalypse that the maternal work is described in the most grandiose fashion, connecting the different biblical citations which deal with cosmic maternity.

Because the poor woman lives in Christ, she scorns the wealth of the world.\(^{136}\) In this passage, the author describes the terrible primordial combat in which the victory of Christ and his army over the forces of the devil were realized. The woman had a refuge beyond the desert. The woman in the refuge
of the desert gives birth to sons who, with the first born son, have become heirs to the kingdom. Her sons are knights of the absolute who have become pilgrims on their way to the Royal Jerusalem. The representation of the woman as Church, soul, and sacred humanity is now familiar to us.\textsuperscript{137}

The woman who will now give birth is both fertile and radiant with truth. Richard of Saint Victor used this imagery of giving spiritual birth when he described the woman whom grace has impregnated through faith. She entered into a period of gestation through good will and engendered faith through good works. One speaks of giving birth when the baby sees the light of day.\textsuperscript{138}

The same theme is developed by Rupert of Deutz in his commentary on the Gospel of Saint John, "Because He (Christ) who renews the human race will be called New Man and will obtain the new kingdom for the entire world . . . . . That is why the beloved Virgin engenders salvation for all and is completely the mother of all."\textsuperscript{139} Francis reflects this traditional theme in a new way by applying the Marian image to himself.

"When you see a poor man, this is the image of the Lord and his poor Mother you have before your eyes."\textsuperscript{140} He recognized in all poor men the son of the Lady who was poor. Francis chose to be poor as Christ and his Mother who chose poverty.\textsuperscript{141} Thus in sufferings Francis saw Mary as a model of Lady Poverty.

He recognized the poor but beautiful woman as Mary and recommends to all who desire to follow him that she become their mother.\textsuperscript{142} Finally, when he wished to express the birth of the Order, he thought of Mary as he set up the first Franciscan community around the church he himself repaired, a church dedicated to Mary, the poor Virgin. Celano notes in Second Celano 18:

It is not without a prophetic inspiration of divine disposition that the place was called Portiuncula which was to fall to the lot of those who desired to own nothing in the world. For there was built a church of the Virgin Mother who merited by her singular humility to be, after her Son, the head of all the saints, and it is in that church that the Order of Friars Minor was born.\textsuperscript{143}
In Francis' parable the woman has withdrawn to the desert where she engenders the other sons comparable to the First. It is the time of the Church which, persecuted by the devil, withdraws into the unique concern of divine things, with grace aiding their access to the supernatural. Gagnan notes that the spouse of Christ is united intimately with him in the work of the cross. This woman is also the spouse of those wise men in the world who, following Solomon, languish with love for her, and when they are faithful to her, she unites with them and gives them birth in the Kingdom of Truth.\textsuperscript{144}

Francis' well-known devotion to the Nativity and his creation of the Nativity scene is reflected in his seeing Lady Poverty, who gives spiritual birth to those who love her in the Kingdom of God. This is a reflection\textsuperscript{1} of Francis' devotion to the Mary, the poor Mother of the poor Christ.

Numerous primary Franciscan sources have been cited which make use of feminine symbolism, specifically Lady Poverty. Contemporary Franciscan writers, especially Gagnan, have seen a development in this use of symbolism both in general and in reference to poverty from Spouse to Lady to Mother. Because of the central part played by chivalry in the ambitions of the upwardly-mobile Italian merchant class and the possibility for this type of advancement in the city-states, it is not surprising to find the symbolism of Courtly Romantic literature in Francis' life. It is noteworthy that recent writers see this use of symbols coming naturally to Francis because of his artistic temperament. These writers also suggest Francis' use of symbolism is more influenced by scripture than by stories of romantic love. It is interesting that Francis and his early biographers used feminine imagery in a creative way, as we shall see in later chapters.
CHAPTER THREE

END NOTES


51 Cel. Omnibus. 373.

6Interview with the author, April 8, 1997.


8S.C. Omnibus, 1534-1597.

9Ibid., 1535.

10Ibid.


13 Ibid., 1565.

14 Ibid., 1575.


17 Hilarin Felder, *The Ideals of Saint Francis of Assisi* (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1925), 49.

18 1 Cel. Omnibus, 272.


20 M.L. Omnibus, 684.

21 1 Cel., Omnibus, 235.

22 2 Cel., Omnibus, 365.


24 2 Cel. Omnibus, 369.


26 L3S, Omnibus, 927.

27 Marion Habig, ed., "Legend of Perugia," *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies, English Omnibus of Sources*


29 M.P. Omnibus, 1251.

30 2 Cel., Omnibus, 380.

31 L.M. Omnibus.


33 Ibid., 2.

34 Ibid., 38.


36 Ibid., 70.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.


40 Block, Feudal Society, 235.

41 Ibid.


43 Green, "Courtly Love," 394.

44 Ibid.
2 Cel., Omnibus, 363-365. See also L3S Omnibus, 891.


Green, New Catholic Encyclopedia, 393-394.

L3S. Omnibus, 892.

L3S. Omnibus, 892-895.

2 Cel. Omnibus, 365.

L3S Omnibus, 895.

1 Cel. Omnibus, 235.

1 Cel. Omnibus, 235.


Ibid.


Hess. Romanticism, 35.
61 L3S. Omnibus, 901-902.

62 Hess. Romanticism, 32.


64 Ibid.

65 S.P. Omnibus, 997.

66 1 Cel. Omnibus, 427.


69 Ibid., 493.

70 Ibid., 494.

71 Ibid., 495.

72 Ibid., 496.


74 Gagnan, 497.

75 Ibid., 498.

76 Hess. Romanticism, 32.

77 1 Cel. Omnibus, 235.


81 Mary Francis Hone, ed., Clare Formed by Francis, Vol. I: Towards the Discovery of Clare of Assisi (St. Bonaventure New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1992), 159.

82 Ibid., 157.

83 Ibid.


86 Ibid., 107.

87 Ibid., 95.


89 2 Cel. Omnibus, 376-377.


91 Ibid., 376-377.


93 Ibid.

98 Ibid., 438.


97 L.M. Omnibus, 684.

98 Gagnan, "symbole," 265.

99 1 Cel. Omnibus, 235.

100 Gagnan, "Typologie," Laurentianum, 469.


102 Ibid., 478.

103 Werner Jeanrond, Theological Hermeneutics (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 27.


105 Eusebius Hieronymus Stridonesis, Commentaria in Ezechielem prophetam, Liber XII P.L. 25, 440.


107 Rupertus Tuitiensis, Commentaria in Apocalypsim, P.L. 169, 1041A.


110 Bruno d'Astensis, Expositio de muliere forte P.L. 164, 1229-1234.
111 Gagnan, "Typologie," 481.

112 Ibid., 477.

113 Ibid., 479.

114 M.L. Omnibus, 632.

115 Gagnan, "Typologie," 479.


118 Gagnan, "Typologie," 484.

119 M.L. Omnibus, 699.

120 2 Cel. Omnibus, 439.

121 Gagnan, "Typologie," 485.


124 Gagnan, "Typologie," 480.


126 Ibid.

128 Ibid., 498.


130 Ibid., 499.

131 2 Cel., Omnibus, 506.

132 Ibid., 493-494.


134 Ibid., 51-52, 56, 103-105, 506.

135 2 Cel., Omnibus, 376.


137 Ibid., 505.

138 Ibid.

139 Rupertus Tuitiensis, Commentaria in Apocalypsim, P.L., 169, 1049.

140 2 Cel. Omnibus, 691.

141 Gagnan, "Typologie," 509.

142 2 Cel., Omnibus, 486.

143 Gagnan, "Typologie," 510.
CHAPTER FOUR

FRANCIS AND HIS MINISTRY TO WOMEN

In this chapter the recorded encounters of Saint Francis with women will be reviewed. As noted in chapter two, Carol Bynum holds that Cistercian spiritual writers tend to divorce feminine imagery from the actual lives of women. She suggests that the positive image of the feminine reflects what the monks thought of Jesus and themselves, not what they actually thought of real women. The recorded interactions of Francis with women must be examined and compared with his words on women, taking into consideration the context in which they were spoken. The examination will begin with the earliest sources.

The references to Francis' contacts with women can be organized under two headings: miracle stories and other reported events which show Francis as an instrument of God's love and concern for women, and those which show Francis as an example of virtuous conduct towards women. Those geared toward miracles can be divided into miracle stories and other reported events which illustrate a particular aspect of Francis' attitude toward women.

Francis of Assisi is presented in First Celano, Second Celano, Mirror of Perfection and the Major Legend is presented as working numerious miracles for women to the extent that a visit to any village is a course for women to rejoice. These include the Pregnant Woman near Arezzo (First Celano) the Blind Woman of Narni (First Celano) the Blind Woman of Gubbio (First Celano) the Woman with Withered Hands (Major Life) the Blind Girl of Beuagna (Major Life) the Possessed Woman of San Gemini (First Celano) the Crippled Girl of Gubbio (First Celano) the stories are sometimes repitious the Paralyzed Woman of Coccorano (First Celano) the Blind Woman Named Sybil (First Celano) the Woman of Camerino (First Celano) the Hysterical Woman of Narni (First Celano) the Mother of Todi (First Celano) the Mother from Todi (First Celano) the Paralyzed Woman Gubbio (First Celano) the Mother of Villa (First Celano) and a woman who could not speak (First Celano).

Francis is seen in these passages not only receiving, but receiving and actually passing on God's love. Francis did not hinder God's action or distract another creature from the love
of God, but became the means by which God's action is manifested.

Although these stories are similar to others found in medieval hagiography they serve a special purpose in Franciscan literature. In addition to showing that Francis is favored by God, they also reflect the Franciscan theme of Francis, the "Speculum Perfectionis" or "Mirror of Perfection." Francis is the clear reflection of a Friar Minor whose virtues include: humility, love of Christ, love of God's creatures, love of neighbor, love of humanity, and obedience. By carrying these virtues to their logical end, Francis, because of his ability to reflect clearly the love of Christ, can be seen transparently conducting Christ's power to overcome the effects of sin.

That this love of God's creatures is so often directed toward women is striking. This is even more remarkable when we recall the negative or antifeminist views so often prevalent in his age. Similarly the Cloak Stories, the Woman from Celano (Second Celano) and the Woman from Rieti tell of Francis and his brothers sharing even their Cloaks out of compassion for women. This important body of testimony shows that both of his earliest biographers, as well as the author of the Mirror of Perfection, recount many eyewitness reports of Saint Francis' kindness toward women. Women sought Francis out and Francis, far from turning away from them, seemed to have shown them special love and consideration. For example as we have noted, he took pieces of cloth which he and a brother were using to keep warm and gave them to an old woman. To the mother of two friars, Francis gave the Order's only copy of the New Testament, stating that to give to the poor is more pleasing to the Lord and his blessed Mother than to read from the Bible. Recognizing the suffering he brought on himself and the brother by giving away the cloth and the value he placed on Scripture, not even allowing a scrap of paper with a word of Scripture on it to lie on the ground, the love of Saint Francis becomes apparent. It is interesting as Celano tells us in his First Life, 92, that their need caused him to think of Mary the Blessed Virgin Mother.

These stories illustrate that Francis was willing to go to great lengths, even to the point of denying himself or the brothers' own needs, to meet the needs of poor women. It is also noticeable that although Francis sometimes used an intermediary in these interactions, we also find him dealing
directly with these women. His immediate response reveals his concern for them.

I. FRANCIS AND THE MOTHERS OF THE ORDER

Francis' concern for women included those who had given sons to the Order. Why did Francis believe that "A mother to any friar was his mother?" For Francis, a sincere conversion experience set up a special relationship between himself, his order, and relatives of the friars. This relationship was based on the radical beginning of the Franciscan vocation, which was for Francis and his brothers "to leave the world."

This concept is forcefully emphasized by the early writers. James of Vitry wrote in 1216 that, "Many left everything for the sake of Christ and left the world. They are called Friars Minor." In this, the early Franciscans shared the experience of Francis. "Thus already beneath his secular garb he wore a religious spirit and withdrawing from public to solitary places . . . he frequented hidden places as more suitable for prayer . . . (and) completely renounced the world."

This renunciation was to be complete and sincere. The Legend of Perugia tells of two postulants rejected by Francis because of excessive love of their families and, it is implied, a rejection of the poor. However, as is seen in Second Celano 92 and The Mirror of Perfection 38 (The same story is found in the Legend of Perugia 56), when that conversion was complete Francis felt a relationship was established, not only between the Order and the friar, but between the Order and the friar=s family. An example of this complete commitment is found in the story of "Brother John the Simple" found in the Legend of Perugia 18, 19. When Francis invited John to join the Order, a friar getting to know him instructed John to divest himself of everything ... and give it to the poor. While John was willing, his family was thrown into consternation over the loss of their eldest son. Francis, in a scene reminiscent of Elijah calling Elisha in First Kings 19, took pity on the family and said to them:

Prepare a meal: we shall eat together; and do not cry, for I am going to restore your son to you. When the family had feasted on the oxen John had been plowing with, Francis said to the family. Your son wishes to
serve God; you should not grieve over this but rather rejoice. This is an honor for you not only in the eyes of God but also in the eyes of the world. Both your souls and your bodies will profit by it. Because one of God's creatures wants to serve the creator and since you are poor, I want him to divest himself of this ox in your favor, although, according to the Holy Gospel, he should rather give it to other poor people. All were considerably eased by these words, and since they were poor, they especially rejoiced over the fact that John was totally obedient to Francis' wish to give his property to the poor. 27

Through his generosity Francis demonstrated his recognition of the obligation he and his followers had to relatives who were poor.

In the Mirror of Perfection is found the following story:

38 Another time, while he was staying at Saint Mary of the Porziuncula, a poor old woman, who had two sons in the Order, came to the friary asking alms of the blessed Francis. He immediately asked Brother Peter of Catani, who was then Minister General, "Have we anything to give our mother?" For he used to say that the mother of any friar was mother to himself and to all the friars. Brother Peter said to him, "There is nothing in the house that we can give her, for she wants the kind of alms that can sustain her bodily needs. But in the church we have a single New Testament from which we read the lessons at Matins." (For at that time the friars had no breviaries and few psalters.) So blessed Francis said to him, "Give the New Testament to our mother, so that she can sell it for her needs. I am sure that this will please our Lord and the Blessed Virgin better than if we were to read from it." So he gave it to her, for it can be said and written of him as is read of blessed Job: "Loving care has borne me company as I grew up from childhood, ever since I left my mother's womb." To us who lived with him, it would be a long and very difficult task to write or describe not only what we have learned from others about his charity and kindness toward the friars and
other poor folk, but what we have seen with our own eyes. 29

Celano relates the same story with a more conservative editing. He adds nothing to the story. 30 Bonaventure shows this compassion for women was a common occurrence with Francis. 31 Unlike some medieval spiritual writers, Francis did not see the embracing of religious life as a turning away from the bonds of family love. Perhaps because of the profound loss Francis had suffered with the alienation of his family, Francis was most understanding of the needs of the mothers of the friars.

II. FRANCIS AS A MODEL OF VIRTUE TOWARD WOMEN

It is possible to get a clearer view of Francis' attitude towards women by comparing them with some social views of women in medieval society found in contemporary writings.

In the "Dits," a type of French poem often used to describe women, one finds extensive criticism of women.

Gloria Piero, in her study of medieval poetry, notes that literature is one of the best resources available to historians. Poetry tells much about the time and place of its origin. 32 Although literature does not always reflect social interactions, it does reflect the attitudes and prejudices of the writer and his readers. 33 In the context of these contemporary views of women, the attitude of Francis toward woman is further clarified.

The "Dits" Blasme, for example, begins with women's cursed lineage in Eve and Eve's essential wickedness. The author then discusses perfidy, infidelity, greed, and aggressiveness. 34 Women are further seen as cunning, troublesome, and dangerous. 35

Andreas Capellanus is the name used by a writer, supposedly a priest, who authored a book called The Art of Courtly Love during the Middle Ages. 36 Capellanus is quoted as saying: "No woman can make you such a firm promise she will not change her mind about it in a few minutes. No woman is ever of the same mind for an hour at a time." 37 The same view is found in "La Contenance des Fames": "A woman's heart is just not able / To chart the course that's firm and
Women were seen to be frivolous, immature, quarrelsome, and spiteful, as well as proud and selfish.

Medieval writers were often influenced by Ancient Greek and Roman writers. In regard to procreation, woman constituted matter, chaotic and formless, while man provided the life-giving principle. The female, therefore, was an imperfect and incomplete version of the male. This view was supported by physicians, such as the Greek Hippocrates and the Roman Galen, both widely read during the Middle Ages, and who saw the female as cold and weak, and not to be trusted.

Even when women are not put down, they are seen as a threat to men. The author of the "Blasme," a popular work contemporary with Francis, writes that women are keen, clever, and capable of outsmarting men. Women's superior guile and cunning make them dangerous.

III. FRANCIS AS MODEL OF DISCRETION

It is against this background that one begins to see Francis' ingenious rebellion in his ministry to women; he definitely respected women. He saw in them a reflection of God Our Father, and he saw them as fellow pilgrims. To those especially who reflected Lady Poverty he was most sensitive and showed the greatest love and affection. Francis' action toward women shows that he believed that it was possible for a man and woman to have a relationship based on mutual respect and the love of God.

In Chapters 78-80 of Celano's Second Life, the following is found:

112 That honeyed poison, namely, familiarities with women, which lead astray even holy men, Francis commanded should be entirely avoided. For he feared that from such things the weak spirit would be quickly broken and the strong spirit often weakened. Avoiding contagion from association with them, unless it were a question of a most proven man, Francis said, in accordance with Scripture, was as easy as walking in a fire without having the soles of one's feet burned. And that he might speak from deeds, he also showed himself an example of all virtue. Indeed, a woman was so unwelcome to him that you would think that his caution was not a warning or an
example but rather a dread or a horror. When their importunate loquaciousness caused him difficulty in speaking with them, he would ask for silence with a humble and speedy word.

But those women in whose minds an urgency of holy devotion had set up the abode of wisdom, he taught by wonderful yet brief words. When he talked with a woman, he spoke in a loud voice so that he could be heard by everybody. He said once to a companion: "I tell you the truth, dearest Brother, I would not recognize any woman if I looked her into her face, except two. The face of the one and of the other is known to me, but I know no other." "Rightly so, Father, for looking upon them makes no one holy. Rightly so, I say, for they provide impediments to those who would walk the difficult way and who want to look up to the face that is full of graces." 42

It may be that the extreme attitude expressed here may be more the "official" attitude of the Order rather than an exact quote of St. Francis. As pointed out in chapter one, Celano is sometimes more interested in showing Francis as a man endowed with supernatural virtues than in giving an accurate portrait of the saint. 43

Francis himself explained his view of the relationship between women and himself by using the symbol of a herald as the following parable will demonstrate:

A. FRANCIS' PARABLE OF THE TWO MESSENGERS

113 Francis was accustomed to combat unclean eyes with the following parable: "A very powerful king sent two messengers to the queen, one after the other. The first came back and reported only her words in exact words. 'For the eyes of a wise man are in his head, and he did not let them roam about.' The other returned and after a few short words about her message, he recounted a long story of the lady's beauty. 'Truly, lord,' he said, 'I have seen a most beautiful woman. Happy he that enjoys her.' But the king said: 'Wicked servant, you have cast impure eyes on my wife. It is evident that you wish to purchase what you looked upon so sharply.' He commanded that the first messenger be called back and
said to him: 'What do you think of the queen?' And he said: 'I think very well of her, for she listened silently and replied wisely.' 'And there is no beauty in her?' the king said. 'It is for you, my lord,' he said, 'to look upon her; my business was only to deliver a message.' Then this sentence was pronounced by the king: 'You,' he said, 'are chaste of eye, and being even more chaste of body, you shall be my chamberlain. But let the other man depart from my house lest he defile my marriage bed.'"

But the blessed father would say: "Too much confidence makes one guard too little against the enemy. If the devil can get but one hair from a man, he will soon make it grow into a beam. Even if after many years he still has not made him fall who he has tempted, he is not put out over the delay, as long as he catches him in the end. For this is his business, and he is busy about nothing else by day or by night."44

Francis considered himself the herald of the Great King.45 The herald was first of all a messenger: "If a personal defiance was to be delivered, if a city was summoned to surrender, if a truce was sought, or if safe conducts were required to enable negotiators to meet . . . a herald would be dispatched to carry the message or request."46 Their status, at least in the twelfth century, was not high. Their positions were temporary and they ranked with the lesser minstrels.47 It was the particular duty of heralds to bear the messages of honorable lovers and to keep their secrets.48 This image of herald had been adapted to illustrate theological concepts. Helarin Felder states that Francis Bernadone Awas fascinated by these musicians and poets."49 This led Francis to Aemulate the trubadours in their love of music and song.50

Another possible source of inspiration for this parable are the stories of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table which constituted a large and distinct part of Italian literature during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and which were the consequent inspiration of many stories by contemporary Italian writers.51 Father Cuthbert states that King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table were among the heroes who supplied Francis with inspiring themes.52 In the story of Tristan and Isolde, the young knight, Tristan,
chosen to escort Princess Isolde to her marriage with King Mark. The traveling pair mistakenly drink a love potion meant for the bridal couple and fall helplessly in love. This theme of betrayal by a knight of his liege lord is also found in Lancelot and Guinevere. This idea of betrayal would have had profound significance for Francis who wept for his sins and who experienced betrayal at the hands of his followers. 53

Felder states that at that time everyone in western Europe was familiar with the great epic legends of Charlemagne and of King Arthur and the Round Table. 54 Even the unlearned Brother Giles made reference to them. Francis states in the Mirror of Perfection 4: "The Emperor Charles, Roland, Oliver, and all the paladins and men of valor were mighty in battle." In chapter 72 of the same work he states, "These friars are my Knights of the Round Table." In the Legend of Perugia 71 he points to his friars with pride and says, "Behold my Knights of the Round Table." Francis was obviously well-versed in courtly romantic literature.

Thus Francis' parable rings true in both a historical and theological sense. The messenger who seeks to become more than the carrier of the message betrays the King and frustrates the communication of the message. Celano, in a piece of wise editorial work, follows this parable with a practical example.

In this parable, Francis uses the image of the medieval messenger to stress the reverence for women which is so necessary in the vocation of a servant of God.

In Second Celano is found this example:

Once it happened, when Saint Francis was going to Bevagna, that he was not able to reach the town because of his weakness from fasting. His companion, however, sending a messenger to a certain spiritual woman, humbly begged bread and wine for the saint. When she heard this, she ran to the saint along with her daughter, a virgin vowed to God, carrying what was necessary. But after the saint had been refreshed and somewhat strengthened, he in turn refreshed the mother and daughter with the word of God. But while he preached to them, he did not look either of them in the face. When they departed, his companion said to Francis: "Why, Brother, did you not look at the holy virgin who came with such great devotion?" The father answered: "Who
must not fear to look upon the bride of Christ? But when a sermon is preached with the eyes and the face she looks at me, but not I at her."

Many times when Francis spoke of this matter he said that all talk with women is frivolous except only for confession, or, in so far as custom demands, a very short admonition. For he said: "What business should a Friar Minor have to transact with a woman, except when she piously asks for holy penance or for advice concerning a better life."55

When we look at the parable in Chapter 79, we see that emphasis is on the weakness of the messenger, not the seductiveness of the queen. This is reinforced in Chapter 81 where it is obvious that the danger of temptation would not come from the bride of Christ:

All the brothers, wherever they are or travel, should beware of evil looks and association with women. And no one should counsel women alone. Priests should speak honorably with them when they give them (the sacrament of) penance or other spiritual advice. And absolutely no woman should be received into obedience by any brother; but when she has been given spiritual counsel, she should go do penance where she wishes. And let us all keep close guard over ourselves and our bodies pure, for the Lord says: "Anyone who has looked at a woman with lust has already committed adultery in his heart."56

"Therefore, whoever violates God's temple, God will destroy him."57 58

The Influence of Women on Contemporary Poverty Movements and the Developing Franciscan Order

In the *Regula non bullata* Chapter 12 we read:

No matter where they are or where they go, the friars are bound to avoid the sight or company of women, when it is evil. No one should speak to them alone. Priests may speak to them in confession or when giving spiritual direction, but only in such a way as not to give scandal. The friars are absolutely forbidden to
allow any woman to profess obedience to them. Once they have given her advice, they should let her go and lead a life of penance wherever she likes.

We must keep a close watch over ourselves and let nothing tarnish the purity of our senses, because our Lord says: "Anyone who so much as looks with lust at a woman has already committed adultery with her in his heart."\(^59\)

**B. FRANCIS AND THE DANGERS TO THE ORDER**

Father David Flood, in his analysis of the *Regula non bullata*, claims that Chapter 12 concerns a question of social relations arising from the brothers' work and their encounters with others.\(^60\) Also, it should be noted that Father Cuthbert states that a reader of the rule will be struck by its patchwork character as regards style. Furthermore, "there is a lack of consistency of tone. The voice of the idealist alternates with that of the legalist."\(^61\) Therefore it would be reckless to ascribe these views to Francis. The question of dealing with women became quite important when clerics entered the Order in large numbers and brothers undertook the pastoral ministry. While this is true, the history of the Order demonstrates, as we will now see, a more complex situation at the time the rule was written.

Saint Francis had to deal with dangers outside of his Order, such as overfamiliarity of friars and women.\(^62\) In addition, one of the dangers of the day which Francis and Hugolino were both aware of was the resemblance between Franciscan poverty and the dualist heresies, especially that of the Cathars. Although Cathars and Waldensians were both dualists, they came for the most part from different sections of society and developed in totally different ways.\(^63\) A full-fledged Cathar male entered into an apostolic life of preaching and teaching, always traveling with a companion, praying constantly, owning nothing . . . \(^64\) It was frequently alleged that behind the appearances of piety in the various heretical groups were concealed lives of immorality.\(^65\)

Father Cuthbert Hess points out that Francis stressed "The poor Christ"; that is to say, not simply the poverty of Jesus Christ, but rather Jesus Christ in his earthly poverty. The Cathars "worshiped the poverty more than the Christ."\(^66\)
Rathschmidt also identifies the similarity between Francis' recruits, the majority of whom were poor, ordinary people who found in Francis a model for their own conversion, and those of the Cathari, also poor, who found the call to equality, "even of women and prostitutes, appealing." 67

Another group were the Waldensians. At first approved by the Church, they later had fallen into heresy. "They went about two by two, barefoot, clad in woolen garments, owning nothing, holding all things in common like the apostles, naked following the naked Christ." 68 Besides rejecting the authority of the Church, they insisted on preaching in which women joined. 69 Frederick Antal goes so far as to claim that Francis originally founded a religion of the laity, which like other sects, was at first essentially heretical. He notes, for example, that Francis first preached as a simple layman, without spiritual preparation, guidance, or permission. 70 I disagree with Antal that Francis started out as a heretic. The point is a useful one, however, as it points out one of the similarities that could have proven to be dangerous if Francis had not been cautious. That Francis deliberately went to the Pope when he returned from the Holy Land after learning of abuses in relationships with some friars and women, rather than confronting the hierarchy of the Order, is characteristic of his self-effacement. Francis, as Celano points out, saw himself as a "little black hen" who could no longer shelter all her chicks under her wings, and therefore said: "I shall go and entrust you to the Church of Rome, that by the rod of her power the ill-disposed may be smitten and the children of God enjoy full freedom everywhere for the increase of eternal salvation." 71 Esser agrees that this statement is fully confirmed by the witness of the primary sources, such as the testament of St. Francis. 72 It is in the light of these events that Francis emerges all the more remarkably as an innovator in the religious life of women while remaining firmly orthodox. 73

IV. FRANCIS' LOVE FOR THE POOR LADIES

The writings of an early Franciscan reveal that the relationship between Francis and the Poor Ladies was a caring one. 74
A. DISCRETION TOWARD POOR CLARES

In the Fioretti, Chapter 13, we are told that Francis out of strictness had refused to eat a meal with Clare. Later in this chapter the reasons for Francis' behavior will be discussed. At this point it would be valuable look more closely at the particular incident.

B. Francis The Role Model

Francis' distancing of himself from the Poor Ladies was observed by the friars. In their concern, the brothers approached Francis to ask why he separated himself from the Poor Ladies, thus scandalizing his first companions. He answered:

Do not believe, dearest brothers, that I do not love them perfectly. For if it were a fault to cherish them in Christ, would it not have been a greater fault to have united them to Christ? Indeed, not to have called them would not have been a wrong; not to care for them once they had been called would be the greatest unkindness. But I give you an example, that as I have done to you, so you also should do. I do not want anyone to offer himself of his own accord to them, but I command that unwilling and most reluctant visit brothers be appointed to take care of them, provided they be spiritual men, proved by a worthy and long religious life.

Once, when a certain brother who had two daughters of perfect life in a certain monastery said he would willingly take some poor little gift to that place for the saint, Francis rebuked him very severely, saying things that should not now be repeated. So he sent the little gift by another brother who had refused to go, but had not persisted in his refusal. Another brother went in the winter to a certain monastery on an errand of sympathy, not knowing the saint's strong will about not going on such visits. After the fact had become known to the saint, he made the brother walk several miles naked in the cold and deep snow.75

The moral of these stories is that only the spiritual men proven by a long and worthy religious life should be sent
to the Poor Ladies. Visits simply for reasons of personal affection were not acceptable, and Francis applied all these rules to himself. Thus The Friars observed that Francis denied himself the comfort of the sisters he loved in order to strengthen his brothers. As has been pointed out, this is not the same as saying Francis did not care for the Poor Ladies.

Another reason for the distancing of Francis from the Sisters is found in statements attributed to Brother Stephen, described as "A simple man, one endowed with such virtue that you would believe he could not tell a lie." Francis seems to have distanced himself especially from those nuns assigned to the Franciscan Order by the Holy See whom Francis had never met.

Father van Asseldonk believed that Francis' feared the practice of some heretics to engage in an excessive familiarity between the sexes, a familiarity of which Saint Francis and the Roman Church disapproved. It was from the Lord that the Franciscan vocation came and all were to be returned to the Lord.

If Francis is seen as rejecting women, then his orientation has been misinterpreted. The preeminent meaning of asceticism lies in aspiring to one's true nature. The struggle is against the distortions of reality and their source. The goal is full recovery from the effects of sin, not the destruction of relationships.

Rather than destroying the warmth of human relationships, Francis' discretion enables truly human exchange.

Francis returned creation to God and so was loyal to Christ, his liege lord. Instead of becoming self-centered, he saw the world and his brothers and sisters as a sacrament of communion. Instead of seeing woman as someone to be exploited, a source of pleasure and satisfaction, he saw her as she is in herself and in God. In his freedom as a child of God, his relationship with women became life giving because God is the source of life. This active love made him perfect and more human. In contemplation Francis saw all persons as sacraments of God. In his spiritual vision each person stood out in sharp relief in all the brilliance of his or her specific being. Francis did not leave the world in the sense of isolating himself from the concerns and struggles of men and women. Rather, he understood that their love was a sacred trust.

In Francis we find the "moral life" and the "natural
life" complementing each other through Francis' cooperation in the regeneration in Christ. 85

An example of this shared suffering can be found in the Legend of Perugia 109 which states, "During the week in which the blessed Francis died, Lady Clare, . . . . was also very sick . . . . She wept bitterly and could not console herself." 86

C. FRIENDSHIP AS A SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

This does not imply that Francis was incapable of friendship with a woman. Clare shared in Francis' suffering much as Mary shared in Christ's passion as she stood at the foot of the Cross. 87

The depth of the relationship of Francis and Clare makes them rejoice and at the same time suffer. 88 With few exceptions Francis did not allow women to address him with familiar forms of speech. The reason for this is that he saw Jesus in all men and women. Francis made an exception for the female hermit of Rome mentioned in Third Celano 181, who was allowed to make a vow of obedience to him and who will be discussed in the next chapter. Because of his frequent conversations with Clare, Father van Asseldonk saw Francis as having a particular love for Clare, his spiritual sister, whom he saw as reflecting Christ's love. 89

Why was the relationship with Clare so special for Francis? While Clare and her Poor Ladies were living out their Franciscan experiment, other female fraternities with Franciscan ideals were forming. Cardinal Hugolino saw for himself how the movement was spreading when he was legate in Umbria and Tuscany. He decided to give it formal recognition by putting it under the direct control of the Apostolic See and by giving it a monastic style of life which, while respecting the women's desire for simplicity, provided them with a certain amount of stability and economic security. The pattern for other communities developing between 1218-1219 was the San Damiano experiment, with its own particular observances, "... hence the name Damiante by which the communities were known." 90 Even this did not bring things completely under control. In 1241 the Pope had to warn bishops against women who went around calling themselves "discalceatae," "chordulariae," or "minoretae" and pretending to be members of the Order of Saint Clare. 91
Administrative problems were not Francis' only concern. While one may only guess at the inner struggles reflected in Francis' attitudes, Groschel suggests that thoughtful psychologists really do not believe that the virtues of Saint Francis are entirely explainable as sublimation of libido or even of any forces entirely subject to scientific examination. The journey through the purgative way usually leaves a person with a badly battered self-image. It may be suggested that Francis' self-image was not a positive one. He is quoted as seeing himself as a worm and no man. "Even in a saint, self-righteousness can creep in." While our study of Francis is severely handicapped by the fact that there is very little chronological order in the various lives, one can see his overreaction to visiting the convents of the Poor Ladies in the context of his own struggling through the various stages of spiritual growth. Francis was quite open about his struggles. His public confession that he had eaten stew and a little meat during an illness, his remark that he might yet have many children, reflect his understanding of his weakness and his hatred of pretense.

In dealing with Francis and his relation with women, one is dealing with a man of many parts. It must be admitted, Francis was a complex individual. While apparently harsh when legislating interactions with women, his tenderness and spiritual concern for women is apparent in the Canticle of Exhortation which he sent to Saint Clare and the Poor Ladies:

Listen, little poor ones called by the Lord, who have come together from many parts and provinces:

Live always in truth, that you may die in obedience.

Do not look at the life outside, for that of the spirit is better.

I beg you through great love, to use with discretion the alms which the Lord gives you.

Those who are weighed down by sickness and the others who are wearied because of them, all of you: bear it in peace.
For you will sell this fatigue at a very high price and each one of you will be crowned queen in heaven with the Virgin Mary.\(^98\)

Both the *Mirror of Perfection*\(^99\) and the *Legend of Perugia* substantially agree about the circumstances of the origins of this song.\(^100\) It is stated in the *Mirror of Perfection* that he wrote some holy words with a melody to comfort and edify the Poor Ladies, knowing they were in great distress over his illness. Unable to visit them personally, he sent these words to them through his companions. He saw that their conversion and holy lives were not only a source of glory for the Order of the Friars but of edification to the whole Church. But knowing that from the beginning of their conversion they had led a life of great confinement and poverty, he always felt the greatest pity and compassion for them. This prayer was written at a time of great suffering in the life of Francis. The *Legend of the Three Companions* reveals that the Canticle was written while Francis was living in a little hut near the convent of Poor Ladies. At this time, in addition to the piercing pains of the stigmata, he suffered from recurrent attacks of malaria. His liver and spleen, the reservoirs of the malaria parasites, were swollen. Progressive anemia, complete physical exhaustion, and a wrecked digestion plagued him. While in Egypt with the Fifth Crusade, he had contracted a very contagious conjunctivitis popularly known as Egyptian eye disease. The result was blurred vision, discharges, and painful, progressively worsening hypersensitivity to light. Almost blind, completely helpless, and his body racked with pain, Francis was battling with despondency. It gives an insight into his love for his sisters that at this time he sought to comfort them. It would be useful to examine one word, "poverelle," a diminutive which we can translate as "poor little sisters." It implies a freely-chosen state of childhood before God. It also implies the amiability and joyfulfulness of a child. It signifies the absolute interior and exterior poverty implied in the following of the poor Jesus and his Mother. It must be said that this deep affection and respect shown in this canticle must be founded on a real knowledge and sharing of self. This is a discovery of Francis, who is totally in love with God and loving in a
special way those males and females who share his love of God.  

Joseph Lortz has pointed out that there are many things in the life of Francis which sound unbelievable, strange and even offensive. There is also much which cannot be accepted upon first hearing. While Francis effected a profound renewal of Christianity in more than one instance, he often paid no heed to the basic necessities of human nature or to sociological needs. Medieval biographies do not include the detailed personal information that would be so useful in gaining a greater understanding of Francis' personality. Celano seems to imply that part of Francis' negative reaction to women was caused by his own struggles. Celano recorded in his Second Life that God said to Francis in spirit, "What you have loved carnally and vainly you shall now exchange for spiritual things and taking the bitter for the sweet despite yourself, if you wish to acknowledge me, for you will have a taste for me . . . ." This struggle to maintain his balance in life's struggles took many forms as the following incident illustrates.

In Celano's Second Life is found the story of Francis being tempted in a number of different ways. When faced with temptations of the flesh, he beat himself with a rope until welts appeared. The temptations then departed in confusion, according to the story.

The Legend of the Three Companions, states, "... This (the conversion experience) inner struggle had so changed him as to make him appear a new man." So intense a struggle and such radical solutions must have left Francis with a unique view of the severity of the struggle and the solutions necessary to overcome temptation.

Clare understood that Francis was not avoiding the Ladies out of dislike for them, but rather out of fear that his example to visit Clare might be "taken as a sanction by those who were less unworldly in their views and purpose."

It would be useful now to examine Franciscan biographical sources that appear to be at least superficially negative in their treatment of women. However, it would be useful to put these in context by reviewing briefly some negative views of women expressed in the literature of the period. In the next chapter I will discuss some of the advances and positive recognition available to some women during this period.
In this section the three women who had an enormous influence on the life of Saint Francis will be presented: his Mother, Lady Pica, Lady Clare, and Lady Jacoba. It is in the context of the lives of these women, who influenced Francis and who were influenced by him, that one gains a greater understanding of Francis and the Feminine. These women have been chosen because they are the only women he had long-term relationships with which are recorded. It may be mentioned there was a fourth woman in Francis' life named Prassede who had lived as a hermit in Rome since childhood. Francis allowed her to make a vow of obedience to him and to wear a Friar's habit. Urner implies the woman was unkempt and unstable. Francis appeared to her after his death and cured her of a broken leg. She appears suddenly in Bonaventure's Major Life and just as suddenly disappears. The relationship is fleeting. Unfortunately this is all that is know of her.

However, there are numerous problems in dealing with the subject of Francis' interactions with women. As noted in chapter one, a candid view of Francis is lacking as a result of heavy editing in the official biographies. That is to say, Celano implies that his account is an orderly, accurate and adequate portrait of the saint. As was discussed in chapter one, this has an effect on our perception of Francis' attitude toward women. Bonaventure, for example, quotes all the passages in Celano which warn the brothers against familiarity with women, but suppresses Francis' visits to Saint Clare and the arrival of Lady Jacoba at his deathbed. Secondly, as was discussed in chapter one, a lack of information on Francis' youth in Celano, for example, makes it more difficult to discover patterns of development in Francis' relationships with women. In comparison, Leclercq, in his book Women and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, approaches his subject by taking into account the dates of Saint Bernard's compositions in so far as they are known. Francis, however, wrote very little, and often it is not known exactly when particular documents were written.

To give one example of the difficulties in attempting to find the "historical Francis," the first section of the First Life of Saint Francis by Thomas of Celano is introduced by the author as being related in an orderly manner. In fact, Celano makes little effort to tell about Francis' childhood, although
stories about Francis must have abounded in Assisi during the time Celano was writing the First Life.\textsuperscript{116} Rather, he is content to give a highly colored account of Francis' youthful sins with the obvious intention of emphasizing the sanctity of his life after his conversion. After this he adds some general and rather pointless observations on the failure of parents to raise their children correctly. Celano tells of Francis' devotion to poverty, simplicity, humility, and obedience. However, the material available is sufficient to indicate that the women discussed in this chapter had a profound influence in confirming and developing the character(s) of Francis of Assisi, and motivated him to create new structures in the Church in which nurturing was an important fact of spiritual life for the spiritual leader as well.

As will be shown, Lady Pica, Lady Clare, and Lady Jacoba contributed to the evolution of the feminine side of Francis' soul. After reviewing the primary sources, the role in Francis' development will be highlighted and substantiated.

VI. LADY PICA AS SEEN IN THE PRIMARY SOURCES

Although the information on Lady Pica is relatively scarce but informative, the influence on her son was profound. The role she was to play in the conversion episode presented Francis with an image of the feminine which defied common stereotypes of the period, and which gave him an image of the feminine which was active and courageous.

Francis' whole life was a struggle to establish the sense of identity as the son of a loving Father, which can be summed up in his declaration recorded in Second Celano, 12, "From now on I can freely say 'Our Father who are in heaven,' not Father Peter Bernardone." On the other hand, his relationship with his mother was more complex. In order to evaluate the role played by his mother in his view and understanding of women, it would be useful to look at all of the images of his mother found in the early biographies of Saint Francis. The passages will be derived from First and Second Celano and The Legend of The Three Companions.
The first reference is from First Celano:

A. Francis in the World Before His Conversion
(First Celano)

In the city of Assisi, which lies at the edge of the Spoleto valley, there was a man by the name of Francis, who from his earliest years was brought up by his parents proud of spirit, in accordance with the vanity of the world; and imitating their wretched life and habits for a long time, he became even more vain and proud. For this very evil custom has grown up everywhere among those who are considered Christians in name, and this pernicious teaching has become so established and prescribed, as though by public law, that people seek to educate their children from the cradle on very negligently and dissolutely . . . . Impelled by a fear that is natural to their age, none of them dares to conduct himself in an upright manner, for if he were to do so, he would be subjected to severe punishments. Therefore, a secular poet says well: "Because we have grown up amid the practices of our parents, we therefore pursue all evil things from our childhood on." 117

The importance of this passage lies in Celano's negative view of both of Francis' parents. A different view, however, is found in Chapter 6:

B. How Francis' Mother Freed Him (First Celano)

It happened, however, when Francis' father had left home for a while on business and the man of God remained bound in the basement of the house, his mother, who was alone with him and who did not approve of what her husband had done, spoke kindly to her son. But when she saw that he could not be persuaded away from his purpose, she was moved by motherly compassion for him, and loosening his chains, she let him go free. He, however, giving thanks to Almighty God, returned quickly to where he had been before, but now, after he had been proved by temptations, he allowed himself greater liberty, and he took on a more cheerful aspect because of the many struggles he had gone through. From the wrongs done him
he acquired a more confident spirit, and he went about everywhere freely and with higher spirits than before. Meanwhile, his father returned, and not finding Francis, he turned to upbraid his wife, heaping sins upon sins. Then, raging and blustering, he ran to that place, hoping that, if he could not recall him from his ways, he might at least drive him from the province. But, because it is true that in the fear of the Lord is confidence, when this child of grace heard his carnally minded father coming to him, confident and joyful he went to meet him, exclaiming in a clear voice that he cared nothing for his chains and blows. Moreover, he stated that he would gladly undergo evils for the name of Christ. 118

Celano's phrase "from his purpose" may be interpreted to mean the following of God's will even if the behavior it initiated brought about mockery and gossip and the wrath of his father. The phrase "where he had been before" refers to the Church of Saint Damian.

It is noteworthy that by chapter five the negative emphasis has shifted to the father. As will be shown, it is significant that it is Francis' mother who frees him.

C. How Francis' Mother Prophesied Concerning Him
(First Celano)

Francis, the servant and friend of the Most High, to whom divine providence gave this name so that by means of this singular and unusual name the knowledge of his ministry might become known to the whole world, was called John by his mother, when, being born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he was made child of grace from a child of wrath. This woman, a friend of all goodness, bore about her a certain image in her conduct of the virtue of that holy Elizabeth, enjoying as she did a certain privilege of resemblance to her, both in the giving of a name to her son and in her spirit of prophecy. For while her neighbors were wondering about the nobility of soul and the modesty of Francis, she would say, as though prompted by divine guidance: "What do you think my son will turn out to be? Know that he will be a son of God by the grace of his merits." . . . The name John referred to the work of the ministry which
he would undertake; the name Francis referred to the spread of his fame, which, after he had been fully converted to God, quickly spread everywhere. He considered the feast of John the Baptist to be more illustrious than the feasts of all the other saints, for the dignity of his name left a mark of mystic virtue upon him. Among those born of women there has not arisen a greater than John; among the founders of religious orders there has not arisen a more perfect one than Francis. This is an observation that is worthy to be heralded about . . . John prophesied, enclosed within the hidden places of his mother's womb; Francis prophesied future events enclosed within the prison of this world while he was still ignorant of the divine counsel.¹¹⁹

Celano's references to the resemblance between Lady Pica and Elizabeth are a demonstration of Celano's creative writing style. Elizabeth prophesied about Jesus and his mother in her greeting to Mary in Luke 1:46-55. Lady Pica prophesied to her neighbors about her son Francis. Zachariah was a just man. The father of Francis was not.

By the time of the second life of Francis, Celano, having had more time to research his subject, presents Lady Pica as a second Elizabeth. Pica is a name which may have derived from Picardy, a region in France. Trexler suggests that this might indicate that the mother of Francis came from France.¹²⁰

Fortini states that Lady Pica's real name was Joanna and that she was French. He suggests that she came from a merchant class family that had gained its wealth in the trade of textiles. He agrees that Pica is a nickname for one who came from Picardy.¹²¹ Pica's ability as a prophet is striking, considering Francis' popularity and extravagant behavior which had the neighbors talking.¹²² From Celano's description of Francis as the leader of "the sons of Babylon" his ability to attract followers was present before his conversion.¹²³

The following section is taken from the Legend of the Three Companions. If Moorman's analysis of the primary sources is correct, the Legend of the Three Companions predates First Celano, and thus the Three Companions represents the earlier source. It is, at any rate, clear that Three Companions represents a very positive view of Lady Pica.¹²⁴
D. Concerning Francis' Birth (First Celano)

The father of the blessed and evangelical man Francis was named Peter, the son of the merchant Bernardone; and he was absorbed in making money. On the other hand, Francis' mother Pica was an excellent woman; and like another Elizabeth, she gave birth to her blessed son in the absence of his father who had gone to France on business. She wished the child to be called John, and on the very day of his baptism a pilgrim stopped to beg at the door. Having received alms from the serving maid, the stranger said to her: "I beg you to show me the child born today for I greatly wish to see him." The maid answered that this was impossible, but the pilgrim insisted that he would not go away unless his wish were granted. The maid was annoyed and went back into the house leaving the pilgrim outside. But, when the Lady Pica heard what had happened, she was amazed and told the maid to show the child to the stranger. When this was done, the pilgrim took the baby into his arms with great devotion and joy, as Simeon had once taken the infant Jesus, and he said: "Today two children have been born in the city; this one will be among the best of mankind, and the other among the worst." The whole world has seen what was verified in Francis. In regard to the other, many people are convinced of the truth of the prophecy. When Peter returned from France, he insisted that his son should be called Francis after the country he had recently left. Francis grew up quick and clever, and he followed in his father's footsteps by becoming a merchant. In business, however, he was very different from Peter, being far more high spirited and openhanded. He was a spendthrift, and all that he earned went into eating and carousing with his friends. For this his parents often remonstrated with him, saying that squandering such large sums on himself and others, his style of living made him appear not so much their son as the son of some great prince. However, being rich and loving him tenderly, they allowed him free rein in order to avoid displeasing him. When the Lady Pica heard the neighbors commenting on her son's extravagance, she answered: "What do you think my son will be? Through grace he will become a son of God."
Celano's remark about the "other" (child) born the same day who would be among the worst of humanity and the many people who are convinced of the prophecy is not explained further. Perhaps Celano did not want to hurt the innocent relatives of this unfortunate person who might still be living in Assisi.

In examining the arrival of the mysterious stranger and the idea of Francis being a "son of God" it would be useful to mention the following story which dates only from the middle of the fifteenth century:

E. The Birth of St. Francis

There is a curious fact about the birth of this holy man. When his mother had been in travail for several days, suffering great pain and unable to bring the child to birth, a man came to the door of the house, dressed as a pilgrim, but believed to be a divine messenger, who said that the child should be born not in a costly bed, but in a stable, and that he should lie, not on silk, but on straw. He then advised them to move without delay into a stable which stood nearby. Although this seemed a mad thing to do, yet, as the pains increased, the good mother was carried to the place which had been indicated. And there, without any further help or trouble, she gave birth to her glorious son, lying in the hay. O blessed child, who from the very first moment of life followed the example of Christ!  

The stable has ever since been held in great esteem, and a chapel has been built there in honour of Saint Francis, called "San Francesco il Piccolo" or "Little Saint Francis."

The arrival of the mysterious stranger, the prophetic remark by Pica concerning Francis as a "son of God," and the legend of Francis being born in a stable certainly indicate that Lady Pica was perceived by her contemporaries and by early Franciscans as being a Marian figure. The inference of Francis as a "son of God" reinforces Lady Pica's Marian image.

Several observations can be made on this material. Although First Celano is extremely critical of the parents of Saint Francis, the specific criticism is aimed entirely at his father and the elder brother. Indeed, the role of Lady Pica
as depicted by Celano brings to mind Saint Elizabeth and Saint Monica and, if we accept the Thirteenth century testimony, a nativity scene in which she takes the part of the Blessed Mother. Perhaps the positive model of "mother" which we find throughout the writings of Saint Francis, has its basis in this warm and understanding relationship between Francis and his mother. Unfortunately, like so many areas in the life of Francis, nothing is known of their later relationship.

It is interesting that in Francis' struggles with his earthly father, Celano writes that it was Francis' mother who did not approve of her husband's actions, and who spoke kindly to her son when he had been chained up by his father in the basement of the house. It is profoundly significant, in looking at Francis and his relationship with women, that when Lady Pica saw that her son could not be persuaded away from his purpose, she was moved with motherly compassion to let him go freely while his father was away on a business trip. This loosening of his chains, which brought down the wrath of her husband on her own head, enabled Francis to return to his former life -- freer, more confident, more cheerful, and in the coming confrontation with his father, braver. This positive image of the feminine was to be developed further in Francis' relationship with Lady Clare.

VII. LADY CLARE

Clare's relationship with Francis is a complex one. The study begins by reviewing Clare's relationship as found in the primary sources. This is followed by biographical information on Clare. Clare's role as the bride of Christ will then be discussed. The image of bride comes from Celano, who reports that Francis desired the immaculate spouse of God. Clare was introduced to Francis by the Holy Spirit as a bride of Christ.\textsuperscript{127}

Clare tells us in chapter six of her \textit{Form of Life} that Francis' relationship grew with Clare so that he became her spiritual father after God, while she grew to become the guardian and interpreter of his vision.\textsuperscript{128} Francis as spiritual father and Clare as spiritual co-founder will be developed. Francis' tribute to Clare's femininity and Clare as the feminine symbol of Francis' message will be examined. This section will review the subtle and beautiful tribute Francis pays to Clare at the end of his life.

98
A. PRIMARY SOURCES

1. The Form Of Life Given To Saint Clare
   And Her Sisters

Since by divine inspiration you have made yourselves daughters and servants of the most high King, the heavenly Father, and have taken the Holy Spirit as your spouse, choosing to live according to the perfection of the holy Gospel, I resolve and promise for myself and for my brothers always to have that same loving care and special solicitude for you as [I have] for them.\textsuperscript{129}

Clare of Assisi is the source of this brief text which she placed in what is now considered chapter six of the Form of Life.\textsuperscript{130}

The Form of Life and the next four texts will be discussed in the section on Clare the feminine symbol of Francis' message.

The Legend of Perugia 45 describes the events at San Damiano after Francis composed the Canticle of Brother Sun. The author narrates the composition of the following canticle inspired by the need to console and encourage the Poor Ladies of San Damiano. This latter text was lost until 1941.\textsuperscript{131}

2. The Canticle Of Exhortation To Saint Clare
   And Her Sisters

Listen, little poor ones called by the Lord, who have come together from many parts and provinces:
Live always in truth, For you will sell this fatigue at a very high price and each one [of you] will be crowned queen in heaven with the Virgin Mary.\textsuperscript{132}

The source of the following writing is the Rule of Saint Clare, Chapter VI, in which Clare tells of the Seraphic Father's eagerness to have his followers persevere in the life and poverty of Jesus Christ.

99
3. The Last Will Written for Saint Clare and Her Sisters

I, brother Francis, the little one, wish to follow the life and poverty of our most high Lord Jesus Christ and of His most holy mother and to persevere in this until the end; and I ask and counsel you, my ladies, to live always in this most holy life and in poverty. And keep most careful watch that you never depart from this by reason of the teaching or advice of anyone.  

The next two writings deal with the death of Francis.

4. A PREDICTION FOR LADY CLARE

a. Legend of Perugia

During the week in which blessed Francis died, Lady Clare, the first little plant of the Order of Sisters, abbess of the Poor Ladies of San Damiano of Assisi, emulator of St. Francis in the continual observance of the poverty of the Son of God, was also very sick and was fearful of dying before blessed Francis. She wept bitterly and could not console herself at the thought of not seeing him again before his death, her only father next to God, her interior and external comfort, he who was the first one to establish her solidly in the grace of the Lord. She made this known to the saint through the intermediary of a brother. On hearing this, Francis was moved with compassion; for he loved Clare and her sisters with a paternal affection for the saintly life they were leading, and because it was he who with the grace of God had converted her by his advice, shortly after the arrival of the first brothers. Her conversion greatly edified not only the Order of the brothers but the whole Church. Since Francis could not grant her desire to see him again, because both of them were sick, he sent her in writing, for her consolation, his blessings and absolution from all the infractions of his orders and desires, and of the orders and desires of the Son of God. Furthermore, to rid her of all sadness and
console her in the Lord, he said to the brother she had sent, or rather the Holy Spirit said it through his mouth: "Go and bring this letter to Lady Clare. You will tell her to banish the sorrow and sadness she experiences at the thought of never seeing me again. Let her know, in truth, that before she dies, she and all her sisters will see me again and will receive great consolation from me."

A short while later, blessed Francis died during the night. In the morning, the people of Assisi, men and women and all the clergy, came in search of his body in the friary. To the chant of hymns and canticles, holding green palms in their hands, they bore him by the will of God to San Damiano, so that the word the Lord had spoken by the mouth of his saint might be fulfilled, and that his daughters and servants might be consoled. The iron grill of the window through which the sisters received Holy Communion and heard the word of God was pulled back; the brothers lifted up the body of blessed Francis from the stretcher and held it in their arms before the opening for at least a minute. Lady Clare and her sisters experienced a very great consolation from this. Nevertheless they wept bitterly and felt great pain; for, next to God, the holy Father was their one and only consolation in this world.134

It is interesting to note the subtle difference in the description of Clare found in the Legend of Perugia which describes Clare as "The emulator of Saint Francis in the continual observance of the poverty of the Son of God," and Celano=s First Life in which the emphasis is entirely on Francis as spiritual father.

b. First Celano

Concerning the grief of the Ladies at St. Damiano's . . . . (when the brothers) came to the place where he had himself first planted the religion and order of holy virgins and poor ladies, they placed him in the church of St. Damian, where these same daughters whom he had won for the Lord dwelt; there they paused and the little window, through which the handmaids of Christ were accustomed to receive at the appointed time the sacrament

101
of the body of the Lord, was opened. The coffin was opened, in which lay hidden the treasure of supercelestial virtues, and in which he was being borne by a few who was accustomed to bear many. And behold, the Lady Clare, who was truly illustrious by the holiness of her merits, and was the first mother of the rest since she was the very first plant of this holy Order, came with the rest of her daughters to see their father who would no longer speak to them or return to them but was hastening elsewhere. 135

And redoubling their sighs and looking upon him with great sorrow of heart and many tears, they began to proclaim in a restrained voice: "Father, Father, what shall we do? Why do you forsake us in our misery, or to whom do you leave us who are so desolate? Why did you not send us rejoicing ahead of you to the place where you are going, us whom you leave here in sorrow? What do you bid us do, shut up in this prison, us whom you will never again visit as you used to? All our consolation departs with you and no solace like it remains to us buried to the world. Who will comfort us in our great poverty no less of merit than of goods? Oh Father of the poor, lover of poverty! Who will strengthen us in temptation, Oh you who experienced innumerable temptations and who knew how to overcome them? Who will console us in our trials, Oh you who were our helper in troubles which found us exceedingly? Oh most bitter separation, Oh unfriendly leave-taking! Oh most dreadful death, that slays thousands of sons and daughters bereft of so great a father, by hastening to remove beyond recall him through whom mainly our efforts, such as they were, were made to flourish!" But their virginal modesty restrained their great weeping; and it was not fitting to mourn too much for him at whose passing a host of the army of angels had come together and the citizens with the saints and members of God's household rejoiced. And so, divided between sorrow and joy, they kissed his most radiant hands, adorned with the most precious gems and shining pearls; and, when he had been taken away, the door was closed to them which will hardly again be opened for such great sorrow. Oh how great was the sorrow of all over the woeful and pitiable outcry of these poor ladies! How great in particular were the lamentations of his grieving
sons! Their special grief was shared by all, so much so that hardly anyone could refrain from weeping when the angels of peace wept so bitterly.\textsuperscript{136}

This incident is reported in Bonaventure's \textit{Major Life}. It adds nothing original. That the Poor Ladies should have felt abandoned was certainly justified as will be shown in the section on Clare, The feminine symbol of Francis' message.

In the following excerpt, the conversion of Clare by Francis is presented. It will be examined in the section on Clare, the Bride of Christ.

5. RULE OF CLARE

Chapter Six: The Lack Of Possessions

After the Most High Heavenly Father saw fit by His grace to enlighten my heart to do penance according to the example and teaching of our most blessed Father, Saint Francis, I, together with my sisters, willingly promised him obedience shortly after his own conversion.

When the Blessed Father saw we had no fear of poverty, hard work, trial, shame, or contempt of the world, but, instead, regarded such things as great delights, moved by compassion he wrote a form of life for us as follows:

"Because by divine inspiration you have made yourselves daughters and servants of the Most High King, the heavenly Father, and have espoused yourselves to the Holy Spirit, choosing to live according to the perfection of the holy Gospel, I resolve and promise for myself and for my brothers to always have that same loving care and solicitude for you as [I have] for them."

As long as he lived he diligently fulfilled this and wished that it always be fulfilled by his brothers.\textsuperscript{137}

In the next passage Celano links Francis' repair of the Church of San Damian with the beginning of the Order of Poor Ladies.
6. CELANO’S FIRST LIFE

The Church of San Damiano

The first work that blessed Francis undertook after he had gained his freedom from the hand of his carnally minded father was to build a house of God . . . When he had returned to the place where, as has been said, the church of San Damiano had been built in ancient times, he repaired it zealously within a short time with the help of the grace of the Most High. This is the blessed and holy place, where the glorious religion and most excellent order of Poor Ladies and holy virgins had its blessed origin about six years after the conversion of St. Francis and through that same blessed man. Of it, the Lady Clare, a native of the city of Assisi, the most precious and the firmest stone of the whole structure, was the foundation. For when, after the beginning of the Order of Brothers, the said Lady was converted to God through the counsel of the holy man, she lived unto the advantage of many and as an example to a countless multitude. She was of noble parentage, but she was more noble by grace; she was a virgin in body, most chaste in mind; a youth in age, but mature in spirit; steadfast in purpose and most ardent in her desire for divine love; endowed with wisdom and excelling in humility; Clare by name, brighter in life, and brightest in character.138

Clare’s conversion is covered in the section on The Spiritual Fatherhood of Francis.

The next two sections examine the place of Francis in the spiritual growth of Clare. They will be examined in the section on Clare, the Bride of Christ.

7. THE CANONIZATION PROCESS

Twelth Witnese

Sister Beatrice, daughter of Messer Favarone of Assisi, a nun of the monastery of San Damiano, said under oath that she, the witness, was the natural sister of Lady Clare of holy memory whose life was, from her childhood, almost angelic; that she was a virgin and
remained always so. She was careful about good deeds of holiness so her good reputation was spread about among all who knew her.

The Conversion of Saint Clare

She also said, after Saint Francis heard of the fame of her holiness, he went many times to preach to her, so that the virgin Clare acquiesced to his preaching, renounced the world and all earthly things, and went to serve God as soon as she was able. After that she sold her entire inheritance and part of that of the witness and gave it to the poor.

Then Saint Francis gave her the tonsure before the altar in the church of the Virgin Mary, called the Portiuncula, and then sent her to the church of San Paolo de Abbadesse. When her relatives wanted to drag her out, Lady Clare grabbed the altar cloths and uncovered her head, showing them that she was tonsured. In no way did she acquiesce, neither letting them take her from that place nor remaining with them.

Then Saint Francis, Brother Philip and Brother Bernard took her to the church of Sant'Angelo di Panzo, where she stayed for a little time, and then to the church of San Damiano where the Lord gave her more sisters for her direction.

Asked how she knew all these things, she replied since she was her sister, she saw some things and heard some from Lady Clare and others. Asked how long ago that was, she replied: about forty-two years ago. 139

The Legend of Clare

Hearing of the then celebrated name of Francis, who, like a new man, was renewing with new virtues the way of perfection forgotten by the world, she was moved by the Father of the spirits, --Whose initiatives each one had already accepted although in different ways -- and immediately desired to see and hear him. No less did he desire to see and speak with her, impressed by the wide-spread fame of so gracious a young lady, so that, in some way, he, who was totally longing for spoil and [who] had come to depopulate the kingdom of the world, would be
also able to wrest this noble spoil from the evil world and win her for his Lord.\textsuperscript{140}

This is examined in the section on the Canticle of Brother Sun.

8. CELANO'S SECOND LIFE OF THE SERMON FRANCIS PREACHED MORE BY EXAMPLE THAN BY WORDS:

Repeatedly asked by his vicar to preach the word of God to his daughters when he stopped off for a short time at St. Damian's, Francis was finally overcome by his insistence and consented. But when the nuns had come together, according to their custom, to hear the word of God, though no less also to see their father, Francis raised his eyes to heaven, where his heart always was, and began to pray to Christ. He then commanded ashes to be brought to him and he made a circle with them around himself on the pavement and sprinkled the rest of them on his head. But when they waited for him to begin and the blessed father remained standing in the circle in silence, no small astonishment arose in their hearts. The saint then suddenly rose and to the amazement of the nuns recited the Miserere mei Deus in place of a sermon. When he had finished, he quickly left. The servants of God were so filled with contrition because of the power of this symbolic sermon that their tears flowed in abundance and they could scarcely restrain their hands from inflicting punishment on themselves. By his actions he taught them that they should regard themselves as ashes and that there was nothing in his heart concerning them but what was fitting this consideration. This was the way he acted toward these holy women; his visits to them were very useful, but they were forced upon him and rare. And this was his will for all his brothers: he wanted them to serve these women in such a way for Christ, whom they serve, that, like them that have wings, they would always guard against the snare laid out for them.\textsuperscript{141}

This is developed in the section on the Canticle of Brother Sun.
In the following description Bonaventure sees Clare as Francis' daughter. He also separates Francis from the Poor Clares by describing Clare as their foundress.

9. Bonaventure, Major Life
(The Inspiration of Clare)

Unmarried women were inspired to profess a life of perpetual virginity, among whom St. Clare was especially dear to God. She was the first flower in Francis' garden, and she shone like a radiant star, fragrant as a flower blossoming white and pure in springtime. She was his daughter in Christ and foundress of the Poor Clares. Now she has been glorified in heaven, and on earth the church pays her the honor which is her due.\textsuperscript{142}

This is dealt with in the section on the \textit{Canticle of Brother Sun}.

In the following passage the author of \textit{The Little Flowers} shows God using Clare and Brother Silvester to communicate His will to Francis. Silvester had been a secular priest who had been converted by a vision of Francis.

10. Little Flowers (Clare Advises Francis)

The humble servant of Christ, St. Francis, at the beginning of his conversion, when he had already gathered many companions and received them in the Order, was placed in a great agony of doubt as to what he should do: whether to give himself only to continual prayer or to preach sometimes. He wanted very much to know which of these would please Our Lord Jesus Christ most. And as the holy humility that was in him did not allow him to trust in himself or in his own prayers, he humbly turned to others in order to know God's will in this matter.

So he called Brother Masseo and said to him: "Dear Brother, go to Sister Clare and tell her on my behalf to pray devoutly to God, with one of her purer and more spiritual companions, that He may deign to show me what is best: either that I preach sometimes or that I devote myself only to prayer. And then go also to Brother Silvester, who is staying on Mount Subasio, and tell him the same thing."
This was that Lord Silvester who had seen a cross of gold issuing from the mouth of St. Francis which extended in length to Heaven and in width to the ends of the world. And this Brother Silvester was so devout and holy that God immediately granted or revealed to him whatever he asked in prayer. The Holy Spirit had made him remarkably deserving of divine communications, and he conversed with God many times. And therefore St. Francis was very devoted to him and had great faith in him. This holy Brother Silvester often stayed alone in the above-mentioned place.

Brother Masseo went, and as St. Francis had ordered him, gave the message first to St. Clare and then to Brother Silvester. When the latter received it, he immediately set himself to praying. And while praying he quickly had God's answer. And he went out at once to Brother Masseo and said: "The Lord says you are to tell Brother Francis this: that God has not called him to this state only on his own account, but that he may reap a harvest of souls and that many may be saved through him."

After this Brother Masseo went back to St. Clare to know what she had received from God. And she answered that both she and her companion had the very same answer from God as Brother Silvester.

Brother Masseo therefore returned to St. Francis. And the Saint received him with great charity: he washed his feet and prepared a meal for him. And after he had eaten, St. Francis called Brother Masseo into the woods. And there he knelt down before Brother Masseo, and baring his head and crossing his arms, St. Francis asked him: "What does my Lord Jesus Christ order me to do?"

Brother Masseo replied that Christ had answered both Brother Silvester and Sister Clare and her companion and revealed that "He wants you to go about the world preaching, because God did not call you for yourself alone but also for the salvation of others."143

The same incident is reported in Bonaventure's Major Life. It adds nothing new. This is examined in the section on the Canticle of Brother Sun.
B. Clare, The Bride Of Christ  
(Francis, the Skillful Agent of the Groom)

Clare was the third of five children. Her mother, while praying for a safe delivery, heard a voice say to her, "O Lady, do not be afraid, for you will joyfully bring forth a clear light that will illuminate the world." This may be compared to another woman who had heard, "Do not be afraid... and behold you will conceive a son..." The child was named Chiara or Clare, the clear or bright one. She grew up during a period of great turbulence and violence. Lord Ranieri de Bernardone of Assisi, the eighteenth witness at the canonization process, stated that he had many times asked her to marry him. Clare was noted for her holiness of life and generosity to the poor, even before her "conversion." Her education and intelligence are more difficult to evaluate. Taken together, the collection of Clare's writings is quite small. The Rule, four Letters to Blessed Agnes of Prague, The Testament, Blessing, and a letter to a Sister named Ermentrude of Bruges, are the writings which are attributed to Clare. Within these writings there are four different styles. This indicates that Clare probably used various secretaries and consulted with canonists, theologians, and various sisters before writing. However, the consistency of style and elegance in the series of letters to Agnes of Prague, written over a period of nineteen years, indicate Clare as their sole author. She was not formally educated and probably received help in her writings. Clare's repeated quotations from the Canticle of Canticles and the Gospel of Matthew show a familiarity with scripture. In addition, the Legend of Saint Clare tells us: "although she was not educated in the liberal arts, she nevertheless enjoyed listening to the sermons of those who were, because she believed that a nucleus lay hidden in the text that she would subtly perceive and enjoy with relish. She knew what to take out of a sermon of any preacher that might be valuable to the soul..." This is evidence of a prodigy's memory, as there was no library at San Damiano.

The conversion experience of Clare reveals a great deal concerning the relationship of Francis and Clare. In the following paragraphs those sections of the process of canonization which speak of Clare's progress in spiritual growth will be analyzed. The twelfth witness at the
canonization of St. Clare, Sister Beatrice, the natural sister of St. Clare, stated that "Saint Francis heard of her (Clare's) holiness and went many times to preach to her, so that the virgin Clare acquiesced to his preaching . . . ."\textsuperscript{148} The implication here is that Francis "initiated" the relationship and that Clare was "converted" by the preaching of Francis. The eighteenth witness at the canonization process, Lord Ranieri di Bernardone of Assisi, stated that "because she had a beautiful face, a husband was considered for her. Many of her relatives begged her to accept them as a husband, but she never wanted to consent to this; she did not even want to hear him; moreover she preached to him to despise the world."\textsuperscript{149}

One of the great difficulties in examining the relationship of Clare of Assisi with Francis has to do with the obscurity concerning dates in the life of St. Clare. It is known that she entered religious life at the age of 18.\textsuperscript{150} Although it cannot be determined for certain when and how Clare and Francis first met, Armstrong suggests Clare heard Francis preach in the cathedral of San Rufino in 1210 when Clare would have been about 16. Clare's family lived directly opposite the cathedral. Her uncle had made arrangements for her to marry about this time.\textsuperscript{151} Longpré states that Clare's family tried to marry her off twice during the period 1205-1210, but she refused to cooperate. She, of course, would have been between the ages of twelve to seventeen.\textsuperscript{152}

It is noteworthy that Clare was considered beautiful and had many suitors. Clare's determination is evident in the fact that she would not even hear of their proposals, and with Franciscan simplicity preached on despising the world to at least one.

The nineteenth witness at the canonization, Pietro de Damiano, stated that:

\textit{... her Father, Mother, and relatives wanted her to marry magnificently, according to her nobility, to someone great and powerful. But the young girl, at that time about seventeen or so, could not be in any way convinced because she wanted to remain in her virginity and live in poverty, as she had demonstrated, since she had sold her inheritance and gave it to the poor.} \textsuperscript{153}
The opposition of the male members of Clare's family to her religious vocation was fierce. There were seven Knights, "noble and powerful." They arrived at the Benedictine convent of San Paolo where Francis and the brothers had placed her temporarily after her tonsure. A papal bull granted numerous privileges to the nuns including asylum and forbidding violence under the pain of excommunication. "Therefore in San Paolo St. Clare was safe from any violent reaction on the part of her family." This was providential because when her uncle and brothers arrived, they marched into the chapel where Clare was praying and attempted to drag her away. Clare clung to the altar cloths and showed them her tonsure. "In no way did she acquiesce, neither letting them take her from that place nor remaining with them." So great was this propensity for violence that when Clare's sister, Agnes, joined her in the convent, Clare's Uncle Monaldo gained entrance and with armed men pounced on the young girl, after gaining entrance to the convent by subterfuge. They carried off the young girl leaving locks of her hair and pieces of her dress in the briars. Clare, falling to her knees in prayer, asked for a miracle. Agnes became so heavy "you would think she had eaten lead all night." When Clare caught up with the abductors, they became as gentle as lambs and returned peacefully to their homes leaving Agnes with Clare.

Sister Pacifica di Guelfuccio of Assisi, a witness at the canonization of Clare, states that she never saw Clare's father. This is strange because she lived across the Piazza from Clare's family home. The logical conclusion is that Clare's father Ugolino had passed away by the time Clare went to Francis on Palm Sunday, 1212, or was an invalid. Her uncle was the head of the clan, but it is strange that nothing is said of Clare's father. This, however, is seemingly contradicted by the testimony of Pietro di Damiano, the nineteenth witness at the canonization who said he also lived near Clare's home and knew her and her father, Lord Favarone, who was noble, great, and powerful. The witness noted there were seven knights in Clare's family.

Conrad Harkin suggests that "Francis had seen what avarice had done to his own father: the preoccupation with money, usury, dishonesty, violence, arrogance, blindness of spiritual values. It would be his mother who would break his chains, set him free, and make him truly 'Francisco.'" In like manner, it may be presumed that the obsession with power

111
so obvious in Clare's uncle must have made Francis' message of peace all the more attractive. When Clare calls Francis "Father" which she does twenty-four times in her writings, it conveys that Francis was indeed a spiritual father to her.\textsuperscript{160}

This image of Francis as father was probably reinforced by the 13 or 14 year difference in age between Francis and Clare. This position of Francis as spiritual father to Clare will be developed in the next section.

The opposition of the feminine side of Clare's family to her vocation may not have been as strong as her father's. Her mother, after she became a widow, and a younger sister also entered Clare's convent.\textsuperscript{161} Clare showed strength and determination. She would not be dominated. She would be free to choose. Francis showed fatherly love, concern, and prudence by placing Clare in a cloister which had received broad rights of asylum under pain of excommunication.\textsuperscript{132}

The twentieth witness at the process of canonization, Ioanni de Ventura, a watchman at the home of Clare, stated that, "while she was still in her father's house she wore a rough garment under her dress." He also said "she fasted, prayed, and did other pious deeds as he had seen, and that she had been inspired by the Holy Spirit from the beginning." He also said, "Lady Clare, hearing St. Francis had chosen the way of poverty, proposed in her heart to do the same thing." So she was tonsured by St. Francis. When her relatives wished to drag her away from the church, she showed them her tonsured head. Then she went to San Damiano where she became mother and teacher of the Order of San Damiano and she begot many sons and daughters in the Lord Jesus Christ, as is seen today.

This witness sees Clare's vocation as being "inspired by the Holy Spirit from the beginning."\textsuperscript{163} Celano refers to Francis' prophecy concerning Clare's coming to the convent of San Damiano as "being inspired by the Holy Spirit."\textsuperscript{164} Therefore, Clare can be seen as a "spouse of the Holy Spirit," one of Francis' terms for Mary.\textsuperscript{165}

It would be useful to examine at this point the interactions of Francis and Clare during Clare's "conversion" experience as found in the Legend of St. Clare. This Legend is the official biography of Clare, written as part of the official process of canonization, based on the testimony of those who knew her.

The following description of Clare's conversion is taken from the Legend of Saint Clare. The Legend is an official
biography undertaken, as was the custom, by one familiar with
the data gathered during the canonization process, to
establish Clare's sanctity either through personal interviews
of eye witnesses or reviewing the transcripts of official
ecclesiastical investigations. This section contains poetry.

Brother Buon-Biovanni, the author of a poetic exposition of
a moralistic type of spiritual literature, the Anticerberus,
has been suggested as the author. 166

Because of the fact that this description of the earliest
interactions of Francis and Clare are based on eyewitness
reports, it is quoted at length. Many historians attribute
the work to Thomas of Celano writing around 1255 or 1256. 167

... Finally, when her family desired that she be
married in a noble way, she would in no way consent, but,
feigning that she would marry a mortal at a later date,
she entrusted her virginity to the Lord.

Such were the offerings or her virtue in her
paternal home, such the beginnings of the Spirit, such
the preludes of her holiness. As a chest of so many
perfumes, even though closed, reveals its content by its
fragrance; so she unknowingly began to be praised by the
mouth of her neighbors and, when the true recognition of
her secret deeds appeared, the account of her goodness
was spread about among the people.

Hearing of the then celebrated name of Francis,
who, like a new man, was renewing with new-virtues the way
of perfection forgotten by the world, she was moved by
the Father of the spirits, 168 -- Whose initiatives each
one had already accepted although in different ways - and
immediately desired to see and hear him. No less did he
desire to see and speak with her, impressed by the
wide-spread fame of so gracious a young lady, so that, in
some way, he, who was totally longing for spoil and [who]
had come to depopulate the kingdom of the world, would be
also able to wrest this noble spoil from the evil world
and win her for his Lord.

He visited her and she more frequently him,
moderating the times of their visits so that this divine
pursuit could not be perceived by anyone nor objected to
by gossip. For, with only one close companion
accompanying her, the young girl, leaving her paternal
home, frequented the clandestine meetings with the man of
God, whose words seemed to her to be on fire and whose deeds were seen to be beyond the human.

The Father Francis encouraged her to despise the world, showing her by his living speech how dry the hope of the world was and how deceptive its beauty.

He whispered in her ears of a sweet espousal with Christ, persuading her to preserve the pearl of her virginal purity for that blessed Spouse Whom Love made man. Why dwell on many things? The virgin did not withhold her consent for very long, because of the insistent most holy father and his role as a skillful agent of the most faithful Groom.

Immediately an insight into the eternal joys was opened to her at whose vision the world itself would become worthless, with whose desire she would begin to melt, [and] for whose love she would begin to yearn for heavenly nuptials. Burning with a heavenly fire, she so thoroughly condemned the glory of earthly vanity that nothing of the applause of the world would ever cling to her affections. Trembling with fear at the allurements of the flesh, she already proposed to be ignorant of the transgression of the marriage bed, and desired to make of her body a temple for God alone and strove by her virtue to be worthy of marriage with the great King.

Then she committed herself thoroughly to the counsel of Francis, placing him, after God, as the guide of her journey. Her soul relied on his sacred admonitions and received whatever he said of the good Jesus with a warm heart. She was already troubled by the tinsel of an ornate world and considered as almost dung everything acclaimed by the world, in order that she might be able to gain Christ. 169

Quickly, so that the mirror of her unblemished mind might not be stained any further by the dust of the world or that mundane contamination might not ferment in unleavened youth, the kind father hurried to lead Clare from the dark world.

The Solemnity of the Day of the Palms was at hand when the young girl went with a fervent heart to the man of God, asking [him] about her conversion and how it should be carried out. The father Francis told her that on the day of the feast, she should go, dressed and adorned, together with the crowd of people, to [receive]
a palm, and, on the following night, leaving the camp 170 she should turn her worldly joy into mourning 171 the Lord's passion.

Therefore, when Sunday came, the young girl, thoroughly radiant with festive splendor among the crowd of women, entered the church with the others. Then something occurred that was a fitting omen: as the others were going [to receive] the palms, while Clare remained immobile in her place out of shyness, the Bishop, coming down the steps, came to her and placed a palm in her hands. On that night, preparing to obey the command of the saint, she embarked upon her long desired flight with a virtuous companion. Since she was not content to leave by way of the usual door, marveling at her strength, she broke open-with her own hands -- that other door that is customarily blocked by wood and stone.

And so she ran to Saint Mary of the Portiuncula, leaving behind her home, city, and relatives. There the brothers, who were observing sacred vigils before the little altar of God, received the virgin Clare with torches. There, immediately after rejecting the filth of Babylon, she gave the world "a bill of divorce." 172 There, her hair shorn by the hands of the brothers, she put aside every kind of fine dress. Was it not fitting that an Order of flowering virginity be awakened in the evening or in any other place than in the place of the one, the first and most worthy of all, who alone is Mother and Virgin. This is the place in which a new army of the poor, under the leadership of Francis, took its joyful beginnings, so that it might be clearly seen that this was the Mother of mercies who brought to birth both Orders in her dwelling place.

After she received the insignia of holy penance before the altar of the blessed Virgin and, as if before the throne of this Virgin, the humble servant was married to Christ, Saint Francis immediately led her to the church of San Paolo to remain there until the Most High would provide another place.

But after the news reached her relatives, they condemned with a broken heart the deed and proposal of the virgin and, banding together as one, they ran to the place, attempting to obtain what they could not. They employed violent force, poisonous advice, and flattering
promises, trying to persuade her to give up such a worthless deed that was unbecoming to her class and without precedence in her family. But, taking hold of the altar cloths, she bared her tonsured head, maintaining that she would in no way be torn away from the service of Christ. With the increasing violence of her relatives, her spirit grew and her love, provoked by injuries, provided strength. So, for many days, even though she endured an obstacle in the way of the Lord, and her own [relatives] opposed her proposal of holiness, her spirit did not crumble and her fervor did not diminish. Instead, amid words and deeds of hatred, she molded her spirit anew in hope until her relatives, turning back, were quiet.173

Several things may be noted. The author emphasizes the "violent force, poisonous advice, and flattering promises" of her family. This escalates to "increasing violence" met with "strength" and "spirit" and "love." Armstrong notes that the term "skillful agent of the most faithful groom," found in this passage really does not apply.174 "Usually the groom or his agent would discuss terms with the bride's parents or agent." It would be "highly unlikely" that the bride would be approached directly.175 It is interesting that Francis is "Father Francis." The conversion experience of Clare shows Francis and Clare as spiritual father and spiritual daughter. Clare, like Mary, is brought into her relationship with Christ by the Holy Spirit. Francis and Clare rejected their natural fathers for spiritual fathers.176

What emerges then is the image of a serious, attractive, intelligent, and devout young woman who could have had the world at her feet. The repressive anti-feminine laws had not yet blanketed Europe.177 Clare's act of turning away from power, prestige, and wealth, and joining herself to a group of outcasts, has monumental meaning when considered in the context of medieval ambivalence towards women.178 As an Italian noblewoman Clare could have benefited from the new styles of living available to the aristocracy.179 Even in an established religious community of women she could have enjoyed a life of ease befitting her station in life.180 Clare's renunciation of worldly values reveals a strong, thoroughly convinced, and heroic woman who shattered many of the traditional religious stereotypes by writing her own
religious rule and freeing her convent from the socioeconomic foundations considered indispensable in the ecclesiastical world at the time.\footnote{181}

On Palm Sunday, March 18, 1212, when young ladies of Assisi customarily dressed in their finest and processed to the Bishop for a palm branch, Clare hung back, prompting him to come to her. Armstrong states that "the refusal of Clare to go to the Bishop and his coming to her was a symbolic gesture suggesting her renunciation of the social conventions of the time with all the vanity and appeal to wealth with which they were imbued, and the Bishop's awareness and reverence of the movement of God within her calling her to accept the palm of martyrdom in imitation of . . . Christ."\footnote{182} Di Ciaccia sees the carrying of the olive palm to Clare by the Bishop of Assisi on Palm Sunday as a "mystical espousal," an act equivalent to Francis' stripping himself and proclaiming God his Father.\footnote{183} This sign of the rejection of worldly values can also be seen as a sign of mystical betrothal because it foreshadows the tonsuring of Clare that evening by Francis, the tonsure being a symbol of sacrifice which unites a person with divinity.\footnote{184}

A new lifestyle was adopted by Saint Clare, and young women rushed to join her at San Damiano, where there was particular emphasis on the enclosure and poverty. The enclosure was not imposed from higher-up, nor did they adapt it from older orders, but it was part of a new life-style which Clare made her own.\footnote{185} Moreover, the spiritual bond between Clare and her "Poor Ladies" and Francis and his brothers was considered essential.

What motivated Francis to lead Clare to this radical decision? In Chapter 8 of Celano's Second Life, one reads that, early in his new life, he begged in French for oil for the Church of St. Damiano and, having gotten it, prophesied before all in French that there would be a monastery of holy virgins of Christ who would be especially honored and venerated with special reverence. Francisco Di Ciaccia sees in Francis' gathering of stones for the rebuilding of the Church of San Damiano while singing in French and while enduring the ridicule of the children of Assisi who pelted him with stones, the ultimate act of courage that confirmed Francis as the knight, the hero, whose spiritual journey was an adventure greater than that of any of the King Arthur's knights. Indeed, Francis' use of French on these occasions
may be seen as moments of supreme spiritual joy. The French language, which may have been the first language of his mother, may have been symbolic to Francis of his mother's love or the joyful feelings of childhood. In Second Celano, the Holy Spirit foretold that the Holy Order of Virgins was to be established at San Damiano, which, like a polished mass of living stones, was one day to be brought there for the restoration of the heavenly house. Lady Clare, for her part, responded with great ardor and daring. That Francis should have such a great effect on a young woman noted for her holiness of life is striking. She was later to write, "After I came to know the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ through his servant, Francis, no pain has been too bothersome, no penance too severe, no weakness has been hard." 

Clare mentions Francis twenty-eight times in her Testament. It was to Francis that she and her sisters promised poverty and obedience. It was Francis who prepared the little sisters' home and settled them. It was Francis who taught them by word and example and tested their vocations. It was Francis who had a special concern and care for them and who, after death, was their intercessor with God.

Lady Bona, the seventeenth witness in the process of Clare's canonization, tells that many times she accompanied her to speak to Saint Francis, and that Clare and Lady Bona went secretly so as not to be seen by Clare's parents. As the witness adds, when Clare entered religious life, she was a prudent young girl of eighteen who always stayed in the house, hidden, not wanting to be seen by those who passed in front of the house. It is apparent that Francis must have set fire to her deepest longings for God. As noted in the Legend of Clare, Clare was "moved by the Father of the Spirits . . . ." "She (Clare) immediately desired to see and hear him (Francis). No less did he (Francis) desire to see and speak with her, impressed as he was by the widespread fame of so gracious a young lady."

So great was Francis' confidence in Clare that he sent a Brother Stephen who was afflicted with madness to her. Following the orders of Saint Francis, she made the sign of the cross over Brother Stephen and allowed him to sleep for a short time in the place where she prayed. He returned to Francis healed. This can be seen as a sign of God's blessing on Francis and Clare's cooperation.
In Chapter 16 of The Little Flowers, when Francis was assaulted with doubts about whether he should give himself completely to prayer or to preach, he sent Brother Masse to Clare to ask her and a devout companion to pray that it might be revealed what would be best. Through Clare and her companion (and also Brother Silvester), God revealed that Francis was to go about the world preaching. This is a profound example of spiritual friendship. It demonstrates the profound trust and respect Francis had for Clare as well as the profound understanding Clare had of Francis. Clare, Francis' convert, became his nurturer in the spiritual life.

C. SIGNS OF CONVERSION IN FRANCIS' AND CLARE'S RELATIONSHIP

Francis' stripping himself was more than an act of adolescent rebellion. His love of vanities and pomp was symbolized by his expensive and showy clothing. To remove it publicly was to symbolize his spiritual rebirth. This was all the more so because of Francis' difficulties with his father. Ignace Lepp asserts that, "The noblest of all forms of human interaction and the only one capable of dissolving our loneliness is friendship." In friendship we discover and reveal what we are and what we are capable of becoming. The mutually enriching opportunity enables each friend to extend love more easily to the whole of humanity, even to all of reality.

In the Testament Clare recorded how the experience of Francis' direction affected her:

After the most high heavenly Father saw fit in his mercy and grace to enlighten my heart that I should do penance according to the example and teaching of our most blessed father, Francis, a short while after his conversion. I, together with a few sisters whom the Lord had given me after my conversion, willingly promised him obedience, as the Lord gave us the light of his grace, through his wonderful life and teaching.

Such profound trust demonstrates a relationship based on a well-founded respect.
Margaret Carney has pointed out that what Clare describes in her writing is not so much an obedience to a concept, but a relationship which embraces Christ as the way, with Francis as the guide, and the sisters as fellow pilgrims.\textsuperscript{195}

McInally and Wood see Francis' empowering of Clare at that time as a revolutionary act:

Francis was probably the first founder of a female community who believed that women should govern themselves. In chapter eleven of his Rule of 1223 for his Friars, Francis warns them against "entering the convents of nuns." This was not a cautious warning against impropriety, but rather a clear statement of noninterference in the governing of women communities. This is another revolutionary decision for the times; and a reversal of tradition.\textsuperscript{196}

Cuthbert Hess notes that the Franciscans captivated the 13th century with their "Christlike freedom."\textsuperscript{197} Clearly, Francis expected this freedom should be shared by Franciscan women.

It would be an error to read too much of a negative attitude into Francis' dealings with women.\textsuperscript{198} Armstrong agrees. He notes that modern writers have imaginatively romanticized Francis' relationship with Clare of Assisi. These authors, building on the meager facts of the earlier biographical tradition, tend to overshadow her role in the Franciscan tradition.\textsuperscript{199} In reality, Clare expressed the Franciscan message with a woman's sensitivity, intuition, and resilience.\textsuperscript{200} Her femininity expressed in a most important way the universality of the charisma of Saint Francis, and accentuated its rich and enduring qualities.\textsuperscript{201} It was through Clare that Francis' teaching, in its most authentic form, reached the world.\textsuperscript{202} Francis, while accepting Clare and her sisters as equals whose lives were free to pursue contemplation and the mystical graces, recognized that religious women had special insights and gifts.\textsuperscript{203}

The relationship of Francis and Clare can be characterized by sentiments of sweetness and affection difficult to find in the lives of the saints.\textsuperscript{204} This friendship enriched Franciscan spirituality with both masculine and feminine insights. Francis' relationship with Clare enriched the Church with what Vauchez has called a
"feminization of sanctity." Indeed, the relationship of Francis and Clare illustrates reaction against the previous practice of the Church in completely separating men and women.

Because Francis was twelve years older than Clare, their relationship may be compared to that of father and daughter. Francis was able to contemplate Clare with benevolent and innocent eyes. Francis loved Clare with a love and wisdom which was free of fear and ignorance. In the friendship of Francis and Clare is a reflection of Christ and His mother. The love of Francis and Clare converged in the love of God.

This was a truly spiritual relationship, one characterized by freedom of spirit.

By comparing Francis' attitude with the widespread misogyny of the time, it is evident that the relationship of Francis and Clare was without the crystallization of attitudes such as possessiveness, paternalism, or male superiority so prevalent at the time. On Clare's part it was a relationship without fear, distrust, or doubt. The friendship of Francis and Clare was based on the motivation of the love of Christ. Like his relationship with Lady Jacoba, the relationship of Francis and Clare transcended the prejudices of the time. This relationship was the basis of an ever deepening understanding of Francis' teaching by Clare.

This friendship is one of the proofs of the faithfulness of Clare and her sisters to the central role of poverty in the teaching of Francis. Thus, Clare testifies:

Therefore, I, Clare, a handmaid of Christ and of the Poor Sisters of San Damiano, although unworthy - and the little plant of our holy father, consider with my sisters so lofty a profession, and the command of such a father and also the frailty of some others, that we feared in ourselves after the passing of Our Holy Father Francis, who was our pillar (of strength) and after God, our one consolation and support. Time and again, we willingly bound ourselves to our Lady, most holy poverty, that after my death, the sisters and those to come will never turn away from her.

Clare clearly realized that a life lived without possessions frees one to enter more profoundly into God's life through prayer. "Oh, God centered poverty," Clare wrote in
her first letter to Agnes of Prague, "Oh, blessed poverty who bestow eternal riches on those who possess and desire you, God promises the kingdom of heaven and offers indeed, eternal glory and blessed life." This understanding resulted in one specific activity by which Clare witnessed to her solidarity with Saint Francis -- the writing of the Rule of Clare. This Rule was the development of the way of life which encouraged the Poor Ladies in poverty as did the many writings he gave them. Clare realized that the Franciscan Vision that had been entrusted to her was in danger as long as the Poor Ladies had to obey the hodgepodge of rules that had been forced on the sisters. She submitted her own Rule to Gregory IX, but was turned down. She did no better with Innocent IV until 1247 when he promulgated the Clare’s Rule as a canonical basis for their life.

Faced with the fact that the "form of life" had no juridical standing, Francis, in 1215, convinced Clare to take the title of Abbess. She then appealed to Innocent III and obtained a privilege of poverty whereby her monastery of San Damiano would not be forced into the benefice system or be deterred from its immediate dependence upon Divine Providence. It is noted that Pope Innocent was deeply moved by Clare's unusual request and drafted the document with his own confirming hand.

In 1218, after Cardinal Hugolino had been appointed Papal Legate for Lombardy and Tuscany, he received orders from Pope Honorius III to exempt all new convents of women from local diocesan control. He did this by creating a Benedictine/Cistercian Rule for these convents. Ernest Gallant Smith observed that there were many elements in the Benedictine observance useful to Clare. Sister Marie Aimee of Christ notes in Clare's use of Chapter 2 of the Rule of Saint Benedict (concerning the Abbot) she took whatever suited her and dropped the rest. However, crisis came about in 1228 when Hugolino, now Gregory IX, began conferring property on convents and removed them from dependence on the Friars' money. He failed, however to convince Clare and, after a hunger strike by Clare, was forced to confirm her privilege of poverty. Thus, Clare brought about the recognition of Francis' ideal. This understanding was brought about through "familiar solicitude and companionship."
Englebert states Clare "had the art of making herself loved, and was so persuasive that Francis, the cardinals, and the popes themselves always came round to her way of thinking." Saint Clare became very ill in 1250. The hour had come when she was to formulate a Rule for her daughters. Clare set down the *Form of Life of the Order of the Poor Sisters* with an exquisite charismatic precision all her own. In 1252 this Rule was approved by the Cardinal Protector Raynaldus, destined to be the Pope who would canonize her.

Finally, in 1253, Pope Innocent IV, completely won over to the cause of Clare after two providential meetings at San Damiano, gave full Apostolic approbation on August 9. A faithful Friar Minor was dispatched the next day to carry the Rule to the dying St. Clare in her poor dormitory at San Damiano.

Clare lived under her own fully approved Rule less than twenty-four hours, for on Monday, August 11, 1253, at early dawn, she died. Clare thus became the first woman to write a rule for religious women, a courageous act considering the struggles she had already been through, and her own poor health which had confined her to bed for years. As Father Cuthbert points out, "the Franciscan movement would have been less inspiring had it lacked Saint Clare." She was truly "The Lady Poverty" of her age. For, as the Legend of Saint Clare recounts:

Virgins hasten after her example to keep themselves as they are for Christ. Married women strive to live more cloistered lives. The eager crowd of youths is incited to take part in the stainless conflicts, and is urged on by the hardy examples of the weaker sex to spurn the weakness of the flesh . . . all wish to have a share in the angelic life which has become resplendent through Clare.

Clare's lowly struggle to defend Francis' ideas in a masculine world ended in triumph. We see an example of this in her teaching others to develop a life of prayer only by focusing attention on Christ. She writes in the second letter to Agnes, "Oh, most noble Queen, gaze upon him, consider him, contemplate him as you desire to imitate him." She repeats this idea eighteen years later. "Gaze upon the mirror each day and continually examine your face in it that you may adorn
your face in it, that you may adorn yourself within and without with beautiful roses." While mirror literature was quite common, Clare brings to it that Christological dimension she received from Francis and the feminine quality she brought to the Franciscan movement. This mirror image found in Clare's writing is reflected in Francis' Canticle of Brother Sun as will be demonstrated.

Clare's role in the early history of the Franciscan Movement was also recognized in unofficial writings. An important text is contained in The Legend of Perugia, 109, in which she is described as: "Lady Clare, the First Flower of the Poor Sisters of San Damiano in Assisi, the zealous imitator of Saint Francis in preserving the poverty of the Son of God . . . ." 229

Clare's rule states: "Our visitor should always be of the order of Friar's Minor." She then asks for two priests and two brothers from the Order to provide temporal and spiritual assistance for the sisters. 230 As the number of friars and convents of Clarisses grew, and the friars' time became more and more occupied in various employments, the task and responsibility of looking after the Clarisses became increasingly arduous. 231

By the time the Second Life of Celano was written, a profound change had taken place in the attitude of The "Community," or moderates, toward Clare and her sisters. The friars were increasingly divided between those brothers who believed in the old tradition of a strict observance of the Rule and keeping alive the wishes of Saint Francis, and the "Community" or Conventuals as they came to be called, who believed in progress and development. They realized the Order had changed a great deal since its foundation, but they regarded such change as a sign that the Order was adapting to the needs of the world and of the Church. 232 Thomas simply repeats the praise of the Poor Ladies, but only as a caution for the brothers to avoid a too frequent association with religious women, something that worried the superiors of the Order at the time. It was felt that too much attention to Clare might distract from Francis' role as founder of the Poor Ladies. The writers of the First Order singled out Francis as the one and only founder of the Monastery of San Damiano and, by implication, of all other monasteries of nuns. 233
The moderates began to distance themselves from the Poor Ladies and played down Clare's influence on the development of the male branch of the Order. Francis, on the other hand, had wished that the friars should look after the Poor Ladies both spiritually and materially.

Clare stated that:

> When the blessed Francis saw, however, that, although we were physically weak and frail, we did not shirk deprivation, poverty, hard work, trial, or the shame or contempt of the world -- rather, we considered them as great delights, as he had frequently examined us according to the example of the saints and his brothers -- he greatly rejoiced in the Lord. And moved by compassion for us, he bound himself, both through himself and through his order, always to have the same loving care and special solicitude for us as for his own brothers.\(^{234}\)

Francis was going against the tenor of the times. Greater separation of men and women and the absence of women in the activities of their respective orders was increasingly common.\(^{235}\)

The Friars found the relationship with the Poor Ladies a great burden. In 1228, the Order of Preachers had gotten rid of their responsibility for the Dominicanesses and many Friars Minor wished to do the same.\(^{236}\) In many places where no friary existed the Friars and Sisters had to live in one building and the Friars assigned to duty with the Nuns were exempt from the ordinary observance and apostolic tasks assigned to their Brothers.\(^{237}\) The Friars resented this because they felt it immobilized them and kept them from the work they wanted to do.\(^{238}\)

Brother Leo, and those who felt the Franciscan Order was moving away from the moorings of poverty and simplicity which Francis had established and advocated, desired a closer relationship with the nuns and looked on Clare as a model and inspiration for fidelity to their primitive ideas, "... rivaling Saint Francis in maintaining inviolable the poverty of the Son of God."\(^{239}\)

Thus it is apparent that those who were closest to Francis recognized the important place of Clare and the Poor Ladies in the life of the Franciscan Order. One important
indication of Clare's influence on Francis is found in the Canticle of Brother Sun.

D. THE CANTICLE OF BROTHER SUN

According to Father van Asseldonk, a dream, or in the case of The Canticle of Brother Sun, a praise song, becomes an expression of synthesis and completion written at the end of his life, summing up all that was good in his life. The Canticle of Brother Sun is relevant because Clare and Mary are present in it. It would be useful to examine one particular passage: *Laudato si' mi' Signore, per sora luna e le stella in celu I 'ai formate clarite et pretiose et belle.*

"All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Moon and Stars, in heaven You formed (made) them clear (bright), precious and beautiful (fair)."

According to van Asseldonk, the term *made* (formed) has special meaning in the writings of Francis. He uses it when he writes of the excellence of the vocation of the follower of Christ, created and formed by God, in the image and likeness of his son the God-Man. Father van Asseldonk further points out that it would seem impossible for Francis to use the word "clarite" without thinking of Clare. LeClerq writes that the word "pretiose" (precious), takes on a sacred meaning in the context of the story of Clare driving off the Saracens with the Eucharist. Furthermore, the moon and the stars have a long history in religious writings symbolizing life and death, the unknown, feminine qualities, and maternity. Thus Clare's favorite images, light and reflection, are brought together by Saint Francis in the symbol of the moon. Dozzi points out that Clare uses a mirror, a feminine image of reflected light, twelve times in her writings. The term light is found once in Clare's Rule, twice in her Testament, twelve times in the process of canonization, twelve times in *The Legend of Saint Clare*. This connection with light is especially striking in the prophecy made to Clare's mother. "You will give birth to a light that will shine brilliantly in the world". The sign of the moon, a symbol of the sun's reflected light, can be seen as a beautiful poetic complement to one who saw Christ the Son of God reflected in the spiritual mirrors of her sisters' souls. This perfect reflection is possible because Clare abandoned herself completely to Christ her spouse. She was able to reflect Christ's pure love to others.
Father van Asseldonk believes that *cum*, or *con* and *per* (with and through), have special significance in the writings of Saint Francis, especially in *The Canticle of Brother Sun*. He teaches that *with* and *through* signify not only *together with*, but also *by means of*, so that the creatures become, for Francis, more fundamentally, instruments of his praise to the Most High. 248

Francis' humility was so great that he felt incapable or unworthy to praise the Most High God except through all creatures, above all, therefore, "together with," Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit and through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all of heaven and earth, the latter expressed in *The Canticle of Brother Sun* as "through all creatures." It may be that Francis is paying a most delicate compliment to Clare who mirrored the light of Christ to Francis in the days before his death.

As previously noted in Chapter four when discussing Francis' discretion in his relations with women, he had a deep fear of appropriating a relationship with a creature that belonged to God. An example of this is found in paragraphs 204 and 205 of *Second Celano* quoted in the primary sources at the beginning of this section. The positive side of this view of women and, indeed, of all creation, is reflected in *The Canticle of Brother Sun*. In it, Francis reveals his view of all creation, where all the elements are united or "fraternized" as brothers and sisters in one great family of equals, together with all who forgive and all who suffer and die with Sister Death.

Every creature is in a reciprocal relationship as brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of the only Father. As Christ rejected the false roles of hero and king while remaining faithful to the cross, so Francis overcame the temptation of exaggerated self-adulation and became a minor brother to all. 249

Oxilia notes that the personal pronoun "you" is often used and repeated with the words "Brother" and "Sister" which indicates a universal fraternal identification by Francis with the universality of God and the brotherhood of creation. 250

Father Oxilia has developed the thesis that if Christ is viewed as the Sun in the Canticle; i.e., the Sun of Justice (comparable to Phoebus-Phoebe), then following the Evangelist Saint John, Mary is Sister Moon who is comparable to Artemis-Diana, Persephone-Proserpina and the cosmic mother

127
Astarte. Oxilia expresses himself definitively that Clare is present in *The Canticle of Brother Sun* and for many reasons. In the first place Oxilia states that Clare, as the "first small plant" and the most loved and closest to Francis, is the "mother" that the Father cares for and reverences in San Damiano, where the canticle was written. Moreover, he finds it significant that the Italian word *clarite* is used in a poem of the Umbrian dialect. *Clarite* is a feminine gender plural adjective like the two words that follow *precious* and *beautiful*. Oxilia believes the Italian word "*clarite*" was invented by Francis. It would not be arbitrary to see Clare as the inspiration of this word. If Francis is another Christ, then Clare may be seen as being another Mary.

In *The Legend of Clare* is the statement "let . . . the women imitate Clare, the footprint of the Mother of God, a new leader of women." Armstrong notes that this comparison of Clare to Mary comes from all the sisters of San Damiano, as given in the acts of the canonization process, where they claimed that Clare was a perfect copy of the Mother of the Lord.

Father van Asseldonk declares that Francis was, after the Father of Mercies, father to Clare in the deepest experience of her being. From the beginning of his conversion, Francis considered Clare as living in the spirit of the Lord, foreseeing and prophesying her as the first plant, the first Marian-female incarnation of the words which came from the crucifix of San Damiano: "Francis, go and repair My Church." Consequently, Francis, in his prophetic vision "dreamed" of Clare as the one to fix (build) the House of the Lord, i.e. Holy Mother Church. Father van Asseldonk teaches that Francis was Father in the spirit to Clare, and was also mother to her in the same spirit:

It is by means of that same lived reality that we can clearly understand to what a vital degree the mystery of Marian maternity has been in reality, incarnated in the lives of Francis and Clare and illustrated in the rules they wrote for the Franciscan Order. We see confirmation of this Marian maternity in the process of canonization:

Then the witness began to think joyfully about the great and wonderful holiness of the Lady Clare. It seemed that the heavenly court was moving and preparing to honor this holy woman. Our most glorious lady, the
Blessed Virgin Mary, was especially preparing some of her garments for clothing this new saint. While the witness was lost in this thought and image, she suddenly saw with her own eyes a great multitude of virgins, all dressed in white with crowns on their heads, coming and entering through the door of that room where the holy mother Clare was lying. Among these virgins there was one greater, above and beyond what could be described, far more beautiful than all the others, and wearing a crown upon her head larger than all the others. Above her crown she had a golden cluster in the form of a thurible from which such a brilliance came forth it seemed to illumine the entire house.

These virgins approached the bed of the holy Lady Clare. That virgin who seemed greater at first covered her bed with the most delicate cloth so fine that, even though she was covered with it, Lady Clare nonetheless saw through its great delicacy.

Then the virgin of virgins, who was greater, inclined her face above the virgin Saint Clare, or above her breast, so that the witness could not discern one from the other. After this was done, they all disappeared.

As we have just seen according to this witness, it became impossible to distinguish between Clare and the Blessed Virgin. The same witness notes that "She did not believe there had been another woman of greater holiness than the Lady Saint Clare other than Our Lady, the Blessed Virgin Mary." Clare as the feminine symbol of Francis' message was indeed the first plant of Saint Francis. Aniello Calcara refers to Saint Clare as the twin soul of Saint Francis. Francis himself said: "I tell you the truth, dearest Brother,
I would not recognize any woman if I looked her in the face except two. The face of the one and of the other are known to me, but I know no other."\(^{256}\) Surely one of these was Clare. In a very real sense, she was the embodiment of Lady Poverty for Francis, as well as friend and helpmate, shown to him by God, with whom he could share his dreams and later his doubts. In a time when the Friars sought more and more relaxation, she defended poverty against the highest authorities of the Church. At a time when the Friars became more divided, she was the defender of the reality of the message Francis had left. It may be concluded that in an era of great social change, Francis contributed toward the integration of the poor and marginalized. His was a revolution of reconciliation rather than rebellion. Saint Clare, in accepting the charisma of Francis, changed religious life and directed a multitude of poor and disenfranchised toward the life of the Church.\(^{257}\) As Celano observes:

Though their father gradually withdrew his bodily presence from them, he nevertheless gave them his affection in - the Holy Spirit by caring for them. For when the Saint recognized by many signs of highest perfection that they had been proved and were ready to make every sacrifice for Christ and endure every difficulty without ever wanting to depart from Christ's holy commandments, he firmly promised them and others who would profess poverty in a similar way of life that he would always give them help and counsel and the counsel of his brothers. This he always diligently carried out as long as he lived, and when he was close to death, he emphatically commanded that it should always be so, saying the one and the same Spirit had led the Brothers and the Poor Ladies out of the world. At times the brothers wondered that Francis did not visit the holy servants with his corporal presence more often, and he would say, 'Do not believe, dearest brothers, that I do not love them perfectly. For if it were a fault to cherish them in Christ, would it have not been a greater fault to have united them to Christ? Indeed not to have called them would not have been a wrong: not to care for them once they have been called would be the greatest unkindness. But I give you an example, that as I have done to you, so you also should do. I do not want anyone
to offer himself of his own accord to visit them, but I command that unwilling and most reluctant brothers be appointed to take care of them, provided they be spiritual men, proved by a worthy and long religious life. 258

Clare mentions Francis repeatedly in her letters, her rule, her testament, and her final blessing. 259 She always speaks of him with respect. Indeed, there is something touching about the restraint these two people show in their relationship toward each other. The passage just quoted from First Celano shows the very real admiration and affection Francis obviously felt for Clare. This relationship, so different from the romantic image projected by some modern movies about Francis and Clare, shows a mature spiritual relationship based on love of God. 260

Octavian Schmucki, in his analysis of the "Canticle of Exhortation to Saint Clare and Her Sisters" looks at verses 5-6: "Those who are weighed down by sickness and the others who are wearied because of them, all of you: bear it in peace. For you will sell this fatigue at a very high price and each one of you will be crowned queen in heaven with the Virgin Mary." Schmucki tells us that, in a few lines, Francis deals "with the danger that one can choose the cloistered life but still long for the world." 261 It is an interior openness to God rather than physical seclusion which makes life different from the "outside." 262 It is this that makes the life of the Poor Ladies superior and is the reason for the special love that Francis has for them. 263 An example of that love is clearly seen in the episode in The Legend of Perugia entitled "A Prediction for Sister Clare" quoted at the beginning of this section. Even in pain and death Francis reached out to Clare.

As Margaret Carney has pointed out, the relationship of Francis and Clare is, above all, a relationship that demonstrates the presence of Christ as grace. 264 Sabatier agrees with this analysis of the relationship of Francis and Clare as the following quote shows:

So pure, so little earthly, that on their first meeting they enter the most holy place, and once there the thought of any other union would not be merely indecent, but an impossibility . . . Clare sought Francis out and opened to him her heart. With that exaltation, 'a
union of candor and delicacy, which is woman's fine endowment, and to which she would more readily give free course if she did not too often divine the pitfalls of base passion and incredulity, Clare offered herself to Francis. By one of those invitations which often come to the very enthusiastic and very pure women, Clare had penetrated to the innermost depth of Francis' heart and felt herself inflamed with the same passion which burned in him.

Clare defended Francis not only against others, but also against himself. In those hours of dark discouragement which so often and so profoundly disturb the noblest souls and sterilize the grandest efforts, she was beside him to show the way. When he doubted his mission and thought of fleeing to the heights of repose and solitary prayer, it was she who showed him the ripening harvest with no reapers to gather it in. Yet this love by which at St. Damian Francis felt himself surrounded, frightened him at times. He feared that his death, making too great a void, would imperil the institution itself, and he took pains to remind the sisters that he would not always be with them.  

While recognizing Sabatier's tendency to romanticize, nevertheless, his analysis of Clare as being pure, candid, delicate, loyal, supportive, and loving rings true. Mulholland holds that the themes of romantic courtly love did not simply eulogize the ideals of chivalry, but were "the art forms of action and change" which encouraged mutual cooperation and a more humane treatment of women. There is apparent in Francis' interactions with Clare an application of the ideals of chivalry, which led to a relationship characterized by mutual respect and responsibility.

Clare's role in helping to create with Francis a new form of religious life is usually overlooked. Her life of enclosure, no less than the itinerant and/or eremitical life of the Friars, was based on absolute poverty, but expressed differently. As previously noted, Francis expressed the hope that the relationship he had with the Poor Ladies would be continued in The Form of Life Given To St. Clare and Her Sisters. This, sadly, did not occur. The struggle over the rule arose precisely because Church officials realized the practical implications of her enclosed Franciscan life and tried to mitigate its demands. What they did not grasp was
Clare's strong unwavering confidence in God, her loving Father, a love she had been taught by "Father Francis." While the friars were accepting one dispensation after another and were becoming increasingly entangled in legal interpretations, Clare fought for true poverty and persevered in the fight. She took the Gospel insights offered by her teacher and recast them in a new, more demanding form, thereby showing us, in her clear transparent way, the spirit of the Gospel love that animated her.

VIII. LADY JACOBA

Lady Jacoba di Settesoli was a member of an important Roman family. Her relationship with Francis reveals a warmth and a humor towards a woman on the part of Francis, and qualities of leadership and wisdom on the part of Jacoba.

A. OUR LADY AND THE LAMB

The following two incidents show the association of Jacoba with lambs and will be discussed in the section on Brother Jacoba, Brother Lamb:

1. Bonaventure, Major Life

Another time he was offered a present of a sheep at the Portiuncula and he accepted it gladly in his love of innocence and simplicity, two virtues which the image of a sheep naturally recalls. He exhorted the animal to give God praise and avoid offending the friars, and the sheep was careful to follow his instructions, just as if it realized the affection he had for it. If it was entering the church and heard the friars singing in the choir, it would go down on one knee spontaneously and bleat before the altar of our Lady, the Mother of the Lamb, as if it were trying to greet her. At the elevation during Mass, it would bow profoundly on bended knees and reproach those who were not so devout by its very reverence, while giving the faithful an example of respect for the Blessed Sacrament.
2. First Celano
(First Celano's Gift of a Lamb to Jacoba)

On another occasion while in Rome, St. Francis had a lamb with him which he kept out of reverence for the Lamb of God; and when he was leaving, he gave it to Lady Jacoba di Settesoli to keep. The lamb accompanied its mistress to church and stayed there with her, refusing to leave until she left, just as if the saint had trained it in its spiritual exercises. When she was late getting up in the morning, the lamb nudged her with its horns and roused her with its bleats, urging her to hurry and get to church. She was amazed and became very fond of the animal which had been a disciple of St. Francis and was now a master of the religious life.

The following episode deals with Lady Jacoba at the death of Francis. It will be examined in context with the story of the death of Francis in the Legend of Perugia which follows:

3. The Death of Francis

a. Second Celano

Of Lady Jacoba of Settesoli, equally renowned for her nobility and her sanctity in the city of Rome, had merited the privilege of a special love from St. Francis. It is not necessary for me to repeat unto her praise her illustrious origin, the dignity of her family, her great wealth, nor finally the wonderful perfection of her virtues, or her long continence as a widow. When therefore the saint lay in that illness that was to end all his suffering and bring to a most happy conclusion the happy course of his life, a few days before his death he wanted to send word to Rome for the Lady Jacoba, that if she wanted to see him whom she loved so ardently in this land of exile before he would go home to his fatherland, she should come with the greatest speed. A letter was written, a swift messenger was sought, and when one was found, he was gotten ready for the journey. Suddenly there was heard at the door the sound of horses, the noise of soldiers, and the crowd of a company of men. One of the companions, the one who had instructed the
messenger, went to the door and found her there whom they had wanted to summon from afar. He was completely astonished, ran very quickly to the saint, and not being able to contain himself for joy, said: "I have something good to tell you, Father." And the saint immediately said in quick reply: "Blessed be God, who has guided Lady Jacoba, our brother, to us. Open the door and bring her in, for our Brother Jacoba does not have to observe the decree against women."

There was a great rejoicing among the noble guests, and amid the rejoicing of spirit there was also a flowing of tears. And that nothing should be lacking to the miracle, the woman was found to have brought what the letter that had been previously written had contained about what should be brought for the father's burial. For God had seen to it that she brought the ashen-colored cloth with which to cover his dying body, also many candles, the cloth for his face, the little pillow for his head, a certain sweetmeat the saint had wanted to eat, and everything the spirit of this man had wanted. I want to tell the outcome of this true pilgrimage, lest I dismiss that noble pilgrim without consolation. A great multitude of nobles, especially the many devout people of the city, awaited the approaching birthday in death of the saint. But the saint was made stronger by the coming of these devout people from Rome, and it seemed for a little while that he would live a little longer. Wherefore that Lady ordered the rest of the company to leave, and only she herself with her children and a few attendants would remain. The saint said to her: "No, for I will depart on Saturday; on Sunday you may leave with all who have come with you." And so it happened. At the time he had foretold, he who had fought so hard in the church militant entered the church triumphant. I will pass over the concourse of people, the cries of rejoicing, the solemn ringing of the bells, the streams of tears; I will pass over the weeping of his sons, the sighs of those dear to him, the lamenting of his companions. I want only to speak of those things that pilgrim, deprived of the consolation of her father, did to be consoled.

She was led quietly, streaming with tears, to Francis, and his body was placed in her arms. "See,
said the vicar, "he whom you loved in life you shall hold in your arms in death." She wept hot tears over his body, wept aloud, and sighed deeply; and holding him in her arms and kissing him, she loosened the veil so that she could see him unhindered. Why should we add more? She looked upon that precious body in which also a precious treasure lay hidden, ornamented as it was with five pearls (The Stigmata). She saw that work that only the hand of the Almighty had wrought to the astonishment of the whole world, and filled with unaccustomed joy, she drew new life from her deceased friend. On the spot, she gave the advice that the unheard of miracle (The Stigmata) should not be hidden or covered over in any way, but that with prudent foresight it should be unveiled before the eyes of all. They then all eagerly ran to see the miracle and they found in truth what God had not done in like manner to every nation, and they wondered in astonishment. I break off my description, for I do not want to stammer over what I cannot explain.

John Frigia Pennates, who at that time was a young man and afterwards a proconsul of the Romans and a count of the papal palace, admitted to the doubts he had about it, but swore willingly to what at that time he and his mother had seen with their eyes and touched with their hands. Let the pilgrim now return to her fatherland, consoled with such unusual graces, and let us pass on to other things that happened after the death of Francis. 

Engelbert Grau states that Celano's story of Jacoba at the death of Francis is important because it is based on the witness of Jacoba's sons. Grau also notes that this episode serves as a balance to the severe admonition against "familiarity with women" found in Second Celano 112-114. 

The recounting of this episode, approximately three years after the completion of Second Celano, shows a continuing development in Celano's treatment of women in the life of Saint Francis. It would be useful at this point to look at the version of Francis' death found in The Legend of Perugia so that it can be contrasted with Celano's version:
b. The Last Visit Of "Brother Jacoba"
Legend of Perugia

One day blessed Francis called his companions and said to them: "You know how much Lady Jacoba di Settesoli has always been and still is attached to our Order. I believe that if you were to inform her of my condition it would be a great kindness to her and a great consolation. Write her to send you some of that grey-colored monastic material for a tunic, like the one the Cistercians manufacture in overseas countries. Have her also send some of that cake that she prepared for me many times when I was in Rome." The Romans called this cake made of almonds, sugar, or honey and other ingredients mostacciuolo. The lady was a very pious widow, related to the noblest and richest families of Rome. Through the merits and preaching of blessed Francis, she had received the gift of tears and fervor from God, to the extent that she seemed to be another Mary Magdalene.

The letter had just been written, as the saint had requested, and they were about to appoint a brother to deliver it, when suddenly there was a knock at the door. A brother went to open it, and there he found Lady Jacoba who had hastened from Rome to visit blessed Francis, the brother immediately returned to warn blessed Francis that Lady Jacoba had arrived to see him, accompanied by her son and several other persons. He said to Francis: "What shall we do, Father? Shall we allow her to enter and come to your bedside? As a matter of fact, by the will of the saint, it had long been prescribed that for the honor and dignity of this friary no woman was to enter the cloister. Blessed Francis answered: "That rule is not applicable to this lady whose great faith and devotion brought her from so great a distance." Ushered into the room, she began to weep profoundly. And marvel of marvels, she had brought a grey-colored shroud cloth with which to make a tunic, as well as everything she had been asked to bring in the letter. The brothers regarded with the keenest admiration the holiness of blessed Francis.

Lady Jacoba said to the brothers: "My brothers, I was about to begin to pray and in spirit I heard a voice say to me: Go and visit your father, blessed Francis. But
hurry; do not lose a moment, for if you delay, you will not find him alive. You will bring the required quantity of cloth to make him a tunic, and the ingredients for a particular cake. In addition, take a large quantity of wax for light and some incense also."

Now, blessed Francis had not mentioned incense in the letter. But the Lord had inspired this lady to bring it to recompense her and console her soul, and also that we might better know the great sanctity of this poor man whom the Lord wished to surround with so many honors at the moment of his death. He who had inspired the Magi to bring presents to honor the Infant, his well-beloved Son, at the time of his birth and poverty, also inspired this noble lady who lived so far away to come with presents to venerate and honor the body of his servant saint who cherished and loved the poverty of his well-beloved Son in life and in death with such love and fervor.

The lady made the cake the father had desired. But he hardly touched it, for with each day his strength waned, and he was nearing his end. She also had a great many candles made. These were to burn before the holy body after his death. With the material she brought, the brothers made for blessed Francis a tunic which served as a shroud. He himself ordered the brothers to sew sackcloth over it as a sign of most holy humility and poverty. And it so happened by the will of God that blessed Francis went to the Lord during the week Lady Jacoba had come.274

The Legend of Perugia is drawn from Manuscript 1046 of Perugia. In 1922 Ferdinand M. Delorme, determined to the satisfaction of Franciscan scholars that portions of it dated from 1311. It is now believed that these portions were copied directly from the writings of Brother Leo shortly before they were lost or destroyed.275

The differences between The Legend and Celano are those of style. In Celano's reedited version the characters are in sharper relief, his rendition is more refined. His story is less human; the supernatural is emphasized. In Celano the reader is without doubt that Jacoba's arrival is a miracle. Celano has taken the death of Francis from The Mirror of Perfection and "improved" it.276

138
It would be useful therefore to also examine briefly the version of the death of Francis as found in The Mirror of Perfection at this point.

c. The Mirror of Perfection
On The Food And Cloth He Wanted At His Death

One day at Saint Mary of the Angels, during blessed Francis' last illness which was to cause his death, he called his companions together and said, 'You know how the Lady Jacoba of Settesoli has been and is most faithful and devoted to our Order and to me. I am sure that she will regard it as a great favor and consolation if you inform her of my condition. Ask her especially to send me some plain ashen-colored cloth, and with it some of that sweetmeat that she has often made for me in the City.' (This is the sweetmeat which the people of Rome call mostaccioli, and is made of almonds, sugar, and other ingredients.) For the Lady Jacoba was a sincerely spiritual woman, and belonged to one of the noblest and richest families in the whole of Rome. Through the merits and preaching of blessed Francis she had received such grace from God that she seemed like another Magdalene, full of tears and devotion for the love and sweetness of Christ.

So the brethren wrote a letter as the Saint had instructed them, and one of the friars went to find a brother to take the letter to the lady. But suddenly there was a knock at the friary gate, and when one of the friars opened it, there stood the Lady Jacoba, who had come in great haste to visit blessed Francis. Directly he knew this, one of the friars hastened to blessed Francis and told him with much joy how the Lady Jacoba had arrived from Rome with her son and many other people to visit him. 'What shall we do, Father?' he inquired. 'Shall we allow her to enter and come to you?' (He asked this because in order to preserve good order and devotion at S. Mary's, blessed Francis had made a rule that no woman should enter the enclosure.) Blessed Francis replied, 'This rule need not be observed in the case of Lady Jacoba, whose faith and devotion have impelled her to travel here from such a distance.'
So Lady Jacoba came in to blessed Francis, and when she saw him, she wept. Wonderful to relate, she had brought ashen-colored cloth for a habit, and everything mentioned in the letter as though she had already received it. And she told the friars, "My brothers, while I was at prayer I was told in spirit, 'Go and visit your Father, blessed Francis. Hurry, and do not delay, for you will not find him alive if you wait long. And take with you this cloth for a habit, and such and such things, and make him some of that sweetmeat. Take with you also a large amount of wax for candles, and some incense.'" (All things, with the exception of the incense, had been mentioned in the letter that was about to be sent.)

So God, Who had guided the kings to go with gifts to honor His Son, also inspired this noble and holy lady to go with gifts to honor His best beloved servant on the day of his death, which was rather the day of his true birth. Then Lady Jacoba prepared the food that the holy Father had wished to eat, but he could only take a little of it because he was steadily growing weaker and drawing nearer to death. She also had many candles made to burn before his most holy body after death, and from the cloth the friars made him the habit in which he was buried. But he told the friars to sew him in sack-cloth as a sign of holy Humility and of the Lady Poverty. And during the week in which Lady Jacoba arrived, our most holy Father passed away to the Lord.

The Mirror of Perfection states that "through the merits and preaching" of St. Francis "she had received such grace from God that she seemed like another Magdalene, full of tears and devotion for the love and sweetness of Christ." The author also notes that Francis dispensed Jacoba from the "rule that no woman enter the enclosure" because of her "faith and devotion." The term Magdalene does not necessarily indicate that Lady Jacoba was a great sinner. The reason given for her resemblance to the Magdalene was "her tears and devotion for the love and sweetness of Christ." Father d'Alencon states that his research shows that Lady Jacoba was the widow of Gratianus Frangipani and that she had two sons, John and Gratianus, who was born after the death of his father. Records also mention a daughter-in-law, Saracena. It is interesting
that Francis allowed her to enter the enclosure because of her "faith and devotion."

All this would indicate that the version of Francis' death found in The Mirror of Perfection is the original one edited for the Treatise on Miracles to meet the needs of Celano's story line. Hess notes that it is evident from Celano's Treatise on Miracles 37 that Francis desired Lady Jacoba to visit him. This episode is repeated in The Mirror of Perfection, but Celano offers a more detailed version. The Legend of Perugia also includes a version of this event but it is without significant additional information. Sabatier rejected the view of the Bollandists that the episode could not be accepted as historically reliable because it violates the prescriptions of Francis himself. As Sabatier points out, why would the story have been invented?

Celano's editorial comments on Jacoba are noteworthy. He brings out that Jacoba is equally known for her nobility and holiness of life. He mentions her wealth, the dignity of her family, the "wonderful perfection of her virtues," and her long countenance as a widow "as well as the fact that she loved Francis ardently." It is taken into consideration that besides the Mirror of Perfection, Jacoba is only mentioned in the Little Flowers and the Legend of Perugia. As I have noted, the Little Flowers simply states that Lady Jacoba was present at one of Brother Giles' spiritual conversations. Celano's statement that Giles was a member of Francis' original group, puts Jacoba within Francis' most intimate circle. This is important because Franciscan scholars agree that the episode of Francis' death was revised from recollections of the first companions.

Urner notes that the account of the death of Francis in Celano's Treatise on Miracles has the freshness and urgency of an eyewitness account. Van Ortroy states "one senses the author tells what he has seen," but there is no evidence that Celano was present. Van Ortroy suggests "the form of the narration shows that Celano wrote it at the direction of the Roman woman (Jacoba) and that she was for the newborn order a devoted benefactress." The following episode from The Little Flowers is valuable according to Franciscan scholar Raphael Brown because of the "remarkable psychological insight and elegance" of the text.
d. Little Flowers
The Considerations on the Holy Stigmata
(Fourth Consideration):

... The Lady Jacoba dei Settesolli of Rome, who was the most prominent Lady in Rome in her time and was intensely devoted to St. Francis, saw and kissed them many times with the greatest reverence before St. Francis died and after he died, because she came from Rome to Assisi at the death of St. Francis as a result of a divine revelation. And it happened this way...

... And when they (the brothers) arrived at St. Mary, they carried him to the infirmary, and they laid him down there to rest. Then St. Francis called one of his companions and said to him: "Dearest Brother, God has revealed to me that I am going to live until a certain day and then die from this sickness, and you know that the Lady Jacoba dei Settesoli, who is very devoted to our Order, would be extremely sad if she knew about my death and was not present. So let us notify her that if she wants to see me alive, she should come here at once."

The friar answered: "You are right, Father; because of the great devotion she has for you, she would grieve intensely if she were not present at your death."

So St. Francis said: "Go and bring the inkhorn and pen and paper, and write as I tell you." And when the friar had brought them, St. Francis dictated the letter this way: "To the Lady Jacoba, servant of God, Brother Francis, the little poor man of Christ, sends his greetings in the Lord and fellowship in the Holy Spirit of Our Lord Jesus Christ. You must know, my very dear friend, that the Blessed Christ by His grace has revealed to me that my life will come to its end soon. So if you want to find me alive after you have seen this letter, set out and hasten to S. Mary of the Angels. For if you do not come by a certain day, you will not be able to find me alive. And bring with you some haircloth in which to wrap my body and the wax needed for the funeral. I also ask you to bring me some of the things to eat which you used to give me when I was sick in Rome."

And while this letter was being written, it was revealed to St. Francis by God that the Lady Jacoba was coming to him and was near the place and was bringing
with her all those things which he was requesting in the letter. So after he had this revelation, St. Francis suddenly said to the friar who was writing the letter: "Don't write any more, because it is not necessary, but put the letter aside."

And all the friars were very much surprised that he did not allow the letter to be finished and did not want it to be sent. And then, a little while later there was a strong knocking at the gate of the place. And St. Francis sent the brother porter to open it. And when he opened the gate, there was the Lady Jacoba, the greatest noblewoman of Rome, with her two sons who were senators and with a throng of companions on horseback. She had come to St. Francis and had brought with her all the things which St. Francis had included in that letter.

On entering, the Lady Jacoba went right to the infirmary and came to St. Francis. Her arrival brought him great joy and consolation, and she also rejoiced on finding him alive and talking with him. And she had the cookies fetched which she had brought to St. Francis, and she gave him some to eat.

And after he had eaten some and was very comforted, the Lady Jacoba went to the feet of St. Francis and she knelt and took those very holy feet marked and adorned with the wounds of Christ. She kissed and bathed them with her tears with such consolation and grace that she seemed to the friars who were standing around like another Mary Magdalene weeping and embracing and kissing the feet of another Christ. And the friars were unable to draw her away from the Saint's feet.

Finally, after a long time, they nevertheless raised her up and led her aside and asked her how she had come just at the right time and so well provided with everything that St. Francis needed while alive and when he would be buried. The Lady Jacoba answered that while she was praying one night in Rome, she heard a voice from Heaven saying to her: "If you want to find Brother Francis alive, go to Assisi at once, without delay. And take with you those things which you used to give him when he was sick in Rome, and take also those things which will be needed for his burial."

"And," she said, "I did so."
Moreover, she brought such a large supply of wax that it was sufficient not only for his funeral but also for all the Masses said over his body for many days.

The Lady Jacoba stayed until St. Francis died and was buried. And she with all her company gave very great honor to his remains at his funeral, and she paid for everything that was needed. Then she returned to Rome. But sometime later, out of devotion to St. Francis, she came again to Assisi. And there she ended her days in saintly penance and virtuous living and died a holy death. And it was her will that she be buried in the Church of St. Francis with great devotion. And so it was done.

At the death of St. Francis, not only Lady Jacoba and her sons and her company saw and kissed his glorious stigmata, but also many citizens of Assisi. . . . 287

This passage develops the theme of Lady Jacoba's devotion to Francis' stigmata which will be discussed in the section on Brother Jacoba, Friend of St. Francis. It is interesting to note that Jacoba is described by Francis as taking care of him when he was sick in Rome.

Raphael Brown estimates that the Considerations on the Holy Stigmata was written between 1370 and 1385 by an unknown monk who included it with his Italian translation of Brother Ugolino Boniscambi's Actus. 288

The presence of Jacoba is also discussed by Bernard of Bassa, the secretary and traveling companion of Saint Bonaventure. It has not been quoted for several reasons; Moorman finds his Liber de Laudibus Beati Francisci disappointing. Because of its late date and lack of new sources or new insights, it can be passed over in silence.

As noted previously, this section shows Jacoba's relationship with Francis' close companion, Brother Giles.

4. LITTLE FLOWERS

How the Lady Jacoba Visited Brother Giles

When Brother Giles was staying in Perugia, the Lady Jacoba Di Settesoli, a noble Roman lady who was very devoted to the Friars Minor, came to see him. Later a Brother Gerardino of the Order of Minors, a very
As will be shown in the discussion on Lady Jacoba's relationship with the Order after the death of Francis, Jacoba was an intimate friend of Francis' closest companions.

B. Biographical Information

There is reason to believe that Francis came to Rome in 1212 and at that time met a woman who would have an enormous influence on his life, Jacoba dei Settesoli. A recent widow and member of a wealthy and powerful noble family, she was not more than 22 with two small children to raise. From this time until his death a friendship existed between Francis and Lady Jacoba. In his trips to Rome, Francis spent a great deal of time with "Brother" Jacoba. Thomas of Celano wrote:

Jacoba of Settesoli, equally renowned for her nobility and her sanctity in the city of Rome, had merited the privilege of a special love from Saint Francis. As noted above, Bonaventure writes that Saint Francis gave her a pet lamb who went to church with her and woke her when she was late for Mass.

C. LADY JACOBA, BROTHER LAMB

The gift of a lamb is significant. Bonaventure notes that Francis had a special affection for lambs which he saw as symbols of Christ and the gentleness and innocence of Christ. Certainly for Francis lambs were symbols of worship such as in the story of the lamb who came to vespers with the brothers.

If Lady Pica was the mother who gave physical and spiritual birth and Clare was the spiritual daughter, then Jacoba was the adult friend. One of the relics associated with Francis is a white wool tunic supposedly made for Francis by Jacoba. A painting over her tomb shows her led by an angel bringing the garment to Francis. The lamb symbolizes sacrifice. Francis led Jacoba to a deeper life of prayer and a greater love of the Mass. When Francis left, the lamb led
Jacoba to Mass. With her he was no longer a pattern and example for all, but simply Francis.  

Sabatier notes that the jaguar is the heraldic symbol of Graziano Frangipani, Jacoba's husband, and the Frangipani Family. A pet jaguar even killed a woman in the family home. Lady Jacoba, however, was nicknamed Brother Lamb by the Franciscan brothers and knit a sweater of wool for Francis. The jaguar, symbol of the fierce knightly tradition of Jacoba's family, was replaced by Francis with the symbol of a lamb symbolizing the gentleness of Jacoba.

D. JACOBA, THE FRIEND OF FRANCIS

Francis probably met the young widow of 22 when he was 31. He stayed at her home and gave her the gift of a lamb. But Francis seems completely oblivious to any danger or problem, which might be expected in the light of the popularly held view that "the sentence of God on this sex of yours (women) lives on even in our times and so it is necessary that the guilt should live on, . . . You are the one who opened the door to the Devil . . . ." It is not known when Francis first met Jacoba. Strong gives the date 1206, the date Strong believed to be the time of Francis' first visit to Rome. During his visit he begged outside St. Peter's. Aubert also chooses an early date, 1209, which as Urner points out, would make sense as Francis would still have some of his natural spontaneity and innocence in his relationship with women. Strong states that Francis was refused permission to see the Pope at first. Cardinal John of St. Paul interceded for him. Jacoba, if Francis had met her by then, could have used her influence to introduce Francis to the Cardinal. As Urner points out: Jacoba could have provided him with crucial help during his 1209 visit to Rome. It would not be unusual for Jacoba to know everyone of importance because Rome was at that time a small city of 35,000 crowded near the Tiber. Urner pictures Jacoba as being quite mature in 1209, "wielding power, making decisions, moving among the . . . men of Rome almost as another man." She could have easily used her influence in Rome to help Francis gain access to the Papal Court. There is much to be said for an early meeting of Francis and Jacoba. Scholars now agree that the tertiary movement had its real beginnings in 1209, not 1221, as was previously thought.
Lovorich believes Jacoba was the inspiration for the secular Franciscan movement. Arneni and Humani suggest she was its first member. Another area of uncertainty is in the number of times Francis and Jacoba met. Englebert and R. Brown are certain of only three visits to Rome, 1209, 1215, and 1235. Terzi adds two more in 1217 and 1220, and states there may have been others which were not recorded. Urner mentions another incident also discussed in Chapter four in the life of Francis, which, she believes might indicate a meeting in 1209. Celano relates in the Second Life of the devil coming at night to lure Francis into lukewarmness saying, "There is no sinner in the world whom the Lord will not forgive if he is converted; but whoever destroys himself by harsh penance will not find mercy forever." The devil then tempts Francis with various temptations to lust. When whipping himself did not end the temptation Francis cast himself naked into the snow after building seven snowmen. The snow lady, her children, and servants, Urner points out, fits no one better than Jacoba. If one accepts Jorgensen's view, this temptation, took place in the winter of 1211 before Francis had met Clare and at the end of a period of struggle, temptation, and doubt. Was Francis tempted to "lukewarmness" by his love for the devout Lady Jacoba? Both Celano and Bonaventure state that Francis asks his companion to tell no one of the incident until after his death. Was Francis trying to hide the identity of the "Lady?" There is no way to know. Perhaps Francis, in his struggle with the devil, gave his relationship with Jacoba to God, who purified it.

Jacoba reconciled a long running feud with the Papacy in 1217 by signing a document with the papal chamberlain. Certainly, this was the act of a mature woman. It is difficult to estimate with any certainty Jacoba's age. She may have been much older than Francis or even nine years younger. She may have been as young as 13 when she married and a widow at 15. She might have been 25 when she took full control of family estates and military forces. It is clear that her own family by marriage, the Frangipani, were deeply alienated from Innocent III. Furthermore, the civil war among prominent Roman families, which had just ended, must have devastated anyone who lived through it. It is even possible Jacoba's husband was killed by Papal forces. Such a course, which was costly to Jacoba and her sons, seems to have started
a series of events which led to a realignment of her family with the Papacy.\textsuperscript{320} Jacoba's personal seal, which has been found, carries on it the heads of St. Peter and St. Paul separated by a cross. The use of the apostles on a family seal was a privilege granted by the Popes.\textsuperscript{321} Jacoba, who should have been a bitter enemy of the Church, was instead the friend of Francis and the friend of the Church.

Among the relics associated with Jacoba are a pair of shoes which, according to tradition, she had made for Francis and a painting showing Francis weeping, the stigmata visible, with Francis holding a handkerchief to his eyes. It is possible this is how Jacoba remembered her friend and had the painting commissioned after his death.\textsuperscript{322} At the deathbed of Francis, the Lady, as Urner points out, is clearly in command; and she intended to order a part of her retinue to return to Rome until deterred by Francis.\textsuperscript{323} Jacoba arrived amid the "sound of horses, the noise of soldiers, and the crowd of a company of men."\textsuperscript{324} Urner suggests that the contradiction found in Jacoba, her might, her wealth, her prestige, and her friendship with Francis can only be resolved by seeing her as a "Gospel Revolutionary."\textsuperscript{325} Jacoba was a woman who lived her life amid beauty and cruelty and practiced her faith by showing love and gentleness in a world which had forgotten the Lamb of God.

The \textit{Legend of Perugia} seems to indicate the author was embarrassed at the cloth, the cookies, and the manner in which God instructed Jacoba to bring these gifts for the consolation of her own soul. Urner translates the \textit{Scripta Lionis} phrase as "for the reward and consolation of his soul," and notes it can be translated either way.\textsuperscript{326} The scene of Jacoba's holding Francis' body at the same time many of the Friars were getting to see the stigmata for the first time, reflects an image of Mary's holding the body of Christ, and makes at the same time Jacoba an image of Magdalene because of her tears.\textsuperscript{327} It was at her suggestion, at the death of Francis, that the stigmata be publicly displayed, although she was the only woman present.\textsuperscript{328} She was a woman of power. Bernard de Bessa believed Francis called her "brother" "because of the manly nature of her virtues."\textsuperscript{329} Celano tells us that Jacoba has merited the privilege of a special love "of Francis who in turn loves her ardently."\textsuperscript{330}

Urner notes that the accounts of Jacoba's last visit to Francis were among those ordered destroyed in the mid-
thirteenth century. Urner suggests the suppression of these accounts may indicate something about Jacoba and her relationship to the early Franciscan Movement. First "there may have been simple embarrassment over the love itself, and the very existence of this incongruous relationship between the saint and a wealthy widow from the secular world." Urner feels that "for Franciscans the powerful love between Francis and Clare had always been acceptable." Jacoba was another story. Jacoba in addition had broken cloister. In addition, Jacoba could have seen the saint naked. Twice Francis asked, as a symbol of complete poverty, to be placed on the ground naked. Father Cuthbert puts this episode at the time after Jacoba arrived. Fortini agrees. For these reasons Jacoba could be considered an embarrassment. Sabatier states: "Francis did not fit the portraits later admirers tried to draw of him." The wholly natural conduct of the saint with women has very much embarrassed his biographers. Urner points out that Francis was often an embarrassment to his biographers. Francis did not fit their view of how a saint should behave.

It must be noted that Lady Jacoba is a forgotten woman by Franciscan scholars. According to Di Ciaccia the "forgetting" of Brother Jacoba by Franciscan scholars was an injustice based not so much on the "medieval fear of women" so much as a failure to understand the function of "Brother Jacoba." It may be that Lady Jacoba's love of Francis was so purified by the love of God that the normal precautions which Francis and the brothers observed were deemed to be unnecessary in her case. It is noteworthy that she was allowed to observe Brother Giles in one of his "spiritual conversations." Since Giles was one of Francis' early companions and noted for his acid-tongued remarks to anyone who favored a relaxation of Francis' ideal, Jacoba must have been held in high esteem by Francis' Brothers. It is frustrating that nowhere in the early Franciscan sources is it exactly explained why Francis recognized Jacoba as one so holy that she was seen as unique among women.

On a number of occasions recorded in Little Flowers Chapter 38 and Second Celano 23, God revealed to Francis the spiritual state of various Friars. It is possible that God revealed Jacoba's spiritual state to Francis. This would be a possible explanation of Francis' remark "Blessed be God who has guided the Lady Jacoba, our brother, to us. Open the door
and bring her in for our Brother Jacoba does not have to observe the decree against women."  

Perhaps Jacoba's presence at Francis' death is a recognition by God of Jacoba's holiness and her loyalty to Francis and his ideals. In early Franciscan history a theme of returning to the original innocence is often found. We see it in Francis' preaching to the birds, being understood by a rabbit, shaking hands with a vicious wolf, and in St. Anthony's preaching to fish.  

Perhaps in Jacoba and Francis is found another reflection of the theme of original innocence.

Another event occurred at the deathwatch of St. Francis which is perhaps also revealing. Jacoba was allowed to hold the body of St. Francis while the Father Vicar said "See, him whom you loved in life you shall hold in your arms in death." The words of Our Lord to Mary Magdalene, "Do not touch me because I have not ascended to my Father" come to mind. The fulfillment of their relationship would take place in heaven. The love they shared was the pure love of God.

Di Ciaccia brings up an interesting question: "Why did Francis have to request cloth and candles from Jacoba? Why did he think of sweets at the point of death?" Di Ciaccia explains that in The Canticle of Brother Sun, Francis develops an attitude of spiritual elevation toward all creation. At death Francis even makes friends with his enemy "Brother Body." With the sweets he signifies "I am ready to satisfy your desires." But even more important, Francis was "very comforted" by the sweets, of which, by this point, he could eat "little." His comfort was great at the visit of his friend, although the physical comfort she could give was quite limited. According to Di Ciaccia the lamb Francis gave Jacoba, which woke her when she overslept for Mass, was a symbol of Francis' effective union with Jacoba. The Lamb, the symbol of Christ's sacrifice, symbolized their purified friendship.

This relationship shows Francis overcoming the sexual stereotypes of his day. This relationship shows that Francis believed it was sometimes possible for a man and woman to have a relationship based on mutual respect and the love of God, discerned with both natural and supernatural prudence. This love is a reflection of the love of God.
IX. CONCLUSIONS

In order to get a realistic view of Francis' attitude toward women, Francis' interaction with the three women was studied. They are: his Mother Lady Pica, his friend Lady Jacoba, and his helpmate Saint Clare.

Lady Pica may be seen as a Marian model, giving birth, according to one legend, to Francis in a stable and encouraging him in his following of Christ even when she could not understand his vocation.

Lady Pica is also a positive feminine model who actively brought about the freeing of Francis from the chains his father had used to imprison him. This was an act of great courage because she was certain to face the anger of her husband. Francis' view of women was probably greatly influenced by his mother. As noted in the chapter on Francis' ministry to women, Francis showed great devotion to women. Mothers specifically are seen by Francis as symbols of Mary's love. I believe it is originally from Lady Pica that Francis gained his respect and love for women.

In Lady Clare is also a clear Marian Image. Indeed, as noted previously, she was seen by one of her nuns as being indistinguishable from Mary. Furthermore, in the relationship of Francis and Clare, there is a transcending love, free of exploitation, in which Francis and Clare complement each other and reflect respectively of each other the Image of Christ and Mary.

The image of Lady Pica as the woman who freed Francis is a powerful one. First Celano tells us, "It happened, however, while Francis' father had left home for a while on business and the man of God remained bound in the basement of the house; his mother, who was alone with him and who did not approve of what her husband had done, spoke kindly to her son. When she saw that he could not be persuaded away from his purpose, she was moved by motherly compassion for him and loosening his chains, let him go free."

In the same way, Clare, at a great crisis in Francis' life, acted decisively. "Francis was placed in a great agony of doubt as to what he should do: -whether to give himself only to continual prayer or to preach sometimes." He asked the prayers of Saint Clare. When he received her answer that God desired him to go about the world preaching because "God did not call him for himself alone," he became inflamed with
Francis found in Clare a woman of intelligence and vision who could share his dream. Clare notes with a dry humor not unlike that of St. Teresa, "When the blessed Francis saw, however, that although we were physically weak and frail, we did not shirk deprivation, poverty, hard work, trials, or the shame or contempt of the world . . . he greatly rejoiced." Like Pica, Clare presented an image of the feminine to which Francis could turn for understanding at a time of great crisis. The Little Flowers, for example, recounts that after receiving Clare's answer that Francis should preach, "he set out like a bolt of lightning in his spiritual ardor, not paying any attention to the road or path. The appearance of these women at times of crisis in Francis' life literally inflamed his very soul as noted. The Franciscan characteristics of enthusiasm and joy can be said to be feminine because they were exhibited by women of wisdom and insight who confirmed Francis and shaped his future at times of crisis.

Lady Jacoba is an incarnate symbol of fraternal love. In Jacoba there is a "relationship of persons of the flesh but without the passion of the flesh." She is recognized as "brother," not in denial of her as a whole person, or in denial of her femininity, but in recognition of a pure and simple friendship between male and female, a love which has at its source the love of Christ.

Lady Pica, Lady Clare, and Lady Jacoba are united by certain characteristics which they shared with Francis. All three defied convention. All three nurtured. All three shared the characteristics of joy and enthusiasm. All three were strong in moments of crisis in Francis' life, and all three communicated their warm and loving strength to Francis. Lady Pica defied her husband, Lady Clare defied convention by refusing to receive the palm from the Bishop on Palm Sunday, an act reserved for wealthy young women. Lady Jacoba violated cloister as "Brother Jacoba" and entertained Francis in her home. Lady Pica nurtured her son by listening to him and setting him free. Lady Clare nurtured him by embracing his vision of Poverty. Clare also encouraged him to overcome self-doubt and to preach to the world. Lady Jacoba nurtured him by bringing cookies and cakes and by embracing in death what she could not embrace in life. Lady Pica showed joy and enthusiasm by asking her neighbors, "What do you think this my son will turn out to be? Know that he will be a son
of God by the grace of his merits." Lady Clare showed enthusiasm and joy. She embraced the hardships of her cloistered life with joy to the amazement and delight of Francis. She lived her whole consecrated life with enthusiasm. She "quickly ran" to St. Mary of the Portiuncula, leaving behind her home city and relatives. After entering the cloister, she was noted for her energy. Francis learned from these women nurturing, joy, and enthusiasm. From them he also learned to defy convention. From their love and strength Francis was able to love and strengthen others. Francis defied convention by giving his clothing back to his Father in front of the assembled citizens of Assisi. Francis, who was once the leader of the youth, defied convention by wearing a "poor and mean tunic," and begging for scraps of food. Francis was noted for his joy and enthusiasm. Celano writes that when the sweetest melody of spirit would bubble up in him, Francis would give expression to it in French. Francis would even "pick up a stick from the ground and putting it over his left arm, would draw across it, as across a violin, a little bow bent by means of a string, and going through the motions of playing, he would sing in French about his Lord," in an "ecstasy of joy". Francis instructed his followers, "Let the brothers beware lest they show themselves outwardly sad and gloomy hypocrites; but let them show themselves joyful in the Lord, cheerful, and suitably gracious".

Francis in his life in the world before his conversion was the master of revels, but also kind, easy, and affable. Perhaps it is because of the example of Lady Pica with her courage, Clare with her idealism, and Jacoba with her understanding, that there was something more to life than worldly power that encouraged Francis to use his gifts for the Kingdom of God. Their appearance at all the important junctures of his life may have been gifts from God.

Francis was a nurturing and compassionate individual. In his Rule for Hermitages he writes that those who take care of the practical side of the hermitage were to be "mothers" to the contemplatives. In his audience with the Pope, Francis describes himself as a poor mother who returns her sons to their father. Francis nurtured his brothers when they were hungry. When Brother Leo was struggling with doubts Francis wrote him: AI speak to you, my son as a mother . . . If you
find it neccessary for the well-being of your soul or to find comfort, and you wish to come to me, Leo, come."

Even when he was dying, Francis Addicted a canticle, words and music for the Poor Ladies . . . He was well aware of the fact that his sickness greatly grieved them. Since he could not go in person to visit and console them, he had his companions bring them what he had composed for them. Francis wrote: "For if a mother loves and cares for her child in the flesh, a friar should love and care for his spiritual brother all the more tenderly. Francis loved with the love he had received from Lady Pica, Lady Clare, and Lady Jacoba. The gospel of Franciscan poverty acquired a comeliness and attractiveness which no friar alone could give it. The sublimation of the Lady of the chivalric romance and love song was to be added to the story of Francis. The feminine was resplendently actualized by these women, Pica, Clare, Jacoba, who brought love and joy to the Franciscan movement by their faith and devotion, the ardent faith which caused Jacoba to drop everything and rush to Francis' side even as Mary rushed in haste into the hill country to be with Elizabeth, her kinswoman after the Annunciation. It is exactly in this that Celano's account differs from the Mirror of Perfection in that he emphasizes "the wonderful perfection of Jacoba's virtues" and "her long countenance as a widow." This would agree with the image presented by Sabatier of Pica, Clare, and Jacoba.

Peter Kreft tells us that ours is a civilization that is in the midst of "the flight from woman" because action is extolled over contemplation, doing over being, analysis over intuition, problems over mysteries, success over contentment, conquering over nurturing. Perhaps in Francis we find a balance of the masculine and the feminine. He knew how to nourish the feminine which is a part of every human person.

It has been noted that Francis was loving and considerate to women, often at great cost to himself and his brothers. It has been shown that much of the behavior that appears to be negative must be seen in the context of his time. Many of the religious reforms contemporary with the Franciscans, drifted into heresy. Often overfamiliarity between the sexes was characteristic of these heretical groups. The Franciscan Friars were appointed to provide spiritual direction and administration to literally hundreds of convents assigned to the Franciscan Order by the Holy See. The women assigned to

154
Francis' care had received no instruction from Francis, and had not necessarily chosen to follow a Franciscan vocation. Francis' consternation is understandable under the circumstances. The complex personality of Francis has briefly been addressed.

Finally, modern Franciscan writers have demonstrated that detachment which is so central to the understanding of the spirituality of Saint Francis; this detachment also offers a keen insight into the understanding of Saint Francis and his relationship with women.

Francis recognized that every good thing in his life came from God the source of all goodness. He did not wish to allow his own self-love to frustrate our search for God nor to allow the mercy of God to be frustrated by our own self-love.

Ultimately, it is only by seeing Francis' attitudes to women, in the context, not of antifeminism, but of detachment, that his relationship with women becomes clarified. These relationships will be developed more fully in the next section.
CHAPTER FOUR

END NOTES


This story and the following stories in Chapter Four are recounted here in the original Latin. Thoma de Celano "Vita Prima S. Francisci" 62. Analecta Franciscana. X 47. Tempore illo in quo, sicut dictum est, venerabilis pater Franciscus volucribus praedicavit, civitates et castella circuiens et ubique benedictionum semina spargens, ad civitatem Esculanam applicuit. In qua cum verbum Dei more solito ferventissime loqueretur, immutatione dexterae Excelsi, tanta gratia et devotione pene universus populus est repletus, ut ad audiendum et videndum eum anhelantes omnes se invicem conculcarent. Nam et triginta viri, clerici et laici, tunc temporis ab ipso sanctae religionis habitum susceperunt.

Tanta erat fides virorum et mulierum, tanta devotione mentis erga sanctum Dei, ut felicem se pronuntiaret qui saltem vel vestimentum eius contingere potuisset. Ingrediente ipso aliquam civitatem, laetabatur clerus, pulsabantur campanae, exsultabant viri, congaudebant feminae, applaudebant pueri, et saepe, ramis arborum sumptis, psallentes obviam ei procedebant.--Confundebatur haeretica pravitas, extollebatur fides Ecclesiae, et fidelibus iubilantibus, haeretici latitabant. Nam tanta in eo apparebant insignia sanctitatis, quod nemo se illi audebat verbis opponere, cum ad ipsum solummodo respiceret frequentia populorum. Inter omnia et super omnia fidem sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae servandam, venerandam et imitandam fore censebat, in qua sola salus consistit omnium salvandorum. Venerabatur sacerdotes et omnem ecclesiasticum ordinem nimio amplexabatur affectu.

2 Celano, "Vita Prima," 63, A.F.48. Offerebant ei populi panes ad benedicendum, quos longo tempore reservantes, ad eorum gustum a diversis aegritudinibus sanabantur.--Sic et multoties fide maxima freti eius tunicam incidebant, ut quasi nudus aliquando remaneret. Et quod magis est admirandum, si rem aliquam manu tangeret sanctus pater, per eam etiam

156
nonnullis sanitas reddebatur. --Nam cum mulier quaedam, in partibus Aretii villulam quamdam inhabitans, gravida esset, veniente tempore partus, in pariendo diebus pluribus laboravit, sicque incredibili attrita dolore, nec mors nec vita sibi aliquatenus praestabatur. Vicini et cognati eius audierant beatum Franciscum per viam illam fore ad quamdam eremum transiturum. Exspectantibus autem illis, accidit beatum Franciscum ad dictum locum per aliam viam transire: iverat enim eques, eo quod erat debilis et infirmus. Sed perveniente ipso ad locum, per quemdam fratrem, nomine Petrum, equum remisit ad illum virum, qui sibi eum, concesserat intuitu charitatis. Frater Petrus, reducens equum, per viam illam transivit, in qua mulier torquebatur. Quem videntes viri terrae illius, festini cucurrerunt ad eum putantes ipsum esse beatum Franciscum; sed cognoscentes ipsum non esse, tristati sunt valde nimis. Tandem coeperunt quaerere inter se si posset res aliqua inveniri, quam manu tetigisset beatus Franciscus. Cumque in his diu quaerendo facerent moram, demum invenerunt freni habenas, quas ipse manu tenuerat equitando, extrahentesque frenum ex equi ore, cui sanctus pater insederat, posuerunt supra mulierem habenas, quas propriis manibus contractaverat ipse; quae incontinenti, remoto periculo, cum gudio peperit et salute.

3 Cel. Omnibus, 282.

4 Cel. Omnibus, 284.

5 Cel. Omnibus, 284.


7 L.M. Omnibus, 727.

"Celano, "Vita Prima," 67,A.F.50. Mulier quaedam civitatis supradictae, oculorum caecitate percussa, signum crucis a beato Francisco super oculos suos suscipientis, statim lumen meruit recipere concupitum.--Apud Eubium mulier erat, quae manus ambas contractas habens, nihil cum eis poterat

9Celano "Vita Prima," 127,A.F.104-105. ...Eo namque die quo sacrum et sanctum corpus beatissimi patris Francisci reconditum fuit velut pretiosissimus thesaurus, magis supercaelestibus aromatibus quam terrenis speciebus inunctum apportata est puella quaedam, iam per annum habens collum monstruose plicatum et caput humero adnexum, nec poterat nisi ex obliquo sursum respicere, Quae dum sub arca, in qua pretiosum sancti reconditum iacebat corpus, caput aliquamdiu submisisset, statim meritis sanctissimi viri collum erexit et in condecenti statu caput exstitit reparatum, ita quod puella ex subita sui mutatione obstupefacta nimis, coepit fugere ac plorare. Fovea quaedam namque apparebat in humero cui caput fuerat applicatum propter situm quem fecerat infirmitas diuturna.


Fuerat enim tanta enormitate contractus, ut tibiae natibus adhaerentes forent penitus arefactae.

12 Cel. Omnibus, 345.

Mulier quaedam, Sibilia nomine, caecitatem oculorum per plures annos perpessa, ad sepulcrum viri Dei caeca tristis adducitur. Recuperato vero pristino lumine, gaudens et exsultans domum revertitur. -- Caecus quidam de Spello, coram tumulo sacri corporis, visum diu perditum reinvenit. -- Alia vero mulier de Camerino, cum esset dextri oculi lumine privata ex toto, pannum quem beatus Franciscus tetigerat, parentes eius super perditum oculum posuerent, et sic voto facto, de recuperato lumine Domino Deo et sancto Francisco gratias persolverunt. -- Simile aliquid cuidam mulieri de Eugubio accidit, quae voto facto, lucem pristinam se rehabere laetatur. -- Civis quidam de Assisio per quinquennium perdito lumine oculorum, quia cum adhuc viveret beatus Franciscus familiaris fuerat ei, semper cum oraret beatum virum, pristinam familiaritatem commemorans, ad tactum sepulcri eius exstitit liberatus. -- Albertinus quidam de Narnio fere per annum oculorum lumen ex toto amiserat, ita quod palpebrae usque ad genas dependerent. Qui beato Francisco se vovit, et statim, lumine reparato, ad gloriosum sepulcrum eius visitandum se praeparavit et venit.


15 Celano, "Vita Prima," 139, A.F.109. Puer quidam Matthaus nomine de civitate Tuderti, per octo dies quasi

16 Cel. Omnibus, 347. Celano, "Vita Prima," 140. Iuvenis quidam, cum in quodam loco altissimo moraretur, ex eodem loco corruens, loquelam et omnia membrorum officia perdidit. Tribus quoque diebus non manducans, neque bibens, neque aliquid sentiens, motuus credebat. Mater vero ipsius, nullorum medicorum requiris suffragium, a beato Francisco eius postulat sanitatem. Et sic, voto facto, vivum eum recipiens et incolunem, laudare coepit omnipotentiam Salvatoris.-- Alius quidam, Mancinus nomine, infirmatus ad mortem et de liberatione sua penitus ab omnibus desperatus, invocato utcumque nomine beati Francisci, subita sanitate convaluit.-- Puer quidam de Areto, Galterius nomine, continuis febribus laborans et duplici apostemate cruciatus, ab omnibus medicis desperatus, voto parentum beato Francisco exhibito, concupitae restitutus est sanitati.-- Alius vero morti propinquus, facta imagine cerea, priusquam perfecta esset, ab omni passione incontinenti extsit liberatus.

17 Cel. Omnibus, 349. Celano, "Vita Prima," 142,A.F.111. Mulier quaedam in Eugubii civitate paralytica iacens, tertio invocato nomine beati Francisci, ab infirmitate sua demissa est et sanata.-- Quidam nomine Bontadosus, cum in pedibus et digitis sustineret gravissimam passionem, ita quod nec movere se poterat, nec ad partem aliquam declinare, cibo iam perdito atque somno, mulier quaedam die quadam venit ad eum, monens et
suggerens ut, si ab hac infirmitate vellet citissime liberari, beato Francisco se devotissime devoveret. Respondebat autem vir ille, nimio dolore correptus: "Non credo ipsum esse sanctum". Muliere vero pertinacius illi de voto sugerente, vir ille tandem vovit se in hunc modum: "Voveo me", inquit, "sancto Francisco et ipsum credo sanctum, si me infra trium dierum terminum ab hac aegritudine liberabit." Qui meritis sancti Dei mox liberatus ambulavit, manducavit et requievit, dans gloriam omnipotent. Deo.


devotum, dixit illi: "Accipe hunc mantellum et duodecim panes, et vadens sic loquere illi pauperculae mulieri: Pauper homo, cui commodasti mantellum, gratias tibi agit de mutuatione; sed nunc tolle quod tuum est!" Ivit ille et sicut audierat dixit. Aestimans mulier illudi sibi, cum rubore dixit ad eum: "Dimitte me in pace cum tuo mantello! nescio quid loquaris." Instat homo, et omnia ponit in manibus. Considerans illa fraudem non esse in facto, timensque ne sibi auferetur tam facile lucrum, surgit noctu et oculorum curam non curans, domum cum mantello regreditur.

22Lemmens, Le Speculum Perfectionis, Documenta Antiqua Quaracchi: Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1901. Chapter 29, Pp. 61-62. Quidam frater, spiritualis homo, cui nimirum erat familiaris B. Franciscus, manebat in quodam eremitorio, et considerans, quod, si aliquando illuc veniret B. Franciscus, non haberet aptum locum ad manendum, fecit fieri in quodam loco remoto prope locum fratrum quandam cellulam, ubi posset orare, dum veniret. Et factum est, non post multos dies advenit B. Franciscus; cumque duceretur a fratre illo ad videndum eam, dixit ei B. Franciscus: "Nimis mihi pulchra videtur cellula ista; si vis, ut maneam in ipsa per aliquot dies, facias fieri sibi quoddam vestimentum interius et exterius de silicibus et ramis arborum." Erat enim cellula illa non murata, sed de lignis facta; sed quia ligna erant plana, facta cum securi et dolabra, videbatur beato Francisco nimirum pulchra. Et statim frater ille coepit ipsam aptare, sicut dixerat beatus Franciscus. Nam quanto plus essent pauperculae et religiosae cellulae et domus fratrum, tanto magis ibenter eas videbat et aliquando ibi hospitabatur. Immo exemplo Domini nec cellam nec domum voluit habere in hoc saeculo, nec pro se fieri fecit. - Immo, si contingeret, quod aliquando diceret fratribus: Aite, aptate Cellam istam, nonlebat postea in ea permanere propter illud verbum evangelii: A Nonite solliciti esse etc.


27 L.P. Omnibus, 994-995.

28 L.P. Omnibus, 995.


adiecit: "Unum Novum Testamentum habemus, in quo, breviario carentes, ad matutinum legimus lectiones." Cui beatus Franciscus: "Da matri nostrae Novum Testamentum, ut vendat illud pro sua necessitate, quia per ipsum monemur subvenire pauperibus. Credo equidem quod magis Deo placebit donum quam lectio". Datur ergo mulieri liber, et primum Testamentum quod in Ordine fuit, sacra hac pietate distrahitur.

31 Bonaventure, "Legenda Major" Analecta Franciscana X P. 614, Chapter 12, 10. Mulier quaedam civitatis Eugubii ambas contractas et aridas habens manus adeo, ut nihil per illas operari valeret, signo crucis ab eodem in nomine Domini sibi facto, tam perfectam obtinuit sospitatem, quod statim rediens domum, cibos in ministerium eius et pauperum, quasi altera soecrus Simonis, propriis manibus 'praepararet'.-- Puellae cuidam in castro Bevanii ocularum privatae luminibus, cum in Trinitatis nomine sputo suo ter ipsius oculos linivisset, lumen concupitum restituit.-- Mulier quaedam civitatis Narnii ocularum caecitae percussa, signum crucis ab eodem suscipliens, lucem recuperavit optatam.-- Bononiae puer quidam unum oculorum macula adeo habens obtectum, ut nihil prorsus videre posset, nec aliquo adivvari remedio, post signum crucis a capite usque ad pedos per servum Domini sibi factum, visum recuperavit tam limpidum, ut postmodum Ordinem Fratrum Minorum ingressus, se longe clarius videre assereret de oculo prius infirmo quam de oculo semper sano.-- In castro Sancti Gemini servus Dei a quodam devoto viro susceptus hospitio, cuius uxor a daemonio vexabatur, post orationem factam in virtute 'obedientiae imperavit daemoni, ut exiret', eumque potestate divina tam subito effugavit, ut vere claresceret, quod obedientiae sanctae virtuti pervicacia daemonum non obsistat. - In Civitate de Castello quidam furibundus et nequam spiritus quamdam obsidens mulierem, a viro sancto obedientiae accepto mandato, indignabundus discessit, mente simul et corpore liberam obsessam prius feminam derelinquens.


33 Ibid.

34 Ibid., 121-131.


37 Fiero. Views of Women, 57.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid., 58.

40 Ibid., 121.

41 Ibid., 125.


43 John R.H. Moorman. The Sources for the Life of St. Francis of Assisi, (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1940), 63-64.


Dicebat autem beatus pater: "Ex nimia securitate minus cavetur hostis. Diabolus si de suo capillum potest habere in homine, cito illum eccrescere facit in trabem. Nec si per Multos annos deicere non potuit quem tentavit, moram causatur, dummodo sibi cedat in fine. Hoc est enim opus suum, nec est ad alia die noctuque sollicitus."


46 Maurice Keen, Chivalry (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 133.

47 Ibid., 136.

48 Ibid., 138.


50 Ibid., 118.


54 Felder, 10.


Multoties vero de huiusmondi loquens, asserebat frivolum esse omne colloquium mulieris. excepta sola confessione, vel ut assolet monitione brevissima. Dicebat enim: "Quae sunt fratri Minori cum muliere tractanda negotia, nisi cum sanctam paenitentiam vel melioris vitae consilium religiosa petitione deposcit?

56 Matthew 5:28.

57 1 Corinthians 3:17.


59 Matthew 5:28.
60 RNB. Omnibus, 42.


62 Hess. St. Francis, 65

63 Tosland Brooke, Early Franciscan Government Eilas to Bonaventure (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 64.


70 Ibid., 46.


72 Ibid.

73 Ibid., 76.


77 Ignatius Brady and Sister Mary Francis. The Legend and Writings of St. Clare of Assisi (St. Bonaventure N.Y., Franciscan Institute Publications, 1953), 70.


80 Ibid.

81 Ibid., 69.

82 Ware. Orthodox Way, 77, 86, 159, 161.

83 Georgios Mantzardis. The Defication of Man (Crestwood N.Y.: St. Vladimir=s Seminary Press, 1984), 62.

84 van Asseldonk. Una, 264.

85 L.P. Omnibus, 1084.

86 van Asseldonk. Una, 263.

87 Ibid., 263.

88 Ibid., 262.

170


94 Ibid., 146.

95 1 Cel. Omnibus, 296.

96 2 Cel. Omnibus, 471.

97 L.P. Omnibus, 1017.


100 L.P. Omnibus, 1020-1024.


103 2 Cel. Omnibus, 369.

104 2 Cel. Omnibus, 459.

171
1052 Cel. Omnibus, 459.

1062 Cel. Omnibus, 459.

107 Fior. Omnibus, 1332.

108 Hess. Romanticism, 100.


110 Carol Reilly Orner, "The Search for Brother Jacoba, a Study on Jacoba dei Settesoli, a Friend of Francis of Assisi and his Movement" (Dissertation, Manila: Ateneo de Manila University, 1980), 109.

111 Ibid., 779.

112 Ibid., 109.

113 John R.H. Moorman, The Sources for the Life of Saint Francis of Assisi (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1940), 63-64, 144-145.

114 Ibid., Death bed.


116 Moorman, 63.

118 1 Cel. Omnibus, 239-240.


120 Richard C. Trexler, Naked before the Father: the enunciation of Francis of Assisi (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 11.

121 Arnaldo Fortini, Francis of Assisi (New York: Crossroad, 1980), 70.

122 2 Cel. Omnibus, 363.

123 2 Cel. Omnibus, 366.

124 Moorman, Sources, 70-71.

125 Marion Habig, ed., "Legend of the Three Companions" St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies, English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982), 890-891. cited hereafter as L3S.


128 Clare of Assisi, "Form of Life of Clare of Assisi," Clare of Assisi, Early Documents, revised edition ed. Regis Armstrong

129 RCl Clare, 72.


133 Cant Exh AB, 46.


135 1 Cel. Omnibus, 330.


137 RCl Clare, 71-72.

138 1 Cel. Omnibus, 243-244.


141 2 Cel. Omnibus, 527-528.


149 Ibid., 172-173.

150 Ibid., 172.

151 Armstrong, "Introduction," Clare, 12.

152 Ephrem Longpré, "Sainte Claire d' Assise (1194-1251)," Études Franciscaines, n.s.4 (1953) 6.


154 Ibid., 174 N.a.

155 Ibid., 174.


157 Bartholomew of Spoleto., "Canonization," Clare, 139.

158 Ibid., 183-184.

Mary Francis Hone, ed., *Clare Formed by Francis, Vol. 1: Towards the Discovery of Clare of Assisi* (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: the Franciscan Institute, 1992), 151.

Bartholomew of Spoleto, "Canonization," *Clare*, 135, 286.g

Ibid., 174 N.a.

Ibid., 184-185.

2 Cel. *Omnibus*, 373.


Leg Cl, 247.

Ibid.

Armstrong notes in *Clare of Assisi, Early Documents* page 56 N.b that the author is alluding to Hebrews 12:9, "Again we pay due respect even more readily to our earthly fathers who disciplined us; should we not submit even more readily to our spiritual Father, and so attain life." Armstrong describes this passage as "A most unusual biblical allusion that cannot be found in any other Franciscan biographical work."

Phil. 3:8.


Ja 4:9.

Dt. 24:1.
173 Leg Cl. A.B. 255-261.

174 Leg Cl. A.B. 257 N.a

175 Leg Cl. A.B. 257 N.a.

176 Leg Cl. A.B., 255-261.


180 Ibid., 273.

181 Armstrong, Clare, 10, 18.

182 Ibid., 11.


186 2 Cel. Omnibus, 525-526.


188 Hone, Clare, 151.


190 Armstrong, "Legend," Clare, 256.

191 1 Cel. Omnibus, 230.


196 Claran McInall and Joseph Wood, "Clare of Assisi," The Cord 43 (December 1993), 331.


198 André Vauchez, Laity in the Middle Ages (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 172-173.

199 André Vauchez, Laity in the Middle Ages (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 172-173.

200 Ibid., 176.

201 Ibid., 184.

202 Moorman, History, 205-208.

203 Ibid., 300.


205 Vauchez, 180.

206 Zavalloni, 71.


208 Zavalloni, 77.

209 Mandelli, 447.

180
216 Ibid., 443.
211 Ibid.
212 Ibid.
213 Zavalloni, 71.
214 Test Cl, 54.
215 Ibid., 36.
216 Clare, "Form," Clare, 62-80.
217 Carney, "Francis," 60.
219 Ibid., 82.
221 Hess, 91.
222 Ibid., 161.
223 Ibid.
224 Ibid., 162.
225 Ibid., 129.

1Cel. *Omnibus*, 242-246.


Iriarte, *Franciscan*, 446.


Rcl, A.B., 55-56.

Valerio, 63-65.


Iriarte, *Franciscan*, 444.


Iriarte, "Clare," 191.

241 Francis of Assisi "Il Cantico del Sole;" Analecta franciscana. V. 261-262.


243 Optato van Asseldonk, Maria, Francesco E Chiara: Una spiritualità per domani (Roma: Collegio Lorenzo di Brindisi, 1989), 02.


245 Hone, 14-15, 19.

246 Dozzi, "Chiara," 308, 315.


248 van Asseldonk, 302.

249 Carney, 60.

250 Oxilia, 50.

251 Ibid.

252 Bartholomew of Spoleto, "Canonization," Clare, 252 N.a.

253 van Asseldonk, 302.

Ibid., 163.

2 Cel. Omnibus, 455.


2 Cel. Omnibus, 525-526.

Hone, 151-161.


Schmucki, Rediscovery, 118.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Carney, Francis, 25-60.


Ibid., 47-56.


Armstrong, "Introduction" Clare, 29


LM Omnibus, 694.


L.P. Omnibus, 1077-1078.


SP. 1249-1251.

SP. 1250.

280 Sabatier, Jacqueline, 306-308.

281 Cuthbert Hess, St Francis of Assisi (New York: Longmans Green and Company, 1925), 455 N. 2.


283 Urner, 25.

284 Ibid.

285 Ibid.

286 Fior. Omnibus, 35.

287 Urner, 274-277.

288 Ibid., 278.

279 S.P. Omnibus, 1483.

290 Fortini, 373-374, 527-529, 609-619.

291 3 Cel. Omnibus, 549.

292 LM Omnibus, 694

293 LM Omnibus, 692.

294 d'Alencon, 24.N.1.

295 S.P. Omnibus, 1142.

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296 Sabatier, Jacqueline, 299-300.

297 Maria Castigone Humani, "Frate Jacopa," Frate Francesco ssisi, 5, (1924), 140.

298 Ibid., 21.


301 Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie écclesiastiques. U. "Frangipain, Jacqueline."

302 Strong, 275.

303 Urner, 118.

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191

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE FEMININE DIMENSION OF THE PERSONALITY
OF FRANCIS IN HIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHURCH

In chapter five the women who had a profound effect in Francis' life: Lady Pica his mother, Lady Clare, and Lady Jacoba were discussed. It may be asked what effect did women have on his self image? How did Francis understand the feminine in his personality? How did his contemporaries understand the nurturing and intuitive side of Francis? It would be useful to look first of all at the personality of Francis as described by some modern writers, beginning with the feminine dimension in the personality of Francis, followed by the feminine dimension of Francis as seen by his contemporaries, and the maternal image of the Church as seen by Francis and in conclusion examine the total personality of Saint Francis in the context of his vocation.

The early biographers of Francis did not put a great deal of emphasis on the feminine in the personality of St. Francis. In the writings of Thomas of Celano, for example, the term virgin is used 25 times. The term lady is used 63 times. The term woman is used 54 times. The term wife is used 11 times. The term mother is used 121 times. The term daughter is used nine times. However, these terms are used to describe Francis or some aspect of his personality only seven times. These seven terms will be found in the passages from Celano quoted in this chapter. However, as Hardick has pointed out, the modern study of Francis has concentrated on his words.

Francis exhibited a strong and profound vocabulary, which may be described as vibrant, feminine, and maternal as noted by his use and repetition of certain words and idioms: life, to live, alive, spirit and life (birth), heart, house, habitation, daughter, Virgin Queen, Lady, Spouse, Mother, womb, Virgin Spouse, Virgin Mother of God, all full of grace, and of every good (from God), Virgin made Church, chosen by God, and consecrated to the Son, and to the Spirit, Paraclete. Thus, Francis preferred to use names and titles for God, human persons and other creatures that express interpersonal, filial, fraternal, spousal, and maternal relationships. He showed a marked preference for familiar terms, the referents of family and relationship.
It would be useful to examine Francis' use of "creative feminine terminology." "Creative feminine terminology" is any use of feminine nouns, pronouns, verbs, or adjectives, such as sister, wife, her, she, mothering, nurturing, beautiful, in new and creative ways which have not been analyzed in chapters three, four, and six. For example, if Francis describes himself as the wife of a king with many children, this would be a creative use of feminine terminology.

In previous chapters the use of Lady by Francis in the context of Lady Poverty and the Poor Ladies of San Damiano has been discussed. In the examination of Francis' conversion experience, his attraction to caves and grottos as places of prayer, which could be seen symbolically as a spiritual return to the womb, was revealed. In this chapter the remaining examples of the creative use of feminine terminology by Francis and his contemporaries will be developed under the three headings: 1) The Use of Creative Terminology by Francis; 2) The Feminine Element in the Personality of Francis As Seen by Francis' Contemporaries; 3) Francis' Image of the Maternal Church.

It is striking that two examples of Francis' use of creative feminine terminology are both maternal. In the following example Francis describes the superiors of the Hermitage as mothers.

I. FRANCIS' USE OF CREATIVE FEMININE TERMINOLOGY

It would be useful to examine an excerpt from the Rule for Hermitages:

Not more than three or at most four friars should go together to a hermitage to lead a religious life there. Two of these should act as mothers, with the other two, or the other one, as their children. The mothers are to lead the life of Martha; the other two, the life of Mary Magdalene.

Those who live the life of Mary are to have a separate enclosure and each should have a place to himself.

The friars who are mothers must be careful to stay away from outsiders and in obedience to their custos keep their sons away from them, so that no one can speak to them. The friars who are sons are not to speak to anyone.
except their mother or their customs, when he chooses to visit them, with God's blessing. Now and then, the sons should exchange places with the mothers, according to whatever arrangement seems best suited at the moment.

This use of "Friar Mothers" is unique in the writings of Francis but, at the same time, reflects a real motherly compassion found throughout Francis' life. As will be demonstrated, Francis practiced the nurturing role he describes so creatively in the Rule for Hermitages. In the next example Francis uses creative feminine terminology by describing himself as a poor woman with many sons.

Francis saw himself in the role of "Mother" as is seen in the following story of the "poor woman":

At the time when Francis presented himself along with his followers before Pope Innocent to ask for a rule of life, the Pope, a man endowed with the greatest discretion, seeing that his proposed way of life was beyond his powers, said to him: "Pray, son, to Christ, that He may show us His will through you, so that, knowing His will, we may more securely give assent to your pious desires." The holy man agreed to the command of the supreme shepherd and hastened confidently to Christ; he prayed earnestly and devoutly exhorted his companions to pray to God. But why should we speak at length? He obtained an answer by prayer and reported the news of salvation to his sons. The familiar talk of Christ is made known in parables. Francis spoke thus to the Pope: "A certain woman who was poor but very beautiful lived in a certain desert. A certain king loved her because of her very great beauty; he gladly married her and begot very handsome sons by her. When they had grown to adulthood and been brought up nobly, their mother said to them: 'Do not be ashamed, my loved ones, in that you are poor, for you are all sons of that king. Go gladly to his court and ask him for whatever you need.' Hearing this they were in admiration and rejoiced, and buoyed up by the assurance of their royal origin, they regarded want as riches, knowing that they would be heirs. They boldly presented themselves to the king and they did not fear the anger of him whose
likeness they bore. Recognizing his own likeness in them, he wondered and asked whose sons they were. When they said they were the sons of that poor woman living in the desert, the king embraced them and said, 'You are my sons and heirs; fear not. For if strangers are fed at my table, it is all the more just that I see to it that those be fed to whom my entire heritage is reserved by right.' The king then ordered the woman to send all the sons he had begotten to the court to be provided for."

The saint was made happy by the parable and reported the holy message to the pope.

This woman was Francis, because he was fruitful in many sons, not because of any softness in his actions. The desert was the world, untilled and barren at that time in the teaching of virtues. The handsome and numerous progeny of sons was the great multitude of brothers adorned with every virtue. The king was the Son of God, to whom they bore a resemblance by their holy poverty. And they received nourishment at the table of the king, despising all shame over their meanness; for, content with imitating Christ and living by alms, they knew they would be happy amid the reproaches of the world.7

It is quite probable that this parable developed from the one mentioned in the following sermon of Odo of Cheriton and has been affected by Celano's editing. For example, Francis' somewhat crude dialog has been refined by Celano so as to befit a great saint. This theme is reflected, as will be shown later in this chapter, in Francis' theme of Our Mother the Roman Church. It would be useful to examine briefly a sermon preached by Odo of Cheriton, in 1219, where he mentions a parable he heard in a sermon that Francis preached. While it is similar to the parable of the woman in the desert which we have already discussed at some length in the chapter on Lady Poverty, this parable corrects Celano by giving us a story that is uncensored by Celano and which is considerably earlier in composition than Celano's First Life:8

Brother Francis was asked to feed his brothers: after all he accepted anyone without distinction. He answered, "A certain King cared for someone in his woods whom he had impregnated, after he had nourished this one
for a certain period she came to the King, that among others he would feed his own son. When this had been announced to the King he answered, 'So many wicked and useless people are in my house and eat my food. It would only be just and fair that my own son should be nourished among them.'" Francis explaining this said, "I am that woman whom the Lord had impregnated with his word and who has brought forth these spiritual children." This means that if the Lord feeds so many wicked people, we should not be surprised if he feeds his own sons among the others."

Interestingly, Odo wrote this sermon in 1219, while Francis was still alive.

van Asseldonk states that, Francis, gives proof of the integration of body and soul which had experienced growth and reached unity and completion in his statement, "I am that woman," 10 This example of creative feminine imagery can be seen as demonstrating a positive regard for the feminine.

The story of the little black hen in the Second Life of Celano contains a creative feminine image of Francis and his view of the Church:

While the man of God revolved these and similar things in his mind more often, one night while he was asleep he saw this vision. He saw a little black hen, much like a tame dove, whose legs and feet were covered with feathers. She had innumerable chicks which pressed close around her, but they could not all get under her wings. The man of God, arising from sleep, took to heart what he had meditated on, and became his own interpreter of his vision. "The hen," he said, "is I, small as I am in stature and naturally dark, who ought to be attended through innocence of life by dove-like simplicity, which easily wings its way to heaven, as is most rare in this world. The chicks are my brothers, multiplied in number and in grace, whom Francis' strength does not suffice to defend them from disturbances of men and from the contradiction of tongues. I will go, therefore, and I will commend them to the holy Roman Church, by the rod of whose power those ill-willed will be struck down while the children of God will enjoy full freedom everywhere unto the increase of eternal salvation. From this the
sons will acknowledge the kind gifts of their mother and always embrace her venerable footsteps with special devotion. Under her protection, no evil will befall the order, nor will the son of Belial pass with impunity over the vineyard of the Lord. Our holy mother herself will emulate the glory of our poverty and will not permit the fame of our humility to be clouded over by the mist of pride. She will keep unbroken in us the bonds of charity and peace, striking the dissenters with her strictest censure. The holy observance of Gospel purity will constantly flourish in her sight, and she will not permit the fragrance of their life to vanish even for an hour."  

Father van Asseldonk develops the theme of "our Mother, the Roman Church" found in Francis' parable of the little black hen, and in the parable of the woman impregnated by the King. Father van Asseldonk writes that Francis is "mother of his brothers who are brought to birth by the Church Mother."  

In the theology of the Fathers there is an extension and amplification of the bride motive that is not authorized by Scripture . . . . The Church is seen as possessing a womanly beauty, whose form and adornment, feelings and sentiments, destinies, humiliations, and exaltations may be described.  

In like manner, Francis, in using a feminine image of the Church, must be seen, not as simply following the conventions of courtly love images or personalization of an abstraction, but rather reaching back into Christian tradition and recognizing the Church as someone, not merely a symbol, but a reality which nurtures and protects her young. Once again, Francis intuitively grasps theological concepts and applies them in a practical way to the needs of his developing Order.  

Francis put into practice the nurturing he proposed in the Rule for Hermitages as the following story demonstrates.

II. FRANCIS AS NURTURER  

Celano relates another story in his Second Life which bears witness to the fact that Francis carried this concept of maternal compassion into his own life as religious superior:

One night one of the brothers cried out while the rest were sleeping: "I am dying, brothers, I am dying of
hunger." Immediately the good shepherd got up and hastened to give the ailing sheep the proper remedy. He commanded the table to be set, though it was set with poor things, and, as is often the case, where wine was lacking water took its place. First he himself began to eat, and then he invited the rest of the brothers to share this duty of charity, lest that brother should waste away from shame. When they had eaten the food with fear of the Lord, the father wove a long parable for his sons about the virtue of discretion, lest something should be lacking in the offices of charity. He commanded them always to give the Lord a sacrifice seasoned with salt, and carefully admonished each one to consider his own strength in the service of God. He said that to deprive the body indiscreetly of what it needs was a sin just the same as it is a sin to give it superfluous things at the prompting of gluttony. And he added: "Know, dearest brothers, that what I have done in eating, I have done by dispensation, not by desire, because fraternal charity commanded it. Let this charity be an example to you, not the food, for the latter ministers to gluttony, the former to the spirit." 

These two episodes illustrate several facets of the personality of Francis. The use of the term mother by Francis and his nurturing of the young friar shows that his use of feminine imagery is not used to reinforce the image of masculine authority figures such as Abbots, Religious Superiors, or Bishops as did twelfth century spiritual writers. Rather, the image of superior as seen by Francis is that of nurturer. Francis is the woman in the desert and the woman in the woods.

The administrators in the hermitage act as mothers. Nurturing and mothering are not added to the authority figure, but are an integral part of that image. The strong image of the nurturer is derived and reinforced, as suggested in the previous chapter, from the positive association by Francis with Pica, Clare, and Jacoba. The nurturer "ministers to the spirit" as was shown by Francis in the story of the hungry Friar. The nurturer builds up the community through love rather than through something required by a rule. Bynum points out that attitudes toward the feminine may reflect, not so much a man's attitudes toward his mother, his sister, and
the women in his community, as toward his sense of the feminine aspects of himself. What these examples show is that the attitude of Francis toward his feminine dimension is positive, and these aspects are an integrated part of his personality.

Further examples of this are found in the life of St. Francis in his Letter to all the Faithful which tell us:

It is they (those who serve the needs of others) who are the brides, the brothers, and the mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ. A person is his bride when his faithful soul is united with Jesus Christ by his holy spirit. . . . We are mothers to him when we enthrone him in our hearts and souls by love with a pure and sincere conscience by doing good . . . how beautiful and lovable to have in heaven a bridegroom.

This allusion to biblical images is typical of Francis, as is the creative development of these images. "Who is my Mother" for Francis becomes "It is they who are the Brides . . . and Mothers." Habig notes that the Letter to all the Faithful Ahas been called the most beautiful and most vivid of all Francis' writings. Its scripture passages seem to have been those particularly dear to Francis. Written at a time of illness, the meditation of Francis dwelt on these images of receptivity to God's love which flowers into new spiritual life. The same image of spiritual maternity is found in Second Celano 164 where Francis addresses vain preachers: "Why do you glory over men who have been converted when it is my simple brothers who converted them by their prayers?" Finally, he discusses the words "so the barren have borne many." He explained in the following way; "The barren," he said, "is my poor little brother who does not have the duty to bring forth children for the church. This one will bring forth many at the judgment, because of those he is now converting by his private prayers. "She that had many children will be weakened" suggests that the preacher who rejoices over many as though he has brought them forth by his own power, will learn he has nothing to do with them personally. Francis unites several of his favorite themes in this discourse. He connects a personal interest in a particular person with the love of God, which purifies our love and brings about a spiritual maturity.
The followers of Christ become like Mary, "who made Christ our brother," when they love God and share His love with others. Another maternal image is used by Francis at Greccio, where he had prepared a manger with hay and had brought an ox and an ass to that place. After the Mass, a knight named John, who had arranged all these things as Francis had asked, claimed that he saw a beautiful child asleep in the crib, and that Francis took it in his arms and seemed to wake him up. In this Francis may be seen as a Marian figure. Once again, it is a maternal image.

The feminine dimension of Francis' personality was manifested not only in his use of language, but it is also commented on by those who knew him.

The feminine dimension of the personality of Francis was observed by three of his contemporaries, Saint Clare, Brother Pacificus, and a doctor from Siena. In the Acts of the Process of Canonization of Saint Clare, the third witness relates the following striking symbolic recognition of Francis as nurturer:

Lady Clare also related how once, in a vision, it seemed to her she brought a bowl of hot water to Saint Francis along with a towel for drying his hands. She was climbing a very high stairway, but was going very quickly, almost as though she were going on level ground. When she reached Saint Francis, the Saint bared his breast and said to Lady Clare, "Come, take and drink." After she had sucked from it, the Saint admonished her to imbibe once again. After she did so what she tasted was so sweet and delightful she in no way could describe it. After she had imbibed, that nipple or opening of the breast from which the milk came remained between the lips of blessed Clare. After she took what remained in her mouth in her hands, it seemed to her it was gold so clear and bright that everything was seen in it as in a mirror.

Father van Asseldonk notes that the symbol of nursing was used extensively in the Middle Ages as a feminine symbol, was a well-known and popular image among women religious, and that it is also found in biblical and pagan religious writing. Saint Clare refers to nursing ten times in her writings. It would be useful to look at her dream of Francis as nursing.
mother. Van Asseldonk remarks that in this dream gold represents the fullness of human and divine goodness.

In this mirror image mentioned above in the Acts of the Process of Canonization of St. Clare, Clare sees herself as totally reflected in the person of "Francis her Mother"; this "mirror" is placed on high, at the summit of the ladder, deeply united to heaven in the mystical state of union. As noted before, this love for Francis takes nothing away from her love of God. Rather, for Clare, Francis is the real means for knowing and loving God, and after God and heaven her only consolation. In the mirror image is discovered the reciprocal personality of Francis and Clare in their personal and interpersonal unity with God. In fact, the text explicitly states that "She could see herself completely, as in a mirror," not as a sign of vanity, but as a symbol of a transparent and pure spirituality.

Their fraternal-maternal union was so strong and complete that both persons were able to love with an unselfish love, neither possessive nor egotistical, finding in their love fullness and freedom. This love is a reflection of the unity requested by the Lord from the Father.

Father van Asseldonk has stated that the use of feminine symbolism in the life of Saint Francis is located in a harmonious unity of masculine and feminine aspects which enables him to become highly endowed as a human person, a model and mirror of all human Christian perfection.

According to Father van Asseldonk, Francis was essentially a man who lived and wrote in a world of symbols; symbols which were deeply felt and which he applied to his religious and human experience. Instead of thinking in an abstract, intellectual, or theoretical way, Francis proceeded intuitively. That is, he used images, symbols, gestures, and parables, spontaneously integrating the whole universe with his thinking, feeling, doing, and living. Francis was truly engaged with the Spirit of God while remaining a brotherly companion of men and women. Francis presented himself variously as artist, actor, mystic, and even as a jester.

Father van Asseldonk has written that in Francis:

... a wealth of deep human love is clearly present because of the harmony of his feminine aspect and the masculine that is part of every human person. The richness of his soul feminine is made clear by the
special ability he has to love with the whole person all that is good and beautiful, wherever it is found, giving and uniting himself to God. To all people and creatures from the abundance of his love-filled heart from his youth, this gentle and noble love made him very sensitive in his actions as well as his writings. Francis is an intuitive person who expresses himself through symbolic acts. 

Father van Asseldonk agreed with Gagnan that it is in the form of spouse (espoused) rather than as wife or mother, that the definite feminine form of Lady Poverty first appears to Francis. The spouse of God is introduced to him and he falls in love amid strictly masculine symbols of arms and chivalry. 

Francis, following a classic story motif, begins to search caves and grottos, themselves symbols of the womb and of spiritual rebirth, for a treasure and is drawn to prayer. This meeting of the Lord in prayer leads him to meet the leper and become his friend, brother, and servant.

The characteristic identity of Francis had grown and developed in a special way when he hears the voice from the cross of San Damiano: "Francis, go repair my House." Father van Asseldonk believed that from this encounter with God, Francis understood the vocation of the "Ladies-Virgins, spouses of the Lord in the Church." From this vision Francis understood his own vocation to be, like them, a unique evangelical identity: he is called to be son of the Father, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, brother and Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, to be a Mary, Virgin made Church.

Father van Asseldonk further develops this concept:

The identification of Francis with the feminine figure is so strong that Francis feels he is called to the same identical evangelical Trinitarian Marian life. Francis finds himself in Clare while the Poor Ladies find themselves in the friars. We are not dealing in a personal appropriation of the above-mentioned Clare, but of the one and same vocation, inspired and given by the Lord himself for his "Church house" in the Unity of Spirit. Both in the one Spirit totally consecrated to the Lord, and to his gospel. Clare and the Poor Ladies
became spouses for the Lord, like Francis and his brothers.\textsuperscript{35}

Van Asseldonk sums up this concept of detachment which leads to a deeper and more profound relationship:

The entry of Clare into Francis's universe was not a simple episode. In order to belong entirely to God, Francis had renounced women completely. And now he found woman again, along his path, this time with the features of a consecrated virgin. And he received her, no longer as a function or complement of man, but in her personal and transcendent vocation, in her consecrated being, beyond desire. From the psychological and spiritual viewpoint, one cannot exaggerate the importance of this event nor undervalue its significance in the life of Francis because it concerns that which is most profound in man. Henceforth, a woman is present in Francis' spiritual life. Clare played a very significant role in his inner (spiritual) progress. When hesitating as to which road to follow, he addressed her. Then later, when all clarity had disappeared from his soul as well as from his eyes, in the darkness of the night, he turned his glance toward her in quest of light.

In the fullest meaning of the expression, she was his sister Clare. She was so, not only through her counsel, but also, and even more profoundly, through the spiritual radiance of her being, which shone upon the intimate power of Francis' soul. Even as devoted as he was to the service of God, this man could not gain access to spiritual maturity except through a feminine influence which sensitized his intelligence and brought completion to his soul. But there was also the acceptance (reception) of the woman for herself, the recognition of her own being, her personal vocation and her spiritual dignity. Thus, the woman is received and loved for herself, beyond desire, and she ceases to be a myth in order to become the symbol of a mystery transcending herself in a clarity that passes through her.

It is at this depth, at the level of the primary affective powers, that one must place the action of Clare in Francis' life. If this life offered Francis "a unique and singular encounter" between Eros and Agape, as

204
Scheler maintains, that is, an encounter which led to such an intimate interdependence that the result was the most extraordinary and the most sublime example ever recorded of the "spiritualization of life" and "invigoration of the spirit," then this is largely due to her presence as a profound and feminine source of clarity. Clare was this source, "clearer than the light of day." 36

Clare, being from the beginning a daughter, becomes, like Francis, a mother in completeness and unity by renouncing all self-love. This identification enabled her to defend the primitive Franciscan ideal for 25 years after the death of Francis.

In the story of Clare dreaming that she brought the saint hot water, Van Leeuwen states that Clare first approaches Francis like a daughter, maid, or servant to perform a maternal service for Francis; indeed he sees Francis and Clare exchanging life through lives of mutual service. Father van Asseldonk points out that water is a maternal and feminine symbol representing life and the Holy Spirit. According to Bartoli, Clare was "another Francis." A "Daughter of the Church," and "Mother-made Church" with and through Mary. 37

Bartoli observes that in dreams or ecstasies such as Clare's dream as described in the Process of Canonization of St. Clare there is no distinction between male and female because the image does not express reality but represents something personal for the one who dreams. This dream of the nurturing Francis shows a deep psychological dependence. In the vision, Clare lives with Francis and experiences maternal love. Clare desires to possess the whole Francis as a baby desires to possess its mother. According to Bartoli the gold mirror of the dream symbolizes all she received in leaving all to follow Francis. Bartoli tells us that the gold shining like a mirror indicates that Clare desired fully and completely to be identified with and in Francis, in whom she saw a reflection of herself. 38

It is stated in the dream, moreover, that Clare was bringing to Francis a pot of hot water with a towel to dry his hands. Father van Asseldonk is reminded of the Last Supper where our Lord washed the feet of the Disciples. And so he sees the dream as a symbol of loving service, always practiced by Francis and Clare. Indeed Clare is presented four times in
the process of canonization, washing the hands or feet of others. Father van Asseldonk also found it significant that the dream takes place on a very high stair, implying that Francis, an invalid during his life, is now whole and holy, elevated as it were to a sublime, maternal, intimate, and most personal helper of Clare.³⁹

Bartoli and van Leeuwen have developed the biblical imagery as well as patristic and medieval references to the "maternal" God in reference to the dream of the nurturing Francis.⁴⁰ They see Francis in this dream as the mother of Clare, as well as its representing Clare's desire to be one with Francis. This would indicate that Clare saw Francis as the source of spiritual knowledge which she desired to possess fully. The golden nipple, according to Bartoli, symbolizes all she received in leaving all to follow Francis.⁴¹

Father van Asseldonk believes the sweetness of the nourishment received by Clare from Francis refers to a Franciscan love he finds implied in the roles of Francis and Clare, which is only possible between spiritual brothers and sisters bound together in the strength and sweetness of the Spirit.⁴²

A vision Francis had about poverty in the Second Life of Celano is yet another application of feminine characteristics to Francis:

It pleases me to tell here of a vision the saint had that is worthy to be remembered. One night, after he had prayed for a long time, sleep gradually overtook him. That holy soul was taken into the sanctuary of God and he saw in a dream, among other things, a certain woman that looked like this: her head seemed to be of gold, her bosom and arms of silver, her abdomen of crystal, and the rest from there on down of iron. She was tall of stature, delicately and symmetrically framed. But this woman of such beautiful form was covered over with a soiled mantle. Getting up in the morning, the blessed father told the vision to that holy man, Brother Pacificus, but he did not explain what it meant.

Although many have interpreted this vision as they saw fit, I believe it would not be amiss to hold to the interpretation of Brother Pacificus, which the Holy Spirit suggested to him while he listened. "This beautiful woman," he said "is the beautiful soul of Saint
Francis. The golden head is his contemplation and his wisdom regarding eternal things. The bosom and arms of silver are the words of the Lord, which he meditated on in his heart and fulfilled in his actions. The crystal, because of its rigidity, signifies sobriety, and because of its brightness, chastity. Iron is the greatest perseverance. But take the soiled mantle to be his despised little body with which his precious soul is covered."

Many, however, having the spirit of God, understand this woman to represent poverty, the spouse of our father. "The reward of glory," they say, "made her golden; the praise of her name made her silver; the profession of poverty both outward and inward and without treasures made her crystal; final perseverance, iron. But the judgment of carnal men wove a sordid mantle for this renowned woman." 

Celano, like many of the writers who followed him harkened back to the vision described by the Prophet Danial to interpret Francis' dream. He states, "But that the vision refers to our father is apparent especially from the fact that, avoiding any arrogance, he refused absolutely to interpret it. Indeed if it had pertained to the order, he could not have passed over it with complete silence."

Once again Francis is perceived by someone in feminine form and in this instance "inspired by the Holy Spirit." Pacificus sees this feminine form as representing Francis' virtues.

The story of the third witness in the canonization of Clare, and Brother Pacificus' interpretation of Francis' dream about poverty, demonstrate that Clare and Brother Pacificus recognized feminine elements in Francis. The nurturing, sensitive side of Francis is reflected in the story of the discretion of Saint Francis with the hungry brother. Elsewhere in this dissertation numerous stories are developed which demonstrate the sensitivity of Francis to those in need. He was careful to satisfy their needs without causing them embarrassment.

The story of "Francis and the Three Women" is quoted in its entirety in chapter three and therefore will not be retold here. As has been discussed, in this episode the Christian
virtues recognize Francis as the personification of Lady Poverty.

These instances, in which the self-understanding of Saint Francis was manifested, are of great interest today because of the growing understanding that the relationship between God and man is enriched when the feminine elements of the relationship, represented by Mary and the Church, are recognized. As Paul Tillich writes in "The Impact of Psychotherapy on Theological Thought":

We have replaced the emphasis on the demanding yet remote God by an emphasis on His self-giving nearness. (and) by elements of the image of the embracing and supporting mother.

Charles Curran further expounds the issue of the feminine element in personality:

"In recent psychological literature dealing with personality assessment, counseling, psychotherapy, and related areas, the human person is being considered not as exclusively male or female as his sex might designate. Rather, qualities, tendencies, and characteristics previously considered masculine or feminine, are now seen as interwoven, in varying degrees, in the same person, in himself and how he relates to others."

Concerning the three mysterious women Gagnan writes:

After having suggested that one understands thus the three mysterious poor women, the seraphic doctor (Bonaventure) adds that these virtues shone in him who "chose, nevertheless, to put his pride in poverty." That is why the greeting from the young maidens to Francis goes under the title of "Lady Poverty." Already a revelation, the poor appearance of the young maidens leads one to understand that these three virtues were sent in the name of the poor Christ. In other words, chastity, poverty, and obedience (and by them, all virtues which the Gospel recommends) become visible, living and revelatory, a triple expression of the poverty of Christ. They express in Jesus -- chaste, poor, and
obedient -- the power of the Father who, for the world's salvation, made him completely poor: Poor on the cross, as rich as he was in glory. Even before the greeting, a primary symbolism leads one to believe that Francis recognized in the poverty of Christ the fundamental and the dynamic of all holiness. To live the Gospel implies the practice of virtues which are living and expressive; the poverty of the cross is the only place (only, because "without Me you can do nothing") from which emanates the vigor of life which the Father gives through the Son ("out of his heart shall flow rivers of running water"), and thus, the only place where a man would be able to live these virtues himself. 46

When the young maidens greeted Francis, they recognized in him the perfection of this dynamic of grace. Because he was intensely moved by the poor and crucified Christ, Francis was a champion of the three Gospel counsels, but in him these three virtues attest to the source which gave them life: the poverty of Christ. This is why the Saint chose this virtue for his spouse; it is why in him she was beautiful, living and expressive; it is why she was truly "Lady." 47

No more than Celano, does Saint Bonaventure insist on giving a one-sided explanation of Francis' vision of the three women. If he suggested what he thought to be the most plausible understanding, most conforming to the Poverello's spirituality, he is careful not to overstate this one perspective. Celano suggests to his reader another three-part grouping. He tells us Francis considered it a privilege to call Lady Poverty, at times, his mother; his spouse; and his Lady. 48

Cardinal Ratzinger has recently pointed out that, properly understood, Mariology exercises a twofold clarifying and deepening influence on the concept of the Church:

1. As against the masculine, activist, and sociological approach of the 'People of God,' there is the fact that the Church, Ecclesia, is feminine. Where the Church is seen only in masculine, structural and institutional terms, it has lost the really distinctive aspect of Ecclesia, that central core of which the Bible and the Fathers speak when referring to the Church.

209
2. The Church is the body...of Christ in spiritual tension of love in which the conjugal mystery of Adam and Eve is fulfilled, in the dynamism of a unity which does not eliminate reciprocity. This being so, Mariology can never be dissolved as a symbol of ecclesiology, a mere exemplification. 45

One finds in the Mariology of Saint Francis, and indeed, in his attitude toward the feminine, an intuitive understanding of Ecclesia, a respect for the sense of mystery which is touched only in prayer. For Francis, Mary is a person who experienced poverty, and so her struggles became for Francis something touched by God. Francis imitates Mary in her poverty, in her giving birth to Christ, and in her giving birth to the Church.

Francis, as will be shown in the next chapter, reflected contemporary Mariology in a creative manner. Creative persons are a blend of masculine and feminine characteristics. The tensions thus produced by somewhat opposite characteristics account for the creative achievements of such people. In them, there is a constant interplay which leads to a creative unfolding of conscious and unconscious, reason and passion. 50

However, caution must be exercised in the analysis of historical figures. As Father Peter Fehlner has pointed out, "similarities of a 13th-century personality to 19th-century or 20th-century cultural fashions, hardly justify categorizing Francis as a romantic. It is far more reasonable, despite similarities, to assume Francis, no more than any other Medieval, anticipated the sensitivities of the modern era. 51

Was Francis effeminate? Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines effeminate as "having feminine qualities untypical of a man; not manly in appearance or manner; marked by an unbecoming delicacy or overrefinement." On the contrary, the contemporaries of Francis give us no indication that they saw him as unmanly or overrefined. As John R. H. Morton states, Saint Francis is a much loved figure; but he was in fact a very terrifying person. This is due to the fact that he set himself to achieve an ideal which demanded immense courage and determination; and he could be very severe with anyone who tried to persuade him to take a rather smoother path. 52 Perhaps an openness to the feminine, both in the medieval sense of nurturing or in the modern sense of an openness to creativity, was God's gift to Francis to offset his tendency to harshness.
This openness to the feminine is a reflection of spiritual development. The feminine completes, invigorates, and adds substance to his desire to serve God. The feminine was necessary because his vocation was to be shared with men and women who needed more than a "ruthless" leader who was willing to undergo "hardship and suffering."\(^5^3\)

Francis recognized the feminine elements in his life and used them as inspiration for his reference to maternal care in the Rule for Hermitages, and in his stories about the little black hen and the poor woman in the desert. His ability to nurture, as seen in the story of the hungry brother, was not a weakness but a strength integrated into his total personality. Francis demonstrates, in the story of the little black hen, that the Church is seen as strong precisely because she has the ability to nurture.

III. CONCLUSION

To what extent does the feminine in the self-understanding of Saint Francis reflect the women who played such an important role in his life: Lady Pica, Saint Clare, and Lady Jacoba? In Francis' personality is found the ability to nurture and uplift. It is found in Clare's vision where she walks up stairs to reach Francis and be nurtured by him. It is found in the episode of Francis and the hungry brother, and in the story of the poor woman in the desert. These traits are also found in Saint Clare, who was seen by Francis as a strong and competent individual, in Lady Jacoba, whom he accepted as an equal, and in his mother, Lady Pica, who both nourished him and freed him from his father's domination. As might be expected, Francis' understanding of the feminine in his self-understanding is also present in his personal struggles. In the parable of the little black hen we see Francis struggling with the overwhelming cares of his growing and developing Order. It is therefore significant that in this situation Francis, the little black hen, sends his brothers to their mother, the holy Roman church which is seen as strong, nurturing, and uplifting. Even in Francis' struggles with his own weakness his image of the feminine remains positive.
CHAPTER FIVE

END NOTES


3 L. Hardick, s.v. “St. Francis of Assisi.” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*.


6 1 Cel Omnibus, 72-73.

7 1 Cel Omnibus, 376-377.


9 Ibid., 584-587.


11 2 Cel Omnibus, 382-383.

12 van Asseldonk, 315.

14 2 Cel Omnibus, 380-381.

15 2 Cel Omnibus, 381.


17 Caroline Walker Bynum, Jesus as Mother, Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 168.


19 Mt. 12:50.


22 I Kings 25.

23 2 Cel Omnibus, 493-494.


26 van Asseldonk, 310.

27 Ibid., 310-311.

28 Ibid., 311.

29 Ibid., 267.
30 Ibid., 268.
31 Ibid., 269.
32 Ibid., 271-273.
33 2 Cel Omnibus, 365.
34 van Asseldonk, 274.
35 Ibid., 278.
36 Ibid., 281-282.
38 van Asseldonk, 315.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
42 2 Cel Omnibus 291-292.
43 2 Cel. Omnibus, 430-431.
45 Curran, 113.
47 Brown, Lady, 257.
48 L.M. Omnibus, 684.

50 Curran, 116.

51 Peter D. Fehlner, Letter to the Author, April 26, 1995.


53 Ibid., 14.
CHAPTER SIX

MARY IN THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF SAINT FRANCIS

This chapter will begin with an overview of Francis' Mariology as seen by modern Franciscan writers. In the second section of this chapter the image of Mary as found in Francis' own words and in the writings of his early biographies will be analyzed. Throughout this latter section reference will be made to patristic texts as well as writers of the Early and High Middle Ages who inspired Francis with many images of Mary. This will also put Francis' Mariology in the context of Medieval Mariology. While these materials are not unknown, their role as sources for Marian devotion has been neglected. In addition, examples of popular Franciscan devotional lore from the fourteenth century have been included. These latter works have been widely ignored by secondary authors because of their late date and lack of reference or connection with the historical primary sources. Nonetheless, these works are valuable to this study because they demonstrate what is believed to be Francis' greatest contribution to the Mariology of his time. They reflect an accurate popular rendering of mainstream Marian thought of the period as reflected by Francis. Francis influenced popular Marian devotion by his writings and by the preaching of his friars, and in that sense the popular rendition of this folklore which pictures Francis as totally united to Mary is valid. In reviewing the secondary literature, two possible sources for Francis' use of the term "Spouse of the Holy Spirit" that have been overlooked will be examined. It may be mentioned that it would be more precise to characterize Francis' Mariology as "creative" rather than "original." This indicates that Francis produced Marian works which were poetical and affective renditions of mainstream Marian thought. The first section of the chapter will establish a basis for the study of the Mariology of Saint Francis. The second section of the chapter will deal with the actual Marian writings of Francis and his biographers. The second section will begin with an analysis of Francis' concept of Mary as the Mother of God. Bonaventure held that this was Francis' most beloved image of Mary, pivotal to his understanding of Mary's role in salvation history. This examination will be followed by analysis of Francis' other images of Mary.
In analyzing the primary sources used in this chapter the system of Franciscan scholar Raphael Brown will be utilized to indicate the relative degree of historicity or authenticity of each incident by the following terms:

(1) historical (historically verifiable), (2) probable, (3) uncertain, (4) doubtful, (5) apocryphal.

The writings of Thomas of Celano serve as a basic conservative criterion for the historical classification. Materials found in other earlier documents, such as the Speculum Perfectionis (both versions), The Legenda Antiqua of Perugia, The Little Manuscript, The Actus and Fioretti, and various fourteenth- and fifteenth-century codices will be classified "historical" only when confirmed in outline by Celano, and otherwise as "probable," "uncertain," or "doubtful," depending on internal or external evidence.

I. CONTEMPORARY STUDIES OF THE MARIOLOGY OF SAINT FRANCIS

No comprehensive study of Francis' Mariology was done before the 1950s. Reviewing the studies of Saint Francis in chronological order, Willibrord Lampen's study "De S. Francisci cultu angelorum et sanctorum" is among the first. Lampen holds that Francis had great devotion to Mary which followed the teachings of the church without exaggeration. Lampen studies Mary in her relation to the Trinity and as Mother of Christ. This study is valuable in that he demonstrates the poetic originality and inventive affection of Francis' Mariology. As noted in this chapter, Lampen made a valuable contribution to Franciscan Mariology with his study of the terms used by Francis, especially "Spouse of the Holy Spirit."

A basic study of the Mariology of Saint Francis and the most seminal research of modern times is Kajatan Esser's "Die Marienfrömmigkeit des hl. Franziskus von Assisi," in Wissenschaft und Weisheit, written during the Marian Year in 1954. The thoroughness of his study is remarkable. He systematically examines the small corpus of Francis' writings on Mary, puts them in their theological and historical context and analyzes their historical value. Esser notes how the
complementarity of Mary and Christ (New Eve--New Adam) is basic to Francis' thoughts and affections regarding Mary. Esser studies Mary also in the context of Advocate of the Order, in Mary's relationship with the Church and the Trinity, and as Mary the Poor Woman. Esser discusses Mary as Mediatrix of all Graces, as Spouse of the Holy Spirit and in the context of Christ, the New Adam, and as the New Eve.

Similar to this study is one in Spanish, Feliciano De Ventosa's "La devoción a Maria en la espiritualidad de San Francesco." This source is shorter than Esser's work and tends to be somewhat devotional.

An interesting volume is Mary in the Franciscan Order. This work, containing the proceedings of the third national meeting of Franciscan Teaching Sisterhoods, was published in 1955. The papers presented reflect the devotional Mariology of the 1950s, i.e., the history of the Franciscan Rosary and the Marian devotion of the Franciscan saints. The article on "St. Francis and Mary" by Joachim Deleiden presents the information found in Raphael Brown's Our Lady and St. Francis such as Mary's role as the Poor Lady in Francis' writings.

Another valuable study is Oktavian Schmucki's "De seraphici Patris Francisci habitudine erga beatissimam Virginem Mariam" which appeared in Regina Immaculata in 1955. In it, Schmucki writes on Francis' Marian teaching, his devotion to Mary, and his Marian practices. In the section on Marian teachings, Schmucki places Francis' writings, such as the "Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary," in their theological context and her relationship with the Trinity. In the section on Francis' Marian practice, Schmucki considers Francis' actions which showed his love of Mary. Under the Marian practice of Saint Francis, he shows how Francis consciously tried to transfer the life of the poor Mary to his own and his friars' way of living. Because of Schmucki's development of the relationship between Francis and the Patristic Fathers, he can be considered to have set the stage for others, such as Hilarius Pyfferoen and Optatus van Asseldonk. It may also be suggested that because of his profound work Schmucki along with Esser may be considered to be the founders of the study of Francis' Marian writings, devotion, and practices. Raphael Brown produced a valuable work around the time of the Marian Year, 1954, Our Lady and St. Francis; all the Earliest Texts. Especially valuable in this small collection is Brown's system of
classifying the historicity or authenticity of each text. In addition, his translation of fourteenth-century legends of Francis and Mary show how Francis affected popular Mariology and became a source of orthodox teaching on Mary to many people. Also of value is Brown's article on "Saint Francis of Assisi and Our Lady" published in The Marian Era in 1960. This popular, detailed, and sensitive piece presents to the general reader an overview of the studies of the Mariology of Saint Francis done in the 1950s.11

Much of the important work in the study of Francis' Mariology has come out of northern Europe. In 1970, Hilarius Pyfferoen published "Fuditne S. Franciscus suas duas preces mariales ad S. Mariam de Angelis ad Portiunculam."12 There, he shows the strong connection between devotion to Mary as Queen of the Angels and the Marian thinking of St. Francis.

Another important work, done in 1971, was Hilarius Pyfferoen's "Ave . . . Dei Genitrix Maria, Quae es Virgo Ecclesia Facta (S. Francisci)."13 It shows how Francis' original concept of Mary as virgin-made-church was suppressed by church authorities as dangerous. Pyfferoen develops Francis' original concept of Mary as the symbol of the Church. Hilarius Pyfferoen and Optatus van Asseldonk co-authored "Maria Santissima e Lo Spirito Santo in San Francesco d'Assisi" in 1975. They follow the system of Octavius Schmucki in situating Francis' teaching in the context of the Church Fathers.14 The major contribution of this work is the thorough study of Francis' insights into Mary's relationship to the Holy Spirit.

Kajetan Esser made another important contribution with "Piété mariale de saint François d' Assise," written in 1959.15 In this article Esser shows that Francis' love of Mary and of the Church would have important implications in the development of the Franciscan Order.

Alberto Ghinato in "La Madonna nella pietà e nella vita di San Francesco," which appeared in 1963, sees the perfection of charity at the core of Franciscan spirituality.16 This charity is the measure of one's identification with Mary, the Spouse of the Holy Spirit. Ghinato examines Francis' Mariology in the context of Mary as advocate of the Order, and Francis as servant of Mary. For example, the article notes the liturgical references to Mary which serve to remind the faithful of Mary's love. Francis uses references to
constantly remind the faithful of Mary's place at the foot of the cross in the *Office of the Passion*.

Bernard Prezewozny, in the "The Marian Dimensions in the Life of St. Francis" in 1976, develops the view that Francis' devotion to Mary, while not central to his spirituality, was that of a devout thirteenth-century Catholic.\(^{17}\)

Calvo Moralejo authored "La Piedad Mariana en San Francisco de Asis y la Exhortacion Apostolica 'Marialis Cultus'" in 1978. In it, he shows that Francis anticipated many of the Marian concepts of Vatican II.\(^{18}\)

Maralejo examines Francis' Mariology in the context of Mary as mother of the Church and her relationship with Christ and the Holy Spirit. Maralejo develops the themes of the Exhortation, namely the Blessed Mother in the Revised Roman Liturgy; the Blessed Virgin as model of the Church; Trinitarian Christological; and Ecclesial aspects of Devotion; and other topics in reference to Francis' Marian writings.

Francesco Di Caccia in "Il Saluto alla vergine e la pietà mariana di Francesco d' Assisi" discusses the profound and precise theological implications of Francis' writings concerning Mary and the mystery of the Trinity.\(^{19}\)

Willibrord-Christian van Dijk does a thorough analysis of Francis' Mariology using recent sources in *Ce que saint François d' Assise croyait de la Vierge Marie*.\(^{20}\)

An important study by Peter Fehlner is "St. Francis and Mary Immaculate," written in 1982.\(^{21}\) Fehlner, using the work of Esser, Schmucki, Lampen, and Pyfferoen, develops the role of Mary in the life of Francis and shows his influence on later Franciscan Marian writings culminating in the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and the Marian teaching of Saint Francis.

Ann Werehoff in "St. Francis' Devotion to Mary," appearing in 1994, emphasizes the importance of Mary in the life of Francis by tracing his devotion to Mary to the early days of his conversion, citing Celano and Bonaventure.\(^{22}\)

John Harding presents a popularized treatment of Mary's place in the writings of Saint Francis in the ecumenical journal *One in Christ*.\(^{23}\) Optato van Asseldonk reflects on the Mariology common to Francis and Clare in "Maria, Francesco e Chiara: Una Spiritualità per domani."\(^{24}\)

Beginning with Esser, the modern writers just reviewed have put Francis in the context of his times. They have insisted that he was in agreement with the Marian writings of
the Medieval period. These studies of Francis have revolved around Esser's categories, i.e., Mary in relation to the Church and the Trinity, Mary as Mediatrix of All Graces, and Mary as Poor Lady. Subsequent writers, as will be shown, have taken these categories and developed them, each in their own areas of interest and expertise. The various writings have been brought together in this study. In most cases, the various investigations compliment and enrich each other. In one case, the authors disagree and contradict each other; in that case, subsequent analysis weighs the conclusions of each. In all cases, an attempt has been made to analyze and incorporate all these studies which have, as their starting point, the work of Esser.

II. FRANCIS' MARIAN WRITINGS, MARIAN DEVOTION, MARIAN PRACTICES

On the other hand, the biographers of Francis tell us that "He embraced the Mother of Jesus with unspeakable love because she made the Lord full of majesty, our Brother," 25 and because "we attained mercy through her." 26 Because the Incarnation of the Son of God was the foundation of his entire religious life, and he painstakingly tried his whole life long to follow in everything the footsteps of the Word Made Man, he had to meet with grateful love the woman who not only brought God closer to him humanly, but who "had made the Lord full of majesty, our brother." 27 With that, she enters into the closest relationship to the work of salvation. Furthermore, Franciscan writers have shown that Francis' devotion to Mary can be traced at least to the early days of his conversion. Celano and Bonaventure both mention Francis having devotion to Our Lady of the Angels during his conversion. 28

Saint Francis was a theologian in the wider sense of the word in that many of his writings contained profound theological insights into the mystery of God. 29 The noted Capuchin theologian, Octavianus Schmucki, has praised the Mariology of Saint Francis as being notable for its "perfecta sanitas theologica." 30
A. MARY AND THE INCARNATION AS SEEN BY FRANCIS

Bonaventure held that Francis was devoted to Mary because by becoming the mother of Christ she made Jesus our brother. It would be useful to present an overview of both Francis' own words on the subject and those observations on Francis' devotion reported by his early biographers. Esser and Busenbender agree that the Incarnation was the foundation of Francis' spiritual life.31

Armstrong suggests that the Marian passage in the Letter to the Entire Order, "Listen my brothers; if the Blessed Virgin is so honored as is right, since she carried Him in her most holy womb.. . ."32 is inspired by a Cistercian author, Pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux, in the work Tractatus de Corpore Domini.33

B. MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS

It was by prayer rather than combat or discussion that heresy was opposed by Francis. This view affected Francis' Mariology. The Cathars, in virtue of their dualist principle according to which matter is evil, denied the Incarnation of God's Son. By the same token, they reduced to nothing Mary's share in the work of salvation. Francis in contrast wrote:

The most high Father announced through his holy Archangel Gabriel, to the holy and glorious Virgin Mary, that this Word of the Father, so worthy of reverence, so holy and glorious, was coming down from heaven, and from her womb he took on the true flesh of our frail human nature.34

As Francis wrote about Mary, he taught orthodoxy:

Hail, his palace! Hail, his tabernacle!
Hail, his home! Hail, his vesture!
Hail, his handmaiden! Hail, his mother!35

Christmas is the "Franciscan feast" par excellence. Francis saw it as the Feast of Feasts36 because, as Celano tells us:

222
"He observed with indescribable eagerness the Nativity of the Child Jesus above all other feasts, declaring that it was the feast whereupon God became a tiny infant, hung upon a human breast." 37 In the well-known Christmas celebration of Greccio, he is said to demonstrate vividly and strikingly the mystery of this day and to speak with great urgency about the "Child of Bethlehem." In this context, the final report by Thomas of Celano is of unmistakable clarity: "A devout man saw a . . . little boy lying in the manger which was put there. He saw the holy man of God go there and waken the child as though from a deep sleep." 38 Celano comments on this report, "This vision was not unfitting, for the Child Jesus had been forgotten in the hearts of many. Then it was revived, through his mercy, by his holy servant Francis and lovingly stamped on their memories." 39

Through his own love of the Son of God become man and his love of his Virgin Mother, which on this day became so evident to people, Francis rekindled in many hearts a love which had become very cold. What he did in Greccio and what still came to light in the many details of his devout meditations and actions, was nothing other than the concrete application of his general principle, "The love of him who has loved us so much we must return with all our hearts." 40

By stressing Mary's physical motherhood, Mary is never seen by Saint Francis as being isolated from her Son. 41 Rather, Francis can be seen as safeguarding the orthodox teaching, "She made the Lord of Majesty our brother." 42

Saint Francis' Mary of the incarnation is always based in Scripture and the Gospel events. This gives his devotion to Mary a timelessness which goes beyond medieval culture.

Octavius Schmucki, in his study of Francis' devotion to Mary, notes that the theme of the Incarnation used by Saint Francis paralleling the work of St. Peter Damian in the Sermon on the Nativity of the Blessed Mother:

Today the Queen of the World is born,
The Gate of Heaven,
Tabernacle of God,
Star of the Sea,
The Celestial Ladder through which the King of Kings comes down from on high.\textsuperscript{43}

Thus, possibly taking his inspiration from sermons of St. Peter Damian, which he could have heard quoted, Francis' devotion to the motherhood of Mary is manifested in a particular way on Christmas, when Christ becomes our brother.

Peter Damian had become famous especially through his treatise on the Eucharist, the doctrine of which began to be studied more carefully during the High Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{44} It is not surprising that he worked out a connection between the Eucharist and the Virgin in his sermon on her nativity:

For the same body of Christ which the most blessed Virgin brought forth, which she nourished in her womb, wrapped in swaddling clothes and brought up with motherly care; this same body, I say and none other, we now perceive without any doubt on the sacred altar.\textsuperscript{45}

Francis' recognition of Mary as the Mother of God led him to greet Mary as the Tabernacle of Christ in his Salutation to the Blessed Virgin Mary.\textsuperscript{46}

Following the insights of Saint Peter Damian, Francis took the concept of Mary as Tabernacle to its logical conclusion by linking Mary to the Eucharist and the Priesthood.

The themes of the Incarnation, the Motherhood of Mary, and the Eucharist are linked together in the "Letter to a General Chapter":

Listen to this, my brothers: It is right to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary because she bore Him in her most holy womb . . . how holy, virtuous, and worthy should not a priest be; he touched Christ with his own hands. Christ who is now to die no more but enjoy eternal life and glory, upon whom the angels desire to look.\textsuperscript{70} A priest receives Him into his heart and mouth and offers Him to others.\textsuperscript{47}

In this passage, Francis unites Mary, the symbol of the Church, with Christ. Francis' Mariology must be seen in the context of his time.\textsuperscript{48,49}
Peter Damian had spoken in a similar manner about the relation between the Eucharist and the Incarnation. 50

Both Peter Damian and Francis connect Mary, who carried Christ in her womb and held him on her lap, with the Christ received in the Eucharist.

Luke describes the disciples, Mary, the women and the brothers returning to Jerusalem and the community devoting themselves to "the Apostles teaching and fellowship to the breaking of the bread and the prayers." Thus, Francis develops this Biblical image uniting Mary and the Eucharist.51

This connection of the poor Son of Mary, the Incarnate Word, with the Eucharist made food and drink, ultimately aimed at making visible the invisible divinity in the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word.52 For Francis, the Incarnation of Christ in Mary does not occur accidentally. Rather, because she opened herself in faith and total devotion to the working of the Holy Spirit -- as he notes by the use of the expression "Sponsa Spiritus Sancti," she served to help the hidden God to become visible, perceptible. In this, Mary is a model for everyone who, like she, opened himself in faith to the Spirit of the Lord and will "see with spiritual eyes" the Lord in the mystery of the Eucharist, and will be filled by Him and become one spirit with Him.53 In the Eucharist he will see at once the beginning and the end of the work of salvation; because in this way the Lord is always with His faithful as He Himself says, "Behold I am with you until the end (perfection, completion) of the world."54

In the relationship with her Son, Francis believed that Mary voluntarily shared her Son's poverty. Thus, Mary became a model for Francis and his brothers. Following Bonaventure's logic, Mary as a Model of Poverty and Mary the Model of Fasting.

C. MARY THE POOR LADY

Bonaventure informs us that Saint Francis would often recall with tears the poverty of Jesus Christ and his mother. Hence, he declared that "this virtue was the queen because it shone with such superior brilliance in the King of Kings and in the Queen, his Mother." 55
Saint Peter Damian had written previously:

To what great perfection had Mary seen herself lifted above all humanity, when she heard that she was made the mother of her Creator? But with what great depth of humility did she, who merited to rise before God to such a sublime dignity, prostrate herself before Him. For she said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word." By the angel she was called the mother of God, but she acknowledged that she was the handmaid of the Lord.\textsuperscript{56}

Joining humility to poverty, "In his Letter To All The Faithful," Saint Francis stressed that Jesus though he was rich above all things, nevertheless wished with his most blessed Mother, to take Poverty as his choice.\textsuperscript{57} Marian poverty had been previously explored by Leander of Seville (d. 600) had also written stressing the poverty of Mary:

Look at the virginity and the poverty of Mary. She was so precious in the Lord that she merited to be the Mother of God. She was so poor in things that she had the consolation of neither midwife nor handmaid at the time she gave birth. Her resting place was so small that she used a stable for a cradle.\textsuperscript{58}

In Chapter 9 of his Earlier Rule, Francis made illusion to the subject of begging, Francis urged all the brothers to:

\ldots strive to follow the humility and poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . . And if it is necessary, let them go begging. And they should not be ashamed, but let them rather remember that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living almighty God . . . . was not ashamed and was poor and homeless and lived from alms -- he and the Blessed Virgin and his disciples.\textsuperscript{59}

Clare embodied in the Rule of her Order (Chapter 6) a passage from Saint Francis' "last will for us," which he wrote shortly before his death, that sums up his lifelong determination to adhere faithfully to his mystical union with Lady Poverty and also Mary:
I, little Brother Francis, wish to follow the life and poverty of our most high Lord Jesus Christ and of his most holy Mother, and to persevere in it to the end.\textsuperscript{60}

In urging everyone to feed the animals and birds at Christmas time in honor of the birth of the Christ Child, St. Francis recalled with tears how on that day the poor little Virgin was surrounded with poverty and need -- how on that night the most Blessed Virgin Mary laid the Son of God down in the manger between an ox and a donkey.\textsuperscript{61}

This event is also mentioned in the \textit{Mirror of Perfection} without significant additions. This devotion to Mary's poverty is not completely original with Francis. The devotion to the stable is also found in Bernard.\textsuperscript{62} What was original was Francis' manner of popularizing the devotion with his invention of the manger scene.

"In all the poor he saw the Son of the poor Lady. He (Francis) bore naked in his heart the One whom she bore naked in her hands."\textsuperscript{63}

The poverty of Christ and his Mother was, for Francis, not only a lamentable historical fact but a present reality in the Church which must be seen and met:

What he saw of afflictions, what he saw of misery in a person, he immediately attributed to Christ, and in a quick turn transferred it to Him. The poor person has, in Francis' eyes, the task of making transparent the poverty of Christ and his Mother. Consequently, when one of the brothers had behaved improperly toward a poor man, Francis punished him severely and then admonished him, "Brother, when you see a poor person, a mirror of the Lord and his poor Mother is held up to you."\textsuperscript{64}

Schmucki holds that Francis heard the call to a life of evangelical perfection in the Church of the Portiuncula through the words of Matthew 10:1-42: "Provide yourselves with neither gold nor silver . . . ." In Francis' mind, therefore, evangelical poverty is somehow the compendium of the entire Gospel.\textsuperscript{65}

If Mary played an important role in Francis' spiritual life, it would seem to follow that Mary's poverty would be reflected in Francis' spirituality. Indeed, Thomas of Celano
tells us that Francis connected the voluntary poverty of Christ and his mother. 66

When once the vicar of the Saint, Brother Petrus Catarii, saw how entire hordes of out-of-town brothers came for a visit to the Portiuncula and there was not sufficiency of alms to procure the necessary supplies, he spoke to Saint Francis:

"Brother, I don't know what to do. The brothers come together here, coming from everywhere and I have nothing with which I could care for them adequately. I beg you, give your consent that some of the property of the entering novices be kept so that we can fall back on it at the proper time in order to cover expenses." The Saint answered him, "May this type of love be far from us, that we sin against the Rule for the sake of a man." The former responded to him, "What am I to do then?" "Rob," thus spoke Francis, "the altar of the Virgin and remove the various jewelry if you cannot meet the needs in any other way! Believe me, she will prefer that we observe the Gospel of her Son and rob her altar than leave her altar adorned and despise her Son. The Lord will surely send someone who will return to his Mother what she has lent us." 67

Such words, which manifest a deep faith, show most clearly how seriously the saint took his imitation of the poverty of Mary, and also how very much the latter is embedded in the whole life according to the Gospels. Also, it is clearly recognizable here that veneration of Mary did not stand somehow alienated and isolated in his life. They were fused externally and internally into a firm union.

Francis, reflecting on the poverty of Mary, always reflects his Christocentric Marian spirituality. He never mentions the Poor Mary without mentioning the Poor Christ. 68

It is apparent, therefore, that Francis saw in Mary the disciple, poor in possessions but rich in love, a real person who understood human suffering. Although Francis was not a theologian, he had a profound understanding of Mary's role in salvation history. In the "Last Will" which Francis wrote to Saint Clare, he says, "I, Brother Francis the poor little man, want to follow the life of poverty of Our Most High Lord Jesus Christ and of his Blessed Mother and persevere in her until the end." 69
Francis is also concerned with the visible aspects of poverty which are given in the historical life of Mary. Here, too, he is eager to avoid all abstraction and generalities. His piety is influenced and given life by the historical facts of her life joined to Christ and her concrete place in God's plan of salvation.

For Francis, Mary's poverty is the embodiment of the poverty of Christ, a sign of the fact that she bore and fully shared a common fate with her Son.

After he described the mystery of the Incarnation as stated previously in his first version to the "Letter to the Faithful," Francis continued, "He wanted, although he was rich beyond measure, nevertheless to choose poverty with the most blessed Virgin, his Mother." This comment alludes to Saint Francis' knowledge of the redeeming function of poverty as it shines forth in Saint Paul's saying which is used so often, "Understand the mercy of Our Lord Jesus Christ: For your sake he became poor when he was rich so that you might become rich through his poverty." Mary shares in this redeeming poverty; the disciples of Christ share in it; so should all who want to follow him. For this reason he called poverty the queen among all virtues because it radiates so brilliantly from the King of Kings and his royal Mother. In poverty Mary brought Christ into the world. In poverty and hunger Mary and Christ lived in Nazareth.

Saint Francis embraced the Mother of Our Lord Jesus with indescribable love because, as he said, it was she who made the Lord of Majesty our brother, and through her we found mercy. After Christ, he put all his trust in her and took her as his patroness for himself and his friars. In her honor he fasted every year from the feast of Saints Peter and Paul until the Assumption. Francis wrote in the 9th Chapter of the Rule of 1221, "The friars should be delighted to follow the lowliness and poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ, remembering that of the whole world we must own nothing; but having food and sufficient clothing, with these let us be content," citing Saint Paul in the first letter to Timothy. Francis believed that the friars should love the poor and those who begged by the wayside. If they are in want, they should not be ashamed to beg alms, remembering that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living, all-powerful God, "set his face like a very hard rock and was not ashamed."
believed that Mary was best honored by the observance of poverty.

In like manner, Saint Peter Damian had written that through the food which Eve ate we were punished by an external fast; but the food brought forth by Mary has given us access to the heavenly banquet. In the Legend of the Three Companions we read, "Once during a meal a certain brother remarked that the Blessed Virgin was so poor that she had hardly anything to set before her Son, Our Lord. On hearing this, Francis sighed, deeply moved, and leaving the table, he ate his bread sitting on the floor." Francis’ love was so great that:

Semper beatus Franciscus ante cibum dicebat Gloria in excelsis Deo, et ante potum Ave Maria (Before eating, the Blessed Francis always recited a Glory to God in the Highest, and before drinking a Hail Mary).

Because Mary was the Mother of God, Francis believed "there was no one born into the world" like her. Does this imply that Mary was immaculately conceived? In the next section this question will be examined.

D. MARY AND THE TRINITY

Ghinato suggests that Francis recognized that Mary was raised to a higher order of grace, thus anticipating the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception because of her personal relationship with each person of the Blessed Trinity. In the Antiphon of the Office of the Passion, Francis attributes to Mary: "There is no one like you born into the world." According to Fehlner, this opens the way to a formulation of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Schmucki disagrees with Fehlner that Francis foresaw this doctrine, as will be discussed in the following section. The Immaculate Conception is further ascribed by Fehlner to Francis in Mary’s relationship with the three divine persons with the words: "You are . . . the one chosen by the most Holy Father in heaven whom he consecrated with His most holy beloved Son and with the Holy Spirit the Paraclete." Bonaventure comments on this intuitive insight by Francis in the Major Life when he recounts that Saint Francis was consulted in Siena by a religious who was a doctor of theology.
about a number of difficult questions, and he expounded the secrets of divine wisdom so clearly that the theologian was amazed and exclaimed, "His theology soars aloft on the wings of purity and contemplation, like an eagle in full flight, while our learning crawls along the ground." 88

Fr. Peter Fehlner, more than any other Franciscan writer, sees a connection between the Mariology of St. Francis and the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. We will compare and discuss Fehlner's ideas in the context of the views held by other Franciscan writers.

In his article, "Saint Francis and Mary Immaculate," Fehlner notes that although Mary Immaculate occupies a major place in the spirituality, theology, and apostolate of the Franciscan Order . . . no one has ever seriously defended the possibility that Mary played a major role in the life of Saint Francis. 89 Fehlner finds this surprising. He holds that the "Christocentrism characteristic of Francis and his Order has its Marian co-efficient in the thesis of the Immaculate Conception." 90

Fehlner further notes that Esser teaches that the complementarity of Mary and Christ, which Esser sees as a relationship of the New Eve and New Adam, is basic to Francis' thoughts of and affections for Mary. 91 Fehlner suggests that, although Esser does not develop the idea of the Immaculate Conception, the inference is perfectly clear: "Francis' Mariology was a major influence on the development of the thesis on the motive of the Immaculate Conception in the Franciscan School." 92

Fehlner holds that Francis owed his vocation to his devotion to Mary, quoting the following from First Celano:

And at the will of God it happened that his holy soul was released from his body at that place (St. Mary's) . . . the knowledge of heavenly things were first given to him . . . he experienced that the place of the church of St. Mary of the Portiuncula was endowed with more fruitful graces and visited by heavenly spirits. 93

Bonaventure, Major Life 3, 1.

As he (Francis) was living there by the Church of Our Lady Francis prayed to her . . . begging her insistently and with tears to become his Advocate. Then
he was granted the true spirit of the gospel by the intercession of the Mother of Mercy and he brought it to fruition.94

Bonaventure Major Life 4,5

Francis brought his little flock of twelve friars to St. Mary of the Portiuncula. It was there that the Order of Friars Minor had been founded by the merits of the Mother of God and it was there, too, that it would grow to maturity by her intercession.95

According to Fehlner Mary through these mystical experiences plays an important role in the life of Francis of Assisi and leads to the revelation of the Immaculate Conception to Francis by Mary.96 Fehlner, like Newman, teaches that: "In her (Mary's) own order (of existence) and in terms of her unique relationship to her Son, the economy of salvation and its unfolding in the history of the Church is as much her work as it is His (Christ's)."97 Fehlner holds that, "If the achievement of Saint Francis can quite rightly be described as the work and possession of Christ in virtue of his initiative, it can with equal justice be described as the work and possession of Mary in 'virtue of her intercession initiative.'"98 Here, Fehlner is referring to the quotes from Celano and Bonaventure just mentioned. If, notes Fehlner, the Franciscan charism is at root Christocentric, it is so, and distinctively so, in virtue of its emphasis on the place of Mary in salvation history. I might note at this point that Schmucki would disagree with Fehlner on this basic assumption. Schmucki indicates that Francis did not go beyond seeing Mary's influence on us as intercessory rather than as seeing Mary as a dispenser of virtue.99

For Fehlner, the doctrine and devotion of the Immaculate Conception is inseparable from the Kingship of Christ. However, the only modern study of the place of the Immaculate Conception in the Life of Francis is Schmucki's "De seraphici Patris Francisci habitudine erga beatissimam Virginem Mariam," which not only dismisses the possibility of Francis' belief in the Immaculate Conception as without grounds, but suggests that the place of Mary in Francis' vocation is only one of many factors.100 Fehlner's thought coincides with Schmucki's in that the word immaculate does not occur in the writings of
Francis, and that the theological discussion of the Immaculate Conception at the time of Saint Francis could not have been familiar to him. Fehlner holds, however, that a number of facts have been overlooked. Fehlner holds that Francis' devotion to Our Lady of the Angels indicates a devotion to the woman foretold in Genesis 3:15 and Apocalypse 12. This devotion indicates to Fehlner that Francis' new form of life is distinctive precisely in relation to the Immaculate Conception which, as Apocalypse 12 points out, is characterized by complete exemption from any subjection to the power of Satan. This view is strengthened by Francis' devotion to Saint Michael the Archangel. Fehlner notes that Francis believed that Mary's greatest title was Mother of God. This immediately brings to mind the greeting of the angel: Hail, full of grace. Fehlner sees in Francis' devotion to the cross a reflection of devotion to Mary's love of Christ at the foot of the cross as described by Saint John. The emphasis on love found in John's gospel is perfectly fulfilled in Mary, the Immaculate Conception.

In the Vespers antiphon for the Office of the Passion, Francis addresses Mary thus: "Among women there is no one like you born into the world. You are the daughter and the servant of the most high and supreme King and Father of heaven. You are the Mother of our most holy Lord Jesus Christ. You are the spouse of the Holy Spirit." In this passage, Fehlner notes: "Our Lady is addressed as unique from birth . . . (and) that uniqueness (is) ascribed to our Lady . . . is further specified, not in terms of her moral character or vocation, but directly in terms of her relationship . . . with the Trinity . . . ." Thus, her uniqueness is not in her activity but in that mystery (the Immaculate Conception) which underlies her existence. Fehlner believes that Mary is asked in the antiphon to "pray for us with Saint Michael the Archangel and all the powers of the heavens and all the Saints . . ." because Francis recognized Mary had merited with Jesus to be the head of the angels and the saints. Fehlner further suggests that, given Francis' education and the contemporary state of theological reflection, there is no other source for the term "Spouse of the Holy Spirit," and no other explanation except a mystical grace. Graef, contrary to Armstrong however, suggests that with the beginning of the twelfth-century the Immaculate Conception was a much discussed subject. Francis could have heard about it.
Unfortunately, much of Fehlner's thesis is based in areas of controversy. Fehlner suggest that Francis received his knowledge of the Immaculate Conception with a mystical experience with Mary.\textsuperscript{110} Schmucki also holds that, as Fehlner notes, Francis' "attitude toward Mary was not the kind of devotion which existed over and beyond other devotions."\textsuperscript{111}

While Fehlner's work is a valuable contribution to the study of the question, it has not proved conclusively that Francis foresaw the dogma of the Immaculate Conception or that it was of prime importance in Francis' life.

The Cistercians were the chief developers of Mariology in the twelfth century. Under the influence of Saint Bernard, they were mainly responsible for halting the progress of belief in the Immaculate Conception. In the thirteenth century, the Sentences of Peter Lombard became the standard theological textbook. Basing themselves on the authority of Peter Lombard, all the great schoolmen denied the Immaculate Conception.\textsuperscript{112} Positive or negative indications are also lacking in Peter Damian. Indeed, Schmucki points out that, with the exception of Eadmer, no explicit testimony is found in the thirteenth century to favor this Marian privilege.\textsuperscript{113} When Peter Aureoli wrote his treatise on the Conception of the Immaculate Virgin,\textsuperscript{114} Francis, it may be noted, had already died in 1226. Even accepting Hilda Graef's earlier date for the controversy at around 1173,\textsuperscript{115} Francis lived in an age when the "negative" influence of Saint Bernard\textsuperscript{116} and his "authentic medieval mentality"\textsuperscript{117} discouraged the spread of popular interest in this devotion. The vagueness which some Franciscan scholars perceive in Francis' writings and statements in regard to Mary's Immaculate Conception\textsuperscript{118} may simply be Francis' reflection of the popular, dogmatically correct Marian devotion of his time.\textsuperscript{119} Söll implies that the beginning of the controversy concerning the Immaculate Conception did not take on widespread significance until long after Francis' death.\textsuperscript{120} A subject which is much less controversial, but which is just as important to Francis, is Mary's relationship to the Holy Spirit.

Hilarious A. Wingene believes that Francis wrote the "Antiphon of the Blessed Virgin Mary" in the sanctuary of the Church of Saint Mary of the Angels. Wingene's extensive research proves that the "Antiphon of the Blessed Virgin Mary" found in Francis' Office of the Passion was not original to him, but was already centuries old when Francis freely adapted
it to his own needs. The original Antiphon read: "Virgin Mary, there is no one among women, in the world like you. Like the rose you come forth. Your odor is like that of the lilies, intercede for us with your Son." 121 Francis modified it by dropping the words "like the rose you come forth, your odor is like the lilies," and replacing them with praise of the Trinity and a reference to the angels. The Office of the Passion was intended by Saint Francis to be used at the close of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, as indeed it was in the early days of the Franciscan Order.122 Francis ended his Rule of 1221 with a poetic reflection on God the Father, God the Son, and Mary:

Almighty, highest, most holy and most exalted God, the holy and just Father, the Lord and King of Heaven and Earth: We say thanks to You that You, . . . through the true and holy love with which You loved us, had Himself been born as true God and true man of the eternally glorious, most blessed, holy Virgin Mary.123

Here, "homage," a characteristic of medieval piety, moved close to God. Francis connects the spousal bond and motherhood of Mary in the Antiphon of the Office of the Passion when he calls Mary "the mother of our most holy Lord Jesus Christ, the spouse of the Holy Spirit."124 He links them again in the Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

1. MARY, THE DAUGHTER OF THE FATHER

Fehlner states that Mary "is not the wife of the Father, rather she is the most perfect handmaid; i.e., most perfect by her obedient 'Fiat,' as the crowning complement of the original 'Fiat' of Creation, bringing to be the most perfect work of God; namely, the Incarnation and Redemption. How is it that she is at once handmaid and mother, that she pertains in so unique a fashion to the order of the hypostatic union? Because she is "spouse of the Holy Spirit."125 In this, Fehlner is applying the same logic Francis used in his first version of the "Letter to the Faithful," wherein he states that they are children of the heavenly Father whose works they do.126

Following Francis' own logic, Mary is "Daughter of the Father" through her obedience. This is a very useful insight.
According to Fehlner, "Mary is daughter of the Father because she pleases him the most of all creatures. She is the most perfect of all the created. She is the 'glory' of the Father, the most perfectly redeemed." Fehlner points out that through the Incarnation Mary is drawn into a relationship with the Father as well as the other two persons of the Trinity.

2. MARY, THE MOTHER OF THE SON

The mystery of the divine motherhood raises Mary far above all other creatures and places her in a unique living relationship with the Triune God. Everything in her life comes to her from God. There is never a praise of Mary on his lips which would not simultaneously be a praise of God, of the One and Triune, who has chosen her from among all others and blessed her above all things. Francis never sees and contemplates Mary of and by herself, and not only in her unique relationship to Jesus Christ but rather always in all those relationships which unite her with the Triune God. Francis wrote, "Hail Holy Lady . . . chosen by the Father with his . . . son and the Paraclete Spirit. . . ." This also demonstrates that everything Francis says about Mary, and everything that he praises in her, springs from the one central mystery of her life, the divine Motherhood. It, however, is the work of the Triune God in her, the Virgin. Through it, she becomes the "pure" vessel into which God can pour himself with the fullness of his mercy in order to effect the great mystery of becoming man. Virginity is thus not something valuable in itself -- that would all too easily mean sterility -- but pure readiness to receive the working of God which she then allows to become fruitful in a humanly incomprehensible way.

In the Salutation of the Virgin Mary, Francis addresses Mary as Dei genitrix Maria. Peter Damian uses this "technical term" also. Hence, in Sermon 29 we read: "The Glorious Mother of God stood beside him visibly pressing out milk from the nipple of her holy breasts . . . ."

Francis' vocabulary in his references to Mary reflects the tenderness and trust found in the insights of earlier writers such as Saint Ildephonsus. Ildephonsus had written, "Hail, flower of humility and lily of purity, temple and sanctuary of total divinity, of inviolate love."
Peter Damian preached in like manner in his Sermon 46: "There was born today the queen of the world . . . , the gate of heaven, the tabernacle of God, the star of the sea, the stairs to heaven, through whom the King of heaven humbled himself to descend to the depths." 132

A characteristic which is found in the Antiphon of the Office of the Passion is that Christ holds the central position with regard to Mary." 133

This theme is later developed by Saint Bonaventure, who proclaims, as does Saint Francis, that Mary's greatest claim to honor is that she is the Mother of Christ. She is the obedient handmaid of the Father; her obedience brings about the Incarnation.

In his homily for the Feast of St. Felicity, Gregory The Great writes that Felicity shared the martyrdom of her seven sons because she was forced to watch them die. 134 Was Francis reminded of Mary, another grieving mother, at the execution of her child? Was this why he put a Marian antiphon in the Office of the Passion? Perhaps the answer is yes.

This theme of Mary's sharing in the suffering of her son was also developed prior to the time of Francis in a homily by Amadeus of Lausanne. 135

Celano, in his Second Life, writes that Francis frequently prayed to Mary as Mother of Christ, and wrote praises in her honor. Saint Bonaventure writes:

He embraced the Mother of Our Lord Jesus with an indescribable love because, as he said, it was she who made the Lord of Majesty our brother, and through her we found mercy. After Christ, he put all his trust in her and took her as patroness for himself and his friars. In her honor he fasted every year from the feast of Saints Peter and Paul until the Assumption. 136

After Christ, Mary as Mother of Christ played the most prominent part in Francis' spirituality. Celano says in the Second Life:

Toward the Mother of Jesus he was filled with an inexpressible love; because it was she who made the Lord of Majesty our brother. He sang special praises to her, poured out prayers to her, offered her his affections, so many and so great that the tongue cannot recount them.
But what delights us most, he made her the advocate of the order and placed under her wings the sons he was about to leave that she might cherish them and protect them to the end.137

Because Francis felt so closely united and bound to the Mother of God in his whole life, he was also especially grateful to her.138 Brown believes Francis probably taught his brothers to pray the Ave Maria together with the Our Father, naturally in the short version of the Middle Ages.139

Father Ghinato notes that Daughter, Mother, and Spouse of God were concepts Francis borrowed from contemporary Mariology; for example, Nicholas of Clairvaux who has been previously discussed in the section on Sources.140 The term full of grace is seen by some Franciscan scholars to imply an insight into the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.141 Francis contemplated Mary in the light of Christ. By a humiliation and lowering of himself in the Incarnation, Christ exalted the Holy and Glorious Virgin.

The Antiphon of the Office of the Passion demonstrates an important insight of Saint Francis. Mary is Handmaid and Mother ("Hail, His servant") because she is also the Spouse of the Holy Spirit. Fehlner suggests that "Spouse of the Holy Spirit" is original with Francis, finding that this implies an explicit grasp of the mystery of Mary, not current at the time. Thus, it can be observed that the titles ascribed to Mary in the Antiphon express personal relationships with the three divine Persons, rather than the results of her activities.

Francis is not saying that because Mary is obedient, therefore she becomes Mother of God and, hence, Spouse of the Holy Spirit. Rather, Francis is saying that because Mary is uniquely Spouse of the Holy Spirit, therefore she is perfectly obedient and becomes the Mother of God's Son.142

3. MARY, SPOUSE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The use of the term "Spouse of the Holy Spirit" by Francis, and the claims made in regard to its originating with Francis, require an in-depth analysis. Fehlner states that "a careful review of scholarly studies since 1927 on the Mariology and Marian piety of Saint Francis ... indicates that at least one title used by Saint Francis for Our Lady,
"Spouse of the Holy Spirit," is, according to all these scholars, original with Saint Francis in its present verbal form. 143

Fehlner further notes that Esser, Moralejo, Pyfferoen and van Asseldonk hold that the conceptual originality as well as verbal originality can be attributed to Saint Francis. Pyfferoen and van Asseldonk, for example, specify Francis' originality in regard to this phrase thus: "He was the first to invoke Mary directly under this expression 'Spouse of the Holy Spirit.' Although the phrase had been used in connection with Mary prior to Saint Francis, it had never been used in this way before, that is in a prayer. By putting it in a prayer his Friars used it and spread its popularity." 144

Schmucki notes that Rupert, Abbot of Deutz, is quoted in De operibus Spiritus Sancti as calling Mary the spouse of the Father and the Son of God. 145 Schmucki goes on to say, "But in the patristic age the expression 'spouse of the Holy Spirit' as far as is known only occurs once, namely in the tenth century by Cosmas Vestitor." 146 Cosmas Vestitor had stated that "Joachim . . . sancti Spiritus sponsam genuit; Joachim begat the spouse of the Holy Spirit." 147 Schmucki notes that the term spouse is also used by Francis in the Second Version of the Letter to the Faithful where he says, "We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined to Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit." 148 Schmucki writes:

Similarly in the medieval writings immediately before Saint Francis it is found only twice: in Amadeus of Lausanne . . . who says to Mary): " . . . go forth for your bridal bed is now set up. Your spouse shall come to you, the Holy Spirit will come to you", and in Nicholas of Clairvaux "the virgin is singularly consecrated to the Son of God and especially united to the Holy Spirit." 150

Schmucki ends his discussion by saying that it is remarkable that Francis, lacking scientific knowledge of theology, speaks so beautifully about the bridal link of the Blessed Virgin to the Holy Spirit. 151 Schmucki goes on to say that Saint Peter Damian speaks about "the mother of the church's spouse," that is Christ, after he discourses on the preparation of the "home," the womb of Mary through the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. 152
There are several problems in the studies by Franciscan writers on the term "Spouse of the Holy Spirit" as used by Francis. As noted, most of the Franciscan writers quoted in this chapter -- Fehlner, Esser, R. Brown, Lampen, Pyfferoen, van Asseldonk, and Moralejo -- have overlooked Pseudo-Methodius of Olympus, who wrote in the fifth century in his Sermo de Simeone et Anna: "The All Saint Virgin Mary escaped the 'gunaikeia' ('of women's things') . . . the Holy Spirit having already espoused and sanctified her." ¹⁵³ Pseudo-Iildefonsus, writing in his fourth sermon, has the Holy Spirit say to Mary: "Come from Lebanon, come from Lebanon, my bride." ¹⁵⁴ Both Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo-Iildefonsus (Sermon IV) have obviously been overlooked. Schmucki specifically claims that Francis, to his knowledge, was the only writer to specifically use the term "Spouse of the Holy Spirit" (with the exception of Cosmas Vestitor, as I have noted). Schmucki states that -- with the exception of Vestitor -- previous writers, as just discussed, applied the term spouse to Mary only in relation to the Father and the Son.¹⁵⁵ His statement obviously ignores the contribution of Pseudo-Iildefonsus.

Esser states that, just as Francis praised Mary the Mother of God as Sponsa Spiritus Sancti, he also places it next to the motherhood of the faithful soul.¹⁵⁶ Through his mercy and illumination, pours all virtues into the hearts of the faithful in order to turn them from unbelievers into believers in God. This allusion is also probably not accidental in Saint Francis' hymn of praise to the Mother of God. Just as through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit the Word of the Father assumed flesh in Mary, through the mercy and illumination of the same Holy Spirit, Christ is being born in souls and developed more and more in a Christian life until -- as Francis expresses it in the eleventh chapter of the same letter -- they possess the spiritual wisdom because they have in themselves the Son of God, who is the Wisdom of the Father.¹⁵⁷ Esser sums up Francis' Marian ideal as "living in the Church as Mary did," and his spirituality as "making the invisible God visible through Mary's realization and to transmit the work of salvation."¹⁵⁸

This does not deny the claim that Francis made a unique and original contribution to Marian popular devotion properly understood. As Lehmann has pointed out, it is difficult to prove that Francis was influenced by previous writers.¹⁵⁹ It is not impossible, however, that Francis was influenced by
sermons which quoted these witnesses. Certainly, Francis did make an original contribution to popular Marian devotion. The term "Spouse of the Holy Spirit" was popularized and first widely disseminated by Franciscan preachers who used the term extensively, quoting Saint Francis.¹⁶⁰

Fehlner draws several conclusions from his study of Francis' devotion to Mary. He believes Francis had some original insight into the mystery of Mary.¹⁶¹ In the "Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary." Francis writes, "Hail Oh Lady, Holy Queen ... whom he consecrated with his most holy Son and with the Holy Spirit the Paraclete, in whom there was and is all the fullness of grace and every good."¹⁶² Fehlner implies that is does not matter that the Patristic sources exist. Only mystical experiences can explain Frances' implication of his knowledge of the Immaculate Conception. Fehlner also believes Francis' understanding of Mary is the key to a deeper understanding of the Trinity, of the mission of Christ, and the structure of the economy of salvation.¹⁶³

Francis said of himself: "I am ignorant and unlettered."¹⁶⁴ In spite of this, Lehmann notes that Francis gives evidence in his writings of being familiar with the epistles of the New Testament and the circular letters of the Popes.¹⁶⁵ The title of bishop, which Francis used as a sign of respect for the office of theologian, shows his acceptance of the program of studies which Anthony of Padua was going to establish.¹⁶⁶ Rather than accept Francis' self-description of ignorance, his writings indicate a sensitivity to theological writings which he presented in the creative, intelligent, and sensitive manner reflective of the true pastor.

While Raphael Brown notes the possible influence of Saint Peter Damian and others, he states that "a unique figure such as St. Francis should show himself to be somewhat original in his devotion to the Blessed Virgin."¹⁶⁷ It is quite possible that Francis was influenced by the theological writers discussed in this chapter, perhaps through the readings at liturgical offices or from learned sermons he heard. According to Brown, Octavíanus Schmucki "traces so many indirect resemblances and tenuous threads without accenting or demonstrating more than one direct influence."¹⁶⁸ James of Vitry, in his "Damietta" letter written in 1220, states that many masters and learned men left his diocese to join the Friars Minor.¹⁶⁹ As mentioned previously, Francis wrote a letter to Saint Anthony, a former Augustine Canon who had
become a Franciscan, telling him that "it pleases me that you teach sacred theology to the brothers as long as you do not extinguish the Spirit of Prayer and devotion." Thus, Francis was open to theological learning. He noted in his Testament, "We should honor and venerate theologians too...because it is they who give us spirit and life." Willibord Lampen states that palatium, tabernaculum, domus, and vestimentum, found in the Salutation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, can be traced directly to Peter Damian. This similarity of terms seems to indicate that Francis unhesitatingly and creatively used the popular Marian themes of the day. "The imagery," as Regis Armstrong has noted, "was in the air and could easily have influence." It would be hard to believe that Francis was not influenced by such giants as Saint Augustine, and the other great thinkers and saints who dominated the age. Schmucki states that Saint Francis "reflects in a popular yet dogmatic, correct way the contemporary Marian teaching of the time." Rather than ascribe this to a mystical experience, it is appropriate to recognize the influence of contemporary Mariological teachings.

Francis saw Mary not only in her relationship with Christ but also in relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He wrote:

Hail, holy Lady! Most holy Queen! Mary, Mother of God, yet a virgin forever! Chosen by the most high holy Father in heaven, and by him with his most holy beloved Son, and the Spirit Paraclete consecrated! You in whom there was and there is all the fullness of grace and everything good.

Clearly and confidently Francis spoke about the Marian mysteries during a time when heresies were multiplying. The Albigensians, for example, thought that Mary, no less than Christ, was an "Aeon" possessed of only an apparent body. Others saw Mary only as a symbol of a chaste and potential life.

It may be that Francis produced such sound writings about Mary because he always places her with her son. Brown attributes his outpourings on Mary to many hours of
contemplative prayer.\textsuperscript{180} Francis' language goes right to the point.

Esser points out that in the writings of Saint Francis every attribute of Mary leads back to her divine Motherhood, which is, in turn, the work of the Triune God. Her perpetual virginity is centered, therefore, around her divine Motherhood. She is a "most pure vessel" which symbolizes pure receptivity toward divine action. Mary is consecrated to the Son and the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{181} In the Antiphon of the Office of the Passion, Francis further develops this relationship: "Holy Virgin Mary! There was never anyone like you born in the world among women, daughter and handmaid of the most high King, our Father in Heaven, Mother of our most holy Lord Jesus Christ; spouse of the Holy Spirit." Esser notes that the praise of Mary reflects praise of Christ.\textsuperscript{182}

Francis stated, "See how every day he humbled himself as when he came down from his royal throne into the virgin's womb."\textsuperscript{183} This humility of Christ was for Francis made visible by Mary's birth of Jesus.

An influential source during Francis' lifetime was Gregory the Great, who had written:

We should know that whoever is a brother and sister of Christ by believing, becomes a mother by preaching. For one, as it were, gives birth to the Lord, whom he imparts into the heart of his listener. And that person is made a mother, if by his voice the love of the Lord is generated in the heart of his neighbor.\textsuperscript{184}

This homily was used in the third nocturne of the feast of Saint Felicity; Francis would have heard it read every year.\textsuperscript{185}

Saint Peter Damian wrote in a commentary on the Gospel of Luke:

It was special and unique that Christ was conceived in the womb of that most Blessed Virgin; it is common and universal for all the elect to carry Him in the devotion of the heart. That woman was happy and exceedingly blessed who for nine months bore him in her womb. We are also happy if we assiduously strive to carry him in our hearts. It is a wonderful thing for Christ to be born in a womb of flesh, but it is no less wonderful, if He is born in the confines of the heart.\textsuperscript{186}
It must be stated that some of Francis' Marian writings seem to bear more than a passing resemblance to the work of popular scholars; for example, the Antiphon of the Office of the Passion is the same as the one found in the Officium Parvum of Saint Peter Damian.  

E. MARY AS QUEEN OF ANGELS AND SAINTS

Francis linked Mary with Saint Michael and the other angels several times. In this, Francis followed the popular usage of the tenth and eleventh centuries. For example, in the hymn for the Feast of Saint Michael, a verse reads: "Here Mary, Mother of Our God and all the choirs of angels, await us with all the blessed assembly." She is also linked together with the angels in the hymn for the Feast of All Saints.  

Saint Francis -- this man who "was prayer" -- expressed his innermost thoughts not in theological treatises but in prayer. When one realizes that the antiphon "Holy Virgin Mary" was to be recited at all the hours of the Divine Office, one sees that turning to Mary, Saint Michael, the Heavenly Host, and all the Saints at every part of the day and night in all of his struggles and temptations with his characteristic fervor was central to his spirituality. Pyfferoen, after extensive research into the prayers of Saint Francis, says that Francis is asking the Crucified, Mary, Saint Michael and the angels, for the grace of perseverance. This is not surprising in the context in which these prayers were said. As was discussed in the previous chapter, Francis understood his own weakness and the overwhelming burden of the vocation to which he had been called. That he should turn to Mary, his Queen of the Angels, and to Saint Michael in the battle to turn back is understandable.  

Fourteenth century sources emphasized. Francis attending Mary as the first and foremost among the throng of saints and angles. In this role as Queen of Haven, Francis implores Mary to show mercy to sinners.

These popular stories show the connection a later generation was to make between Francis and Our Lady, Queen of Heaven who represents the Mercy of God. There are only two genuine references to The Church of Our Lady, Queen of Angels before the time of Saint Francis: a sales deed from 1045 which mentions a place called "Porzuncle," and a list of
churches in 1165 which includes *S. Maria de Porzuncula*. Brown states that Vitale, in his unreliable *Five Wounds of Christ*, presents as "fact" that Francis' mother, Pica, was childless for six years and used to pray at the Chapel of *Portiuncula*, where she finally obtained from Our Lady of the Angels the favor of becoming the mother of Saint Francis. Writers further muddied the waters by adding that Pica often prayed at the chapel with her young son, Francis. Brown notes that there is no evidence of these occurrences in the early documents.¹⁹²

Part of Francis' role in popularizing Mariology may have been based on the fact that Francis was seen as a sinner pulled back from hell by Mary's constant intervention. Popular Franciscan preaching would easily have seized on this image.

Bonaventure links Saint Mary of the Angels with a number of angelic visitations and, as a result, Francis' reverence for the angels and special love for the Mother of Christ. It is also understandable that Bonaventure would see a connection between Michael the Warrior Angel and Francis the Knight of Christ. Francis saw the Church of St. Mary's as a place of angelic visit's and stayed there because of his reverence for Mary and the angles.¹⁹³ Francis believed Mary loved that church more than any other church in the world.¹⁹⁴ The significance of the affection Francis felt for Saint Mary of The Little Portion is based on Francis' affection for Mary who made Christ our brother and whom he saw as protector of his order and who had, he felt, brought him to the church of Saint Mary's early in his conversion.¹⁹⁵ Francis' devotion to the Church of Saint Mary of the Little Portion is to some degree devotion to Mary as Mother of Mercy, who led Francis to a closer relationship with Christ.

There is, however, a significant role which Mary plays in the foundation of the order. The devotional example just presented gives an accurate impression from both a historical perspective and from the view of the fourteenth-century poor for whom the stories provided an important source of religious education.¹⁹⁶

F. MARY AS VIRGIN MADE CHURCH

Having seen Francis' connection of Mary and the Eucharist, it would be useful to examine Francis' "Salutation
to the Blessed Virgin" in which he sees Mary united with the Church:

Hail, holy Lady,
Most holy Queen,
Mary, Mother of God!
You are forever Virgin,
Chosen by the most holy Father in heaven,
Whom he consecrated
With his most holy beloved Son
And the Holy Spirit,
You in whom was and is
All plentitude of grace
And all good!
Hail, his palace!
Hail, his Tabernacle!
Hail, his Dwelling!
Hail, his vesture!
Hail, his Handmaid!
Hail, his Mother!
And all your holy virtues
That by the grace and light
Of the Holy Spirit
Are infused
In the hearts of the faithful
That from faithless souls
You may make souls faithful to God! 197

Once again, it is striking to note how Francis' Mariology is in agreement with the popular Mariology of his day. 194 199

There is an important controversy concerning this prayer which will be discussed next. It would be useful to explore the mysterious words, "Holy Mother of God, you are Virgin made Church," found in the earliest texts of "The Salutation" (which eminent Franciscan scholars attribute to Saint Francis) rather than the phrase "Mother of God, you are also a perpetual virgin," which replaced it in later editions of this prayer. 205 This combination of Francis' love of the Church and his love for Mary has a complex historical background, and would have had important implications during the development of the Franciscan Order. 206
It is interesting to note that the English word "Church" comes from the Greek Kyriakon and means "She who belongs to the Lord." This surely reflects Francis' concept of Mary as symbol of the Church and his desire to love Mary as Christ loved her.

It is possible that Francis then referring to Mary as virgin-made-church was inspired by Psalm LXXXVII which is usually seen as referring to Jerusalem or Zion, but sometimes to the Church when referring to Mary as virgin-made-church. What Scripture says of the Church is true of Mary, and what is said of Mary reflects the glory of the Church. These norms codified by Tichonius, an African exegete living around A.D. 400, were very popular among spiritual writers from the time of Saint Augustine to the late medieval period. It is not surprising that a wide variety of parallelisms, analogies, and topologies is discovered in the spiritual writings of the medieval period. When applied to liturgical texts, this further reflects the famous saying attributed to Proper of Aqultain: "Legem credendi statuit lex orandi" ("The rule of prayer determines the rule of faith").

Saint Augustine states: "The truth of Christ is in the mind of Mary, the flesh of Christ in her womb; greater is what she bears in her mind, than what she bears in her womb." In Sermo de tempore CCXXIII, Augustine writes, "The Virgin is the Church. Although she is a virgin, she gives birth."

Saint Anselm, following the same theme in Expositio In Lucam, says that Mary "is truly espoused (to Joseph) because she is the type of the Church."

Pseudo-Hildebert states:

In this connection there is a great and marvelous sacrament, that is, of the union of Christ and the Church, or of the word and the soul. For the Virgin Mary, or whatever faithful soul is chaste by the soul's lack of corruption and virginal by its sincerity to the faith, is made the church. For the Apostle says: I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband.

Armstrong writes that Francis' use of the term virgin-made-church places Mary as a paradigm or sacrament of the faithful Christian, both of whom are called to be virgins.
expressing the mystery of the Church, the dwelling place of the word of God.215

Unlike the term "Spouse of the Holy Spirit," no claims of originality have been made for Francis' use of the term "You are Virgin made Church" in regard to Mary. Still, because of the controversy surrounding it, it would be worthwhile to briefly review the use of the term prior to Francis' orthodox use of the praise. Showing the development of the term "You are Virgin made Church" in no way detracts from Saint Francis. Rather, the fact that it became controversial only with Francis' use shows his great influence in the popular Mariology of the time -- hence, the fear of some in the Order that Francis' orthodox use of the term might be misunderstood or misused.

Looking again at Francis' fervent precursor in Marian devotion, Saint Peter Damian says in Sermo LXIII that Mary is both Mother Mary and Mother of the Church.216 Certainly, Peter Damian saw Mary as having primacy of intercession above all other saints.217 Mary's maternity seems to be the center of Peter Damian's Marian teaching.218 Sermo LI, written by Rupert of Deutz in the twelfth century, used the same concepts and terminology used by Francis in Salutation to the Virgin (Mary, Virgin, Mother, Church, and the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) are coupled in a very difficult text.219

Isaac of Stella (+1169), in Sermo LI in Assumptione writes: "Both Mary and the Church are mothers, both virgins, both conceived by the same spirit without sin. Both are the Mother of Christ, but neither gave birth without the other. . . Therefore, what is said generally of Holy Mother Church is said of Mary."220 This theme of spiritual motherhood is characteristic of Medieval Mariology.221

There is a further striking resemblance between the Salutation of the Blessed Virgin, which contains the phrase, "Hail, his palace, Hail, his tabernacle, and Hail, his dwelling place," and Innocent III's text on Psalm V, "I will enter into your house."222 This particular dwelling place is the Holy Mother Church, of which we read, "Sanctity is becoming to your dwelling place, Oh Lord, for length of days. The special dwelling place of God is the Glorious Virgin Mary . . . ."223 As noted previously, it appears that Francis was influenced by many ancient and contemporary writers. Furthermore, the meaning can have a completely orthodox interpretation. It is obvious that the later texts of the
Salutations show a definite tampering by the Order.\textsuperscript{224} The fear, clearly enough, is that virgin-made-church could have been misused by those with heretical tendencies, especially those who claimed to be followers of Blessed Joachim of Fiore (+1202).

Abbot Joachim’s ecclesiastical theories divided the history of salvation into three periods.\textsuperscript{225} The period of the Father was governed by the \textit{ordo coniugatorum}, and ran from Adam to the time of Christ. The second was that of the Son, governed by the \textit{ordo monachorum}. The third period was a time of radical and revolutionary change in the history of Christianity, in which the Church of the Hierarchy, the Sacraments, and the Law would be superseded by the \textit{Ecclesia Spiritualis}. This would be a community of gladness and love, in which joy would be the fruit of liberty; a new order of spiritual men, poor and humble, would emerge. This new era would be signaled by the angel of the sixth seal who would have the "mark of the living God." The temporary Gospel would be replaced by the everlasting Gospel. To the church leaders of Francis’ time, the danger of Joachim’s teaching was that it proclaimed that the Father had laid on man the yoke of the law -- that is to say, the yoke of fear; the Son imposed a teaching of discipline, and that the wisdom of the Holy Spirit would unfold a reign of liberty, for liberty is love and fear is slavery.\textsuperscript{226}

Many Franciscans saw Francis’ stigmata as the sign of the angel of the sixth seal, the Franciscan Rule as the everlasting gospel, and the Franciscans as the New Order. The danger of this teaching, wherein the old Church, seen as carnal, with its hierarchy, sacraments and laws, would be replaced by a new "spiritual church," becomes quickly apparent. Joachim saw a spiritual bond between Mary and the "Spiritual Church," which would replace the "Carnal Church." Taking the text of Matthew Chapter 1, Verse 25, "and though he (Joseph) had not had intercourse with her, she gave birth to a son," Joachim wrote: "You think this is said of Mary, but the Holy Spirit intends it to be of the Church; you understand it for the head, the Spirit signified it for the body and the members."\textsuperscript{227} In his commentary on the Visitation, Joachim tells us Mary does not signify the Universal Church, not even the Monastic branch of the Church, but a Spiritual Church of the prophetic profession (as the monks). Elizabeth represents the Primitive, or Apostolic Church. Mary represents the chaste
and virginal Church, and of her would come the Man who would found the spiritual Father's Order.\textsuperscript{228}

The rebellion of the Spiritual Franciscans became open rebellion against the Order and the Church to the extent of identifying the Church as the great Prostitute, the great Babylon, the mother of Fornication, and the land of abominations.\textsuperscript{229} The problem is that, even with the best known of the spiritual writers, it is difficult to say if they are attacking the Church or if they are attacking abuses in the Church and are perfectly orthodox.\textsuperscript{230} Therefore, the dangers of the phrase \textit{virgin-made-church} are apparent. These texts, where it is quite clear, provide a useful weapon to defend a heterodox position. Joachim writes:

The contemplative Church was incarnated by Mary, the Mother of the Lord whom we call the glorious Virgin. The Spiritual Church, which Mary brought forth, began at her time, when she was to conceive in the future, if she had not already conceived. Therefore, the same Blessed Mother, not without great mystery, had to stay with Elizabeth, so that the Spiritual Church may defer to the General Church, until its time of giving birth is completed.\textsuperscript{231}

It is quite easy to see how Francis could be seen as the angel of the sixth seal and the Franciscan Order as the "new" order. If this same Francis writes that the Virgin is made Church, it could be easily understood that Francis was encouraging opposition to the "carnal" Church on the part of the Spirituals. Therefore, for the good of the brotherhood and for the sake of peace, "You are a virgin made Church" was removed from the salutation and replaced with "You are a perpetual virgin."\textsuperscript{232} The original verse as written by Francis reads: \textsuperscript{268}

\begin{quote}
Hail Oh Lady, Holy Queen, Mary, Mother of God: You are the Virgin made Church, and the one chosen by the most holy Father in heaven, whom he consecrated with his most holy Son and with the Holy Spirit the Paraclete, in whom there was and is all the fullness of grace and every good.\textsuperscript{233}
\end{quote}
It has been pointed out that there are a number of similarities, both in thought and phraseology, to that of the antiphon discussed above. First, Francis uses the words of Gabriel which refer specifically to her fullness of grace. This is the uniqueness ascribed to her by Francis. Fehlner sees the theological basis for the uniqueness ascribed to her in terms of who she is as a person, rather than as subsequently being linked to the elaboration of the doctrine of Immaculate Conception. He sees a further link between the use of the terms *Domina sancta* and *regina sanctissima* with the antiphons asking Mary and the angels to pray for us under her title of Queen of the Angels.

The originality, the creativity, and the freedom which Francis invested in traditional terminology has been noted by scholars. Mary is unique because she is full of grace and because of her relationship to the three distinct divine persons.\(^{234}\) It is significant that Francis chose to use the terms "chosen" (*electa*) and "consecrated" (*consecravit*).\(^{235}\) Francis can be seen as recognizing that Mary's consent to grace resulted in her being elevated to a higher order by virtue of her personal relationship to each Person of the Blessed Trinity.\(^{236}\)

In the following section of this chapter the image of Mary as a maternal icon will be examined. In the first examining Mary as Intercessor for sinners. Next Mary is examined as a model of spiritual Motherhood. Followed as Mary is presented as Advocate before God.

G. MARY AS MOTHER OF MERCY FOR SINNERS AND MODEL OF SPIRITUAL MOTHERHOOD

According to Bonaventure, after Christ, Francis placed his trust especially in Mary.\(^{237}\) Near the end of Francis' life, he wrote a *Letter To The Entire Order* in which, after humbly making a public confession of "the many ways in which I have offended through my grievous fault" in not perfectly keeping the rule or reciting the office, he wrote:

> I confess all my sins to God the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost and to Blessed Mary ever Virgin and all the Saints in heaven and on earth . . . . \(^{238}\)
Brown has stated that "the liturgy was undoubtedly the principal wellspring of St. Francis' prayers to our Lady." Thomas of Celano informs us that Francis rendered "special praises and poured forth prayers and offered his devotion to the Mother of Jesus -- how many and in what ways, it is not humanly, possible to tell."

In the case of his formula for the Confiteor in his Letter to the Entire Order, which obviously originated in the liturgy, several things are of interest. During the time of Saint Francis, there was no fixed formula for the Confiteor. When it was first introduced into the liturgy, the phrase "all the saints" was used. Under the influence of Saint Bernard, the custom of inserting Mary's name in every confiteor was sanctioned in 1184. Francis probably followed this Cistercian custom.

In his Paraphrase of the Our Father, when begging God "to forgive us our trespasses," Saint Francis added "by your unutterable mercy, by the virtue of the passion of your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the merits and intercession of the most Blessed Virgin Mary . . . ."

In the First Rule (Chapter 23), "because of (God's) love, (we ask) the glorious Mother, the most blessed Mary ever Virgin . . . to give thanks" to the Lord for all that the Savior has done for us." As Mary was the Mother who sinners can approach as their intercessor so also for Francis she is the model of spiritual motherhood for the faithful.

With jubilation and praise to the heavenly Father, Francis presents his gratitude for the divine motherhood. This and nothing else is for Francis the first and foremost reason to praise and honor Mary herself. "Listen, my brothers: The Most Blessed Virgin is honored so highly, as it is fitting, because she bore him in her most holy womb . . . ."

To Saint Francis, Mary is the Mother of Christ, and as such, is a model. In his Letter to all the Faithful, Francis writes:

"We are mothers to him when we enthrone him in our hearts and souls by love with a pure and sincere conscience, and give him birth by doing good. This, too, should be an example to others."

This mystical birth of Christ in us has been a favored subject beginning with Hippolytus. Augustine and Origen also
wrote on the subject. Indeed, the theme of the spiritual birth of Christ was a popular one during the patristic and medieval periods.\textsuperscript{248} Francis could have come in contact with the subject through the collections of writings or published sermons of the Church Fathers.\textsuperscript{249} According to Saint Bonaventure, Francis received the spirit of Christ's Gospel message at the Church of Saint Mary of the Angels through the merits of the Blessed Mother. Kajetan Esser sees in that experience the basis of Francis' love and veneration for Mary and the orientation of his Mariology. The spousal relationship between Mary and the Holy Spirit is reflected in the soul's relationship with God.\textsuperscript{253} Francis teaches this in the Letter to the Faithful when he writes, "We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined to Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit."\textsuperscript{254}

Because Mary is the Mother of Jesus, Francis venerated her. This may have caused him to settle down near the Shrine of the Mother of God at Portiuncula; after all, he expected everything from her grace. In her shrine, Francis received and brought forth, as Celano interpreted, the spirit of gospel truth through the merits of the Mother of Mercy.\textsuperscript{255}

Mary made Jesus our Brother.\textsuperscript{256} This comment is undoubtedly the most profound expression of Saint Francis' love and veneration of Mary. In fact, it does not exhaust itself in fervent words of prayer and hymns of praise, but fulfills and perfects itself in the fact that, in all things, Francis tried to make Mary's attitude toward the Word of God his own.\textsuperscript{257}

In that magnificent letter just quoted, Saint Francis wrote to the "faithful of the world," and unfolded the thoughts of his heart in rare fullness. In the first chapter, Francis describes the birth of the Word of God from the womb of the Virgin Mary. This divine birth is renewed in the hearts of the faithful. The Church Fathers since Hippolytus and Origen had pondered in manifold ways this most intimate mystery of Christian life and tried to give it ever new explanations.\textsuperscript{258}

Francis recognized that as the Mother of Jesus, Mary was also our spiritual mother and advocate.\textsuperscript{259} In the next section Francis' understanding of Mary's spiritual motherhood of all believers will be examined.
The divine birth in the heart of the faithful, however, is but one aspect of this motherhood. Francis also points to the second one, that precisely through the Christian life, Christ is to be born in other human beings.\footnote{260} This reflects St. Paul’s teaching that “My dear children, with whom I am in labor again, until Christ is formed in you.”\footnote{261} This theme is an honored one throughout the Patristic and Medieval periods.\footnote{262} Here, the motherly function of Christian life broadens and gives life to the Church. It is precisely this motherly task of the faithful in the Church that Francis liked to speak of so often. For example, when he applied the following Scripture passage to his simple, uneducated brothers, "The barren woman will give birth to many children,”\footnote{263} Francis interpreted it as follows: "The barren woman is the simple minor brother who does not have the duty in the Church to bear sons. He will give birth to very many at judgment because those whom he now converts with his quiet prayer, the judge will credit him to his glory.”\footnote{264}

Thus, what became reality in the motherhood of Mary for the salvation of the world continues in the hearts of the faithful through the gracious working of the Holy Spirit. It is actually the life mystery of the Church in which the faithful participate. Frances sees himself gifted with what he admires in Mary as a gift of grace of God; Francis knows that it is given to him and his brothers as a responsibility in the Church. Mother of Christ, that is to him, Mary, whom he, therefore, loves unspeakably. Mother of Christ, those are the faithful "who hear and follow the Word of God,”\footnote{265} and consequently share in the task of the Mother, the Church. From this perspective, his Marian piety may be summarized in the short phrase: living like "Mary in the Church.”\footnote{266}

Schmucki states that Francis saw Mary as spouse of the Holy Spirit because she opened herself to the message of the angel and with "burning love" conceived in her womb the "Word to be made flesh.”\footnote{267} Schmucki believes Francis sees each faithful soul as a spouse of Christ through the Holy Spirit and thus conceives the Lord. As proof, Schmucki quotes from the Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Saint Francis: "Hail His . . . (Christ's mother) and hail, all you holy virtues which through the grace and light of the Holy Spirit are poured into the hearts of the faithful so that from their faithless state you may make them faithful to God.”\footnote{268}
Francis again mentioned spiritual motherhood in the First Version of the Letter to the Faithful where he writes: "We are mothers to Him when we carry Him in our hearts and body through love and a pure and sincere conscience. We give to Him birth through love and a pure and sincere conscience." Francis then went on to praise spiritual union above every other bond. In this, he cited the teaching of Christ, who said, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" And pointing to the disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother, my sister, my mother." Rather, baptism is presented as the birth of the Lord in the heart of the believer. This, Schmucki believes, demonstrates Francis creative insights into Scripture.

Brown states that Francis was the "first known writer to stress the obligation of all Christians, just not preachers to bring about the conversion of others by prayer, that is by spiritual maternity." Octavius Schmucki sees this as giving a Marian aspect to the whole life of the Christian. Schmucki explains "... through a truly virtuous life ... the faithful soul carries Jesus in his heart and body in a manner similar to the Blessed Virgin carrying the Lord in her womb." The subject of spiritual birth was a popular one during Francis' lifetime, and many have influenced his thinking. Esser agrees with Schmucki that Francis' teaching on spiritual motherhood can be summed up as: "As often as anyone fulfills the will of our heavenly Father and does not withdraw from Him by means of any sin, so often does the espousal bond with Christ through the Holy Spirit remain inviolate." Schmucki states that "it belongs peculiarly to Saint Francis, as saying that Francis conceived the whole Christian life as a continual birth of Christ." This reflects Richard of Saint Victor's statement, "For if faith in Christ is in your heart, Christ is in your heart."

1. Mary as Mother of Mercy for Francis

Saint Francis wrote in his Testament shortly before his death that, before his conversion, "It was bitter" to see those deformed by disease. In this popular devotional tale Francis has become the symbol of Mary's power to intercede for those burdened with illness. This illustrates Francis' connection in the popular religious imagination of the day.
with Mary, the most powerful advocate with the Advocate Christ.

In A Letter to a General Chapter Francis wrote:

I confess all my sins to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; to blessed Mary ever Virgin and all the saints in heaven and on earth; to the Minister General of our Order, my reverend superior; to all the priests of the Order and all my other friars. I have sinned in many ways, through my own most grievous fault, and in particular by not keeping the Rule which I promised to God, and by not saying the Office, as the Rule prescribes, through carelessness or sickness, or because I am ignorant and have never studied.

In this passage, Francis is found rendering that homage which man renders in the depth of his being to the divine Majesty. Francis begged Mary, chosen by God and placed by Him above all others. Thomas of Celano stated that: "He (Francis) sang special Praises to her (Mary), poured out many prayers to her, offered her his affections." This concept is repeated in the Paraphrase of the Our Father, "And forgive us our trespasses, through your infinite mercy, and by the passion of your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, together with the merits and the intercessions of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all your saints."

The firm foundation and highest distinction of Francis' Marian doctrine is faith in the Incarnation of the Word in the Blessed Virgin's womb. As Mary is the Mother of our heavenly King, she is to be honored as Queen. Because she is linked to the Incarnate Word by the bond of blood, she also necessarily has an intimate relationship with the other Persons of the Holy Trinity as well as with the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Father E. R. Carroll has noted that the Mariology of the twelfth century showed two trends of piety strongly affecting devotion: First, attention to Mary's compassion on Calvary and the interpretation of the Savior's words, "Woman, behold your son," as signifying Mary's spiritual Motherhood of Christ's brethren as typified in the Beloved Disciple; and, secondly, Mary's present assistance to all people under the influence of the doctrine of the Assumption. Schmucki states that the feast of the Assumption occupied a special place in Francis' devotion -- he used to fast for forty days in order to
celebrate it worthily. Schmucki suggests, "This exercise of piety is probably explained by the special dignity of this feast in the liturgy." While Francis does not write about the Assumption, he does emphasize Mary's being a Merciful Mother under the title of Advocate of the Order.

2. Mary as Advocate

Francis' use of the term *advocate* reflects an awareness of the Mariology of his time. Helimand of Froidmont states that the Cistercians had previously chosen Mary as their advocate. Abbot Adam of Perseigne, who died in 1221, wrote: "Invoke the Virgin and take refuge in every assault of the demon, for the Queen of the Angels will overcome his cleverness." He goes on to say that nothing is safer than her patronage and protection. Saint Hildephonsus agrees. Peter Damian explicitly assigns the primacy in intercession to Mary above all other saints. When Francis is described by Celano and Bonaventure as calling Mary his "advocate," he may be described as "reflecting in a popular yet dogmatically correct way the contemporary Marian belief." Schmucki wrote that "after Christ, he (Francis) put all his trust in her (Mary) as patroness for himself and his friars." Schmucki equates "patroness" with "advocate" (advocata). Schmucki suggests that one meaning for the word is derived from the biblical manner of speaking and from court practice. In the first epistle of John 2:1, he notes: "My dear children, these things I write you in order that you may not sin. But, if anyone sins, we have an advocate in Jesus Christ the just." This terminology reflects the judicial practice of the time; someone brought before the court hired a defender who would eloquently persuade the judge to free the accused without punishment. Schmucki sees Mary and Christ interceding for sinners with the Father. Indeed, Bonaventure reports that even before his conversion Francis would pour out his heart to the Blessed Mother in the Church of Saint Mary of the Angels, so that she might be his advocate. The word advocate could sometimes mean a guardian who administered and cared for an orphan. In documents pertaining to this subject there is the express mention of women who performed this function and who were designated as advocates. Advocata also means "intercessor" in Medieval Latin. In the secular courts, the intercessor represented the monastery
entrusted to him. He had to protect it and, if necessary, defend it against force and usurpation from the outside. In the course of time, many infringements and abuses resulted from this. Therefore, many Cistercians refused the intercessors on principle, but not always successfully. Thus, they elected Mary the Mother of God to be their intercessor.\textsuperscript{296} This title had already been applied to Mary in an even older antiphon, \textit{Salve Regina misericordiae}. However, in this context, the Cistercians decided at their General Chapter in 1218 to sing this antiphon daily. A report by Thomas of Celano shows that Francis knew and valued this hymn.\textsuperscript{297} This title could only have a spiritual meaning to Francis and the minor brothers who renounced all worldly possessions.\textsuperscript{298} Mary was to intercede with the Lord on behalf of the minor brothers, take care of them, and protect them in all difficult situations and questions of their lives. Mary was to stand up for them when they failed. To "the glorious, most blessed, eternally immaculate Mother Mary," Francis turns before all angels and saints with the humble request to help him and the minor brothers to say thanks to "God, the eternal and holy one exactly as it is pleasing to Him" for the great mercies of the work of salvation and redemption.\textsuperscript{299}

Celano seems to combine all these meanings when he writes, "But what delights us most, he (Francis) made her (Mary) the Advocate of the Order and placed under her wings the sons he was about to leave, that she might cherish and protect them to the end.\textsuperscript{300}

It is central to Francis' expression of Marian piety that Mary is genuinely and actively integrated into his entire piety: Mary, the advocata, is to him a motherly guide to Christ, the God-man; and Christ, the God-man is, to Francis, in all things the intercessor with the Father.

In a popular hymn of the time, the \textit{Salve Regina}, are found the words: "Eia ergo Advocata Nostra, illos tuos misericordes oculos, ad nos converte" ("Turn then, Most Gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy on us").\textsuperscript{301} Francis, as has been noted, may have been inspired by the concept of advocate. It is not surprising that Francis, who is remembered today as one who was compassionate to the poor and to animals, should see Mary as the compassionate advocate with Christ her Son.
III. CONCLUSIONS

Francis of Assisi reflects in his Marian writings the devotion to Mary of a Catholic Christian of the High Middle Ages. Francis' greatest contribution to Mariology was a popularizing of themes addressed by patristic writers and by writers of the early Middle Ages. The popularly held view that Francis was gifted with great creativity, which he utilized in his devotion to Mary, seems to be supported by the events of his life and his writings. Francis' dependence on theologians such as Saint Anthony, liturgical readings, and sermons (heard in various religious houses and churches as a likely source of inspiration) does not detract from his creativity but illustrates his intelligence and his openness to the views of others. One of the most powerful effects of Francis' use of these sources can be seen in his devotion to Mary, the Poor Lady who, in poverty of spirit, gave birth to the Poor Christ.

Finally, the meager amount of Marian writings of Francis available to us has been reviewed. What is obvious is that, as previously pointed out, Francis was not the "idiot" or completely unlettered person he called himself. His education as noted in this Chapter, if typical of his time, would have included Latin grammar, and would also have given him knowledge of doctrine and practice of the sacraments, as well as understanding of the liturgy and the study of Scripture.

Francis' position in regard to the Immaculate Conception remains unclear. While Fehlner's study is valuable, the devotional writings of Francis on Mary do not seem to indicate that the Immaculate Conception, as it is presently understood, played a decisive role in Francis in his thought and life.

It may also be observed that, in the case of Francis' use of the term "Spouse of the Holy Spirit," modern Franciscan writers, as has been noted, have had a tendency to exaggerate Francis' originality. However, a more critical approach to the study of Francis' contribution to popular Marian devotion takes nothing away from Francis' stature as a Marian devotee.

Francis was influenced by Saints Peter Damian, Augustine, Gregory the Great, and others. His great contribution to the Mariology of the time was to present in creative manner a popular, yet dogmatically correct, Marian devotion.
As noted, Mary is always seen in the context of her relationship with her Son. Hence, the Incarnation is the moment of Mary's greatest glory in salvation history, according to Francis. The Divine Motherhood of Mary is central because it makes Christ our brother. For Francis, Mary is never isolated from her Son; rather, she is the model for Christians who give spiritual birth to Christ by doing good, thus giving life to the Church. Furthermore, Franciscan writers have shown that Francis' devotion to Mary can be traced at least to the early days of his conversion.302

Mary, because of her humble obedience, is recognized by Francis as Daughter and Handmaid of the Eternal Father. Mary can sometimes be seen as Lady Poverty, the symbol of the Franciscan vocation. Finally, the Mariology of Saint Francis is practical. Hence, Francis' Mariology had wide influence on the popular Mariology of the fourteenth century, and beyond.


3 Ibid.


262
24 Optato van Asseldonk, *Una spiritualità per domani, Maria Francesco e Chiara*, (Roma: Collegio Lorenzo da Brindisi, 1989).


26 Ibid, 177.


30 Schmucki, "Seraphici," 46.


34 Sal. B.V.M. *Omnibus*, 67.


37 1 Cel. Omnibus, 521.

38 Thomas of Celano, "Second Life of St. Francis," *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies, English

39 2 Cel. Omnibus, 521.

40 1 Cel. Omnibus, 301.


42 Brown, Our Lady, 20.


45 Petrus Damianus, Sermo XLIV, In Nativitate Beatissimae Virginis Mariae, P.L. 144, 743B.

46 Sal. B.V.M. AB, 150.


48 Lehmann, 162.


50 Petrus Damianus, Sermo XLIV, P.L. 144, 743A.

51 Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:4-5, 13-14.

52 R. Brown, Our Lady, 112-113.

54 Mt. 28:20.


58 Leander Hispalensis, Regula, sive, Liber de institutione virginum et comemptu mundi, P.L. 72, 888C.

59 RnB AB, 107.


61 L.M. Omnibus, 710-711.

62 Bernardus Clarae-Vallensis, Sermo IV, In Nativitate Domini, P.L. 183, 123B.

63 2 Cel. Omnibus, 432.

64 2 Cel. Omnibus, 433.

65 2 Cel. Omnibus, 419.

66 2 Cel. Omnibus, 433.

67 1 Cel. Omnibus, 419.

68 R. Brown, St. Francis, 24.

69 ULT. Vol. AB, 46.

265
70 L.M. Omnibus, 680.


72 Fehlner, "St. Francis," 405.

73 2 Ep. Fid. AB, 67.

74 2 Cor. 8:9.

75 L.M. Omnibus, 680.

76 2 Cel. Omnibus, 522.


78 L.M. Omnibus, 699.


80 Is. 50:7.

81 Petrus Damianus, Sermo XLV, P.L. 144, 743C.


83 A. Fierens, "La question franciscaine, Vita Sancti Francisci Anonyma Bruxellensis d' après le Manuscrit II. 2326 de la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique," Revue d' histoire ecclésiastique (Louvain) 9 (1908).

84 Off. Pass. AB, 82.

86 Fehlner, 502-519.

87 Schmucki, "Seraphici," 18, 46-47.

88 L.M. Omnibus, 447.

89 Fehlner, 502.

90 Ibid., 503.

91 Esser, Marien, 178.

92 Fehlner, 503.

93 1 Cel. Omnibus, 320.

94 L.M. Omnibus, 646.

95 L.M. Omnibus, 656.

96 Fehlner, 508.


98 Ibid.

99 Fehlner, 504.

100 Schmucki, "Seraphici," 40-41, note 133.


103 Lk. 1:28.

104 Fehlner, 511.
105 Off. Pass. AB, 82.

106 Fehlner, 513.

107 Fehlner, 515.

108 Eph. 5:7.


110 Fehlner, 507-515.


114 Graef, 178.

115 Ibid., 250.

116 Schmucki, "Seraphici," 18, note 5.

117 Graef, 235.

118 Fehlner, 502.


121 Hilarius de Wingene, "Puditne," 431.

122 Ibid.

123 RegNB AB, 130.

124 Off. Pass. AB, 82.

125 Fehlner, 514.
Mt. 5:45.

Sal. B.V.M. AB, 149.


Schmucki, "Seraphici," 17.

Petrus Damianus, Epistola XXIX, ad Stephanum Monarchum, P.L. 144, 419-422.


Petrus Damianus, Sermo XLVI, Homilia in Nativitate Beatissimae Virginis Mariae, P.L. 144, 753C.

Off. Pass. AB, 82.

Gregorius Magnus, "Homilia III, Habita ad populum in basilica sanctae Felicitatis martyr is in die natalis ejus. Lectio S. Evangelii sec. Matth. XII, 46-50," P.L. 76, 1086D.

Amedeus Lausannensis, Homilia V, De mentis robore seu martyrio Beatissimae Virginis, P.L. 188, 1330-1331.

L.M. Omnibus, 699.

2 Cel. Omnibus, 521.

2 Cel. Omnibus, 521.


Fehlner, 513, note 42.

Ibid., 502.

Fehlner makes this statement in "Saint Francis and Mary Immaculate," 505. The review of scholarly studies he

144 Pyffereroen-van Asseldonk, 462.
148 2 Ep. Fid. AB, 70.
152 Petrus Damiaus, Sermo XLIV, In Nativitate Beatissimae Virginis Mariae, P.L. 144, 741C.


157 Ibid., 115.

158 Ibid.

159 Lehmann, 162.

160 Pyfferoen-van Asseldonk, 462.

161 Fehlner, 515.

162 Sal. B.V.M. AD, 149.

163 Fehlner, 515-516.


165 Lehmann, 160-161.

166 Ibid., 183.


168 Ibid.


172 Lampen, 12-14.


175 Sal. B.V.M. Omnibus.


177 Schmucki, "Seraphici," 16.

178 Ibid.


180 Ibid., 44.


182 Ibid., 180-183.

183 R. Brown, Our Lady and St. Francis, 21.


185 Schmucki, "Seraphici," 42.


187 Lehmann, 162. [see P.L. 151, 927C]

188 Ibid.

189 Ibid.


191 R. Brown, Our Lady, 73-74.

192 Ibid., 6.

193 L.M. Omnibus, 645-646.
194 DeBesse, 687.

195 R. Brown, Our Lady, 12.

196 Ibid., 69-77.


198 Amedeus Lausannensis, P.L. 188, 1330-1331.

199 Off. Pass. AB, 82. [see also Schmucki, "Seraphici," 30, note 75.]

200 Ibid., 19.

201 George Söll, 151.


204 Sal. B.V.M. Esser, 148.

205 Pyfferoen, 913.


208 Pyfferoen-van Asseldonk, 418.


210 Prosperus Aquitanus, Praeteritorum sedis apostolicae episcoporum auctoritates, de gratia Dei et libero voluntatis arbitrio, P.L. 51, 209.

Ibid.


Rupertus Tuitiensis, *De Trinitate et Operibus Spiritus Sancti*, P.L. 169, 1576b-1577d.


Gregorius Magnus, *Homilia III*, P.L. 76, 1086d.


Ibid.

Pyfferoen-van Asseldonk, 412-413.

Pyfferoen, “Ave...Dei,” 428.

Pyfferoen, “Ave...Dei,” 431.


229 Apoc. 17:1-5.

230 Pyfferoen, “Ave...Dei,” 428.


233 Sal. B.V.M. Esser, 146.

234 Fehlner, 516.

235 Sal. B.V.M. Esser, 146.

236 Fehlner, 516.

237 L.M. Omnibus, 699.


239 R. Brown, Our Lady, 28.


244 Exp. Pat. AB, 106.

245 RegNB AB, 131.


253 1 Ep. Fid. AB, 63.

254 L.M. Omnibus, 646.

255 1 Cel. Omnibus, 114.

256 1 Cel. Omnibus, 114.


258 Ibid.

259 2 Cel. Omnibus, 521.
260 1 Ep. Fid. AB, 63.
261 Gal. 4:19.
263 1 Kgs. 2:5.
264 2 Cel. Omnibus, 494.
265 Lk. 8:21.
266 Schmucki, "Seraphici," 40.
267 Ibid.
268 Sal. B.V.M. AB, 150.
271 Schmucki, "Seraphici," 41.
273 Schmucki, "Seraphici," 44.
274 Ibid., 43.
276 Schmucki, "Seraphici," 44.

277 Richardus a S. Victore, De superexcelenti baptismo Christi, P.L. 196, 1017A.
278 Test Omnibus, 154.
280 2 Cel. Omnibus, 521.
281 Exp Pat AB, 106.


286 Ibid.

287 Helinandus Frigidi Montis, Sermo II, in Natali Domini I, P.L. 212, 495A.

288 Adamus Persenianus, Fragmenta mariana, P.L. 211, 750-751.


291 Petrus Damianus, Epistola XIX ad Rodulpum et Ariprandum monachos, P.L. 144, 402A.


293 L.M. Omnibus, 699.


296 C. Du Cange, Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis, 1840, s.v. "vocata," "advocatus".

297 L.M. Omnibus, 646.


299 2 Cel. Omnibus, 521.

300 2 Cel. Omnibus, 521.

278
301 R. Brown, Our Lady, 7.

302 Ibid.
CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS

I. WHAT IS FEMININE?

At the end of this study it is necessary to review the conclusions reached in the body of the text concerning the place of the feminine in the life of Francis and the interplay of women's effect on Francis' view of Mary and the effect of the image of Mary on Francis' view of women.

What is the feminine? There is difficulty in defining the feminine because of modern controversy. A useful example of the feminine is Charles Curran, although there are of course others. As noted in chapter six, Charles Curran, summarizing modern definitions of the feminine in Marian Studies,¹ has defined the feminine as openness in feelings and emotions, sensitivity and awareness of oneself and others, and possessing a wide range of interests. Francis was certainly open with his feelings and emotions, and sensitive to his feelings and himself as well as to others. He was therefore able to go beyond the understanding of his contemporaries. Many scholars have addressed the feminine in medieval spiritual writings.

Caroline Walker Bynum, as cited in chapter two, for example, has found three characteristic uses of feminine imagery in medieval spiritual writers:

1. the image of Jesus or an authority figure as mother
2. consistency of sexual stereotypes, e.g., authority and judgment are seen as masculine, while compassion and tenderness are seen as feminine
3. breasts and nursing are more frequent images than giving birth

II. FRANCIS AND THE FEMININE

Francis and Franciscan superiors, as discussed in chapter three, are often pictured in maternal roles and in that sense are typical of Franciscan writing in their frequent use of nursing and nurturing images as feminine symbols. Francis
often uses the image of giving birth in a spiritual sense. However, Francis uses the image of Jesus as mother not at all, and he seldom uses authority figures as mother, the Rule for Hermitages\(^2\) being one of the few examples. The evidence would therefore suggest that John Rathschmidt is correct in his conclusions that Franciscan literature is influenced by the use of feminine imagery found in earlier medieval writers. On the other hand, it is also apparent that Francis and his biographers had little need for a consistency of gender stereotypes; "Francis the poor woman"\(^3\) and "Francis the little black hen"\(^4\) are two examples. It would appear, therefore, that (as was characteristic of the early Franciscans) they took what was found in the contemporary environment and adapted it creatively to their own needs.

In addition, although Clare and Celano uses the images of breasts and nursing as found in the Process of Canonization of Clare III, 29. and 2nd Celano 82 and Francis implies a need for nurturing in the Rule of Hermitages in no way can these images be seen as characteristic of a Franciscan image of the feminine. Francis and the early Franciscans had a new image of the feminine.

The definition of the feminine employed in this work includes both Bynum’s and Curran’s interpretations, but expands to include Francis’ respect for women and feminine gifts. Francis’ relationship with the feminine was not a theoretical inquiry, but is illustrated by Francis’ compassion for women as found in the miracle and cloak stories. Medieval images of weakness and irresolute behavior as being feminine characteristics is replaced in the life of St. Francis by wisdom, decisiveness, and moral certitude as found in Lady Pica, Lady Clare, and Lady Jacoba.

Lady Pica is a positive feminine model who actually and courageously brings about Francis’ freedom to pursue his vocation. Clare acted decisively at a turning point in Francis’ vocation, urging him to continue his active life of preaching when he sought her council, thus providing him with a positive image.

Lady Jacoba is an incarnate symbol of fraternal love. In Jacoba there is a “relationship of persons of the flesh but without the passion of the flesh.” She is recognized as “brother,” not in denial of her as a whole person, or in denial of her femininity, but in recognition of a pure and
simple friendship between male and female, a love which has at its source the love of Christ.

Lady Pica showed joy and enthusiasm by asking her neighbors, "What do you think this my son will turn out to be? Know that he will be a son of God by the grace of his merits." Lady Clare also shows enthusiasm and joy. She embraced the hardships of her cloistered life with joy to the amazement and delight of Francis. She lived her whole consecrated life with enthusiasm; she was noted for her energy. Francis respected women. He gave Lady Clare and Lady Jacoba full range to develop their gifts. Francis was loved and respected by them in return. Francis may be seen in his relationship with Clare in a positive light. It may be suggested that this is a spiritual continuation of his relationship with his mother who, at risk to herself, freed her son from his chains. If Clare found a spiritual father in Francis, then Francis found in Clare a friend who enriched his life with an understanding of his vocation which would be brought to fruition after his death. Francis learned from these women nurturing, joy, and enthusiasm.

In chapter four, Francis' relationships with women were reviewed, looking first at the interactions recorded in primary sources. It has been noted that Francis was loving and considerate to women, often at great cost to himself and his brothers and that much of the behavior that appears to be negative must be seen in the context of his time. Many of the religious reforms contemporary with the Franciscans drifted into heresy.

Francis' relationship with women has been examined beginning with the interactions recorded in primary sources. It has been noted that Francis was loving and considerate to women, often at great cost to himself and his brothers. Francis recognized that every good thing in his life came from God, the source of all goodness. Ultimately, it is only by seeing Francis' attitudes to women in the context, not of antifeminism but of detachment, that his relationship with women becomes clarified.

Lady Pica, by facing the bitterness and anger of her husband, presented Francis with the image of the Lady of Courtly Love literature who transforms and enobles man through his relationship with Lady Pica, a true Lady of the Manor. Francis gained access to his own soul and grew in wisdom. Lady Clare, in her rejection of family, inheritance, and prestige,
gave Francis an icon of the Most Blessed Mother who chose poverty and, by her rejection of all suitors, gave Francis an image of Mary as Spouse of the Holy Spirit. In Lady Jacoba, the head of one of the wealthiest clans in Italy, Francis found a peacemaker who embraced the way of life of the Franciscan Third Order and who, by giving up title to disputed property, brought peace to Rome. It is in Pica, Clare, and Jacoba that we find women who were courageous enough to have the Holy Spirit as their spouse, spiritual enough to be ladies who pulled others to new heights of spirituality, and as nurturing as a mother.

Because of the central part played by chivalry in the ambitions of the upwardly-mobile Italian merchant class and the possibility for this type of advancement in the city-states, it is not surprising to find the symbolism of Courtly Romantic literature in Francis' life. It is noteworthy that recent writers such as Gagnan see this use of symbols coming naturally to Francis because of his artistic temperament. Gagnan also suggests that Francis' use of symbolism is more influenced by scripture than by stories of romantic love.

Dealing with the subject of Francis and his view of women in general is much more difficult. Several hypotheses have been suggested in an attempt to find a basis for his seemingly negative views. Looking at the valuable research done on the use of feminine symbolism in religious writings, it has been noted that although Francis used positive symbolism of women, use of such symbolism does not necessarily imply a positive or realistic image of women.

As has been suggested, his Rule for Hermitages and his religious life as a superior reveals Francis' emphasis on the nurturing role of the superior. As noted, however, even within the Franciscan community, Francis did not emphasize this to the extent which Saint Bernard did.

It is often put forth that the Church has been a defender, in attitude if not in word, of the status quo in which femininity is defined in a negative contrast to the masculine:

Her (woman's) emotionality, her warmth, her spontaneity loosened, dissipated, and relaxed him (the man) when he returned from the professional battlefield which demands from him harshness, discipline and external tension, if he does not wish to fall behind. Her
dependency, helplessness, anxiousness and naivete afford him the feeling of his own strength, circumspection and invulnerability. The "femininity" of women first makes the "masculinity" of man possible as such but only if women take over this emotionally compensating role. Only in this way would the caricature of masculinity be possible which today governs the society of work.

The place of women in the Church and society is one of the most discussed topics of our day. In 1963 Pope John XXIII spoke on the subject in his encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*:

It is obvious to everyone that women are now taking part in public life. This is happening more rapidly perhaps in nations with a Christian tradition, and more slowly, but broadly, among peoples who have inherited other traditions or cultures. Since women are becoming evermore conscious of their human dignity, they will not tolerate being treated as inanimate objects or instruments, but claim, both in domestic and in public life, the rights and duties that befit a human person.

The sources demonstrate that Francis showed a discernment which beheld woman as something other than the opposite of man. Women played an important role in the life of Francis and the Franciscan movement. In the women close to Francis unusual piety was combined with an adventurous and fearless character. With them Francis was playful, calling Lady Jocaba de Settisoli, "Brother Jacoba," and he was also reverent, always calling Clare "Sister" or "Lady."

In Jacoba is found a living symbol of Franciscan fraternal love which, while not denying the fullness of her feminine person, recognizes her transcendence to the fullness of friendship.

For Francis, as was noted in chapter seven, woman is not chattel. Indeed, so profound and so positive is this relationship that van Asseldonk tells us "Clare is the female face of Francis, Francis is the male face of Clare." In Francis and Clare is discovered a rare example of two persons animated by the Spirit, living the evangelical life and fully consecrated to God in an intimate reciprocal unity both human and divine. In addition, the importance of the feminine in the life of Francis and in the development of the Franciscan
movement becomes clear. Elio LeClerc tells us: "Henceforth, a woman (Clare) is present in Francis' spiritual life . . . . Even as devoted as he was to the service of God this man could not gain access to spiritual maturity except through a feminine influence which sensitized his intelligence and brought completion to his soul." Therefore, there cannot be a complete analysis of Franciscan spirituality which excludes the influence of Clare.

It cannot be overlooked that Francis had, because of his own experiences, struggles, and the mistakes of his subordinates, good reason to fear familiarity with women. In spite of this, in Francis there is a real concern and fatherly love for the Poor Clares and a real human friendship with Lady Jacoba which overcame any and all obstacles.

Francis did not see himself as a social reformer. As Father Cuthbert noted, the narrow and depressing gospel of protest of the sectaries was the antithesis of the message of Francis. Francis looked for and found the good in everyone, a radical inwardness in the Franciscan vocation, but the inward light revealed new value in things taken for granted, such as marriage and human relationships. Franciscanism helped to open Church life to a vast number of men and women. It is in Francis' relationship to Lady Clare that he is seen truly relating to women. The spiritual dangers he was aware of and warned of are not found here, because of the high spiritual characters of both Francis and Clare. The spiritual dangers he was aware of and warned of did not prevent sharing with Jacoba and Clare because of the high spiritual character of both women.

III. MARY AND THE FEMININE

It is in his relationship with God and the discussion of spiritual attitudes that the use of feminine imagery, especially as Spouse, Lady, and Mother, becomes central. One of the most powerful effects of this imagery can be seen in his devotion to Mary, the Poor Lady who in poverty of spirit gave birth to the Poor Christ. Gagnan holds that this use of feminine imagery was an ongoing and developing phenomenon in the Medieval period. It was necessary, therefore, to examine specific uses of feminine imagery such as Spouse, Lady, and Mother as it was used by Francis.
In this meager amount of Marian writings of Francis available to us has been reviewed, as well as Francis' Marian devotion and practices as described by Francis' biographers. What is obvious is that, as has been pointed out previously, Francis was not the idiot or completely unlettered person he called himself. His education, if typical of his time, would have included Latin grammar and would also have given him knowledge of doctrine and practice of the sacraments, as well as understanding of the liturgy and the study of Scripture. Francis was greatly influenced by contemporary Mariology and by spiritual writers and liturgical texts of the previous centuries. Franciscan scholars state that Francis used these sources creatively as witnessed by his use of such terms as "Spouse of the Holy Spirit" and "You are Virgin Made Church." It has been demonstrated that, although Francis was not a theologian, there is development in his writings on Mary.

The relationship of Francis to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception remains unclear. While Fehlner's study is valuable, the devotional writings of Francis on Mary do not seem to indicate that the Immaculate Conception as it is presently understood played a decisive role in Francis' vocation.

It may also be observed that in the case of Francis' use of the term "Spouse of the Holy Spirit," Franciscan writers have had a tendency to exaggerate Francis' originality. A more exact approach to the study of Francis' contribution to popular Marian devotion takes nothing away from Francis' stature.

Francis was influenced by St. Peter Damian, St. Augustine, and others. His great contribution to the Mariology of the time was to present in a creative manner a popular yet dogmatically correct Marian devotion.

As noted, Mary is always seen in the context of her relationship with her Son. Hence, the Incarnation is the moment of Mary's greatest glory in salvation history, according to Francis. The Divine Motherhood of Mary is central because it makes Christ our brother. For Francis, Mary is never isolated from her Son. Rather she is the model, for Christians who give spiritual birth to Christ by doing good, thus giving life to the Church. Furthermore, Franciscan writers have shown that Francis' devotion to Mary can be traced at least to the early days of his conversion.
What effect did Francis' experience of women have on his view of the Blessed Mother? Having examined Francis' Marian writings, Marian devotion, and Marian practice as well as Francis' understanding of Mary in relation to the Trinity and the Church and as, advocate and the Poor Lady, it would be useful to examine what effect the women in Francis' life might have had on his view of Mary and how his view of Mary might have influenced his understanding of women.

In Second Celano is found mention of a pilgrimage to Rome. 9 Cuthbert Hess places it before the fall of 1205.10 Sabatier places it between spring of 1204 and spring of 1206.11 It may be that it was on this pilgrimage that Francis' first meeting with Lady Jacoba took place.12 If so, it may be that Francis sought Jacoba's help to meet Cardinal John of St. Paul, who was to defend Francis' idea in the Curia. Such an influence would be quite normal in the society of thirteenth-century Rome. It would also provide Francis with a fitting model for Mary Our Advocate as found in the Major Life of St. Bonaventure,13 the Little Flowers,14 The Paraphrase of The Our Father,15 and The Antiphone of The Office of The Passion.16 If Jacoba is accepted as a model for an image of Mary Our Advocate for Francis, the place of Jacoba at the death of Francis and her relationship with Brother Leo can be seen in a new light; rather than a scandalous situation, it becomes a crowning moment -- fitting because of Lady Jacoba= s pivotal role in the foundation of the Order. The vision of Lady Jacoba, telling her to bring a pillow, a woven coverlet, candles, and cookies, is a fitting task for one who had offered Francis shelter, nourishment, and support.17 Thus, in the lives of Lady Pica, Lady Clare, and Lady Jacoba can be found the inspiration for the three central images of the Blessed Mother: Mary, Our Mother Who Made Christ Our Brother; Mary the Poor Lady; and Mary Our Advocate.

In the descriptions of Mary as Poor Lady a connection is found between Mary and Clare. Clare embodied in her rule a passage from "his last will for us (Poor Ladies)." Francis wrote:

I, little Brother Francis, wish to follow the life and poverty of our most high Lord Jesus Christ and of his most holy Mother, and to persevere in it to the end.18 Thus, Francis presents Mary to Clare as her model fitting because Francis had found in Clare and her sisters like-
minded souls who did not shirk deprivation, poverty, hard
work, trial, shame or contempt of the world. 19

As van Asseldonk has written, Mary, properly understood,
is symbolized by Sister Moon, while Clare, the clear one, is
represented by the clear, precious, and fair heavens. Indeed,
all elements of creation are fraternized as brothers and
sisters. It may be concluded that Clare, in her choice of
poverty, resembles Mary, the Poor Woman, in the mind of
Francis.

What influence did Pica, Clare, and Jacoba have on
Francis' image of Mary? The evidence that Pica was seen by
her contemporaries as a Marian figure who gave birth to
Francis has been cited. The story, however, can only be dated
as far back as 1452. 20 Francis, however, speaks of Mary as
Mother repeatedly. 21 Both Celano and Bonaventure state that
the Blessed Mother's greater claim to honor is that she was
the Mother of God and that she had made Jesus our Brother. 22
In Pica, Francis found a strong defender against his
overbearing father and the first person to recognize his
vocation. 23 It may be suggested, therefore, that Francis was
influenced in his view of Mary by Lada Pica. 24

In Lady Clare, as has been mentioned above, her role was
an influence on Francis seeing Mary as the Poor Lady who chose
poverty along with her Son and the Apostles. 25

Mary, because of her humble obedience, is recognized by
Francis as Daughter and Handmaid of the Eternal Father. Mary
can sometimes be seen as Lady Poverty, the symbol of the
Franciscan vocation. Finally, the Mariology of Saint Francis
is practical.

IV. THE FEMININE AND FRANCIS

As noted in Chapter 5, Francis was observed by his
contemporaries as having a maternal relationship with his
disciples. This is most concrete in the image of Francis as
being hailed as Lady Poverty by the apparition of the three
ladies. It is also found in visions such as Clare nursing at
the breast of Francis. Francis himself, recognized this
phenomenon in the parables of "The Little Black Hen" and the
"Poor Women in the Desert." As noted in the text, this
feminine side is an integrated part of Francis' personality.
Francis of Assisi was absorbed in focusing on Jesus Christ. But that vision of Jesus Christ included all men and women. From his mother's freeing him from chains, to pursuing a vocation he did not understand, to the clothing in the shroud made by Lady Jacoba, Francis was touched by women, and he, in turn, profoundly influenced their lives. Without this interplay and enrichment, the message of Francis would be significantly less vigorous and influential.


5 Joan Erikson, St. Francis and His Four Ladies, (Toronto: Gregory J. McLeod Ltd., 1970), 5.


7 Ibid.


9 2 Cel. Omnibus, 363.

10 Hess, Life, 27. [See also Habig, Omnibus, XI.]


290

13 L.M. Omnibus, 699.

14 R. Brown, Our Lady, 9.

15 Francis of Assisi, The Paraphrase of The Our Father, Omnibus, 160.

16 Francis of Assisi.

17 L.M. Omnibus, 694.


22 2 Cel. Omnibus, 521.

23 2 Cel. Omnibus, 364.

24 2 Cel. Omnibus, 378.

Some of Francis' writings are full of solecisms and read more like the old Italian dialect spoken by the people than Latin.¹ Mistakes in Latin grammar and syntax serve to authenticate Francis' writings and are an important criterion for establishing the original wording of his writings.² Schmucki states that Francis most likely dictated most of his writing in ancient Italian to a more learned brother who then translated them into Latin.³ Although Francis' schooling enabled him to rise above the educational level of his fellow citizens, his lack of proficiency in Latin led him to dictate much of his correspondence.⁴ The following are excerpts of the writings of Francis followed by the writings of his biographers when possible. The translations of Regis Armstrong and Ignatius Brady have been used when possible because of their precision. They will be cited hereafter as A.B.

**ADMONITIONES (CAPUT I)**

Unde: Filii hominum, usquequo gravi corde? (Ps 4, 3) Ut quid non cognoscitis veritatem et creditis in Filium Dei (cfr. Joa 9, 32)? Ecce, quotidiem humiliat se (cfr. Phil 2, 8), sicut quando a regalibus sedibus (Sap 18, 15) venit in uterum Virginis; quotidiem venit ad nos ipse humilis apparens; quotidiem descendit de sinu Patris super altare in manibus sacerdotis.

Therefore, Oh sons of men, how long will you be hard of heart (Ps 4:3)? Why do you not recognize the truth and believe in the Son of God (cf. Jn 9:35)? See daily He humbles himself (cf. Phil 2:8) as when He came from the royal throne (Wis.18:15) into the womb of the Virgin; daily He comes to us in a humble form; daily He comes down from the bosom of the Father (cf. Jn 1:18) upon the altar in the hands of the priest. (Placid Hermann, trans.)
56. Postmodum vero ab abbate Sancti Benedicti de monte Subasio prope Assisium beatus Franciscus, voluntate et inspiratione Dei praevia, eam humiliter acquisivit. Quam ipse sanctus notabiliter et affectuose recommendavit generali ministro et omnibus fratribus, tanquam locum prae cunctis locis et ecclesiis huius saeculi dilectum a Virgine gloriosa.

Ad ipsius autem loci commendationem et affectum multum fecit quaedam visio quam quidam frater vidit adhuc existens in saeculo, quem beatus Franciscus singulare dilexit affectu quamdiu fuit cure ipso, familiaritatem praecipuam ostendendo eidem. Ille ergo cupiens servire Deo, sicut postea in religione fideliter servivit, videbat in visione omnes homines huius saeculi esse caecos et stare genibus flexis in circuitu Sanctae Mariae de Portiuncula iunctisque manibus et in caelum cure facie elevatis, voce magna et lacrimabili Dorainure praecabantur ut omnes illuminaret misericorditer dignaretur. Quibus sic orantibus videbatur quod splendor magnus exiret de caelo et descendens super eos illuminabat omnes lumine salutari.

Evigilans autem ille proposuit firmius Deo servire, et parum post saeculo nequam cure pompis suis penitus derelictor, intravit religionem ubi permansit in Dei servitio humiliter et devote.

56. The abbot of the monastery of Saint Benedict on Mount Subasio was divinely inspired to offer this sanctuary to Francis; and Francis accepted it very humbly, and openly and affectionately commended it to the minister general of the order and all the brothers, insisting that, of all the shrines and churches dedicated to the Blessed Virgin throughout the world, this was the one nearest to her heart. The brothers' love and veneration for this place was further increased by the vision of a certain friar, greatly beloved by blessed Francis, who treated him as an intimate, familiar friend. This man while still in the world earnestly desired to serve God faithfully, as indeed he subsequently did on entering the order; and he had a vision of a multitude of people, all blind; they were kneeling on the ground round Saint Mary of the Angels with joined hands and upturned eyes and they cried pitiably to God, praying that, in his mercy, he would give
them sight. While they were praying, a great light came from heaven and rested above them, shedding its healing radiance. On awaking, the man promised his faithful service to God; and a few days later he left the passing vanities of the world and entered the order, where he served God humbly and devoutly. (Nesta de Robeck)

CELANO, VITA PRIMA 24.

Inter quos quidam de Assisio, pium ac simplicem spiritum gerens, virum Dei devote primo secutus est. Post hunc frater Bernardus, pacis legationem amplectens, ad mercandum regnum caelorum post sanctum Dei cucurrit alacriter. Hic enim frequenter susceperat beatum patrem hospitio, cuius vitam et mores intuitus et expertus, refectusque sanctitatis eius odor, concepit timorem et salutis spiritum parturivit. Videbat eum tota nocte orantem, rarissime dormientem, laudantem Deum et gloriosam Virginem matrem eius, mirabatur atque dicebat: "Vere hic homo a Deo est."

24. Among these, a certain man from Assisi, of pious and simple spirit, was the first to devoutly follow the man of God. After him, Brother Bernard, embracing the delegation of peace, ran eagerly after the holy man of God to purchase the kingdom of heaven. He had often given the blessed father hospitality, and, having had experience of his life and conduct and having been refreshed by the fragrance of his loneliness, he conceived a fear and brought forth the spirit of salvation. He noticed that Francis would pray all night, sleeping but rarely, praising God and the glorious Virgin Mother of God, and he wondered and said: "In all truth, this man is from God." (Placid Hermann, trans.)

LEGENDA MAJOR

CAPUT VIII

5. Afflictis quoque qualicumque corporali molestia mira compassionis teneritudine condescendens, si quid penuriae, si quid defectus in aliquo cerneret, pii cordis dulcedine regerebat in Christum. Sane clementiam habebat ingenitam, quam superinfusa Christi pietas duplicabat. Itaque liquebatur animus eius ad pauperes et infirmos, et quibus non
poterat manure, exhibebat affectum. Contigit semel, ut pauperi cuidam eleemosynam importune petenti unus e fratribus durius responderet. Quod audiens pauperum pius 'amator', fratri praeceptit, ut ad illius pauperis pedes se nudatum prosterneret, proclamaret culpabilem, orationis suffragium postularet et veniam. Quod cure ille fecisset humiliter, dulciter pater adiecit: "Dum pauperera vides, o frater, speculum tibi proponitur Domini et pauperis Matris eius. In infirmis similiter infirmitates, quas assumpsit, considera!"

5. Francis sympathized lovingly and compassionately with those stricken with any physical affliction and he immediately referred to Christ the poverty or deprivation he saw in anyone. He was kind and gentle by nature and the love of Christ merely intensified this. His soul melted at the sight of the poor or infirm and where he could not offer material assistance he lavished his affection. A friar once brusquely refused a beggar who had asked him for an alms at an awkward moment. When Francis heard about it, he made the friar take off his habit in his love for the poor, and cast himself at the feet of the beggar, confessing his fault and begging his prayers and forgiveness. The friar obeyed humbly and Francis remarked gently, "My dear brother, when you see a beggar, you are looking at an image of our Lord and his poor Mother. When you see a sick person, remember the infirmities he bore for us." (Benen Fahy, trans.)

LEGENDA ANTIQUE S. FRANCISCI
(LEGEND OF PERUGIA)

79. Tempore illius capituli celebrati in eodem loco, in quo frates primo missi fuerunt ad quasdam provincias ultramarinas, finito capitulo, B. Franciscus remanens in praedicto loco cum quibusdam fratribus, dixit ad illos: "Carissimi frates, me oportet esse formam et exemplum omnium fratum. Si ergo misi fratres meos in longinquos partibus ad laborem et verecundiam, ad famem et alias quamplurimas necessitates sustinendas, iustum est et bonum mihi videtur, ut et ego similiter vadam ad aliquam linginquam provinciam, maxime ut fratres suas necessitates to tribulationes magis patienter valeant sustinere, cum audierint illud idem me supportare." Et ait illis: "Ite ergo et orate Dominum, ut det mihi eligere illam provinciam, quae sit magis ad laudem Domini et ad profectum et salutem animarum et nostrae

295
religionis bonum exemplum." Nam mos cerat sanctissimi Patris, non solum cum ad longinquam provinciam iret ad praedicandum, sed etiam cum iret per adiacentes provincias, orare Dominum et frates ad orandum mittere, ut ibicumque esset melius secundum Deum, Dominus dirigeret cor suum ad ambulandum illuc. Iverunt ergo frates ad ortonem et, ortonem finita, reversi sunt ad eum. Qui dixit ad illos: "In nomine Domininostri Jesu Christi et eius gloriosae Virginis matris et omnium sanctorum eligo (f. 119 b.) provinciam Franciae, in qua est catholica gens, maxime quia inter inter alios catholicos sanctae Ecclesiae reverentiam magnam exhibent Corport. Christi quod mihi plurimum gratum est. Propter quod libentius cum illis conversabor."

79. After the chapter of St. Mary of the Portiuncula, in which for the first time brothers were sent to overseas countries, blessed Francis, who had stayed in this friary with a few brothers, said to them: "My dearest brothers, I ought to be a model and example to all. If I, therefore, have sent my brothers into distant countries where they will undergo fatigue, humiliations, hunger, and all kind of trials, it is fair and good, it seems to me, that I also leave for a distant country so that my brothers will suffer their trials and privations with patience, knowing that I, too, am enduring as much." And he added "Go and pray to the Lord that he may lead me to choose the country where I shall best work for this glory, for the advancement and salvation of souls, and for the good example of the Order."

When he was about to go and preach in a distant country or even in a neighboring province, it was the most holy father's custom to pray and have others pray that the Lord might inspire him to go where God preferred him to go.

The brothers, therefore, withdrew to pray and, when they were finished, they returned to blessed Francis, who said to them: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the glorious Virgin, his Mother, and of all the saints, I choose the country of France. It is a Catholic nation, and more than all the other Catholic nations of the holy Church, it bears witness to the greatest respect for the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and nothing would please me more than go among these people." (Paul Oligny, trans.)
ULTIMA VOLUNTAS S. CLARAE SCRIPTA

Ego frater Franciscus parvulus volo sequi vitam et paupertatem altissimi Domini nostri Jesu Christi et eius sanctissimae matris et perseverare in ea usque in finem; et rogo vos, dominas meas, et consilium do vobis, ut in ista sanctissima vita et paupertate semper vivatis. Et custodite vos multum, ne doctrina vel consilio alicuius ab ipsa in perpetuum ullatenus recedatis.

The Last Will Written for Clare and Her Sisters

I, brother Francis, the little one, wish to follow the life and poverty of our most high Lord Jesus Christ and of His most holy mother and to persevere in this until the end; 2. and I ask and counsel you, my ladies, to live always in this most holy life and in poverty. 3. And to keep most careful watch that you never depart from this by reason of the teaching or advice of anyone. (A.B.)

EPISTOLA AD FIDELES II

Istud Verbum Patris tam dignum, tam sanctum et gloriosum nuntiavit altissimus Pater de caelo per sanctum Gabrielemangelum suum in uterum sanctae ac gloriosae virginis Mariae, ex cuius utero veram recepit carhem humanitatis et fragilitatis nostrae. Qui, cum dives esset (2 Cot 8, 9) super omnia, voluit ipse in mundo cure beatissima Virgine, matre sua, eligere paupertatem.

Through his angel, Saint Gabriel, the most high Father in heaven announced this Word of the Father--so worthy, so holy and glorious--in the womb of the holy and glorious Virgin Mary, from which He received the flesh of humanity and our frailty. Though He was rich beyond other things (2 Cor 8:9), in this world He, together with the most blessed Virgin, His mother, willed to choose poverty. (A.B.)
REGULA NON BULLATA

CAP. XXIII

Et gratias agimus tibi, quia sicut per Filium tuum nos creasti, sic per sanctam dilectionem tuam, qua dilexisti nos (cfr. Joa 17, 26), ipsum verum Deum et verum hominem ex gloriosa semper Virgine beatissima sancta Maria nasci fecisti et per crucem et sanguinem et mortem ipsius nos captivos redimi voluisti.

And we thank You for as through Your Son You created us, so also, through Your holy love with which You loved us, You brought about His birth as true God and true man by the glorious, ever-virgin, most blessed, holy Mary and You willed to redeem us captives through His cross and blood and death. (A.B.)

LEGENDA TRIUM SOCIORUM

CAP. V

Cum autem semel ad mancucandum sederet, dixit ei quidam frater quod beata Virgo in hora comestionis ita fuerat paupercula quod non habebat quid daret filio suo ad manducandum. Quod audiens, vir Dei suspiravit cum magno dolore, mensaque relicta, panem super nudam terram comedit.

Once during a meal a certain brother remarked that the Blessed Virgin was so poor that she had hardly anything to set before her Son our Lord. On hearing this, Francis sighed, deeply moved, and leaving the table, he ate his bread sitting on the floor. (R. Brown)

EPISTOLA AD FIDELES (RECESSION PRIOR)

EPISTOLA TOTI ORDINI MISSA UNA CUM ORATIONE:

OMNIPOTENS, AETERNE

Audite, fratres mei: Si beata Virgo sic honoratur, ut dignum est, quia ipsum portavit in sanctissimo utero; si Baptista beatus contremuit et non audet tangere sanctum Dei verticem; si sepulcrum, in quo per aliquod tempus iacuit veneratur, quantum debet esse sanctus, iustus et dignus, qui
non iam moriturum, sed in aeternum victurum et glorificatum, in quo desiderant angeli prospicere (1 Petr 1, 12), contractat manibus, corde et ore sumit et aliis ad sumendum praebet!

Listen to this, my brothers: If it is right to honor the Blessed, Virgin Mary because she carried him in her most holy womb if St. John the Baptist trembled and was afraid even to touch Christ's sacred head; if the tomb where he lay only for a short time is so venerated; how holy, and virtuous, and worth should not a priest be; he touches Christ with his own hands, Christ who is to die now no more but enjoy eternal life and glory, upon whom the angels desire to look (1 Pet. 1:12). (R. Brown)

Epistola Toti Ordini

Confiteor praeterea Domino Deo Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sanctor, beatae Mariae perpetuae Virgini et omnibus sanctis in caelo et in terra.

I confess all my sins to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; to blessed Mary ever Virgin and all the saints in heaven and on earth. (A.B.)

OFFICUM PASSIONIS DOMINI [Off Pass]

AD COMPLETORIUM

ANTIPHONA: SANCTA MARIA VIRGO

Antiphona: Sancta Maria virgo, non est tibi similis nata in mundo in mulieribus, filia et ancilla altissimi summi Regis Patris caelestis, mater sanctissimi Domini nostri Jesu Christi, sponsa Spiritus Sancti: ora pro nobis cure S. Michaele archangelo et omnibus virtutibus caelorum et omnibus sanctis apud tuum sanctissimum dilectum Filium, Dominum et magistrum Gloria Patri. Sicut erat.
OFFICE OF THE PASSION

COMPLINE

ANTIPHON: HOLY VIRGIN MARY

Holy Virgin Mary, among all the women of the world there is none like you; you are the daughter and handmaid of the most high King and Father of heaven; you are the mother of our most holy Lord Jesus Christ; you are the spouse of the Holy Spirit. Pray for us, with St. Michael the archangel and all the powers of heaven and all the saints, to your most holy and beloved Son, our Lord and Master. Glory be to the Father, etc. (A.B.)

AD VESPERAM IN NATIVITATE DOMINI

ANTIPHONA: SANCTA MARIA VIRGO

Quia sanctissimus pater de caelo, Rex noster ante saecula (Ps 73, 12a) misit dilectum Filium suum de alto et natus fuit de beata virgine sancta Maria.

FIFTH OFFICE

Our most holy Father of heaven, our King, before time was, sent his beloved Son from on high and he was born of the blessed and holy Virgin Mary. (A.B.)

SALUTATO BEATAE MARIAE VIRGINIS

Ave, domna sancta,
Regina sanctissima,
Dei, Genitrix, Maria,
Quae Virgo Ecclesia Facta,
Electa a sanctissimo
Patre de caelo,
Quam sanctissimo dilecto
Filio Et Spiritu Paraclito,
In qua fuit et est
Omni plenitudo gratiae
Et omne bonum!

300
Ave, palatium eius!
Ave, tabernaculum eius!
Ave, domus eius!
Ave, vestimentum eius!
Ave, ancilla eius!
Ave, Mater eius!
Et vos omnes sanctae virtutes
Quae per gratiam et illuminationem
Santi Spiritus
Infundimini
'In corda fidelium,
Ut de infidelibus
Fideles Deo faciatis.
Hail, Holy Lady,
Most holy Queen,
Mary, Mother of God!
You are Virgin made church,
Chosen by the most holy Father in Heaven,
Whom he consecrated
With his most holy beloved Son
And the Paraclete Spirit!
You in whom was and is
All plenitude of grace
And all good!
Hail, his palace!
Hail, his tabernacle!
Hail, his dwelling!
Hail, his vesture!
Hail, his handmaid!
Hail, his Mother!
And all you holy Virtues
That by the grace and light
Of the Holy Spirit
Are infused
Into the hearts of the faithful,
That from faithless souls
You may make souls faithful to God! (A.B.)
EXPOSITIO IN PATER NOSTER

"Et dimitte nobis debita nostra; per tuam misericordiam ineffabilem, per Passionis delecti Filii tuorum domini nostri Jesu Christi virtutem et per beatissimae Mariae virginis et omnium electorum tuorum merita et intercessionem.

And forgive us our trespasses: In your infinite mercy, and by the power of the Passion of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, together with the merits and intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all your saints. (A.B.)

REGULA NON BULLA IX, (3-5)

"Et cure necesse fuerit, vadant pro eleemosynis. Et non verecundentur, sed magis recordentur, quia Dominus noster Jesus Christus nec verecondatus fuit; et fuit pauper et hospes et vixit de eleemosynis, ipse et Beata Virgo et discipuli eius" (Esser, Opuscula 37).

And they should not be ashamed, but rather recall that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living and all-powerful God (cf. Jn 11:27) and he set his face like flint (Is 50:7) and was not ashamed. And He was a poor man and a transient and lived on alms, He and the Blessed Virgin, and His disciples. (A.B.)

REGULA NON BULLA XXIII

"Et gloriosam matrem beatissimam Mariam semper Virginem, propter tuum amorem humili ter deprecamur, ut sicut sibi placet, pro his tibi gratias referant summo vero Deo, aeterno et vivo, cum Filio tuo carissimo Domino nostro Jesu Christo et Spiritu sancto Paracleto in saecula saeculorum, Amen Alleluia (Esser, Opuscula 50).

And we beg his glorious mother, blessed Mary, ever Virgin, Saints Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and all the choirs of blessed spirits, Seraphim, Cherubim, thrones and Dominations, Principalities and Powers; we beg all the choirs of Angels and Archangels, St. John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, Saints Peter and Paul, all the holy Patriarchs, Prophets, Innocents, Apostles, Evangelists, Disciples, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, blessed Elias and Enoch and all other saints, living and dead or still to come, we beg all of you most humbly, for love of you, to give thanks to you, the
most high, eternal God, living and true, with your Son, our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter for ever and ever, Amen. (A.B.)

ANALECTA FRANCISCANA

TOMUS X.

THOMAS E CELANO VITA I

21. Interea sanctus Dei, mutato habitu et praedicta ecclesia reparata, migravit ad locum alium iuxta cievitatem Assisii, in quo ecclesiam quamdam dirutam et propemodum eversam reaedicare incipiens, a bono principio non destitit quosque ad perfectum adduceret universa. -- Inde vero ad alium se transtulit locum, qui Portiuncula nuncupatur, in quo ecclesiam Beatae Virginis matris Dei antiquitus constructa exstiterat, sed deserta tunc a nemine curabatur. Quam cum sanctus Dei cerneret sic destructam, pietate commotus, quia devotione fervebat erga totius bonitatis Matrem, coepit ibidem assiduus commorari. -- Factum est autem, cum iam dictam ecclesiam reparasset, conversionis eius annus tertius agebatur. Quo in tempore quasi eremiticum ferens habiturn, accinctus corrigia et baculum manu gestans, calceatis pedibus incedebat.

21. Meanwhile the holy man of God, having put on a new kind of habit and having repaired the aforesaid church, went to another place near the city of Assisi, where he began to rebuild a certain dilapidated and well-nigh destroyed church, and he did not leave off from his good purpose until he had brought it to completion. Then he went to another place, which is called the Portiuncula, where there stood a church of the Blessed Virgin Mother of God that had been built in ancient times, but was now deserted and cared for by no one. When the holy man of God saw how it was thus in ruins, he was moved to pity, because he burned with devotion toward the mother of all good; and he began to live there in great zeal. It was the third year of his conversion when he began to repair this church. At this time he wore a kind of hermit's dress, with a leather girdle about his waist; he carried a staff in his hands and wore shoes on his feet. (Placid Hermann, trans.)
106. Dei quoque nutu factum est hoc, ut sancta anima
carne soluta inde ad caelorum regna transiret, ubi sibi adhoc
in carne manenti primo data est notitia supernorum et infusa
unctio salutaris. Nam cum in omni sede terrarum caelorum
regna constituta cognosceret, et in omni loco divinam gratiam
electis Dei tribui crederet, expertus erat tamen locum
ecclesiae Sanctae Mariae in Portiuncula gratia uberiore
repletum, et supernorum visitatione spirituum frequentatum.
Aiebat proinde fratribus saepe: "Videte, o filii, ne quando
hunc locum relinquatis. Si ab una parte foras pelleremini, ex
alio reintrate; nam locus iste vere sanctus est et habitatio
Dei. Hic cum pauci essemus, nos augmentavit Altissimus; hic
luce sapientiae suae illuminavit suorum pauperum corda; hic
igne amoris suis nostras voluntates accendit. Hic qui oraverit
corde devoto, quod petierit obtinebit, et offendens gravius
punietur. Propterea, filii, omni honore dignum habete locum
habilaculi Dei, et in toto corde vestro, in voce exsultationis
et confessionis, ibi confitemini Deo".

106. And at the will of God it happened that his holy
soul was released from his body and passed to the kingdom of
heaven at that place, where, while he was still in the flesh,
the knowledge of heavenly things was first given to him and
the saving unction poured upon him. For though he knew that
the kingdom of heaven was set up in all the habitations of the
land and believed that the grace of God was given to the elect
of God in every place, he had however experienced that the
place of the church of St. Mary of the Portiuncula was endowed
with more fruitful graces and visited by heavenly spirits.
Therefore he often said to his brothers: "See to it, my sons,
that you never abandon this place. If you are driven out from
one side, go back in at the other. For this place is truly
holy and is the dwelling place of God. Here, when we were but
a few, the Most High gave us increase; here he enlightened the
hearts of his poor ones by the light of his wisdom; here he
set our wills afire with the fire of his love. Here he who
prays with a devout heart will obtain what he prays for and he
who offends will be punished more severely. Wherefore, my
sons, consider this dwelling place of God to be worthy of all
honor, and with all your heart, with the voice of joy and
praise, give glory to God in this place." (Placid Hermann,
trans.)
18. The servant of God Francis, a person small in stature, humble in mind, a minor by profession, while yet in the world chose out of the world for himself and his followers a little portion, inasmuch as he could not serve Christ without having something of the world. For it was not without the foreknowledge of a divine disposition that, from ancient times, that place was called the Portiuncula, which was to fall to the lot of those who wished to have nothing whatsoever of the world. For there had also been built in that place a church of the virgin mother who merited by her singular humility to be, after her son, the head of all the saints. In this church the Order of Friars Minor had its beginning; there, as on a firm foundation, when their number had grown, the noble fabric of the order arose. The holy man loved this place above all others; this place he commanded his brothers to venerate with a special reverence; this place he willed to be preserved as a model of humility and highest poverty for their order, reserving the ownership of it to others, and keeping only the use of it for himself and his brothers. (A.B.)

et omni saeculari personae omnis penitus praecludebatur introitus. Nolebat ut fratres existentes ibidem, qui sub certo numero arctabantur, ad saecularium relationera prurirent auribus, ne contemplatione intermissa cælestium ad inferiorum commercia per rumigerulos traherentur. Non licebat ibidem alicui otiosa verba proferre, nec referre prolata per alios. Quod si quandoque per aliquem contigeret, ut ultra non adderet, poena docente cavebat in posterum. Sine intermissione diebus ac noctibus existentes in loco divinis erant laudibus occupati, et odore miro fragrantes, vitam ducebat angelicam. Merito quidera. Solebat enim veterum incolarum relatu Sancta Maria de Angelis alio nomine dici. Revelatum sibi a Deo felix pater dicebat, beatam Virginem, inter alias ecclesias ad suum honorem in mundo constructas, ecclesiam illam speciali amore diligere; ideoque sanctus eam praec caeteris plus amabat.

19. The most rigid discipline was observed there in all things, both as to silence and work, and to the other ordinances of the rule. To no one was admittance there granted except to specially appointed brothers who, coming from all parts of the world, the holy man wanted to be devoted to God and perfect in every way. So, too, admittance was prohibited to every secular person. He did not want the brothers dwelling there, who were restricted severely as to number, to have itching ears for news of worldly things, lest, with their meditation on heavenly things interrupted, they should be drawn to the business of inferior things through those who spread rumors. It was not permitted to anyone there to utter idle words or repeat those uttered by others. If anyone at any time did this, he was taught through punishment to be careful not to let it happen again. Those who dwelt in this place were occupied with the divine praises without interruption day and night, and fragrant with a wonderful odor, they led an angelic life.

This was as it should be. For, according to what the old inhabitants used to say, the place was also called St. Mary of the Angels. The happy father used to say that it had been revealed to him by God that the Blessed Mother loved this church among all the other churches built in her honor throughout the world, with a special love; for this reason the holy man loved it above all others. (Placid Hermann, trans.)

67. Videns aliquando vicarius sancti, frater Petrus Cathanii, turbis fratrum forensium Sanctam Mariam de
Portiuncula frequentari, nec ad providendum in necessariis eleemosynas abundare, dixit ad sanctum Franciscum: "Nescio, frater, quid faciam, dum catervatim undique confluantibus fratribus non habeo quo sufficienter providere. Placeat, oro te, quod intrantium novitiorum res aliquae reseruentur, ad quas expendendas recurratur tempore opportuno". Respondit sanctus: "Absit haec pietas, frater carissime, ut pro quovis homine irapie agatur in regulam". Et ille: "Quid igitur faciam?". "Altare", inquit, "spolia Virginis et varium aufer ornatum, cure aliter indigentibus non poteris subvenire. Crede mihi, gratius babebit Evangelium Filii sui servari suumque spoliari altare, quam altare vestitum, Filiumque contemptum. Dominus mittet, qui Matri, quod nobis commodavit, restituat".

67. At one time the vicar of the holy father, Peter of Catania, seeing that St. Mary of the Portiuncula was visited by a great number of brothers from afar and that there were not sufficient alms to provide for their needs, said to St. Francis: "Brother, I do not know what I will do, for with these brothers who have come here in such masses from all over, I do not have enough to provide for them properly. May it please you, I beg of you, that some of the goods of the entering novices be kept aside so that we might have recourse to them at the opportune time." The saint answered: "Away with kindness of this kind, dearest Brother, that would act wrongly against the rule for anyone's sake." And the former said: "What then shall I do?" Francis said: "Strip the altar of the Blessed Virgin and take away its many ornaments, since you cannot otherwise come to the help of the needy. Believe me, she would be more pleased to have the Gospel of her son kept and her altar stripped than that the altar should be ornamented and her son despised. The Lord will send someone who will give back to our mother the ornaments he has lent to us." (Placid Hermann, trans.)

Once the mother of two of the brothers came to the saint confidently asking for alms. The holy father had pity on her and said to his vicar, Brother Peter of Catania: "Can we give some alms to our mother?" Francis was accustomed to call the mother of any brother his mother and the mother of all the brothers. Brother Peter answered him: "There is nothing left in the house that could be given her." And he added: "We have one New Testament from which we read the lessons at Matins since we do not have a breviary." Blessed Francis said to him: "Give the New Testament to our mother that she might sell it to take care of her needs, since we are admonished by it to help the poor. I believe indeed that the gift of it will be more pleasing to God than our reading from it." The book, therefore, was given to the woman, and thus the first Testament that was in the order was given away through this holy kindness. (Placid Hermann, trans.)

Matrem Iesu indicibili complectebatur amore, eo quod Dominum maiestatis fratrem nobis effecerit. Peculiares illi persolvebat Laudes, fundebat preces, offerebat affectus, quod et qualiter humana promere lingua non posset. Sed quod laetificat plurimum, Ordinis advocatam ipsam constituit, suisque alis quos relicturus erat filior usque in finem fovendos et protegendos submisit. Eia, pauperum advocata! imple in nobis tutricis officium usque ad praefinitum tempus a Patre.

Toward the Mother of Jesus he was filled with an inexpressible love, because it was she who made the Lord of Majesty our brother. He sang special praises to her, poured out prayers to her, offered her his affections, so many and so great that the tongue of man cannot recount them. But what delights us most, he made her the advocate of the order and placed under her wings the sons he was about to leave that she might cherish them and protect them to the end. Hail, advocate of the poor! Fulfill toward us your office of protectress until the time set by the Father. (Placid Hermann, trans.)
8. Hac tandem ecclesia consummata, pervenit ad locum qui Portiuncula dicitur, in quo ecclesia beatissimae Virginis, 'genitricis' Dei, antiquitus fabricata extiterat, sed deserta tunc a nemine curabatur. Quam cum vir Dei sic derelictam conspiceret, ob devotionem ferventem, quam babebat ad Dominam mundi, coepit illic assidue pro ipsius reparatione morari. Sentiens autem iuxta nomen ipsius ecclesiae, quo ab antiquo S. Maria de Angelis vocabatur, 'angelicarum ibi visitationum frequentiam', pedem fixit ibidem propter reverentiam Angelorum amoremque praecipuum Matris Christi. Hunc locum vir sanctus amavit prae caeteris mundi locis; hic et enim humiliter coepit, hic virtuose profecit, hic feliciter consummavit, hunc in morte fratibus tamquam Virginum carissimum commendavit. De hoc frater quidam Deo devotus ante conversionem suam visionerat relatione condignam. Innumerous cernebat homines caecititate percussos, facie in caelum directa et genibus flexis, in huius ecclesiae stare circuitu. Qui omnes, protensis manibus in altum, lacrimabiliter clamabant ad Deum, misericordiam postulantes et lumen. Et ecce ingens de caelo splendor advenit, se per omnes diffundens, qui lumen unicuique tribuit et salutem desideratam concessit. Hic est locus, in quo Fratrum Minorum Ordo a sancto Francisco per divinae revelationis instiuntum inchoatus est. Divinae namque providentiae nutu, qua Christi servus dirigebatur in omnibus, tres materiales erexit ecclesias, antequam, Ordinem inchoans, Evangelium praedicaret, ut non solum a sensibilibus ad intelligibilia, a minoribus ad maiora ordinato progressu conscenderet, verum etiam, ut quid esset facturus in posterum, sensibili foris opere mysterialiter praesignaret. Nam instar reparatae triplicis fabricae ipsius sancti viri ducatu, secundum datam ab eo formam, regulam et doctrinam Christi triformiter renovanda erat Ecclesia trinaque triumphatura militia salvandorum, sicut et nunc cernimus esse completum.
out of reverence for the angels and love for the Mother of Christ. He loved this spot more than any other in the world. It was here that he began his religious life in a very small way; it was here that he made such extraordinary progress, and it was here that he came to a happy end. When he was dying, he commended this spot above all others to the friars, because it was most dear to the Blessed Virgin. (Benen Fahy, trans.)

Before entering the Order, one of the friars had a vision about the Portiuncula. He saw a huge crowd of blind folk kneeling in a circle about the church and looking up to heaven. With tearful voices and outstretched hands, they cried out to God, begging him to have pity on them and give them sight. Then a brilliant light descended from heaven and enveloped them all, giving them back their sight and the health they longed for.

This was the place where St. Francis founded the Order of Friars Minor by divine inspiration and it was Divine Providence which led him to repair three churches before he founded the Order and began to preach the Gospel. This meant that he progressed from material things to more spiritual achievements, from lesser to greater, in due order, and it gave a prophetic indication of what he would accomplish later. Like the three buildings he repaired, Christ's church was to be renewed in three different ways under Francis' guidance and according to his Rule and teaching, and the three-fold army of those who are to be saved was to win victory. We can now see that this prophecy has come true. (Dr. Peter Howard)

DE INSTITUTIO RELIGIONIS ET APPROBATIONE REGULAE.

1. In ecclesia igitur Virginis Matris Dei moram faciente servo ipsius Francisco et apud eam quae concepit Verbum plenum gratiae et veritatis, continuis insistente gemitibus, ut fieri dignaretur advocata ipsius, meritis Matris misericordiae concepit ipse ac peperit spiritum evangelicae veritatis. Dum enim die quodam Missam de Apostolis devotus audiret, perlectum est Evangelium illud, in quo Christus 'discipulis' ad praedicandum mittendis formam tribuit evangelicam in vivendo, 'he videlicet possideant aurum vel argentum', nec in zonis pecuniam, nec 'peram in via', neque duas tunicas 'habeant', nec calceamenta deferant, neque virgam. Quod audiens et 'intelligens' ac memoriae commendans, apostolicae paupertatis amicus 'indicibili mox' perfusus laetitia: "Hoc est, inquit,
quod cupio, hoc 'quod totis praeordiis concupisco.'" Solvit proinde calceamenta de pedibus, deponit baculum, peram et pecuniam exsecratur, unaque contentus tunicula, 'reiecta' corrigia, pro cingulo funera sumit, orenero sollicitudinem cordis apponens, qualiter audita perficiat et apostolicae rectitudinis regulae per omnia se coaptet.

1. As he was living there by the church of our Lady, Francis prayed to her who had conceived the Word, full of grace and truth, begging her insistently and with tears to become his Advocate. Then he was granted the true spirit of the Gospel by the intercession of the Mother of Mercy and he brought it to fruition. He was at Mass one day on the feast of one of the apostles, and the passage of the Gospel where our Lord sends out his disciples to preach and tells them how they are to live according to the Gospel, was read. When Francis heard that they were not to provide gold or silver or copper to fill their purses, that they were not to have a wallet for the journey or a second coat, no shoes or staff, he was overjoyed. He grasped the meaning of the passage immediately in his love for apostolic poverty and committed it to memory. "This is what I want," he exclaimed. "This is what I long for with all my heart." There and then he took off his shoes and laid aside his staff. He conceived a horror of money or wealth of any kind and he wore only one tunic, changing his leather belt for a rope. The whole desire of his heart was to put what he had heard into practice and conform to the rule of life given to the Apostles in everything. (Dr. Peter Howard, trans.)

DE INSTITUTIONE RELIGIONIS ET APPROBATIONE REGULAE.

CAPUT IV

5. Post haec pusilli gregis pastor Franciscus ad Sanctam Mariam de Portiuncula 'duodenarium illum fratrum', superna gratia praeeunte, deduxit, ut ubi meritis Matris Dei Minorum sumpserat Ordo initium, ipsius illic susciperet auxiliis incrementum. Ibi quoque factus evangelicus praeco, civitates circuibat et castra, non in doctis humanae sapientiae verbis, sed in virtute Spiritus annuntians regnum Dei. Videbatur intuentibus homo alterius saeculi, quippe qui mente ac facie 'in caelum semper intentus', omnes sursum trahere conaretur. Coepit ex hoc Christi vinea germinare germen odoris Domini, et

311
productis ex se floribus suavitatis, honoris et honestatis, uberes fructus afferre.

5. After this, at God’s prompting, Francis brought his little flock of twelve friars to St. Mary of the Portiuncula. It was there that the Order of Friars Minor had been founded by the merits of the Mother of God, and it was there, too, that it would grow to maturity by her intercession.

From the Portiuncula, Francis set out as a herald of the Gospel to preach the kingdom of God in the towns and villages in the vicinity, "not in such words as human wisdom teaches, but in words taught him by the Spirit" (1 Cor. 2, 13). To those who saw him he seemed like a man from another world as, with his gaze fixed on heaven where his heart always dwelt, he tried to lift their thoughts on high. As a result of his efforts the supernatural vineyard of Christ began to put forth shoots which gave out a pleasing fragrance before God and produced fruit in abundance, lush and rich. (Dr. Peter Howard, trans.)

DE INSTITUTIONE RELIGIONIS ET APPROBATIONE REGULAE.

8. Eo tempore religiosus quidam de Ordine Cruciferorum, Moricus nomine, in hospitali quodam prope Assisium languore tam gravi tamque prolixo laborans, ut iam morti foret adivicatus a medicis, viro Dei supplex factus, per nuntium postulabat instanter, ut pro se ad Dominum intercedere dignaretur. Cui beatus pater benigne assentiens, oratione praemissa, panis micas accepit et cum oleo accepto de lampade, quae coram Virginis ardebat altari, commiscens, quasi quoddam electuarium per manus fratrum infirmanti transmisit, dicens: Mediciham hanc fratri nostro deferte Morico, qua ipsum Christi virtus non solum plenae sanitati restituet, verum etiam robustum bellatorem effectum, aciei nostrae perseveranter adiunget. Statim autem, ut antidotum illud sancti Spiritus adinventione conrectum aeger homo gustavit, sanus exsurgens, tantum mentis et corporis a Deo vigorem obtinuit, ut paulo post viri sancti religionera ingressus, et unica tantum operiretur tunicula, sub qua longo tempore loricam portabat ad carnero, et crudis dumentaxat cibariis, herbis videlicet, leguminibus fructibusque contentus, per plura temporum lustra nec panem gustaret nec vinum, fortis tamen et incolumis perseverans.

312
8. At this time, too, a religious of the Order of the Crucigeri who was called Moricus was lying ill in a hospital near Assisi. It was a long drawn-out illness and his condition was so bad that the doctors had given up all hope, but then he appealed to St. Francis and sent a message to him, entreating him of his goodness to pray to God for him. Francis agreed immediately and said a prayer for him; then he took some bread-crumbs and dipped them in oil taken from the lamp which burned before our Lady's altar, making a sort of pill out of them. This he sent with one of the friars to the sick man saying, "Take this medicine to our brother Moricus. By means of it Christ's power will restore him to perfect health and he is strong and ready for the fray once more, he will bring him into our company for the rest of his life." The moment the sick man took the medicine which had been prepared under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he immediately recovered and was able to get up. God gave him such strength of body and soul that he joined Francis' company a short time afterwards and was able to keep the rule which allows only a single tunic. Under this he wore a hair-shirt next to his skin for years and never ate cooked food, contenting himself with herbs, vegetables, and fruit. For years, too, he never ate bread or drank wine and yet he remained strong and in perfect health. (Dr. Peter Howard, trans.)

DE INSTITUTIONE RELIGIONIS ET APPROBATIONE REGULAE.

CAPUT V.

3. Matrem Domini Iesu indicibili completectabatur amore eoquod Dominum maiestatis fratrem nobis effecerit et per eam simus misericordiam consecuti. In ipsa post Christum praecipue fidens, eam sui ac suorum advocatam constituit et ad honorera ipsius a festo Apostolorum Petri et Pauli usque ad festum Assumptionis devotissime ieiunabat. Angelicis spiritibus ardentibus igne mirifico ad excedendum in Deum et electorum animas inflammandas inseparabilis erat amoris vinculo copulatus et ob devotionera ipsorum ab Assumptione Virginis gloriosae quadraginta deibus ieunans orationi iugiter insistebat. Beato autem Michaeli archangelo, eo quod animarum repraesentandarum haberet officium, speciali erat aereore devotior propter fervidum quem babebat zelum ad salutem omnium salvandorum.

313
3. He embraced the Mother of our Lord Jesus with indescribable love because, as he said, it was she who made the Lord of majesty our brother, and through her we found mercy. After Christ, he put all his trust in her and took her as his patroness for himself and his friars. In her honor he fasted every year from the feast of Saints Peter and Paul until the Assumption. He had an unshakable love for the Angels who burn with a marvelous fire, so that they are taken out of themselves to God and long to inflame the souls of the elect. Each year he fasted and prayed in their honor for forty days from the feast of the Assumption. In his ardent zeal for the salvation of souls he was particularly devoted to St. Michael the Archangel because it is his task to bring souls before God. (Dr. Peter Howard, trans.)

LE SPECULUM PERFECTIONIS

TOME I.

CAPUT. 38.

De testamento novo quod fecit dari mulieri pauperi matri duorum fratrum.

Alio tempore, dum maneret apud Sanctam Mariam de Portiuncula, quaedam mulier vetula et paupercula quae habebat duos filios in religione, venit ad locum, quaerens eleemosynam a beato Francisco.

Statim beatus Franciscus dixit fratri Petro Cathanii qui erat tunc generalis minister: "Possimusne habere aliquid quod demus illi matri nostrae?" Dicebat enim matrem alicujus fratris esse matrem suam et omnium fratrum. Respondit ei frater Petrus: "In domo nihil est quod possimus ei dare, quia vellet talem eleemosynam quod inde posset sustentari corpus ejus. In ecclesia autem habemus solummodo unum testamentum novum in quo legimus lectiones ad matutinum." Nam, illo tempore, fratres non habebant breviaria nee multa psalteria. Dixit ergo illi beatus Franciscus: "Da matri nostrae novum testamentum ut vendat illud pro sua necessitate. Credo enim firmiter quod plus placebit Domino et beatae Virgini quam si in ipso legeremus." Et sic dedit illi. Nam illud potest dici
et scribi de ipso quod legitur de beato Job: Ab utero matris meae egressa est et crevit mecum miseratio.

How he ordered a New Testament to be given to a poor woman, the mother of two friars.

Another time, while he was staying at S. Mary of Portiuncula, a poor old woman, who had two sons in the Order, came to the friary asking alms of blessed Francis. He immediately asked Brother Peter Catanii, who was then Minister General, 'Have we anything to give our mother?' For he used to say that the mother of any friar was mother to himself and to all the friars. Brother Peter said to him, 'There is nothing in the house that we can give her, for she wants the kind of alms that can sustain her bodily needs. But in the church we have a single New Testament, from which we read the lessons at Matins'. (For at that time the friars had no breviaries and few psalters.) So blessed Francis said to him, 'Give the New Testament to our mother, so that she can sell it for her needs. I am sure that this will please our Lord and the Blessed Virgin better than if we were to read from it.' So he gave it to her. For it can be said and written of him as is read of blessed Job: Loving care has borne me company as I grew up from childhood, ever since I left my mother's womb.

To us who lived with him it would be a long and very difficult task to write or describe not only what we have learned from others about his charity and kindness toward the friars and other poor folk, but what we have seen with our own eyes. (Placid Hermann, trans.)

LE SPECULUM PERFECTIONIS

CAPUT LV (7-24)

Tunc ivit ad abbatem Sancti Benedicti de monte Subasio, et eadem verba proposuit coram eo. Abbas vero, pietate motus, habito consilio cum monachis suis, operante gratia et voluntate divina, concessit beato Francisco et fratribus suis ecclesiam Sanctae Mariae de Portiuncula, pro minori et magis paupercula ecclesia quam haberent. Et ait abbas beato Francisco: Aecccc, frater, exaudivimus quod petisti. Sed si Dominus hanc congregationem vestram multiplicaverit, volumus
quod locus iste sit caput omnium vestrum. Et placuit sermo beato Francisco et fratibus suis; et gavisus est nimis beatus Franciscus de loco fratibus concesso, maxime propter nomen ecclesiae Matris Christi. et quia erat ita parva et paupercula ecclesia; et etiam quia cognominabatur de Portiuncula, in quo praefigurabatur quod debebat esse mater et caput pauperum Minorum fratrum; vocabatur enim Portiuncula quia contrata illa antiquitus Portiuncula dicebatur.

Unde dicebat beatus Franciscus: "Propterea voluit Dominus ut nulla alia ecclesia fratribus concederetur, et quod fratres primi tunc ecclesiam de novo non construerent, nec haberent, nisi illam; quoniam in hoc adimpleta fuit quaedam prophetia per adventum Minorum fratrum.

Et licet esset paupercula et quasi jam destructa, tamen per magnum tempus homines civitatis Assisii et totius illius contratae habuerunt devotionem maximam ad illam ecclesiam et majorera habent usque hodie, et quotidie augmentatur. Unde statim sicut fratres iverunt illuc ad morandum, quasi quotidie multiplicabat Dominus eorum numerum, et odor famae ipsorum per totam vallem Spoletanam et per multas partes mundi mirabiliter est dispersus.

Antiquitus tamen vocabatur Sancta Maria de Angelis quia, sicut dicitur, cantus angelici ibi saepius sunt auditi.

Et licet abbas et monachi ipsam beato Francisco et fratribus suis libere concessissent, tamen beatus Franciscus, tanquam bonus et peritus magister, volens domum suam, id est religionera suam, fundare supra firmam petram, id est supra maximam paupertatem, mittebat annuatim dicto abbati et monachis unam fiscinulam, seu unum Canistrellum, plenum pisciculis qui vocantur lascae, in signum majoris humilitatis et paupertatis; ut fratres nullum proprium locum haberent, nec in aliquo loco manerent qui non esset sub dominio aliquorum, ita quod fratres non haberent unquam potestatem vendendi vel alienandi quoquo modo. Quando autem fratres portabant monachis pisciculos annuatim, ipsi propter humilitatem beati Francisci, qui hoc de voluntate sua faciebat, dabant eis unum vas plenum oleo.

Nos vero qui fuimus cum beato Francisco testimonium perhibemus quod ipsa, cure affirmatione verbi, dixit de illa ecclesia, quod ibidem fuit sibi revelatum quoniam, propter multas praerogativas quas Dominus ibi ostendit, inter omnes ecclesias de mundo quas beata Virgo diligit, ipsam ecclesiam affectuosissime diligebat. Et propterea semper ex tunc
maximam reverentiam et devotionem in ipsa habuit; atque ut fratres memoriale semper in cordibus suis baberent, in morte sua fecit scribi in testamento ut omnes fratres similiter facerent. Nam, circa mortem suam, coram generali ministro et aliis fratribus, dixit:

"Locum Sanctae Mariae de Portiuncula volo ordinare et relinquere fratribus in testamentum, ut a fratribus semper in maxima devotione et reverentia habeatur.

"Quod et antiqui fratres nostri fecerunt: licet enim locus ille sit sanctus et praedilectus ac preelectus a Christo et Virgine gloriosa, tamen sanctitatem ejus conservabant cum continua oratione et silentio die noctuque. Et si aliquando loquebantur post terminum et constitutionem silentii, cum maxima devotione et honestate solum ea quae ad laudem Dei et animarum salutem pertinent loguebantur.

Speculum perfectionis

Then he went to the Abbot of Saint Benedict on Monte Subasio, and made the same request to him. The Abbot was roused to sympathy, and took counsel with his monks; and guided by the grace and will of God, he granted to blessed Francis and his friars the church of Saint Mary of the Porziuncula, which was the smallest and poorest church that they had. And the Abbot said to blessed Francis, 'See, Brother, we have granted your request. But if the Lord causes this congregation of yours to grow, we wish this place to become the chief of all your churches'. His suggestion pleased blessed Francis and his brethren, and he was delighted with this place granted to the friars, especially since the church was named after the Mother of Christ, and was so poor and small. He was also happy that it was called the Porziuncula, which foreshadowed that it was destined to become the Mother-House and chief church of the poor Friars Minor, for it had been known by this name from earliest times. So blessed Francis used to say, 'This was why the Lord willed that no other church should be given to the friars, and that the first friars should not build a new church or have any but this'; for in this way an old prophecy was fulfilled by the coming of the Friars Minor. And although it was poor and nearly in ruins, the people of the city of Assisi and the whole district had for a long time held the church in great reverence. Today their reverence is still greater, and grows day by day.
So the friars at once went to live there, and the Lord added to their numbers almost daily. And the fragrance of their reputation spread marvellously through the Vale of Spoleto and many parts of the land. But in ancient times it had been called Saint Mary of the Angels, because it was said that the songs of angels were often heard there.

Although the Abbot and monks had made a free gift of the church to blessed Francis and his friars, he, as a good and experienced master-builder, wished to establish his house—that is, his Order—on a firm foundation of absolute poverty. So each year he sent to the Abbot and monks a basket or jar full of little fish, known as lasche. This served as a reminder of their greater poverty and humility, and of the fact that the friars were to possess no place of their own, or live in any place that was not the property of others, so that the friars had no right to buy or sell anything. But when the friars carried the fish to the monks each year, the monks used to give them a jar of oil, in recognition of the humility of blessed Francis who had done this of his own free will.

Those of us who lived with blessed Francis testify that he solemnly affirmed that it had been revealed to him that the Blessed Virgin had a greater love for this church than for any others in the world, because of the many favours that God had granted there. So thenceforward he held it in the greatest reverence and devotion; and in order that the friars should always remember this in their hearts, he had it written in his Testament at his death that all friars should do likewise.

For about the time of his death he said in the presence of the Minister General and other friars: 'I wish to entrust and bequeath the friary of Saint Mary of the Porziuncula to my brethren by my Testament, in order that it may always be held in the greatest reverence and devotion by the friars. Our earliest brethren always did this, and because this place is holy, beloved, and chosen before all others by Christ and the glorious Virgin, they preserved its sanctity by constant prayer and silence day and night. If they had occasion to speak after the close of the appointed silence, they did so with the greatest devotion and sincerity, and only on matters which concerned the praise of God and the salvation of souls. And if ever anyone began to talk unprofitably or idly—although this seldom occurred—he was at once corrected by another friar. (Placid Hermann, trans.)
SACRUM COMMERCIUM

CAPUT 83.

Licet beatus Franciscus in omni sede terrarum regna caelorum constituta cognosceret, et in omni loco divinam gratiam electis Dei crederet posse donari, expertus tamen erat locum Sanctae Mariae de Portiuncula gratia uberiori repletum et supernorum spirituum visitatione caelitus frequentatum.

Dicebat proinde fratribus saepe: "Videte, o filii, ne unquam relinquitis hunc locum. Si ab una parte foras pelleremini, per aliam reintrate; nam locus iste vere sanctus estet habitatio Christi et Virginis matris ejus. Hic cure pauci essemus nos augmentavit Altissimus; hic, luce sapientiae suae illuminavit animas Paperum suorum; hic, igne amoris sui nostras voluntates accendit. Hic, qui oraverit corde devoto, quod petinerit obtinebit; et offendens gravius punietur. Popterea, o filii, habete hunc locum omni reverentia et honore dignissimum, tanquam vere habitaculum Dei, ab ipso eta matre ejus singulariter praedilectum. Atque ibidem toto corde vestro in voce exsultationis et confessionis confitemini Deo patri et ejus filio Domino Jesu Christo in sancti Spiritus unitate."

CHAPTER 83

Although blessed Francis was aware that the kingdom of heaven was established in every place on earth, and believed that the grace of God could everywhere be given to the faithful, he had learned from experience that Saint Mary of the Angels was filled with richer grace and often visited by celestial spirits. So he often said to the friars, 'My sons, see that you never abandon this place! If you are driven out of one door, re-enter by another, for this place is holy indeed; it is the dwelling-place of Christ and His Virgin Mother. When we were few, it was here that the Most High increased us; it was here that He illumined the souls of His poor ones with the light of His wisdom; it was here that He kindled our desires with the fire of His love. Whosoever prays here with a devout heart shall obtain whatever he asks, while an evil-doer shall receive heavier punishment.

'My sons, regard this place as most worthy of all reverence and honour as the true dwelling-place of God,
especially dear to Him and to His Mother. Glorify God the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit in this place with all your hearts and with the voice of praise and confession.' (Placid Hermann, trans.)

Quod volebat suadere Imperatori ut faceret specialem legem quod in Nativitate Domini homines bene providerent avibus et bovi et asino et pauperibus.

CAPUT 114

Nos qui füimus cum beato Francisco et scripsimus haec, testimonium perhibemus quod multoties audivimus eum dicentem: "Si locutus fuero Imperatori, supplicabo et suadebo sibi ut areore Dei et mei faciat legera specialera quod nullus homo capiat vel occidat sovenes laudas, nec eis faciat quidquam mali. Similiter quod omnes potestates civitatum et domini castrorum et villarum teneantur omni anno, in die Nativitatis Domini, compellere homines ad projiciendum de frumento et aliis granis per vias extra civitates et castra, ut babeant ad comedendum sovenes laudas, et etiam aliae aves, in die tantae solemnitatis; et quod, ob reverentiam Filii Dei, quem tali nocte beatissima Virgo Maria inter bovem et asinum in praesepio reclinavit; quicumque habuerit bovem et asinum teneatur, ipsa nocte, de bona annona eis optime providere; similiter quod in tali die omnes pauperes debeant a divitibus de bonis cibariis saturari."

CHAPTER 114

We who were with blessed Francis and write about these events testify that we often heard him say, 'If I ever speak to the Emperor, I shall beg him for love of God and myself to enact an especial law, forbidding anyone to kill our sisters the larks or do them any harm. Similarly, all mayors of towns and lords of castles and villages should be obliged each year on the Nativity of our Lord to see that their people scatter wheat and other grain on the roads outside towns and villages, so that our sisters the larks and other birds may have food on such a solemn festival. And in reverence for the Son of God, Who with the most blessed Virgin Mary rested in a manger that night between an ox and an ass; anyone who owns an ox or an
ass should be obliged to give them the choicest of fodder on Christmas Eve. And on Christmas Day the rich should give an abundance of good things to all the poor.

For blessed Francis had a deeper veneration for the Nativity of our Lord than for other festivals, and he said, 'Since our Lord has been born for us, it is for us to accept salvation.' He wanted every Christian to rejoice in the Lord on that day, and for love of Him Who gave Himself for us, he wished everyone to provide generously not only for the poor, but for beasts and birds as well. (Placid Herman Translator)
APPENDIX

END NOTES


4 Lehmann, 159.


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329


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_____ "De viduis." PL 16, 233-262.

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