Enkindling the Seraphic Fire Within: 
A Lonerganian Analysis of the Franciscan Charism of 
Bonaventure of Bagno REGIO

By

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Regis College
and the Theology Department of the Toronto School of Theology
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Abstract

Within current scholarship, the general consensus seems to be that Bonaventure did not, according to Paul Sabatier, “[understand] him whose disciple he wanted and believed himself to be.” Ewert W. Cousins takes up this line of thinking in his analysis of Bonaventure’s theology contrasting Bonaventure’s presupposition of the “speculative tradition” with the “simpleness and directness” of Francis of Assisi. This contrast contains the implication that Bonaventure’s work cannot be considered to be truly Franciscan, given the differing expression of his ideas from those in the orders foundational texts; however, I hypothesize that Bonaventure’s operates in, what Bernard Lonergan calls, the realm of interiority. I will argue that as a result of this Bonaventure is able to transpose his understanding of Franciscan spirituality from the realm of theory, as is seen in the Itinerarium mentis in Deum, to the realm of common sense, as is seen in the Legenda Maior.
Acknowledgements

“Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks and serve Him with great humility.”¹ St. Francis wrote these words, which end the magnificent Canticle of Creation, shortly before he entered into his eternal reward. I have chosen to begin my acknowledgements with them as I feel they express both the sentiment that I have towards God for blessing me with the wonderful ministry of studying theology, and the attitude that I hope to have as I move forward in it. God has truly blessed me over the past two years and continues to do so, so to Him I owe my greatest debt of thanks. Secondly, I must thank Our Lady of Mount Carmel. As Thomas Aquinas notes, “a captain does not intend as a last end the preservation of a ship entrusted to him, since a ship is ordained to something else as its end, viz. to navigation.”² Our Lady, stella maris, has been the constant star by which I am able to navigate, and for this I am extremely grateful. Thirdly, I owe clear debts of thanks to St. Francis of Assisi, Bl. John of Parma, St. Bonaventure, and Bernard Lonergan, as well as less noticeable ones, amongst others, to the Prophet Elijah, and Sts. Ignatius of Loyola and Thérèse of Liseux.

Given that a thesis is an earthly endeavor, there are also several people I should thank who have not yet gone to their eternal reward. Firstly, I would like to thank my parents, as well as my brother, for their continued love and support. Secondly, I would like to thank the people who were instrumental in getting me here both academically, personally, and spiritually throughout my program: my supervisor, Fr. Gilles Mongeau, SJ; the members of my


² Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, 1-2, Q5, A2.
committee, Profs. John Berkman and Jeremy Wilkins; my program advisor, Sr. Gill Goulding, CJ; the Rector Emeritus of Regis College, Fr. Bert Foliot, SJ; my spiritual director, Sr. Mary Agnes Roger, DCJ,; my pastor Fr. Christopher Cauchi and the Toronto Newman Centre; Fr. Robert Doran, SJ; Fr. Peter Drilling; Prof. Thomas Reynolds; Fr. Micheal Shields, SJ; my fellow members of the Lonergan Research Institute, especially Brian Bajzek, Eric Mabry, and Justin Schwartz; the Jesuits of the Cardoner and Regis College communities; the staff and students of Regis College; The Newman Centre Catholic Students Club; the Catholic communities at Hazelburn Co-Op and Harrison Carmel; my classmates at TST; and my own cohort particularly Dcn. Shane Daly, SJ, Marc-Alexandre Ladouceur, Peter San Filipo, and Daniel and Sarah Pettipas. Were I to thank everyone I wanted to thank, it would perhaps take up more pages than the thesis itself, so I can only hope that if anyone who feels they deserved to be thanked by name and isn’t reads this, they will know that just as the Lord knows the number of hairs on their head, so too does He know my immense gratitude and affection for all you have done for me. Thus, I can only say with St. Francis, “May the Lord bless you and keep you; may He show His face to you and be merciful to you. May He turn His countenance to you and give you peace.”

As I was finishing this thesis, I was given news of the death of Joshua Balden, a Wycliffe College student and seminarian for the Anglican Church of Canada with whom I was acquainted, was unexpectedly called from life. A few days later, on the solemnity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, I was given the news of the death of a friend, colleague and benefactor from my undergraduate days, John Dietrich Senior. Without Jack’s generosity in helping to fund my missionary work, I would have never been set on the course that lead to

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me studying theology. Soon after on the feast of the great Franciscan doctor St. Lawrence of Brindisi, my former ethics professor Dr. Ernest McCullough went to his eternal reward. Again shortly after on the feast of St. Joachim and St. Anne, the grandparents of Our Lord, my own grandfather Rory O’Sullivan entered into the kingdom prepared for him, after a long and valiant struggle with cancer. I should like to dedicate the first chapter of this thesis to Joshua, the second to Jack, the third to Ernie, and the thesis as a whole to my Grandfather. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Liam Farrer

The Feast of the Transverberation of Saint Theresa of Avila

Toronto, Canada.
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Introduction

In the year 1997, as the Catholic Church prepared to enter into the new millennium, Robert M. Doran noted that there remained a task, within the realm of systematic theology, that he felt must be completed with a “certain urgency”: “the task of integrating” the theologies of Bernard Lonergan and Hans Urs Von Balthasar, “and of allowing them to complement and, when necessary, even correct on another.” Doran went on to note that “if we cannot achieve this sort of integration, we may well find ourselves engaged in something similar to the Aristotelian-Augustinian disputes in the Middle Ages.”

Expressing his desire to forestall the theological disputes that may arise from these camps, he goes on to state that by showing how “Lonergan and Balthasar do not differ in a dialectical fashion, but rather are related in a way that at times provides mutual complementarity and at times reflects genetic relations that go both ways,” such conflict may be at best avoided and at worst tempered.

While this hope appears to be proving very fruitful for modern systematic theology overall, both on the levels of publishing and teaching, what is of particular interest for this project is not Doran’s proposal itself, but rather his initial justification for making it, that the complementarity between the two theologians is reminiscent of the “complementary and genetic . . . relations between Bonaventure and Aquinas.”

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5 Ibid, 569-70

need for a more convergent reading of these great medieval doctors. In a discussion on
the same topic, stating,

St. Bonaventure has no intention of devaluing the intellectual aspect so strongly emphasized by St. Thomas Aquinas . . . it seems to me that the two theories when proposed by the great teachers Thomas and Bonaventure are not opposed but complete each other. Or, let us say that they manifest the same vision but from different angles. However, as soon as the two schools became antagonistic, there was a militant emphasis on one aspect as against the other, and thus the wholeness was shattered.7

While a naïve reader may take Doran’s language of complementarity as a sign that the problem of shattered wholeness has been dealt with in the years since Häring’s initial observation, this is unfortunately not so. The false dichotomy between the Franciscan and Dominican theological schools may no longer exist at the forefront of Catholic theology; yet the fact remains that even the broadest survey of literature shows that when Bonaventure is read outside of the realm of specialists, he is rarely read on his own, almost exclusively being used alongside Aquinas.8 More importantly, in comparison to Aquinas, Bonaventure is rarely


8 I feel it is important to use the phrase Catholic as opposed to Christian theology in this context, due to the fact that the scholars of the Radical Orthodoxy movement still base a large portion of their theology on the premise that John Duns Scotus is completely opposed to Aquinas. For a very general overview of this debate one ought to consult Daniel P. Horan, OFM Postmodernity and Univocity: A Critical Account of Radical Orthodoxy and John Duns Scotus, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014). It should be noted that Horan’s book, while
used as a point of comparison with regards to the work of modern theologians. While this may not seem like a problem, I am convinced that this lack of major dialogue with Bonaventure relegates his unique theological contributions to the realm of history, thus preventing them from reaching their systematic potential. Since the publication of Doran’s paper, theological scholarship has seen much good come out of the comparison between Aquinas and Balthasar, most recently Robert Miner’s “Thomas Aquinas and Hans Urs von Balthasar: A Dialogue on Love and Charity,” published in the Autumn 2014 edition of New Blackfriars. The fruitfulness of the Thomistic contribution to both the understanding of Balthasar and the Balthasarian (re-) interpretation of Aquinas lends itself to the question of whether a (re-) interpretation of Bonaventure, in the light of a modern theologian (e.g., Lonergan), be fruitful for both theology and the Church. The answer to this question, I believe, is clearly yes. I believe that these principles can, and should be, used in order to read Bonaventure in light of something that I will argue was more important to him than his

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10 An example of this comparison can be seen in Charles Carpenter, MAP, *Theology as the Road to Holiness in St. Bonaventure*, Theological Inquiries, (New York: Paulist Press, 1999.)
theological education—his Franciscan charism. With this in mind, I would like to suggest that Bonaventure be read in the same way that Robert Sweetman proposes reading John Duns Scotus, never forgetting that he must not be read primarily as a mystic, a schoolman, an Augustinian, or even as a church doctor, but, as what he was, first and foremost, a Franciscan.¹¹ This suggestion may seem surprising, as to an outside reader Bonaventure’s corpus seems, as Frederick Bauerschmidt observes, “a commendation of Francis as the ‘sage’ who embodies the life of true wisdom.”¹² It is not, perhaps, as surprising to those who are familiar with the divisive stance on Bonaventure found within the writings of members of his own order. This divisive opinion has existed since his death, when “a vocal minority party, the ‘Spirituals,’ began expressing vehement disagreement with the directions their Order was taking.”¹³ While this will be discussed in more depth within the thesis itself, it is sufficient to point out, for the sake of this introduction, that while recent historical studies have shown that many of the works which have lead to these opinions are in fact inauthentic, and that while “Bonaventure was less decisive in the Order’s overall development than previously thought,” the fact remains that it was under Bonaventure’s term as general that many of the policies put into place by his predecessors began to hold the rule of law.¹⁴ This resulting ambiguity led

¹¹ “Univocity, Analogy, and the Mystery of Being,” 85.


¹⁴ Ibid, Kindle.
Paul Sabatier to conclude, “Bonaventure simply ‘has not understood him whose disciple he wanted and believed himself to be.’”

Even those who take a more favourable view of Bonaventure’s understanding of Franciscan spirituality, such as Ewert H. Cousins, still argue that certain “Franciscan writings” of Bonaventure, although Franciscan in spirit, clash with the simplicity and directness proposed by the Seraphic Father. Bonaventure thus appears at best as someone who, perhaps due to his theological training, could never really understand the message of the order, which he ruled, and at worst as the architect of that message’s destruction. Several prominent scholars, however, have formed a school of thought that argues against these readings by addressing two key questions. Firstly, in relation to the criticism of Bonaventure’s direction of the order during his generalate, if he did not mean to change the orientation of the order, why did he not continue the ressourcement proposed by his predecessor John of Parma? Secondly, how could Bonaventure reconcile own role as a regent magister, a venerable occupation, and in a broader sense the concept of Franciscan magistri, with his profession as a lesser brother.

These thinkers have gathered together to work out these questions in two separate projects, in order to advance this reading of Bonaventure. The first is the *Works of Saint Bonaventure* led by Robert Karris, the second is *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents Collection* led by Regis

15 Qtd in Monti, “Introduction”, Kindle.


17 The controversy surrounding John of Parma’s generalship, and its effects on Bonaventure, will be addressed in more depth in Chapter Two.
Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Meeks, and William J. Short.\textsuperscript{18} While this research can, and I argue should, be read effectively alongside Bonaventure’s writings, to show someone with a keen understanding of the spirit of Francis’ rule, there remains one piece in Bonaventure’s corpus that, I believe, is improperly understood by Karris-Armstrong et al, the \textit{Itinerarium Mentis in Deum}. Unfortunately, until this piece is properly interpreted, it will be impossible to make a truly authentic judgment regarding Bonaventure’s understanding of Francis. Although both branches of the school have very different readings of the piece, they both present inauthentic representations. The Armstrong branch of the school ignores the importance of any significant scholastic influence on the \textit{Itinerarium}, reading it solely as a work of Franciscan mysticism, while the Karris branch of the school takes the position of the theological-spiritual supplication. The problems with this school are best illustrated by Cousins when he asks why Bonaventure, who wrote so understandably in so many of his texts, chose to complicate the simple message of Francis’ spirituality within the \textit{Itinerarium}; especially since doing so could not only be seen as a rejection of both the instructions given by Francis to Anthony of Padua, concerning theological teaching in the Franciscan order, and more importantly the spirit of the \textit{Regula bullata}.\textsuperscript{19} This question, while seemingly insignificant when asked by


Cousins in 1978, during the time of the old interpretation of Bonaventure, clearly creates a massive problem when read alongside the Karris-Armstrong school’s overall position of authentic Franciscan understanding. This, then, begs one to ask, if Bonaventure truly did understand Francis in the way that new research claims, why did he structure the *Itinerarium* the way he did?

I believe this question can be answered through the use of Lonergan’s work on meaning as presented in *Method in Theology*, supplemented by sections of Doran’s *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, most notably the concept of psychic conversion. It is my hypothesis, based upon my readings of these works, that Bonaventure’s understanding of the Franciscan charism operates within the realm of interiority, and that, due to the differentiated consciousness which developed from this interiority, his presentation of this charism is able to move between a scholarly treatise, within the *Itinerarium*, to texts which rely on the tools of commonsense meaning, such as his *Legenda*. By re-reading Bonaventure through this lens, I believe that I will be able to come to a new understanding of his “Franciscan texts,” which will show that, in his actions as Minister-General, Bonaventure operated in a way that led him to produce texts in the language of his intended audience, so that his words could be “well-considered and chaste, for the instruction and edification of people.”

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Chapter 1

“Take me as your model of discipleship, for I am a true disciple:”
Methodological and Historical Concerns

1 Implications

In his discussion on the relevance of the Rule of Carmel today, Patrick McMahon notes, “it’s really only the Jesuits and the Carmelites that have a spirituality that reaches out to people beyond their own membership. I always joke that only an Augustinian is interested in Augustinian spirituality, which is unfortunate because Augustine’s spirituality is magnificent, but the fact of the matter is that people when they look to spirituality look to Ignatius or to John of the Cross, Theresa of Jesus or Thérèse of Lisieux . . . but what’s underneath the spirituality of each of them is the rule.”21 While I agree with the tenor of McMahon’s argument, I disagree with regards to his claim that a binary duopoly exists in contemporary Catholic spirituality, between the Jesuits and Carmelites. Rather, I would posit that there is a four-fold oligopoly between Jesuit, Carmelite, Monastic and Franciscan. I would also add that just as Jesuit and Carmelite spirituality seem to take their start from their orders’ foundational documents, so do the majority of writers dealing with monastic spirituality begin either with the Desert Fathers or the *Regula Benedicti.*22 Modern spiritual Franciscan

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writings, however, present a unique version of the problem McMahon identifies. Although they are widely read, they are, more often than not, misrepresentative of the rule, relying instead on a foundation that subsists in what Richard Rohr refers to as “birdbath Franciscansim.” This misconception presents Franciscanism as the manifestation of “an idealized, free, and happy self for many spiritual seekers,” a vision which undervalues Francis’ distinct love of poverty, misreads his love for nature as something rooted in eco as opposed to creation theology, and has a tendency to portray him as more of a “hippy” than a spiritual pioneer.23 Unfortunately this mentality has become so ingrained within the Franciscan spiritual tradition that even authors who claim to be opposed to the “hippy” caricature of Francis (e.g., Richard Rohr) are unable to reconcile his radical revisioning of religious life with his loyalty to the institutional church, opting instead to present him as the champion of what Rohr calls a “minority position.” This minority position, of course, has no “mention of the rule of St. Augustine, or St. Bernard, or St. Benedict,” but, rather, is presented as something designed to serve as an “alternative orthodoxy” to doctrinal-rheological based “mainstream” Catholicism.24 This position is summed up by oft quoted and never spoken phrase misattributed to Francis: “preach the gospel at all times, when necessary

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23 Richard Rohr, OFM, Eager to Love: The Alternative Way of Francis of Assisi (Cincinnati: Franciscan Media, 2014,) xv; A prime example of a portrayal of classic “birdbath Franciscanism” can be seen in Franco Zeffirelli’s 1972 film Fratello Sole, Sorella Luna, which although a brilliant film is not an accurate portrayal of either Francis’ life nor his relationship with Pope Innocent III. For an excellent example of an authentic eco-theology rooted in Francis love of creation see Pope Francis’ encyclical Laudato Si § 10-12; 84-88.

24 Eager to Love, 80-82. A prime of example of Rohr’s misunderstanding of Francis relationship with the institutional church is his use of the quotation from The Legend of Perguia as an indication that Francis was opposed to Regula Vitae when it is in fact an account of him expressing to the orders Cardinal-Protector his opinion that no current rule fits the vision that he has for his Lesser Brothers.
use words,” a saying which is not only misrepresentative of Franciscan theology, but which also comes into direct conflict with Francis’ own writings. The ninth chapter of the *Regula bullata* states:

The brothers may not preach in the diocese of any bishop when he has opposed their doing so. And let none of the brothers dare to preach in any way to the people unless he has been examined and approved by the general minister of this fraternity and the office of preacher has been conferred upon him. Moreover, I admonish and exhort those brothers that when they preach their language be well-chosen and chaste for the benefit and edification of the people, announcing to them vices and virtues, punishment and glory, with brevity, because our Lord when on earth kept his word brief.  

In this chapter, Francis clearly presents not only his desire that the brothers actively engage in the preaching of the gospel, but also his desire that they do it prudently, and carefully, modeling themselves after Christ’s example, by expounding his message to the people they meet, not silently, but in word and deed. This is the true charism of the Franciscan order, “to observe the holy gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”. Moreover, it is this understanding of Franciscanism that Bonaventure would have practiced, and which would have inspired his writings on Francis. Thus, I believe that Bonaventure, properly interpreted, offers a much more accessible and effective method of following the Franciscan charism in order to grow in holiness than the modern day “birdbath” Franciscanism. I shall present this interpretation in the following chapters. In order to do so, however, I must first lay some foundational principles for its understanding. The remainder of this chapter then shall be divided into two sections. The first shall treat the methodology proposed by Lonergan, on which this project

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25 *Regula bullata*, IX: 3.

26 Ibid I: 1.
will be based. The second will offer some historical considerations about the foundation of the mendicant movement in general, as well as the two founders of the great movements in particular. Within this discussion, I shall place a special emphasis on Francis’ life, so that within the following chapters the reader will have a phantasm of Francis that will hopefully be more in line with the man with whom Bonaventure would have been familiar than with the caricature; a man whose life’s purpose can be summed up by the positioning of his statute in front of a birdbath.

2 Methodological Background

2.1 Interpretation

It is not surprising that, with the aforementioned exception of Carpenter, those who study Lonergan’s works have not engaged with the Seraphic doctor’s theology. While Lonergan, himself was certainly aware of Bonaventure’s work, it seems that after the publication of the articles that would eventually become Verbum and Grace and Freedom, he gave the Franciscan theologian little thought. While this is unsurprising for a self-identified convert from Molinism to Thomism, it is extremely unfortunate, given that there are “many striking similarities, [and] at the same time illuminating contrasts” between the works of the two authors. It is for this reason that, like Carpenter, I propose to engage with Bonaventure via

27 One only needs to check the personal books owned by Lonergan, at the end of his life, to see that with the exception of a clean copy of Vol. II of Frederick Coplestone, SJ’s A History of Philosophy, none of them treat Bonaventure in any major way. My profound thanks to Prof. Jeremy Wilkins, Director of the Lonergan Research Institute, for allowing me access to Lonergan’s personal collection.

28 Cf. Method 163 n5; Theology as the Road to Holiness, 5.
Lonergan’s transcendental method. Unlike Carpenter, however, I intend not to use the transcendental method to ask what Bonaventure is doing when he is doing theology, but rather to pose a question of whether or not Bonaventure’s interpretation of Franciscan theology was in line with Francis’ own spiritual vision for the order. I believe the answer is yes. This question is inspired by the aforementioned specialty research, which has shown that it was Haymo of Faversham, the order’s fourth minister-general, who “more that any other single man, fixed the constitutional and social lines along which the order was to travel through the thirteenth century.”  

In order to examine this question, I shall turn to the second of Lonergan’s functional specialties, interpretation, in order that my readers, when presented with the evidence I believe I have gathered, might commit to approaching Bonaventure from this new horizon moving forward, or at the very least, while judging my thesis to be erroneous, will find it helpful in providing a dialectical tool to further their own understanding of Bonaventure.

The functional specialty of interpretation as defined by Lonergan is, most simply put, the performance of three basic sets of exegetical operations. The first is the exegetical process by which one understands a text, the second is that by which one judges the correctness of one’s understanding of the text, and the third is a statement of that judgment.  

In order to engage in the first operation, one must engage in understanding the four main aspects of a text: “the

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30 *Method*, 155.
Lonergan begins his discussion of understanding the object by noting the difference between a student and an exegete. Whereas the student reads a text in order to learn about objects they do not know, exegetes read a text in order “to know what happened to be the objects, real or imaginary, intended by the author of the text.” A proper exegete must be immersed in the language of the text, that is, both the language of writing itself, and the particular phraseology and lexicon of the time period. This knowledge serves to aid the exegete when they are examining particularly difficult passages, as it enables them to be able to evaluate all possible meanings of a phrase. An excellent example of this form of understanding the object can be seen in the way that Bonaventure’s use of the word mens is understood by readers. A beginning student, for instance, can read a translation of the Itinerarium labeled The Soul’s Journey into God and be enriched by it without realizing that the Latin for soul is not mens but anima. In the same way, a more advanced student will be enriched by the text, but will also recognize that the word soul is not a direct translation of mens but rather a dynamic equivalent. In contrast to both of these approaches, a beginning exegete will understand the Latin of Bonaventure, as well as his sources, and therefore will be able to realize that when Bonaventure uses mens, he is referring to the mens as encompassing “the [mind/] soul in its three faculties of memory, intelligence, and will, which constitute the [mind/] soul as image

31 Ibid, 155.

32 Method, 156.

33 Ibid, 156.
of God . . . in the depths of the person, the most profound dimension of man’s spiritual being;” for the sake of convenience, however, they will likely translate the word as either mind or soul throughout the text.\textsuperscript{34} Finally, an experienced exegete will be able not only to understand the true meaning of \textit{mens}, but also to translate it as either mind or soul throughout the text based on its context.\textsuperscript{35}

Lonergan ends this section by discussing the naivety that one possesses if they believe that the best course of interpretive action is to employ what he calls “the theory of the empty head,” which is his name for the school of interpretive thought that suggests that one must come to a text having dropped all preconceptions, focusing solely on the things themselves. If one does this, he informs his readers, one cannot truly interpret a text as anything more than “a series of signs.”\textsuperscript{36} In actuality, then, for the functional specialty of interpretation to work, it is better for one to have a wider range of experience, so that one can have a deeper understanding and more balanced judgment. He concludes:

> interpretation is not just a matter of looking at signs. That is imperative. But it is no less imperative that, guided by signs, one process from one’s habitual general knowledge to actual and more particular knowledge; and the greater the habitual knowledge one possess, the greater the likelihood that one will be guided by the signs themselves and not personal preferences and by guess-work.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{34} Ewert Cousins, “Introduction,” 21.

\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Method}, 21.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid, 157.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid, 157-8.
The second exegetical aspect, understanding the word, is perhaps the easiest to understand in theory, and the most difficult to put into practice. It is, simply put, the realization and understanding that when the author speaks of $P$ and the reader takes it to mean $Q$, that this mistake is the fault of the reader, and that a reevaluation of the meaning of the source is required.\(^{38}\) This re-evaluation is the “self-correcting process of learning” by which “we acquire and develop common sense” through the development of “a habitual core of insights,” which allows the aforementioned, “self-correcting process of learning” to spiral “into the meaning of the whole by using each new part to fill out and qualify and correct the understanding reached in reading early parts,” which, in turn, allows a reader to make the most accurate possible judgment of the text.\(^{39}\) It is this ability, the ability to acknowledge one’s mistake, which allows one to prove oneself to be an interpreter and not a controversialist. To provide an example, imagine that I were to refer to Bonaventure as a Minorite, using the term in the medieval sense, i.e. meaning that he did not belong to the spiritual faction of the Order of Friars Minor. A controversialist, who perhaps recognized the term Minorite as the nickname for members of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual, in the English speaking world, would no doubt fault me for implying that Bonaventure, who died in 1274, was a member of a congregation founded in 1517. An interpreter, however, would realize that, given the context, I could not possibly mean Minorite in the way in which they are familiar with it, and therefore must be referring to something else. This would cause them to look into the history of the term, thereby discovering its original meaning, and, thus, expanding their horizons for future interpretations that they may do.

\(^{38}\) Ibid, 158.

\(^{39}\) Method, 158-9.
The third exegetical aspect is, “understanding the author, himself, his nation, language, time, culture, way of life, and cast of mind.” I am not a Franciscan, and I am certainly not a 13th century Franciscan; however, if I am to understand Bonaventure properly, I must learn to think within that culture and within that time. As Lonergan notes, this is a tremendous task, but it is a key part of the enormous labour of becoming a scholar.40

The final aspect is the understanding of oneself. It is in this aspect, according to Lonergan, that one must have a radical change in oneself, a process that may demand “intellectual, moral, [and] religious conversion . . . over and above the broadening of [their] horizon.” They must do this in order to engage in the authentic tradition with which the classic texts are grounded and “the cultural tradition, the mentality, the Vorverständnis, from which they will be read, studied, [and] interpreted.” As Lonergan notes, it is at this stage when one begins the process of moving to the further functional specialties, because “if the interpreter is to know, not merely what his author meant, but also what is so, then he has to be critical not merely of his author but also of the tradition that has formed his own mind. With this step he is propelled beyond writing history to making history.”41

Once these aspects have been treated, it is up to the exegete to judge the correctness of their enterprise. One must evaluate the questions and the issues that have been raised during their exegesis and see if—by engaging in this series of interweaving questions and answers proposed by specialist research—they have moved forward into a “fuller horizon that

40 Method, 160.

41 Ibid, 162
includes a significant part of the author’s.”42 This task, the task of answering these questions, only to have new questions discovered, which Lonergan refers to as the discovery of the actual context, must continue until “one reaches a point when the overall view emerges, when other components fit into the picture in a subordinate manner, when further questions yield ever diminishing returns, when one can say just what was going forward and back it up with the convergence of multitudinous evidence.”43 This allows one to make a judgment. Once one has made said judgment, one can engage in the final exegetical operation, the statement of understanding made by the exegete qua exegete. For a discussion of this stage in the development of exegesis, and how one should proceed with it within the academy, one would do well to consult Lonergan’s text.44 For our purpose it is sufficient to say that the purpose of this operation is to state the results that one has judged to be correctly understood in a presentable form so that researchers operating in the later functional specialties may have an encounter with the text in order to understand, and properly build upon, the author's intentions.

2.2 Lonergan’s Notion of Conversion

The notion of personal conversion is a key aspect of Lonergan’s thought.45 Building upon the Johannine notion that “we love because he first loved us,” (1 Jn 4:19) as well as his extensive

42 Ibid, 163.

43 Method, 164.

44 Cf. Ibid, 167-173.

45 Lonergan’s treatment of grace, the supernatural, and its effect on conversion, as well as the notion of conversion in and of itself goes much too in depth to be summarized in a single chapter, let alone a section of one. Interested parties should consult (in chronological order)
research into the topic of grace, Lonergan came up with the notion of a threefold conversion,

intellectual, moral, and religious, to which Robert M. Doran added a fourth type, psychic, in his 1975 dissertation “Subject and Psyche.” As we shall see in the third chapter, in order to properly engage with Bonaventure’s theology via Lonergan’s transcendental method, one must have some understanding of Lonergan’s notion of conversion. Therefore, it seems appropriate, for now, to provide both a definition of conversion, as well as a brief description of each of the four types of conversion.

The notion of conversion is grounded in Joseph de Finance’s idea of the “distinction between a horizontal and a vertical exercise of freedom.” Lonergan summarizes this understanding quite proficiently when he writes, “a horizontal exercise is a decision or choice that occurs within an established horizon. A vertical exercise is the set of judgments and decisions by which we move from one horizon to another.” It is within this vertical movement that one can experience what Lonergan calls an “about-face” which, in turn, leads to a new beginning.

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46 Robert M. Doran, SJ, “Subject and Psyche.” (PhD diss. Marquette University, 1975). Doran later published the work as Subject and Psyche in 1977. The most up to date version of the work is Robert M. Doran, SJ, Subject and Psyche, 2nd Ed. Marquette Studies in Theology, Vol III, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1994.) While the notion of psychic conversion remains debated in some Lonergan communities, I see no reason to do so given that Lonergan, himself, gave it both his implicit approval, in his 1977 “Questionnaire on Philosophy: Response,” and his explicit approval, in his 1978 lecture “Reality, Myth, Symbol” where he referred to psychic conversion as an “advance,” and stated that to make up for his own deficiencies “in the realm of symbols and stories . . . I can do no better than refer the reader to Professor Doran’s current writing (Subject and Psyche).” Cf. “Questionnaire on Philosophy: A Response,” in Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980, 381; “Reality, Myth, Symbol,” 390.

47 Method, 237.

48 Ibid, 237.
within one’s life.\(^49\) This “about-face and new beginning is what is meant by a conversion.”\(^50\) Although from a causal viewpoint religious conversion is the first act of the about-face movement that leads to a new beginning, temporally speaking any of the four conversions may begin to happen at any time within a person’s life.\(^51\) It seems proper then to present the types of conversion in the way in which Lonergan did, beginning with the conversion of the intellect.

Intellectual conversion is “the radical clarification and, consequently, the elimination of an exceedingly stubborn and misleading myth . . . that knowing is like looking, that objectivity is seeing what is there to be seen.”\(^52\) Intellectual conversion breaks one of this habit and allows one, instead, to begin to know properly via engagement with the world mediated by meaning, a world known by the “external and internal experience of a cultural community, and by the continuously checked and rechecked judgments of the community. Knowing, accordingly, is not just seeing; it is experiencing, understanding, judging, and believing.”\(^53\) Ultimately, as Lonergan defines it, to be intellectually converted is to “acquire the mastery in one’s house that is to be had only when one knows precisely what one is doing when one is knowing,” and through this to be opened to “ever further clarifications and developments.”\(^54\)

\(^{49}\) Ibid, 237.

\(^{50}\) Ibid, 238.


\(^{52}\) Method, 238.

\(^{53}\) Ibid, 238.

\(^{54}\) Ibid, 240.
The next of the three initial types discussed by Lonergan is that of moral conversion. Moral conversion seems to be, for Lonergan, the process by which one “goes beyond the value, truth, to values generally. It promotes the subject from cognitional to moral self-transcendence. It sets him on a new, existential level of consciousness that in no way interferes with or weakens his devotion to truth.” He notes that while children must be “persuaded, cajoled, ordered, [or] compelled to do what is right,” the one who is morally converted opts “for the truly good, even for value against satisfaction when value and satisfaction conflict.” It is important to note, as Lonergan does, that moral conversion is not the same thing as moral perfection. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rm 3:23) and thus all must humble themselves enough “to advance and to learn” so that they may ever grow in holiness, thereby developing the habits that allow them to both decide and do what is morally praiseworthy in any given situation. The last kind of conversion to be described by Lonergan is religious conversion. He describes it quite beautifully, and quite fully, in chapter ten of *Method in Theology*. This section, though long, seems prudent to reproduce in its entirety:

> Religious conversion is being grasped by ultimate concern. It is other-worldly falling in love. It is total and permanent self-surrender without conditions, qualifications, reservations. But it is such a surrender, not as act, but as a dynamic state that is prior to and principle of subsequent acts. It is revealed in retrospect as an under-tow of existential consciousness, as a fated acceptance.

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56 Method, 240.

57 Ibid, 240. The notable exceptions to the Apostle’s statement, from a Catholic Christian point of view, are of course Jesus Christ, and, through the salvific and sanctifying merits of his life, death, and resurrection, his mother Mary.
of a vocation to holiness, as perhaps an increasing simplicity and passivity in prayer. It is interpreted differently in the context of different religions. For Christians it is God’s love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us. It is a gift of grace, and since the days of Augustine, a distinction has been drawn between operative and cooperative grace. Operative grace is the replacement of the heart of stone by a heart of flesh, a replacement beyond the horizon of the heart of stone. Cooperative grace is the heart of flesh becoming effective in good works through human freedom. Operative grace is religious conversion. Cooperative grace is the effectiveness of conversion, the gradual movement towards a full and complete transformation of the whole of one’s living and feeling, one’s thought, words, deeds, and omissions.  

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The final type of conversion is the notion of psychic conversion, proposed by Doran. Psychic conversion serves to transform “the psychic component of what Freud calls ‘the censor’ from a repressive to a constructive agency in a person’s development.” 59 In other words, psychic conversion is a process during which the distorted censors within our psyche are for whatever reason linking the images formed in our imagination to the wrong concepts. This prevents us from forming insights via the phantasms which these images could produce. During the process of psychic conversion, the censors are switched from a repressive to a constructive mode of operation, thus allowing the converted images to be associated with the proper concepts so that insights may be constructed. This also ensures that the emotions, often negative, which should be attached to repressed images, and which, by virtue of being dissociated from these images, have attached themselves to another image, in order to emerge into the consciousness, are now attached to the proper image. The censors now play a constructive role. This prevents the oversights and false insights that come from the


59 TDH, 59.
misattachment of emotions to distorted images, and allows for the healing process to occur within the damaged psyche, through God’s grace, so that the human spirit is no longer confined to “an animal habitat, fastened on survival, intent on the satisfaction of its own deprivation of the humanum” but rather is an entity which is “released from oppressive patterns . . . into the human world and indeed ultimately into the universe of being.”60 This transformation of the psychic horizon dissolves wounds that would otherwise block the self transcendence needed to move to new horizons and thus experience within oneself all of the operations that lead to the fullness of affective conversion by allowing us “the freedom to engage in the constitution of a human world.”61 At the same time, it enables “simultaneously the participation of the psyche in the operations of intentionality and the embodiment of intentionality through the mass and momentum of feeling. As the movement of consciousness ‘from below’ allows us to affirm the vertical finality of the psyche to participate in the life of the spirit, so the movement ‘from above’ allows us to affirm an orientation of the human spirit to embodiment in the constitution of the person.”62

2.3 The Realms of Meaning

As was noted above, the crux of this project consists in affirming that Bonaventure operates in the third realm of meaning, that of interiority. In order to properly grasp the concept of interiority, as is required for this project, one must have a working understanding of what Lonergan calls “the realms of meaning,” and what he refers to as “the differentiation of

60 Ibid, 62.

61 TDH, 62.

consciousness.” The discussion of this must, in turn, be prefaced by Lonergan’s definition of meaning. He defines it as a thing that is “embodied or carried in human intersubjectivity, in art, in symbols, in language, and in the lives and deeds of persons. It can be clarified by a reduction to its elements. It fulfils (sic) various functions in human living. *It opens upon quite different realms.*”

Within *Method in Theology*, Lonergan identifies four different realms, common sense, theory, interiority, and transcendent exigence. The first realm, common sense, is the realm in which our basic understandings are shaped, where our conscious decisions are affirmed, and where “we are able to meet situations as they arise, size them up by adding a few more insights to the acquired store, and so deal with them in an appropriate fashion.” An example of common sense is the decision by a fair skinned person to apply sunscreen before leaving the house on a summer’s day. The person is likely not thinking of the temperature, the complexities of the levels of the atmosphere, the different degrees of sunburn, or the carcinogenic effects that direct exposure to the sun’s radiation can have on skin that is pigmented with pheomelanin instead of eumelanin; they are thinking, based upon their prior experience, that if they apply sunscreen their skin will not burn. Some people, however, are concerned with questions such as why their skin burns, or what the permanent effects of such a burn will be on their body, and factor this into their assessment of meteorological situations. The intrusion of these questions into the common sense is an example of what Longergan refers to as systematic exigence. This intrusion leaves one with questions that common sense

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63 *Method*, 57. My emphasis.

64 *Method*, 81.
cannot answer. In order to get these answers those who can must begin to think in the realm of theory. It is within this realm that one can begin to both pose and answer questions that exist outside of the realm of common sense, such as the question “what is causing my skin to burn?”

Lonergan makes two points very clear in relation to these concepts. The first is that since the realms are interconnected, questions in the common sense realm can, and often do, lead to questions within the realm of theory (Lonergan gives the example of how the questions on virtue asked by Socrates, in Plato’s Dialogues, which were directed to the realm of common sense, inspired the thought process in Aristotle which led to his definition of what a virtue is in the Nicomachean Ethics). The second is that as long as one has an undifferentiated consciousness, the truths discerned in the realm of theory and the truths discerned in the realm of common sense will appear to be in opposition to each other. If one is willing to accept Lonergan’s definitions, one can easily see how an undifferentiated consciousness could be led to see the use of a common sense truth that is seemingly contradictory to established theories by pastors, theologians, etc. as an act of cognitive dissonance, which occurs through the acceptance of alternate accounts of truth. In order to avoid doing this, one must operate on the realm of interiority. One begins to operate in this realm by confronting three basic questions:

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65 Cf. Method, 82-83.

66 Method, 82.

67 Ibid, 84-85.
What am I doing when I am knowing? Why is doing that knowing? What do I know when I do it? With these questions one turns from the outer realms of common sense and theory to the appropriation of one’s own interiority, one’s subjectivity, one’s operations, their structure, their norms, their potentialities . . . [this] grasp provides one with the tools not only for an analysis of common sense procedures but also for the differentiation of the sciences and the construction of their methods.68

A person who operates in the realm of interiority is thus able to separate the truth of common sense and the truth of theory while acknowledging both. By operating in this realm of interiority, one can achieve self-appropriation and thus develop a differentiated consciousness, which operates “both in the realm of common sense and in one or more other realms,” thus allowing one to “[relate] different procedure to the several realms, [relate] the several realms to one another and consciously [shift] from one realm to another by consciously changing his procedures.”69

The final realm of meaning is that of transcendent exigence. This realm is caused when the gift of God’s love, which operates within the other three realms, emerges as a distinct, differentiated realm within itself. “It is the emergence that is cultivated by a life of prayer and self-denial and, when it occurs, it has a twofold effect.”70 The first effect is that of withdrawal from the realm in which one was previously operating to the “‘cloud of unknowing.’”71 This is followed by an intense purification and clarification of the notion of transcendence, which

68 Ibid, 83.

69 Method, 272; 84.

70 Ibid, 266.

71 Ibid, 266.
allows one to be fulfilled by “a radical peace, the peace that the world cannot give,” and which “bears fruit in a love of one’s neighbor that strives mightily to bring about the kingdom of God on this earth.”

Before moving on to our discussion of the origins of the mendicant movement, it is here where it seems appropriate to include two caveats regarding the aforementioned realms, prior to moving to a discussion of the final realm of meaning. The first involves the realms of common sense and theory. One must acknowledge, quite simply, that there exist multiple forms of common sense and multiple forms of theory. Different cultures, organizations, associations, and professions will invariably develop different ways of understanding both on the common sense and theory level, so that not only will different aspects of knowing make it into the shared understanding of common sense and/or theory, but in some cases certain symbols will have different meanings depending on the subset in which a particular group operates. Take for example, within the realm of common sense, the symbolism of the word “rule” within different religious communities. While all the religious hearing the phrase rule will have the same general common sense understanding of the term—as a set of guidelines—the Carmelite’s common sense will cause him or her to immediately call to mind the Regula Ordinis, composed by Albert of Avogadro, whereas a Benedictine when asked to think of “the rule” would think of no text other than the Regula Benedicti etc. The same can be said for the realm of theory. The term psychological analogy will mean one thing to a theologian crafting an argument based on Thomas’ understanding of the Trinity and a very

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72 Ibid, 266; 105.
different thing to a literary critic approaching texts through the lens of Carl Jung or Jacques Lacan.

The second caveat has to do with the term differentiated consciousness, particularly with its application to Bonaventure. In his discussion of the functional specialty of foundations, Lonergan notes that, when speaking of differentiation between realms of consciousness, in addition to the four realms of meaning one must add two more realms, that of art and that of scholarship.\textsuperscript{73} Doran later, and I would argue rightly, added ecological participation in nature, modern science, and soteriological experience to this list of realms in which one’s consciousness can function.\textsuperscript{74} The ability to differentiate between common sense and more than one of these other realms leads to what Lonergan refers to as “double, triple, fourfold, and fivefold differentiations.”\textsuperscript{75} While determining exactly what level of differentiation Bonaventure had is a significant and worthwhile scholarly project, it is beyond the scope of this study. It is enough for the purposes of this project to note that in his act of communicating the Franciscan charism, Bonaventure makes use of a differentiated consciousness between common sense and theory. It is through this lens that we shall be interpreting Bonaventure’s understanding of the Franciscan charism in the following chapters, after our discussion of the historical background.

3 The Foundation of the Friars

\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Method}, 272

\textsuperscript{74} \textit{TDH}, 531

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Method}, 275.
3.1 The Problem of Gyrovagi

By the early twelfth century, several forms of life existed within the medieval estate of those who prayed. Men in holy orders were either incardinated to a diocese as secular clerics, served in a cathedral or chapter house as canons, or lived in a monastery under a rule and an abbot, or prior. In addition to this, lay persons, both male and female, could serve as lay monks, anchorites, *donati, conversi*, or one of the various forms of ecclesiastical penitents. Although the way in which these vocations were lived out differed drastically, they all shared one thing in common. Each vocation required the person in question to commit to a specific place, and to a specific superior, in which, and under whom, they would serve God. While the idea of monks transferring from abbey to abbey, or seculars and canons being assigned to various cathedral schools, or universities, to serve as *magistri*, was generally accepted, the church frowned upon the practice of wandering holy men, not living under any rule. As early as the fifth century Benedict of Nursia spoke against them in his description of the four kinds of monks, stating:

The fourth kind of Monks are called “Gyrovagi,” or wanderers, who travel about all their lives through divers provinces, and stay for two or three days as guests, first in one monastery, then in another; they are always roving, and never settled, giving themselves up altogether to their own pleasures and to the enticements of gluttony, and are in all things worse that the Sarabites. Of their miserable way of life it is better to be silent than to speak.\(^76\)

The distaste of the institutional church for the gyrovagitic lifestyle was increased in the middle of the twelfth century by the establishment of the “popular heresies,” inspired by the passage in the Gospel of Luke where Christ instructs the seventy to “take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money—not even an extra tunic,” which soon came

\(^{76}\) Benedict of Nursia, *The Rule of St. Benedict*, 1.3.
into conflict with the church hierarchy. Although these movements seemed to start as attempts to reform Church corruption, they soon began to espouse beliefs that the Church hierarchy considered to be heretical.

The first of these heresies to become popular amongst the common people was Catharism. As F. Donald Logan observes, it is dangerous to attempt to describe the Cathar belief system in its totality, as it shifted from place to place; however, it is accurate to describe the overall tenor of the movement as dualistic and extremely focused on fasting, abstinence and total continence.\(^{77}\) Although the start date of the Cathar movement is impossible to date, modern historians accept that it began around 1143.\(^{78}\) This can be supported by the fact that the earliest references to the heresy seem to be a document discussing the seizure of professed Cathars from clerics harbouring them in 1144, and a sermon preached against an unnamed heretical movement that sounds quite similar to the Catharism by Bernard of Clairvaux in 1145.\(^{79}\) Another major sect, founded thirty years after the Cathars were the followers of the Lyonese cloth merchant Peter Waldès. Following the gospel mandate these Waldensians set out two by two, living on alms, preaching the message of Jesus Christ. This soon brought them into conflict with local ordinaries who often attempted to prevent the Waldensians from preaching in their diocese. Believing, based upon his own reading of Luke’s gospel, that the bishops had no authority to do this, Waldès appealed to Pope Alexander III, who approved

\(^{77}\) F. Donald Logan. *A History of the Church in the Middle Ages*, (London: Routledge, 2002), 204.


\(^{79}\) *A History of the Church*, 204.
their voluntary poverty at the Third Lateran Council, but attempted to place strict limits on their ability to preach. Unsurprisingly, the Waldensians ignored his orders, and in 1183 the Archbishop of Lyons excommunicated them. This led to their condemnation in 1184 by the Council of Verona, alongside the Cathars. Several Waldensians responded to this condemnation by shifting their message “from a condemnation of bad priests to the position that sacraments, including the Mass, administered by bad priests were no sacrament at all . . . In parts of Italy Waldensians, who were not priests, celebrated Mass. Some Waldensians began to deny the existence of purgatory. A line had been passed.”. 80 By the 1190’s the Waldensians were officially declared heretics within the Universal Church. 81 Thus, it is easy to see why, by the beginning of the thirteenth century, the idea of wandering preachers was held in contempt by Church authority; however, this was about to change. In the year 1204, two very different men would have two very different experiences. These experiences would lead them down paths, which though extremely different accidentally proved to be extremely similar substantially, and which would change the course of the Church forever. 82 Given the nature of this project it seems sensible to provide a greater history of Francis to lead into the discussion of the reinterpretation of Bonaventure; nevertheless, given his great involvement

80 Ibid, 211.
81 Ibid, 211.
82 N.B. It is impossible, within the confines of this project, to provide an exhaustive description of the lives of either Francis of Assisi or Dominic of Caleruega or of the foundations of their orders. For further information cf. Augustine Thompson, OP, Francis of Assisi: A New Biography, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); André Vauchez, Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint, translated by Micheal F. Cusato, OFM (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); Guy Bedouelle, OP, Saint Dominic: The Grace of the Word, translated by Mary Thomas Noble, OP, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987).
in the rise of the mendicant movements, it seems appropriate to engage first in a small
discussion on the life and ministry of the founder of the Order of Friars Preachers.

3.2 The Hound of the Lord

Domingo Félix de Guzmán was born in Caleruga, and was sent as a youth to be educated at
the University of Palencia. Dominic was ordained in 1194, for the Diocese of Osma and in
1206 was given the spiritual leadership of a group of Cistercian monks, whom Diego, the
bishop of Osma, had ordered to adopt “the simple lifestyle of the Cathars [walking] on foot,
without a retinue, from place to place in Languedoc, preaching and even debating with their
opponents.” After Diego’s death, Dominic continued this ministry in the Diocese of
Toulouse, with the permission of Bishop Folquet. It was here that the Order of Preachers
began to take shape. Innocent III confirmed the order in 1215, at the Fourth Lateran Council,
and Honorius III did so twice more, first on December 22, 1216, and then again on January
21, 1217.

At the time of the third confirmation, Honorius, at Dominic’s behest, contacted the University
of Paris “requesting that masters and students should be sent [there to study] so that they
might combat heresy with a solid intellectual foundation.” Thus Dominic was not only
responsible for the foundation of the first officially sanctioned mendicant movement within
the Catholic Church; he was also instrumental in introducing the mendicants into the culture

83 Bedouelle, Saint Dominic, 69-70; Logan, A History of the Church, 220.
84 Saint Dominic, 77.
85 Saint Dominic, 77.
of the medieval university, an innovation that we shall later see had no small effect on Bonaventure’s own life.

3.3 The Poverello of Assisi

The man who can rightly be considered with Dominic as the co-founder of mendicantism, Francesco di Pietro di Bernardone, was born in Assisi c.1181, during which time the city was a fief of the Holy Roman Emperor belonging to the Duchy of Spoleto.\(^{86}\) He was the son of a cloth merchant. Little is known about Francis’ youth prior to his conversion, but it is likely that he attended school at the hospital of San Giorgio, in order to learn the skills required to follow in his father’s footsteps.\(^{87}\) While not a member of the aristocracy, Francis would have belonged to a very well off family, and thus would have had a relatively comfortable life growing up. The earliest hagiographical traditions of Francis tell the story of a young man who, though narcissistic and prone to revelry, could also be extremely generous, and we have no reason to doubt this. It is important to note in establishing the character of Francis that he was “averse to ugliness . . . he avoided such outcasts [as the physically deformed] . . . holding his nose and running away from them,” something he could do, due to his comfortable position within society.\(^{88}\) Unfortunately for the young Francis, he was not able to enjoy this life of comfort for very long. In 1197, after the death of Emperor Henry VI, the non-noble

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\(^{86}\) Much ink has been spilt on whether, or not, Francis was initially baptized with the name Giovanni. As this, in my opinion, does not affect either his life, ministry, or the order he founded, I will not enter into it. Those interested in such things can consult Thompson, Saint Francis, 174.

\(^{87}\) Thompson, Francis of Assisi, 8.

\(^{88}\) Thompson, Francis of Assisi, 9.
upper class of Assisi decided to become a free city. They expelled the ducal guard and the aristocracy. Following this, they destroyed the Cathedral of Saint Rufino in order to show the Pope that they lacked with equal gusto the desire to join the Papal states either. The Assisian nobility fled to Perugia, and soon began a campaign to retake the city. The young Francis thus found himself occupying a role that he had likely never expected to play, a soldier. In 1203 the Assisians were defeated at the battle of Collestrada, and Francis was captured. Although Assisi attempted to gain protection from its nobles by pledging loyalty to the Papal States, several young men, including Francis, had already been captured and were forced to spend the year 1204 in Perugia as prisoners of war. During this time Francis was plagued both by physical sickness and strange dreams, which continued to haunt him after his ransom.

Francis’ early biographers attribute both the illness and dreams to God, whereas his contemporary biographer Augustine Thompson feels that the onset of the dreams was an effect of post-traumatic stress disorder, given their militaristic nature. I tend to take a middle position between the two. Although I am certain that Francis’ military experience was trying and that it may have influenced his dreams, the transformation of “the censor” from a repressive to a constructive [agent] within his personal development,” thus opening Francis up to “the emergence of the images required for that insight,” meets the criteria for psychic

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89 For a more detailed description of the conflict, as well as the situation leading to it cf. Vauchez, Francis of Assisi, 9-18.

conversion and thus can, and I would argue should, be attributed to God’s grace. Whatever the case, this experience initiated a noticeable change in Francis’s attitude. He became more generous with the poor, and more detached from the frivolities of his old life, turning instead to prayer. This led to a pilgrimage to Rome, which inspired Francis to became an ecclesiastical penitent. He did so upon his return and was stationed at the Church of San Damiano in Assisi. When Francis refused the demands of his father Bernardino that he abandon this lifestyle, his father brought him before the Bishop in order to renounce his goods. Arriving at the Bishop’s palace, Francis stripped naked and returned his clothes to Bernardino, announcing that his father in heaven would be his father now.

Following this, Francis, now fully separated from his familial ties, experienced two more profound experiences of God’s grace. The first, which Richard L. Boileau rightly describes as Francis’ moral conversion, was an experience he had upon meeting a leper. The stories surrounding this range from Francis being inspired to live amongst and minister to the lepers, for a time, after the incident, to the leper, being Christ himself, disappearing after Francis had departed from him. Although we cannot know exactly what happened in the encounter, we can know how it impacted Francis. In his Testament he writes, “what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body, and afterwards I delayed a little and left the

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91 TDH, 59-60.

Although Francis intended to spend the rest of his life as a hermit, dividing his time between prayer, and physically rebuilding churches, it would appear that God had other plans. While living as a hermit, Francis attended a Mass and heard a sermon on Matthew 10:9. This sermon triggered a shift within him, “[dismantling] and [abolishing] the horizon in which [Francis’] knowing and choosing went on and . . . [setting] up a new horizon in which the love of God [transvalued his] values and the eyes of that love [transformed his] knowing.” This new horizon inspired Francis, much as it inspired Dominic, to live as an itinerant preacher, sanctioned by the Holy See, “in obedience, in chastity, and without anything of [his] own, and to follow the teaching and footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Joining together with his companions, Francis travelled to Rome to propose the rule he had composed (the Regula non bullata) to him. Innocent, who had had disastrous experiences with orders of wandering preachers in the past, nevertheless approved the rule, without granting it a bull, and assigned Giovanni Cardinal Colonna as the order’s protector. The Franciscans were tonsured and given permission to preach, with the permission of the local bishop. Thus it was that the Lesser Brothers were, at least in Francis’ mind, officially founded. The order continued to grow in numbers and in renown. Given this factor, the order was, at least implicitly, approved in 1215 at the Lateran Council under Canon XIII. The order

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94 Cf. LM 3.1; IC 21-22; 2C, 198; Julian of Speyer Vita S. Francisci, 7.

95 Method, 106.


97 The meaning of the tonsure received by Francis and his companions remains a matter of debate. Cf. Thompson, St. Francis, 198.
gained its final approval in 1223 when Honorius granted a papal bull to their revised rule. It was at this point that the second great mendicant order, the Order of Friars Minor, was official within the eyes of the institutional church. It was around this same time that another event that would radically define the history of the order occurred. In the town of Bagnoregio, not far from Assisi, Giovanni di Fidanza, the man who, as pious tradition recounts, was renamed Bonaventure—meaning he of good fortune—upon his entrance into the Franciscan order, was born. As I have noted above, it may no longer be historically accurate to consider Bonaventure, in and of himself, to be the order’s second founder, but, as the following chapters will show, his understanding of the Franciscan charism, and his quest to communicate it, truly was, and truly still is, a good fortune not just for the Franciscan order itself, but for all who wish to use Francis’ example to enkindle the seraphic fire of God’s love within their own hearts.
Chapter 2:

“A Sentinel for the House of Israel:”
Bonaventure’s Understanding of Franciscan Life

1 A Seraphic Spark Ignited

Perhaps one of the most enduring legends in the early Franciscan corpus is the story of the meeting of Giles of Assisi and John of Parma. Following the latter’s election as Minister-General, during the General Chapter of Lyons in 1247, Giles embraced the priest stating, “well and opportunely have you come, but you have come too late.” While these words may be apocryphal, they do, perhaps, express the sentiments likely felt by Giles following John’s election. The order that Giles had entered decades earlier in Assisi seemed, at this point, to exist in name only. The steady clericalization of the order, which had begun in Francis’ own lifetime, the establishment of conventual friaries, under John Parteni and Elias, the adoption of a constitution, and the establishment of Franciscan Studia, run by Franciscan masters, at major universities, under Haymo, had led to an order which appeared to be more like the one that Dominic had envisioned than the one which Francis had founded. When one adds to this the tension that the spirituals likely felt under the generalship of Crescentius, it is no wonder that Giles seemed to have lost hope by the time John was elected. While there are no records of John’s response to Giles, we can infer from historical documents that John proved Giles at least partially wrong. John took immediate steps to reinvigorate the order, beginning with a three-year visitation of the order’s friaries, which allowed him to both personally ensure that each friary was governing itself with a spirit that was in keeping with the Rule, and

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personally correct those that weren’t.\textsuperscript{99} As John Moorman notes, John was well liked, given that “to many he appeared as the ideal of what a friar should be. . . . for John was a great preacher, whether his audience were a group of simple friars or the regent masters of the University of Paris. Everywhere he went he did his best to heal divisions.”\textsuperscript{100} It seemed that John was perhaps the perfect solution to the ongoing debate between the conventuals and the spirituals; however, in 1251, at the Chapter of Metz, he made a mistake that toppled the fragile balance he had spent five years trying to achieve. John, who had previously supported the creation of new statutes for the order, denied the request of a group of conventual leaning provincial ministers to create an entirely new constitution stating, according to the chronicler Salimbene, “we do not want any new laws, let us be content with keeping those we have.”\textsuperscript{101} This created growing resentment in the conventual faction, causing them to begin to look for a way to remove John from office. They were presented with an opportunity in 1256 when the pope condemned the writings of tenth century Cistercian abbot Joachim of Fiore, whose apocalyptic theology John subscribed too. John was quickly accused not only of holding Joachim’s apocalyptic views but also his theological positions, which were now considered heresy. In 1257 Alexander IV ordered John to resign.\textsuperscript{102} John called for a chapter in Rome to

\textsuperscript{99} Cf. \textit{History}, 112-114.

\textsuperscript{100} \textit{History}, 113.

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid, 114.

\textsuperscript{102} It must be noted that the range of scholarly opinion on just how much of a Joachimite John actually was is divided. Some believe that the charges are entirely false, while others believe that John was in fact a heretic. Since the only extant writings we have of John are his letters, and the only accounts we have of his trial are written by non-neutral parties, I have made the judgment to proceed under the most common assumption that John held the apocalyptic beliefs relating to the Age of the Holy Spirit, but not the dogmatic errors which were condemned by the Fourth Lateran Council. It remains unclear whether or not John actually
announce his resignation. It was at this chapter that, under the influence of the Spiritual guardians, it was determined that he be allowed to nominate his own successor. In response to this request, John chose Bonaventure, who at that time was serving as Regent Master of the Franciscan school at the University of Paris.

While there is no way to know for certain, textual evidence would suggest that Bonaventure was not expecting to be elected Minister-General during the 1257 General Chapter. While it was commonplace in medieval correspondence for prelates and heads of orders to first establish their unworthiness for the position, Bonaventure, particularly in his “First Encyclical Letter,” makes two statements that suggest that his surprise was genuine. The first is his reference to his “frail health,” something that Peter John Olivi, who knew Bonaventure in Paris, also comments on in his *Tractatus*.103 The second is the fact that, within the letter, Bonaventure mentions that he has concerns with the current state of the order and “had I been at the general chapter I would have addressed them more freely.”104 Had Bonaventure thought he would have succeeded John, he would have likely attended the general chapter. Still, as Bonaventure makes it clear in the same letter, he intends to take seriously the duty, which John, and the guardians, had passed onto him to, in his own words, serve as “a sentinel held to a belief in the Order of the Just during his life; however, current historical research which suggests that John was not as much of a spiritual as was previously thought makes this seem unlikely.

103 Peter John Olivi, *Tractatus de usu paupere*, 28ra; “Fraglis tamen fuit secundum corpus et forte in hoc aliquid humanum sapiens quot et ipse humiliter sicut ego ipse ad eo sepius audivi confitebatur.”

for the house of Israel.”

While this may be how Bonaventure saw himself, this position was challenged by the spirituals, in the years following his death, and by scholars such as Sabatier, Moorman, and Théophile Desbonnets. As I have made clear, I do not support this position, but rather align with an adapted version of the position advanced by the specialty research conducted by Robert J Karris et al, for the introductions to the *Works of Saint Bonaventure* collection, and by Regis J. Armstrong et al for the *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents Collection*, which readers of both will see are complementary and best summed up by the thesis proposed by Philotheus Boehner that “Bonaventure [is] the true Franciscan, who has learned from Saint Francis not only the rules and form of life, but his whole outlook, his ideal.”

The adaptation that I would make, as was noted in the introduction to the first chapter, is a re-interpretation of the way in which the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* should be understood. I feel that a re-interpretation is necessary due to the fact that both branches’ interpretations of this specific text create unnecessary dialectics with their overall reading of Bonaventure. The Karris branch does so by holding to their interpretation of the text as mystical treatise supplemented by scholastic theology, while the Armstrong branch does so

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106 Perhaps the most notable example of this is a story occurring in in which a friar named James of Massa has a vision wherein Christ, Francis, and several friars are sitting in a tree. Christ gives Francis a chalice, which he passes onto each of his brothers. John of Parma proceeds to drink from the chalice, fully, and beginning to glow, takes his place at the top of the tree. When Bonaventure receives the chalice he drinks rather sparsely and a storm arises. Bonaventure becomes transformed into a devil with long claws and teeth, and proceeds to climb to the top of the tree to attack John of Parma. At this point Christ intervenes and Bonaventure is stopped. See *Actus Beati Francisci et Sociorum Eius*, V, and *Fioretti di Santo Francesco d’Ascesi*, 48.

107 Boehner, “Introduction,” 9; cf 15. It must be noted that the specialty research that lead to Karris et al.’s insights was begun by scholars such as Boehner, and Rosalind Brooke in the late 1950’s but has only recently received the mainstream attention it deserves.
by failing to acknowledge the influence of scholastic theology on the text’s composition. This has allowed for this scholarship to avoid engaging with the questions asked by scholars such as Ewert Cousins, who hold the same position, but whose more detailed examination of it shows that this position proves to be just as troublesome as the second founder position proposed by Moorman et al. Thus it becomes clear that in order to interpret Bonaventure correctly one cannot subscribe completely to the interpretation of the Karris-Armstrong school’s position: one must supplement their interpretation of the *Itinerarium* with the opinions of other scholars in order to resolve the aforementioned tensions. In order to do this, however, one must first understand why their position on the *Itinerarium* is not compatible with their overall position. Therefore, I will begin the chapter by discussing the two questions addressed by Karris-Armstrong et al which I feel do help to create an authentic interpretation of Bonaventure; his relationship to the order he inherited from John of Parma, and his understanding of the relationship between the concept of regent master and that of lesser brother. Following this I will show how this new interpretation is challenged both by the unnecessary dialectic that the Karris-Armstrong school’s interpretations of the *Itinerarium* creates, and how the questions abstracted from Cousins’ research, the importance of which this new interpretation brings to light, show how these interpretations create an even further challenge to reaching an authentic understanding of Bonaventure’s work. The response to this challenge, in turn, shall make up the bulk of my third chapter.

2 The Myth of the Second Founder

In order to transcend the metaphorical baggage attached to the first question, what was Bonaventure’s relationship to the order he inherited from John of Parma, the answer must be
changed from the interpretation that he was one who caused many to stumble by his instruction, (cf. Mi 2.8) to the interpretation that he was, in fact, a sentinel for the house of Israel (cf Ez 33:7). In order to do this, the common, but incorrect, interpretation of Bonaventure as the second founder of the order who, through his promulgation of the Constitutions of Narbonne, transformed his brother friars from simple itinerant preachers into de facto monks must be addressed.108 Given that Bonaventure has been accused of committing this crime against the Regula for so many centuries, it is unsurprising that for so long in academic circles he has played the role of what Dominic V. Monti calls “a villain, albeit a devout one, who had [unknowingly] betrayed Francis ideals”; however, new research has caused scholars to reevaluate the context in which these claims were originally made.109 It has become necessary then to reevaluate our understanding of Bonaventure, in light of this research, and to pay serious attention to the sustainability of the new interpretations based upon their correlation with Bonaventure’s own writings.

Discussing the context in which interpretation must be done, Lonergan notes, “if the interpreter is to know, not merely what his author meant, but also what is so, then he has to be

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108 Cf. History, 148; 152-154. Surprisingly, with the exception of the writings of Angelo Clareno, whose problematic views of Bonaventure will be discussed below, Bonaventure never came under much criticism for his understanding of poverty, perhaps, as Raymond Burr suggests, due to the fact that he extensively treated the topic in Apologia Pauperum (see 24-25). Even Peter Olivi, whose radical understanding of mendicant poverty in opposition to the papal pronouncements on the issue led to censorship, acknowledged that while Bonaventure was perhaps a bit self-indulgent in the debates of poverty, he was on the side of the spiritual reform (ibid, 26). For more on the issue cf. Bonaventure, Defense of the Mendicants (Apologia pauperum). Works of St. Bonaventure, Vol. XV, edited by Robert J. Karris, OFM, translated by José de Vinck and Robert J. Karris, OFM (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute,) 2010.

109 History, 2.
critical not merely of his author but also of the tradition formed in his mind.”\textsuperscript{110} It is the inability to be critical of the Franciscan tradition of Bonaventure as second founder of the order that presents the first stumbling block to a proper understanding of his Franciscanism.

The most notable example of this misunderstanding is perhaps Moorman’s chapter on Bonaventure in \textit{A History of the Franciscan Order}, which speaks of “the codification of the statues of the Order” at Narbonne—something that he had previously noted John of Parma was loath to do—and concludes by noting that “the typical friar was no longer a wandering evangelist . . . but a member of a religious house. . . . [Moorman notes that,] it is, therefore, not without reason that [Bonaventure] has been called ‘the second founder of the Order.’”\textsuperscript{111} However, new research, done by historians since Moorman, has shown that the majority of constitutions were actually established during “a series of chapters between 1239 and 1242 called by contemporary chroniclers the ‘reformation’ of the order.”\textsuperscript{112} Given that the original Latin in which these chroniclers wrote used the word \textit{reformatio}, which takes its root from \textit{reformare}, it is clear that Franciscan’s prior to Bonaventure had noted a change in the order, since its initial foundation. The likely response to this by those trapped within the mythos of the second foundation would be that while the text must indeed be read this way, the existence of a prior reformation does not negate the fact that the sources composed

\textsuperscript{110} \textit{Method}, 162.

\textsuperscript{111} \textit{History}, 147; 154.

immediately after Bonaventure’s death, by writers such as Angelo Clareno, present him as one who undid the *ressourcement* based reforms of Haymo’s reformation by John, and then proceeded to recodify Haymo’s reformation. ¹¹³ Unfortunately for those who hold this position, this counter-argument fails to hold up to exegetical criticism, in so far as it both represents an unauthentic interpretation of John and contradicts more contemporary accounts of Bonaventure written by members of the spiritual faction.

In their quest to reform the order as they saw fit, the spirituals needed someone to serve as a counter-point to Bonaventure, a hero for the spiritual movement, and that lot soon fell to John of Parma. John soon became “hailed as archetype by all later Spirituals; [for them] he was the first and last of his race to hold supreme power in the Order.” ¹¹⁴ While this reading of John was certainly common amongst early 20th scholarship, it was contested in the second half of the century by Rosalind Brooke who, based upon her reading of both contemporary Franciscan sources, argued that it did not represent an authentic historical person but, rather, is based upon the former tradition of reading medieval sources as history instead of reading them in what Augustine Thompson calls a “consistently, sometimes ruthlessly, critical manner.” ¹¹⁵ Brooks notes that, “it is dangerous to draw a preconceived picture of John as a Spiritual and explain away anything that does not fit in as done without his knowledge or


against his will,” given that his contemporaries explicitly mention his commitment to the theological education of the friars, his desire for the order to be granted the conventual rights given to monasteries and the lengths he went to ensure that these rights were restored upon their revocation by Innocent IV.\textsuperscript{116} It is clear from these examples that the portrait painted by the later spiritual writers is largely fictitious. In reality John did just as much, if not more than Bonaventure to make sure that Haymo’s reformations were accepted, and ratified, by the eyes of the institutional church. Based on this evidence, one must acknowledge that John and Bonaventure’s visions for the order were far from contradictory. As David Burr observes, while “undoubtedly policy changed somewhat under Bonaventure, since he was a different person and came to power in a much different situation . . . the fundamental continuities [between him and John of Parma] are striking.”\textsuperscript{117}

As Lonergan expresses in \textit{Method in Theology}, interpretations lead to further relevant questions. In this case the question that must be asked is: if the purpose of the \textit{Constitutions of Narbonne} was not to codify Bonaventure’s changes to the order he inherited from John of Parma, what was it?\textsuperscript{118} The answer to this is simple. It was Bonaventure’s attempt to bring the new duties that the friars were facing within their ministries in line with Francis \textit{Regula bullata}, in order to ensure the spirit of the order’s founder was not lost. As he notes in his \textit{Letter in Response to Three Questions}, Bonaventure was drawn to the order because of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{117} \textit{Olivi,} 26.
\item \textsuperscript{118} Cf. \textit{Method,} 162-165.
\end{itemize}
simplicity of its beginnings, which he compared to the early church “which began first with simple fisherman and afterwards developed to include the most illustrious and learned doctors.” Bonaventure follows this comment immediately by addressing what these learned people must do to succeed within the order, making it abundantly clear that they “should become fools so that you might become wise [1 Cor 3:18].” By this Bonaventure is alluding to the fact that just as all the actions done by these illustrious doctors must be tempered with the “word of the cross,” so too must the way in which the friars live their lives “encompass the very substance of the perfection and purity of the rule they have vowed to keep.” While the date of the letter assures us that Bonaventure developed this understanding of Franciscan life as a magister, the comparisons done between The Constitutions of Narbonne and Haymo’s Pre-Narbonne constitutions by Cesare Cenci show that upon being elected to the generalate he immediately strove to turn his theory into something practical. The Constitutions of Narbonne, as Monti observes, on behalf of the Karris-Armstrong school, is “unlike its predecessor, uniquely Franciscan . . . [it is indeed] a

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120 In addition to using this passage to make his point, Bonaventure is relying on a common medieval rhetorical device in which he is appealing to the trained memory of his reader. Bonaventure knows that given the context and the use of the world foolishness his reader will think of the passage in 1 Cr 1:23 wherein Paul describes Christ’s message as “a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to Gentiles.” Bonaventure’s implication of course is that since the Regula bullata is “to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ” (Regula bullata I:1) it is a stumbling block to those who do no understand it, in this case the Dominican magister’s critiquing it to the Young Master. For more information of the use of this rhetorical device see Gilles M. Mongeau, SJ, “The Spiritual Pedagogy of the Summa theologiae,” Nova et Vetera, English Edition, 2:1 (2004): 94-95; For a further treatment of the issue Mongeau recommends Mary Carruthers, The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature. 2nd Edition. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
systematic application of the values of the Order’s foundational document in concrete terms for their current situation.”^121 The Constitutions, then, can, and should, still be seen as a decisive moment in the history of the Franciscan order; however, it must not be for the reasons that Moorman proposes given that they were not an attempt to redefine the order Francis had founded as something which he himself would not recognize. Rather, the Constitutions were an attempt by Bonaventure to make sure that the ever-developing order did not lose sight of the teachings of Saint Francis, whom he believed was the “model of discipleship,” whose rule was “received from the Lord. As he himself testifies” and which “it pleased God in his goodness to affix his own seal [the stigmata] to” in order to show that “the doctrine and Rule of Saint Francis are a most perfect way to reach eternal life.”^122

3 Bonaventure and Theology

In order to discuss Bonaventure’s views on theology, one must turn to Francis’ own writings in order to reinterpret the common misconception that he was opposed to theological learning. The truth is exactly the opposite. In 1224, a year after the promulgation of the Regula, Francis addressed the issue in the friars’ theological education in a letter to Anthony of Padua, the former Augustinian Magister who had joined the order. Francis told him, “it pleases me that you teach sacred theology to the brothers, so long as—in the words of the

^121 Dominic V. Monti, OFM, “Introduction to the Constitutions of Narbonne” in Writings Concerning the Franciscan Order, 74.

Rule—you “do not extinguish the Spirit of prayer and devotion” with this kind of study.\textsuperscript{123} This clearly shows that he was not only unopposed to his friars learning theology, but that through his instruction to Anthony to make sure that the “spirit of prayer and devotion” as understood by the Franciscan order remains following theological education, he was laying the groundwork for a distinct theological tradition that although clearly connected to the dominant scholastic school of neo-Augustinian thought was also rooted in the person, spirituality, and, I would argue, theological insights offered to the order by Francis and the \textit{Regula}.\textsuperscript{124}

This was certainly the understanding of theology held by Bonaventure. In his \textit{Prologue to the Constitutions of Narbonne}, Bonaventure makes it clear that, for a minor friar, the “\textit{Rule we have vowed to keep}” is “the very substance of perfection and purity.”\textsuperscript{125} In the same way, he states in his “First Encyclical” that the \textit{Regula} is of the utmost importance for friars since “if we do not observe it, we cannot be saved,” and in his “Second Encyclical” that the most important duty of a guardian is to make sure that “the brothers in your care dedicate themselves to prayer; at the same time entreat and even compel them to observe sincerely the


\textsuperscript{125} Bonaventure, “The Constitutions of Narbonne,” in \textit{Writings Concerning the Franciscan Order}, Kindle.
Rule they have promised to keep. The *Regula* was of the utmost importance for Bonaventure and affected the way in which he interpreted everything. It should be no surprise then that theology, for Bonaventure, while a noble pursuit, in and of itself, serves one purpose within the Franciscan order, to help the friars achieve the life of spiritual perfection called for by the *Regula bullata*. In fact, as Monti notes even Bonaventure’s clearest opinion of what a theologian should be, which is found in his *Letter to a Young Master*, is first and foremost a series of “clarifications regarding the Franciscan rule” and its relation to theology. The importance of Bonaventure’s opinion on the relation of the *Regula* and Franciscan theology is heightened, according to Monti, by the fact that recent evidence suggests that Hugh of Digne, the “father of the Spirituals” made extensive use of Bonaventure’s open letter in his attempt to “the scattered comments of recognized authorities on various portions of the rule into one.” This is important, as Monti notes, due to the fact that “this would indicate that Bonaventure’s ‘open letter’ quickly attained quasi-authoritative status in the Order,” both amongst the conventuals and the spirituals. Although I am inclined to agree with the argument put forward by the Karris-Armstrong school, as Monti notes, the evidence, although compelling, is not strong enough to make a definitive statement. The evidence does confirm, however, that during this time several *magistri*, from both of the Franciscan


128 Ibid, Kindle; Ibid, fn9, Kindle.

129 Ibid, Kindle.

130 Cf. Ibid, fn9.
schools of thought, were explicating the *Regula*, and within these documents it was clear that they felt the *Regula* was not incompatible with, and could even be served by, the study of theology.

The first way in which Bonaventure ties the study of theology to the service of the *Regula* within the “Letter in Response to Three Questions” where he ties study of theology by some into the duty of the friars to serve as preachers, in response to the Young Master’s condemnation of “the brothers who are masters and those who study philosophy[,] though our Rule states that ‘those who are illiterate should not be eager to learn.’”¹³¹ Bonaventure replies by making it clear that “the Rule states in no uncertain terms that the brothers have the right and duty of preaching,” and that the friars are “not to preach fables but the Divine Word, which they cannot know unless they read.”¹³² Bonaventure then proceeds to note that due to this “it is totally in harmony with the perfection of the Rule for them to have books, just as it is for them to preach.”¹³³ Bonaventure then notes that in the same way that if the brothers must have access to “missals for celebrating Mass and breviaries for reciting the Hours, then it is not detrimental to have books and Bibles for preaching the divine Word.”¹³⁴ By distinguishing between books and bibles, Bonaventure explicitly notes that the reading of theological texts is not contradictory to the *Regula* as it allows the friars to continue to reflect on the Gospel which they have been taught, and share it with those they have been tasked to

¹³¹ Ibid, §1.


preach to. Thus the *studium* education being received by friars has nothing to do with an eagerness to learn which would contradict the humility of embracing God in the state in which God created a person, but rather a practical tool in order to help them fulfill the duties to which the *Regula* has bound them.

While this addresses the apparent objection to the average friar’s exposure to theology, it does not explain the necessity for the “intellectual” friars who become *magistri*. Bonaventure addresses this objection near the end of the letter, when he explicitly states his position that Franciscans are the most qualified to teach the gospel to fellow friars by asking rhetorically who “are better fit to teach the Gospel than those who profess and observe it?”\(^{135}\)

He supports this by stating the example of Alexander of Hales, the secular *magister* turned Franciscan, asking “Who in their right mind would say that our master, Brother Alexander should have preached and taught on the text ‘blessed are the poor in spirit’ when he was rich, and afterwards when he made himself poor, ought to have kept silent?”\(^{136}\) Through the use of these rhetorical devices, Bonaventure is not only setting up his reader to have what will appear to be a spontaneous insight—which of course ties together his discussion of preaching with his discussion of the need for bibles, and liturgical books—he is also triggering his reader’s trained memory to recall the first chapter of the *Regula bullata*. By forcing him to recall this passage and to relate it to his discussion of the Gospel, preaching, and teaching, Bonaventure no doubt realized that the young master, being familiar with a *Magister*’s threefold duty, would begin to look for examples preaching within the *Regula*, and would,

\(^{135}\) “Letter in Response to Three Questions,”, §11.

\(^{136}\) Ibid, §11.
thus, immediately think of the ninth chapter, which covers the duties of a preacher, duties which, as I have already discussed, required a *studium* training, especially by Bonaventure’s time. Given that the *Regula* was so central to Franciscan life, it would become clear to the Young Master, following Bonaventure’s arguments based upon the way in which they both thought, that a *studium magister* would therefore be required to have knowledge of the rule in order to teach Franciscans. This of course would make it necessary for the *studium’s magister* to be a Franciscan himself. Following this logic, one can easily come to the conclusion that the Franciscan regent masters at the universities who educated the *studium magistri* must also be Franciscan, since their primary purpose was ultimately not to seek academic success, but to aid in the training of those friars who had been given the task, by their superiors, to teach the majority of the friars to preach. Bonaventure notes this by stating that ultimately the threefold task of the *magister* is nothing more than a type of work, the grace of which the Lord “gives to a few friars,” and must be viewed as a “duty or office,” which one undertakes for the good of the order, to make sure that one’s brother friars can be educated properly in the Franciscan way of life. In regards to this, Bonaventure states that “surely, it is right that the brothers, like clean animals should learn the divine words and chew them over. And if they are able to supply themselves with teachers, who would be so foolish as to say that the [Gospel] doctrine which befits them to observe and teach they must like beggars get from those who do not carry it out.”\[137\] He then assures the young master, and, if this is as the Karris-Armstrong school suggests an open letter, reminds his fellow friars that “all the ambition and pretentiousness associated with this title of ‘master’ must be condemned and in

\[137\] Cf. “Letter in Response to Three Questions,”, §11.
no way sought after, but that the duty of office must indeed be assumed."\(^{138}\) Bonaventure notes that “I therefore condemn, as you do, any ostentation associated with the office of master, but I commend the office itself. Yes, I condemn the pretentious brother and maintain that he is entirely unworthy of the teaching office; but I praise the studious one, since I believe that the authority to teach the Gospel of Christ belongs to him more than anyone else.”\(^{139}\) In fact it is “the one who scorns such things” out of devotion to the duty to which Christ has called him who ought “to be esteemed all the more” in the order.\(^{140}\) Bonaventure concludes by noting that there is in fact a place for magistri within the order, for “the Church itself, which began first with simple fisherman and afterwards developed to include the most illustrious and learned doctors. You find the same thing in the Order of St. Francis.”\(^{141}\) The implication here of course is that just as theology developed to be done as a service to the Church and must be secondary to the faith which was shown by the Apostles, so too must Franciscan theology be secondary to the *Regula bullata* and the spirit of Francis that it represents.

4 The Next Question

As one can see from the interpretation of the research, Bonaventure shows in his own words that he has both an extensive knowledge the *Regula bullata* and its pivotal role in the surrounding Franciscan tradition. In like manner, he goes to great lengths to maintain his

\(^{138}\) “Letter in Response to Three Questions,”, §11.

\(^{139}\) Ibid, §11.

\(^{140}\) “Letter in Response to Three Questions,”, §11.

\(^{141}\) Ibid, §11.
continuity with it, a position which, on the surface, appears also to be held by the treatment of the *Itinerarium* in the introductions to *The Works of Bonaventure* and *Such is the Power of Love*, the offprint of *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents* containing Bonaventure’s writings. Armstrong et al’s argument that “Francis’s mystical experience was not only the goal of his vocation, but the road to it,” seems to tie in perfectly with Bonaventure’s interpretation of the stigmata as God’s seal upon the *Regula*, as does the statement from Boehner, representing that Karris school, that “the Seraphic Doctor, Saint Bonaventure, follows, in his *Itinerarium in Mentis in Deum*, the model of his Master and Father in religion.”

This is because neither one of the positions we are now discussing is a completely mistaken reading of the *Itinerarium*. Rather, like the objections found in Thomas’ *Summa Theologiae*, they are mostly right; however, each is missing an important point, which must be identified and brought to light. The point missing in the Armstrong et al position is clear enough upon proper critical examination. Armstrong et al, while acknowledging that the treatise is written for Franciscans, fail to mention that it has a very specific audience within the order, what Boehner dubs the “intellectual Franciscan” i.e. the *magistri*, the bachelors and the schoolmen studying for these degrees, and that the fact that it is written for this audience affects the way in which it is composed. Those doing a critical reading of the text should easily recognize this oversight; therefore, it merits no further discussion. The discussion of Karris et al’s interpretation is more complicated, but ultimately rests in the lack of critical engagement with other scholarly sources. Karris, and his colleagues, in their attempt to provide the definitive introductions to Bonaventure’s text, did not see fit to supplement Boehner’s classic 1956

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introduction with a scholion discussing modern Bonaventure scholarship, thus making
Boehner’s position, that Bonaventure chose to supplement the teachings of Francis with
theology in a way that forced him to abandon Francis in letter, but not in spirit, this branch of
the school’s official position on the *Itinerarium*.\(^{144}\) One familiar with the writings of Francis
can see why the Karris branch of the Karris-Armstrong school is willing to accept this as their
position, given that it can be supported by Francis’ admonition to the friars to remember that
“those religious are put to death by the letter who are not willing to follow the spirit of the
divine letter but, instead, wish only to know the words and to interpret them for others.”\(^{145}\)
Therefore one can see how for the Karris school this position still has merit. Still one must
acknowledge that the position has certainly been expanded upon in the time since the initial
composition of Boehner’s essay, most notably by Ewert Cousins in the introduction to his
1978 edition of the text. Had Karris et al engaged with this text, they would have become
aware of Cousin’s argument that “Bonaventure’s approach presupposes the speculative
tradition of Christian theology” in “contrast to Francis’s simple directness.”\(^{146}\) While this fact
does not pose a problem to Cousins, who sees Bonaventure as someone who supplements his
Franciscan mysticism with theology, it creates one for those wishing to interpret
Bonaventure’s approach to theology as something ultimately at the service of the *Regula*,
given that it creates more questions than it does answers. This begs the question as to why
Bonaventure would overly complicate Francis’s own teachings, which he saw as the way to

\(^{144}\) Cf. Ibid, 18.

\(^{145}\) Francis of Assisi, *The Admonitions*, VII; while this admonition refers directly to sacred
scripture, Francis’ argument when read in its totality is transferable.

\(^{146}\) Cousins, “Introduction,” 29.
perfection, with abstract speculative theology, especially if the goal of the *Itinerarium* is to reach the level of mystical union that Francis did. Would it not have been easier to simply lay out the plan of the *Itinerarium* using Francis’ own words and teachings, as opposed to using the very doctrine and studious readings that Bonaventure warns against at the *Itinerarium*’s end? If this is ultimately the goal of the mystical union, following the path of Francis, how can we accept, as Boehner, and by extension Karris et al do, that Bonaventure is truly following the spirit of Francis, given that he is forcing others to engage in such a complex theological exercise only to encourage them to abandon it upon reaching a certain stage of the process. Thus we see that by failing to note Cousin’s extension of the theory that they claim as their own, and by virtue of this failing to address the questions it raises, the members of the Karris branch create more questions than answers through the application of their hermeneutical key to the *Itinerarium*.

When forced to address these questions, the ultimate answer provided by both Boehner and Cousins, to lead others to Christ, is correct; still, one must remember that Bonaventure does not see his *Itinerarium* but rather the *Regula* as the surest way of doing this. Given this information, one must look at the questions posed above and ask the further relevant question “was the *Itinerarium* either necessary or useful for the Franciscan order, during Bonaventure’s life, or did it simply serve as a complication.” I believe that the answer is that the *Itinerarium* is necessary and useful for the Franciscan order, but in order to fully appreciate these characteristics one must interpret it through the proper hermeneutical key, something that has not yet been done. I believe that this key is Lonergan’s general empirical method. As I shall show in the next chapter, by interpreting Bonaventure through the lens of
interiority one will be able to see that the *Itinerarium* not only aligns perfectly with the parts of the Karris-Armstrong school’s interpretation that I believe to be productive to a genuine understanding of Bonaventure’s intentions but completes the understanding of his Franciscan charism in such a way that it allows one’s interpretation to transcend to a new horizon.
Chapter 3

“We May Say With Philip:”
Reading Bonaventure’s System

1. Bonaventure’s Inspiration

In his first encyclical letter Bonaventure bemoans that due to a lack of observance of “the Rule we have vowed” there were “dangers still threatening our Order, the wounds being inflicted on the consciences of many brothers.” Bonaventure makes it clear at the end of the letter that he intends to eliminate what he sees as sinful practices within the order so that the friars may live under the *Regula* with a common understanding both of who their seraphic father is and how they are to build upon the foundations which he laid in order to imitate the union that he had with Christ, which Bonaventure notes is represented perfectly in the life of Francis who “would never have dared to teach or write down other than what he received from the Lord . . . so Christ, having recognized this teaching of Saint Francis as his own affixed the seal of his stigmata to his body, and thereby irrevocably confirmed his teaching.” Bonaventure understood that the common understanding must then be based not only on the *Regula* given to the friars by Francis but also on his life. Fortunately for him, John of Parma and the ministers had been of like mind at the Chapter of Rome, which ordered “that one good legend of blessed Francis be compiled from those already in existence,” and invited Bonaventure to do so. This biography, the *Legenda Maior*. is extremely important to our

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147 “First Encyclical Letter,” Kindle.

148 Dominic V. Monti, “Introduction to ‘The Statues of the Constitutions of Narbonne’” in *Writings Concerning the Franciscan Order*, FN 2, Kindle. Cf. for an in depth discussion on the ambiguous identity of the chapter at which this decree was issued.
understanding of the *Itinerarium*, as it is not only the starting point of the system of understanding developed by Bonaventure, in which the *Itinerarium* plays a key part, but it is through the research for this biography that Bonaventure found the occasion to write the *Itinerarium*.

The *Legenda Maior* may be considered by modern scholars to be a great work of spiritual theology, but this does not change that fact that it is written for an audience with a common sense understanding of Franciscan spirituality, namely studium educated friars.

Bonaventure’s presentation of Francis’ life is very clearly designed to lead the friars to holiness through an imitation of Francis in an “immediate, concrete, and particular way.”

Bonaventure does this, as he notes in the introduction, by maintaining “a more thematic order, relating to the same theme events that happened as different times, and to different themes events that happened at the same time, as seems appropriate” before concluding the *Legenda Maior* with the most important chapter “his sacred stigmata.” Thus Bonaventure lays out in a simple way the wisdom that can be gleaned from the life of Francis, in the easiest way possible, so that these friars who operate primarily in the realm of common sense may easily understand and put this wisdom into practice in their daily lives and ministries, and through the imitation of Francis they may learn from him and be inspired by him who “set Christ as a seal upon his heart, as a seal upon his arm,” and may reach the highest point of their spiritual journey where they too may achieve union with Christ crucified “internally

\[149\] Cf. *Method*, 303.

\[150\] *LM*, Pr.4
in their hearts” so that they might experience the love described by Hugh of Saint Victor and attributed by Bonaventure to Francis “that transforms the lover into the Beloved.”\textsuperscript{151}

At this point one may be asking how this relates to the \textit{Itinerarium}, and, again, why if a document such as the \textit{Legenda Maior} exists the \textit{Itinerarium} is necessary. The answer to the first question can be found within the research done by Monti for the Karris et al \textit{Works of St. Bonaventure}. As Monti notes in his introduction to the “Statutes Issued by the Chapter of Narbonne,” despite the fact that “virtually all modern studies state that the Chapter of Narbonne commissioned Bonaventure to write a new legend of St. Francis . . . no such decree is found among the acts of this chapter. It seems rather to have emanated from the Chapter of Rome in 1257 . . . and that the composition of the work was indeed a painstaking process which occupied him for several years.”\textsuperscript{152} As Monti observes in the footnote to this argument, tradition states that the \textit{Legenda Maior} and its companion the \textit{Legenda Minor} were completed in 1261.\textsuperscript{153} Monti supports this claim by citing that passage in “The Letter to the Abbess and Sisters of the Monastery of St. Clare of Assisi” in which Bonaventure states “My dear daughters in the Lord, when recently I learned from our dearest brother Leo, one time companion of our Holy Father [etc.],” which he argues shows that Bonaventure had already begun visiting the companions of Francis, to research his biography, in 1259, a year prior to

\textsuperscript{151} cf. \textit{The Morning Sermon on Saint Francis}, 1255, 516; 513; \textit{LM} 1:6.

\textsuperscript{152} Dominic V. Monti, OFM, “Introduction to ‘The Statutes of the Constitutions of Narbonne’” in \textit{Writings Concerning the Franciscan Order}, Kindle.

\textsuperscript{153} Ibid, FN 2, Kindle.
the Chapter at Narbonne. I argue that similar internal textual evidence in the *Itinerarium* can further substantiate Monti’s claim, as well as show that at the time of its composition Bonaventure was engaged in thinking about a process by which the Friars could learn to imitate Francis in a common way, thus drawing them closer to the spirituality of the *Regula*, and therefore closer to God. Bonaventure writes in the prologue of the *Itinerarium*, “it happened around the time of the thirty-third anniversary of the death of the saint that I was moved by divine inspiration and withdrew to Mount Alverna since it was a place of quiet.” While I am not questioning the spiritual motivation of Bonaventure’s retreat to Mount Alverna, I do think it is important to note that the year of his retreat 1259, a time when he is believed to have resided in Paris, is the same year in which he mentions in his letter to the Poor Clares his visit to Brother Leo, who is traditionally believed to have lived in the Portiuncula, an eight hour walk from Mount Alverna, following Francis’ death. This shows that at the time of his realization that “the vision of the winged Seraph in the form of the Crucified . . . pointed not only to the uplifting of our father himself in contemplation but also to the road by which one might arrive at this experience,” Bonaventure was thinking about the *Legenda Maior*. Based on this, I propose that this insight influenced its composition as much as it did that of the *Itinerarium*. Bonaventure makes this clear at the end of his chapter on the stigmata when, while addressing Francis himself, Bonaventure states “Behold, you

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156 *Itinerarium*, Pr:2.
have arrived with seven apparitions of the cross of Christ wondrously apparent and visible in you and about you following an order of time like six steps leading to the seventh where you finally found rest.”¹⁵⁷ This clearly corresponds with Bonaventure’s description of his intention for the Itinerarium that “those six wings can well be understood as symbols of the six levels of uplifting illuminations through which the soul is prepared, as it were by certain stages or steps, to pass over to peace through the ecstatic rapture of Christian wisdom.”¹⁵⁸

When one reads the two texts this way, it becomes clear that the only way to answer the second question is to apply Lonergan’s general empirical method. When this is applied, one can clearly see that although they have the same staring point, one’s fallen, Franciscan self, the same ending point, union with God through the crucified Christ, and the same guide, Francis of Assisi (as presented by Bonaventure,) they operate on different levels of consciousness. The Legenda Maior on the level of common sense and the Itinerarium on the level of theory. The reason behind this is simple. As someone operating on the realm of interiority, Bonaventure is able to relate to both the studium educated friars who, while having some experience in the realm of theory, operate, by virtue of their ministry to the laity, in the realm of common sense, and the university educated friars and studium magistri, who operate primarily in the realm of theory. I will attempt to prove this hypothesis in the following section, by showing how within these two texts Bonaventure communicates his systematic understanding of how Francis’ example can lead someone to union with God through Christ, on their respective levels, by organizing his triple way through the terms and relations obtained in Lonergan-Doran’s discussion of conversion. Thus this chapter will show

¹⁵⁷ _LM_ XII:10.

¹⁵⁸ _Itinerarium_, Pr: 3.
that when one reads Bonaventure’s texts as spiritual writings, with the awareness that the
system he has designed, to allow friars to imitate Christ, through the example of Francis, is
the system of a man who is operating on the level of meaning that Lonergan refers to as
human interiority, one will easily be able relate the theological project that he is engaging in
in both the *Itinerarium* and the *Legenda Maior*, and the system which it relies on, to the
dynamic set of terms of relations defined by the four basic conversions. By using the four
basic conversions as a method of describing what is being accomplished within the person as
they follow the program set out by these texts, one should be able to easily notice the
presence of an overall system, which is being transposed to the language of common sense
within the *Legenda Maior*, and theory within the *Itinerarium*. With this understanding, one
will then be able to appreciate that Bonaventure has neither to abandoned the spirit of
Franciscan spirituality nor the letter of the *Regula bullata* in his efforts to provide a uniform
way for the friars to be united with Christ. Rather, he has followed both the spirit and the
letter of the rule through his actions by ensuring that all members of the order have access to
a guide that they would acknowledge to be “well considered and chaste for the benefit and
edification of the people”.159

2. Bonaventure’s System

2.1 Bonaventure’s System: The Triple Way

In his introduction to the *Itinerarium* Cousins accurately notes that the text must be
considered to be “a type of *summa* [of spirituality,] comparable in its own sphere to the

159 *Regula bullata*, IX
Summa theologiae of Thomas Aquinas, for he draws together into a comprehensive synthesis major strands of Christian spirituality.”¹⁶⁰ I acknowledge this not because I wish to engage in a source study of the Itinerarium in order to prove Bonaventure’s competency in the realm of theory; rather, because I wish to draw attention to the fact that both this work and the Legenda Maior are spiritual writings. As such, when used properly, they will engage not just the speculative intellect, but also by the practical intellect in order to be used as spiritual exercises designed to help the reader fulfill the first principle of the Regula by allowing them to “pass over with the crucified Christ from this world to the Father.”¹⁶¹ This union through which “we may say with Philip: It is enough for us” cannot, however, be achieved simply through one’s desire, due to the effects of the fall which have disordered one’s affections. In order to achieve it, then, one must engage in a system of spiritual exercises. Bonaventure selects as the basis for his spiritual exercise the medieval system of de triplici via, whereby union with God is achieved through a process of descent and ascent, which both begins and ends with Christ, who is the beginning and the end, “the way and the door . . . the ladder and the vehicle” of this exercise.”¹⁶² This process involves three distinct ways, which Bonaventure calls the purgative way, the illuminative way, and the way of perfection. Each of these stages are attained through a “threefold goal, namely: reading and meditation, praying, and contemplating.”¹⁶³ Although the stages have the same threefold process, they

each lead to a different aspect of communion with God. “Purgation leads to peace, Illumination to truth, Perfection to charity.”

Bonaventure also notes these ways must correspond to the threefold way in which “Sacred Scripture should represent in itself traces of the Trinity . . . namely moral, allegorical, and anagogical.” Thus the acts exist in a hierarchy of “purgation, illumination, and perfection.” It must be noted that Bonaventure’s understanding of de triplica via, which he inherited from Pseudo-Dionysius, developed over the course of his theological career, before taking its final shape in De triplici via: Incendium Amoris, which was written after both the Itinerarium and the Legenda Maior. As Zachary Hayes notes, by the time Bonaventure wrote De triplici via his understanding of the concept of hierarchy had changed from “the static model of Pseudo-Dionysius into an extremely dynamic model.” It is also important to note that in addition to being dynamic Bonaventure’s system is sublative. That is that to say that the effects of the first stage, purgative meditation, do not end when one reaches illuminative meditation, and/or purgative prayer, but are assumed into and deepened by the next stage.

As will be shown below, this dynamic model is also found within the Itinerarium, in a somewhat different manner. Bonaventure begins the Itinerarium with purgation, and follows

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164 DTV, Pr.1

165 Ibid, Pr.1. Cf. fn12 in which Coughlin notes the extensive use of this model by Bonaventure throughout both his scholastic and mystical theologies.

166 Ibid. Pr.1.

it with simultaneous illumination, meditative and prayerful perfection before ending with contemplative perfection. The *Legenda Maior*, in turn, while still much more static than *De triplici via*, does include certain instances that show that Bonaventure is beginning to see all three activities as dynamic order. Notable examples of this include Francis’ realization that he must be naked at the time of his death in order to combat his worldly pride (an act of purgation) after his stigmata (a sign of the achievement of perfection), or simultaneously such as Francis’ desire, in chapter nine, to both preach to the Muslims (a sign of illumination) and to suffer martyrdom at their hands (a sign of perfection).

While the next section will provide a discussion of Bonaventure’s overall method of what goes on within a person during spiritual exercises using the language of *De triplici via*, due to the fact that “it is not difficult to place the *Itinerarium* [and I will add the *Legenda Maior*] within the system of mysticism that we find developed in the *De Triplici Via*,” it must be understood these texts represent a form of the system that is not as developed. Therefore, it is important to note that while the following section will employ Bonaventure’s phrases regarding the system from *De triplici via*, certain parts of the discussion may appear different from Bonaventure’s final text, and certain parts of *De Triplici via*, namely the nine steps to perfection and the twofold contemplation of divine things, will not be discussed. This is not due to an unintentional misreading or an oversight. Rather, I am attempting to present the best description of Bonaventure’s position as it is found within the two texts he has given us, while at the same time relying on the terminology, which he would eventually come to use to define the work that he is doing.
2.2 Bonaventure’s System: Purgation

In his excellent summary of the three ways, Boehner describes the starting point of the way of purgation as being “mainly concerned with its own misery and pitiful condition because of original and personal sin.”\(^{168}\) This awareness is achieved through the *stimulus*, whereby one who has recalled their sins must “accuse [themselves] of manifold negligence, disordered desire and evil.”\(^{169}\) When they have done this, the orientation towards the infinite goodness found within the *mens* cognitive power begins to desire to discover this truth, while the intellectual power, which is ordered to infinite goodness, correspondingly begins to contemplate the best ways in which this goodness could be expressed. This leads then to be, as Coughlin puts it, “‘stung’ or ‘prodded’ by *synderesis*,” which leads the person to “the affection of spiritual joy.”\(^ {170}\) Bonaventure notes that while this exercise is painful, it is consummated in love.\(^ {171}\) Following this reordering of one’s appetites, one, made aware of one’s sins, can engage in purgative prayer. Although he does not state this explicitly, it is clear that purgative prayer for Bonaventure is a fruit of the gift of fear of the Lord. The purpose of purgative prayer is to make known to God that one deplores “any misery [that] occurs with respect to the commission of sin, the loss of grace or the delaying of glory. Thus the soul must have these three, namely sorrow, shame, and fear.”\(^ {172}\) Sorrow for our past sins, which have caused us to lose “the gift of life,” shame of our sinful human state when we

\(^{168}\) Boehner, “Introduction,” 22.

\(^{169}\) *DTV*, 1:4


\(^{171}\) Ibid, 1:9.

\(^{172}\) Ibid, II.2.
realize that “[we] are now a slave, whereas [we] had been free” and fear of the future when one “[foresees] where [one] is going, because its steps are leading to hell.”\textsuperscript{173} This prayerful contrition leads to sevenfold process of contemplation wherein one must “be ashamed of your crimes, be fearful of judgment, groan because of the harm, beg for help to be cured, extinguish passion because of your adversary [the devil,] yearn for martyrdom to attain the prize, draw near to Christ and be shaded.\textsuperscript{174}

### 2.3 Bonaventure’s System: Illumination

The process of illuminative meditation is that “whereby the soul must exercise itself towards the ray of understanding.”\textsuperscript{175} This is a threefold process. Firstly, the person must consider the evils that they have committed against God and the mercy, which with God has responded. The person will then be illuminated to understand the graces that they have received. Bonaventure notes that “such illumination must be joined with affectionate gratitude.”\textsuperscript{176} Following this, one will be illuminated to recognize the gifts that complement nature, such as one’s body, the gifts of grace, namely restorative salvation, repentance, and the sacraments, and the gift of superabundance by which one becomes a steward of creation, a “brother and friend” of Christ, and “a friend, a daughter and a spouse” through the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{177} Finally, one is able to see how “the ray of understanding needs to be reflected back so that it can

\textsuperscript{173} Ibid, II:2.

\textsuperscript{174} DTV, III:8.

\textsuperscript{175} Ibid I:10

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid, I:10.

\textsuperscript{177} Ibid, 1:13.
return to the font of all goodness by recalling the rewards promised it.”  

This leads one to desire God’s greatest gift, his mercy, which one requests of him in illuminative prayer. Illuminative prayer enables one to understand oneself as united to God and to the communion of saints and thus receive the grace to ask for intercession from “The Holy Spirit who pleads for it [the soul of the person] with inexpressible groanings; with the confidence of hope which the soul has from Christ who died for all; and with a diligence in imploring help which the soul asks of the saints and of all good people.”  

“When these three concur; then divine mercy is implored in an efficacious way,” which, for one following Bonaventure’s system, should cause the soul to contemplate how access to that mercy was originally gained. One begins by contemplating “who it is that suffers and so believing grasps him” through “the assent of reason.” This is followed by considering “what sort of person suffers and [suffering] with him” due to “the affection of compassion.” This compassion allows one to “consider how great he is who suffers and admire [him] with stupefaction,” which Bonaventure calls “the gaze of admiration.”  

Looking upon Christ with admiration will allow one to reach a contemplative “ecstasy of devotion” whereby one continuously and “confidently gives thanks.” This will urge one to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ “ (Rm

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179 DTV, 2:3.
180 Ibid, 2:3.
181 Ibid, 3:8; 3.
182 Ibid, 3:8; 3.
183 Ibid, 3:8; 3.
184 Ibid, 3:8; 3.
13:14) in order to “follow his example” embracing his passion and cross as one’s own.

Ultimately, upon doing this one will consider the truth of the “the knowledge of the seven things hidden from humanity by Christ’s passion […] the admirable God, the intelligent spirit, the sensible world, the desirable heaven, the horrible hell, laudable virtue and culpable guilt.”185

2.4 Bonaventure’s System: Perfection

The meditation on the perfective way is based around what Bonaventure refers to as the little flame of wisdom. First Bonaventure notes that the flame must be concentrated “by turning the affections away from all created things,” and re-ordering one’s affections towards God. While this may seem very un-Franciscan, it is not. As Coughlin notes “the latin reductionem affectionis reflects Bonaventure’s understanding that “‘well-ordered’ affections are ‘turned toward God’ or lead a person back to God.”186 Thus what Bonaventure is truly saying is not that one should reject creatures outright, but that the love one has for creatures should be a reflection of the love that one has for their creator, as opposed to a love that is centered around created things themselves. Following this, the flame must be nourished by meditating on God’s spousal affection for you, in order to achieve a true desire for total communion. This leads to the final stage of meditation, wherein one realizes that God can neither be sensed, nor imagined and that God is, as Hugh of Saint Victor notes in De arrha animae,

185 DTV, 3:3.

186 Ibid, 1:15; fn 37.
“beyond our understanding and yet is totally desirable.” This understanding and experience leads to the final three stages of prayer; adoration, thanksgiving, and harmonious conversation with God. Finally there is the contemplation of the seven steps of the unitive way, which Bonaventure describes as such:

Vigilance prompts you to be solicitous because your Spouse is at hand; confidence strengthens you because you are assured of [his love]; passion inflames you because of his sweetness; ecstasy raises you up because of his loftiness; pleasing harmony quiets you because of his beauty; joy intoxicates you because of the fullness of his love; cling to the spouse because of the fortitude of his love. Thus the devoted soul from the heart can say to the Lord: I seek you, in you I hope; I desire you, in you I rise up; I embrace you, I exult in you, and finally I cling to you.

2.5 Bonaventure’s System: The Six Steps to the Throne of Solomon

As Boehner notes, historically speaking, researchers who have accepted that the Itinerarium was written with the system of de triplici via in mind have “said that its proper place is in the perfective way.” Boehner rejects this, stating instead that “it belongs rather to the illuminative way, reaching at the end the contemplation of the unitive way and merging with it.” It is easy to see how Boehner comes to this conclusion based upon his reading of the first line of section three of the prologue, wherein Bonaventure states “for those six wings can well be understood as symbols of six levels of uplifting illuminations [illuminationum suspensione] through which the soul is prepared, as it were by certain stages or steps to pass

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188 DTV, 3:8.


190 Ibid, 24.
over [transeat] to peace through the ecstatic rapture of Christ.”¹⁹¹ Based upon this reading, Boehner argues that “the speculations of the Itinerarium belong partly to meditation, partly and mainly to contemplation.”¹⁹² This causes him to conclude that the Itinerarium is but a different method of contemplation in the illuminative way [than De triplici via,] noting that the two have the same goal for illuminative contemplation, “a transformation into Christ crucified.”¹⁹³ He then notes that the primary difference between the two is their intended audience. De triplici via is written for a general audience, whereas the Itinerarium is written for intellectual Franciscans. In both the first, last and second part of the middle points, which I have just mentioned, I am in agreement with Boehner. It is only with the first middle point that I must disagree. As I have already stated, I believe that Bonaventure, inspired by Francis, recognized the need for a dynamic system by the time of the Itinerarium, and while he clearly intended for each of the six chapters to emphasize the illuminative contemplation that would later be discussed in De triplici via, he also intended for them to simultaneously include aspects of the purgative and perfective ways. A careful reading of the three texts will enable a reader to see that Bonaventure has a consistent metaphor for the mystical union with God, the throne of Solomon, and that he relates the journey in which one achieves this union to the six steps to the throne.¹⁹⁴ In both the Legenda Maior and De triplici via, Bonaventure clearly

¹⁹¹ Itinerarium, Pro:3; cf. fn 6 and 7 of Boehner’s edition for a discussion of the Christological importance of the words suspensiones and transeat as they are used by Bonaventure.


¹⁹⁴ Cf. Itinerarium, I:5, VII:1; LM, XIII:9 [NB This is an implicit reference which would be understood by studium educated friars due to their trained memory and knowledge of the of the Bible]; DTV, II:11.
notes the steps are not confined to the way of illumination. Within the thirteenth chapter of the *Legenda Maior*, Bonaventure clearly associates the six steps with the six visions of the cross that he has described prior to discussing Francis’ stigmata. The first vision which “you [Francis] saw at the onset of your conversion,” during his time as a prisoner of war, represents qualities, which are both purgative and illuminative.\(^{195}\) In the same way, the penultimate vision of “the figure of you lifted up in the air in the form of a cross the angelic man Monaldo saw while Saint Anthony was preaching about the inscription of the cross,” bridges the stages between illuminative and perfective.\(^{196}\) By the time of the composition of *De triplici via*, Bonaventure explicitly identified these six steps as the steps needed to arrive at perfect love. He lists them as sweetness, eagerness, satiety arising from avidity, spiritual intoxication, security in God, and true and complete tranquility.\(^{197}\) While Bonaventure places these steps between perfective prayer and perfective contemplation, he makes it clear that the steps are arrived at in a gradual and orderly fashion throughout the soul’s journey through purgation, illumination and perfection.\(^{198}\) An excellent example of this can be found in Bonaventure’s description of eagerness, the second step. Here he quotes the passage from *The Book of Job* which reads “my soul has chosen hanging and my bones death” (Jb 7:15) before noting that “as the hind longs for the fountains of water, so my soul longs for you O God.” (Ps 41:2). His choice to preface the psalmist’s prayer for unitive desire with Job’s

\(^{195}\) *LM*, XIII:9.

\(^{196}\) Ibid, IV:10.

\(^{197}\) cf. *DTV*, 2:9

\(^{198}\) cf. *DTV*, 2:9
lament because, as he puts it, one must meditate on how perfect union “cannot be attained in this present life” due to sin, and it is only by meditating on this sin that one can achieve the desire to arise above it towards perfection.\textsuperscript{199} I believe that these six steps are also present in a dynamic way within the \textit{Itinerarium}, and within the transformative assent that Boehner identifies. This is important to note, given that, as Zachary Hayes observes, these six steps are not original to Bonaventure, but rather come from Richard of Saint Victor’s \textit{Beniamin Maior}, wherein Richard uses “the two cherubs facing each other on the cover of the ark” “in a symbolic sense to lay out his understanding of [the roads to] contemplation” as a form of love mysticism. When read alongside the aforementioned passages, then, one can see that the assent into God represented in the \textit{Itinerarium}, just as it is in the \textit{Legend Maior} presents “stigmata as love-mysticism;” therefore, “the stigmatization of St. Francis [becomes the thesis] statement about the goal of the spiritual journey.”\textsuperscript{200} This thesis statement is as follows, that the ascent into spousal union cannot be separated from the transformation into Christ crucified. The two must ultimately occur in dynamic movement, “for in a very particular way the mystery of the cross suggests insights into the mystery of divine love as well as insights into the dynamism of the spiritual way to God.”\textsuperscript{201} It is for this reason that I shall argue below that within the \textit{Itinerarium} the six-fold ascent must be read as both a process of illuminative meditation and contemplation, by which one is configured to Christ crucified, and a dynamic application of all process of \textit{de triplici via} wherein one mounts the

\textsuperscript{199} DTV, 2:9.

\textsuperscript{200} Zachary, \textit{The Hidden Centre}, 31.

steps to the spousal union represented by Solomon’s throne; a union which Bonaventure notes can only be understood by someone who “using the rod of the Cross” has “passed over the Red Sea, moving from Egypt into the desert where the hidden manna will be tasted.” I believe that this thesis statement I have identified is the key to interpreting Bonaventure’s system of de triplici via as it relates to the Franciscan’s spiritual journey. While I acknowledge that the dynamic nature of Bonaventure’s system cannot be read as Hayes notes, as a “flow chart of exercises,” due to the fact that each person will experience it in a slightly different way due to their formation, their prayer life, and their personal understanding of who God is and how to approach this relationship, even if they are all united by a common Franciscan charism, it is clear from the texts that Bonaventure did have specific waypoints in that he felt one must reach on the ladder of ascent in order to proceed to the next level of one’s deepening relationship with God. 202 Given the incarnational nature of Bonaventure’s anthropology, wherein “the revelatory character of creation and history is held together by the affirmation of the identity of the divine Word as increatum, incarnatum, and inspiratum,” it is no surprise that these points correspond to Bonaventure’s cosmological hierarchy, “which is built [on the principle of a] degree of similarity between the creature and the Creator, between the copy and the model after which the copy is shaped.” 203 As Bonaventure notes in the Breviloquium:

The created world is a kind of book reflecting, representing and describing its Maker, the Trinity, at three different levels of expression: as a vestige, as an image, and as a likeness. The aspect of vestige is found in every creature; the aspect of image only in intelligent creatures or rational spirits; the aspect of

202 “Bonaventure,” 32.

203 Ibid, 85; 76.
likeness, only in those spirits that are God-conformed. Through these successive levels, comparable to steps, the human intellect is designed to ascend gradually to the supreme Principle, which is God. 204

The recognition of these different levels of how the created world interacts with the Trinity is incorporated into Bonaventure’s system leads to encounters with a self-communicative God that furthers our ascent to the mystical union. Given that Bonaventure did not provide a language in which to explain how the recognition of these levels fit into the rest of his system, most likely due to the fact that he intended for De triplici via to operate in the level of common sense, a set of terms must be provided in order to explain its importance to the process of recognition of these different levels and how they relate to the overall system Bonaventure has designed for his Franciscan brothers. I believe that the best set of terms which one can use to perform this task is the language of conversion presented by Lonergan and Doran. Within the following section I shall examine the relationship between the three aforementioned aspects of Bonaventure’s system, using the Lonergainan language of conversion to show that the same method of union with God through the imitation of Christ, as understood by the Regula, exists within the Itinerarium and the Legenda Maior.

3. The Mens Journey

3.1 The Mens Journey: The Prologues as Examples of a Differentiated Consciousness

As I have noted before, Bonaventure beings both of his texts by affirming to the reader that the beginning and guide of his system is God as understood and exemplified by Francis of Assisi, while at the same time calling them to begin the process of purgation. From the very outset of these two texts one can see that Bonaventure is operating within the realm of interiority. The *Legenda Maior* begins by noting that “The grace of God our Savior has appeared in these last days in his servant Francis” and then instructing “all who are truly humble and lovers of holy poverty [Franciscans] who, while venerating in him God’s super-abundant mercy, learn by his example to reject wholeheartedly ungodliness and worldly passions, to live in conformity with Christ and to thirst after blessed hope with unflagging desire.” This formula is very easily understood. It begins by placing the context of the exercise within God as revealed by the scriptures, in this case the passage from Titus 2:11, it then identifies Francis as the example of cooperation with the grace being offered by God to complete this journey. This is followed by identifying the method for beginning of this journey, purgation, and the ultimate goals, conformity with Christ, and a desire for the blessed hope that is union with God. A critical reader will see that Bonaventure offers the same steps in the prologue of the *Itinerarium* but does so in the language of the theory. He begins by stating “In the beginning I call upon that First Beginning [*In Principio primum principium*] from whom all illumination flows as from the God of lights.” While the language of first beginning does call to mind the opening passages of Genesis and the Gospel of John, the opening sentence also makes it very clear that intended audience is meant to have an understanding of the concepts of the first principles of demonstration, as well as

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205 *LM*, Pro.1

Augustine’s theology of illumination, neither of which is explicitly required to understand the
Legenda Maior. Bonaventure’s description of Francis too is related to the theoretical. He
notes that the Seraph, whom Francis saw on Mount Alverna, reflects “not only the uplifting
our father himself in contemplation but also the road by which one might arrive at this
experience,” as “the figure of the six wings of the Seraph . . . is a symbol of six stages of
illumination which begin with creatures and lead to God to whom no one has access properly
except through the Crucified.”207 Thus Bonaventure explicitly notes that this theoretical
system will lead, just like the Legenda Maior, to conformity with Christ and union with God.
In the same way he notes that in order to begin this a reader must be “disposed by divine
grace . . . [to be] devout and sorrowful for this sins.” This allow them to embark on the
spiritual journey, beginning with an understanding of their relationship to the world outside
to the mens.208

3.1 The Mens Journey: The World Outside the Mens

It is extremely likely that in preparation for the visits he made to the first companions, in
order to compose the Legenda Maior, Bonaventure would have (re-)read the biographies of
Francis that were already written, including The Assisi Compilation. It is in this text, which
Armstrong et al describe as a series of “anecdotes about Francis that could only have come
from day-to-day associations with him,” that we are given the most explicit insight, albeit one
mediated by an author, into Francis’ understanding of humanity’s relationship to the world

207 Ibid, Pro:2;3.

208 Itinerarium, Pro:5.
outside of themselves. After meditating on how his illness is a gift from God, Francis
summons his brothers and informs them

Therefore for His praise, for our consolation, and for the
edification of our neighbor, I want to write a new Praise
of the Lord for his creatures, which we use every day, and
without which we cannot live. Through them the human
race greatly offends the Creator and every day we are
ungrateful for such great graces, because we do not praise,
as we should, our Creator and the Giver of all good.209

The praise of the Lord that “Francis” is referring to in this passage is of course The Canticle
of Creation, perhaps Francis’ most well known writing. It is from this text, wherein Francis
offers praise to God through all aspects of creation, that Bonaventure gets his theological
framework for the first two steps towards mystical union and the first two uplifting
illuminations mentioned in the first wing.

As Armstrong and Ignatius C. Brady note the Canticle “springs from the depths of [Francis’]
soul, [and] provides us with many insights into the profundity of his life of faith in the Triune
God, Who so deeply enters into creation . . . He [Francis] becomes so intimate and familiar
with the wonders of creation that he embraces them as “Brother” and “Sister,” that is,
members of one family.210 This intimacy stems from a profound humility. As Bonaventure
notes in The Evening Sermon of Francis Preached at Paris October 4, 1255, “to be meek is
to be a brother to everybody; to be humble is to be less than everybody. Therefore, to be

83.

210 Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Cap and Ignatius C. Brady, OFM, “Introduction to The Canticle
of Brother Sun” in Francis and Clare: The Complete Works. The Classics of Western
meek and humble of heart is to be a true lesser brother [frater minore].” Bonaventure goes on to note in this sermon, “we ought to learn meekness, which is utterly necessary, from St. Francis,” and that “Saint Francis possessed this humility supremely.” As Hayes describes it

Not only does the humility define his relation to God: it comes to shape his relation to other people as well as the entire created world. If it is true that I live and move and have my being only in the creative and salvific love of God, the same is true of all other people as well as of the entire created order . . . Thus when St. Francis comes to speak of all creatures as “brothers and sisters,” this is a long way from the birdbath image through which his insights have often been trivialized. . . humility opens one to an ever deeper and fuller life of grace that will find expression in an active love and life of virtue. If spiritual poverty is genuine it will express ourselves in our relation to all things.

The desire for spiritual poverty is clearly a side affect of the ongoing act of purgation called for by Bonaventure in the prologues to both the Itinerarium and the Legenda Maior. Only once one has traveled downward to the depths of oneself, in order to extinguish one’s passions so as to rest in God’s peace, can one begin to truly travel upward to the heights of God’s glory, a glory that is manifest in all creation. But how does this change in direction occur? How, to use Bonaventure’s language, does the one dwelling in God’s peace begin to comprehend the grace that is being passed onto them by the rays of understanding? The answer to this question is that one must undergo a psychic conversion.

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212 Ibid, 518; 519.

213 The Hidden Center, 29.
Bonaventure’s understanding of the shift in one’s relationship to the outside world corresponds very well to the way in which Doran describes the process of psychic conversion. There have been vestiges of the Trinity within creation since creation’s beginnings; however, we have not been able to see them clearly since we can only see “God and those things that are within God” through the “eye of contemplation,” which does not function perfectly except through glory, which human beings have lost through sin.”

Due to this sin our censors have assigned to all aspects of creation a concept of purely natural agency. This leads us to view creation on a purely superficial level thus repressing our relationship with God. Thus the process of psychic conversion is necessary in order to associate the appropriate aspect of the vestigiae dei with the created object, so that through recognizing God in it one may draw closer to God. As this psychic conversion, whereby the inability to perceive God via one’s interaction with the created world, flows from the initial grace of religious conversion, which is brought about by Christ as the start of this process, it is possible to identify the operative and cooperative aspects. Although these processes must occur as a whole in order for the person to ascend to the next level, it is important to note the two steps within the level occur at different times. The first step begins to occur after the initial psychic operation, and eventually leads, if one is following Bonaventure’s system properly, to the beginning of cooperation, whereas the second step requires cooperation in order to begin.

The initial psychic conversion is of course the reordering of the censors in the way that I have already discussed. This reordering corresponds with the first of Bonaventure’s six steps to

\[214\] Breviloquium, 12:5
mounting the love of God, since it is through this reordering that one is able to see how God is present in all aspects of creation. This new ability to understand how all aspects of creation participate in the song of praise to God will allow the mens to truly “taste and see how sweet the Lord is” for the first time.\textsuperscript{215} This new way of seeing is described in both the \textit{Itinerarium}, where Bonaventure states that “the supreme power, wisdom and benevolence of the Creator shines forth in created things,” and the \textit{Legenda Maior} where he writes that Francis “would call all creatures no matter how small by the name of ‘brother’ and ‘sister’ because he knew they shared with him the same beginning.”\textsuperscript{216} Once grace has enabled one to see in this new way one must cooperate with it in order to understand, appreciate, and truly benefit from the fullness of what it is that one can now see. This cooperation done through prayer and meditation illuminates the mens to realize that it is through God’s grace, the grace God has given the Church, and the duty of stewardship that reflects one’s new understanding of the way in which God is present in the created order.\textsuperscript{217} As Hayes puts it, “to appreciate [created things] as creatures of God that awaken us to a sense of the divine is one thing. To allow them to replace God in our spiritual journey is another.”\textsuperscript{218} Hayes goes on to note that one ought to, following Bonaventure, compare this new understanding to an understanding of art. He quotes the passage from the \textit{Collation of the Six Days of Creation} wherein Bonaventure notes that

\begin{quote}
For things are true to the degree that they exist either in their
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{215} \textit{DTV}, 2:9.
\item \textsuperscript{216} \textit{Itinerarium}, I:10; \textit{LM} VIII:6.
\item \textsuperscript{217} Cf. \textit{DTV}, I:2.
\item \textsuperscript{218} \textit{Bonaventure}, 72.
\end{itemize}
own reality or as universals, as they exist in the eternal Art and are expressed there. A thing is good, then, insofar as it is adequeted to the intellect that causes it. But because it is not perfectly adequeted to the reason that expresses or represents it, every creature is a lie, as Augustine says.219

Hayes goes on to note, “this does not mean that creatures are bad. It means that they are a limited good and can be misread to our detriment if we attribute to them a greater truth than they possess.”220 To put it even more simply, great art may be beautiful, but at the end of the day it is not real, it is a reflection of the genius and talent of the artist. Our appreciation then should not be for the object itself, but rather for the intellect from which the object sprang. By cooperating with the grace that has come from the aforementioned psychic conversion, one comes to appreciate God the artist and the traces of God within the art of creation, rather than solely appreciating the created thing itself.221

Within the *Legenda Maior*, Bonaventure, operating on the realm of common sense, presents this in a very practical way. He does not engage in the theoretical language of art or of vestiges; rather, he focuses on the practical methods through which a friar could identify whether or not this type of conversion had happened within himself, and also communicate what this conversion would look like, in a simple way, to both his brother friars and to the people of God. The conversion process begins with Francis having a vision of the cross

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219 Qtd in “Bonaventure,” 73.

220 “Bonaventure,” 73.

221 One must be careful not to read this as a justification for rejecting the principle of art for art’s sake. Rather, one must be careful to realize that Bonaventure’s intent is to show that all art reflects the beauty of the artist who created it, and thus reflects the beauty of God.
during his time as a prisoner of war. After having this vision, Bonaventure makes it clear that one ought to value God, the creator, more than earthly things. "'Francis,'" he has God ask, "who can do more for you, a lord or a servant, a rich person, or one who is poor? . . . why, then, are you abandoning the Lord for a servant and the rich God for a poor mortal."222

Following this description of Francis’ realization of God as the source of all riches, a description that must be read alongside the quote from Chapter Eight, which I have previously quoted, given that the intended audience would connect the two using trained memory, Bonaventure notes that Francis “despised all earthly things as nothing; he realized that he had found a hidden treasure, and, like a wise merchant, planned to buy the pearl he had found by selling everything."223 While this line no doubt refers to Francis’ poverty, it also refers the reconfiguration of his way of seeing, whereby he realized that all creation comes from and is directed to God, the only true treasure. Bonaventure notes that this affected not only the way in which he lived his life exteriorly, but also his interior life. Francis’ prayer life becomes a prime example of the first step of illuminative contemplation, that of submitting to God through one’s reason and acknowledging that Christ is “the Son of God, the origin of all things, the Savior of humankind, the dispenser of rewards.”224 To do this, Bonaventure implies one must model one’s prayer life as Francis did, after “the Gospel text: If you wish to come after me, deny yourself and take up your cross and follow me.”225

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222 LM, I:3.


225 Ibid, I:5.
Within the *Itinerarium*, the same steps are described in the language of theory. Bonaventure later describes the threefold method by which the converted *mens* can cooperate with the grace it has received to see God as the center of all creation. The first is to contemplate things, as they are themselves. This allows us to note the differences between small things that we normally take for granted such as weight, number, and measure. By reflecting on these things, Bonaventure argues, we will begin to see in “terms of mode, species, and operations. From these perspectives we can rise as from the vestige to an understanding of the immense power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator.”226 This, like God’s dialogue with Francis, shows the way in which one can begin to see God as the source of all riches.

Secondly, there is seeing in the way of faith, wherein we view creation through “the law of nature, the law of Scripture, and the law of Grace. By faith, we believe that the world is to come to an end in the final judgment. In terms of the first, we consider the power of the highest Principle; in terms of the second, we consider the providence of the Principle; and, in terms of the third, we consider the justice of the same Principle.”227 It is through this step of seeing that one engages in both illuminative meditation and the assent of reason. The final way of seeing, that of reason, has no explicit correspondence within the *Legenda Maior*. This is because for Bonaventure seeing by reason is designed to help one recognize the difference between things that “merely exist; others exist and live; and yet others exist, live, and discern,” and how God is present within these things be it by vestiges, vestiges and image, or vestige, image, and likeness.228 The lack of any explicit mention of this distinction, which

226 *Itinerarium*, I:11.

227 *Itinerarium*, I:12.

requires an understanding of scholastic theology and philosophy, in the *Legenda Maior* as opposed to a convoluted attempt to explain it in common sense terms, shows that Bonaventure is capable of executing judgment in the realm of interiority.

In order to move from the “first wing” to the “second wing,” following one’s cooperation with the initial psychic conversion, one must experience the steps of eagerness and compassion. As Bonaventure notes, eagerness is achieved when “there arises in [the soul] such a thirst that nothing else can satisfy except the one who it loves and possesses perfectly.” Bonaventure is quite straightforward in his description of Francis’ conversion from sweetness to eagerness. After meditating in the fields, surrounded by the beauty of God’s creation, Francis returns to the Church of Saint Damiano and begins to pray before a cross. As Bonaventure notes “while his tear-filled eyes were gazing at the Lord’s cross, he heard with his bodily ears a voice coming from that cross, telling him three times: “Francis, go and repair my house which, as you see, is all being destroyed.” This leads to a process wherein Francis renounces his earthly inheritance choosing to say only “‘Our Father who art in heaven,’ since I have placed all my treasure and all my hope in him.” Bonaventure presents a Francis whose sole desire is communion with God. In contrast to this simplicity, the second chapter of the *Itinerarium* is perhaps one of the most complicated to interpret. This is due to the fact that, in order to understand the shift from sweetness to eagerness, one

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230 *LM*, II:1

must first understand the relationship between the *mens* and sensible thing. This is due to the fact that in order to achieve this one must contemplate God “not only through [sensible things], but also in them . . . this world which is called the macrocosm enters our soul, which is said to be a microcosm, through the doorways of the five senses by which we become aware of, enjoy, and judge concerning the object of sense experience.”\(^\text{232}\) While the discussion of Bonaventure’s opinions on the sense world would be of utmost importance to one discussing the *Itinerarium* from the functional specialty of systematics, since we are discussing it via interpretation it is sufficient to note that the senses are the way in which the human being becomes aware of, delights in, and judges the sense species.\(^\text{233}\) Through the ultimate action of judgment, “the sense organ, purifies, and abstracts it, and causes it to enter the intellective faculty. And in this way the entire world enters into the human soul through the doorways of the senses . . . now these actions are vestiges in which we can see our God.”\(^\text{234}\) When we see our God, this we can truly say that we have internalized and are fully cooperating with the effects of our psychic conversion. “The likeness that gives delight in its beauty, sweetness and wholesomeness suggests that in the first likeness there is a first beauty, sweetness and wholesomeness in which is found the highest proportionality and equality in relation to the one that generates it.”\(^\text{235}\) Therefore, “God alone [is] the true fountain of delight is to be found. So it is that from all other delights we are led to seek this one delight.”\(^\text{236}\)

\(^{232}\) *Itinerarium*, II:1;2.

\(^{233}\) Cf. Ibid, II: 3,4,5.

\(^{234}\) *Itinerarium*, II:7.

\(^{235}\) Ibid, II:8.

\(^{236}\) Ibid, II:8.
Following this, Bonaventure confirms his theoretical hypothesis by appealing to Augustine’s text’s *De Vere Religione* and *De Musica*. He concludes the section by noting that our eagerness will lead us to compassion with the crucified, since unlike those “who do not wish to pay attention to these things . . . through Jesus Christ our Lord who has lifted us out of darkness into his marvelous light . . . we might be disposed to re-enter the mirror of our mind in which divine realities shine.” These divine realities of course lead to the step of compassion. It of key importance to note that, in our discussion of this step, Bonaventure uses the word *compassio* in its literal sense, to suffer with, in all aspects of Christ’s life and ministry. It is not merely meant to be a contemplative exercise. It must also be something that is experienced through the senses and manifested through the active intellect in order to correspond with the precepts set forth within the *Regula*. Bonaventure makes this much more explicit within the *Legenda Maior* where he follows Francis’ declaration of eagerness with a discussion of the seraphic father’s ministry to the lepers, to whom he became “a physician of the Gospel.”\(^{237}\) Bonaventure explicitly notes that it was only after that active step of compassion that Francis could be truly “grounded in the humility of Christ” in such a way that he was able to recall “to mind the obedience enjoined upon him from the cross, to repair the church of San Damiano,” the process which would set the stage for his ultimate act of compassion with Christ, his transformation into the Poverello of Assisi.

3.1 The *Mens* Journey: The World Inside the *Mens*

\(^{237}\) *LM*, II:6.
While someone analyzing the life of Francis as it stands itself may view his transformation from ecclesial penitent into Poverello as a moment of religious conversion within his life, for those such as Bonaventure, who wish to use his life as an example for other friars, this moment serves to highlight the shift from the “first wingspan” wherein one deals with recognizing God within the world around them to the “second wingspan” wherein “we can enter again into ourselves, that is, into the mind itself which the divine image shines forth.”

It is within this wingspan that one truly begins to understand how God relates to oneself on the level of natural faculties and how these faculties have been reformed and re-affected by God’s grace. Thus as will be shown below it is important to view the steps of Bonaventure’s system being taken within these wings through the lens of intellectual and moral conversion.

It is here that an important note must be made. While Lonergan distinguishes between intellectual and moral conversion as two separate operations within the conversion process, Bonaventure makes no such distinction. While Bonaventure does divide scientia into three broad categories, natural philosophy, rational philosophy, and moral philosophy, he does so because scientia, like everything else, is an image of the trinity. Therefore, these three types of philosophy, which represent the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, respectively, are inter-related. While these forms of scientia can certainly help guide the mens “to reflect on [the] eternal light” from a natural and rational level, Bonaventure makes it clear that the purpose of such reflection is to allow one to realize that one must come to fully know Christ through knowledge from above, not below. Full assent to the judgment made, for

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238 *Itinerarium*, III:1.


240 Cf. *Itinerarium*, IV:2.
Bonaventure, can only come after moral conversion, as in order to truly decide the mind must be able to “re-enter into itself as the image of God.” This is only possible when one is “clothed over with the three theological virtues” so that one may form effective moral habits, which allow it to make the ultimate judgment of value, the decision to contemplate God above ourselves.²⁴¹

The step of illuminating ascent in the “wingspan”, the speculation of God through the image of imprint on our natural powers, corresponds roughly to the first three steps of authentic judgment. It begins by initializing the process described in the third of the six mounting steps, the soul’s desire for God “that of being raised up.” This is a natural affect of the illuminative meditation brought on by eagerness. As the soul meditates on the superabundance of God’s goodness, the little flame of wisdom becomes concentrated within it, and we begin to desire God more. Bonaventure describes this process quite poetically in the Itinerarium, where he writes, “the light of truth shines like the light of a candelabrum upon the face of our mind in which the image of the most blessed trinity shines in splendor.”²⁴² Naturally, someone who desires union with God will seek to understand this new experience of contemplative meditation. Within the Itinerarium, Bonaventure addresses the process by which one understands by appealing to the traditional threefold process of memory, intellect, and choice. “Through the operations of memory,” Bonaventure reminds his readers, “it becomes clear that the soul itself is an image of God and a similitude so present to itself and having God so

²⁴¹ Ibid, VI:1.

²⁴² Itinerarium, III:2
present to it that it actually grasps God and potentially has the capacity for God and the ability to participate in God.” Once we remember then that we have this capacity and this ability, our intellect, in cooperation with the grace we received in the initial stage of religious conversion, realizes that this ability is not being exercised and begins to ask why. Eventually, one will come to the answer that “within yourself [there is] a truth which teaches you as long as unruly desires and sense images do not stand as impediments becoming like clouds between you and the ray of truth.”

One must then deliberate between the desires placed within one’s mind by sense images and the desire to transcend them. Assuming that one is continuing to cooperate with the initial psychic conversion that allows us to see God within all created things, the spark of synderesis gained in the initial purgative meditation should allow for “the law that has been impressed upon the mind,” which is the law to love the Good to encourage one to make a right judgment. Bonaventure assures his readers that when this process of judgment takes place, “our deliberative power is in contact with the divine laws.”

Bonaventure also notes that this process leads to an intense desire to “[reach] the best and ultimate goal . . . the supreme Good.”

Our memory thus makes us aware of our eternal connection to God, our intelligence allows us to judge this connection to be true, and our desire to increase this connection, once we have established it as true leads further and further into communion with the highest good.

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243 Ibid, III:3
244 Ibid, III:4.
245 Itinerarium, III:4.
Within the *Legenda Maior*, Bonaventure again outlines a three-step process of despising earthly things, a judgment, and a decision that leads to further desire for Christ. Within this step, for the first time, we see Francis as the imitation of Christ, as opposed to one who longs to imitate him. Bonaventure, knowing that each member of his audience had at some point felt called to a Franciscan vocation, or at least should have, equates the stirring of this vocation within the soul of the friar with the initial experience of the shift from the encounter with the world outside to the world inside. The desire to reenter into God through the mind is thus equated with the entrance into the Franciscan way of life, with the experience of Francis and Bernard serving as a reminder of what the friars would have, assumedly, experienced when they began this path.\(^{246}\) The way in which Bonaventure explains how to understand the beginning of the process is perhaps one his most brilliant examples of communication in the realm of common sense understanding. He simply follows his discussion of the initial experience of the rule with a description of Brother Giles: “a man indeed filled with God and worthy of his celebrated reputation. Although he was a simple and unlearned man, he later became famous for his practice of heroic virtue, as God’s servant had prophesied, and was raised to the height of exalted contemplation.”\(^{247}\) Bonaventure has a twofold purpose here. First he is telling his audience that, in order to come to understand the process occurring in them, they need simply to reflect on the life of Brother Giles, something that would be a part of the order’s institutional memory at this point, and put themselves in Giles place in order to be guided on the decision that they ought to make next. Secondly, he is reminding his audience, who through their *studium* training would not be completely uneducated of the

\(^{246}\) *LM* III:2.

\(^{247}\) *LM*, III:4.
degrees of contemplation described by Giles, something that he himself sought fit to place within his Lucan commentary, in order that they may have a more general guide, as opposed to the specifically Franciscan one which Bonaventure is addressing them through, in order to aid their preaching.\textsuperscript{248} Bonaventure follows up his guide to understanding by giving an example of the link between judgment and desire in the life of Brother Sylvester. As Bonaventure notes Sylvester, during his time as a parish priest in Assisi, “had an abhorrence for the bearing and the way of Francis and his brothers.”\textsuperscript{249} He notes that God intervened by providing Sylvester with the same vision three times wherein Francis saved Assisi from a dragon after “a golden cross whose top reached the heavens and whose arms stretched far and wide and seemed to extend to the ends of the world” rose out of his mouth.\textsuperscript{250} Bonaventure notes that it was not until after “he had seen this vision for a third time [that he] realized it was divine revelation.”\textsuperscript{251} By mentioning that he had to experience the vision three times before realizing it was divine revelation, Bonaventure is emphasizing the importance of making sure that our judgments are rooted within the divine, emphasizing the same overall point as he did in the \textit{Itinerarium} without burdening his readers with the complex theological nuances. Just as with the \textit{Itinerarium}, he immediately follows this by emphasizing that this


\textsuperscript{249} \textit{LM}, III: 5.

\textsuperscript{250} Ibid, III.5.

\textsuperscript{251} \textit{LM}, III.5.
leads to a desire for communion with the highest good, noting that “not long afterwards, leaving the world, he [Sylvester] clung to the footsteps of Christ.”

It is this desire to cling to Christ that leads into the speculation on God in the image reformed by grace. Bonaventure’s readers are already aware from the prologues to both texts that Christ is the beginning, the end and the way to spiritual perfection. Therefore, it is unsurprising that Bonaventure notes in the *Itinerarium* that in order “to re-enter into the enjoyment of truth [the speculation of God in the world inside the *mens*] as into a paradise, we must do so through faith in, hope, in and love for the mediator between God and humanity, Jesus Christ, who is like the tree of life in the middle of paradise.”

While the intellectual Franciscans are merely instructed to clothe their souls in the theological virtues in order to enter through Christ the door, the Franciscans reading the *Legenda Maior* are treated to a set of instructions placed in the mouth of Francis:

> When the brothers asked him to teach them to pray, he said: “When you pray, say ‘Our Father . . .’ and ‘We adore you, O Christ, in all your churches throughout the world, and we bless you, for by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.’” He also taught them to praise God in all and with all creatures, to honor priests with special reverence, and to believe with certainty and to confess with simplicity the truth of the faith, as the holy Roman Church holds and teaches.

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252 Ibid, III:5.

253 *Itinerarium* IV:2.

254 *LM*, IV:3.
Through this passage Bonaventure is instructing the friars to enter into the door through his words, which are the words of scripture, his passion, his creation, his person in the form of the ordained priest, and (by extension in the sacrament of the Eucharist which the priest can consecrate, and) within his church. In both cases, Bonaventure is instructing his readers to concentrate their focus on Christ so that they may begin to love him with all of their hearts, and all of their souls, and all of their might (cf. Dt 6:5). This leads to threefold process of advancement within the spiritual journey. The first stage of advancement is in conforming oneself to Christ. The constant reflection on Christ causes one to begin to look upon him with the gaze of admiration, thereby realizing that “God is of enormous power, beauty, and happiness forever and ever.”255 This realization, coupled as it always is in Bonaventure’s system with cooperation with divine grace, will then cause one to desire to make authentic decisions, that is decisions based on what is pleasing to God, as opposed to what is pleasing to oneself or to others. As a result of this, one’s relationship with all aspects of the created order shift. One no longer recognizes God in the things that one loves; rather, one loves God and because of this love of God loves the things, which are God’s. This is the fulfillment of the third step of mounting love to God, wherein one discerns that only God, and not earthly things, can satisfy.256 When one experiences this shift to an almost supernatural level of relation to the created order, the sweetness of God, which surrounds them, becomes intoxicating. This is the first step of the contemplation of Christ which leads to what Bonaventure calls the ecstasy of devotion, wherein one loses oneself in Christ. In both texts, Bonaventure makes clear that it is only through becoming lost in Christ in this way that one’s

255 _DTV_, III:3.

256 Cf. _DTV_, II:9; _Itinerarium_, IV:2; _LM_, V: Passim.
spiritual senses become restored in a way that allows spiritual intoxication. “With its spiritual senses restored, the soul now sees, hears, smells, tastes, and embraces its beloved . . . the soul becomes like a column of smoke filled with the aroma of myrrh and frankincense,” according to the Itinerarium.\textsuperscript{257} This sentiment is echoed in the Legenda Maior where Bonaventure notes that as soon as Francis heard of “the love of the Lord . . . Jesus Christ crucified always rested like a bundle of myrrh in the bosom of his soul.”\textsuperscript{258}

The true purpose of this wing; however, is not merely to describe the effects of intoxication by God’s grace, but to show how this intoxication serves as bridging point between the world inside the \textit{mens} and the world above the \textit{mens}. Bonaventure notes that, while both our rational capacities, as discussed in the third wing, and “the gifts of virtues, the spiritual senses and the mental ecstasies,” discussed in the fourth serve as intellectual lights which flood our mind with divine wisdom, the operations of the third wing are sublative to the operations of the fourth. It is only through the clothing of the soul in the theological virtues, the uses of the reformed spiritual senses and ecstatic experience that the \textit{mens} returns “to the interior where it can see God,” and relate to God as “a daughter of God, a spouse, [and] a friend.”\textsuperscript{259} Thus scientific study and preaching may bring the \textit{mens} closer to Christ, but it is only through meditation and contemplation of him that we can fully understand his teachings and ascend to the higher spiritual plane. Union with the cross must be the hermeuntical key through which Christ is in one’s restored mind. Bonaventure makes this clear to his commonsense audience

\textsuperscript{257} \textit{Itinerarium}, IV: 3.

\textsuperscript{258} \textit{LM}, IX:2.

\textsuperscript{259} \textit{Itinerarium}, IV: 6;8.
by using the example of Brother Pacifico. Pacifico, as a minstrel, decides to visit “the man of
God who despised the things of the world” in order to hear him preach. While Bonaventure
does not go into more detail than this, his description of the Pacifico as the Emperor’s “king
of verse” allows his readers to assume that the minstrel was educated enough to compose
chansons, and that he was stable enough within his state in life that if he went to hear Francis
preach he did so of his own accord. Bonaventure does not describe the sermon. Instead, he
notes that “the preacher of Christ’s cross [was] marked with two bright shining swords
intersecting in the shape of a cross.” While Bonaventure does note that Pacifico was
moved by the words after this, he makes a point of noting that it was after he experienced the
vision of Francis totally united to the cross that he vowed to do better and found the peace
that was eluding him in the world. Pacifico thus serves as an example of the point that
Bonaventure is trying to bring to light, that ultimately it is only through recognizing the
power of the Cross, and being metaphorically marked by it, much like Francis literally was in
Bonaventure’s description of Pacifico’s second vision, that one may be truly converted.

3.3 The Mens Journey: The World Above the Mens

It is within the final wingspan that one experiences the religious conversion that will lead
them to the perfect imitation of Christ, which results in spousal union with God. This union
with God is of course the most perfect way of living out the Regula, given that the total
surrender of one’s life to Christ assumes the most perfect forms of poverty, chastity, and

obedience according to one’s state in life. This process begins in the fifth wing and relies on the gift of wonder. When one truly strives to suffer with Christ by imitating his likeness in ones actions, with others one is raised to evangelical perfection in the same way that “Christ, our Master, [wished] to raise to evangelical perfection the young man who had observed the Law.” As usual, Bonaventure outlines his system by appealing to theological authority for his theoretical minded audience and the example of a vision of the cross for his common sense audience.

The theological authorities he cites are Damascene and Pseudo-Dionysius. Bonaventure confirms that God is being itself by appealing to Damascene’s assertion that “The One Who Is” is God’s first name, as Moses taught. He then connects this with Pseudo-Dionysius’ assertion that it is “Good,” which is the characteristic of God alone which Christ gives to the aforementioned rich young man, Bonaventure leads his audience to the realization that God’s name is “The One Who is Good.” After establishing that Being Itself is Good, Bonaventure discusses that, for theologians who “look upon the light of the highest being, [and seem] to see nothing,” there is a misunderstanding. The mens does “not understand that this darkness itself is the highest illumination of our mind, just as when the eye sees pure light it seems to it that it sees nothing.” What Bonaventure is stressing here is that rational knowledge gets us only so far. At some point, we must trust in the security of our relationship with the Beloved, his six mounting steps, and realize that we will never understand Being perfectly, since “it is most simple in essence, [and therefore] it is greatest in power since the more unified a power

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263 Itinerarium, V:2.
264 Itinerarium, V:4.
is the more intense it is.” When we give this understanding the assent of faith we have, as Bonaventure puts it, “something to lift you in wonder,” so that you may hear God say as he did to Moses, “I will show you all good.”

The example, which Bonaventure uses to explain this process to his general audience, is that of the vision of Brother Monaldo. One must note that the passages which proceed it, in chapter four on the Legenda Maior, all discuss how “the spirit of the Lord had come to rest” upon Francis and the order, and how “under the guidance of Heavenly Grace,” “the vineyard of Christ began to produce buds with the sweet smell of the Lord.” This discussion of the rapid expansion of the order would leave no doubt in the mind of the Franciscan audience of God’s goodness towards them, and in general, thus allowing it to correspond with the thematic point touched on by Bonaventure at the start of the fifth wing of the Itinerarium. The vision itself provides a metaphorical illustration of the shift from the limits of rational thought to the assent of wonder. “The outstanding preacher, who is now a glorious confessor of Christ, Anthony” clearly represents the preceding steps of the system, whereas “Francis lifted up in the air with his arms extended as if on a cross, blessing the brothers,” serves as an icon of Christ, who calls us all to imitation of him and union with God, which leads us to


266 Ibid, V:4. It must be noted that while Bonaventure is prone to making Christological references by using key words from the scriptures within his text, the word he uses for the verb to lift up, subleveris, is not the same word, exaltavit, which the vulgate has Jesus use in his conversation with Nicodemus in John 3: 14-15; cf. Ibid V:8.

267 LM, IV:4;5.
embrace the cross as our own and follow him.\textsuperscript{268} Monaldo’s shift in attention, and the consolation of the spirit he receives afterwards, must then be read as Bonaventure providing an example to his brother friars of how even the words of the greatest of preachers cannot feed us in the same way that the Spirit can when we contemplate God’s wondrous good. Thus we see in the fifth stage too the correspondence between the wings of the \textit{Itinerarium} and the crosses of the \textit{Legenda Maior}.

As Bonaventure would later note in \textit{De Triplici Via}, when one contemplates the wonder of the goodness of God, one is “lifted up beyond everything that can be sensed, imagined, or understood.”\textsuperscript{269} It is through this lifting up that one begins to experience the final state of self-transcendence wherein the power of love transforms the lover into their beloved. As Boehner notes, when one reaches the sixth wing (or the sixth cross), they “have reached here the peak of St. Bonaventure’s philosophical speculations as a help to the return of the mind \textit{[mens]} to God. . . . Now the soul, its gaze fixed on the idea of being, freely turns from one attribute of God’s being to another, perceiving their intimate connection and inter-relation enraptured and full of admiration.”\textsuperscript{270} Boehner goes on to note “when it now passes to the idea of Goodness, revealed by Sacred Scripture, the soul climbs a step higher to the highest peak toward which contemplative theology tends, and contemplates the necessity of the generation and spiration

\textsuperscript{268} \textit{LM}, IV:10.

\textsuperscript{269} \textit{DTV}, 1:15.

\textsuperscript{270} Philotheus Boehner, OFM, “Commentary on the \textit{Itinerarium Mentis In Deum}” in \textit{Itinerarium Mentis in Deum}, 215.
of Blessed Trinity itself.”²⁷¹ The different audiences are, as before, treated to very different ways of explaining God’s interconnectedness. Within the realm of theory, Bonaventure launches into a straightforward, albeit densely concentrated, discussion of the Trinity’s relationships in order to highlight the fact that the supreme good there is “from eternity a production that is actual and consubstantial, and a hypostasis as noble as the producer, and this is the case in production by way of generation and spiration.”²⁷² When one realizes this the eye of one’s mind will be able to “reflect on the purity of that goodness which is the pure act of the principle that in charity loves with a love that is free and a love that is due, and a love that is a combination of both, which would be the fullest diffusion” of the love of God poured out for the word through the divine missions. In both the generation of the Son and the spiration of the Spirit, one is contemplating a great truth, “but when you think of them in relation to each other you have something that will raise you to the highest sense of wonder.”²⁷³ This of course represents the seventh and final step of illuminative contemplation, that of intuition of the truth, which is required to begin the process of ascension to the fullness of the spousal union and the fullness of conformation to Christ.

Bonaventure describes the truth, which one intuits as follows:

The perfect illumination of the mind is found in this consideration when, as on the sixth day, the mind sees humanity made in the image of God. For if an image is an expressed likeness, then our mind has already reached something perfect when it contemplates our humanity so remarkably exalted and so ineffably united in Christ, the Son of God, who is by nature the image of the invisible God; and when, at the same time, our mind


²⁷² Itinerarium, VI:2.

²⁷³ Ibid, VI:3.
sees in a single glance the first and the last . . . Here with God the mind reaches the perfection of its illumination on the six step, as on the sixth day.  

The way in which this final step, the realization and contemplation of the link between humanity as the image of God, Christ, and the divine missions is discussed in the *Legenda Maior* is perhaps one of Bonaventure’s greatest achievements in communication. While he does not explicitly mention the theology behind the divine missions, he relies on the basic theological education received by his *studium*-educated audience to allow them to draw the connection between Francis’ life, the image of the trinity and the divine missions. The foundation for these connections is first laid within chapter four, wherein Bonaventure presents a description of Francis as the second Elijah that concludes with the phrase “the Spirit of the Lord had come to rest” upon him.” Studium educated friars would have recognized this phrase as being taken from Luke 4:18. As we know from his *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, Bonaventure linked this passage with the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the linking of Jesus human and divine natures by the Spirit. Assuming, therefore, that the friars remembered the standard biblical education they received from Franciscan *magistri* within the studium, one can assume that the audience would read the rest of the text having associated Francis’ conformity with Christ to the indwelling of the Spirit within him, and thus would not have separated Francis conformity with Christ from conformity with the other two persons of the Trinity.

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274 *Itinerarium*, VI:7.


Following chapter four, Bonaventure spends ten chapters discussing Francis’ life of imitation of Christ and the miracles that he performed due to this. While the length is much too great to be summarized here, it is important to note that Bonaventure begins chapter thirteen, which deals with the stigmata, by noting that through these miracles “like the heavenly spirits on Jacob’s ladder, he [Francis] either ascended to God, or descended to neighbour,” and that at a certain point of ascent, while on Mount Alverna, “he experienced an overflow of the sweetness of heavenly contemplation, was on fire with an ever intense flame of heavenly desires, and began to be aware more fully of the gifts of heavenly entries.”

As a keen reader can see, this passage is clearly a description of what one will feel when one reaches the perfect illumination of the mind. It must be noted that just as in the *Itinerarium* Bonaventure links this level with contemplation of the divine missions. He does this by noting that during his contemplation Francis opened the Gospels “three times in the name of the Most Holy Trinity. All three times, when the book was opened, the Lord’s passion always met his eyes.”

The mention of the Lord’s passion not only foreshadows Francis’ perfect conformation to Christ and the spousal union, which that entails for Bonaventure; it also implies that Francis meditated on the Christ breathing forth his spirit (cf. Jn 18:30), something the *studium* educated friars would have associated with the completion of Christ’s earthly mission, which would lead to the mission of the Spirit, whom Christ breathed out into the world on the cross. Bonaventure also makes it clear, as he does in the *Itinerarium*, that Francis recognizes that in addition to his illuminative understanding of the passion, he has

\[277 LM, XIII:1.\]

\[278 Ibid, XIII:2\]
begun to operate on the level of perfect contemplation, since “the unconquerable enkindling of love in him for the good Jesus had grown into lamps and flames of fire that many waters could not quench,” that all he needs to do is wait “to be conformed to him in the affliction and sorrow of his passion.” 279 This conformation comes, within the Legenda Maior, on the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross when Francis, while praying, sees Christ in the form of a fiery seraph “in the form of the cross and fastened to a cross.” 280 Bonaventure immediately follows this description with the description of Francis “ascending to the throne of Solomon” when the Seraph marks him leaving in “his heart a marvelous fire and imprinting in his flesh a likeness of signs no less marvelous.” 281 This passage has a corresponding passage in the Itinerarium, wherein it equates to Francis’ vision of the six-wing Seraph with one “experiencing as far as possible in this pilgrim state, what was said on the cross to the thief who was hanging there with Christ: This day you will be with me in Paradise.” 282 Thus, Francis, being transformed by the Seraphic Christ, becomes for Bonaventure both the final vision of the cross and the personification of the throne of Solomon.

The form of Christ as the seraph plays an important role in both the Itinerarium and the Legenda Maior, as it is both what connects the experience of love-mysticism found within the stigmata to the Regula Bullata. The Seraph not only represents Christ as the end of the journey into God; it represents the entire journey. The six wings call to mind the six

280 Ibid, XIII:3.
281 Ibid, XIII:3.
282 Itinerarium, VII:3.
wingspans and the six images of the cross which have led the Franciscan friar to “meditate on the mystery of God beyond Being” in order to achieve a spousal union with God that Hayes describes as the ability, I would add through this form of spousal union which Bonaventure is guiding the friar to, “to a reflection of being precisely as a Being-in-love.”283 It is the reflection of being in love that transforms the lover into the beloved. Although it is a coincidence, it is quite fitting that Hayes chooses to use the phrase Being-in-love to describe the way one understands God when one has reached the level of contemplation, because it corresponds perfectly with the language Lonergan uses to describe the soul that has achieved the fullness of religious conversion, which occurs when one cooperates with the grace of religious conversion that is initially present, as it can be achieved in this life (i.e., a soul in the dynamic state of being in love). Thus once again we see that Lonergan’s language of conversion can serve to effectively illuminate the meaning behind Bonaventure’s spiritual theology. Being-in-Love converts one to being-in-love and allows the soul to enter into a dynamic state where it becomes closer and closer to God both through self-transcendence and the penetration of awe, so that “our deepest and total affection must be directed to God and transformed into God,” so that “when [God] has been shown to us [in this way], we may say with Philip: It [the dynamic state of being in love] is enough for us.”284

As was noted in the last chapter, Bonaventure makes it clear that the surest way for a Franciscan to achieve salvation is to become a perfect follower of the Regula to which they are vowed. He even preached within his 1255 “Morning Sermon” “the doctrine and Rule of

283 Bonaventure, 112.

284 Itinerarium, VII:4; 6.
Saint Francis are the most perfect way to reach eternal life. In the same sermon he notes, “it pleased the Lord to endorse and confirm the teaching and Rule of Saint Francis, not only by miraculous signs but also by the marks of his own stigmata.” The state of perfection that is symbolized by total imitation of Francis must be understood then as a sign that the Franciscan who has achieved it has achieved the perfection of the *Regula* as much as they can within this life, and have therefore become an imitation of Christ, and an imitation of Francis, and while not all Franciscans are marked with visible stigmata, it is clear from Bonaventure’s description of being in love as being “penetrated to the very marrow with the fire of the Holy Spirit whom Christ has sent into the world,” that those who achieve this perfection of the *Regula* will experience an interior transverberation. Bonaventure also makes it clear that the friars who experience this interior change are not to announce it to the world. Within the *Legenda Maior*, he does so by discussing the example of Francis, who “so cautiously concealed [the wound in his side so] that as long as he was alive no one could see it except by stealth.” To the readers of the *Itinerarium*, he simply notes that this state of being in love is “mystical and very secret, which no one knows except one who desires it, and no one desires it except one who is penetrated to the very marrow etc.” The question may be asked why Bonaventure desires for the friars to keep it a secret, instead of using it to aid other friars on their journey. My answer to that would be that the two are not mutually exclusive. The


286 Ibid, 513.

287 *Itinerarium*, VII.4.


289 *Itinerarium*, VII.4.
Franciscan way of life clearly calls for humility, which would be why one should not boast about having achieved this state, (although that would be a paradox since one who has achieved a conformation to Christ which is as perfect as it can be in this life would emulate Christ’s humility) it also calls for community. The converted friar must not separate himself but rather emulate the example of Francis, who after his stigmata “not only burned with a seraphic love into God, but also thirsted with Christ crucified for the multitude of those to be saved” “more by example than by words.”

This is not a call to “preach the gospel at all times, and use words when necessary,” but rather a call having been transformed by the being-in-love to continue to fulfill the mandates of the *Regula* to preach with words that are “well-considered and chaste,” and to live the gospel which instructs its readers to “preach the gospel to all nations,” (cf Mt 28:19) so that Jesus may “draw all people to himself.” (cf Jn 12:32).

When one who is operating in the dynamic state of being in love does this, the love of Christ shines through them so that they like Francis can “fulfill and teach Christ’s Gospel” to all they encounter and provide for their fellow friars an example of “how they might sincerely keep the rule they had accepted, how they might advance in all holiness and justice before God, [and] how they might should improve themselves and be an example for others” by following the system set out by Bonaventure, whether it be in the language of theory as presented in the *Itinerarium* or the language of common sense as presented in the *Legenda Maior*.

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290 LM: XIV: 1; *Itinerarium* VII:3.


292 LM, IV,1.
Conclusion

As a Franciscan friar, Bonaventure would have lived a life that was dedicated to the gospel of Jesus Christ. When one considers this, in light of Bonaventure’s life, it seems appropriate to suggest that perhaps the scripture which Bonaventure tried to live out most perfectly was the passage from John’s last supper discourse in which Christ prayed “that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us” (Jn 17:21). This passage perhaps perfectly describes the project which Bonaventure set out to see accomplished during his tenure as Minister General, a way in which all Franciscans, be they intellectual or pastoral, spiritual or conventual, could be united in a spiritual system that would allow them to live out their Regula more truly and conform themselves to Francis more fully. As I have shown, when one reinterprets the Itinerarium and the Legenda Maior through Lonergan’s general empirical method, one can see that Bonaventure has done so, creating a system that is not only perfectly designed to awaken the friars to the spirit found within Francis’ writings, but which can be accessed by both the practical and the intellectual, given the unique way in which he presented it. By transposing the process of descent and ascent from the language of theory to the language of common sense, Bonaventure truly discovered a way to ensure all members of the ever-expanding Franciscan movement were able to access the wisdom of their founder in a way in which they could easily understand it and transfer its content into their day to day operations. Through his use of interiority, Bonaventure truly, as Armstrong et al put it, engaged in the “ministry of guiding his brothers, that is of aiding them in discovering the wonder of their Founder and his vision of the world, themselves and the God who calls them” in a way that would have, had it been understood properly by the spirituals
after his death, shaped the “ideals of the life of the brotherhood for generations to come.”

It is my hope that this new interpretation of the *Itinerarium* can allow it to achieve this goal, by clearing up any misconceptions that may arise from the way in which the Karris-Armstrong school interpreted various parts of Bonaventure’s thought process or his intentions within its composition. It is my hope that moving forward this project will help to place Bonaventure within an authentically Franciscan framework within his own historical time period, allowing for a dialectical assessment of his works so that the long neglected contributions which he makes to the realm of theology, which have so often, as Doran and Häring have pointed out, been regulated to a point of comparison or, at worst, contrast with Neo-Scholastic theological thought, may be properly understood and developed into authentic tools for those working in the functional specialty of systematics, for the good of the members of the Franciscan family, the church and the academy at large, and ultimately, as I believe Francis and Bonaventure would have wanted, for all those people of good will who are searching for God in order to co-operate with the grace that has begun to light the seraphic fire within their hearts so that they may be transformed from state of lovers into the dynamic state of being beloved and being in love with the Beloved Being in love.

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