

VOLUME V

Works of St. Bonaventure



WRITINGS CONCERNING THE FRANCISCAN ORDER

Introduction and Translation
by Dominic Monti, O.F.M., Ph.D.

WORKS OF
SAINT BONAVENTURE

V

WRITINGS CONCERNING
THE FRANCISCAN ORDER

St. Bonaventure's
Writings Concerning
The Franciscan Order

WORKS OF SAINT BONAVENTURE

Edited by
George Marcil, O.F.M.

St. Bonaventure's

Writings Concerning
The Franciscan Order

Introduction and Translation

by

Dominic Monti, O.F.M., Ph.D.

The Franciscan Institute
St. Bonaventure University
St. Bonaventure, New York 14778

1994

Copyright © 1994
The Franciscan Institute
of St. Bonaventure University

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number:
94 - 70311

Printed in the United States of America
BookMasters
Ashland, Ohio

Table of Contents

Preface vii

Introduction 1

Writings of Bonaventure Concerning the Order

A Letter in Response to Three Questions
of an Unknown Master (1254-55) 39

First Encyclical Letter (1257) 57

A Letter to the Count and Countess
of Flanders (1259) 63

A Letter to the Abbess and Sisters of the
Monastery of St. Clare in Assisi (1259) 67

The Constitutions of Narbonne (1260) 71

Statutes Issued by the Chapter of Narbonne (1260) 137

Instructions for Novices (c.1260) 145

Statutes Issued by the Chapter of Pisa (1263) 177

Two Letters on the Friars' Relations
with the Poor Clares (1263) 189

Statutes Issued by the Chapter of Paris (1266) 199

Explanations of the Constitutions
of Narbonne (1266) 205

Second Encyclical Letter (1266) 225

A Letter to All Brothers
Who May Be Concerned (1266) 231

Agreement with the Canons of the

Cathedral of Cambrai (1268)	233
Decrees Issued by the Chapter of Assisi (1269)	239
A Letter to the Canons of Kaiserswerth (1269)	245
A Letter to the Custodian and the Guardian of Pisa (1271)	247
Statutes Issued by the Chapter of Lyons(1272)	249
A Letter to the Abbot of Bourgmoien in Blois (1273)	253
Decrees Issued by the Chapter of Lyons (1274)	255
Appendix: Daily Life in the Medieval Friary	261
Abbreviations	267
Bibliography	271
Index	275

Preface

This completed book looks quite different than what I had first envisioned. The idea for it arose a number of years ago, when I began teaching a course in Franciscan history. I was faced quickly with the lack of sources in English on the history of the Order after the time of St. Francis, and thought that a translation of some of the legislative documents from the period of Bonaventure's generalate might prove useful for students. But the project has grown greatly in the writing. First of all, it soon became apparent that simply providing a straightforward translation would not be that helpful; documents regulating daily life in an age far removed in both time and mentality from the present needed considerable explanation as well. Then I realized that taking such a route opened up a further possibility: presenting a much wider selection of texts, so that we might possess a comprehensive translation and commentary on all of Bonaventure's writings as general minister of the Order. Such a project would help round out our understanding of a man who was not only a great theologian, but a highly competent and successful leader of his brotherhood for over half his Franciscan life. This would also provide a window through which the student might be able to examine a cross-section of Franciscan life in the third quarter of the thirteenth century.

This book contains twenty documents, about half of which are writings of Bonaventure himself, the rest being the legislation of the Order during his generalate, over which he had a great influence. It is essentially a translation of the authentic *opuscula ad Ordinem spectantia* published in Volume VIII of the Quaracchi edition. I have eliminated the spurious and doubtful works printed there, and have also omitted the *Apologia pauperum*, the *Legenda major*, and the *Legenda minor*, both because of their length and their ready availability in English translation. However, I have added a number of other works which have come to light subsequent to the publication of the Quaracchi edition and which are considered authentic. Since these twenty documents represent a wide range of both style and content, I thought it most helpful to arrange them in chronological order, prefacing each with an introduction. A general introduction precedes the selections,

viii / Preface

placing Bonaventure's administration as general minister in historical perspective. Since I have aimed this work at the reader whose knowledge of foreign languages may be limited, my notes refer to English-language scholarship wherever possible. To translate the numerous Scriptural passages, I have used the New Revised Standard Version (1989), except where Bonaventure's Vulgate substantially differs in meaning; in such cases I have attempted to modernize the Douai-Rheims Version.

As I look back at the writing of this book, I realize how indebted I am to a great many people. The staff of The Franciscan Institute has always been most supportive in this project. In particular I would like to thank Fr. George Marcil, O.F.M., the editor of this series, who suggested that I contribute this volume and has been most generous in allowing me the time to complete it. Fr. Canisius Connors, O.F.M., painstakingly checked many of the translations, saving me from numerous errors. Fr. Servus Gieben, O.F.M. Cap., of the Capuchin Historical Institute in Rome kindly sent copies of several items unavailable in this country. I owe a long-standing debt to Sr. Sylvia Rauch, R.S.C.J., librarian of Holy Name College in Silver Spring, Md., who for years has faithfully maintained Holy Name Province's collection of Franciscana there and has always generously responded to my many requests for assistance. Most immediately, I am grateful to my school, the Washington Theological Union, for providing a semester sabbatical which has enabled me to complete this book. The community at the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, Ca., has warmly received me during these months. In a particular way, my fellow friar historians: William Short, O.F.M., Maurice Sheehan, O.F.M. Cap., and Joseph Chinicci, O.F.M., have shared their insights, their books, and their fraternal support. The staffs of the Flora Lamson Hewlett Library of the Graduate Theological Union and the Library of the University of California at Berkeley have been most cooperative. Dr. Eric Steinle has kindly provided me with the translation of one document from the medieval French. My unfailingly generous colleague at the Washington Theological Union, Michael Blastic, O.F.M. Conv., has read over the entire manuscript. And I would be remiss if I did not express my gratitude to those who have helped me in less tangible but even more

important ways through their continual personal support while I was engaged in this project: my Franciscan brothers in Silver Spring, both at Holy Name College and my present community at Gemelli House; our provincial minister, Fr. Anthony Carrozzo, O.F.M., himself a great lover of Bonaventure, who has always encouraged my work on the Seraphic Doctor; and especially my parents, Anthony and Alice Monti, who for half a century have given me life and love. To them I dedicate this book.

Dominic V. Monti, O.F.M.
21 November 1993
Feast of Christ the King

Introduction

Bonaventure as General Minister

In February of 1257, Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, for the previous three years regent master of the general study house of the Friars Minor at the University of Paris, was unanimously elected general minister of his 30,000 member brotherhood, spread throughout Western Christendom. He would occupy that position for the next seventeen years, finally handing over the reigns of government at a general chapter of the Order held in conjunction with the Second Council of Lyons in May, 1274.¹ This was by far the longest tenure of any Franciscan general minister in the thirteenth century, an era when that office was constitutionally much more powerful than it would become in the future. When one adds to this a strong character and a powerful intellect, it meant that Bonaventure had the opportunity to stamp the Franciscan Order with his own personality in a way that virtually no other leader in its history would enjoy. His Order was young, not quite fifty years old, at the time of his election, and still in the midst of a period of expansion and institutional formation. Within this relatively brief lifetime, the Lesser Brothers of Francis of Assisi had been dramatically transformed from a group of itinerant, socially marginal laborers, hermits, and preachers, mostly laymen, to a vast international organization dominated by clerics, involved in numerous and virtually indispensable pastoral activities in the church.

But strangely enough, a truly accurate appreciation and understanding of Bonaventure's role as general minister of the Order has been difficult to attain.² There are several reasons that account

¹There are very few dates in Bonaventure's life known with certitude: these are two of them. For the most commonly accepted chronology, see Jacques G. Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson, N. J.: St. Anthony's Guild Press, 1964), pp. 171-77. Bougerol revised this slightly in light of later research in *S. Bonaventura 1274-1974* [hereafter *SB*] 5 vols. (Grottaferrata: Collegio S. Bonaventura, 1974), 1: 9-16.

²Other than the treatments in the histories which will be discussed below, there are very few studies on Bonaventure's activities as general minister in English. Noteworthy among these are Rosalind B. Brooke, "St. Bonaventure as Minister General," *S. Bonaventura francescano*, Convegno del Centro di Studi sulla spiritualità medievale 14 (Todi, 1974), pp. 77-105; and Raoul Manselli, "St. Bonaventure and the Clericalization of the Friars Minor," *Greyfriars Review* 4 (1990): 83-98. As for studies in other languages, the

for this. First of all, precisely because the Friars Minor were still deeply engaged in a process of institutional self-definition during his administration,³ it has been hard for later generations to evaluate his own contribution to this process without prejudice. For within a few years after his death, a vocal minority party, the "Spirituals," began expressing vehement disagreement with the directions their Order was taking.⁴ For them, Bonaventure increasingly appeared as a villain, albeit a devout one, who had betrayed Francis's ideals. Under the guise of moderation, he had permitted laxist tendencies to grow up which led the Order down a self-destructive path. From their vantage point, looking back at Franciscan history after long years of agonizing struggle, Bonaventure provided a striking contrast to his zealous predecessor, John of Parma, whom they idealized as the champion of the brotherhood's primitive charism. This re-telling of Franciscan history in Spiritual circles was captured in a powerful vision which became part of later Franciscan mythology:

At about the beginning of the ministry of Brother John of Parma, Brother John of Massa was rapt in ecstasy, in which God revealed to him the future of the Order. He saw a certain high and beautiful tree with spreading branches: at the very top was John of Parma, and grouped around him, on all the branches according to their provinces, were all the brothers of the Order. After this he saw Christ give to St. Francis a chalice full of the spirit of life, telling him to offer it to each of his brothers. John of Parma drank of it deeply and devoutly, becoming bright and luminous as the sun. But only a few of the other brothers followed his example. Some even pushed

most thorough treatment of Bonaventure's generalate is still that of Gratien de Paris, *Histoire de la fondation et de l'évolution de l'Ordre des frères mineurs au XIIIe siècle*, reprint of 1928 edition with updated bibliography by Mariano D'Alatri and Servus Gieben (Rome: Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini, 1982), pp. 249-320. One should also mention a collection of articles on the theme "S. Bonaventura francescano," *Incontri Bonaventuriani* 10 (1974); Giovanni Odoardi, "L'evoluzione istituzionale dell'Ordine codificata e difesa da S. Bonaventura," *MF* 75 (1975): 137-85; and Francesco Corvino, *Bonaventura da Bagnoregio: francescano e pensatore* (Bari: Dedalo Libri, 1980), pp. 144-215, a very judicious treatment.

³An important new study by Roberto Lambertini, *Apologia e crescita dell'identità francescana (1255-1279)* *Nuovi Studi Storici* 4 (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1990), argues that during these years the friars "constructed a progressively more precise understanding of their presence as an Order in the midst of both church and society" (p. 5). In this, he illustrates Bonaventure's central role.

⁴For a good introduction to the Spirituals' background and ideas, see Duncan Nimmo, *Reform and Division in the Medieval Franciscan Order* (Rome: Capuchin Historical Institute, 1987), pp. 78-108, although the prejudices of the author are evident. See Optatus van Asseldonk, *Greyfriars Review* 3 (1989): 79-95.

the cup away, spilling its precious contents; these became horribly deformed, like devils. Many others drank only a little and tossed the rest away. Then suddenly, John saw the whirlwind of a great storm coming against the tree; he left his post at the top and hid in a safe spot in its trunk. Another brother, Bonaventure, one of those who had drunk only part of the chalice, climbed up to take his place. Immediately Bonaventure's nails grew hard as iron and sharp as razors and he went down towards John of Parma, intent on wounding him. Only the intervention of Christ stopped him from doing so. But then, the violent storm hit the tree: those who had rejected the cup quickly fell to their destruction, while John and his faithful remnant were spirited away to safety. Meanwhile, the great storm continued to buffet the tree, until it finally crashed to the ground.⁵

For many years such stories were simply unofficial, virtually 'underground' opinions. Although repeated, they made little impact on the telling of Franciscan history by the Order's chroniclers in the later Middle Ages, and by its scientifically-trained historians in the early modern period. These authors dismissed the Spirituals as misguided fanatics. Instead, they presented Bonaventure's generalate as an unambiguous success story: he was the Order's great lawgiver, whose Constitutions of Narbonne had remained the basis and pattern for all its subsequent legislation; its spiritual master, whose *Life of St. Francis* had presented the model of holiness for its members; its great defender, whose brilliant apologies had routed its adversaries and whose explications of the theoretical underpinnings of Franciscan life continued to define the life and function of the Friars Minor within the People of God. Because of these contributions, he could rightly be considered the "second founder" of the Franciscan Order.⁶

⁵Paraphrased from the *Fioretti*, c. 48 (*Omnibus*, pp. 1411-14). The *Fioretti* are a late 14th century vernacular abridgement of stories which circulated in Spiritual circles and were compiled as the *Actus beati Francisci et Sociorum ejus* between 1327 and 1340. Another version of this vision is in Angelo Clareno's *History of the Seven Tribulations of the Order of Minors*, dating from the mid 1320's (*ALKG*, 2: 280-81, 284-87).

⁶This inherited view of Bonaventure's generalate was best expressed by Leonhard Lemmens, *Der hl. Bonaventura: Kardinal und Kirchenlehrer* (Munich, J. Koselschen, 1909), pp. 148-205. The fullest presentation in English is Raphael Huber, *A Documented History of the Franciscan Order from the Birth of St. Francis to the Division of the Order 1182-1517* (Milwaukee: Nowiny Publishing Apostolate, 1944), pp. 145-66. There are differences in

This canonized portrait of Bonaventure began to fade towards the end of the nineteenth century, as the 'underground' Franciscan sources began once again to surface and appeared in modern printed editions. The Spiritual myth began to find its way into modern scholarship; indeed, it was increasingly accepted as the authentic version of thirteenth century Franciscan history. No one did more to advance this revisionist view than Paul Sabatier, who involved Bonaventure and his generalate with the whole vexing 'Franciscan Question.'⁷ The established opinion that Bonaventure was the 'second founder' of the Franciscan Order had been predicated on the assumption that his policies marked a logical and organic development of the ideas of Francis as set down in the Rule of 1223. But what if, as Sabatier argued, that very Rule marked a dilution, if not an outright betrayal, of Francis's own intentions, a co-optation of his prophetic Gospel movement by the institutional church? Then Bonaventure's *Life of Francis* represented a politically-motivated attempt to suppress the 'real Francis' of the non-official biographies into a unoffending model of holiness for a clericalized Order serving that church. For Sabatier, Bonaventure simply "has not understood him whose disciple he wanted and believed himself to be."⁸

The Sabatier school has dominated treatments of Bonaventure's generalate, especially those in the English language, for much of this century: the old Spiritual mythology is very much alive. As an example, one might cite Dom David Knowles, the great historian of medieval religious orders, who writes:

John of Parma, indeed, both in his personal virtues and in his striving to maintain primitive purity of observance, . . . might well have been hailed as archetype by all later Spirituals; he was the first and last of his race to hold supreme power in the Order, and

perspective here: Lemmens represented the Observant tradition, Huber the Conventual.

⁷It was his brilliant *Vie de S. François d'Assise* (Paris, 1894) which initiated this debate: which of the many sources present the most accurate picture of the 'historical Francis'?

⁸As cited by M. D. Lambert, *Franciscan Poverty* (London, S. P. C. K., 1961), p. 112. F. C. Burkitt succinctly summarized the Sabatier thesis: "Bonaventure represents St. Francis as Church Authority would like to remember him" ("St. Francis of Assisi and Some of his Early Biographers," *Franciscan Essays* Volume 2 [Manchester: University Press, 1932], p. 21). For a thorough discussion, see E. Randolph Daniel, "St. Bonaventure a Faithful Disciple of St. Francis? A Reexamination of the Question," *SB*, 1:171-187.

the difficulties which led to his resignation, and his designation of Bonaventure as his successor showed clearly enough that the majority even of the most observant friars no longer shared his ideals.⁹

And although John Moorman, author of the standard treatment of medieval Franciscan history, is more than willing to give Bonaventure the title of 'second founder' of the Order, he intends it as a back-handed compliment:

His generalate marked a turning point in the history of the Order. In the days of John of Parma a real effort had been made to accommodate the more intransigent of the friars, and to organize the Order in such a way that those who were trying to adhere strictly to the primitive ideals of poverty and simplicity might be kept within the fellowship. Under Bonaventura a new plan was adopted. There was to be greater security and stability, greater privilege and prestige. The typical friar was no longer to be the wandering evangelist who worked in the fields, . . . a simple, devout, homely soul content to take the lowest place and be *idiota et subditis omnibus*,¹⁰ but a member of a religious house, well educated and well trained, a preacher and director of souls, a man whom the community could respect and whose services would be valued. In bringing about this change S. Bonaventura set the friars on the road they were henceforth to travel. It is, therefore, not without reason that he has been called 'the second founder of the Order.'¹¹

In short, *a priori* stereotypes have largely determined the interpretation of concrete facts concerning Bonaventure's generalate, both by the traditionalists and the revisionists. The student attempting to escape the grip of such stereotypes, however, is faced with another problem: despite what is at first glance an overwhelming amount of source material, there is actually a notable lack of personal information about Bonaventure himself which would

⁹*The Religious Orders in England* (Cambridge: University Press, 1948), Vol.1, pp. 177-78.

¹⁰An allusion to Francis's own description of the early brotherhood: "And we were simple and subject to all" (*Testament* 19). Citations of the writings of Francis are from the translation of Regis J. Armstrong and Ignatius C. Brady, *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), here p. 155.

¹¹*A History of the Franciscan Order from its Origins to the Year 1517* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 154. Earlier, Moorman had written that Bonaventure "never really understood the Franciscan ideal" (*The Sources for the Life of St. Francis of Assisi* [Manchester: University Press, 1940], p. 141).

help us better understand his policies as general minister. For a man who occupied the highest office in the Order for almost two decades, we know surprisingly little about him. The thirteenth century chroniclers, who are so helpful in providing both details and the broader context for Bonaventure's predecessors, offer little assistance. Salimbene, who has so much to say about his *paesano*, John of Parma, has only a few scattered remarks; Jordan of Giano and Thomas of Eccleston end their chronicles too early. Furthermore, there is no contemporary biography of Bonaventure; the earliest dates from the time of his canonization in 1482.¹²

Still, despite these difficulties, a good deal of progress has been made in recent scholarly research, which is forcing a number of revisions in the prevailing view.¹³ Here the major contribution has been the work done on Bonaventure's own writings. It is more and more evident that many of the "works concerning the Order" attributed to Bonaventure in the eighth volume of the Quaracchi edition are either spurious or, at best, of very doubtful attribution.¹⁴ Chief among these are the *Determinations of Questions concerning the Rule* (VIII, 337-74) and the *Exposition on the Rule* (VIII, 391-437), but they also include a number of minor treatises. We are beginning to realize that until quite recently many, if not most historians have formed their judgments about Bonaventure's values and motives on the basis of these inauthentic works. In other words, the verdict on his generalate has been rendered largely on false or shaky evidence.¹⁵ When one evaluates Bonaventure's administration on his authentic writings, a considerably different

¹²Lambert, pp. 112-13. The major medieval source of information on Bonaventure is the account of him in the *Chronicle of the Twenty-Four Generals* (AF 3: 323-55). This text, which dates from c. 1369, does incorporate an earlier work written in the late thirteenth century by Bernard of Besse, who for some time was Bonaventure's companion.

¹³As pointed out by Corvino, p. 144-46.

¹⁴See Ignatius C. Brady, "The Writings of St. Bonaventure regarding the Franciscan Order," *MF* 75 (1975): 89-112. Balduinus Distelbrink (*Bonaventurae Scripta authentica dubia vel spuria critice recensita* [Rome: Istituto Storico Cappuccino, 1975]) is more conservative in his assessment, but has at least reduced the works in question to the doubtful category.

¹⁵Moorman is a good example of this; his discussion of Bonaventure's view of the Order is based almost entirely on the *Determinations* and the *Exposition* (*History*, pp. 141-45).

picture emerges. In fact, the primary purpose of this present volume is to gather these writings in one place to assist those who want to form a more accurate understanding of the man and his actions.

The other main result of recent scholarship has been the recognition that Bonaventure was less decisive in the Order's overall development than previously thought. Statements like Moorman's that "his generalate marked a turning point in the history of the Order"¹⁶ are simply not true: the real turning point in Franciscan history occurred almost two decades before Bonaventure took office, when a *coup* orchestrated by some of the Order's leading clerics forced Elias from office, and reorganized it on quite different lines. In a series of chapters between 1239 and 1242, called by contemporary chroniclers the 'reformation' of the Order,¹⁷ far-reaching changes were made in its internal structures and, more importantly, a new orientation of its basic mission in church and society was appropriated. One concrete example may be mentioned at this point: the legislation of the Order. Contrary to what was often thought, Bonaventure's Constitutions of Narbonne were actually not very innovative; they simply put into a more systematic arrangement a miscellaneous collection of statutes, most of which dated from the period of 'reformation'.¹⁸ In this case, as in many others which will be evident in the documents, Bonaventure certainly did not "set the friars on the road they were henceforth to travel."¹⁹ When he joined the Order in 1243, the friars were already well on the way; Bonaventure did not forge the new directions, but was a product of them. This re-evaluation deprives Bonaventure of his title as 'second founder' of the Order, for if that title can be applied to anyone, it

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 154.

¹⁷Both Jordan of Giano (*Chronicle*, 63-65) and Thomas of Eccleston (*The Coming of the Friars Minor to England*, 13) refer to the 'reformation' of the Order during these years. These two works are cited from the translation of Placid Hermann, *Thirteenth Century Chronicles*, hereafter *TCC* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1961). The references here are to pp. 65-67, and 152-60, respectively. For a thorough treatment of these events, see Rosalind B. Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government*, hereafter *EFG* (Cambridge: University Press, 1959), pp. 181-246.

¹⁸Moorman, for example, claimed Bonaventure made major "innovations in the life of the friars" at Narbonne (*History*, p. 148). See the introduction to the *Constitutions of Narbonne*, below pp. 72-74.

¹⁹The phrase is Moorman's, cited earlier (*History*, p. 154).

more appropriately belongs to Haymo of Faversham, the major guiding force of the years of 'reformation.'²⁰ This is not to say that in his seventeen years as general minister Bonaventure did not make a profound and lasting impact on the life of the Order, but that his contributions were largely to refine, strengthen, and stabilize directions which most of his brothers in the Order had already accepted.²¹

Bonaventure's Order

At this point we must say a little more about the new ministerial emphases that had been confirmed in the 'reformation' of 1239-42, for more than anything else they had shaped the brotherhood Bonaventure was called upon to lead. With them the Franciscans had decisively focused their evangelical mission in the church, committing themselves to be major participants in what has been called 'the pastoral revolution.' This was a radical re-envisioning of the purpose and focus of the church's ministerial structures on the part of reform-minded clergy and theologians which had been taking place for the previous half century. But to fathom the full implications of this revolution, we must first place it in the broader context of the vast ecclesiastical renewal movement that had begun in the 11th century and without which it is incomprehensible.²² Prior to that time, the clergy of Western Europe, especially in rural areas, had been largely indistinguishable from their flocks: many were married, only a few were educated beyond knowing enough Latin to get through the church rituals. But, most of all, the clergy were totally caught up in the web of the feudal system. Bishops were 'spiritual lords,' who may have performed certain liturgical

²⁰Knowles accurately assesses Haymo's role: "He, more than any other single man, fixed the constitutional and social lines along which the order was to travel through the thirteenth century," Vol. 1, p. 173. The title 'second founder' was called into question a quarter of a century ago by Heribert Roggen, "Saint Bonaventure second fondateur de l'Ordre des Frères Mineurs?" *Études franciscaines*, n.s. 17 (1967): 67-69.

²¹Lazaro Iriarte expresses this in a nutshell: "It is an exaggeration to call St. Bonaventure 'the second founder.' . . . The evolutionary phase was over. Bonaventure did not amend or reform anything. Conservative by temperament, he accepted things as he found them" (*Franciscan History*, trans. Patricia Ross [Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982], p. 41).

²²For a comprehensive overview of these developments, see Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

functions, but were looked on mainly as holders of the diocesan estates, and therefore just as much powerful magnates as their 'secular' counterparts. The impact of feudalism on the level of the parish was even greater: here the local lords were in actual possession of the church, collecting revenues from its tithes and properties, and controlling the appointment of its priest. The idea of the church as a community had largely faded into oblivion; the village church was simply property, in the same way as the village mill. The priest who held the parish 'living' viewed his role in largely cultic terms, providing the rituals and blessings essential for his people, but in return, jealous of his rights to the customary fees attached to these services.²³

By the 11th century, several currents of reform had sprung up, seeking in various ways to revive the ideals of the 'apostolic church,' the community pictured in the Acts of the Apostles which stood in such striking contrast to the worldly one they saw about them. As these forces gradually gained influence in the Roman Church, they coalesced in a powerful ideological movement generally known as the Gregorian Reform. Its battle cry was the 'freedom of the church'; its objective was to sever as much as possible the ties that had entrapped the church under the control of lay lords, and to place it firmly under clerical leadership. One of its immediate aims was "to separate the clergy from the rest of society, preferably into communities living under a rule with common property, but at least stripped of the ties such as simony and marriage which bound them to the world." The consequences of this movement very much shaped the church which Bonaventure knew. Among them were the concepts of the church as a clerical corporation living under its own canon law and the Papacy as the central directing agency of the work of reform. But one aspect of the Gregorian Reform should be made clear: it really advocated nothing in regards to a reform of church ministry as such. Its proponents still thought of the priesthood in primarily cultic terms. From their perspective "the clergy must be freed from practices which made them ritually impure. Simony and clerical marriage were discussed not as obstacles to pastoral service, but in

²³*Ibid.*, pp. 21-28, for a good description of this 'proprietary church.'

terms of physical corruption" which rendered their worship sacrilegious.²⁴

It was not until well into the twelfth century that there began to be a major rethinking of the whole notion of pastoral care. This came about because of two factors: increasing demands placed on the clergy by a changing laity, and more sophisticated church structures. A growing European economy had spurred a revival of urban life, creating new social classes of merchants, professionals, and skilled workers who had greater expectations of church ministers than did the traditional peasantry. Challenged by this more complex society and by the competition of heretical sects, concerned churchmen increasingly saw the need to provide the laity with both a proper foundation in Christian faith and a suitable ethic for living in the world. The growing awareness of the spiritual needs of the faithful was paralleled by far-reaching developments within the structures of pastoral care: a steady movement towards a more regularized system of local parishes and increased control by the bishop over the routine administration of his diocese.²⁵ By the latter part of the twelfth century, theologians and reform-minded clergy, especially those connected with the Paris schools, were beginning to devote considerable attention to developing an appropriate pastoral strategy. It was predicated on the awareness that all Catholics had to take personal responsibility for living out their faith: sincere repentance and conversion of life was demanded of all. The laity could no longer be passive bystanders at cultic rituals – indeed, more and more of them were no longer content to remain so. The Paris reformers called for a dramatic shift in ministerial focus, which has rightly been called 'the pastoral revolution'. The new program they envisioned called for doctrinal preaching to instruct the laity in Christian belief and conduct, the use of the sacrament of confession as a vehicle of counseling and teaching, and the education of the parish clergy as a necessary step towards realizing these objectives.²⁶

²⁴For a fuller treatment of these themes see I. S. Robinson, *The Papacy 1073-1198: Continuity and Innovation* (Cambridge: University Press, 1990) pp. 98–108 (quotations from pp. 99–100).

²⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 219-26, 287-409.

²⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 489-504; 527-541. The last sentence simply re-words Morris, p. 489. For the rise of the school of pastoral theology at Paris, see J. W. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes*

These new perspectives became the official policy of the universal church at the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215; Pope Innocent III (1198-1216), who had imbibed them in his student days in Paris, was strongly convinced of their necessity. The reform decrees of the Council reinforced the uphill battle against entrenched patterns of corruption among clerics and religious and improved the day-to-day administration of the church. But their most innovative feature was their redirection of the pastoral responsibilities of the clergy. Canon 10 required that bishops "appoint suitable men to carry out . . . the duty of sacred preaching, . . . building up [the people] by word and example;" Canon 21 commanded that all adults confess their sins yearly to their own priest, who was "to inquire about the circumstances of both the sinner and sin, . . . prudently discerning what advice he ought to give and what remedy to apply;" Canon 11 prescribed the appointment of lectors "to teach scripture to priests and others, and especially to instruct them in matters which are recognized as pertaining to the cure of souls."²⁷ Thirteenth century Popes strove to insure the implementation of these decrees by securing the election of reform-minded bishops throughout the Western Church.²⁸

This vast program of pastoral reform did not originally involve the recently founded brotherhood of Francis of Assisi. Unlike Dominic's Preaching Friars, organized by zealous clergy seeking to respond to the religious needs enunciated by the Council, Francis's movement had arisen 'from below.' His Lesser Brothers were made up of lay people and a few clerics, motivated by a desire to renounce 'the world' – the web of avarice and status-seeking they perceived as the dominant forces in their society – to create a new type of community based on authentic Gospel values. They viewed their mission in the church as calling other Christians to true conversion of heart through

and Merchants: The Social Views of Peter the Chanter and his Circle (Princeton: University Press, 1970).

²⁷*Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman P. Tanner, hereafter *DEC* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1990), pp. 239-45. For a summary of Innocent's policies and the work of the Council, see Morris, pp. 418-51. The fundamental study is R. Foreville, *Latran I, II, III et Latran IV* (Paris: Editions de l'Orante, 1965), pp. 227-395.

²⁸The uneven impact of the reform efforts is vividly evoked by Robert Brentano, *Two Churches: England and Italy in the Thirteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

their informal penitential preaching but, more importantly, through the witness of their own converted lives as they worked and moved, propertyless and powerless, among their neighbors.²⁹ In this Francis and his companions were but one manifestation of a fervent 'grass-roots' evangelical piety increasingly evident among the laity in the late 12th century. These men and women viewed the true 'apostolic life' as imitating the very life of Jesus and his first disciples as described in the Gospels, characterized by a community of genuine mutual care, poverty, and preaching. But these new lay communities, especially those who insisted on unauthorized popular preaching and vernacular Scripture sharing, posed problems for an increasingly clericalized church. Its inability to incorporate them into its structures forced them either to be channeled into more traditional patterns of religious life or to be relegated to the fringes of the church, even to becoming heretical sects in opposition to it.³⁰

Innocent III had the vision to try to overcome these alternatives; although he made vigorous attempts to stamp out doctrinally heterodox groups, he also was sympathetic to the legitimate aspirations underlying new religious movements. He thus made it one of the objectives of his pontificate to accommodate such groups wherever possible. So when Francis and his small band of followers came to Rome in 1209 seeking Innocent's approbation, he viewed them as another instance of a larger policy. It is important to note, however, that Innocent's blessing on this occasion did not imply a blanket approval of the new Franciscan movement. Whenever possible, Innocent urged new religious foundations to profess one of the already approved rules. Although he may have sanctioned and encouraged the proposals of life (*proposita conversationis*) of other

²⁹There are numerous works on Francis and his primitive brotherhood, many of which are overly-romanticized. Accurate portrayals are given in Raoul Manselli, *St. Francis of Assisi*, trans. Paul Duggan (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1988); Cajetan Esser, *Origins of the Franciscan Order*, trans. Aedan Daly and Irina Lynch (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1970). Cf. also David Flood, *Francis of Assisi and the Franciscan Movement* (Quezon City, Philippines: The Franciscan Institute of Asia, 1989), which is valuable for emphasizing the social dimensions of the early movement, but often slips into polemics.

³⁰There is a rich literature on this 'evangelical awakening.' For an introduction to its spirit, see the classic study of M. D. Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 202-69.

types of communities and even recommended them to bishops, it does not seem that he viewed these actions as granting to them the character of a true religious order (*religio*); his policy was to give such groups time to mature, but when they sought definitive confirmation, to direct them to existing rules and institutes.³¹ From this perspective, the Fourth Lateran Council posed a very real threat to the new Franciscan movement. Canon 13 had enacted into law Innocent's policy that newly founded communities base themselves on one of the canonically approved religious rules;³² furthermore, it was far from clear how the preaching activities of a largely lay community would fit into the new program of doctrinal preaching by 'suitable men' licensed by the bishops.³³

Although one might speculate how Innocent III would have resolved these issues, his successors were quickly forced to take a position on the Lesser Brothers. Francis's new movement experienced a growth that can only be called astronomical: within a little more than a decade after its founding, it is estimated that there were between three and five thousand friars, spread throughout Italy and beyond the Alps, even to the lands of the infidel Muslims. Much of this dramatic increase was due to Francis's own remarkable missionary consciousness: convinced that his brothers had a message for all people, he purposely dispersed bands of them on ever further expeditions. In 1217, their vast numerical and geographical spread

³¹Michele Maccarrone, "Riforme e innovazioni di Innocenzo III nella vita religiosa," *Studi su Innocenzo III* (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1972), pp. 70-156.

³²The text reads: "Lest too great a variety of religious orders lead to grave confusion in God's church, we strictly forbid anyone henceforth to found a new religious order. Whoever wishes to enter on a religious way of life should follow one of those already approved. Likewise, whoever wishes to found a new religious house should accept the rule and institutes from already approved religious orders" (*DEC*, p. 242, altered). It is difficult to translate this decree into modern English; the word 'order' does not occur in the Latin text, simply the term 'religion.' At this time *religio* and *ordo* were roughly synonymous: a *religio* was a canonically approved way of life which individuals bound themselves to observe; an *ordo*, a canonically recognized group within the church with its own distinctive customs and regulations. This law did not forbid the foundation of a new 'religious order' in its modern sense of an independent congregation, but mandated that any such new group must conform to existing canonical patterns.

³³Canon 3 specified the penalty of excommunication against "those who hold to the form of religion but, denying its power, . . . dare publicly or privately to usurp the office of preaching without having received the authority of the Apostolic See or the Catholic bishop of the place" (*Ibid.*, pp. 234-35).

forced the fraternity to be divided into provinces. Such dramatic growth had its consequences. A movement of such size and appeal quickly came to the attention of the church's hierarchy, and it was transformed from within as well, as more and more zealous young clerics, seeking a true Gospel life, joined its ranks. Both of these factors would quickly transform the Lesser Brothers into agents of the pastoral reform agenda of Lateran IV.³⁴

In contrast to his celebrated predecessor, Honorius III (1216-1227) has often been neglected in Franciscan history, yet he played an extremely important role in it.³⁵ He was personally convinced that the work of reform took priority over ecclesiastical structures. Although the Lateran IV decrees had clearly made its pastoral program dependent on the local bishops, Honorius was not willing to wait for unreformed prelates to take the initiative. His confidence that Dominic's new Order of Preachers filled the description of the 'suitable men' called for by the Council led him to foster their ministry, largely exempting them from episcopal control. He favored Francis's Lesser Brothers in a different, but no less striking way. They broke so completely with the traditional mold of religious life that many bishops were unwilling even to receive them into their dioceses. Honorius responded by issuing a series of bulls commending the new fraternity, the earliest dating from 1219; in a clear break with the intent of the Lateran decrees, he clearly informed the

³⁴The fundamental study for the following development is Lawrence C. Landini, *The Causes of the Clericalization of the Order of Friars Minor 1209-1260* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1968). On the expansion, see Moorman, pp. 62-74. Also important are several articles in *Francescanesimo e vita religiosa dei laici nel '200* (Perugia: Università degli Studi, 1981).

This transformation lies behind the celebrated 'Franciscan question': to what extent did such changes represent or distort the values of Francis himself? Was "the movement waylaid" (Flood, *Francis of Assisi*, pp. 148-73) or not? Historians - and Franciscans themselves - have responded to that question differently. The answers reflect one's judgment of what in the life of the early movement is essential to the 'Franciscan charism.' Cf. Théophile Desbonnets, *From Intuition to Institution: The Franciscans* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1988), p. 135. This brief popular treatment provides many insights on this period but must be read with caution. As the author here admits, it is not objective history, but an exercise in *parti pris*. He is overly eager to prove his point, and to do so often resorts to gratuitous assumptions and half truths. The discussion of the Franciscan sources (pp. 151-65) is valuable.

³⁵James M. Powell, "The Papacy and the Early Franciscans," *FS* 36 (1976): 248-62; Landini, pp. 56-60; P. M. Gy, "Le statut ecclésiologique de l'apostolat des Prêcheurs et des Mineurs avant la querelle des mendiants," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 59 (1975): 75-88.

bishops that he considered the Friars Minor as an approved *religio*.³⁶ He also began to define the scope of their mission in a way that emphasized the role of the clerical friars. It is clear, for example, that individual Franciscans were increasingly being deputized for the work of doctrinal preaching envisioned by the Council, whereas the lay penitential preaching originally characteristic of the Order received less emphasis.³⁷

It was the next Pope, Gregory IX (1227-1241) who fostered the trends that were orienting the Friars Minor in a basically clerical direction. He enjoyed a unique relationship to the Franciscan movement, for as Ugolino di Segni, Cardinal Bishop of Ostia, he had been asked by Francis in 1220 to assume the role of "governor, protector, and corrector" of his embattled brotherhood. Indeed, it was probably his intervention that lay behind many of Honorius III's decisions in favor of the Friars Minor.³⁸ Although Gregory certainly

³⁶As Powell points out (pp. 254-62), the steps to 'regularize' the life of the Franciscan brotherhood after 1220 should be seen as attempts to preserve the Order from its Curial and episcopal critics. This was done by having the Lesser Brothers outwardly conform to canon 13 of Lateran IV by introducing various 'institutes' [i.e., constitutions] from 'already approved orders,' such as a year of probation, even though Honorius was actually moving in a direction contrary to that decree by confirming the status of the Friars Minor as a new *religio*, which he did with the formal approval of the Rule in 1223 (pp. 257-62). cf. Esser, *Origins*, pp. 137-202. Papal favoritism of the Franciscans is indeed evident when one looks at the fate of Durand of Huesca's 'Catholic Poor,' a group of reconciled Waldensians whose *propositum* was approved by Innocent III in 1208. In the years after the Council this brotherhood of itinerant preachers came under increasing fire for not adopting one of the 'already approved rules.' They were finally forced to profess the Rule of St. Augustine in 1237, although this did not save them from eventual suppression. *DIP*, 7: 232-36.

³⁷In the Rule of 1221 it is evident that some of the brothers were specifically designated as preachers (*RegNB* 17.1-2); in fact Francis contrasts their work with the informal penitential exhortations which "all my brothers" could make (*Ibid.* 21.1-9). In just two years, the latter reference was eliminated; the final version speaks only of formal preaching, for which a friar had to be examined and licensed (*RegB* 9.1-2). It was because more and more friars in Northern Italy were becoming involved in this ministry that in 1224 they requested Francis to allow Anthony of Padua to teach Scripture to them [Armstrong-Brady, pp. 122, 126, 141, 79]. See Servus Gieben, "Preaching in the Franciscan Order: From Announcing Penance to Formal Preaching," *Monks, Nuns, and Friars in Medieval Society*, ed. Edward King et al. (Sewanee: The University of the South, 1989), pp. 1-12.

³⁸Hugolino is portrayed as the *bête noire* of the movement by the Sabatier school. For a balanced assessment, see Edith Pásztor, "St. Francis, Cardinal Hugolino, and the Franciscan Question," *Greyfriars Review* 1 (1987): 1-29. The quotation is from the *RegB* 12.3.

respected and aided the work of the Dominicans, he had a marked predilection for the Franciscans he knew so well. He was convinced that their revival of the Gospel life was a gift from God to rebuild the church in a time of tremendous crisis, and as Pope he used every means at his disposal to defend and foster the mission of the Order. At the same time, he increasingly viewed that mission as one meeting the pastoral needs of the church.³⁹ His first explicit connection of the Franciscans with the agenda of Lateran IV was in a letter of 1230, requesting the bishops to allow the Friars Minor to preach in the churches of their dioceses if they were 'suitable men' approved by their ministers.⁴⁰ Later that same year, in the pivotal bull *Quo Elongati* Gregory made it much easier for the Order to provide such men by exempting its clerics instructed in Scripture from the stringent requirement of the Rule that all preachers must be examined personally by the general minister.⁴¹ It is important to note here that Gregory was not forcing the Franciscans to move in directions they did not want to go. The friars themselves had requested him to clarify the Rule on this point, precisely because they were eagerly assuming an ever more prominent preaching role, struggling against heresy and urban social problems and denouncing corruption in the church. These same years also witnessed their growing involvement as licensed confessors.⁴² To exercise these ministries better, the brothers were being granted their own churches in the towns; some were starting to work as chaplains to high officials and even being asked to serve as penitentiaries at the papal court and as apostolic legates.⁴³ The general ministers, John Parenti

³⁹Landini, pp. 60-67. See Regis J. Armstrong, "'Mira Circa Nos': Gregory IX's View of the Saint, Francis of Assisi," *Greyfriars Review* 4 (1990): 75-100.

⁴⁰*Si Ordinis Fratrum Minorum*, 1 Feb. 1230 (BF, 1: 58, no. 46).

⁴¹*Quo elongati*, 28 September 1230, ed. Herbert Grundmann, *AFH* 54 (1961): 23.

⁴²See Zelina Zafarana, "La predicazione francescana," and Roberto Rusconi, "I francescani e la confessione nel secolo XIII," in *Francescanesimo e vita religiosa* (1981), pp. 203-309; D. L. d'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 13-63. To judge from the example of England, the provinces of Northern Europe seem to have had a clerical thrust from the start (Landini, pp. 85-93).

⁴³A good illustration of how Franciscans were increasingly functioning as agents of Lateran IV's pastoral program is a letter of the Archbishop of Ravenna (1236) explaining the reason why the friars in Bologna were being given a church inside the city walls: "their other place was too far away from the city," thereby creating serious difficulties for "clerics and scholars who wish to attend classes and sermons, as well as

(1227-1231) and Elias of Assisi (1231-39), both educated lay brothers, were firm backers of the new trends. Steps were taken to begin organizing a study system so that the Order might train the type of educated cleric that was increasingly in demand. The latter group even gained a patron saint: the scholar and preacher, Anthony of Padua, who was canonized in 1232, within a year of his death.⁴⁴ The high point of this clericalizing trend was the bull *Quoniam abundavit iniquitas* of 1237, in which Gregory explicitly stated that the Order of Friars Minor was founded in order to spread the Gospel of Christ, a goal especially realized through its preaching against heresy and hearing the confessions of the faithful.⁴⁵

These directions were sealed in the great *coup* of 1239, in which some of the leading clerics of the Order brought about the removal of Elias as general minister, alleging both personal corruption and malfeasance in office. The Friars Minor would never be the same again: under the next two generals, Albert of Pisa (1239-40) and Haymo of Faversham (1240-44) they were literally 'reformed.'⁴⁶ An ambitious set of constitutions was framed, largely modeled on the Dominicans, which gave the Order a much more sophisticated governmental system. Francis had relied on charismatic leaders who enjoyed support from the rank-and-file; from now on supreme authority would rest in regularly elected assemblies, without whose consent the ministers could make no major decisions.⁴⁷ But more importantly, these constitutions officially committed the Order to the clericalized vision of its mission that had become increasingly

for the citizens at large, who want to go [to the brothers] to make their confession and to hear the Word of God" (Rusconi, p. 278). Other examples mentioned here are treated by Gratien, pp. 125-38.

⁴⁴One wonders if the reason for Anthony's rapid canonization was Gregory's desire to hold up to both the Order and the wider church a new model of holiness: a Lesser Brother who was both a 'good Franciscan' and served the pastoral needs of the church [Anthony had been a member of the delegation sent to Gregory requesting the clarifications of *Quo elongati*]. Representations of Anthony in 13th century art often couple him with Francis, giving him the same prominence, almost as if he were a co-founder of the Order.

⁴⁵*BF*, 1: 214, no. 224. A decade earlier, Gregory had issued a slightly different version of this same bull in favor of the Order of Preachers (Rusconi, p. 271). It shows that he was regarding the Minors "more and more as a twin of the Dominicans" (Landini, pp. 65-66).

⁴⁶See the literature mentioned in n. 17 above.

⁴⁷See the introduction to *Constitutions of Narbonne*, and rubrics 7-11 of the text.

dominant in practice. Legislation was drawn up severely restricting the type of candidate the Order would accept. Prime consideration was to be given those men whose previous training in Latin grammar equipped them for the ministries of preaching and hearing confessions that the Order viewed, in accord with Gregory IX's vision in *Quoniam abundavit*, as its apostolic *raison d'être*. Candidates fit only for performing domestic tasks were to be exceptions. It also seems that it was about this time, although there is no record of the actual legislation, that non-clerics were declared ineligible for the higher offices of the Order.⁴⁸ The original idea of a brotherhood open to any and all who may have wished to convert their life according to Gospel values was decisively abandoned.

Here it is important to keep in mind that despite this immersion of the Franciscans in the pastoral ministry, they still remained strikingly different to their contemporaries from both the secular clergy and traditional religious orders. While both of these enjoyed a regular income from tithes, fees, and rents from church property, the Friars Minor refused all these things. Their only livelihood was what they conceived to be the apostolic one: free-will offerings in return for their labor. Even then, the only donations they accepted were food, clothing and other necessities, not money. When they were given a church, they surrendered any tithes and real estate holdings that came with it. Furthermore, whereas the secular clergy were assigned definite congregations, the friars were itinerant, taking their message to the streets. If they had a church as a base of operation, it was simply a gathering place for people drawn to their services; the friars held the office of pastor over none of them.⁴⁹ In all of these ways, the Franciscans continued to preserve their role as outsiders to the ecclesiastical system, standing instead as members of the *popolani*, the working classes. In these ways, they still could appear and act as 'Lesser Brothers.' Yet the Order had moved a long way from the wandering life of the primitive brotherhood. More and more, the typical friar would be an educated cleric, living in a

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 1.3-4; rubric 6, "on the work of the brothers," is devoted almost exclusively to the occupations of the clerics; cf. *Statutes of Narbonne* 9. Landini, pp. 130-34.

⁴⁹*Const. Narb.* 3.1-5, 20-21. For examples of Franciscan dispossession when they were given churches, see Gratien, pp. 174-75.