

Bringing out of our storehouse the flesh and blood of our tradition in such a way as to feed future generations . . .

*The Prophetic Heart* (1994) — Joseph P. Chinnici OFM

## “Of God’s Fullness”

### FRANCISCAN EVANGELICAL LIFE: A 21ST CENTURY DIALOGUE

“I cannot emphasize enough that the retrieval of our tradition is yoked to our willingness to embody our *evangelical life form* as a viable religious life in the Church and in society.”<sup>1</sup>

(J.Chinnici OFM, 2001)

Nineteen years ago, Eric Doyle OFM, beloved Franciscan theologian from Canterbury, England, described that life form, challenging us to “. . . immerse ourselves in our theological tradition and enter into fresh dialogue with it, until it becomes part of the very air we breathe, and forms the structures of our vision of God, humanity, and the world”<sup>2</sup>

And Bill Short OFM gives us the reason for our hope in his signature manner of clarifying the challenge:

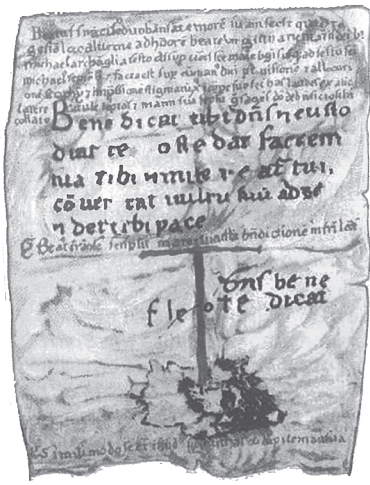
*People are seeking an alternative language — an alternative way of looking at*

- *the human person;*
- *the meaning of the Church and its place in the world;*
- *who God is,*
- *what Christ represents,*
- *what salvation or creation means in our day.*

*We have a hopeful word to speak to the concerns present in today’s Church and to the crises affecting our society.<sup>3</sup> To which Mary Beth Ingham CSJ adds, “Can we be a prophetic and countercultural voice in the face of a secularized, technologically advanced world that progresses at the expense of the most vulnerable? Can we work to change not just the structures of injustice, but the structures of thinking that support and justify the injustice?”<sup>4</sup>*

**“For the first time in centuries, we have the capacity to renew the tradition and to restore the evangelical synthesis of theology and lived experience.”**

Ilia Delio OSF<sup>5</sup>



## The TAU

From the time of Ezekiel the sign of the TAU, marked on the forehead of those turning to God in faith and repentance has long represented faithfulness and wholehearted love. It was used for healing and victory.

Pope Innocent III, evoked the sign of the TAU from Ezekiel when opening the Fourth Lateran Council in 1216 calling for the renewal of the Church, “Mercy will be granted to those to bear the TAU, a mark of a life of penance and renewal in Christ.”

And so Francis, who was present at the Council, wanted to sign himself with the TAU, and his brothers along with him. The TAU became the sign of the little Band’s mission: the preaching of faith and repentance (Rule of 1221:23).

Thomas of Celano, writing in 1252, notes, “The TAU symbol had, above all others, his preference. Francis used it as a signature for his letters, and he painted a drawing of it on the walls of all the cells.” One of these paintings, believed to be created by Francis, is found in the little chapel of Mary Magdalen at Fonte Columbo in the Rieti Valley where Francis wrote his Rule.

Another very precious document, housed in the Basilica of St. Francis, is Francis’ own handwritten blessing for Brother Leo — signed with the TAU.

*Above all else, the TAU meant mission for Francis: a mission to proclaim the Goodness of God by a wholehearted following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ because of whom all life is sacred.*



<sup>1</sup> Joseph Chinnici, “North American Stewardship of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition.” Paper presented at the Franciscan Institute, July 11, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Eric Doyle, “Saint Francis and Theology.” *The CORD* 32.4 (1982) 111.

<sup>3</sup> William Short, “Give An Account of the Hope That Lies Within You.” *The CORD* 53.5 (2003) 252.

<sup>4</sup> Mary Beth Ingham. *Scotus for Dunces*. NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, St. Bonaventure University, 2003. pages 147-8.

<sup>5</sup> Ilia Delio. “Franciscan Intellectual Tradition: Contemporary Concerns.” *Washington Theological Union Symposium Papers*, 2001. Franciscan Institute Publications, St. Bonaventure University NY, page 14.

# 800th Anniversary of Origins of the Franciscan Movement

1209 – 2009

## Francis receiving approval from Innocent III of the Proto-Rule

Francis wanted a Rule that would be no more and no less than the very *marrow of the Gospel*, a Rule open to the Spirit and the workings of God's grace at all times, in all circumstances and needs of the Church, the people of God, and the friars themselves.

Ignatius Brady OFM. Unpublished paper on  
"Saint Francis and The Holy Spirit."

In the year 1209 Innocent III recognized and approved Francis' way of life, and the story of the Franciscan movement began — in all its various institutional, historical, and cultural expressions.

Celebrating our origins gives our Franciscan way a "new face, animates our steps, tired at times, and leaves an imprint for the future of our life." This moment can render "the entire Franciscan movement more transparent as a way of gospel living."

*Following Christ with Francis Today*. A Program for Celebrating the Eighth Centenary of the Origins of the Franciscan Charism (2005-2009) OFM Conventuals, 2005

*Grace of Our Origins*. Curia generalis OFM, Rome, 2004



## A Treasure of Inestimable Riches

Our Franciscan tradition has a "word" to speak today, one that responds to deeply felt needs in our Church and our world. Our tradition can help to articulate a viable way of being Christian in the world today. . . . It becomes crucial for us to understand the next steps, which will bring the tradition into dialogue with today's questions in regard to:

- Christian faith
- The life of the Church
- The world of science and culture
- The needs and longings of the human family

And for all these concerns we can offer a "word" from an ancient and eloquent tradition, *giving an account of the hope that is in us*.

But that word will be lost, and that alternative vision will disappear if we do not take steps in these critical years to *retrieve, preserve, and articulate* that tradition in a language that is understandable to the men and women and the issues of our day.

### **Who else if not us? When else if not now?**

Bill Short OFM and Ilia Delio OSF,  
*The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition, CFIT*  
"Working Paper," 2001

Joe Chinnici OFM challenges, "We are at the point where we must either articulate the intellectual inheritance by updating it into new forms of life, thought and communication; or we will lose it — and with it ourselves."

[WTU Symposium, May 2001]

### **What is possible?**

"As a sign that they remember my blessing and my testament, let them always love one another."

Siena Testament. 3.

# Excerpts from “The Prophetic Heart: The Evangelical Form of Religious Life in the Contemporary United States”

Joseph P. Chinnici, OFM

Keynote address at the 29th Annual Franciscan Federation Conference, Chicago, August 31, 1994  
Published in *The CORD*, November, 1994. Volume 44, No.11, pages 292-306

## The Springs of Remembrance

The first step in the recovery of the evangelical vocation is to be convinced that the Franciscan charism *did not die* on October 4, 1226. “Led by divine inspiration” (TOR Rule 2:1; RegNB 2:1; RCL 2:1) we carry it in our hearts. Yet we do not carry it in exactly the same way as did Francis, Clare, or Giles of Assisi. I mention this at the very beginning because one of the key experiences which many people shared after the Council was that the categories, “contemplative,” “monastic,” “apostolic,” and “secular institute” just did not fit our family. We seemed to share in all four forms. The lived experience and value of being “**brothers and sisters**” in community did not sit well with the purists of the apostolic form; “our cloister is the world” (SC 63) hardly resonated with traditionally contemplative religious; itinerancy scratched uneasily inside a monastic garment; the existence of an approved religious rule predated any twentieth century form of secular institute.

When the contours of another option, the “**evangelical religious life**” were first outlined, the feeling emerged in many quarters, “*this fits*,” “*this is who we are*.” The reassuring experience was soon followed by the bewildering recognition that the “evangelical life” was not described in the *Code of Canon Law*, nor in traditional treatises on religious life, nor did history convey to us any clear tradition, inheritors as we were of a Franciscan rule shaped by an enclosed monastic form and stuffed into the apostolic body of the American Church. The cry, “That’s it!” was succeeded by “What’s it?” This response needs to be shifted to the question: “Who are we?”

## A review of the history of the discovery of our evangelical religious heritage

**1965 – 1981: a period marked by the renewal** initiated by the Council, a series of extraordinary general chapters, experimental constitutions, and a focused attempt to recover the charisms of our founders and foundresses, both in the thirteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was during this period that critical Latin editions of the writings of Francis and Clare were published and some of you participated in the international meetings for the rewriting of the Third Order Regular Rule.

**1982 – 1994: a period of definition and reception.** These twelve years began with the celebration of the eighth centenary of the birth of Saint Francis and have culminated this past year in a similar centenary for Saint Clare. The final *Rule* of the Third Order Regular Franciscans was given approval in 1982; subsequent years have seen a more precise definition of the “**evangelical form of religious life**,” the adoption of definitive constitutions, and the publication of the *complete English language editions* of the writings of Francis and Clare.

### Points of reflection:

1) The renewal initiated by the Council is only in its infancy. In the light of history, the reforms of Lateran IV (1215) and the Council of Trent (1545 – 1563), probably the most far reaching for religious life, took generations to establish themselves and underwent several mutations and enormous conflicts in the process. . . . Among ourselves, we are not yet dealing in any large numbers with the existential impact of the Council on people.



Rose Cecilia Case, Aston OSF with Dolita Kessler, Millvale OSF, USA Superiors General at the 1982 Rome Assembly. (See endnote #5, page 7).

2) It is clear that we are the **first** group of American Franciscan religious to have at our disposal

- critical editions of the sources;
- a life focused on a single *Rule* as opposed to customs, constitutions, and apostolic needs; and
- significant **new** understandings of the rise and growth of the penitential movement.

Our nineteenth century forbearers knew nothing of the *Letters to the Faithful* or the evolution of the *Rule* from Nicholas IV (1289) through Leo X (1521). While the *Rule* of 1927 was framed in the context of the 1917 *Code* and incorporated some references to the Franciscan sources, the 1982 *Rule* was shaped by a **complete recovery of the sources** and published before the 1983 revision of the *Code*.

We now know in a critical way that significant foundresses such as **Francis Bachmann (1824 – 1863)**, Ignatius Hayes (1823 – 1894), Alfred Moes (1828 – 1899), and others were formed by the constitutional and jurisdictional interpretations of their age. A Counter-reformation Church, and the demands of the frontier structured their spiritualities. All of this seems to indicate that for enlightenment in our situation we can rely not on the way in which our forbearers envisioned religious life or interpreted its ascetical practices

*but only on their pursuit of its heart.*

Yet we have inherited both the renewal occasioned by a return to the sources and our nineteenth century roots.

### Rereading our own tradition

There are two ways of reading our own experience. Caught as we are in the confluence of Franciscan and apostolic inheritances, *which for the first time* we are intellectually clarifying, we can feel a loss of identity and mission. Neither “apostolic” nor “evangelical,” we can lose ourselves in the quicksand of second guessing, passing judgments from one ideological perspective or another. . . . We sit uneasily with ambiguity, irony, metaphor, the coincidence of opposites; we want a clear system, part of the inheritance, I suppose, of an ingrained scholasticism.

**There is an alternative.** As an historian, I would like to suggest a reread of our own tradition. It seems to me that Francis, Clare, and companions — even to some extent the nineteenth century foundresses — found themselves in a similar situation, caught as they were in the confluence of a Gospel grace, the pastoral project of the church, the categorizations of the society, and the religious wilderness of the time.



They discovered that it was the ability, under the inspiration of the Spirit, to hold all of the parts in tension. That created their significant **evangelical option**. All of them refused to short-circuit their social, ecclesiological, and personal reality. They inherited not a scholastic system of *sic et non* but a monastic wisdom of **both/and**. Thus they remained in Assisi but lived on its margins; they identified with the *pauperes Christi* but refused the heretical option; they professed obedience to the Church, embarked on new initiatives, and embraced the consequences, *placing the cross of Christ at the heart of the struggle over power and vision*.

### A simple question

While we long for a coherent intellectual and practical position, is it not true that genuine religious life has generally caught fire only in the midst of long, hard, practical experience, the acceptance of life’s ironies, the struggle with others to put heart and mind and behavior together, and the discovery of God in that very experience? In this view, *the conflicts we experience are part of our evangelical life, not signs of its disappearance*. They form the point of entry into the prophetic heart en fleshed by Jesus and Mary, the disciples, and our forbearers.

3) History indicates that in our contemporary experience the first articulations of the “**evangelical form of religious life**” occurred in the context of the two great *internal* dialogue partners in the process of renewal:

- the teachings of the Church — whether conciliar, papal, or congregational
- the return to the sources.

Thus, the key years of 1982 and 1983 saw the:

- celebration of the centenary of St. Francis,
- English edition of Francis and Clare’s writings

- Promulgation of the *Codex Juris Canonici* with its application to religious life in *Essential Elements*, and
- Overarching presentation of “apostolic spirituality,” sponsored by the International Union of Superiors General, (USIG), Rome and supposedly applicable to most religious institutes.

### The distinguishing characteristics of the “evangelical option”

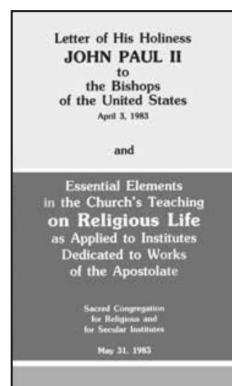
At that point in time, there was concern simply to articulate the distinguishing characteristics of the “**evangelical option**”:

1. a focus on Christ as the head of all creation,
2. the presence of God’s glory in human flesh,
3. the goodness of all that exists,
4. witness by word and example,
5. the reality of being brothers and sisters with its consequences for governance and the structures of community
6. the existence within a congregation of a multiplicity of works based on the talents of each person, and
7. the anthropological foundations of prayer.

### The term “evangelical”

Although it was recognized that all religious life is Gospel based, the term “**evangelical**” referred to the phrase uniquely placed at the beginning of the three rules (Francis, Clare, and the Third Order Regular): *vivere secundum formam s. Evangelii*. It stood for an alternative religious option, one which moved not from the needs of the world or canonical definition, but from a direct Catholic experience of the Spirit. The focus was thus:

- on being in-Spirited,
- in-personed in Christ,
- the formulation in words of a particular experience of God



- the recovery of a Franciscan specificity which had its own Scriptural, theological, and ecclesiological warrants. This thrust has continued up to the present in the response of the Federation to the upcoming Synod's *Lineamenta*.

## Continuing Considerations

How does it come about that the *Legend of Clare* narrates such strong connections between Clare's life and the welfare of the city, or even unbelievers responding to her public bearing, or that the citizens of the cities saw her life as mediating to their bodily health (21-23, *Process* 2:18, 4:11)?

What kind of self-understanding would enable Francis to write letters to the rulers of the people, the clergy within the entire Church, and all the faithful? What in Francis, Clare, and companions would others find so attractive as to be moved to listen to them? Surely, it would not be those elements which made their life distinctive, separate, consecrated into a race apart; it would instead, be characteristics which made their lives one with their fellow citizens.

From this perspective, what is outstanding even in the early history of the **Third Order Regular** movement is not *what makes it distinctive but what makes it universal*;

- its emergence from the lives of ordinary men and women and their desire to live together for God and neighbor;
- its identification of the *Letter to All the Faithful* as one of its charter documents;

Here is every Christian's call to holiness and every person's call to witness a human life with his or her neighbor.

## The Challenge

In terms of the poetics of the **evangelical life** in the context of American culture, the challenge lies in our discovering:

- a method of living together,

- a pedagogy of formation,
- a practice of asceticism, and
- a way of speaking about God which opens up to the human desire for the truly beautiful, the joyful, the affectionate, and the free.

In a society where God has no publicly visible body and the Church very little credibility, the mission of evangelical religious is to open up the experience of God-with-us for Catholic Christians in the Church and for all our fellow citizens in their call to be human.

[Joe Chinnici develops here the *Recovery of the Ancient Disciplines* applied to the creation of the evangelical option — a separate study in itself. He then challenges us to “abandon our eclecticism, to *resocialize ourselves*, and to bring out of our storehouse the flesh and blood of our tradition in such a way as to feed future generations.]

## Where do we go from here?

I believe we are in a process of marrying and birthing, creating a family, becoming spouses, mothers, and brothers/sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ. (TOR Rule, Preface). **It is not easy.** Learning to love has always a dimension of embracing in darkness, where only the stars guide us. However, I guess I would like to make a plea that we continue to discover, and that we do this with all of our intelligence and practice, making use of the historical tradition and contemporary insights which have been given to us. We need to develop:

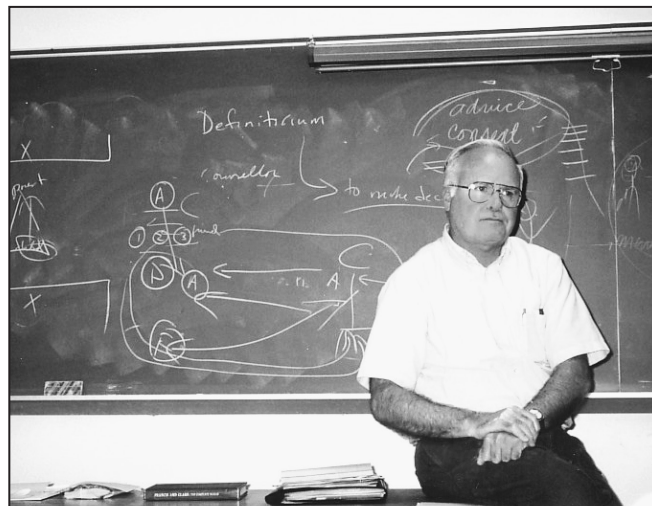
- a poetics of love,
- a politics of how to live together, and
- a pedagogy of spiritual wisdom.

*And in a society and Church which are rife with conflict, I think we need to do this a **little more self-consciously**:*

- Is it possible for us to develop with other members of the Franciscan family a general training program for our formators in the **evangelical life**?
- Is it possible for us to continue to create a forum, regionally and nationally, where we can be honest about what works and what does not work: in leadership, in mission, in prayer, in community life?
- Is it a worthwhile project for us to make a concerted effort to *reinterpret* the Franciscan Intellectual tradition of the mystics and theologians?
- Is it possible for us to create handbooks, commentaries on the *Rules*, study guides, and practical tools for sharing, which will enable us collectively to move towards deepening the charism of the **evangelical life**?

**Above all**, can we develop more faith in God's presence in ourselves? . . . All of our *Testaments* and your own *Rule* end with a blessing. The Son of God, born of a woman, after all, did die for us. Isn't it a blessing to be human, to be Christian, to be Catholic, and to be Franciscan?

Joseph Chinnici OFM  
August 31, 1994



For the entire presentation see *The CORD*, November, 1994. Volume 44, No.11. Pages 292-306.

Excerpts and emphasis (italics and bold) done with permission of Joe Chinnici OFM

“THE OFFICIAL  
ARTICULATION  
OF THE CHARISM  
OF FRANCISCAN  
EVANGELICAL LIFE”

Joseph Chinnici OFM  
“The Franciscan  
Intellectual Tradition:  
WTU Symposium Papers,  
2001, page 141.”



FRANCISCAN FEDERATION  
THIRD ORDER REGULAR  
OF THE SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF THE UNITED STATES

THE SISTERS AND BROTHERS  
OF THE THIRD ORDER REGULAR OF SAINT FRANCIS

*Response to the Lineamenta  
in light of the 1994 Synod of Bishops on Consecrated Life in the Church*

In the past twenty-five years, Franciscan life has witnessed an energy and revitalization of charism that is both gift and task.<sup>1</sup> **In light of the 1994 Synod we offer the following responses to the *Lineamenta*:**

### *Prologue*

The Franciscan charism is a gift given to the Church through Francis and Clare of Assisi and their followers. The Franciscan life includes elements from both monastic and apostolic religious life, but has its uniqueness. The **emphasis** is on neither a common place centered on contemplation and the praise of God, nor on a common task centered on the concrete mission of service to the Church and world. It is rather on a common heart: a prophetic witness to Christ and the whole of his gospel.

Francis and Clare's life for the Church is a call acknowledging the primacy of Christ<sup>2</sup> **with all its implications for a radical way of thinking. Their ability to read the signs of the times challenged them to embrace courageously a new worldview**, giving birth to an evangelical movement for the enlivening of the Church.

### *Elements of the Charism*

The Franciscan charism is always and everywhere unbounded. In Francis' own words, "The world is our cloister." With Christ, Firstborn of all Creation, nothing in creation is untouched by the Spirit of the Lord.<sup>3</sup> **Franciscans seek to proclaim the fundamental *Goodness of God*** in all of life and creation. All of life and creation is a gift from God.

The essence of our life is our relationship with Jesus Christ. Our charism gifts the Church in the world, with a radically simple gospel call where we are **all sisters and brothers**. Reverencing the Spirit's action and embracing continuous conversion, Franciscans live in mutual obedience to one another and affirm the role of minister as servant among them. This is the essential witness of the evangelical life, the prophetic stance<sup>4</sup> **which Franciscans choose to make for the church and the world.**<sup>5</sup>

**Grasped by Jesus Christ,**<sup>6</sup> Franciscans follow a gospel form of life. We minister **more by example** than by words. In all forms of service, we reverence the person and seek to enhance the quality of relationships. The call to inculturate the gospel is at the heart of the Franciscan charism. Nurtured by our contemplative stance before God and the world, the sisters and brothers are called to be peacemakers<sup>7</sup> **wherever they are.**

### *Franciscan Contribution to the Church and the World*

With all of creation as holy ground, nothing can be ignored by Franciscans. The call to be one with all of creation and all people, especially with the marginal and the oppressed, is fundamental to our presence in the world. This presence is rooted in Christ and for Christ.

In our evangelical life we have *no dichotomies*. We are not sometimes contemplative and sometimes active; now in community and then in mission. We stand with the poor while not ignoring the needs of others. This life has been and continues to be pondered and inculturated. In each century Franciscans have tried to read the signs of the times and respond to them appropriately. However, some essentials remain constant. Franciscans and contemporary writers capture the essential characteristics of the Franciscan evangelical life. Francis' followers:

- Strive to live in a contemplative relationship to God and to all creation as sisters and brothers.
- Embrace a communal form of life among the people.
- Affirm the role of minister as servant among all.
- Uphold the rejection of violence of every kind, striving to be peacemakers wherever they are in all situations.
- Insert themselves in the world, not having specific works but ready for all kinds of service to promote the Gospel.<sup>8</sup>

The early Franciscans adopted a new worldview as their response to their day. In these times, as sisters and brothers, we are challenged and continue to be challenged to do likewise.

The coming **Synod of Bishops on Consecrated Life in the Church** is a welcomed opportunity to continue the dialogue with our Church authority so faithfully begun by Francis and Clare eight hundred years ago. In this anniversary year of Clare of Assisi (1294-1994), we earnestly ask you to listen and respond with us as God's Spirit leads us in understanding and embracing the call to our evangelical life as Franciscans.<sup>9</sup>

## Endnotes

1. The mandate of the Second Vatican Council to re-appropriate the founder's charism led the Third Order Franciscans to review the Rule of 1227 against a backdrop of renewed biblical spirituality, an emerging knowledge of the writings of Francis, and the process of constitutional revision. During an International Assembly in Assisi in 1979, the International Franciscan Bureau and Commission were constituted as the bodies responsible to conduct the task of drafting and writing a new rule. On 8 December 1982, Pope John Paul II confirmed *The Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis*. Franciscans in the United States have attempted to deepen their awareness and understanding of the Third Order Regular Franciscan heritage, thus the Franciscan Federation Third Order Regular of the Sisters and Brothers of the United States of America was founded in 1965. Membership in the Franciscan Federation consists of over 16,000 sisters and brothers who embrace the Federation's mission of peacemaking, concern for the poor, and care of creation in light of the T.O.R. Franciscan charism.
2. Colossians 1:15-18; The Admonitions 5:1; Rule of 1221: 23,1; A Letter to the Entire Order: 13; A Letter to the Clergy: 3; The First Version of the Letter to the Faithful: 12; The Third Letter of St. Clare to Blessed Agnes of Prague: 7.
3. Prologue of John 2-4, 10, 16-18; Ephesians 1:9-10; and Colossians 1:15-23.
4. 2 Peter 1:19 and Romans 8:18-30.
5. I.F.C. — Conferenza Francescana Internazionale was established in response to the vibrant era of Third Order Regular collaboration in the writing of a new rule, promulgated by Pope John Paul II in 1982. This affirmation of the new rule came from an international assembly of over two hundred general superiors. These sisters and brothers expressed the wish that a permanent structure be created to insure that the common bond of their Franciscan heritage and the cooperation achieved would continue effectively. In October 1985



*Members of Spirit and Life Committee meet at Rye Beach, NH to prepare the Lineamenta Response for the national board of the Franciscan Federation. President, Eleanor Granger OSF.*

*(Left to right)  
Margaret Pirkl,  
Rochester OSF  
Kathleen Moffatt, Aston OSF,  
Executive Director  
Joanne Brazinski,  
Whitehall OSF  
Kathie Uhler, Allegany OSF,  
Thomas Bourque, TOR,  
Loretta, PA  
Meg Guider, Joliet, IL*

such a structure was approved. Today, the IFC represents over 150,000 Third Order Regular sisters and brothers throughout the world. Membership consists of more than 426 autonomous pontifical and diocesan institutes.

6. Mark 1:14-20; Anthony Carrozzo O.F.M. "The Church in Dialogue with The World." Saint Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Formation Conference, July 1988; Michael Higgins, T.O.R., "The Charisms of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis of Penance," paper prepared for Adrian van Kaam at Duquesne University, 8 December 1988.

7. FRANCISCANS INTERNATIONAL — a non-governmental organization at the United Nations founded in 1989 is open to individuals of the Franciscan family, religious and lay, who personally subscribe to the values and the work of the UN; commit themselves to promoting UN activities in the three foci of: *care of creation, peacemaking, and concern for the poor*; and work with other Franciscans as a local UN group.

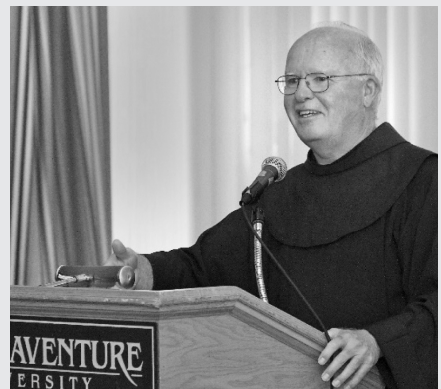
8. *The Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis and Commentary*. Pittsburgh: Franciscan Federation, 1982; Joseph Chinnici O.F.M. "Evangelical/Apostolic Tensions." Saint Bonaventure, NY: Super Conference — Our Franciscan Charism in the World Today, July, 1987; Video presentation by Joe Chinnici OFM, 1987 for Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, Aston, PA; Margaret Carney O.S.F. presentation on the Franciscan Evangelical Life delivered to the General Assembly of the Sisters of St. Francis, Rochester, MN, 1993; Marie Dennis, Joseph Nangle O.F.M., Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, Stuart Taylor. *St. Francis and the Foolishness of God*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993.

9. Walter Brueggemann says it well when he asserts: "God's new thing is not a grand religious act but an invitation to a fresh, dangerous social beginning." Taken from Walter Brueggemann, "First and Second Samuel," *Interpretation*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990, 27.

DIGNITY OF  
THE HUMAN  
PERSON

**AUTHOR: Joseph Chinnici**, Friar of the Province of Saint Barbara, CA is the President *Emeritus* of the *Franciscan School of Theology*, San Diego University CA. Professor of Church and Franciscan Theology and History; former Minister Provincial; author of prize-winning books, Joe has been at the helm of the most significant initiatives towards the revitalization of Franciscan life today.

From his 1983 seminal work with fellow FST scholar, Bill Short OFM, introducing the study of *Franciscan Evangelical Life* to the 2001 creation of the new OFM Commission on the retrieval of the *Franciscan Intellectual Tradition* (CFIT), and then onto serving as President of FST in its decision to re-locate from Oceanside, CA. to the University of San Diego, Joe's vision and scholarship has ushered in a "sea change" in the Franciscan Movement of the 21st century.



**PREPARED BY Kathleen Moffatt**, Aston, PA Franciscan for the 2009 celebration of the 800th anniversary of the birth of the Franciscan Movement with St. Francis' approval of his Rule of simply Gospel texts. Kathleen is Coordinator of Franciscan Resources for her congregation, *Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia*. As Ongoing Formation Director, Executive Director of the Franciscan Federation TOR and teacher of the course on the *Franciscan Evangelical Life* at the Franciscan International Study Centre, Canterbury, England for 7 years, she is greatly indebted to Joe Chinnici OFM as scholar and initiator with Bill Short OFM for the Study on *Franciscan* evangelical life together with the creation of the Commission on the retrieval of *Franciscan Intellectual Tradition*. (see [www.franciscantradition.org](http://www.franciscantradition.org))

**This TAU Series . . . TOR #15** can be downloaded for free from The International Franciscan Conference, TOR Rome, Italy, [www.ifc-tor.org](http://www.ifc-tor.org)  
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