

The Imitation of Christ
Monks and Nuns in the Early Middle Ages
Context: A Superficially Christianized Culture

I. The Call of the Desert: Egypt in the late 200s AD

II. From Martyrs to Monks (230-320)

A. The Urban Life of Virginité in the Pagan Roman Cities

Monastic life was not completely unknown in the urban churches before the 280's. Urban life in the pagan Roman Empire was not solitary – nasty, poor, brutish and short. For pagan women, there was an extra psychic burden, the Roman Empire was chronically under-fertile. The population of ethnic Romans was always below replacement level because of the high mortality rate for infants and the high mortality rate in cities in general. So there was a tremendous pressure for women to have babies. The ethos was that the only purpose they had in life was to have babies.

In the 100 & 200's, many Christian women believed they owed allegiance to a higher calling and a better kingdom and really resisted being co-opted into the birth machine of women in the Roman cities. With the permission of their families, they lived quietly at home without marrying and devoted their life to prayer and good works. It was one way to testify to their alternative allegiance. So the practice of virginité preceded the monastic movement.

Urban virginité as a counter-cultural way of not saluting the flag was part of the Christian network of house churches even before the move to the desert.

B. Martyrdom: Two Great Storms and then the Great Peace (251-258, 304-311)

C. Anthony of Egypt in 280: Fleeing the Cesspool

D. Pachomius and the Rural Communities

III. The Conversion of Constantine and the State Church (312-395)

A. Constantine's Dreams (October, 312) and the Battle of the Milvian Bridge

B. The Church: Out of the Catacombs and Into the Basilicas

C. Struggle with Heresy, Hordes of Unconverted "Converts" (325-381)

D. Athanasius' Life of Antony and the Lure of the Desert in the West (the 360s)

E. The Collapse of the Western Roman Empire after 395

The two chief agents of the re-evangelization of Europe were the Bishops of Rome who had the vision, the big picture, and the Benedictine Monks and Nuns who were the grassroots effort of travelling and planting communities.

IV. The Benedictine Centuries (530-1130) of the West

The Context: In Constantinople in 526 AD, a very able Emperor, Justinian and his even more able wife, Theodora, came to the throne. Justinian achieves all 3 principle objectives he has for life: 1) builds the great cathedral in Constantinople, 2) codifies the Roman Law, and 3) he initiates what he hopes will be the reconquest of the Western Roman Empire. He sent his general to begin in North Africa and within a few months, he mopped up the vandal kingdom there. This replanted Christianity in that place. The Byzantine replant of Orthodox Christianity after 530 AD was from above and it never got down to the grassroots level where the Donatist movement had been very strong as a local expression of Christianity.

From Carthage, Bellasaurius (the general) went to Sicily and then fought his way up the Italian peninsula. It took 30 years and so the Gothic War (533-565 AD) gave Constantinople a few enclaves along the coast.

This is the context in which Benedict planted his order. It was not peaceful and idyllic, it was partisan warfare. Benedict is a Roman nobleman who is disgusted by the bawdy life of the capital of Rome and becomes a serious Christian. He tries various kinds of intentional community (e.g., 2-3 brothers in a cave) but they are unable to support themselves. He tried enlarging his group and begging for food. So by trial and error, he planted a community south of Naples – Monte Cassino.

He founded a community for women headed by his sister Scholastica. He developed a basic pattern of life that was suited to the north climates of western Europe. The opening sentence of his rule is: “We are about to found a school for the Lord’s service.” The intention of the community is to found an enclave that will be as inaccessible as possible and as peaceful as possible so that people can learn prayer and preserve literacy that is self-supporting and not parasitic on the countryside around them. Benedict’s monks plant vineyards and terraced fields and orchards and keep bees, etc.

The rule is very realistic about human nature. Step One is the step of humility. It is moderate, different from the spectacular displays of machismo that you see in the deserts. They lived under the guidance of an elected abbot who is accountable to God directly. So there is stability, obedience and moderation. It is a pattern of life that is designed to last.

The Benedictine model was so useful because every community was self-supporting, independent. If barbarians sacked and burned one house it didn’t expect the continuity of the other houses.

A. Benedict, Scholastica and *The Rule* (the 520s)

B. Survival: Cellular, Self-Supporting, Preserving, Literate Communities in the West

C. The Celtic CounterPoint: From Patrick (432) to Columba (563) and – Pentecost!

D. Cluny (910) and the Cluniac Order: Massive Majestic Monarchical Monasteries

Monasteries are viewed by the Pope as training schools for evangelists and by the aristocracy as powerhouses of prayer. In 800's and early 900's, it is fashionable among monarchs to found monasteries so that prayers for the souls of the donors family may be continued in perpetuity. Gregory the Great said that baptism avails for sins before baptism. As for sins after baptism – don't. This developed the teaching of purgatory because there had to be a second chance for those who died in sin after baptism. Les considers it a misreading of Scripture that the blood of Christ only availed for pre-baptism sin.

This is not yet the late medieval indulgence era. In 910, the Duke of Aquitaine in the South of France founded at Cluny and he endowed it so richly that it was quickly able to afford stone buildings. Cluny had lay brothers to do the manual labor while the monastics devoted themselves to prayer. They became famous for golden church "stuff" and bejeweled vestments. Soon, 300 more monasteries were either planted by Cluny or brought under their mantle. This was a place that royalty could send their younger sons in the sure confidence that they would be with people of their class and not peasants.

The Cluniac chapels went up in grandeur and there were reactions against this.

E. The Cistercian Reform (1098) and the Return to Poverty

In reaction, Christians again went to the desert to find an alternative to the growing majesty and wealth of the monastic orders. The Cistercians found the wildest areas that were inaccessible and austere. The most famous was Bernard of Clairvaux. This was the precedent for success reforms in the return to poverty and marginality.

V. The Benedictine Age: Rural, Isolated, Stable, Conservative, Introspective...Waiting...

Lectio Divina in the original Benedictine model was like a verse of the psalms a week. It was serious, in depth meditation.

Europe's New Towns (1050-1200) **Cloth, Gold, Poverty and Revolution**

I. Europe Expands (1050-1200)

The Viking raids beginning in 793 which led to the decimation of Irish monasticism, made settled life and stable agriculture impossible. The narrow boats could go far up the rivers and spread their terror. It was a difficult era for Europe.

Beginning in the early 900s, the Vikings settled down in Normandy, in southern Italy and Sicily. In Germany and Normandy, strong states began to emerge using the lands of the church. Bishops controlled lots of land and villages and these could support the new model warrior in Europe which was the mounted knight. The introduction of the stirrup in the 700s in the West meant you could fight on horseback. It meant a whole new class in western society, the class of the knights. A boy, by the age of five, was chosen and trained in order to be a knight by 20. There was a large investment required to accomplish this (horses, blacksmiths, squires and soldiers) so only the very wealthy could produce knights. It took five villages to support one knight.

The use of the wheel plow spread in Western Europe at this time which increased agriculture.

Population tips up as a result of all this.

A. The Demographic Curve Tips Upward in the early 1000s

B. Peddlers, Trade, Depots...and Suddenly Towns!

Peddlers begin to crisscross Europe and when they make it big, they need depots to store their goods. They usually rent self-storage units that are wooden sheds built up next to cathedrals in old Roman towns. So towns begin to develop and Europe finds an export commodity that is very desired in the Mediterranean world – the northern sheep's wool. It was very durable.

C. Northern Sheep, Wool, Cloth...the Fairs of Champagne...Trade with the East via Italy

As sheep growing expands as an alternative to agriculture, the wool is produced and woven into cloth and it becomes economically desirable for merchants from Italy and the East for there to be a specific time and place when all the merchants from the north can gather at a half-way point and exchange their wares for silks, spices from the East.

D. Town Life: Crowds, Disease, "Relative Deprivation," Class Warfare, Religious Fervor

When the warlords lived in the blockhouses and the poor in mud and wattle houses, the lifestyle was not that different. If one starved, everybody starved. But now it was different.

Class warfare became an indigenous sport. The last remnant of that is the yearly festival in Sienna where horses race around the town (The Palio).

Assisi was a Roman town with a Roman temple to Minerva. Life there was like other Roman towns – hard and dirty. It was a volatile environment. In the first crusade, there was a military arm and a popular arm.

E. Peter the Hermit and the People's Crusade (1096)

Peter was a charismatic preacher in northern Europe and he gathered thousands who followed him to Constantinople with the promise that when they got to Jerusalem, the heavenly city would come down and they would all be raptured. When the Emperor saw the crowd that needed to be fed, he sent them to the Muslims (“There is your enemy”) where they were slaughtered.

F. A Rural Institutional Church Confronts New Urban Spiritual Needs

There was a transition from a church deployed over Europe in the Benedictine era where the local warlord will appoint a peasant to be the mass priest who memorizes enough Latin to say mass and baptize, marry and bury. Now the church is faced with a new urban environment that is extremely volatile. The institutional church in the 1100's was unequipped to provide the type of ministry that people were looking for. It was a golden age for anti-clericalism.

I. Challenges to the Church in the Towns in the 1100s

A. Anticlericalism...General Broad-Gauge Grouchiness vs. Priests

The feeling that these are lazy slob that live off the hard-earned tithes of the parishioners without giving anything back.

B. Neo-Donatism..."A Bad Priest Celebrates Polluted Sacraments"

This was a danger to the church. Donatists objected to the ordinations performed by priests who had given up the Scriptures in the great persecution in North Africa. They decided the validity of the sacrament depended upon the moral perfection of the clergy celebrating the sacrament. So how could you ever know if you were validly baptized? The Donatists were squashed rather than incorporating their zeal and as a result the Muslims dominate their area until today.

People begin to attack the institutional church and view it as corrupt.

C. Wacko Cults Look Good: The Cathari (“Albigensians”) in 12c Southern France

Albigensianism is a distant relative of Zoroastrianism. It is a cousin of Mithraism – there is a good force and a bad force and in order to be on the side of the good you must be as

ascetic as you possibly can. They were called the “Cathari” or the pure ones. The elect were the ones who gave up marriage, were completely celibate, and practiced ritual suicide by starvation. This got tremendous noble support in the south of France because of the corrupt clergy.

D. Peter Valdes and the “Poor Men of Lyons” (in the 1170s)

Within the church, movements rise up to address the neo-Donatism. A merchant named Peter Valdes heard a sermon on Jesus’ words to the rich young ruler and he responds by going to the Bishop and asks for permission to live this out. The bishop says, “No, just give to the poor.” But he acts on it anyway. He divides his property into two groups (real estate and liquid assets). He gives his wife a choice between one or the other. She chose the real estate and he resolves to live a celibate life and gives away all his moveable goods to the poor and gathers a group around him and begins to preach the gospel to the poor in the villages around. He winds up preaching against the Church. A similar movement called the “Humiliati” rise up.

E. The Humiliati in the North Italian Towns in the Late 1100s

F. The Church’s Choice: Identify with the Haves (3%) or the Have-Nots (97%)?

II. Enter Young Francesco Bernardone and His Ragged Friends (1209)

A. What Francesco Knows

B. Apostolic Poverty and the Imitation of Christ...Where Will It All End?

C. The Dream of Innocent III (1209)

Falling in Love with Lady Poverty

I. Springtime, 1204: Why Is the Fresh World So Gray?

He made it back from prison in Perugia and his life is in ruins. He was born to a wealthy cloth merchant to Pietro Bernadone in Assisi. He was away when Francis was born at the Fairs in Champagne and so his mother had him baptized Giovanni (John – a family name). His father renamed him Francesco because of his love of France. There was another brother, Angelo (younger). It was a status symbol to have the highest tower in a town (visible and more easily defensible) and Pietro's house was tall and stone. He has made it in the town.

He was schooled under the local priest. He was introduced to the high life at the age of 13. He was very popular. He is small, slight, delicate but tough with a good singing voice. He loves playing the lute and singing French troubadour songs. He is basically a wild man about time, a playboy. He's supposed to grow up to take over the business but he has so far been a disappointment. He was not interested at all.

II. Pietro Bernadone's Son (1181-1204)

- A. The House of Bernardone: Pietro, Pica, "Francesco" and Angelo
- B. The School of San Giorgio, the Fairs of Champagne, the Young Rake
- C. Revolution in Assisi (1199-1200) and War with Perugia

Assisi was a violent place in Francis' youth. It is politically controlled by the German Emperor. The German Emperor died young and Assisi declared its independence and threw off the German yoke. It immediately fell into war with its neighbor Perugia.

- D. The Young "Knight" Rides Forth...and Loses (1202)
- E. Prison in Perugia and Recovery at Home (1203-1204)

Francis is not nobility; he's of the merchant class but he aspires to become a knight. He goes off to fight in the battle against Perugia where he was wounded on the battle field, is stripped of his armor, and when they see his elaborate undergarments, they decided not to cut his throat. They drag him back to Perugia and put him in a dungeon.

Pietro offers money and Francis is allowed to come home – sickly and disheartened. He returned to his old way of life as soon as he was able.

III. The Long Conversion (1204-1208)

- A. Springtime, 1204: Fighting the "Gray" with Silk and Iron

B. The Dream at Spoleto (Spring, 1205): One Last Flicker of Military Glory

He decided once more to become a knight. When the troop of soldiers he has joined went to Spelato, Francis had a dream that night. In it, he was asked “Who is the real boss?” “And why are you not following him?”

C. Crawling Home – And Partying Harder

It is dishonorable to return home from battle without any victory to show for it. He returned to his party boy ways but no longer found it as satisfying.

D. Falling In Love with Lady Poverty (Fall, 1205?)

One night while out on the town with his buddies, he has a revelation and declares he has fallen in love with Lady Poverty.

E. Wandering in the Woods

His father is outraged. He’s been a failure as a soldier and now he’s a failure as a playboy. His mother is praying and worried sick. Everyone thinks their son has lost his mind. One day he was wandering in the woods below Assisi and there was an old church dedicated to St. Damien that was in ruins.

F. The Crucifix in San Damiano: “Francis, Rebuild My Church...” (Late Fall, 1205?)

There was a crucifix where the paint was flaked but you could still see the face of Christ and Francis has a vision where Christ tells him, “Build my church.” He takes it literally and begins to rebuild the fallen church structure. He began to beg for money for building supplies. His former friends came out to check on him and wind up joining him in his efforts. The church was rebuilt and it became the home of Clare and the women’s order the Poor Clares.

G. Selling Dad’s Horse...Returning Dad’s Clothes (February, 1206)

His father has had it and went to the Bishop to ask for help. The Bishop called Francis in and asked him about stealing his dad’s horse and cloth. He told him that he was not showing proper respect for his father. Francis responded by removing all his clothes and handed them to his father and renounced him as father – God is now my father.

A beggar saw him and gave him a burlap bag as a garment and he went happily off into the woods. He is joined by other rich young men and they began begging in the streets of Assisi. The townsfolk were outraged and pelt them with garbage and they simply took it and keep on.

H. Begging, Nursing and Building (February, 1206 – February, 1208)

I. Portiuncula and The Call (February 28, 1208)...“And Preach As You Go...”

Some Benedictines had a tiny chapel close by and they offered Francis and his friends a cow shed for shelter. Francis referred to it as “the little portion”, the Portiuncula. He heard a sermon on the Great Commission which spurred his vision, “As you go preach.” But he has no education, is part of no religious order, so they decided to go see the Pope.

IV. Francis’ Character

A. Exuberance, High Spirits, Wit, Extroversion, Generosity...and Courtesy

He is extremely extroverted, intuitive, totally generous and fun to be with. He was always funny and people loved to be around him. A lot of natural characteristics were baptized by the Holy Spirit and used in his ministry. His sense of humor often got him out of a lot of trouble.

B. The Love Songs of the French Troubadours: The True Knight and the Distant Lady

He had a beautiful voice and a musical talent. He reminds Les of Bob Dylan.

C. The Spectre of Death and the Imitation of Christ

Francis lived in an environment where death is a daily possibility. There were little or no treatment for the many illnesses that plagued the people. So there was a very earnest side to Francis that influenced his preaching and ministry.

The Paradox of the Franciscan Movement

I. The Beggar and the Pontiff: Francis and Innocent III (Spring, 1209)

Francis and his followers realized the only way they could be authorized to follow God’s call was to go to the Pope and get a special dispensation to form a kind of mobile religious order. There were two strikes against this: 1) religious orders for 700 years had been rural and stable. The idea of mobile monks is an oxymoron. 2) The groups that tried to break out of that pattern turned neo-donatist and schismatic. So what they were asking for was no small thing.

A. Innocent’s Rule: The 4th Crusade (1204), the Clash with England (1207-13) Etc.

On their way to Rome, they met their old friend Bishop Guido from Assisi. He had been following his activities and was still concerned about his child in Christ. When he heard their plans, he had an idea. He had a friend (a cardinal) close to the Pope and he offered to introduce them to him. After listening to their testimony, he agreed to set up an appointment with the Pope. The night before, Pope Innocent III had a dream that the Basilica of St. John Lateran was toppling to the side and a little man in a brown robe came

along, touched the wall, and the building was righted. Innocent was one of the most powerful Pope in history. Rome had become a center of ecclesiastical judicial business.

B. Papal Moral/Spiritual Authority in the Balance

C. Innocent Accepts Francis...the Little Brown Man Who Props Up the Church

The Pope seemed to know that Rome was on the brink of losing its spiritual authority. Would they identify with those who could pay for their graces or those who could not pay? When Francis and friends approached, Innocent recognized them as the ones in his dream and he came down and kissed their feet. He was concerned about the severity of their rule of life and wanted to make sure they had really thought and prayed about it. When they returned a week later, he gave them his blessing. He required that Francis be ordained a deacon so that he could read the gospel in the mass and have the right to preach. Francis wasn't seeking holy orders but agrees.

II. Explosive Growth of the Franciscan Order (1209-1217)

A. The Rivo Torto and the Portiuncula (1209-11)

They settled in the Tiber valley in the woods by the river (Rivo Torto). They rebuilt the Portiuncula in stone. The order group and within 8 years had over a thousand members. They met at the Portiuncula yearly.

B. Chiara di Favarone (Palm Sunday, 1212)

A female disciple joins the group who is from the same social class as Francis. Clare had to sneak out of her father's house and went to Francis who accepted her vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and cut her hair. Francis knew he was in trouble for taking this action because Clare's father was enraged – so they sent her to a Benedictine convent.

Francis gives her San Damiano which became a cloister that is active until this day. Although her dream was to follow Francis in his ministry, he knew it would not be good for the order (too offensive) and so she remained cloistered. They are the engine room (prayer room) for the Order.

C. La Verna (1213) and Preaching Tours in Italy

A nobleman loaned Francis a retreat place in the mountains which was very inaccessible. He used it whenever he could. It was there that he received the stigmata. He tried to keep the marks hidden and didn't speak much about it.

D. Francis in Spain (1213-14)

He went off on a preaching tour as the movement continued to grow. Much of the recruitment came from the top 3% of the population (the elite).

E. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) and the “Tau”

Francis met Dominic of Spain who had created a similar order. At the Fourth Lateran Council, the Franciscan rule and its order were accepted along with the Carmelites and the Augustinians. But they said “no more” – four gospels, four orders of friars, and that’s it. Dominic was a scholar and the Order of Preachers is the Dominican order. The spirit of the early order at this time, between the first visit to Rome in 1209 and the revision of the Rule in 1223 is the spirit of Francis himself – absolute poverty. There was to be no property ownership whatsoever. Begging was mandatory.

F. Five Thousand Brothers at the Portiuncula (May 5, 1217)

When Francis went away in 1218 or 1219, while on a preaching tour the town fathers of Assisi, anticipating the yearly meeting of the order, put up a building in Assisi so that everyone could be accommodated under one roof. When Francis returned he was furious. He thought they were giving this building to the Order so he climbed up on the roof and began to dismantle it by hand. He found out his error and then tried to repair the damage he had caused.

III. The Spirit of the Early Order (1209-1223)

A. Absolute_Poverty...The Imitation of Christ vs. the Rich/Landed/Powerful Church

B. Absolute Mobility...No Fields and Commitments...Mission at the Breath of the Spirit

There was also absolute mobility. They had to be like a leaf in the wind that the slightest breath of the Spirit could take wherever it wanted them to go.

C. Absolute Courtesy...Kissing the Hands of Every Priest (e.g.) and Every Leper

This was crucial to the order. Courtesy was something that the neo-donatist and other protest movements had practiced. He kissed the hands of every priest he met as a matter of honor, regardless of their morals or character. He also kissed every leper as well. As a young man, he was fastidious about cleanliness. Lepers were symbols of God’s wrath and were required to call out “Unclean!” In Francis’ wandering days, he embraced and kissed a leper which was a crucial point in his spiritual development.

D. Absolute Repentance (Practiced and Preached...No “Feel Good” Gospel)

Costly repentance.

E. Absolute Joy...Walking with Jesus, Seeing Through the Curtain

How could Francis be so wracked with pain and still remain mirthful? Perhaps he despised the pain for the joy set before him.

“Preach the Gospel at all times, when necessary use words.” Yes, his ministry was hands on but he was also very serious about preaching and making disciples. His early desire to be a knight led him to want to go and preach to the Muslims.

IV. Francis and the Cross (1219-26)

A. Francis and the Moslem World (1219-20)

The Muslims saw Francis in his brown habit and recognized him as a holy man. He then travels to the Holy Land and the Bishop there was outraged because all of his staff wanted to join Francis.

B. Francis Returns – and Resigns (1220)

When Francis returned home he resigned as head of the order. He tried to let go but it was difficult for him. The people he delegated to write a rule for an expanded order (now in the thousands) present their work – Francis starts to interject his own thoughts based on his own experience. But his revisions would not serve the order in its new day. The ideals of mobility, poverty, courtesy, joy remained. But can this level of piety exist given its size?

C. The Later Rule (November, 1223)...But Can It Last?

D. Christmas at Greccio (1223)

South of Assisi there is the town of Greccio near Rieti. Francis had a vision there for celebrating the nativity with a live crèche. A cave was found and the crèche was put together for Christmas Eve and the people loved it. It was an instant hit and tradition.

E. The Stigmata at La Verna (August or September 1224)

Visit Assisi, San Damiano and La Verna are “must see’s” if you ever get to Italy. The grotto where Francis meditated and received the stigmata is there (La Verna).

F. Francis’ Illnesses...Bodily Agony and Constant Travel

After the stigmata, his other illnesses accelerated. He had an eye condition which they treated with a red hot poker. He was in his early 40’s and things were breaking down. And yet his joy remained.

G. *The Canticle of Brother Sun* (1225)

H. *The Testament* (September, 1226)

His last plea to the order not to depart too far from the original vision of the movement.

I. "Sister Death" (October 3, 1226)

As he was dying, he asked his friends to lay him on the ground so that nothing would be between him and mother earth.

VI. What Does It Take to Build a Religious Community?

A. Renunciation

The Outside World

A line must be drawn. Single-sex, celibate communities are the most successful. There is a tremendous struggle between ties of blood and ties of spirit. You leave the tribe and you join your new family in Christ.

The Couple
The Family

B. Investment

It's not just leaving behind but also taking on. You have to be tough. Once you've passed through a 3-year probationary period (at least), you make your final vows and it is a big deal if you ask for a dispensation. Vows are for life and are not taken lightly.

In or Out
Irreversibility

C. Sacrifice

The sacrifice is a constant reminder of why you are there. The theme of being in training is essential for the community to be lasting.

Abstinence
Austerity

F. Mortification

Not only abstaining from things but taking on things. There were also strict sanctions for infractions. Spiritual Differentiation was the sense of an ordered pathway. People were recognized as models for the rest of the community. De-Individuating Mechanisms is the sociology for humility. Nobody gets to have a different colored robe.

Confession
Sanctions
Spiritual Differentiation
De-Individuating Mechanisms

G. Communion

Learning to love people that you would ordinarily hate. When you make your final vows, you are buying into – for the rest of your life and theirs – the fact that you’re in it together. It’s the reconciliation of opposites, the ability to be in the presence of the radically other without anger.

There are periods of silence and periods of fellowship. *Into Great Silence* – a movie about this.

- Homogeneity
- Communal Sharing of Property
- Communal Labor
- Regularized Group Contact
- Ritual
- Persecution

H. Transcendence

- Awe through Ideology
- Awe Through Leadership
- Mystery
- Sacralized Daily Routine
- Ideological Conversion
- Tradition

(Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Commitment and Community* (Harvard, 1972) chapter 4

VII. The Paradox of Francis’ Heritage

A. Brother Elias and the Basilica (1226-30)

After Francis’ death, decided to “build three booths” and wanted a cathedral in Assisi to honor Francis. With the Pope’s agreement (Pope Gregory IX saw its benefit for money purposes, a Francis theme park). But it is not what Francis would have wanted. He’s barely in his grave and they’re laying the foundation of the basilica.

B. “St. Francis” (1228)

After only 2 years, he was fast tracked to being a saint (very short time frame).

C. Gregory IX and *Quo Elongati* (1230)...Domesticating the Franciscan Fire

Since this order has grown so great . . . the Franciscan rule must be revised so that lay people can hold property in trust for the Franciscans. The idea of having anything more than a cow shed that you could count on was so counter to anything Francis would have honored. Gregory’s perspective is that given the size of the order – organization and planning were required.

D. Fractures in the Order: Conventuals vs. Observants (Fratricelli) in the late 13c

This led to the schism in the Order between the Conventionals (those who go with the Pope and live a modified rule) and the Observants (the “Little Brothers” who honored Francis’ original rule). In the end, Franciscan piety doesn’t live up to the dreams of Francis and yet think of the millions that he has inspired in greater or lesser ways up until today.

VI. Can Flesh Contain the Spirit?

Each of these three movements is subject to corruption. Each has been co-opted to some degree:

- Carthusian Catechism
- Celtic Monasticism
- Franciscan Missionary Piety