

Portland State University

PDXScholar

Young Historians Conference

Young Historians Conference 2023

Apr 26th, 12:30 PM

“An Impediment to Those Who Would Walk the Difficult Way”: How St. Francis of Assisi’s Revolution in Catholic Thought Was Built on the Perceived Inferiority of Femininity

Julian F. Balsley
Grant High School

Follow this and additional works at: <https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/younghistorians>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Balsley, Julian F., “An Impediment to Those Who Would Walk the Difficult Way”: How St. Francis of Assisi’s Revolution in Catholic Thought Was Built on the Perceived Inferiority of Femininity” (2023). *Young Historians Conference*. 10.

<https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/younghistorians/2023/papers/10>

This Event is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in Young Historians Conference by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. Please contact us if we can make this document more accessible: pdxscholar@pdx.edu.

**“An Impediment to Those Who Would Walk the Difficult Way”:
How St. Francis of Assisi’s Revolution in Catholic Thought Was Built on the Perceived
Inferiority of Femininity**

Julian Balsley

Grant High School

Portland State University History 105: World Civilizations

Donald Gavitte

April 27, 2023

Abstract

St. Francis of Assisi is undoubtedly one of the most famous saints in the Catholic Church. Known for his complete poverty and deep love for the poor and animals, the Little Poor Man of Assisi has become renowned for his way of life and the fraternity he started that has continued for over eight hundred years. In an organization rife with cardinal sin, Francis was in stark contrast with his asceticism and rankless order. However, St. Francis' entire ideology is built on the Catholic belief that women are inherently inferior to men and dangerous to those following God. Francis used feminine descriptors to denote his inferiority to God and saw relationships with women—platonic and romantic—as the gravest of sins. Despite facing immense challenges in pursuing the saint's faith, women have been some of the most devout and important Franciscans. St. Francis is deserving of recognition for his humility, care for those who could not care for themselves, and the movement he inspired within the Church; however, the hateful beliefs that drove the saint to his good deeds in the first place must be central in any Franciscan study.

Introduction: “Another Jesus Christ”

In the early thirteenth century, a very strange phenomenon began to take hold in the Catholic Church. In the central-Italian Umbria region, in the small hill town of Assisi, a young friar’s unorthodox Catholicism was gaining surprising traction. Francesco di Pietro di Bernardone, born into a wealthy merchant family, had denounced his fortune and was leading a small group of friars in a quest to live the life intended by the Gospel, the one led twelve hundred years before by Jesus of Nazareth. The men wore simple, rough tunics secured with a thin cord, walked barefoot, carried no staff, and tonsured their heads. Their way of life was rigorous and extremely ascetic: they owned no property or possessions other than the clothes on their backs, begged for their food, and refused all money under any circumstances.

The Franciscan brotherhood, called the Order of Friars Minor, practiced total inferiority before God and His son. They were to do away with all vice, committing to a life of chastity that deprived them even of setting eyes upon a woman unless absolutely necessary. To this day, the Order of Friars Minor thrives like few other Catholic orders and St. Francis is arguably the most studied saint to ever be canonized. But his revolution in Catholic thought, which not only exemplified a level of Christly perfection still strived for today but transcended Catholicism and made him globally admired, was wholly built on the perceived absolute inferiority of women. Even the most radical Catholic movement in history—characterized by a level of humility, love, and kindness almost unheard of in the rest of the Church—was built on abject fear and hatred.

***The Lives and Miracles of St. Francis* by Thomas of Celano**

On July 16, 1228, just under two years after his death, Francis of Assisi was canonized as a saint of the Catholic Church by Pope Gregory IX. Around this time—whether in anticipation of the ceremony, on the day itself, or sometime shortly after is not known—the pope commissioned Brother Thomas of Celano, a friar in the Franciscan order, to write the first biography of il Poverello, the Little Poor Man of Assisi. Around seven months later, Celano’s *Life of Blessed Francis* (almost exclusively referred to as the *First Life of St. Francis* after 1246) received papal approbation, becoming the first account of the saint’s life in the Catholic canon.¹ Why Celano, who had spent relatively little time in St. Francis’ presence compared to many of the other

brothers, was chosen to write the biography has been lost to time, but he was undisputedly a more-than-capable hagiographer.

Very little is known about Celano's early life other than his birthplace in the Abruzzi mountains in central Italy. He was among the well-learned and noble men ordained in the Order of Friars Minor by Francis himself shortly after the saint's return from Spain around 1215, and in 1221 was one of the twenty-five brothers chosen to travel to Germany to establish a new chapter of the order, where he stayed until 1223. Despite some assertions that Celano saw and touched the saint's stigmata, there is no substantial evidence that the friar saw St. Francis before the latter's death in 1226.²

Celano's intent in writing the *First Life* was not to biography in the modern sense of the word—that is, a comprehensive account of the events of someone's life—nor was it supposed to be an exhaustive chronicle of St. Francis' teachings or analysis of the saint. Celano wrote a *legenda* in its medieval definition (not the fictitious “legends” we think of today): a record of the deeds of a saint that proved the existence of the hand of God in their life.³ The *First Life* begins with the first twenty-five years of Francis' life as a sinful, debauching youth, Christian in name like all Italians but a “promoter of evil” who “strove to outdo the rest in the pomp of vainglory.”⁴ Celano then recounts Francis' conversion to true Catholicism, his life of asceticism, and the establishment and growth of the Order of Friars Minor. The chronology ends with the saint's death, the ceremony of his canonization in the church of San Giorgio—which would later be replaced by the Basilica di Santa Chiara—and a short list of the Little Poor Man's miracles read by Pope Gregory IX to those in attendance.⁵

From reading Celano's work, it is clear that the man was a “skilled literary craftsman” whose prose is clear and at times even poetic in its free use of vivid imagery and metaphor.⁶ However, the piece's purpose and nature limit Celano considerably both in historical accuracy and in the enjoyment achievable by the modern, secular reader. The *First Life* was written expressly to be the official legend of St. Francis followed by the Order of Friars Minor so that those who came after Francis could continue to follow his example. Objectivity in the narrative is often undermined by Celano's frequent praises of il Poverello and proofs of his saintly nature, carefully avoiding events that might prove St. Francis to be “purely human” and giving heavy supernatural emphasis to events that have simple natural explanations.⁷

Sometime in the years 1244–1246, Minister General Crescentius of Jesi commissioned Celano to write a second biography of St. Francis. The *Second Life of St. Francis* is much shorter than the *First Life* and repeats little of the first account, instead acting as a supplementary text of events not included in the original work. However, the *Second Life* included few miracles, prompting Minister General John of Parma to order Celano to write the *Treatise on the Miracles of Blessed Francis* between 1250 and 1253.

Celano was not only an adept writer—he also appears to have been a rather studied theologian. In his later works, Celano imbues his narratives of Francis’ life with his own theological conclusions, positing the Franciscan ideology in more nuanced ways than even Francis could likely have done. At times, it is as though Celano is writing a dissertation on his beliefs through the lens of il Poverello’s life; he asserts that “Humility is the guardian and the ornament of all virtues” and that the “weapon” of forceful command should be used only as a last resort.⁸ The “master hagiographer” was not only an expert biographer—the first official historian of the Franciscan order—but a deep theological thinker who instilled his understanding of St. Francis in his work.⁹ “None has been the subject of so many biographies and other books, written and printed in every major language of the world” as St. Francis of Assisi.¹⁰ Thomas of Celano’s was the very first; all subsequent literature has drawn heavily on his seminal writing.

“Many That Are First Will Be Last, and the Last First”

Francis of Assisi’s ideology can be concisely portrayed early in the New Testament:

And Jesus said to his disciples ... “Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God ... And every one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many that are first will be last, and the last first.”¹¹

It was these words that inspired Francis to seek complete poverty and total inferiority before God and to write a rule that exemplified these ideals so that his order might too lead the life of Christ. This ascetic life is laid out in the *Rule of 1221* and *Rule of 1223*, instructions for a way of life that some twelve thousand six hundred friars continued to observe at the beginning of

2020.¹² The Order of Friars Minor is one of the strictest Catholic fraternities in history and yet has been one of the strongest and most fervently practiced for over eight hundred years.

The Franciscan order is revolutionary to the point of seeming almost anti-Catholic when compared to the rest of the Church. The friars are called “lesser brothers” to denote their lowly nature and humility; the superiors of the order are called ministers—servants, as Joshua served Moses.¹³ Chapter six of the *Rule of 1221* states, “No one is to be called ‘Prior’ [‘Superior’]. They are all to be known as ‘Friars Minor’ without distinction, and they should be prepared to wash one another’s feet.”¹⁴

This repudiation of established rank within the order is exceptional in an institution with such a firmly established hierarchy of authority. To put every member of the order on relatively equal footing (ministers still held more power than the other brothers) seems almost to be a dismissal of the very institution of the Church itself. And yet, Francis and his order were irrevocably tied to their religion. Chapter nineteen of the *Rule of 1221* states, “All the friars are bound to be Catholics, and live and speak as such. Anyone who abandons the Catholic faith or practice by word or deed must be absolutely excluded from the Order, unless he repents.”¹⁵

Franciscans are perhaps the furthest of any members of the religion from being anti-Catholic; they devote every moment of every day to practicing Catholicism to its fullest extent. They are renowned for their absolute poverty: their bare feet, single tunic, and prohibition even from riding horseback.¹⁶ Il Poverello was especially famed for his dedication to living as ascetically as humanly possible to the point of being “immediately envious” of anyone poorer than him, for “in the struggle for complete poverty he feared to be outdone by another.”¹⁷

Outside of the Catholic faith, Francis has become one of the world’s most well-known saints for his notorious love for all creatures; he “rejoiced in all the works of the hands of the Lord,” finding heavenly beauty in candlelight, flowers, and stones, and “removed from the road little worms, lest they be crushed under foot.”¹⁸ One story of il Poverello that has become a cross-cultural household tale of caring for the earth and its creatures—depicted by Giotto di Bondone in a fresco in the Upper Church at the Basilica di San Francesco in Assisi—is that of the saint preaching to a flock of birds while traveling:

“My little bird sisters, you owe much to God your Creator, and you must always and everywhere praise Him, because He has given you freedom to fly anywhere ... be careful not to be ungrateful, but strive always to praise God.”

Now at these words of St. Francis, all those birds began to open their beaks, stretch out their necks, spread their wings, and reverently bow their heads to the ground.¹⁹

The legend that even more firmly established St. Francis in not only Catholic literature but world history is that of the stigmata. Numerous paintings across multiple centuries, now displayed in museums throughout the world, depict the notorious scene first committed to writing in Celano's *First Life*:

Two years before Francis gave his soul back to heaven ... he saw in the vision of God a man standing above him, like a seraph with six wings, his hands extended and his feet joined together and fixed to a cross. Two of the wings were extended above his head, two were extended as if for flight, and two were wrapped around the whole body ... the seraph, whose beauty was beyond estimation ... was fixed to a cross and the sharpness of his suffering filled Francis with fear ... the marks of the nails began to appear in [Francis'] hands and feet, just as he had seen them a little before in the crucified man above him.

His hands and feet seemed to be pierced through the middle by nails ... his right side was as though it had been pierced by a lance.²⁰

For the rest of his life, il Poverello took great care to hide his wounds, lest he appear vain or thinking himself above anyone else. When one brother asked about the scars on his feet, the saint retorted, “Take care of your own business.”²¹ How Celano is able to give such a detailed account of a most private of miracles which Francis took every precaution to hide for the rest of his life is never mentioned in his works, St. Bonaventure's subsequent biographies of St. Francis, or any Franciscan literature thereafter.

Francis being marked with Christ's stigmata solidified him as “another Jesus Christ,” paralleled in heavenly nature by none but Jesus himself.²² It is these physical manifestations of godliness that have lifted St. Francis from the annals of the thirteenth-century Catholic Church and spread him across the pages of contemporary history. But St. Francis and his order were not as pure of heart as the literature and their continued admiration make them out to be.²³ The entire basis of the Franciscan belief system rests on a foundation of the systemic misogyny that has been rife within the Catholic faith since its inception.

“Avoid the Sight or Company of Women”

Any secular—or reasonably sensible—historian would not deny that Francis’ youth, in which “love [was] reserved for male companions” and “Women [were] but prey,” found its way into the ideology he began to construct after two and a half decades of sin.²⁴ From the beginning of the Order of Friars Minor, women were interned in the roles they have been forced to fill from the inception of Catholicism: lesser beings, Eves and Jezebels prone to Satan’s influence. Women are inferior in every capacity to men; they are the purest evils; to associate with them is a surefire way to stray from God’s path. Chapter twelve of the *Rule of 1221* dictates that “the friars are bound to avoid the sight or company of women, when it is evil,” that “No one should speak to them alone,” and warns that the brothers must “keep a close watch over ourselves and let nothing tarnish the purity of our senses,” citing Matthew 5:28: “Every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”²⁵ In the *Rule of 1223*, Francis “strictly forbid[s] all the friars to have suspicious relationships or conversations with women” and orders that “No one may enter the monasteries of nuns, except those who have received special permission from the Apostolic See”; fornication is, of course, grounds for immediate and total expulsion from the order.²⁶ In the *Second Life*, Celano writes of a time when this rule is put into practice:

Another brother went in the winter to a certain monastery on an errand of sympathy, not knowing the saint’s strong will about not going on such visits. After the fact had become known to the saint, he made the brother walk several miles naked in the cold and deep snow.²⁷

Even when brothers extend trips of sympathy to isolated nuns in the depths of winter, Francis sees only the inevitable sin of relations with women.

While all Franciscan men are seen as equal in their humility, women, as in the rest of the Church, are placed distinctly lower. In the *Gospel of Mary*, a non-canonical text found in a fifth-century papyrus codex, when Mary Magdalen shares a vision of Jesus and her subsequent discussion with him, Peter dismisses her outright: “Did He really speak privately with a woman and not openly to us? Are we to turn about and all listen to her? Did He prefer her to us?”²⁸ Franciscan women—and women in the Church at large—are treated much the same.

St. Clare of Assisi, a disciple of St. Francis who established the second Franciscan order, the female Order of Poor Ladies (often called the Poor Clares) is one of the most influential Franciscans in history. But in almost all early Franciscan literature, Clare and the Poor Ladies are mentioned only in passing or not at all—somewhat miraculously, Celano, in the *First Life*, dedicates an early chapter to the grace and virtue of the feminine Franciscan order, even going so far as to mention a woman “endowed with wisdom and excelling in humility; Clare by name, brighter in life, and brightest in character.”²⁹ Even so, Celano’s Franciscan stance on women is clear:

Rightly so, Father, for looking upon [women] makes no one holy. Rightly so, I say, for they provide no profit but only great loss, at least of time. They are an impediment to those who would walk the difficult way.³⁰

One of the most heinous ways that the Order of Friars Minor was built on systemic Catholic misogyny is the ways in which Francis and the brothers express their inferiority. To emphasize his complete subservience before God, il Poverello consistently utilizes feminine descriptors when referring to himself and the order at large. In a letter to Brother Leo around 1220, Francis gives advice “As a mother to her child”; when friars go on hermitages, Francis instructs that “Two of these should act as mothers, with the other two, or the other one, as their children. The mothers are to lead the life of Martha; the other two, the life of Mary Magdalen”; in the *Second Life*, Celano tells of three women, who when Francis approaches them call him “Lady Poverty”; on his deathbed, Francis shows his affection for the widow Jacoba of Settesoli by calling her “Brother Jacoba,” as if he is only capable of giving his deepest love to his male friars.³¹

Francis was not unique in his treatment of women. Other holy men also used feminine framing to illustrate the goal of inhabiting the position of the lowly servant who would inherit God’s kingdom—the position women held in society. “Men, being culturally authoritative, align themselves spiritually with the humble status of women by relinquishing rhetorically, but not socially, the prominence exerted in everyday life” so as to show humility before God without yielding any of the societal benefits of masculinity. To be feminine is beneficial in the Heavenly Kingdom, but detrimental in the physical Catholic world.³²

Francis' adherence to and reliance on the misogynistic status quo of thirteenth-century Italy is in itself antithetical to the very idea of the Franciscan faith. To show his fervent love for God, Francis cast off all his clothes in front of his father and the bishop of Assisi, renouncing all earthly ties. He even denounced his familial bonds, saying, "Until now I called you my father, but from now on I can say without reserve, 'Our Father who art in heaven.'"³³ The subsequent construction of Franciscanism is based on this repudiation of worldly possession and the very society one is born into, hence the seclusion of monastic life and refusal to partake in societal norms, e.g. working for money and wearing shoes. Just as Francis' sinful youth was not entirely washed clean by the Lethe of his conversion to true biblical Catholicism, so too did the depravities of greater society find ways to muddy his faith of purity.

The Franciscans sisters, striving for the same goals of poverty and humility as their brothers, were isolated from the fraternity and confined to the church of San Damiano in Assisi. When Francis, who viewed women—"That honeyed poison"—with abject horror, is nothing short of forced to preach to the sisters at their secluded residence, he refuses to speak to or even look at them, instead guarding himself against womanly temptation with a circle of ashes, which he stands within.³⁴ He sprinkles the rest on his head, solemnly recites the *Miserere mei Deus*, and departs, leaving the Ladies in a state of severe confusion.³⁵

While the friars were exalted for their many virtuous traits and the good deeds that they gladly performed, Clare's sisters were reduced to their virginity being their only dignity—their actions are hardly blinked at (save for Celano's brief passage mentioned above). Clare's contributions to Franciscanism continue to go overlooked, even by the modern members of her eponymous order. Many women have joined the Poor Clares because of a connection to St. Francis, not Clare. The "appeal of [the] famous saint"—not his lesser-known counterpart who provided "women wish[ing] to embrace a life of contemplative prayer" a rare opportunity that has historically been abundantly afforded to men—has drawn women to an order that has become almost inconsequentially related to St. Clare of Assisi.³⁶

Clare's struggle with the misogynistic hierarchy of the Church was never-ending. Pope Innocent III approved Francis' rule in short order—the process is given a single sentence in Celano's *First Life*.³⁷ When Clare, however, pursued the same goal, Pope Gregory IX insisted she accept a less severe rule, believing a woman could not hold herself to the same standards as a

Franciscan brother. Clare “never forgot that she was only a woman without authority in the Church,” but she continued to fight for her right to serve her Lord exactly as Francis and his friars did.³⁸ For more than twenty years and two popes, Clare’s rule—the first ever written by a woman—wandered the desolate hills of purgatory. It would not be approved by the pontificate until two days before her death.³⁹

St. Clare’s Order of Poor Ladies is “one of the oldest and largest women’s religious orders in the Catholic Church”; by Clare’s death in 1253, the order already had one hundred forty-three houses throughout the world.⁴⁰ The sisters lead a life of divine contemplation, modeled after that of their foundress. In the early thirteenth century, Clare was renowned throughout Italy for her refusal to accept less than the absolute poverty practiced by the friars. Her most lasting impact, and one that would thenceforth be central to all iconographic representations of her, occurred at the doors of the church of San Damiano in 1240.⁴¹

In his *Life of St. Clare*, Celano speaks of the turmoil Italy was embroiled in under the rule of Emperor Frederick II by describing that the Spoleto valley “often drank of the chalice of wrath.”⁴² In September 1240, the Saracens—a term used by medieval writers to describe the Islamic warriors who conquered Spain and Sicily and invaded France—attacked the Poor Clares’ defenseless monastery on the outskirts of Assisi. “That worst of races who thirst for the blood of Christians and most shamelessly attempt every wickedness,” writes Celano, were met at the door of the church by a weakened and sick Clare and “a silver casket enclosed in ivory, in which the Body of the Holy of Holies was most devoutly kept.”⁴³

With holy tears and divine prayers, Clare beseeched the Lord to protect her order and the city of Assisi—as her tears fell, the advancing Saracens swiftly retreated in fear, “overthrown by the power of her prayers.”⁴⁴ In remembrance of her bravery, Clare is often depicted holding the monstrance, which glows from within its glass chamber like a divine lighthouse. Francis’ most famous miracle is one of seclusion and suffering, an intimate agony he shared only with God and took great pains for the rest of his life to conceal from even his closest companions. Clare’s is an outward expression of her love for God so strong as to repel the vilest medieval writers could illustrate, a declaration of devotion that saved the entire city of Assisi.

Celano also devotes many chapters of his *legenda* to Clare's deep love for her sisters in the order. Despite governing the convent, she would serve the sisters food, care for those who were sick, and even wash the feet of servants returning from outdoors. If a sister struggled to observe the strictest of observances, Clare allowed her to be content with a less rigorous practice. Additionally, Celano makes multiple notes of Clare's physical characteristics, an emphasis that would be considered absurd if not heretical to give to Francis. The biographer refers to Clare as "redolent" and describes how "her sweet odor, even as a vessel of aromatical spices does though it be closed," made her famous throughout neighboring towns.⁴⁵

When Francis noticed a sorrowful friar, he rebuked him sharply, saying, "Examine your offenses in your room and weep and groan before your God. When you return to your brothers, put off your sorrow and conform yourself to the rest"; when the abbess found nuns "afflicted in sadness, Clare, secretly calling the Sister to her, consoled her amidst tears."⁴⁶ While Francis lived in grief and solitude, Clare found joy and solace in her sisters. Francis preached a life of shame and suffering; Clare taught love and compassion.

Conclusion: Il Poverello's Legacy

Just as St. Francis of Assisi was second in divinity only to Jesus Christ, so too is he second only to Christ in examinations. Intricate paintings of the saint have found their way into the halls of museums across the globe; biographies detailing his life, teachings, and miracles, each building on the seminal works of Thomas of Celano, have been published in every century since his death in 1226; *Franciscan Studies*, a scholarly journal focusing on Franciscan history, theology, art, and philosophy has been published by the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University in New York since 1924. The Order of Friars Minor has been alive and well for over eight centuries, extending across every continent. The Basilica di San Francesco in Assisi is thronged with tourists each summer, bulky cameras and day packs mingling with near-millennium-old frescoes and the modest habits of friars minor.

St. Francis of Assisi has made his way into popular culture in ways no Catholic figure other than Jesus Christ has. Three examples of this are particularly notable. First, the 1972 movie *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*, which more or less accurately brought the saint's canonical life to the

silver screen—Clare (unsurprisingly mostly distinguished by her immense physical beauty) is given much heavier influence on early Franciscanism than is historically accurate. She was over a decade younger than Francis and did not become a Franciscan until after the *Rule of 1221* was approved by Innocent III. She is positioned solely as the effectively powerless muse for Francis’ construction of Franciscanism; her establishment and subsequent governing of the Order of Poor Clares is never mentioned. (A scene in which locals burn San Damiano and murder a friar is also completely ahistorical.)⁴⁷

Second, the Peace Prayer of St. Francis, which former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher famously recited on May 4, 1979, before officially entering office. The Peace Prayer is perhaps the most enduring Franciscan contribution to contemporary Christianity, but is in actuality not the work of St. Francis; it was first published in 1912, anonymously, by the French magazine *La Clochette*—nearly seven hundred years after the saint’s death. A less contemporary example: In Canto XXVII of Dante’s immortal *Inferno*, St. Francis descends to earth as a heavenly host to claim the soul of a Franciscan brother. No other saint throughout the *Inferno* is given such angelic personification.⁴⁸

St. Francis’ unique approach to Catholicism has allowed him to transcend the religion in ways no other saint has. He has become almost a Catholic Buddha—dedicated to fervent meditation and peace with oneself and the world, statues of il Poverello find themselves alongside those of Siddhartha Gautama in gift shops and next to azaleas in white Americans’ gardens. The Little Poor Man’s deep compassion for the poor and sick continues to lead as an example to all of how to treat those less fortunate; his eagerness to discard all material possessions is a devotion to finding joy in life’s simplicity that we can all strive for in a world that seems to be overflowing with unwanted matter and an hourglass whose grains fall ever faster. In the *Canticle of Brother Sun*, Francis praises the most elementary and yet most all-encompassing of human joys, the sun:

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Earth, our mother,
 Who feeds us in her sovereignty and produces
 Various fruits with coloured flowers and herbs.
 All praise be yours, my Lord, through those who grant pardon
 For love of you; through those who endure
 Sickness and trial ...

Praise and bless my Lord, and give him thanks,
And serve him with great humility.⁴⁹

St. Francis' reverence for all living things exemplifies a harmonious co-existence with nature that has resonated with people from all cultures, a collaboration with the earth that has not been seen since the Indigenous peoples of the world were slaughtered and driven from their ancestral lands by advancing colonizers touting the same faith Francis subscribed to.⁵⁰

The life and lessons of St. Francis continue to grow in significance: when the Argentine Jorge Mario Bergoglio became the first pontiff from the Americas and the entire Southern Hemisphere in 2013, he too became the first to take the name Francis, seeking to be "a pope who cares about the poor, who wants to have solidarity with the people of the world."⁵¹

Although Pope Francis has worked to address misogyny within the Catholic Church, he has not mentioned intolerance in the Order of Friars Minor specifically. In October 2018 and early 2019, summits were held in Vatican City to discuss the rampant sexual abuse scandals in the Church which have been brought to light in recent decades. In 2019, of the one hundred ninety Catholic leaders present, only ten were women. In 2018, only nine nuns were invited, compared to two hundred sixty-seven cardinals, bishops, and priests. Women were not allowed to vote on the final recommendations.⁵² In a post-apostolic exhortation following the 2019 meetings, Francis said women have "legitimate claims" to "seek greater justice and equality" in the Church, but did not endorse calls from his own bishops allowing women to hold leadership positions.⁵³ In July 2022, the pope did appoint three women to the Dicastery of Bishops, which helps select bishops around the world, the first female appointments to leadership roles in the Catholic Church.⁵⁴ Many women in the Church saw the move as insubstantial; a statement from the Women's Ordination Conference noted the "deep irony that women may now aid in selecting bishops, a role they themselves are prohibited from holding on account of their gender."⁵⁵ On April 26, 2023, the Vatican announced that Pope Francis would allow women to vote at a Synod of Bishops for the first time in history. Women are still ineligible to hold any positions of power, such as deacon or bishop.⁵⁶

Despite direct calls from high-ranking members of the Catholic Church to recognize women who have historically served the organization in equal capacities to men, the Franciscan pope continues to tout St. Francis' deep-seated belief that women are not capable of being as

godly as men. The Catholic Church praises women for their contributions to the faith, calling St. Clare “One of the best loved Saints” and preaching “how indebted the Church is to courageous women,” but just as the popes of the early thirteenth century believed Clare was incapable of holding herself to the same standard of poverty and prayer as Francis, so too do these men refuse to accept that women can love God as much as they do.⁵⁷

St. Francis was not perfect. He was the closest any mortal man came to living the life of Jesus Christ, renowned across continents and centuries for his patience, humility, and deep love for all of God’s creations. And yet, he was mortal; he felt jealousy, anger, and spite. Perhaps he held his friars to an impossibly high standard, a level of perfection that even he could not achieve. He was a deeply flawed man, a product of the hardship and turmoil of thirteenth-century Italy. Just like every other human to ever walk the face of the earth, Francis was a sinner. But his contributions to ideals of kindness, meekness, and finding joy in life’s simplicities are incredibly significant in the annals of human history.

St. Francis was, without a doubt, an exemplary Catholic. But his ideology, so revolutionary within and without the Church, was built almost entirely on the idea that women were absolutely inferior to men in every capacity, a belief that continues to drive much of the world. Recognize St. Francis for his radicalism and good deeds. Love the poor, care for the sick, and remove worms from the road so that they may not be trampled. But remember too that Francis was not removed from the sin and oppression of the thirteenth-century Catholic Church, nor the Italian society he worked so hard to slough off. Remember that Francis was not isolated from the things he hated, but perhaps hated them so vehemently because he saw that try as he might, he could not escape them.

Remember the women of the Church and of the world, who have struggled against patriarchal rule for millennia. Remember that *il Poverello*, the Little Poor Man of Assisi, perpetuated this system of abject inequality with as much fervor as he prayed.

Notes

1. Placid Hermann, "Introduction," in "First and Second Life of St. Francis with selections from Treatise on the Miracles of Bl. Francis by Thomas of Celano," in *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, ed. Marion A. Habig (Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), 183.
2. Gilbert Wdzieczny, "The Life and Works of Thomas of Celano," *Franciscan Studies* 45, no. 1 (March 1945): 56–58.
The story of St. Francis of Assisi's stigmata, one of il Poverello's most famous miracles, will be addressed later in this paper.
3. Hermann, "Introduction," 200–201.
4. Thomas of Celano, "The First Life of St. Francis," trans. Placid Hermann, in *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, ed. Marion A. Habig (Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), 230.
5. While the information is frustratingly equivocal and difficult to find, it appears that the old church of San Giorgio was first documented in 1111, and construction of the Basilica di Santa Chiara, next to San Giorgio, began circa 1257, following St. Clare's canonization two years prior (Evans, "Cappella di San Giorgio"; Notre Dame, "Convent of Santa Chiara"). Pope Urban IV presumably ordered that a new church of San Giorgio be built (likely the Cappella di San Giorgio within the Basilica di Santa Chiara) to replace the old church of San Giorgio, whose demolition was ordered in 1263 (Evans, "Cappella di San Giorgio"). There is conflicting information in sources about whether the Basilica di Santa Chiara was built next to San Giorgio, with a new Cappella di San Giorgio being built within the basilica, or if the basilica was built *around* the original church of San Giorgio.
St. Francis' remains were originally held in the old church of San Giorgio, where the ceremony of his canonization took place, before being moved to the Basilica di San Francesco in 1230 (Bonaventure, "Major Life," 745). St. Clare was originally buried at the church of San Damiano; her remains were moved to her eponymous basilica in 1260 (Dave and Ream, "Clare's Timeline").
6. Hermann, "Introduction," 201.
7. Hermann, "Introduction," 201.
8. Thomas of Celano, "The Second Life of St. Francis," trans. Placid Hermann, in *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, ed. Marion A. Habig (Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), 475, 485.
9. Timothy J. Johnson, "In the Workshop of a Theologian: The Life of Our Blessed Father Francis by Thomas of Celano," *Franciscan Studies* 74 (2016): 251.
10. Marion A. Habig, "Foreword," in *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, ed. Marion A. Habig (Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), v.

11. Matt. 19:23–30 (Revised Standard Version).
12. Dominic Monti, “A 2020 Snapshot of the Order of Friars Minor,” *Holy Name Province*, September 3, 2020.
13. Celano, “First Life,” 260; Exod. 33:11 (RSV).
14. Francis of Assisi, “Rule of 1221,” trans. Benen Fahy, in *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, ed. Marion A. Habig (Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), 37.
15. Assisi, “Rule of 1221,” 46.
16. Assisi, “Rule of 1221,” 43.
17. Celano, “Second Life,” 432.
In the *Second Life*, Celano writes of over half a dozen specific instances of Francis giving his mantle to people in need so that they may be warm, an illustration of his compassion for the poor and disregard for his own comfort if he may help another (433–438).
18. Celano, “Second Life,” 494–495.
19. Ugolino Brunforte, “Little Flowers of St. Francis,” trans. Raphael Brown, in *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, ed. Marion A. Habig (Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), 1336–1337.
20. Celano, “First Life,” 308–310.
21. Celano, “Second Life,” 472.
22. Pius XI, “Rite Expiatis: Encyclical on St. Francis of Assisi,” *The Holy See*, delivered April 30, 1926.
23. Franciscans were among the largest champions of brutal suppression of indigenous lifeways in the Americas. Throughout the sixteenth-century Spanish conquest of Latin America, clergy were consistently some of the most important figures in deciding what route to take in the proselytization of the natives. Friars and bishops acted as de facto leaders with the king across the Atlantic and had to give assent before indigenous communities could be wiped out (Hanke, *Spanish Struggle for Justice*, 134). In particular, as the conquistadors swept south after Hernán Cortéz’s “spiritual conquest of the natives of Mexico,” Franciscan friars became the leading religious and political party in the decimation of Maya society in the Yucatán (Hanke, *Spanish Struggle for Justice*, 133). Diego de Landa, a mid-century bishop of the region, is one of the most infamous Franciscans in history. It was he who led the inquisition against Maya idolatry that used extensive torture and led to scores of Maya deaths, culminating in the burning of almost every known Maya text. The belief in the necessity of this brutal attack on Maya religion and lifeways was shaped by the “millenarian ideas of Spanish Franciscanism” (Timmer, “Providence and Perdition,” 477). Without the Franciscan ideology, the Maya language might still exist today.

24. Jacques Dalarun, "Francis and Clare of Assisi: Differing Perspectives on Gender and Power," *Franciscan Studies* 63 (2005): 14.
25. Assisi, "Rule of 1221," 42; Matt. 5:28 (RSV).
26. Francis of Assisi, "Rule of 1223," trans. Benen Fahy, in *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, ed. Marion A. Habig (Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), 64; Assisi, "Rule of 1221," 42.
27. Celano, "Second Life," 527.
28. "The Gospel According to Mary Magdalene," Gnostic Scriptures and Fragments, The Gnostic Society Library, accessed February 23, 2023.
29. Dalarun, "Francis and Clare," 13–14; Celano, "First Life," 244.
Following Clare's death in 1253, Pope Alexander IV commissioned a *legenda* of her life written to accompany her canonization in 1255. Originally thought to be written by St. Bonaventure, it is now widely agreed to have been authored by Celano, undeniably making him the most important Franciscan historian of all time (Hermann, "Introduction," 198–199). Disappointingly but not unexpectedly, an inordinate portion of the *Life* is devoted to St. Clare's virginity and how she inspired other women to also remain chaste; in comparison, Celano seldom mentions St. Francis' chastity, instead opting to praise his avoidance of the sinful presence of women.
30. Celano, "Second Life," 455.
31. Francis of Assisi, "Letter to Brother Leo," trans. Benen Fahy, in *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, ed. Marion A. Habig (Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), 118; Francis of Assisi, "Religious Life in Hermitages," trans. Benen Fahy, in *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, ed. Marion A. Habig (Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), 72; Celano, "Second Life," 438; Thomas of Celano, "Treatise on the Miracles of Blessed Francis," trans. Placid Hermann, in *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, ed. Marion A. Habig (Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), 550.
32. Christina Cedillo, "Habitual Gender: Rhetorical Androgyny in Franciscan Texts," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 66.
33. Bonaventure, "Major Life of St. Francis," trans. Benen Fahy, In *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, ed. Marion A. Habig (Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), 643.
34. Celano, "Second Life," 454.
35. Celano, "Second Life," 527.
The *Miserere mei Deus* is Psalm 51, a "Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to

him,” from the Old Testament’s Book of Psalms (Ps. 51 (RSV)). The psalm is an admittance of sin and a prayer to God to “blot out my transgressions” (Ps. 51 (RSV)). It is a most strange sermon for Francis to give to the Order of Poor Ladies—he seems to have been repenting for the lust he could not stop himself from feeling simply from being in the presence of women. It is entirely understandable that the sisters felt “no small astonishment” (Celano, “Second Life,” 527).

36. Paul Gerrard, “The Lord Said “Come””: Why Women Enter a Religious Order,” *Oral History* 24, no. 2 (Autumn 1996): 57.

37. Celano, “First Life,” 255.

38. Paul Sabatier, “The Originality of St. Francis of Assisi,” trans. W. Lloyd Bevan, *The Sewanee Review* 17, no. 1 (January 1909): 63.

39. Sabatier, “Originality,” 63; Nicole Sotelo, “Can women write the rules? St. Clare of Assisi did,” *National Catholic Reporter*, August 28, 2014.

40. Gerrard, “The Lord Said “Come,”” 54.

41. Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby, “St. Clare Expelling the Saracens from Assisi: Religious Confrontation in Word and Image,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 43, no. 3 (Fall 2012): 643.

42. Thomas of Celano, *The Life of St. Clare*, trans. Paschal Robinson (Philadelphia, Penn.: Dolphin Press, 1910), 36.

43. Celano, *St. Clare*, 36, 37.

Celano is speaking of a monstrance carrying the consecrated eucharistic host (the Holy Communion’s sacramental bread), not an actual casket bearing the body of Christ.

44. Celano, *St. Clare*, 37.

45. Celano, *St. Clare*, 23–24, 61; Celano, *St. Clare*, 9.

46. Celano, *Second Life*, 467–468; Celano, *St. Clare*, 61.

47. Dalarun, “Francis and Clare,” 13–14; Cedillo, “Habitual Gender,” 70.

48. Margaret Thatcher Foundation, ““And I would just like to remember some words of St. Francis of Assisi . . .,”” last modified May 2019; Dante Alighieri, *The Inferno*, trans. John Ciardi (New York, N.Y.: New American Library, 1954), 230.

49. Francis of Assisi, “The Canticle of Brother Sun,” trans. Benen Fahy, in *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, ed. Marion A. Habig (Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), 131.

50. The Indigenous peoples of the Americas’ relationship with nature and the environment was—and is—almost the complete inverse of that of the Catholic Europeans who began ruthless colonization campaigns in the early sixteenth century. This dichotomy reaches back to the very creation stories of the Bible and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Whereas the Haudenosaunee recount the story of Skywoman, who created a beautiful garden

for all people to walk through and enjoy the fruits of at will, Catholics tell of Eve, a woman who was banished from her garden for tasting its fruit and made to earn her food by sweat and environmental subdual. Everyone is “inevitably shaped” by cosmologies: Indigenous peoples learned to live in harmony with nature and their fellow man—they welcomed the Spanish Catholics and British Puritans and treated them “very patiently, submissively and quietly”; Christians learned to conquer at all costs, destroying peace with every hopscotched Caribbean island and decimated Indigenous tribe (Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*; Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, 7).

51. Bill Chappell, “Pope Francis: A Saintly Name, Hold The ‘I,’” *National Public Radio*, March 13, 2013.

52. Maya Oppenheim, “Pope Francis says feminism is ‘machismo with a skirt,’” *Independent*, February 25, 2019; Associated Press, “Pope Francis said that Catholic women have ‘legitimate claims’ for justice, equality,” *National Broadcasting Company News*, April 2, 2019.

53. Francis, “Christus Vivit: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation,” *The Holy See*, delivered March 25, 2019; Associated Press, “Legitimate claims.”

54. Associated Press, “Pope Francis names women to bishops advisory committee for the first time,” *Euronews*, July 13, 2022.

55. Women’s Ordination Conference, “WOC welcomes appointment of women to the Dicastery for Bishops,” July 13, 2022.

56. Associated Press, “In a historic shift, Pope Francis allows women to vote at bishops’ meetings,” *National Public Radio*, April 26, 2023.

57. Benedict XVI, “General Audience,” *The Holy See*, delivered September 15, 2010.

Bibliography

- Alighieri, Dante. *The Inferno*. Translated by John Ciardi. New York, N.Y.: New American Library, 1954.
- Assisi, Francis of. "The Canticle of Brother Sun." Translated by Benen Fahy. In *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, edited by Marion A. Habig, 130–131. Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973.
- . "Letter to Brother Leo." Translated by Benen Fahy. In *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, edited by Marion A. Habig, 118–119. Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973.
- . "Religious Life in Hermitages." Translated by Benen Fahy. In *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, edited by Marion A. Habig, 72–73. Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973.
- . "Rule of 1221." Translated by Benen Fahy. In *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, edited by Marion A. Habig, 31–53. Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973.
- . "Rule of 1223." Translated by Benen Fahy. In *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, edited by Marion A. Habig, 57–64. Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973.
- Associated Press. "In a historic shift, Pope Francis allows women to vote at bishops' meetings." *National Public Radio*, April 26, 2023. <https://www.npr.org/2023/04/26/1172201884/pope-francis-women-vote-bishops-meetings>.
- . "Pope Francis names women to bishops advisory committee for the first time." *Euronews*, July 13, 2022. <https://www.euronews.com/2022/07/13/pope-francis-names-women-to-bishops-advisory-committee-for-the-first-time#:~:text=Pope%20Francis%20has%20for%20the,the%20Vatican%20said%20on%20Wednesday>.
- . "Pope Francis said that Catholic women have 'legitimate claims' for justice, equality." *National Broadcasting Company News*, April 2, 2019. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/pope-francis/pope-francis-said-catholic-women-have-legitimate-claims-justice-equality-n990176>.
- Ben-Aryeh Debby, Nirit. "St. Clare of Assisi: Charity and Miracles in Early Modern Italy." *Franciscan Studies* 71 (2013): 237–262. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43855972>.
- . "St. Clare Expelling the Saracens from Assisi: Religious Confrontation in Word and Image." *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 43, no. 3 (Fall 2012): 643–665. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24245545>.

- Benedict XVI. "General Audience." *The Holy See*, delivered September 15, 2010.
https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20100915.html.
- Bonaventure. "Major Life of St. Francis." Translated by Benen Fahy. In *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, edited by Marion A. Habig, 627–787. Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973.
- . "Minor Life of St. Francis." Translated by Benen Fahy. In *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, edited by Marion A. Habig, 789–831. Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973.
- Brunforte, Ugolino. "Little Flowers of St. Francis." Translated by Raphael Brown. In *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, edited by Marion A. Habig, 1301–1506. Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973.
- Casas, Bartolomé de las. *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*. 1552.
https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/A_Short_Account_of_the_Destruction_of_the_Indies/Chapter_1.
- Cedillo, Christina. "Habitual Gender: Rhetorical Androgyny in Franciscan Texts." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 65–81.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/jfemistudreli.31.1.65>.
- Celano, Thomas of. "The First Life of St. Francis." Translated by Placid Hermann. In *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, edited by Marion A. Habig, 225–355. Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973.
- . *The Life of St. Clare*. Translated by Paschal Robinson. Philadelphia, Penn.: Dolphin Press, 1910. <https://archive.org/details/TheLifeOfSaintClare/page/n13/mode/2up>.
- . "The Second Life of St. Francis." Translated by Placid Hermann. In *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, edited by Marion A. Habig, 357–543. Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973.
- . "Treatise on the Miracles of Blessed Francis." Translated by Placid Hermann. In *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, edited by Marion A. Habig, 545–554. Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973.
- Chappell, Bill. "Pope Francis: A Saintly Name, Hold The 'I.'" *National Public Radio*, March 13, 2013.
<https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2013/03/13/174237155/pope-francis-a-saintly-name-hold-the-i>.

- Chuchiak, John F., IV. “*In Servitio Dei*: Fray Diego de Landa, the Franciscan Order, and the Return of the Extirpation of Idolatry in the Colonial Diocese of Yucatán, 1573–1579.” *The Americas* 61, no. 4 (April 2005): 611–646. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4490974>.
- Dalarun, Jacques. “Francis and Clare of Assisi: Differing Perspectives on Gender and Power.” *Franciscan Studies* 63 (2005): 11–25. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41975340>.
- Dave, Deacon, and Thérèse Ream. “Clare’s Timeline.” *Franciscans Of The Prairie*, July 2017. <https://www.prairiestfrancis.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/St-Clare-Timeline.pdf>.
- Evans, Lynda. “Santa Chiara (1260–5).” *Key to Umbria: Assisi*. Accessed March 23, 2023. http://www.keytombria.com/Assisi/S_Chiaara.html.
- . “Santa Chiara: Cappella di San Giorgio.” *Key to Umbria: Assisi*. Accessed March 23, 2023. http://www.keytombria.com/Assisi/S_Chiaara_Cappella_di_S_Giorgio.html.
- Flood, W. H. Grattan. “The Poor Clares in Wexford.” *The Past: The Organ of the Uí Cinsealaigh Historical Society* no. 2 (December 1921): 145. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25519796>.
- Francis. “Christus Vivit: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation.” *The Holy See*, delivered March 25, 2019. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20190325_christus-vivit.html.
- Gerrard, Paul. ““The Lord Said “Come””: Why Women Enter a Religious Order.” *Oral History* 24, no. 2 (Autumn 1996): 54–58. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40179423>.
- The Gnostic Society Library. “The Gospel According to Mary Magdalene.” Gnostic Scriptures and Fragments. Accessed February 23, 2023. <http://gnosis.org/library/marygosp.htm>.
- Habig, Marion A. “Foreword.” In *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, edited by Marion A. Habig, v–ix. Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973.
- , ed. *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*. Translated by Raphael Brown, Benen Fahy, Placid Hermann, Paul Oligny, Nesta de Robeck, and Leo Sherley-Price. Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973.
- Hanke, Lewis. *The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America*. Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949. <https://hdl-handle-net.proxy.lib.pdx.edu/2027/heb00254.0001.001>.
- Hermann, Placid. “Introduction.” In “First and Second Life of St. Francis with selections from Treatise on the Miracles of Bl. Francis by Thomas of Celano.” In *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, edited by Marion A. Habig, 179–212. Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973.

- Johnson, Timothy J. "In the Workshop of a Theologian: The Life of Our Blessed Father Francis by Thomas of Celano." *Franciscan Studies* 74 (2016): 249–262. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44652730>.
- Kimmerer, Robin Wall. *Braiding Sweetgrass*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Milkweed Editions, 2013.
- Margaret Thatcher Foundation. "“And I would just like to remember some words of St. Francis of Assisi ...”" Last modified May 2019. <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/archive/StFrancis#:~:text=origin%20of%20the%20prayer,%2C%20La%20Clochette%2C%20in%201912>.
- Monti, Dominic. "A 2020 Snapshot of the Order of Friars Minor." *Holy Name Province*, September 3, 2020. <https://hnp.org/a-2020-snapshot-of-the-order-of-friars-minor/>.
- Oppenheim, Maya. "Pope Francis says feminism is ‘machismo with a skirt.’" *Independent*, February 25, 2019. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/pope-francis-feminism-machismo-skirt-child-sex-abuse-catholic-church-vatican-summit-a8795726.html>.
- Pius XI. "Rite Expiatis: Encyclical on St. Francis of Assisi." *The Holy See*, delivered April 30, 1926. https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_30041926_rite-expiatis.html.
- Sabatier, Paul. "The Originality of St. Francis of Assisi." Translated by W. Lloyd Bevan. *The Sewanee Review* 17, no. 1 (January 1909): 51–65. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27530948>.
- Schlumpf, Heidi. "Pope’s recent appointment of women is too little, too late." *National Catholic Reporter*, July 29, 2022. <https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/ncr-connections/popes-recent-appointment-women-too-little-too-late>.
- Shwaller, John F. "Introduction: Franciscans in Colonial Latin America." *The Americas* 61, no. 4 (April 2005): 565–570. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4490972>.
- Sotelo, Nicole. "Can women write the rules? St. Clare of Assisi did." *National Catholic Reporter*, August 28, 2014. <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/young-voices/can-women-write-rules-st-clare-assisi-did>.
- Timmer, David E. "Providence and Perdition: Fray Diego de Landa Justifies His Inquisition against the Yucatecan Maya." *Church History* 66, no. 3 (September 1997): 477–488. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3169452>.
- University of Notre Dame. "Church and Convent of Santa Chiara: Overall view of facade with flying buttress." Hesburgh Libraries. Accessed March 23, 2023. <https://curate.nd.edu/show/rv042r39x1v>.
- Wdzieczny, Gilbert. "The Life and Works of Thomas of Celano." *Franciscan Studies* 45, no. 1 (March 1945): 55–68. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41974033>.

Women's Ordination Conference. "WOC welcomes appointment of women to the Dicastery for Bishops." July 13, 2022.

<https://www.womensordination.org/2022/07/woc-welcomes-appointments-of-women-to-the-dicastery-of-bishops/>.