# Francis of Assisi:
# An Invitation to "Brotherhood/Sisterhood" as an Alternative to the Profit Economy of Medieval Europe

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## Introduction

Pope Francis will visit to Korea in August 2014. Jorge Mario Bergoglio, the 76-year-old Archbishop of Buenos Aires, has become the 266th Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. He is the first Jesuit Pope, the first Pope from the global South, and the first non-European Pope since Pope Gregory III in 741. What attracts me most, however, is that he is the very first Pope who chose his papal name in honor of St. Francis of Assisi. Pope Francis, like his papal name, has emphasized the Christian obligation to assist the poor and practiced it by himself by choosing to reside in a guesthouse, rather than the Apostolic Palace, and cook his own supper. "My people are poor and I am one of them," said the Pope.

Born in 1181 or 1182, St. Francis of Assisi died in 1226 when he was only 44. He did not live long, but his life left a great legacy to Western Christianity. Pope Pius XI called him the "Second Christ"(*alter Christus*); others called him "the first after the Only Son" or "the incomparable saint." I write this article on St. Francis with the expectation that Pope Francis' visit to Korea will serve as momentum to raise awareness of people with the significance of Christian spirituality of poverty. The life and faith of St. Francis can be the antidote for Korean churches which are enslaved to neo-liberalism and addicted to so-called the "prosperity theology." For this purpose, I will first investigate the socio-religious context of St. Francis and the meaning of "brotherhood/sisterhood" and "obedience" in Franciscan movement. I will then discuss the significance, implications, and limits of Francis' understanding on "poverty" as evangelistic ideal of Christian discipleship.

## The "Renunciation" of Francis

Before we start, however, we are faced with the "Franciscan Question," or the problem of "historical Francis," so to speak. Francis himself said in the *Earlier Rule* (1209/10-1221): "On behalf of Almighty God and of the Lord Pope… I, Brother Francis, firmly command and decree that no one delete or add to what has been written in this life."[2] Unfortunately, however, his desire was not followed. Throughout history, followers of Francis have projected their own ideas and constructs onto the writings of Francis.[3] Hagiographic tradition seems dominant in the history of Franciscan literature.[4] Indeed, legend has been

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[2] Regis J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and J. William, eds., *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents* (New York: New City Press, 1999), 86.

[3] Armstrong et al. *Ibid*., 13.

[4] Auspicius van Corstanje, *Francis: Bible of the Poor* (Chicago, Illinois: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977), 9.

piled on legend, myth on myth. Each writer saw Francis in terms of what was important to the order at the time he wrote.[5] They write not only to edify and encourage Francis' admirers, but also to defend him from the skepticism of the hierarchy.[6] After all, hagiography is a very special kind of biography, in which spirit and atmosphere are as important as factual date.[7]

Giving heed to this problem, we can start from the "renunciation" story of Francis. This story sharply divides the early "prodigal" Francis and the later "holy" Francis. Here is a version of this story:

> Francis' angry father… led the son to the bishop of the city to make him renounce into the bishop's hands all rights of inheritance and return everything that he had. When Francis was in front of the bishop [Guido II, the bishop of Assisi from 1204 to 1228], he neither delayed nor hesitated, but immediately took off and threw down all his clothes and returned them to his father. He did not even keep his trousers on, and he was completely stripped base before everyone. The bishop, observing his frame of mind and admiring his fervor and determination, got up and, gathering him in his own arms, covered him with the mantle he was wearing.[8]

What was the meaning of Francis' "renunciation" in the thirteenth-century northern Italy? Why is it important to understand Franciscan movement and spirituality?

**The Social Context: From Gift Economy to Profit Economy**

Historians point to the rapid increase in Europe's population since the tenth century, along with a series of technical improvements in farm implements and more efficient crop cultivation, which greatly increased the productivity of the land.[9] A surplus of people and of food made possible the growth of towns and of trade.[10] In addition to this internal "colonization" of previously uninhabited regions within Europe, European society was pulsing with a new dynamism of external colonization of lands inhabited by

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[5] Richard C. Trexler, *Naked Before the Father: The Renunciation of Francis of Assisi* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 44. The familiar stories and images of Francis known to us—e.g., his sickness after the battle with neighbor city, supernatural dream, military (chivalrous) spirit, persecution by his stingy father, struggles with demons, proclamation or greeting of peace, conviction of God's providence for the journey, recurring emphasis on mortification of the flesh, unceasing prayer and all night vigils, and experience of temptation, etc.—are typically medieval hagiographic themes and images, drawn and copied from, for instance, Augustine, Gregory the Great, Athanasius, or Bernard of Clairvaux, etc. (Armstrong et al, *Francis of Assisi: Early Document*, 183-256.)

[6] Armstrong. *Ibid*., 11.

[7] Corstanje, *Francis: Bible of the Poor*, 9.

[8] Armstrong et al. *Francis of Assisi*, 193. This story is originally from Thomas of Celano's *Life of Saint Francis* (1228-1229) which laid the foundation of the rich Franciscan literary tradition of the 13th century.

[9] Williston Walker, Richard Norris, David W. Lotz, and Robert T. Handy, *A History of the Christian Church* (Fourth Edition. New York: Scribner, 1985), 283.

[10] Walker et al., *Ibid*., 283.

Muslims or Greeks.[11] The Crusades, extending over two centuries, were in fact a manifestation of this expansion of the Christendom.[12]

Lester K. Little gives us a concrete picture. According to him, crop yield before the change was on the order of 2:1--i.e., bare subsistence level.[13] At this stage, the community was united spiritually in a single church congregation; the people typically lived in small, closed groups, typically did not travel about, and typically did not often have dealings with strangers.[14] And yet, the innovations of the eleventh century--i.e., the use of horses, the use of deep, mould-board ploughs, and the use of systematic crop rotation in combination with improved fertilizing techniques, etc.--brought about an overall increment in the crop-yield ration from 2:1 to 3:1 (a profit increase of 100 percent).[15] Little asserts that this "agricultural revolution" made it possible to feed a burgeoning population and to assist the "commercial revolution."[16]

Little's study is actually indebted to Marc Bloch who defines the years 1000-1300 as the era of "commercial revolution."[17] The "commercial revolution," according to Bloch, brought about the common trend toward specialization (e.g., mining), the mobility of people as well as of spices, fish, cloth, wine, and iron, and the increase in the size and number of local markets.[18] Bloch also calls this era as a "pre-Industrial-Revolution industry," because it witnessed the burgeoning of woolen cloth, textile industry.[19] What makes us specifically interesting is the fact that the first area of intense commercial activity was none other than northern Italy.[20] While the Flemish and their neighbors dominated the textile industry, it was Italians who actually dominated the cloth trade.[21] Bloch further assures that the period of expanding commerce and industry was both paralleled and facilitated by an increase in the amount and use of money in the European economy.[22] Interestingly again, one of the leading suppliers of funds for investment in the eleventh century were the Italo-Byzantine trade.[23] In short, the implication of "commercial revolution" is the transmission of the society from the "gift economy" of the feudal age to the "profit economy" of the pre-capitalist age.[24]

The merchants, who are the initiators of this commercial revolution, gave a rise to another new world—i.e., the world of the cities and towns.[25] Eloi Leclerc views that the rise and rapid development of this urban world constitutes a true revolution in the bosom of the former feudal and rural society.[26] He emphasizes that the concrete face of this

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[11] Walker et al., *Ibid.*
[12] Walker et al., *Ibid.*
[13] Lester K. Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1978), 20.
[14] Little, *Ibid*., 20f.
[15] Little, *Ibid*., 21.
[16] Little, *Ibid*.
[17] Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*, ix and x.
[18] Little, *Ibid*., 13-15.
[19] Little, *Ibid*., 13.
[20] Little, *Ibid*., 8.
[21] Little, *Ibid*., 14.
[22] Little, *Ibid*., 15.
[23] Little, *Ibid*.
[24] Little, *Ibid*., 4
[25] Eloi Leclerc, *Francis of Assisi: Return to the Gospel* (Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983), 4..
[26] Leclerc, *Ibid*., 6.

urban world should be understood by the "commune movement" of bourgeois.[27] As the feudal structures began to appear oppressive and out of date, the inhabitants of the cities grouped together in association, or "communes," to liberate the cities from the control of their overlords.[28] And, interestingly again, it was the Italian cities that had been among the first in Europe to obtain municipal independence.[29] As Leclerc reminds us, feudal organization was always a contract between an inferior and a superior; consequentially, it always created a link of dependency and subordination that made the whole society resemble a pyramid of interlocking human relationship, finally all based on land ownership.[30] However, rejecting this vertical social hierarchy based on subordination, the communes sought to substitute horizontal relationships of solidarity based on the principle of association.[31] Indeed, "The air of the cities makes one free!" And it is the creation of these free communes in the cities that is the characteristic event during the years when Francis was growing up.[32] The notion of "brotherhood/sisterhood," which is the key to understand Franciscan movement and spirituality, was commonly accepted in these communes.[33]

Communes, however, did not make all free. It did not take long for the members of commune to realize that they were actually ruled by money. Money made it possible for the richer members of the bourgeoisie to monopolize the municipal offices, and thus to seize power and dictate the laws.[34] Within each commune, there arose new social inequalities and new forms of oppression.[35] Leclerc illustrates this unhappy development as follows:

> The ideal of liberty and of free association was what attracted to the cities so many poor people from the countryside, eager to escape from serfdom and the lords' arbitrary rule. But… these men and women soon perceived that they had merely exchanged masters… [I]n the communes the real master was money… Despite all the egalitarian oaths and the protestations of fraternity, wealth had soon created in the midst of the new society new lines of social cleavage. The commune was soon divided into two categories… the "*popolo grosso*" or the "great ones"… and the "*popolo minuto*," the vast throng of the "little ones."[36]

It is in this dynamics of social change where Francis lived out, struggled against, and dreamed for a new world. As "a child of the commune world," Francis naturally shared the ideal of liberty and association of the commune world--i.e., the ideal that Francis named as "brotherhood/sisterhood."[37] Yet, it did not take long before he discovered the

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[27] Leclerc, *Ibid*., 8.
[28] Leclerc, *Ibid*., 9.
[29] Leclerc, *Ibid*., 10.
[30] Leclerc, *Ibid*., 11.
[31] Leclerc, *Ibid*.
[32] Leclerc, *Ibid*., 13.
[33] Leclerc, *Ibid*., 12.
[34] Leclerc, *Ibid*., 13.
[35] Leclerc, *Ibid*., 15.
[36] Leclerc, *Ibid*., 32.
[37] Leclerc, *Ibid*. 16

seamy side of this new society, which is the domination of money with the conflicts and the distress it created.[38] And it was at the point that the Gospel vision of poverty revealed to him a path leading to a new society--i.e., a society based on an authentic and alternative "brotherhood/sisterhood" among men and women.[39]

**Religious Context: Spiritual Crisis**

Williston Walker and others say that the century from 1050 to 1150, the era of the First and Second Crusades, was also a great age of monasticism--but an age of monasticism in a new key.[40] Traditional Benedictine monasticism was widely felt to labor under a weight of useless customs, and it came increasingly under attack. The reformers in general emphasized simplicity and solitude, strict asceticism and poverty, and absolute adherence to the letter of the monastic rule.[41]

As the social infrastructure changes from gift economy to profit economy, the society was characterized by restlessness and people sought to express their energies in new ways. In the context of social transition and the crisis of traditional monasteries, various trends of reform movement arose here and there in Europe. And these various movements, directly and indirectly, exerted a great influence on Francis and his mendicant brothers.

The first trend that influenced on Francis was a flourishing eremitical movement. This movement, according to Little, first appeared in Europe in the eleventh century at the very time when the new urban society was taking shape and the old monastic order was reaching its peak of power and prestige.[42] By their itinerancy, they challenged Benedictine stability.[43] The solution they proposed, instead, was a return to the form of another age of cities and a revival of third- and fourth-century Egyptian eremitism.[44] Little affirms that this movement greatly influenced Francis whose eremitical spirit of the primitive fraternity was quite strong.[45]

Secondly, Little indicates the strong presence of Carthusians, Premonstratensians, and Cistercians who were flourished in the twelfth century. The Carthusian monks were those who thought of themselves as combining the Benedictine life with some of the earlier eremitic elements.[46] The Premonstratensians were those who lived far away from concentrations of population.[47] Cistercian Order was a strict and literal adherence to the Rule of St. Benedict.[48] To sum, the Carthusians, Premonstratensians, and Cistercians tried to stay far from the turbulence of town life, and they all displayed a sensitivity to the problems raised by the new economic and social circumstances.[49] Yet, showing far greater concern for the issue of geographical and sociological setting than for the mater of

[38] Leclerc, *Ibid*.
[39] Leclerc, *Ibid*.
[40] Walker et al., *A History of the Christian Church*, 291.
[41] Walker et al., *Ibid*., 291.
[42] Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*, 68.
[43] Little, *Ibid.*, 70.
[44] Little, *Ibid*. 83.
[45] Little, *Ibid*.
[46] Little, *Ibid.*, 85.
[47] Little, *Ibid*., 89.
[48] Little, *Ibid*., 91.
[49] Little, *Ibid*., 96.

involvement in monetary, profit-making operations, they did not, according to Little, so much offer solutions.[50]

Lastly, we have one more important movement--the movement of the lay men and women. During the era of 1150-1300, lay people became far more deeply involved in the Christian religion than in previous centuries.[51] Duane V. Lapsanski reports that the numerous lay associates, who accompanied the wandering monks and clerics in the first quarter of the twelfth century, served to bridge earlier lay movements with the well-organized apostolic movements of lay people in the closing decades of the twelfth century: They are Humiliati, Waldensians, Beguines, and Cathars.[52] Among them, Catholic churches always saw the Cathars as heretics, as enemies of, or at least outsiders to the true faith, because of their belief in the existence of two primary forces in the universe.[53] Cathars thus became the immediate enemy of Francis who submitted himself to the Catholic Church.

Indeed, the twelfth century was a great age of so-called the "heresy."[54] As Walker and others remind us, however, the identification of what counted as heresy was in fact a matter of papal decree; in other words, medieval heresy was as much as issue of "disobedience."[55] Indeed, by the middle of the twelfth century, a large-scale, organized "heretical" movement was taking shape in Western Europe.[56] Lapsanski reports that during the 1170's and 1180's the relationship between those lay movements and Catholic church was marked open conflict, bitterness and excommunications.[57]

No doubt, the church hierarchy did not lie dormant. According to Walker and others, Pope Gregory IX initiated an assault on ecclesiastical corruption in the face of a remarkable "evangelical awakening" within society at large.[58] Known as "Gregorian Reform," this Pope concentrated on restoring within the church a life-style centered on poverty and simplicity, as simony and avarice became a troublesome problem of that time.[59] However, it was Pope Innocent III who was in a much better position than his

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[50] Little, *Ibid*.

[51] Little, *Ibid*., 113.

[52] Duane V. Lapsanski, *Evangelical Perfection: An Historical Examination of the Concept in the Early Franciscan Sources* (St. Bonaventure, New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1977), 31. The Humiliati (or Humble Ones) evolved from an informal grouping of lay people into an officially sanctioned order of the church. (Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*, 113.) The Waldensians were a group of homeless, poorly clad, wandering preachers. Waldo, the founder, based his spiritual vision on the Gospels, firmly maintaining that Christian perfection lived in poverty was not the exclusive domain of a chosen few, but the fundamental goal of all Christians. (Lapsanski, *Evangelical Perfection*, 34.) The Beguines were those who flourished in northern commercial and industrial cities starting in the latter half of the twelfth century. They had shown a way of making the Christian life attainable by the laity, by women, by city-dwellers both rich and poor. (Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*, 133-134.) Finally, Cathars (or Pure Ones) were peasants, industrial workers, craftsmen, merchants, and nobles and they constituted a loose amalgamation of sects, established in various parts of Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. (Little, *Ibid*.)

[53] Little, *Ibid*. Little also indicates that Protestant historians sought for long to prove that the Cathars were in some respects forerunners of the Protestant Reformation. He also indicates that the Cathars have also been seen as forerunners of socialism.

[54] Walker et al., *A History of the Christian Church*, 300.

[55] Walker et al., *Ibid*.

[56] Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*, 140.

[57] Lapsanski, *Evangelical Perfection*, 46.

[58] Walker et al., *A History of the Christian Church*, 291.

[59] Lapsanski, *Evangelical Perfection*, 48.

predecessors to read the "signs of the times."[60] Recognizing that the sympathy of the masses was not on the side of the institutional church but rather largely on the side of the "apostolic" heretics, and desiring to keep this populist movement *within* the church, Innocent showed a remarkable attitude of tolerance.[61] As a consequence, he not only "converted" two groups of Waldenses who had been previously excommunicated--namely the Poor Catholics and the Community of Bernard Primus--,[62] but he also encouraged the founders of the two Mendicant Orders--i.e., the Friars Minor and the Order of Preachers.[63]

All these various movements aforementioned, according to Little, can be categorized into three patterns. The first is the reform program of the regular canons.[64] This is, so to speak, a reform from above. The key to this reform of the priesthood was individual poverty and the common life together with an active apostolate.[65] The second is the confrontation mounted by various groups of lay people who sought deeper spiritual meaning *outside* the established forms of the religious life.[66] This is, so to speak, a reform thrust from below. The commonality of these lay movements was a rejection of the new, specifically monetary, materialism, particularly as found in ecclesiastical institutions.[67] Finally, the third is the movement of the friars—i.e., those of Franciscans and Dominicans. Little contends that the most important achievement of these friars was "a synthesis of the canonical reform and the new lay spirituality."[68] In other words, the Dominicans and Franciscans more than simply replace the Humiliati and Waldensians; rather they summed up and synthesized the canonical reform and the new lay spirituality.[69]

**Brotherhood/Sisterhood, Obedience, and Poverty**

To look Francis from the larger picture of socio-religious context of his time, he is standing in the middle--i.e., in between the above (canonical reform) and the below (new lay spirituality) and also in between the sunny side of the new world of communes (liberty and association) and the dark side of the same world (new oppression by money, greedy, and avarice). He is probably trying to synthesize the positive sites of opposite dimensions. What then was the most characteristic of Francis's movement and spirituality?

In comparison with Benedictines, labor could be one;[70] in comparison with Cathars, regulation of food could be another.[71] And yet, the most profound originality of

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[60] Lapsanski, *Ibid*., 47.
[61] Lapsanski, *Ibid*., 47, 48.
[62] The Pope gave his approval to the Poor Catholics in 1208. By this, the Poor Catholics became the first papally-approved religious congregation for whom the principle of poverty applied not only to individual members but also to the entire community.
[63] Lapsanski, *Ibid*., 48.
[64] Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*, 99.
[65] Little, *Ibid*.
[66] Little, *Ibid*.
[67] Little, *Ibid*.
[68] Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*, 99.
[69] Little, *Ibid*., 169.
[70] According to Felder, Benedictines worked for the sake of income, and on their own land; the Franciscans, however, not possessing property, worked in order to gain their livelihood, and were therefore

Francis, I believe, is in the fact that Francis invented a new form of community: He created, in a word, "brotherhood/sisterhood." We remember that Francis was "a child of the commune world" and thus he naturally shared the ideal of liberty and association of such world--i.e., "brotherhood/sisterhood." However, we now know that Francis envisioned an authentic and alternative "brotherhood/sisterhood" where there existed, unlike the "brotherhood/sisterhood" of communes, no positions of dominance. This was possible because of Francis particular understanding on incarnation.

The key to Francis' spirituality is incarnation. As Boff assures, Francis' originality is best understood in the mystery of incarnation--incarnation understood as *kenosis*, that is, the humbling and identification by God with the most despised.[72] For Francis, "God made himself our brother and sister in poverty and humility; for God, the mystery of the Incarnation is not represented in the metaphysical formulas; the Incarnation is a mystery of divine sympathy and empathy."[73] In other words, incarnation understood as humility of God is the key to Francis' spirituality. According to Leclerc:

> It is too little to say that Francis broke with the God of feudal wars and holy crusades. For him God is no longer the Lord, in feudal terms, nor even the beneficent master who, from his ruling position on high, dispenses his largesse on his vassals. God has left behind his regal throne; for him there are no more vassals, since he has become one of us. He walked in our midst bereft of every sign of power, as the humblest and meaniest of all. Francis discovered the humanness of God, the humility of God. The God of majesty himself has become our brother.[74]

God has become one of us; God has become our brother! What is important is that Francis rediscovered God's humbleness, God's humanity, not merely as an object of devotion, but *as a new principle on which to reconstruct society*.[75] As we remember, the Franciscan ideal of "brotherhood/sisterhood" made its appearance at a time when society was seeking to establish within itself a new set of social relationships, characterized by greater freedom and greater equality. In this context, the humility of God that Francis emphasized had a profound social dimension. In contrast with the "*majores*," i.e., the rich bourgeois, the name "*minors*" was applied by Francis to the lowly people--i.e., all those in the young society of the towns who had no recognized place at all.[76] In a word, the humility which Francis invited them to cultivate was not an interior attitude, but *an active principle to reconstruct society*. And the way of reconstructing such "brotherhood/sisterhood" for Francis was "obedience" which is identical with "poverty." Francis writes:

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forced to seek occupation abroad. (Hilarin Felder, *The Ideals of St. Francis of Assisi* [Chicago, Illinois: Franciscan Herald Press, 1925], 131.)

[71] Prohibiting anyone who does not eat from judging anyone who does, Francis writes: "In accordance with the Gospel, it may be lawful for them to eat of all the food that is placed before them." In *The Earlier Rule* (1209/10-1221). This innovation was indeed unheard of in the history of monastic institution.

[72] Boff, *Saint Francis: A Model for Human Liberation*, 26.

[73] Boff, *Ibid*.

[74] Leclerc, *Francis of Assisi: Return to the Gospel*, 140.

[75] Leclerc, *Ibid*., ix.

[76] Leclerc, *Ibid*., 64.

> We must also deny ourselves and place our bodies under the yoke of servitude and holy obedience as each one has promised to the Lord… let the one to whom obedience has been entrusted and who is considered the greater be the lesser and the servant of the other brothers… we must be simple, humble and pure… We must never desire to be above others, but, instead, we must be servants and subject to every human creature for God's sake.[77]

This principle of "holy obedience" was directly contrary to the spirit of his time where in the hierarchy of princes-nobility-bourgeoisie-peasants-serfs is deeply entrenched.[78]

Indeed, the most controversial item on the Franciscan agenda, as Jaroslav Pelikan points out, was not conformity to Christ in his crucifixion, but conformity to Christ *in his poverty*.[79] What Francis wanted most was to follow "the great poor one, God, who in his poverty was little, humble, and meek."[80] And, it is this God's humanity, or God's humbleness that is fundamentally what Francis meant by "poverty." The poverty enjoined here is neither the "institutionalized" poverty of the cloister, nor the "natural" poverty of the rural and urban destitute, but the "voluntary" poverty of imitators of Christ and the apostles--i.e., "apostolic" poverty.[81] Thus, as Boff asserts, poverty for Francis was never an end in itself or a purely ascetical path to be followed; instead, it was the means to the union and fraternity with the forgotten and with the suffering servant, Jesus Christ.[82] Poverty, and poverty alone, for Francis, is the path which will lead to an authentic brotherly communion with all men and women.[83]

Francis himself never used the term poverty to mean a material one. He says: "Though He was rich, He wished, together with the most Blessed Virgin, His mother, to choose poverty in the world beyond all else."[84] Here poverty is presented primarily as an opted one. It is, therefore, directly linked with humility. He says: "Let all the brothers strive to follow the humility and poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ."[85] Humility and poverty are always synonymous. For Francis, the "sublime height of most exalted poverty" is the fact that "our Lord made Himself poor in this world."[86] And it is this virtue of most exalted poverty by which his brothers become "heirs and kings of the Kingdom of Heaven, poor in temporal things but exalted in virtue."[87] In a word, poverty is much more than a material concern and it is always understood in relationship to one's brothers, one's inner self, and God.[88] The meaning of poverty for Francis was primarily spiritual.

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[77] In *Later Admonition and Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance* (1220?).
[78] Felder, *The Ideals of St. Francis of Assisi*, 174.
[79] Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1987), 140
[80] Corstanje, *Francis: Bible of the Poor*, 177.
[81] Walker et al., *A History of the Christian Church*, 291.
[82] Boff, *Saint Francis: A Model for Human Liberation*, 72.
[83] Leclerc, *Francis of Assisi: Return to the Gospel*, 41, 139
[84] In *Earlier Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance* (1209-1215).
[85] In *Fragments* (1209-1223).
[86] In *The Later Rule* (1223).
[87] *Ibid.*.
[88] Armstrong, *Francis of Assisi: Early Document*, 133.

Nevertheless, Francis wanted his brothers really poor in material sense. He strictly commands his brothers "not to receive coins or money in any form, either personally or through intermediaries."[89] In case of need, one can accept whatever is needed for the body, but "excepting money."[90] In payment for their work, the brothers may receive whatever is necessary for the bodily support of themselves and their fellow brothers, however "excepting coin or money."[91] "If we find coins anywhere," says Francis, "let us pay no more attention to them than to the dust we trample underfoot."[92] Money, for Francis, is "only dust that is trampled underfoot."[93]

Instead, Francis admonishes his brothers to seek alms, like other poor people, when it is necessary.[94] "Let them go seeking alms with confidence and they should not be ashamed," because "for our sakes, our Lord made Himself poor in this world."[95] "He was poor and a stranger who lived on alms," and thus "alms are a legacy and a justice due to the poor that our Lord Jesus Christ acquired for us."[96] Although Francis does not prohibit labor and trade,[97] Franciscan friars were to depend solely upon alms. In the Middle Ages, this mode of life, dependent on alms, was designated as the state of "*mendicatio*," or "*mendicitas*," and the religious living on alms were called "mendicants."[98]

In sum, Francis himself never used the term poverty in a sheer material sense. What Francis meant by poverty was fundamentally God's humanity, or God's humbleness. It thus meant primarily "voluntary" and "apostolic" poverty. It was never an end in itself or a purely ascetical path to be followed. It was rather a means to achieve "brotherhood/sisterhood"; in others words, poverty was fundamentally placed at the service of "brotherhood/sisterhood." This "brotherhood/sisterhood" was an alternative to the burgeoning profit economy and the oppression and inequality it engenders. In a word, Francis created "brotherhood/sisterhood" as an alternative way of living in response to the profit economy of the thirteenth-century of Europe which was embedded in the cities. Poverty, humility, obedience, and simplicity were the means to achieve this "brotherhood/sisterhood" as an alternative way of Christian living.

**"We Don't Need You!"**

[89] In *The Later Rule* and in *A Rule for Hermitages* (1217-1221).
[90] In *A Rule for Hermitages*. (1217-1221).
[91] In *The Later Rule* (1223).
[92] In *A Rule for Hermitages* (1217-1221).
[93] In *Fragments* (1209-1223).
[94] In *The Earlier Rule* (1209/10-1221).
[95] In *The Later Rule* (1223).
[96] In *The Earlier Rule* (1209/10-1221) and in *Fragments* (1209-1223).
[97] He says: "Let the brothers who know how to work do so and exercise that trade they have learned, provided it is not contrary to the good of their souls and an be performed honestly." (In *A Rule for Hermitages*)
[98] Felder, *The Ideals of St. Francis of Assisi*, 143. This term, however, was not used in the stricter sense, nor did it have the unpleasant savor, which is associated with the common term "begging" in our days; it denoted simply the state of life depending on charity. Secular clerics and monks lived on ample and large alms, offered and invested in the form of endowments; while the mendicants content themselves with the daily and poor offerings of charity. (*Ibid*.)

However, a question remains: How were this ideal and the path Francis suggested viewed by the poor themselves? Did the victims of the emerging profit economy see Francis' ideal and its path probable, practicable, and efficient?

Felder insists that Francis was far from agitating the people against the wealthy and governing classes, or from preaching the overthrow of the existing social order; instead, he esteemed the rich and honored those of superior rank.[99] It was not wealth which Francis impugned but the overvaluation of wealth; that is, it was not power and authority which he condemned, but its abuse.[100] And the means he employed to abolish these social evils, maintains Felder, was the mutual adjustment of wealth and poverty, of power and submission, and the equalization of master and servant by the law of Christian brotherhood/sisterhood and charity.[101] In short, Francis endeavored, as far as he was able, to prevent the abuse of mighty.[102] Corstanje agrees to Felder. He argues that Francis did not, even once in his lifetime, accuse the rich, or pass judgment on their abuse of power; rather, he had many friends among the rich and he never accused them or called their possessions evil.[103] In his *Second Rule*, he warned his brothers "not to despise or condemn the rich."[104] Thus we are not surprised to know that Dom Helder Camara, the Brazilian Archbishop and liberation theologian, stands against Francis. Camara has expressed the view that Francis would not speak about "Lady Poverty" if he were alive today, but about "Lady Justice."[105] Francis would accuse, according to Camara, the rich and powerful members of society as men who manipulate structures for the exploitation of two-thirds of God's sons and daughters in the world.[106]

To this negative picture of Francis, Corstanje and Boff stand in defense of Francis. Corstanje argues that Francis' justification of his decision to live in poverty points in the direction of social justice.[107] According to him, Francis never called the poor fortunate, because Francis thought their enforced misery unbearable; instead, Francis only told people who were not poor and who wanted to follow him that poverty is happy state.[108] Admitting to his order "only those who had given away all their goods and retained absolutely nothing," Francis praised poverty as the beauty of life, the mother of all virtues, and the gateway to eternal happiness.[109] Thus, Corstanje concludes that although Francis hardly ever protested, he did not lack of a sense of justice, because he was confronted

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[99] Felder, *Ibid.*, 295.
[100] Felder, *Ibid*., 296.
[101] Felder, *Ibid*.
[102] Felder, *Ibid*.
[103] Corstanje, *Francis: Bible of the Poor*, 183, 190.
[104] Corstanje, *Ibid*.
[105] Armstrong et al., *Francis of Assisi: Early Document*, 181.
[106] Corstanje, *Francis: Bible of the Poor*, 181f.
[107] In fact, Corstanje views that Francis was fundamentally critical to the possession itself. His view is based on the *Legend of the Three Companions* where Francis speaks to the Sultan as follows: "My Lord, if we possessed any property, we should be forced to have weapons to defend it, since possessions are a cause of disputes and hatred and an obstacle to the love of God and our neighbor. This is why we wish to have no property in this world." (Corstanje, *Ibid*., 190) However, we do not have this narrative from Francis' primary writings. Since the *Legend* itself, according to Paul Sabatier, is incomplete and distorted, we cannot simply rely on this legendary narrative of Francis. Indeed, the *Legend* was the one whose authenticity was questioned by Sabatier and whose legendary components gave a birth to the so-called "Franciscan Question."
[108] Corstanje, *Ibid.*, 178.
[109] Corstanje, *Ibid*.

every day of his life with flagrant injustice and he was deeply affected by the inhuman misery.[110]

Boff echoes to Corstanje. He contends that to look for social liberation in Francis, within present-day schemes of society or liberation, means to fail to find any parallel.[111] Saying that we cannot squeeze blood out of a turnip, the possible consciousness of Francis' time did not place the question in political and social terms, as we do today.[112] And yet, Francis' gospel vision of poverty without disputing the position or power of anyone, according to Boff, does not at all mean masochism, but rather "the highest form of relationship, which engenders liberty in the other."[113] This is particularly so, because what makes poverty inhuman, maintains Boff, is not only that it impedes the satisfaction of basic needs, but also that it is scorn, rejection, exclusion from human life together, the permanent brainwashing of a negative and unqualified image of the poor, developed by non-poor classes.[114] However, Francis served the poor, touched them, kissed them, sat at the same table with them, felt their skin, lived in physical communion with them; and these contacts humanize misery giving back to the poor the sense of their human dignity.[115] Thus, for Boff, Francis' attitudes imply a protest and an act of love.[116] Furthermore, poverty was more than solidarity for the poor; it was a search for identification with them.[117] In other words, poverty for Francis was an expression of love for the poor against their poverty.[118] Thus Boff concludes that Franciscan mendicants (as well as Servites and Dominicans) are even precursors and founders of the modern "preferential option" by the church for the poor and oppressed.[119]

I would agree with Boff that to look for social liberation in Francis *within* our present-day schemes of social liberation could be an anachronistic error; and yet, what about those in Francis' time who demanded a more fundamental change of the society? Boff says that Francis' attitude *implies* a protest and an act of love; still, I doubt whether his attitude *is* a protest and an act of love. What is important, I believe, is the opinion of the poor themselves. Let us consider the following piece of Francis. It is a story that scholars used to think only in terms of Franciscan concept of joy. In his *True and Perfect Joy*, Francis himself writes an interesting story:

> I return from Perugia and arrive here in the dead of night. It's winter time, muddy, and so cold that icicles have formed on the edges of my habit and keep striking my legs and blood flows from such wounds. Freezing, covered with mud and ice, I come to the gate and, after I've knocked and called for some time, a brother comes and asks: "Who are you?" "Brother Francis," I answer. "Go away!" he says, "This is not a decent hour to be wandering about! You may not come in!" When I insist, he replies: "Go

[110] Corstanje, *Ibid*., 183.
[111] Boff, *Saint Francis: A Model for Human Liberation*, 88.
[112] Boff, *Ibid*., 76.
[113] Boff, *Ibid*., 75.
[114] Boff, *Ibid*., 76.
[115] Boff, *Ibid*.
[116] Boff, *Ibid*.
[117] Boff, *Ibid.*, 67.
[118] Boff, *Ibid*., 75.
[119] Boff, *Ibid*., 56.

> away! You are simple and stupid! Don't come back to us again! There are many of us here like you—we don't need you!" I stand again at the door and say: "For the love of God, take me in tonight!" And he replies: "I will not! Go to the Crosiers' place and ask there!" I tell you this: If I had patience and did not become upset, true joy, as well as true virtue and the salvation of my soul, would consist in this.[120]

Traditionally this piece has been viewed only in relation to Francis' ideal of perfect joy. It is true that Francis mentions joy frequently in relation to poverty and powerlessness.[121] In the piece above, joy is closely related with patience, indeed.

However, no one has paid attention to the outcry of the brother who refused to open the door to Francis. Asking Francis to leave, he cries out: "Go away! You are simple and stupid! There are many of us here like you—we don't need you!" What strikes me most is his last words: "We don't need you!" Why did they not need a person like Francis? What does this tiny piece, transmitted to us under the title of *True and Perfect Joy* suggest to us? Does it say anything in terms of how the poor themselves, the victims of the profit economy, and the new slaves in the burgeoning communes, saw Francis and his movement?

We cannot make Francis a forerunner of social justice and/or liberation in contemporary sense. That's for sure. Francis was a person of his time and he was profoundly medieval in many senses. However, his idea of poverty, which is voluntary, spiritual, and evangelical one, must have been limited, for it did not question the problem of forced, material, and demonic poverty which destroys not only human dignity but also humanity itself. Aloysius Pieris, the renowned Asian theologian from Sri Lanka, is one of a few contemporary theologians, who like Francis, emphasizes the imperative of "voluntary poverty." For Pieris, "Poverty certainly is enslaving and degrading when imposed on some by the hedonism of others. But it is ennobling and liberating when voluntarily embraced as a protest and precaution against imposed poverty."[122] Nevertheless, voluntary poverty, emphasizes Pieris, in order not to become a glorification of poverty, i.e., the "spirituality" that exploiters have usually imposed on the poor, must

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[120] A hundred years later, Brother Ugolino's *Little Flowers of St. Francis* (*Fioretti*), the most widely read book, depicts the same story. Comparison between Francis' own writing and Ugolino's illustration gives us a better understanding as to what was most striking in the original version—i.e., what was most difficult to repeat a hundred years later by Ugolino. In the *Fioretti*, details of the story are dramatically changed. The most important changes are: Francis (and this time with his companion) tries three times to enter the house; the one who refuses to open the door (this time portrayed as brother porter) becomes much more brutal, beating even with knotty club, identifying Francis and his companion as "two rascals who go around deceiving people and stealing what they give to the poor—reflection of later development of Franciscan order?); the words of the brother that "There are many of us here like you—we don't need you!" are completed deleted; and the conclusion changed from assuring true joy that comes from patience to assuring the need of "conquering oneself and willingly enduring sufferings, insults, humiliations, and hardships for the love of Christ." (See *Little Flowers of St. Francis*, 1319-1320).

[121] In *The Admonitions*, he says: "Where there is poverty with joy, there is neither greed nor avarice." In *The Earlier Rule* and in *Fragments:* "They must rejoice when they live among people considered of little value and looked down upon, among the poor and the powerless, the sick and the lepers, and the beggars by the wayside."

[122] Aloysius Pieris, "Western Christianity and Asian Buddhism: A Theological Reading of Historical Encounters," in *Love Meets Wisdom* (New Delhi: Intercultural Publications, 1988), 35.

be practiced "in direct relationship to the forced poverty of the masses."[123] For Pieris, "*to be poor for the love of God* and *to be poor for the love of the poor* are two evangelical ideals that merge into one horizon of love, which alone gives voluntary poverty its salvific value."[124] Pieris emphasizes the indivisible connection between voluntary poverty and forced poverty because of his critique to the "monastic poverty" of both Christian and non-Christian traditions in which "their theory of radical detachment is embodied in a kind of individual asceticism."[125] In these traditions, criticizes Pieris, "battles [against mammon] were waged and won within monastery walls"; He does not contest it, but "the battle has to be fought also at the *macro-ethical* level of systems and ideologies in politics and economics."[126]

Gustavo Gutierrez, the forerunner of Latin American liberation theology, echoes to Pieris. He asserts that in both Old and New Testaments, poverty is a central theme, and poverty is presented in them both as "a scandalous condition" that should be struggled against as well as "an attitude of openness to God and spiritual childhood" that is synonymous with faith.[127] However, like Pieris, Gutierrez assures that the latter--"evangelical poverty"--has to define itself *in relation to* the former--"material poverty."[128] Gutierrez accepts that "the deepest reason for voluntary poverty is love of neighbor," but voluntary poverty should be "a commitment of solidarity with the poor and *a struggle against forced poverty*." He says: "If *material poverty* is something to be rejected, then a witness of poverty cannot make of it a Christian ideal, for it would be to justify, even if involuntarily, the injustice and exploitation which is the cause of poverty."[129] Therefore, "Christian poverty has meaning only as a commitment of solidarity with the poor."[130] In a word, "Christian poverty, as expression of love, is solidarity *with the poor* and is a protest against poverty";[131] i.e., poverty is only meaningful, "only if it is a commitment of solidarity *and protest* [my emphasis]."[132] Note that this is fundamentally the same line of thought of Pieris who affirms that voluntary poverty is "a protest and a precaution against 'forced poverty.'"[133]

Unlike Pieris and Gutierrez, Francis does not problematize the poverty itself; nor does he emphasize the connection between voluntary poverty and forced poverty. However, without this emphasis, the evangelical ideal of voluntary poverty only results in a half way truth. Voluntary poverty that does not question and struggle to eradicate forced poverty could even result in an assault on the poor. In his *The Violence of Love*, Oscar Romero, the Archbishop of El Salvador and the martyr, writes how imposing austerity in the name of Christian love on the part of the poor could be a violence of love:

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123 Pieris, "Monastic Poverty in the Asian Context," in *Ibid.*, 91.
124 Pieris, *Ibid*.
125 Pieris, *Ibid*.
126 Pieris, *Ibid*., 90-91.
127 Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1988), 168-171.
128 Gutierrez, *Ibid*., 164.
129 Gutierrez, *Ibid.*, 171.
130 Gutierrez, *Ibid*., 172.
131 Gutierrez, *Ibid*.
132 Gutierrez, *Ibid*., 171.
133 Aloysius Pieris, "Asia's Non-Semitic Religions and Mission of Local Churches," in *An Asian Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1985), 37.

> [The] Lent, which we observe amid blood and sorrow, ought to presage a transfiguration of our people, a resurrection of our nation. The church invites us to a modern form of penance, of fasting and prayer—perennial Christian practices, but adapted to the circumstances of each people. Lenten fasting is not the same thing in those lands where people eat well as is a Lent among our third-world peoples, undernourished as they are, living in *a perpetual Lent* [my emphasis], always fasting. For those who eat well, Lent is a call to austerity, a call to give away in order to share with those in need. But in poor lands, in homes where there is hunger, Lent should be observed in order to give to the sacrifice that is everyday life the meaning of the cross.[134]

Voluntary poverty, as the fundamental nature of Franciscan poverty, was a call to give away one's possessions in order to share with those in need. That *is* an expression of solidarity with the poor. Francis presented poverty as "the key of the kingdom of heaven," "the seal of the kingdom of heaven to mark the elect," "most faithful spouse, most sweet lover [of Jesus]," "a covenant to [God's] faithful chosen ones," and "the mandate of salvation."[135] Yet, by not resisting unmistakably the forced poverty, his spirituality of poverty, which is an invitation to an authentic "Brotherhood/Sisterhood" as the alternative to the profit economy of medieval Europe, was not heard alternative enough for the poor themselves.

**Submission to the Church**

Little contends that Franciscan and Dominican friars, in spite of--but also because of--many traditional roots such as the eremitical tradition, could arrive at a revolutionary program of mendicant preaching.[136] However, they could arrive there, argues Little, because of "the watchful guidance of Innocent III and Cardinal Hogolino."[137] In other words, it was because of "the skill of these astute administrators" that "the revolutionary programme of mendicant preaching, which is a deadly threat to so many established interests, was turned into a form of orderly internal church reform."[138] According to Little, thanks to the "watchful guidance" of church hierarchy, the "apostolic life" of Francis was recovered from "marginality."[139]

No doubt, Francis himself and his brethren wished to live a Gospel life *within the church*. He writes: "God inspired me, and still inspires me with such great faith in priests who live according to the laws of the holy Church of Rome."[140] In fact, a strict obedience towards the ecclesiastical hierarchy was the condition of Franciscan being acceptable reform movements within the church and that was, according to Little, one of the most important characteristics of what differentiated them from certain revolutionary lay

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[134] Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love* (Plough Publishing, 1998), 197.
[135] Armstrong et al., *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, 530-540.
[136] Little, *Ibid*.
[137] Little, *Ibid*.
[138] Little, *Ibid*., 156.
[139] Little, *Ibid*.
[140] In *The Testament*.

groups of the twelfth century.[141] But we are curious to know the reason why Francis was submissive to the Roman Church.

Interestingly, it was Francis' conspicuous emphasis on Eucharist that made him voluntarily submissive to the church authority. Simply put, the Eucharist is the center and heart of Francis' theology. He says: "No one can be saved unless he receives the most holy Body and Blood of the Lord."[142] Elsewhere, he says: "For our salvation He hides Himself under an ordinary piece of bread!"[143] What is significant to Francis is that "each day He humbles Himself as when He came from the royal throne into the Virgin's womb; each day he Himself comes to us, appearing humbly."[144] Francis did not simply emphasize the ritualistic dimension of Eucharist; He encouraged the social or communal character of the Eucharist as the center of Gospel life.[145] It is this fundamental belief in Eucharist and its everyday presence that made Francis to be willing to submit to priests and the Catholic Church. It was not because priests deserve veneration but because they are, for Francis, the ones who administer the most holy Body and Blood of Christ that we must venerate them. Thus Francis says: "We must… be Catholics."[146]

Still a question remains: How do we evaluate Francis' attitude to the Roman Church? Leclerc insists that what Francis hoped to obtain was only "an area of liberty and simplicity in the bosom of the ecclesiastical institution, a sort of free zone… a Charter of evangelical liberties from a Church."[147] Leonardo Boff echoes him that Francis was much more than a yesman and conformist; rather he was a radical revolutionary and at the same time lived obedience in a heroic manner, as a form of a complete stripping of the institutional church.[148] That is to say, Francis went "beyond the ecclesial concretization, not against it or in spite of it, but precisely beyond it."[149] Leclerc and Boff' argument is that Francis was never an agent of the clerical system.

However, as David Burr asserts, the paradox of "*minoritas*" as Francis conceived it is that one can maintain it only if allowed to do so by those in power.[150] To live as "little ones"(*popolo minuto*), you need permission from the "great ones"(*popolo grosso*). This is indeed a paradox--one that cannot easily be resolved like what Leclerc and Boff expected. We have to see how the papal office itself actually viewed Francis and his new movement. Several documents from 1215 to 1237 present us the Franciscan way of life as fully as "a missionary instrument, or weapon, of the church."[151] That is to say, Franciscans were perceived by the Church as "a providential orthodox alternative to

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[141] Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*, 165.
[142] In *The First Letter to the Custodians* (1220).
[143] In *A Letter to the Entire Order* (1225-1226).
[144] In *The Admonitions*.
[145] Armstrong, *Francis of Assisi: Early Document*, 119.
[146] In *Earlier Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance* (1209-1215). Francis' emphasis of the role of the priest may well be directed against the Waldensians. And the immediate circumstance that pressed Francis to be submissive to the Catholic Church was the Fourth Lateran Council in which "the confession of sins to a priest, and the reception of the Eucharist, became primary concerns." (Armstrong, *Francis of Assisi: Early Document*, 47.)
[147] Leclerc, *Francis of Assisi: Return to the Gospel*, 79.
[148] Leonardo Boff, *Saint Francis: A Model for Human Liberation* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 112.
[149] Boff, *Ibid*., 118.
[150] David Burr, *Olivi and Franciscan Poverty: The Origins of the* Usus Pauper *Controversy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania press, 1989), 195.
[151] Armstrong, *Francis of Assisi*, 563.

heretical groups."[152] Papal documents could have exaggerated the role of papal office in the formation and development of Franciscan order. Still, we cannot ignore the fact that Francis and his brothers, wittingly or unwittingly, were perceived, used, and directed by the power of church hierarchy.

## Conclusion

Despite all the wonderful stories about Francis, there is still the possibility that his ideal and movement was not warmly welcomed by the poor themselves. The outcry of the brother who refused to give a shelter for Francis could be understood. He could have been suspicious of Francis' ideal and its path. "You are simple and stupid! Don't come back to us again!" This outcry may suggest the possibility that the ideal of Franciscan poverty as a new principle on which to construct society of authentic brotherly communion was not warmly welcomed at least by all, at best by the people at the bottom, i.e., the "little ones"(*popolo minute*). "There are many of us here like you—we don't need you!" This outcry may suggest the possibility that there were already countless people who were forced to be poor and they were suspicious of a group of people who volunteered to live poor on alms just like them.

Little informs us a very important clue in terms of the class foundation of Franciscan movement. Who actually did join the Franciscan order? In the Franciscan and Dominican orders, assures Little, there were no peasants or lower-class workers of any kind, although one must expect such people to be less noticeable in the sources.[153] Besides a large group of nobles, the largest groups were made up of ministerials, knights, patricians, and burghers.[154] They were, in other words, groups that commanded vast material resources but lacked commensurate social prestige and political power.[155] Could then we say that Francis' ideal of poverty was destined to be another institutional order, because of its class limit? As Philip Wogaman points out, the central paradox of monastic ethic is spiritual elitism--i.e., the irony of how practices designed to enhance one's humility before God instead contribute greater pride. This irony, which is irony of ironies indeed, begets another paradox that despite the vow of poverty, monasteries found themselves leading economic actors on the worldly stage their monks had sworn to renounce.[156]

Indeed, after Francis died, the size of the Franciscan order increased. Around 1210, there were only 12 Franciscans; but by mid-century there were about 30,000, one-third of whom lived in Italy.[157] As the order was expanded, we do see the process of bureaucratization of the order; furthermore, the recruitment of Franciscans began to occupy a rich variety of spiritual and secular offices.[158] This implies that the recruits began to see the order not as a way of renouncing worldly success but as a means of achieving it.[159] In short, Franciscanism became a career opportunity.[160] What is worse,

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[152] Armstrong, *Ibid*., 593.
[153] Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*, 161.
[154] Little, *Ibid*.
[155] Little, *Ibid*.
[156] J. Philip Wogaman, *Christian Ethics: A Historical Introduction* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/ John Knox Press, 1993), 65-67.
[157] Burr, *Olivi and Franciscan Poverty*, 4.
[158] Burr, *Ibid*., 5,6.
[159] Burr, *Ibid*., 5.

the popular piety accelerated these unpleasant developments: Lay piety put increasing stress on prayers and anniversary masses, because people wanted to hasten their progress from purgatory to heaven by subsidizing those who could pray for them.[161] After all, the pope and the lay people alike found the Franciscan useful, and "the uses to which they were put undermined some of the same characteristics that made them admirable."[162] This is the irony of ironies.

The Franciscan movement and spirituality began with the "renunciation" of Francis. And yet the Franciscan order soon became a way of means achieving worldly success rather than denouncing it. Therefore, we must say that Francis ideal of poverty today is remained unfinished. Christians must go back all the time to the very moment of Francis' "renunciation" as the way to follow Jesus. Jesus said to the young rich man: "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor… Then come, follow me."(Mark 9:21) Not only the man went away sad, but also Jesus' disciples were amazed by the austerity of Jesus, saying "Who can be saved?"(Mark 9:26) However Jesus said to them: "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."(Mark 9:27) This is in fact what faith means in Mark: that is, to surrender human impossibility to heavenly possibility! The Franciscan ideal of poverty is a kind of "mission impossible"; and yet, it will be possible "with God." The Church *for* the poor is not enough; it should be the Church *of* the poor. I do hope that the Pope Francis' visit to Korea in August 2014 could serve as momentum to invite Korean Christians to the life and struggle of St. Francis, the incomparable saint whose mission is unfinished.

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[160] Burr, *Ibid*..
[161] Burr, *Ibid*.
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