



**A documentary film by Greg Friedman, OFM
Produced by Franciscan Communications
and Feed the Fire Foundation**

Introduction

“Why after you? Why after you?” One of the first followers of St. Francis of Assisi put that question to him: “Francis, why does the whole world run after you?” Eight hundred years later, the question remains. Why does the whole world come to Assisi, birthplace of Francis and Clare? What spiritual attraction draws pilgrims and tourists, church leaders and heads of government, Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and those without any creed to this ancient city in the Umbrian Valley of Italy?

This new film seeks to answer the question through the experience of real-life pilgrims who have walked in the footsteps of Francis and Clare. With the help of my executive producer, Domenick Morda, a lay Franciscan, and a gifted producer and cameraman in Assisi, I accompanied a group of pilgrims as they visited Assisi, Rome and other shrines associated with the lives of these two medieval saints in the spring of 2004.

We were fortunate to have the cooperation of the Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs, a Franciscan-run group from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, who organized and led our group. Following the location shooting in Italy, I interviewed other pilgrims back in the U.S. All the pilgrims we spoke with—both on location and after their return—revealed the reasons why they came on pilgrimage, and the spiritual discoveries they found there.

To complete the “pilgrimage experience,” I spoke with several Franciscan pilgrim guides, Franciscan author and poet Murray Bodo, Clare scholar Margaret Carney, and pilgrimage leaders Tod Lavery, Roch Niemier, and Joanne Schatzlein. Their expertise helped unfold the stories of the various places and events in the lives of Francis and Clare that mark the pilgrims’ road.

I believe this film is unique in its weaving of the pilgrims’ stories, the description of the various sites and the stories of Francis and Clare. We chose not to begin with the lives of the two saints, but rather, with the voices of the pilgrims and their guides as they share their experiences. As the pilgrims visit (on camera) each place, the stories of Francis and Clare begin to take shape. The lives of the two saints, while set in a different time and culture from contemporary pilgrims, nevertheless were lived out in ordinary human terms. Francis and Clare did not begin as marble statues on a pedestal, but real people—like our pilgrims—who undertook their own faith-journeys, led by God.

It’s my hope that this film will reproduce the pilgrimage journey program and rekindle the spirituality of those who have been on pilgrimage. For those who have not been pilgrims, perhaps it will plant the desire to go, For those unable to make the journey in person, may it offer a “virtual” pilgrimage and allow God to speak in the places and events of daily life, no matter where one travels.

-- Fr. Greg Friedman, OFM

Program Overview

Some viewers may find this film more effective when used in smaller segments. The producers have divided the program into chapters, designed to assist small groups in studying the lives of Francis and Clare, and the pilgrimage process, in more manageable segments. A menu of chapters has been provided on the DVD. For convenience in viewing this film, users may access individual chapters, by following the DVD menu and clicking on the appropriate chapter. Here is a brief description of each segment:

1) *The Pilgrim's Journey* sets the stage by sampling the reaction of pilgrims to their individual experience. Beginning with more general reactions, and moving to some of the characteristic elements of what a pilgrim does (visit particular places, follow the leadership of the pilgrim guides, sample food and cuisine, etc.), the opening vignettes are meant to whet the viewer's appetite for what follows. Following the main title, Father Roch Niemier, OFM, one of the founders of the Franciscan Pilgrimage programs, explains the three fundamental elements of pilgrimage: *place, event* and *spirituality*. He also outlines what a typical pilgrimage experience encompasses.

2) *"Coming Home" to Assisi* tells how the medieval city of Assisi in Italy is a unique place. It is one of the best-preserved medieval cities in Italy, and as the birthplace of both Francis and Clare holds special significance for pilgrims. Father Murray Bodo, OFM, and Father Tod Laverty, OFM, explain the architectural, social, cultural and spiritual meanings contained in the physical place. Pilgrims share their experiences, especially in coming into the city for the first time, and in walking the streets and touching the stones. Sister Joanne Schatzlein, OSF, notes that the antiquity of the city is something North American pilgrims find especially captivating.

3) *"Before I left the world..."* begins the cycle of three chapters which chronicle the life of St. Francis, and relate his life to particular places on the pilgrimage. Here, the hermitage of The Carceri, on Mt. Subasio near Assisi, is the place; the events in the life of St. Francis are his youth, his ambition to become a knight, and the failure of that dream. Returning from a second failed military excursion, Francis became reflective, and sought solitude in nature. The caves on Mt. Subasio offered a place of prayer. Pilgrims share

what the hermitage location meant to them as a place to experience what Francis found in his search for a vocation.

4) *“Go, repair my house...”* chronicles the more immediate conversion experience which began at the chapel of San Damiano. Fathers Roch and Murray describe the place and the event of the crucifix speaking to Francis, inviting him to a mission of rebuilding—first churches, then *the Church*. Francis’ first efforts led him into conflict with his father, which was played out in a dramatic scene at Santa Maria Maggiore, before the bishop of Assisi. There, Francis renounced his father and possessions, and stripped himself of his clothes. He assumed a hermit’s garb, and began his new life. The chapter includes scenes from the pilgrim ritual which dramatizes this scene. A Methodist minister, Rev. Gwen Ehrenborg, shares her encounter with Francis and Clare and the influence they had on her own faith-life, paralleling a conversion experience which she had.

5) *Francis’ Gospel Life Begins* picks up the story of Francis’ early apostolic life, lived in the plain below the city of Assisi. He and his first companions lived at Rivo Torto, in simple huts. They attended Mass at St. Mary of the Angels, where Francis heard the Gospel proclaimed, and based his vocation on those texts, which spoke of a simple, Gospel life-style. They worked with lepers in various places. The chapter visits each place, and reflects with both guides and pilgrims on their impressions. Father Tod concludes the chapter by describing a ritual of sending forth, using the “Tau” cross, which takes place on pilgrimage at St. Mary of the Angels, also known as the Porziuncola, the “Little Portion.”

6) *Clare: The Mirror of Perfection* is the first of two chapters on St. Clare. Her unique vocation began within her family, part of Assisi’s nobility. She and the other women of the family were trained to run the household and estates, and Clare would have been preparing to assume an important role. But Gospel inspiration was also at work in her, as well as a number of movements among medieval women which were taking place in Italy at the time. Sister Margaret Carney, OSF, a leading scholar of our time on St. Clare, describes the milieu in which Clare grew up. Sister Joanne Schatzlein, OSF, also adds details about Clare’s family, and events before and after she decided to join the Franciscan movement. The chapter concludes as Clare settles with other women at San Damiano. A portion of the ritual of

departure, following Clare's own journey out of Assisi, is featured. Viewers can see the complete ritual in the DVD's "bonus features."

7) *St. Clare at San Damiano* continues the story of Clare, giving three aspects of her later life: a) the nature of the community she founded at San Damiano, which was an innovative form of religious life for women; b) Clare's gift of healing, which is ritualized for the pilgrims at San Damiano; c) Clare's struggle to write her own distinctive rule of life, which was achieved in the final days of her life, and now stands as a legacy for later women who follow her way. Sister Margaret and Sister Joanne provide the historical background, along with Father Murray and comments from pilgrims.

8) *Greccio: A New Bethlehem* tells the well-known connection between St. Francis and the Christmas Crib. The shrine at Greccio, located in the beautiful Rieti Valley, is the setting for this story. Francis wanted to illustrate in a very dramatic way his faith in the Incarnation. The act of God becoming human is central to Franciscan spirituality. The Christmas story dramatized at Greccio in 1223 not only accomplished Francis' goal, but spread throughout the Christian world, and remains to this day one of our most beloved religious symbols. The chapter follows the pilgrims on their visit to the shrine, and depicts the very spot where Francis recreated a "new Bethlehem." Sister Kathy Warren, OSF, explains the event and its meaning. Father Murray provides theological reflection as well. Pilgrims recall the festive Christmas meal which accompanies the visit to Greccio.

9) *La Verna: A Living Christ* is the story of how Francis received the marks of Christ's passion near the end of his life—the stigmata. Father Tod explains how Francis came to La Verna many times during his life, after the mountain had been given him as a gift from a wealthy nobleman. Father Roch sets the scene at La Verna by recalling the gift. Father Tod then picks up the story of Francis' life, which, near its end was marked by personal failures and surrender—when he came to La Verna in 1224 for the final time, Francis was himself experiencing his own way of the Cross. In this dramatic setting, near a rocky chasm, he was imprinted with the wounds of Christ. The pilgrims retell the story. Father John Cella explores the deeper meaning of this event along with Father Tod, and several very moving personal accounts by pilgrims tell their own stories of identification with the crucified Christ.

10) *The Two Basilicas* takes viewers on a virtual tour of the two great churches which honor Francis and Clare in Assisi today. Brother Joseph Wood, OFM Conventual, an expert in the medieval art and history of these two basilicas, is our tour guide. Brother Joseph explains how the churches came to be built as places of pilgrimage, meditation, and burial for the two saints. He highlights the upper and lower churches of the Basilica of St. Francis, which incorporate two different architectural moods; the frescoes of Giotto, which tell part of the life of Francis; and the crypt chapel where Francis is buried. At the Basilica of St. Clare, guide Brother Joseph highlights the architecture style; the painted “Tavola” depicting the life of St. Clare; the chapel housing the original San Damiano Cross; and the crypt where Clare is buried. Sister Joanne shares some of her own pilgrimage experience at each place.

11) *Francis and the Church: Pilgrims in Rome* takes the viewer from peaceful Assisi to busy, crowded Rome, as a step in going home. Rome is important to Franciscan pilgrims because Francis visited there on a number of occasions. Father Tod points out each of the significant visits. He notes that Francis came to Rome as a pilgrim, to visit the tomb of St. Peter. Later, Francis sought approval from the pope for his way of life. The Basilica of St. John Lateran is where Francis and the pope would have met. A contemporary statue there marks the visit, and a dream of Pope Innocent, which portrayed Francis holding up the church. Later, Francis would attend the Fourth Lateran Council, and also work with poor at a place now marked by the church of San Francesco a Ripa. There, Father Michael Della Penna, OFM, points out where we believe Francis stayed, in a very humble setting. A ritual using stones, to mark the pilgrims’ journey, concludes the chapter.

12) *From Pilgrim to Nomad: Returning to Everyday Life* begins with Father Roch’s description of how he concludes the pilgrimage with the gift of a candle, to accompany the pilgrims to their homes. There, they become “nomads,” seeking to discover holiness in the places where they live and work. The film concludes with a collage of pilgrims recounting their experiences—ending with two youthful pilgrims who are resolved to become the foundations of the Church in their own world and personal experiences.

Bonus Features:

1) *A Walk in Faith with Clare: The Ritual of her Departure from Assisi* allows the viewer to take a “virtual journey” with St. Clare as she leaves the city on Palm Sunday night, to join Francis and his brothers, and commit her life to the Gospel way. Commentary by Sr. Joanne Schatzlein, OSF, and other guides, explains the significance of each stop along the walk. The pilgrims reflect and pray with Clare, and examine their own life-choices.

2) *The Cross of San Damiano: Its Symbolism and Meaning* features an explanation of this important Franciscan symbol by Bro. Joseph Wood, OFM Conventual. He situates the cross in its original location at San Damiano and in the life of Francis, and then explains in detail the symbolism of the figures, colors, and other elements of this icon, painted in the Byzantine style.

3) *The collection of Pilgrimage Maps is interactive, allowing the user to click on each place name, and access a picture. The maps include:*

a) *Map of Italy, showing the following places:*

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| i. Assisi | |
| ii. Perugia | iv. LaVerna |
| iii. Greccio | v. Rome |

b) *Map of “Central Italy” showing the following places:*

Assisi

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| i. Perugia | v. Greccio |
| ii. Ponte San Giovanni (site of
the Battle of Collestrada) | vi. Rieti Valley |
| iii. Spoleto | vii. Rome |
| iv. LaVerna | |

c) *Map of the Spoleto Valley showing the following places:*

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| i. Assisi | vi. La Maddalena |
| ii. Monte Subasio | vii. San Rufinuccio |
| iii. Carceri | viii. San Paolo delle Abbadesse |
| iv. St. Mary of the Angels (the
Porziuncola) | ix. San Angelo in Panzo |
| v. Rivo Torto | x. San Damiano |

d) Map of Assisi at the Time of Francis and Clare showing the following places:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| i. Santa Maria Maggiore | v. Rocca Maggiore |
| ii. Piazza del Comune | vi. Bishop Guido's palace |
| iii. San Rufino | vii. Porta Moiano |
| iv. Offreduccio Family home | |

e) Map of "Modern-Day Assisi" showing the following places:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| i. Piazza del Comune | v. Santa Maria Maggiore |
| ii. San Francesco | vi. Rocca Maggiore |
| iii. Santa Chiara | vii. Porta Moiano |
| iv. San Rufino | |

f) Map of Rome showing the following places:

- i. St. Peter's Basilica
- ii. St. John Lateran
- iii. San Francesco a Ripa

4) A Chronology of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi compiled by the guides of the Franciscan Pilgrimage program enables the user to track the lives of Francis and Clare, see the parallels between their lives, and locate key events.

Using this Program in Faith Formation Settings

(by Greg Friedman, OFM, and Joan McKamey)

Jesus used the "media" of his day to teach. He was a master storyteller. His preaching is full of imagery. His parables are calculated to engage his audience. Through the ages, Christian teachers and preachers have followed Jesus in the creative proclamation of his message.

From the culture of Jesus' time, heavily dependent on *oral communication*—to the advent of *print communication*—to our own time and its dependence on *electronic media*—Christian teachers have adapted their proclamation to each new medium and its particular demands.

Media scholars like Marshall McLuhan remind us of the impact of the medium on the message it carries. *How* we communicate affects *what* we communicate. Electronic media offer us new ways to tell the story of our faith. Father Pierre Babin points out (see *The New Era in Religious*

Communications, Pierre Babin with Mercedes Iannone, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1991) that the message, as well as the sender and receiver, all will be re-shaped in the telling.

Catechesis or faith formation, as a part of the total evangelization process, must touch the learners' hearts and shine the light of faith on their lives. It must connect to the learners' experience or risk being discarded as irrelevant. To be effective, catechists must learn how to make the best use of the electronic media available in our culture, aware of the particular medium's strengths and weaknesses.

Film and video are a very popular, familiar and accessible part of our electronic culture. They draw us in, capture our imaginations and touch us on a deep, emotional level. As they speak to our experience and utilize several of our senses, their message is more likely to be heard and remembered. By integrating quality film and video programs into the faith formation process, catechists can share the message more effectively.

At the same time, as movies and television become a more pervasive part of our lives, we can be lulled into thinking that they can do everything for us—inform, entertain, shop, even worship. The reality is that they can't and shouldn't do everything. As Pierre Babin emphasizes, electronic media function differently than print media. They appeal first to the *emotional* content of our faith rather than the *intellectual* content. Film and video cannot begin to convey the amount of information print can. They cannot replace the live presence and personal witness of the catechist. But in a catechetical setting, they can be a powerful part of the "mix of media" used in proclaiming the message.

How effectively video—or any electronic media—are used in the catechetical setting depends primarily on how prepared the catechist is to use it:

- A preview of the film and video is essential to determine the best use of the program with a particular group.
- The leader should select a program (or section of a film and video) based on the audience, the purpose, and the availability of competent teachers and other resources and activities to support the theme.
- Sufficient time should be available to introduce the film or video and to process the viewing experience.
- Faith formation leaders must realize that they control the use of film and video in their sessions. They might approach a media program in one of two ways: as a skeleton on which to build a presentation or as a way to "enflesh" an existing skeleton.

A film or video program well-tailored to the needs of a group might be used in its entirety. At other times, leaders may creatively manipulate the particular media to fit their needs:

- An excerpt may be taken from a longer piece to illustrate a point.
- A film or video may be shown with the *sound off* to highlight an aspect of the program.
- The “pause” button can be used freely to interject explanations and examples or to elicit reactions.
- The program or excerpt may be repeated to emphasize a point.

The producers of this film have attempted to craft both medium and message with an awareness of the power of the medium as well as its limitations. They encourage those who use it to study this guide and become familiar with ways to allow this program to supplement their own sharing of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.



Fr. Roch lecturing at San Rufinuccio

Murray Bodo, OFM, is a widely published poet and has annually led pilgrimages to Assisi since 1976. He is a Franciscan priest in the Province of St. John the Baptist and a member of the Franciscan Academy. The author of 15 books, he has also been published in several literary magazines, including *The Paris Review*. His best-selling, *Francis, the Journey and the Dream*, has sold over 180,000 copies and has been translated into French, Spanish, Danish, Japanese, Chinese, Italian, and Maltese. Fr. Murray's latest book is *The Place We Call Home*, published by Paraclete Press. Fr. Murray's time is spent in writing and research combined with working as a staff member of

Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs and as Visiting Professor in the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University.

Margaret Carney, OSF, has been a staff member of the Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs since 1996. Margaret became a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God, Whitehall, Pennsylvania in 1957. Her Franciscan studies were completed at St. Bonaventure University, Olean, New York and the Antonianum, Rome, Italy. Her research on Clare of Assisi, early Franciscan women and the history of the Third Order Regular has been a significant contributor to contemporary Franciscan history and life. Margaret is popular in the lecture circuit and has edited a number of Franciscan publications. She is the president of St. Bonaventure University.

John Cella, OFM, was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He attended Marquette University, LaSalle University, Aquinas Institute, Catholic University of America and the Pontificio Attheo Antonianum (Rome). He holds advanced degrees in Business Administration, Theology and Canon Law. He made solemn vows in 1977 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1978. John has taught at Christ the King Seminary (East Aurora, NY), St. Bonaventure University (Alleghany, NY) and Mundelein Seminary (Chicago, IL); he was Vicar for Religious in Chicago; he was the Director of Development for the Franciscan Order in Rome, and served on various Archdiocesan Tribunals over the years. John assumed the duties of Director of Franciscan Pilgrimages in January of 2005.

Michael Della Penna, OFM, was born in Boston, Massachusetts. Michael completed degrees in Psychology and Philosophy before professing his Solemn Vows in 1997 to the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate Conception Province. After receiving his Masters of Divinity from Weston Jesuit School of Theology, Michael was ordained in 1999. He then studied at the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies in Toronto and completed a Licentiate in Franciscan spirituality from Rome. He has served as Associate Pastor, retreat director, and formation director for his province and is currently working on a doctorate. Michael finds joy in leading others to come to a greater knowledge and love of Christ through Francis and Clare.

Tod Lavery, OFM, is a Franciscan friar of the province of St. John the Baptist, Cincinnati, Ohio. He completed his Master of Divinity studies at St. Leonard College, Dayton, OH, and was ordained in 1972. He joined the pilgrimage staff in 1990. In 1985, Tod took a sabbatical year to study

spirituality at the Gregorian and Antonianum universities in Rome and spent considerable time on pilgrimage in Assisi. The fruit of the pilgrimage was the decision to pursue advanced studies in pastoral counseling. Accordingly, he earned an MS in Pastoral Counseling at Loyola, Baltimore.

Roch Niemier, OFM, joined the Pilgrimage staff in 1976. He became a staff member in 1976 and was made director in 1981. He stepped down from the position of president in January of 2005. Roch was born in South Bend, Indiana. He entered the Franciscans (Assumption BVM Province) in 1956 making his final vows in 1961. He was ordained in 1965. Roch's educational background includes a BA in philosophy from St. Francis College, Burlington, Wisconsin (1961), an MA in Philosophy from DePaul University, Chicago (1968). In addition, he did guided readings of Franciscan sources at St. Bonaventure University, Olean, New York. This institution awarded him an honorary doctorate of Human Letters in May 2004.

Joanne Schatzlein, OSF, is a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She is a native of Minneapolis, Minnesota and entered her congregation in 1961. She received her BSN in Nursing from Marquette University and holds a MA in Franciscan Studies from St. Bonaventure University. She joined the Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs in 1990. In addition to pilgrimage work, Joanne has given presentations in formation programs for the Capuchin Province of St. Joseph, the intercommunity Franciscan Novitiate in the Midwest and the OFM Intercommunity Novitiate. She lectures internationally, promoting an understanding of Franciscan history and spirituality in ongoing formation, retreat work and higher education. In addition, she has served as a consultant on various Franciscan planning committees and as an editor for several Franciscan authors.

Kathleen Warren, OSF, is a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Rochester, Minnesota. She holds an MA in Religious Education from Loyola University, Chicago; a Master's in Franciscan Studies from the Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University; and a Doctor of Ministry from The Graduate Theological Foundation, South Bend, Indiana. Kathy has ministered in Adult Leadership Formation on the parish, national and international levels. While working in the Philippines, Nigeria, India and Ghana she experienced first-hand both the success and failure of interreligious encounters, especially among Christians and Muslims. Her

work, *Daring to Cross the Threshold: Francis of Assisi Encounters Sultan Malek al-Kamil*, was published in 2003. She completed her doctoral course work at the Gregorian University (Rome) in 2004 at the Institute for the Study of Religions and Cultures. The title of her 2006 dissertation is: *Muslims, Christians and Jews Encounter Francis of Assisi and Each Other: A Paradigm for Doing Peace and Rebuilding the World*. She serves as Coordinator for Continuing Education for the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University and is a member of her Franciscan Congregational Leadership Team.

Joseph Wood, OFM, entered the Franciscan Order in 1982. When he finished formation he taught high school in Buffalo, New York. Joseph ministered in Italy from 1990-1998, serving as a retreat and vocation director at the Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi and as archivist at the General Curia in Rome. He was an editor of the English edition of the *Messenger* magazine (Padua, Italy), and the *Companion* magazine (Canada). He is currently a member of the editorial board for the *Cord* magazine. He has co-authored several publications including a brief history of the Conventual Franciscans, and a photo essay on the life of St. Clare. He is a member of the Board of Advisors for the San Damiano Foundation, a corporation that promotes the Franciscan charism in the media. He has been a team leader with the Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs since 1995. He is currently the Vocation Director of his Midwest Province and lives in Chicago, Illinois.

About the Filmmakers

The writer, director and editor is **Greg Friedman, OFM**, a Franciscan priest, writer, pastor and media producer. He produced the award-winning *Catholic Update Video* series for Franciscan Communications, hosts a national radio program, and has written three books and numerous articles. Father Greg also served as an associate producer for the award-winning documentary, *Thomas Jefferson: A View from the Mountain*, produced by Journey Films and seen on public television and the History Channel. Father Greg is also the host of *American Catholic Radio*, heard on Catholic radio stations. He lives in inner-city Cincinnati, where he also serves as a pastor.

Composer Robert Hutmacher, OFM, has created many musical settings which capture the medieval spirit of Francis and Clare. He serves as liturgical director for St. Peter's in the Loop in downtown Chicago.

Oriente Occidente Productions in Assisi provided the on-location crew for filming in Italy. Producer Arturo Sbicca and his wife Patrice have produced many films on St. Francis, St. Clare, Assisi and Italian culture and history. Assisting them was cameraman Massimo Santo Paolo.

Bibliography

(See our catalog offerings at Web address below)

Web Links

- 1) Links to Franciscan resources from St. Anthony Messenger Press
<http://catalog.americancatholic.org/default.aspx>
- 2) Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs
<http://www.franciscanpilgrimages.com/>
- 3) Oriente Occidente Productions
<http://www.orienteoccidente.com/>
- 4) Composer Robert Hutmacher, OFM
<http://www.chiesanuova.org/artists/hutmacher.html>
- 5) Franciscan Institute
<http://www.sbu.edu/go/academics/franciscan-institute/index.htm>

Guide prepared by Greg Friedman, OFM