CLARE OF ASSISI
CLARE OF ASSISI

- Born 1194 into noble family - Offreduccio

- Receives tonsure from Francis approx 1212 at age 18 w/approval of Bishop Guido
Later joined by her sister Catherine they settled into the convent at San Damiano

Clare’s Rule bonded them to Francis’ evangelical life – became the “Poor Ladies”
CLARE OF ASSISI

- Co-founder of Franciscan Tradition and Spirituality
- Little Plant of Francis
- Faithful to absolute poverty
Though monastic, her spirituality is not the classic monastic path of ascent, or transcending the material [inferior & evil] to achieve spiritual perfection [superior & holy] – Escape from nature
CLARE’S SPIRITUALITY

Based on her journey with Francis, Clare emphasizes **Incarnation** as starting point of spirituality, goodness of creation and God cannot be found apart from the world – **immersed in nature**.
CLARE OF ASSISI

- Jesus reveals the **totality of Love** and the heights we can aspire to.
- Heaven is not a place out there, but being in a **Relationship of Love** with the Trinity
- Everything that exists is dependent on and **uniquely loved by the Father** and called into relationship
**Poverty**

is the approach to God, *not a poverty of want/need*, but embracing our humanity and realizing our absolute dependence on God & each other – [contingency]
CLARE’S SPIRITUALITY ~ DOORS TO TRANSFORMATION

- **Humility**
  [vulnerability]

- allows us to enter relationship and to accept relationship from others
The Joy of Poverty
Is not to have nothing in this world;
AND COME TO KNOW - PERFECT JOY

The Joy of Poverty is to have Nothing but God
No human imperfection outweighs God’s love and embrace.

We are uniquely loved just for being who we are.
Relationship ~ defines us and our dignity
Body of Christ ~

our willingness to change from self-importance/aggrandizement in order to become the *living face of Christ* to our world

i.e. enflesh God and become an *Image of God*
Not having power of authority over others

But accepting Our vocation to

Serve others

Image of God ~

Being Relational
CLARE’S SPIRITUALITY

- To love, To feel, laugh, cry, suffer &/or enjoy the other
- Ultimately to lay down one’s life -- to make the others need more important than self
MIRROR OF THE CROSS ~
CLARE’S TRANSFORMING TOOL

Cross is love made visible
-- *Mirror of Perfection*

Inward image –
Discover yourself in the
depth of your being
MIRROR OF THE CROSS

✗ Outward reflected image

– Do you reflect your **authentic self**, who you really are or the you, that you wish others to see?
Christian life is about *visible presence*, not just an intellectual assent to a belief, but a *real lived experience* of that belief.
Mirror exercise ~

JUST LOOK INTO ANY MIRROR

WHAT DO YOU SEE IN A MIRROR?

WHAT SERVICE DOES A MIRROR PROVIDE?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read Scripture</td>
<td>orally savor the words of the text, taste and see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meditate</td>
<td>on the story – actively imagine yourself as a person in the story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pray</td>
<td>allow the Scripture to raise a voice within to pray – thanksgiving, praise even supplication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemplate</td>
<td>sit in quiet, allow God the space to speak to you – draw you into a deeper union, relationship, and escape the world.</td>
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- **Gaze on Him** = visually embrace the crucified Christ
- **Consider Him** = how do I participate in His life – *loving, forgiving & healing*
- **Contemplate Him** = to move beyond ourselves and allow ourselves to be transformed into *similitude*
- **Imitate Him** = become that which we love in reality & action. Leads us to see God in all creation & invites our participation
TRANSFORMING SELF

“Place your mind before the mirror of eternity!

Place your soul in the brilliance of glory!

Place your heart in the figure of the divine substance (Cfr. Heb 1:3).
And transform your entire being into the image (Cfr. 2Cor 3:18) of the Godhead Itself through contemplation.

3rd letter to Agnes
Gaze upon that mirror each day, O Queen and Spouse of Jesus Christ, and continually study your face within it, that you may adorn yourself within and without with beautiful robes,

Indeed, blessed poverty, holy humility, and inexpressible charity are reflected in that mirror, as, with the grace of God, you can contemplate them throughout the entire mirror.

St Clare 2nd Letter to Agnes of Prague
CONSIDER HIM

Look at the border of this mirror, that is, the poverty of Him Who was placed in a manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes.

O marvelous humility!

O astonishing poverty!

The King of angels, the Lord of heaven & earth, is laid in a manger!
CONSIDER HIM

Then, at the surface of the mirror, consider the *holy humility*, the *blessed poverty*, the untold labors and burdens that He endured for the redemption of the whole human race.

4th Letter to Agnes
Then, in the depth of this same mirror, Contemplate the ineffable Charity that led Him to suffer on the wood of the Cross and to die there the most shameful death...
CONTEMPLATE HIM

From this moment, then,
O Queen of our heavenly King,
let yourself be inflamed
more strongly with the fervor of

charity.

As you further contemplate
His ineffable delights,
eternal riches and honors,
and sigh for them in the great desire
and love of your heart . . .
Indeed, it is now clear that the soul of a faithful person, the most worthy of all creatures because of the grace of God, is greater than heaven itself, since the heavens and the rest of creation cannot contain their Creator and only the faithful soul is His dwelling place and throne.
IMITATE HIM

As you desire to imitate [Him]

If you suffer with Him,
you will reign with Him (Cfr. Rm 8:17).

Embrace the poor Christ.

Look upon Him Who became contemptible for you,

Follow Him,
Making yourself contemptible
in this world for Him
**WHY?**

*Clare’s Spirituality is a Eucharistic Spirituality*

- The Mirror of Perfection is to draw us into seeing in the face of Jesus our own face and to help transform us into the hands and feet of Jesus walking in the world today.

- It is to see the love of God in everything and everyone and in turn to become the love of God given for others - *Eucharist*
Eucharist is not a private dinner to refresh our souls or feed our personal piety,

It is the body and blood of Christ combining with our body and blood and becoming real in the world.
PRAYER FOR GAZING

“Who are you O God?
And who am I?”
GAZE AT HIM

And see yourself in the Mirror Of Eternity