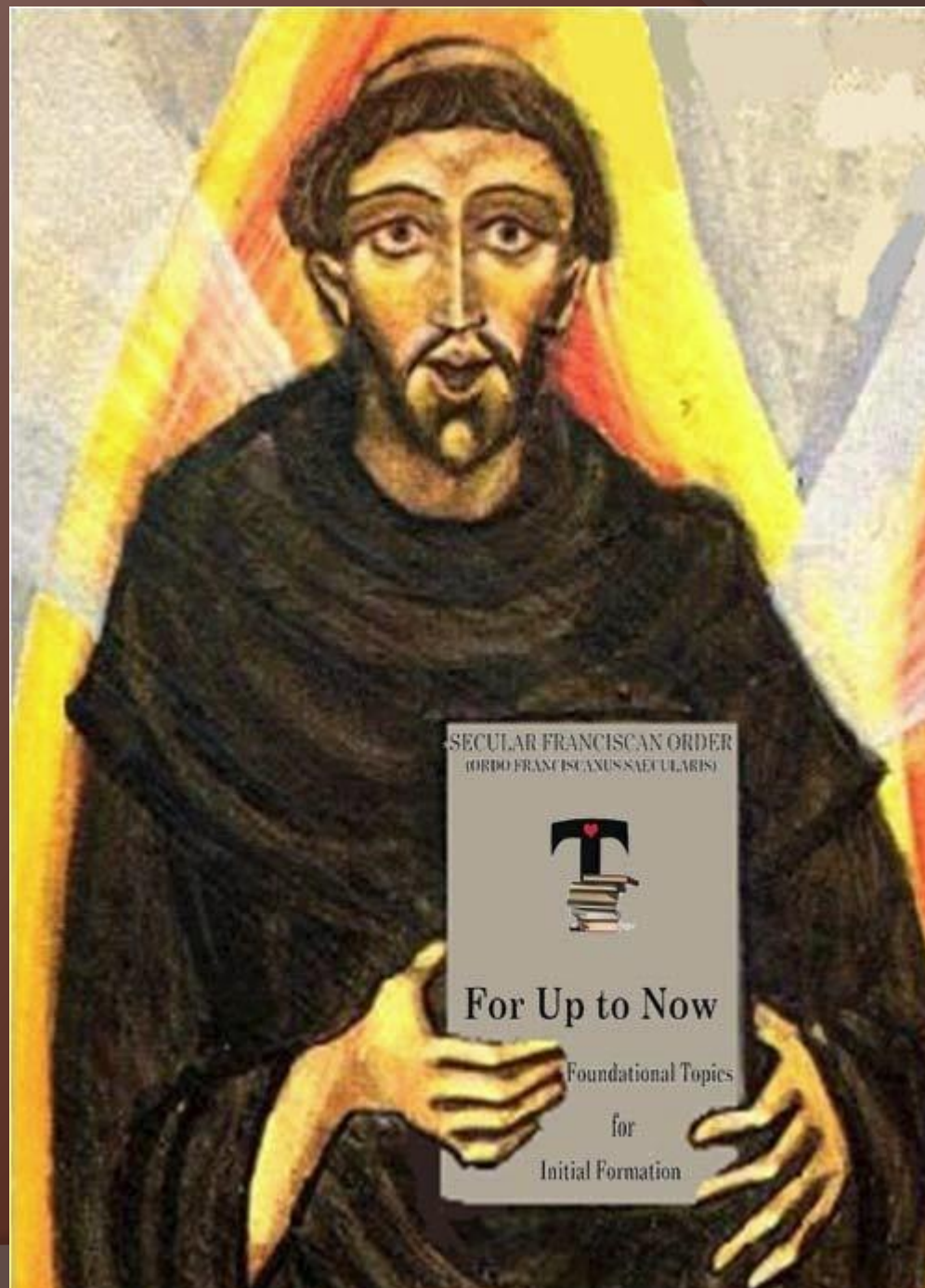


ST FRANCIS REGIONAL WORKSHOP MAY 25-27, 2012



Understanding Franciscan
Theology/Spirituality
Bob Fitzsimmons, OFS
National Formation Commission

FOR
UP
TO
NOW





Pop Quiz

1. Why did Jesus become human (Incarnate)?
2. Would Jesus have come if humanity had not fallen into sin?

Theology - Study of God

Spirituality - Relationship with God,

Charism is our image of God -- 1 of many

2 distinct views of God

- Standard , primary, anthropocentric,
Dominican School
- Alternate – Christocentric
Franciscan School

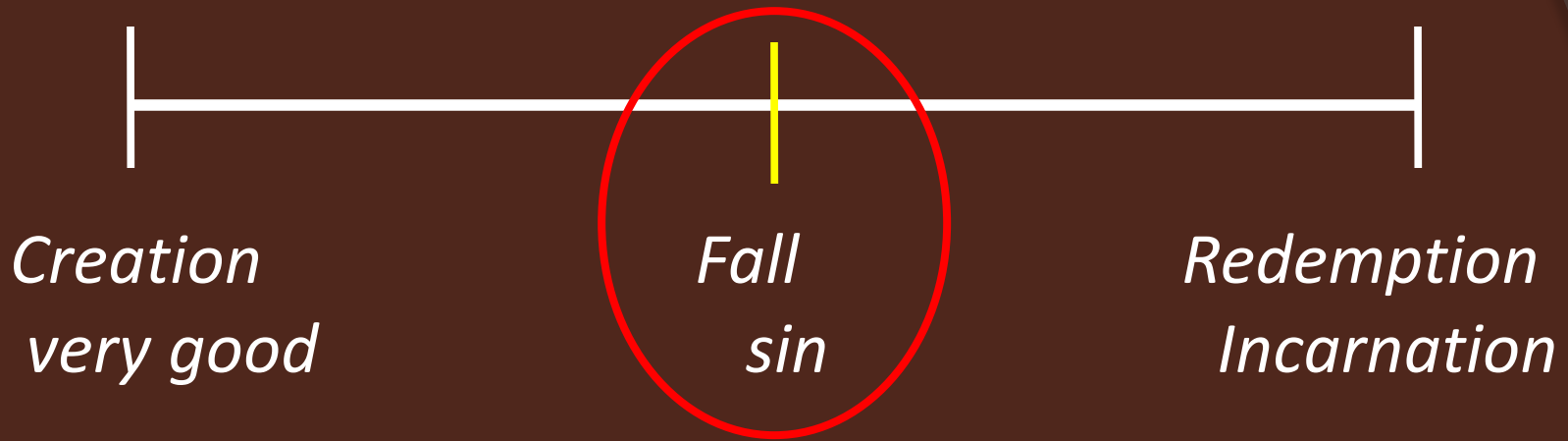
St. Augustine -- Original Sin

St. Anselm

Doctrine of Atonement – *Cur Deus Homo*

Dominican Tradition -- Thomas Aquinas

- **Soteriology (salvation)**
- Sin & atonement
- Jesus - expiation for sin
- work at worthiness “earning salvation”
- Jesus – Incarnation not needed
- Pope Leo XIII -- 1879 *Aeterni Patris*
- Primary or standard theology
- Juridical – moral codes
- **Anthropocentric approach**



Necessity of Incarnation

St. Augustine
St. Anselm

Doctrine of Atonement
“Cur Deus Homo”

Athanasius, Basil the Great,
Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Nazianzus

pseudo-Dionysius
Victorines

Franciscan Tradition

Dominican Tradition
Thomas Aquinas
1225-1274

- soteriological
- Sin & atonement
- Jesus –expiation
- work at worthiness
- **Jesus – no**
- Pope Leo XIII
1879 Aeterni Patris
- Primary view
- Juridical

- anthropocentric

Francis & Clare

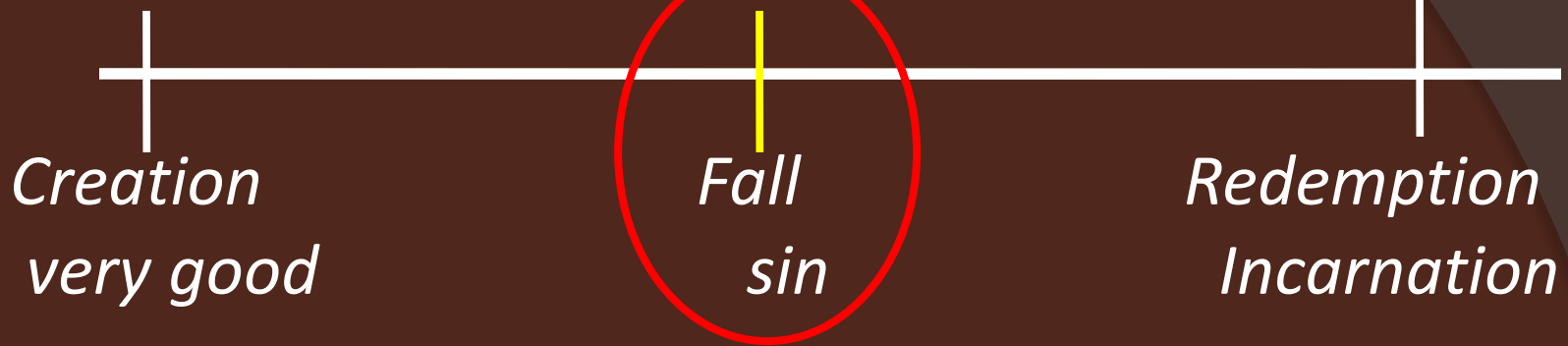
- Goodness of God = Love
- Poverty & Humility
- Everything is God’s = gift

Bonaventure, 1221-1274

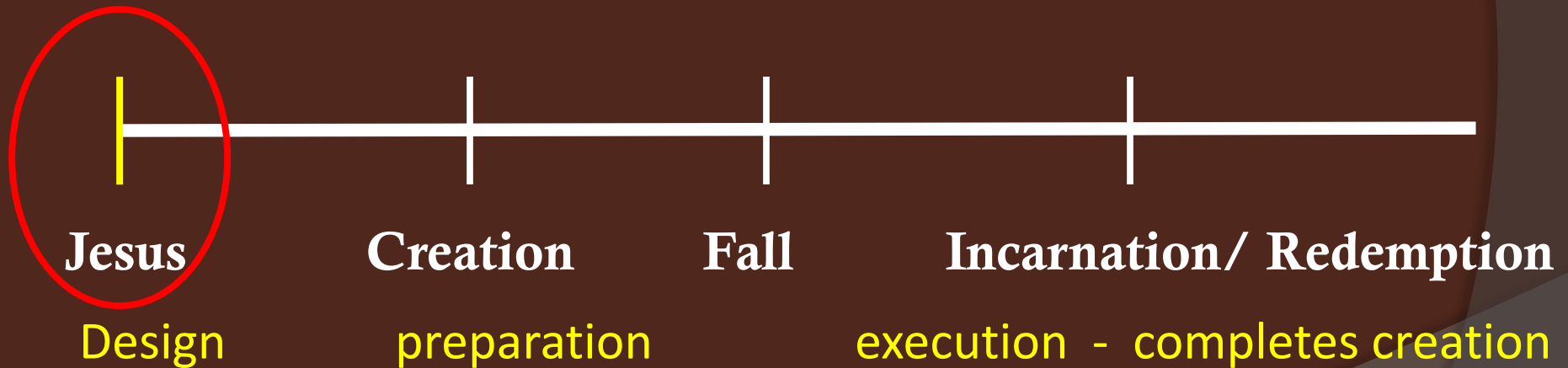
- Trinity – relational

Scotus 1265-1308

- Jesus – Yes – Christocentric
- **Alternate view**
- **Incarnation is original plan**
- **Creation supports Incarnation**



Necessity of Incarnation



God's Plan

Prepare for Christ

**focus on God's initial intention
not reaction to sin**

Francis & Clare

Co-founders of the Franciscan Movement

- Vision is based on God's goodness, manifested by
 - The Incarnation – gift of self
 - The Cross – depth of love
 - The Eucharist - love, poverty, humility

▣ Insight from Francis

- all creation is good & is gift = familial relatedness
- Called to imitate Jesus – beloved Son
- Contingency – We are not God
- **Poverty because of God's poverty**
(sine proprio or living without grasping - sin)

Theology of Francis

- Trinitarian communion – mutual love, equality, care
- becomes the model for Francis' Order - Fraternity – to mirror the love within the Trinity
- Primacy of the Father

- ◎ Relationship with the Father is his goal
- ◎ Francis understanding
 - His unworthiness and
 - God's gift causes him to desire the loving Father even more
- ◎ Wants to be loved by the Father as Jesus is loved – Lover and beloved

This is what I want!

Francis of Assisi

Q – What kind of God do you imagine?

Q – What do you want?

PART 2

**BONAVENTURE
&
JOHN DUNS SCOTUS**

Trinity

Mutual and complete self giving (internal)

Desire for relationship with us (external)

God invites us into relationship

Foundation of Franciscan Life

Poverty of God – Perfect love requires the lover to hold nothing back from the beloved! God freely, by choice empties Himself for the good of the other (self-communication or total self-giving-- kenosis)

Humility of God – God turns toward Jesus completely (God's full self-expression in one other than Himself) and through Jesus, The Father turns toward us (**finite self-expression of Jesus**) and all creation.

Bonaventure's model of Trinity

- Fountain fullness

- Always full

- Always emptying

KENOSIS

The diagram features two yellow arrows pointing towards the word 'KENOSIS'. The upper arrow originates from the text 'Always full' and points diagonally down and to the right. The lower arrow originates from the text 'Always emptying' and points diagonally up and to the right. The word 'KENOSIS' is positioned to the right of the arrows, centered vertically between them.



FOTORESEARCH

John Scotus

◎ Trinity

- life of the Trinity exemplifies mutuality, equality, freedom & communal relationship.

◎ Primacy of Christ – Incarnation

- primary motive for Incarnation is love.
- Action shifts from reaction to original intent.

◎ Haecceitas (thisness)

- each being is unique and worthy of attention

Thisness [*haecceitas*]

Thisness applied to the human person invests each individual with a unique value as one single individual wanted and loved by God, apart from any trait, attribute, accomplishment, similarity to others or any contribution to society.

Of the infinity possibilities for a “you” the specific, unique “you” is the one wanted & loved by God and called into being.

Each of us is a unique, personal gift from God

Each is God’s beloved!

Journey determines arrival - summary

○ **Standard Theology** emphasizes:

- Sin and atonement (salvation)
- Image of a God as judge who demands reparation
- **Need to earn** redemption/salvation

? What image of God does this view promote?

Most Christian
Spirituality
Points
to
redemptive
suffering

Salvation



Journey determines arrival

⦿ **Alternate - Franciscan Theology**

emphasizes the beloved, a God who desires us!

- Love, (not sin)
- Poverty, (Incarnation)
- Humility (turns to us - relationship)
- All of creation is good because GOD IS GOOD

To be loved by the
Father as a son,
Francis points
us to the Trinity
and in particular to
Jesus

A Table Fellowship
which is
Christo-centric but
always pointing us
to the Father

Sanctification



What is needed for the Journey:

- **Desire** – our response to God's Desire
- **Prayer** – vehicle to spirituality
- **Solitude** - entering the cave of the Heart to find the God dwelling in us
- **Community - relationship**

Sharing - discussion

- Question – How does our Franciscan legacy change how we approach God?
- Question – Do you really grasp being desired by God and being God's beloved?

Names

- Jesus reveals to us God's name

ABBA

- The Father reveals Jesus name

BELOVED SON

Summary

- 1. God is absolute love, being and creativity. Creation is dependent upon God to exist.**
- 2. God has freely chosen incarnation (taking on human form) before the human choice for sin.**
- 3. Christmas is of primary importance to us.**
- 4. Christ is the perfect image of who God is for creation.**
- 5. Every creature is unique, gifted, and living in relationship.**
- 6. Nothing humans have the ability to do has the capacity to make God do something.**
- 7. Mercy, forgiveness and justification are God's actions.**

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