



Here we remember, above everything else, the Christmas celebration of 1223. This has, ever since, popularized the practice of displaying the Christmas creche. Francis also celebrated Easter here and offered the brothers a lesson in poverty.

Bonaventure says: The example (reenactment of the Bethlehem event) that Francis put before the world was calculated to rouse the hearts of those weak in the faith. Celano adds: Many saw a vision of a child come to life in Francis' arms. The vision was not unfitting, for the child had been forgotten in the hearts of many; but by the working of his grace, he was brought to life again through St. Francis and stamped upon their fervent memories. Francis used very concrete means to awaken faith in the lives of the people. This incarnational approach is central to our Franciscan heritage.

The mystery of the Incarnation was one of the pivotal elements of Francis' spirituality; the cross and the Eucharist were the other two.

The Chapel of the Presepio, also known as the Chapel of St. Luke, is where a most famous event took place on Christmas Eve. This is a natural cave where Francis returned after his long and tiring business in Rome regarding the Rule.

Greccio

The stone under the altar is the real altar that was used for mass that Christmas Eve.



The dormitory of St. Francis is a dark narrow cave where Francis and some companions lived for several years.

Greccio



Greccio

The brothers lived in what appears to be a narrow hallway. The space was so limited that each brother had a cross on the wall to mark his space.

Greccio



Greccio

One of Francis' cells was at the back of this dormitory so he could be alone. The brothers said that Francis prayed often through the night with groans, sighs, moans and other noises that would keep them up. So this area was so Francis would not disturb the other brothers.



Greccio



Greccio

A staircase leads to the floor above, where the dormitory of St. Bonaventure is located. It was built in 1260 when St. Bonaventure was the Minister General.

Greccio



Bonaventure's cell



The choir where the brothers prayed the office. Because books were so expensive, one book was used. A brother stood near the book to turn the pages during the office. The oil lamp in front of the book was used for light during the midnight office.

Greccio



Greccio



The chapel of ST. Bonaventure. The villagers stood behind this screen to hear mass.

Greccio



Original altar

Greccio



Greccio



Di Giovanni
Battista
Speranza
Della Croce
in
con tutte le chiese
di questo mondo
di medicamenti
per
con la sua salute
ha ridato il mondo
Pietro L. B.

Greccio



Greccio 2

The new church at Greccio friary built in the last century. It contains the oldest portrait of Francis and shows him as he was in his final years. This portrait 1225? is supposed to have been painted to the order of Jacoba dei Settesoli.



The doors a bronze showing the death of Clare holding her rule.



Greccio 2



Greccio 2





This creche at the back of the new church moves and has music around the nativity scene.



It is important to know why the Incarnation is so important in Franciscan life. Blessed John Duns scotus (1266-1308) teaches us that the Word Incarnate, the Son of God who became the Son of Mary, is the main reason why God created the universe. The Trinity first thought of the Word Incarnate, then of other human beings to be his companions and his social body, and then of the material universe as a home for this human family. So the rest of the universe is for the sake of human beings, and humankind is for the sake of Jesus Christ, in who human nature is united to the divine Word, God could not have intended the glorified God-Man only for the sake of redeeming human beings who had sinned. This for two reasons:

- firstly, the more important thing [the glorified God=Man] could not depend for his existence on the less important [human beings who sinned] (Orinatio 19, 1, 6; 7, 3)
- secondly, as human beings are free and might not have sinned, God could not make the most wonderful thing in creation, the glorified Christ, depend on the chance that Adam and Eve would sin (Reportata 3, 7, 4, 4-5)

Franciscans view God as Good. Totally Good, The most High and Supreme Good known as Bonum. God and the Logos or Word of God and the Holy Spirit share the Bonum. This Good, this Bonum, overflows into creation. In Genesis you see all creation is declared good, except humans which is declared very good. As the Trinity share the good back and forth in its entirety, the overflowing extends to creation. From the

beginning, it was planned that one of the Trinity would be Incarnated in order that the good, the Bonum, could flow from Humans back to God. Jesus was that person. We are the only people whose God became human. The Good, the Bonum, is returned to God through Jesus Christ. We isn when we choose a lesser Good that ruptures our relationship with the Bonum or total Good. We are inherently good people, good creatures, and we sin our of our goodness and our talents when we claim them and let them draw us away from God Whenever we do good, we Incarnate God into the world. When I get to Assisi I will share a reading that talks of us as moving a hand or a foot and being Christ in the world.

The friary contains some 80+ creche scenes.

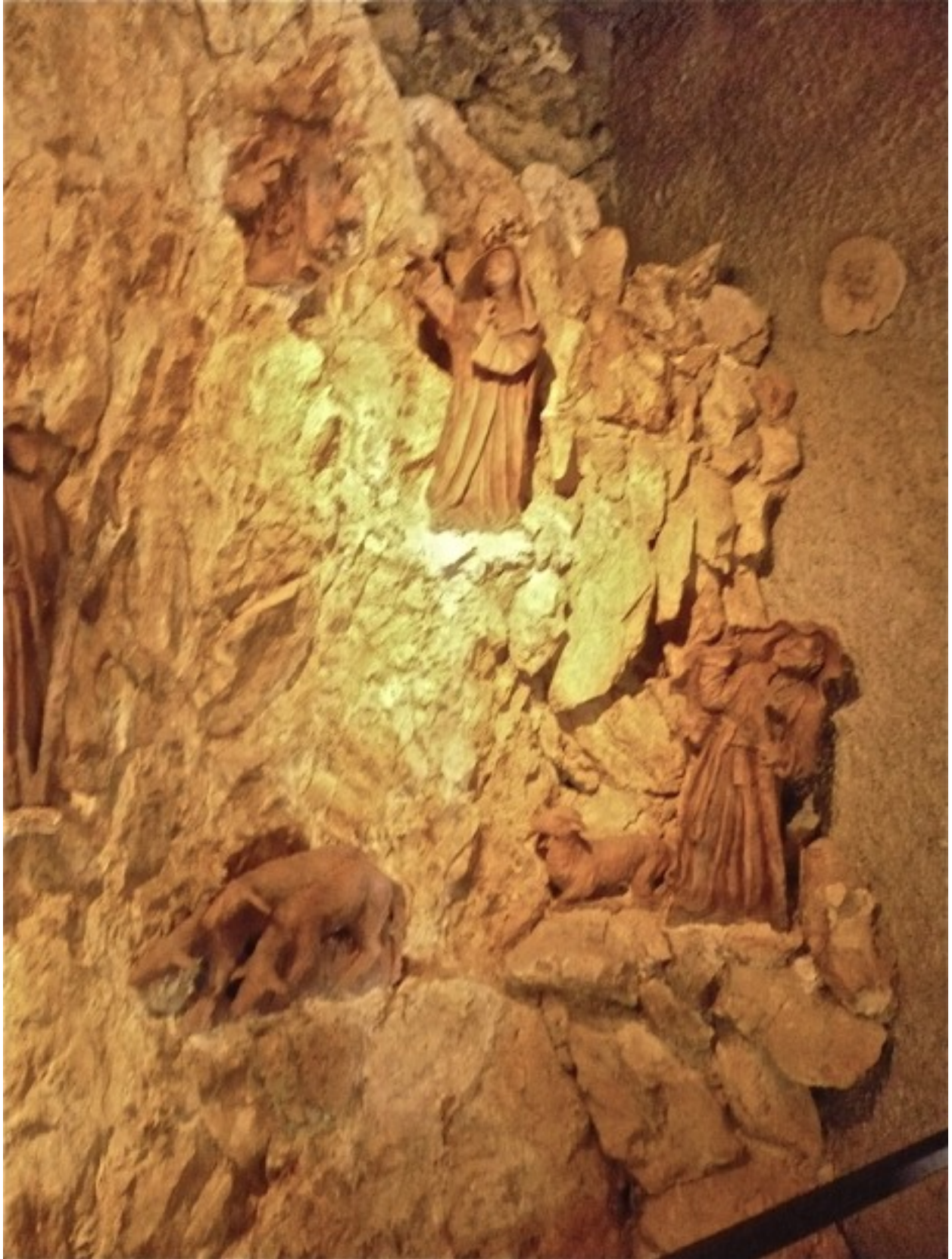


Greccio 2





Greccio 2





Greccio 2



Reflection

Francis Concretized the mysteries of the faith. Explore the current significance of this for evangelization.

Greccio is the “Franciscan Bethlehem,” which highlights the humanity of Christ. Examine other stories in Francis’ life that emphasize the wonder and beauty of the human nature God has assumed and give to us. What do I think of my own human nature?

The condition of a child is the condition that each person is invited to return to in order to enter the kingdom of heaven/ How and why?

Why should Francis have chosen Greccio to reenact the Bethlehem event? Examine the readings on Greccio for any clues.