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Faces of Faith:

Monastic Identity and Protestant Theology in the Swiss Reformation

Honors Thesis

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Department: History

Advisor: Bobbi Sutherland, Ph.D.

April 2023

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Abstract

Religious orders were ever-present in medieval life. Their influence was not limited just to the pulpit and the physical area around monasteries but extended into the daily life of entire kingdoms. Each religious community was unique in the interpretation and expression of its Rule of life, both between and within orders. During the Reformation, religious communities faced pressure from newly converted Protestant authorities alongside theological conversations within their own walls. New Protestant theologies carried with them anti-monastic ideas that challenged religious communities to fundamentally reexamine their lives. Nowhere were these choices as complicated as in Switzerland, where monks and nuns encountered Lutheran, Zwinglian, Anabaptist, and Reformed theology. I argue that these encounters occurred in conversation with the spiritual traditions of their orders, both in those who remained in or left their vows. I specifically look at the first-hand accounts and manuscripts of Swiss Franciscans and Benedictines and place their words in the context of their Rules and spiritual traditions. Further, I will argue that religious who remained Catholic more explicitly expressed their particular spirituality when encountering Protestant theology, while those who left the habit saw their new beliefs as a different expression, or even a fulfillment, of their original vows. Current historiographical approaches to religious orders in the Reformation deemphasize individual communities, seeing their interactions with Protestant theology solely defined by their geography or political context. This paper approaches the Reformation through the lived spiritual experience of religious and seeks to recognize the impact their monastic lives had on their decisions.

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Introduction

When Huldrych Zwingli joined his friend Christoph Froschauer for a meal in March of 1522, it was not just a social call. Gathered at Froschauer's house were several employees of his print house, the men talking and decompressing after printing Zwingli's latest translation of St. Paul's Epistles. Froschauer had known Zwingli for several years, previously printing Zwingli's other biblical translations and sermons, and both men supported Martin Luther's recent Protestant actions in Germany. When the time to eat came, Froschauer brought out sausages for his exhausted workers, a clear violation of the Lenten fasting rules. The "Affair of the Sausages," as it was later coined, propelled Protestantism into the public sphere and resulted in Froschauer's arrest.[1] Although he never claimed to have eaten the titular food, the "Affair" also jump-started Zwingli's public campaign against church doctrine. Following Froschauer's arrest, Zwingli directly confronted Catholic teaching with a sermon against mandatory fasting in July of 1522, titled *Von Erkiesen und Freiheit der Speisen* (Regarding the Choice and Freedom of Foods), and wrote to the local bishop alongside ten other secular priests arguing for the removal of celibacy and the institution of scripture, not church tradition, as the only subject of preaching.[2] After his initial burst of reforming energy, Zwingli's writings left behind ideas of changing the church from within and became explicitly anti-Catholic. In 1523, he convinced the city council to host a series of religious debates that resulted in the removal of statues from churches and the dissolution of monasteries in the city. Just

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[1] E. Bonjour, H.S. Offler, and G. R. Potter, *A Short History of Switzerland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), 149.
[2] Ulrich Zwingli, *Selected Works*, Sources of Medieval History (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), 25.

two years later, in 1525, the Catholic mass was abolished and a new Zwinglian liturgy established just in time for Easter.[3]

On August 29th, 1535, thirteen years after the "Affair of the Sausages," a company of armed men appeared outside the walls of the Convent of St. Clare in Geneva.[4] Along with them was a former nun who demanded two hundred écus,[5] jewels, clothes, and a portion of the convent's land to cover the dowry she had given to the convent. The abbess met the group at the gate and fell to her knees, begging the soldiers not to remove her religious community from their convent because they did not owe the "miserable woman" any money. After some wrangling, the sisters realized that the soldiers were not only there for their money, but to foreshadow an imminent attack on their convent that night. A week before this conversation, a group of Protestant iconoclasts had descended upon the monastery. They attacked the sacred space like "ravenous wolves," destroying any pulpits, altars, statues, or holy books they could find.[6] This act was fresh in the community's mind, and the sisters were sure that any instigation would escalate into the wholesale destruction of the convent. The abbess, said by fellow sister and writer Jeanne de Jussie to be inspired by the Virgin Mary, gathered herself in silent prayer and offered all the convent had so that the soldiers would allow them to leave and "serve God in peace." That night, the nuns sobbed as they gathered and sang one last *De Profundis* for the souls of sisters buried in the cemetery. Under the watch of

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[3] Emidio Campi, "The Reformation in Zurich," in *A Companion to the Swiss Reformation*, eds. Amy N. Burnett and Emidio Campi (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2016), 78.
[4] The convent's official name was the "Monastère Jésus de Bethléem," but later writers consistently use the anglicized name above.
[5] The word refers to a gold coin minted by the French crown and comes from Latin for "shield" (*scotum*), which was printed on one side. The exact value requested above varied, but it was a sizeable amount.
[6] Jeanne de Jussie, *The Short Chronicle: A Poor Clare's Account of the Reformation of Geneva*, trans. Carrie F. Klaus (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 139–40.

the city's archers, the nuns made their way across the city and over the bridge that formed its border. They found safety over forty kilometers away, under the Catholic Duke of Savoy's protection in modern-day Annecy, France. They would never return to Geneva.[7]

Though separated by over a decade, the meal that Zwingli shared with Froschauer led to the religious environment that the Poor Clare sisters fled. Zwingli's public refutation of Catholic fasting laws, both in his presence at the "Affair" and in his printed sermons, kickstarted a process within the city of Zürich that culminated in the City Council removing images from churches, dissolving monastic communities, and ultimately banning the mass over the span of ten months.[8] Inspired and bolstered by Luther's efforts in nearby Germany, Zwingli's theological proposals expanded beyond Zürich's walls over the next few years and overtook cantons across Switzerland. Newly converted Protestant governments overthrew the bishops, priests, and, most importantly for this paper, the monasteries that were in charge of the spiritual health of the people. By analyzing the writings of religious, I found a connection between the spiritual lives of monks and nuns, both those who chose to leave or stay behind, and their experience with Protestant theology. While traditionally ignored or lumped together with local religious sentiments, I argue that the spiritual traditions of religious communities were fundamental to how monastics approached Protestantism and the question of remaining in or leaving their vows.

Religious communities were broadly separated into orders such as the Benedictines, Franciscans, and Dominicans, each with distinctive spiritualities, also called vocations or charisms. Within Switzerland, the Benedictine and Franciscan orders

[7] Jussie, 164–72.
[8] Campi, "The Reformation in Zurich," 77.

were the largest and most influential, although their kinds of life were very distinct. Benedictine spirituality is identified through a devotion to communal life and liturgical prayer but also allowed for individual monasteries to have particular callings to education or public service and created schools or hospitals for that purpose.[9] Franciscan spirituality, on the other hand, grounded itself in service to the poor and simple living, with their male branch living in smaller "friaries" among the people they served, not cloistered like Benedictines. Female Franciscans, called "Poor Clares," expressed a distinct, yet identifiably Franciscan, spirituality through poverty in cloistered convents. These spiritualities did not disappear when Protestant theology emerged in Switzerland. The Swiss Reformation is distinct in the level of interaction that monastic communities had with public discussions and theological debates. Former monastics even became prominent Protestant leaders such as Michael Sattler and Ambrosius Blaurer, both discussed later. The particular spiritual histories of these monastics informed many of their conceptions of Protestant theology, leading them to use Franciscan or Benedictine language from their spiritual past to directly comment on their new life as a fuller realization of their vows.

The Reformation in Switzerland may have started in Zürich in 1523, but it expanded to the largest cities in Switzerland, including Bern, Basel, and St. Gallen, over the next ten years. Many cities followed similar processes to Zürich, establishing city "disputations" where pro-Reformation clergy and councils debated ecclesiastical officials before removing Catholic institutions like monasteries and saintly shrines, eventually

[9] D. Jonathan Grieser, "A Tale of Two Convents: Nuns and Anabaptists in Munster, 1533-1535," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 26, no. 1 (1995): 35.

banning the celebration of mass completely.[10] This development also included closer political ties between the Protestant cantons and the Protestant German cities of Constance, Ulm, and Augsburg. By 1529, tensions between the newly Protestant Swiss states in the north and the remaining Catholic states in the central and south were already high when the executions of a Catholic bailiff in Zürich and a Protestant pastor in Schwyz pushed them over the edge into a series of small military conflicts, called the Kappel Wars. The Kappel Wars ended in 1531 with Zwingli's death and a recognition that Switzerland would never be religiously united again.[11] In the following years, Geneva accepted the Reformation and John Calvin's theology added to the mix of faiths present, while the Catholic Counter-Reformation took a foothold in the Catholic cantons through the introduction of the Capuchins and Jesuits.[12]

Reformation theology also occurred in a uniquely Swiss context that closely tied church and monastic life to politics. Medieval Switzerland was formally organized as the Old Swiss Confederacy,[13] a complex alliance of urban and rural states called "cantons" between Lake Geneva in the west and Lake Constance in the east. In addition to their web of economic, military, and legal agreements, the cantons were unique from their German counterparts in their relationship with the Holy Roman Empire. Locally, cantons ruled themselves through councils made up of local guildsmen and oligarchs rather than individual nobles and were centered in rural conglomerates or major cities. The 1499 Swabian War between the Confederacy and the Swabian League, a loose alliance of

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[10] Campi, "The Reformation in Zurich," 75.
[11] Sundar Henry, "Failed Reformations," in Burnett and Campi, *A Companion to the Swiss Reformation*, 272.
[12] Karin Maag, "Schools and Education, 1500-1600," in Burnett and Campi, *A Companion to the Swiss Reformation*, 539.
[13] The prefix "Old" was added in the 19th century after the modern Swiss Confederation was reconstituted in 1848 after a series of failed governments following Napoleon's invasion.

Southern German states within the Holy Roman Empire, resulted in the effective loss of imperial authority within the Confederacy, although nominal allegiance was maintained until the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Although the alliance contained four languages (French and Romansch in the west, Italian in the south, and German in the east), Switzerland maintained a distinct political and cultural identity.

Switzerland's distinct political structure also influenced spiritual life within the cantons. While some monasteries, such as the Benedictine abbeys of Einsiedeln and St. Gall, and bishops were recognized as lords over areas of land, their power was limited compared to city and cantonal councils. The city councils were especially powerful in their oversight of churches and the election of parish priests by local canons they were often related to.[14] Instead of prince-abbots or bishops, influential clergymen were found in the city parishes and monasteries. The larger cities of Zürich, Bern, and Basel each had large parishes that were tied to the local ruling council and whose pastors were important figures. The exact institution varied from city to city, but the most notable was the Grossmünster in Zürich. The Grossmünster was comprised of a group of cannons in charge of leading prayers and mass as well as a head pastor who was the *de facto* religious leader of the city. New canons were selected from wealthy Zürich families by the city council. The politically connected canons then hired the head pastor, a post Zwingli accepted in 1519.[15]

Spiritual power also spread to the monasteries and religious communities that dotted the land. Switzerland has a deep history with Benedictine monasteries, spawning

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[14] Regula Schmid, "The Swiss Confederation Before the Reformation," in Burnett and Campi, *A Companion to the Swiss Reformation*, 25.
[15] Ulrich Gabler, "Huldrych Zwingli and His City of Zürich," *Andrews University Seminary Studies,* 23, no. 2 (Summer 1985): 145.

the early medieval Saints Meinrad and Othmar. The hermitages of these legendary religious figures grew into the important abbeys of Einsiedeln and St. Gall, respectively. Medieval monasteries also acted as spiritual anchors for their local communities. Prayer, liturgies, and services like education or hospital care cemented the monasteries social and spiritual role.[16] The monasteries were also present in the spiritual life of cities. The largest cities in Switzerland each contained a multitude of convents and monasteries, often participating in politics as much as the other parishes. On top of the large, rural Benedictine abbeys and the Grossmünster, there were several smaller communities of monasteries within Zürich including the Fraumünster, a Benedictine convent whose members also came from politically important families and whose abbess was a confidant of Zwingli.[17]

The political role of bishops also morphed in the face of powerful monasteries and city parishes. The seats of Swiss bishops were not located in the hotspots of reform, a fact that undercut their authority. Zürich was under the Diocese of Constance, a city located seventy kilometers away and primarily covered German, not Swiss territory. Meanwhile, St. Gallen was under the Diocese of Chur, whose seat was 100 kilometers to the south. Even in cities that were home to bishoprics like Bern and Basel, the bishop's residences were not even within the diocese's boundaries. As the parishes and monasteries within cities grew closer to governing councils, their spiritual authority exceeded their own bishops. While the priests and monastics still swore allegiance to Rome, the growth of Protestant theology gave some independent city councils the

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[16] For an interesting reflection on the symbols and their power in expressing faith in monastic communities, see Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c.1400-c.1580* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992).
[17] Gabler, 156.

popular support to fully break away. The city of Basel notably acted on this newfound support in 1521, choosing not to renew their traditional vows of obedience to the bishop. The treatment of ecclesiastical authorities in Zürich, where orders from the bishop to stop the disputations were ignored, shows how widespread the break had become on the eve of the Reformation.[18]

In the view of many historians, the introduction of Protestant theology did not encounter variation among monks and nuns: religious in Protestant areas left their vows and those in Catholic ones remained. The vocational differences between Franciscan friars and Benedictine monks and nuns dramatically changed the context through which they encountered Protestant theology, yet, for many histories of the Reformation, there is no discussion of this underlying context. All that matters is the result of empty monasteries. There have been several works that have looked at the vocational identities of monastics within the Reformation, but these only tangentially touch on with Switzerland in favor of English and German orders. This gap is especially noticeable in English research on Swiss monasteries, where Catholic religious communities were not universally shut down by secular authorities as in England and parts of Germany. Rather, Swiss monasteries coexisted alongside Protestant groups and even under Protestant governments. The variety of theologies they came into contact with, ranging from Zwinglianism to Reformed to Anabaptist, also complicated any questions of conversion.

The Swiss Reformation has an awkward legacy within Reformation studies. While the legacies of Martin Luther, John Knox, and even Henry VIII largely defined the Protestant faith within their regions, Switzerland fragmented among the theologies of

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[18] Amy Nelson Burnett, *Teaching the Reformation: Ministers and Their Message in Basel, 1529-1629*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 20.

Zwingli, John Calvin, and early Anabaptist leaders like Michael Sattler and Felix Manz. It is also the personalities of Zwingli and Calvin that dominate the writing and narrative. Historians recognized this historical trend as far back as 1969, with a speaker at a conference of Swiss historians noting "the non-Zürich Reformation has been virtually eclipsed… behind the figure of Zwingli."[19] These figures were undeniably the leaders of the Swiss Reformation, yet continued focus on them has left a gap in research on the unique interactions that monastic communities and vowed religious had with new theologies. Calvin himself is the subject of countless books and the Reformed theology he pioneered is a cornerstone of many denominations, but he did not arrive in Switzerland until 1536, well after the cantons had made their decisions about the Reformation. His famous tenure in Geneva started in 1541, six years after the Convent of Saint Clare was forcibly closed. Calvin never minced words about his negative view of monasticism, but his Reformed theology eventually folded into a singular Protestant "evangelical"[20] faith with Heinrich Bullinger, Zwingli's successor, that monastics did not differentiate Calvinism from.[21] These men each offer strong lenses of the Swiss Reformation, yet focusing on them does not give voice to the particular lives and spiritualities that Swiss monks and nuns describe in their personal accounts.

The emphasis on well-known figures expanded into a biographical style that defined the earliest histories of religious orders during the Reformation. Veit Ludwig von Seckendorff's seminal 1694 work on the Reformation, *Commentarius historicus et*

[19] Fritz Büsser, "Reformation History Research in German-Speaking Switzerland," *Renaissance and Reformation* 9, no. 1 (December 31, 1969): 23.
[20] The term "Evangelical" is used interchangeably with "Protestant" by both Swiss Catholics and Protestant at this time. The German word used for Protestantism is also "*evangelisch*."
[21] David Curtis Steinmetz, *Calvin in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 196.

apologeticus de Lutheranismo sive de reformation religionis ductu D. Martini Lutheri in magna Germaniae parte aliisque regionibus, was one of the first dedicated academic works on the Reformation but almost exclusively focused on the person of Martin Luther as a medium to describe the Reformation. Monasticism is only brought up in relation to Luther's background and Lutheran theology.[22] The development of professional historians in the nineteenth century developed what I term the "classical" school of Reformation history towards religious orders. Works in this school focused on individuals like Zwingli and had broad historical scopes that covered geographic areas or the entire Reformation period. These writings almost never interact with religious orders outside of portrayals that describe monastic communities as passive to the world around them. Their content also contained the explicit ideological bend of the author, either Catholic or Protestant, and were sometimes even written by clerics. Protestant scholars especially placed a strong emphasis on the moral laxity and failures of Catholic abbots and bishops, with Reformation theology offering a physical and spiritual escape from clericalism and oppresive religious vows.

Leopold von Ranke's sprawling *History of the Reformation in Germany*, published in six volumes from 1854 to 1857, typifies the attitude of this era. A Protestant, Ranke attacks monasticism throughout his work, describing how "those who embraced the monastic profession had no other idea than that of leading a life of self-indulgence without labour."[23] This stance continues into his description of the 1523 Zürich Disputation, where Zwingli takes full stage to passive monastic spectators. Not only is

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[22] Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 10.

[23] Leopold von Ranke, *History of the Reformation in Germany*, ed. Robert A. Johnson, trans. Sarah Ausin (London: Routledge, 1905), 126.

Zwingli “full of the greatest and noblest thoughts,”[24] but any opposition to the dissolution of monasteries is only mentioned in passing. The faith of individual monks is so weak that even a Franciscan monk that came forward to debate Zwingli is described as throwing off his habit upon hearing the “superior weight” of Zwingli’s words.[25] Even contemporary Catholic histories, like the Catholic Archbishop of Baltimore M.J. Spalding’s 1870 *History of the Protestant Reformation*, gloss over monasteries during the era, only touching on them in reaction to Zwingli and Protestant edicts.[26] Both early works also keep their academic focus on the larger geographic areas and influential figures like Luther or Zwingli in discussions, and the religious orders are not explored in any depth, rather mentioned in reaction to other events without regard to their particular spiritualities.

The explicit theological bias of the “classical” school left professional history at the turn of the twentieth century, and the field adapted into what I see as a “neo-classical” school. This continued the biographical and geographic framing of the Reformation, but also included reference to specific religious orders, although these orders were always in service to the larger political goals. Roland H. Bainton’s 1936 article, “Changing Ideas and Ideals in the Sixteenth Century,” removes the explicit praise for Luther or Zwingli found in the earlier works and even connects a specific religious order, the Spiritual Franciscans, to Reformation events. However, Bainton’s ultimate goal is not to discuss Franciscan spirituality so much as Luther’s connection to previous theological

[24] Ranke, 514.
[25] Ranke, 517.
[26] M.J. Spalding, *The History of the Protestant Reformation, in Germany and Switzerland, and in England, Ireland, Scotland, the Netherlands, France, and Northern Europe : In a Series of Essays, Reviewing D’Aubigne, Menzel, Hallam, Bishop Short, Prescott, Ranke, Fryxell, and Others* (Baltimore: Murphy & Co., 1870).

controversies in the Church, and any discussion is always subservient to the life of a major reformer.[27] This focus continued into the 1950s, as seen by Edgar Bonjour's 1952 book, *A Short History of Switzerland*, which discusses the Swiss Reformation solely through the lens of major leaders like Zwingli, Calvin, and Bullinger. Their lives head the chapter titles, and the Swiss Benedictines and Franciscans, while specifically mentioned, are only used to flesh out their context and are not subjects of study themselves.[28]

Starting in the 1950's, historians began to study religious orders directly, going beyond the broad and sporadic mentions of previous authors, and incorporating specific orders and monasteries into their works. These works also connected religious orders with the political development of the modern nation state, with monasteries ultimately acceding to the political decisions rather than making individual decisions. The combination of expanded detail and overt political connection formed what I classify as the "Political-Monastic" school. Norman Birnbaum's 1959 article "The Zwinglian Reformation in Zürich" marks a delineation from the previous school, keeping a focus on the person of Zwingli while also mentioning the backlash of monks in response to the first anti-Catholic sermons in the city. However, the monastic community's ultimate context is still tied to the political realignment of Zürich away from Catholic canons and ecclesiastical authorities towards the new, independent, City Council and Zwinglian evangelical church structure.[29] Brendan Bradshaw's 1974 analysis of the dissolution of Benedictines in Ireland, *The Dissolution of the Religious Orders in Ireland under Henry*

[27] Roland H. Bainton, "Changing Ideas and Ideals in the Sixteenth Century," *The Journal of Modern History* 8, no. 4 (December 1936): 441.
[28] E. Bonjour, H.S. Offler, and G. R. Potter, *A Short History of Switzerland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952).
[29] Norman Birnbaum, "The Zwinglian Reformation in Zürich," *Past and Present* 15 (1959): 33.

VIII,[30] and Paul Nyhus' 1975 article on German Franciscans, "The Franciscans in South Germany, 1400-1530: Reform and Revolution,"[31] each looked at specific religious orders, but still emphasized the futility of orders in deciding their own future. Nyhus especially pointed to the increasing political involvement of the friars in the city-states of Basel and Strasburg, stating "the very success of the friars in integrating themselves into the economic and political life of their host cities made them all the more vulnerable when the Reformation erupted."[32] Scholars continued to write in this school as late as the 1990s. The last work identifiably in this school is historian Arnold Snyder's 1993 article, "Communication and the People: The Case of Reformation St. Gall." In his article, Snyder describes the intensely political role the local monastery of St. Gall took in debates with the surrounding town of St. Gallen over the Reformation. The monks were certainly active in the theological conflict, sending out brothers to preach and debate in the street, even being assaulted on one occasion, but their position was described as being primarily political. Their individual spirituality is again not explored so much as their general monastic presence in a city that was grappling with both its nascent political freedom from the monastery's Rule and its growing connection to the Old Swiss Confederacy.[33]

Starting in the 1970's, scholars began moving away from political focuses towards social history, fine-tuning the former school's research into specific religious orders while also incorporating gender, sexual, and sociological theories. Steven

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[30] Brendan Bradshaw, *The Dissolution of the Religious Orders in Ireland under Henry VIII* (New York: Cambridge Univ Press, 1974).
[31] Paul L Nyhus, "The Franciscans in South Germany, 1400-1530: Reform and Revolution," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 65, no. 8 (1975): 47.
[32] Nyhus, 42–43.
[33] Arnold Snyder, "Communication and the People: The Case of Reformation St. Gall," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 67, no. 2 (1993): 152–73.

Ozment's 1975 book, *Reformation in the Cities*, particularly focuses on the social consequences of the Reformation and religious orders, connecting the social change within reformed cities to the conversions of Swiss Franciscans like Sebastian Meyer.[34] Likewise, this trend corresponded with a similar push in Swiss historiography to examine the emergence of Anabaptism and the "Radical Reformation." While Arnold Snyder shifted his later work into the "Political-Monastic" school, his earlier writing prominently featured social theories. His 1983 article, "Monastic Origins of Swiss Anabaptist Sectarianism," explicitly connected the sociological analysis of church structure by sociologists Benton Johnson and Ernst Troeltsch to Swiss Benedictines and Anabaptists.[35] Similarly, Dennis Martin's 1995 article "Carthusians during the Reformation Era," includes discussion of a specific Carthusian monastery in Basel, highlighting both the social indignity put upon the Catholic monks by Protestant authorities as well as their monks' radical social equality.[36]

This historical focus has strengthened in recent years, expanding to cover the sexual liberation of former nuns living in Anabaptist Münster,[37] Dominican nuns participating in political disobedience against Protestant authorities in Strasburg,[38] and the social effect of the dissolution of the monasteries in England on former monastics.[39]

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[34] Steven E. Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities: The Appeal of Protestantism to Sixteenth-Century Germany and Switzerland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 59–61.
[35] Arnold Snyder, "Monastic Origins of Swiss Anabaptist Sectarianism," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 57, no. 1 (January 1983): 26.
[36] Dennis D. Martin, "Carthusians during the Reformation Era: 'Cartusia Nunquam Deformata, Reformari Resistens,'" *The Catholic Historical Review* 81, no. 1 (1995), 50.
[37] D. Jonathan Grieser, "A Tale of Two Convents: Nuns and Anabaptists in Munster, 1533-1535," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 26, no. 1 (1995): 31–47.
[38] Amy Leonard, *Nails in the Wall : Catholic Nuns in Reformation Germany.*, Women in Culture and Society (University of Chicago Press, 2005).
[39] Harriet Lyon, "'A Pitiful Thing'? The Afterlife of the Dissolution of the English Monasteries in Early Modern Chronicles, c. 1540 – c. 1640," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 49, no. 4 (Winter 2018): 1037–56.

Each of these works feature an appreciation of the theological change experienced by monastics, but it is always placed within a larger context of social history. These works, with few exceptions, are still centered in German and English monastic communities. Even though Steve Ozment and Dennis Martin both mention specific Swiss figures and monasteries, these only take only take up small part of their arguments.

I will be looking at the interactions that Swiss monastics had with Protestant theology through their own words. Specifically, I will compare the writings of Swiss Benedictines and Franciscans from the Reformation who both remained in their vows and who converted to Protestantism. These writings reveal a deep sense of vocational identity even among members who left and rejected their former life. The key parts of Benedictine spirituality, stability, purity of self, and removal from the world, are reinforced in the writings of prominent monasteries like the Abbey of St. Gall on Protestant theology. Even among monastics who left their vows, like Ambrosius Blaurer, their monastic past was not entirely rejected, and they describe rediscovering the Christian community they desired in monastic life within the new Protestant church. Or, in the case of Michael Sattler, that rediscovery occurred through founding a new church structure altogether. Likewise, Franciscan values of poverty and a personal imitation of Jesus are also identified across denominational lines. I will examine the experiences of several former Franciscan theologians whose personal writings or participation in disputations reveal a continued reference to the gospel-centric message of the order and, to the former Franciscan Conrad Pellican, a revelation of support by St. Francis himself. These views are contrasted by their Franciscan sisters in the Convent of Saint Clare in Geneva, who not only remained in their vows but intensified their specific identity,

renewing their devotion to liturgical purity and practice of self-mortification. The spiritualities of a religious order were not easily tossed aside when confronted by opposing theology. Looking at the experiences of religious through the lens of their spiritual identities allows one to encounter monks and nuns, both observant and former, through the language and context that they found themselves in when Froschauer served sausage.

"In the First Place, to Love the Lord God With the Whole Heart, the Whole Soul and the Whole Strength:" Reform Among Benedictines

Medieval Benedictine observance revolved around life within the monastery and service to the area around them. The monastery was a stable religious community centered around the Benedictine motto of *ora et labora*. Large and powerful monasteries, also referred to as abbeys, were common throughout medieval Europe, acting as feudal lords controlling land and peasants and participating in politics. Even in areas with centralized monarchies like England, monasteries still maintained effective spiritual authority and autonomy in their direct areas of ownership. But the abbeys were defined by more than their land holdings. Abbeys operated as spiritual and communal centers, establishing pilgrimages, hospitals, and schools.[40] These activities were all promoted by the rigorous *Rule of St. Benedict*. Established by the titular Saint Benedict in the sixth century, the Rule laid out the vows of stability, obedience, and conversion of life that would govern how a monk lived. The Rule also had a distinct spirituality that focused on

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[40] Brendan Bradshaw, *The Dissolution of the Religious Orders in Ireland under Henry VIII* (New York: Cambridge Univ Press, 1974), 261; Patrick Larkin, "A Forgotten Church In East Galway: The Abbey of the Cormicans of Abbeygormacan," *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 67 (2015): 26.

liturgical purity and work, most often through chanting the liturgy of the hours and a special ministry for the area they served.

Benedictine communities in Switzerland were particularly unique within this tradition because of their importance over bishoprics and the relatively decentralized cantons. Unlike the German or Italian states surrounding them, Swiss monasteries resided in cantons ruled by aggressively independent local councils. Within these decentralized systems, several monasteries grew to be extremely large and important both spiritually and politically. Einsiedeln, Engelberg, and St. Gall Abbeys all ruled sizeable territories, with Einsiedeln having possibly the largest pilgrimage site in all of Switzerland for their famous "Black Madonna" statue and St. Gall becoming an independent "Princely-Abbey" (*Fürstsabtei*) and its abbot an elector within the Holy Roman Empire.[41] Because bishops in Switzerland were often removed from the most important cities, the monasteries acted as spiritual and political authority figures for local churches.

By January 1523, Froschauer's Lenten meal and Zwingli's rhetoric had galvanized the Zürich City Council into assembling a formal debate or "disputation" between advocates for reform and representatives from the bishop, eventually having a second one in September 1523. While the Zürich Disputations were rooted in broader theological concerns that involved the whole church, vowed religious and Benedictine abbots in particular occupied an important space in the proceedings. Their presence was a symbol of religious authority and importance for the city-state. The abbots present at the first disputation were active in their support of Zwingli and several spoke out against the Catholic representatives. When Zwingli and the Zürich Council called the disputations,

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[41] Snyder, "Monastic Origins of Swiss Anabaptist Sectarianism," 154–55.

their intense theological drama drew in many prestigious scholars and ecclesiastical figures, many eager to note their support or opposition. The account of the first disputation begins with acknowledgment of the presence and distinct interest of several abbots, including the abbot of Pfäfers, a close friend of Zwingli, who would eventually leave his monastic vows.[42] Further, the abbot of Kappel, who later converted to Protestantism before ultimately returning to Catholicism and monastic life after Zwingli's death, directly interjected on behalf of Zwingli to end the disputation. Standing up after Zwingli left the bishop's representative stammering, the abbot echoed Zwingli's challenge to the church at the beginning of the disputation, asking "where are they now who wish to burn us at the stake and bring wood?"[43]

While the abbot's strong statement shows the level of support that Zwingli's theology had from religious at this early stage, it does not necessarily connect to his specific Benedictine identity. Several abbots are also mentioned alongside many theologians and formal church representatives at the disputation. However, these monastic leaders join the crowd in silence when asked by Zwingli to cite scriptural sources for the mass, saintly intercession, and celibacy, each essential to their daily life and religious expression as monks. Their silence is not out of reverence for the debating space. Zwingli represented a real challenge to their Benedictine identity. Prompted by Zwingli, the Zürich Council promoted Protestant preaching in the Dominican convent of Oetenbach, eventually authorizing Zwingli to personally preach instead of the Dominican

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[42] Zwingli, 48. The abbot mentioned here is also the same abbot mentioned by the pope in Urk 14.04.1532. The abbot joined Zwingli after the disputations until the latter's death in 1532 and then returned to his original monastery, albeit without the position of abbot.
[43] Zwingli, 110.

priests who had previously done so.[44] If the Dominican friars, who were explicitly referenced as the "preaching brothers," could have such a fundamental part of their spirituality taken away, the abbots understood the serious challenge the disputations were to their observance.

Swiss Benedictines also interacted with early Protestant theology outside of their abbots and local city council. Switzerland also served as a starting point for many of the theologies of the "Radical Reformation" that rejected core tenants like infant baptism and hierarchical church structure. The most famous of these was the early Anabaptist movement, also known as the Swiss Brethren. This group directly intersected with monastic theology through the leadership of Michael Sattler, a former Benedictine prior who was instrumental in composing the first Anabaptist texts. The Schleitheim Articles, which Sattler headed the writing of, and the account of Sattler's martyrdom were pivotal in codifying Anabaptist structure in sixteenth-century Switzerland. These documents directly connect the emerging theology with monastic language and structure. Monastic language infused itself in the larger structure of the Swiss Brethren as well as the personal lives of members.

Michael Sattler was a prior at the Benedictine monastery of St. Peter's of the Black Forest in Southern Germany near the Swiss border. He left his monastic vows around 1525 and would spend the next few years of his life in Zürich and northern Switzerland eventually arriving in Schaffhausen in 1527 alongside other Anabaptist leaders. While the minutes of the meeting were lost, the resulting Schleitheim Articles

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[44] Campi, "The Reformation in Zurich," 78.

and Michael Sattler's leadership and theology in creating them are well attested to.[45] The Articles and Sattler's words at his trial are more than a personal statement of faith and directly reveal a deep sense of Benedictine community separate from the world and an imitation of Christ's meekness and submission.

Benedictine spirituality is grounded in the establishment of the monastery as a transformation of self apart from the world. The *Rule of St. Benedict* was the foundational text for the vast majority of western monks and would have been expected knowledge for a monk, especially a prior (second only to the abbot) like Sattler.[46] Reverence for the Rule was so deep that observance to it would form the basis of not just one, but two seismic breaks in the Benedictine order creating the Cistercian and Trappist religious orders (the latter of whose name was the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance, referencing the Rule). The Rule also describes the monk's relationship with the outside world as a process of surrender and removal. The fourth chapter contains a long list of "Instruments of Good Works" expected of a monk. While much of the list is dedicated to typical acts of Christian living, including helping the sick and not bearing false witness, there is also an emphasis on separation between the monk and the world. The monk is to "love fasting" and not seek after delicate living, leading a perpetually Lenten life "aloof from worldly actions."[47] The emphasis on removal from a sinful world is further elaborated within the Benedictine tradition by John Cassian, whose *Conferences* Benedict specifically mentions as a work to be read during meals as a means towards self-purity

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[45] Andrea Strübind, "The Swiss Anabaptists," in Burnett and Campi, *A Companion to the Swiss Reformation*, 415; Snyder, "Monastic Origins of Swiss Anabaptist Sectarianism," 9.
[46] John B Wickstrom, "Gregory the Great's 'Life of St. Benedict' And the Illustrations Of Abbot Desiderius II," *Studies in Iconography* 19 (1998): 61.
[47] D. Oswald Hunter Blair, trans., *The Rule of St. Benedict: Edited, with an English Translation and Explanatory Notes* (London: Sands & Co., 1907), 29–33. All citations of the Rule are taken from this book and will be noted as *RB* in further citations.

and an even deeper imitation of Jesus.[48] Like Benedict, Cassian's description of monastic life is defined through physical removals from the world, such as fasting and enclosure in the monastery. His work also establishes that the monastic enclosure is not an objective in itself but insofar as it "aids to perfection" and the Kingdom of Heaven, where the individual monk finds Christ.[49] The monk renounces worldly possessions and desires so that his soul is purified and not held back by the temporary and sinful parts of the fleshy world. The vocational journey of the Benedictine monk deeply connects their entrance into the monastic community with preparation for a new, spiritual world.

Sattler witnesses to his former Benedictine identity in his Anabaptist writings, expanding the monastic context to the larger church and doctrines of nonparticipation in government and rebaptism. The Swiss Brethren saw the world and church around them as fundamentally corrupt and beyond reforming. Thus, the only real response was to create a community apart from the fallen world to reflect their spiritual purity. This spiritual purity could only be found in an adult profession of faith and baptism, which was a "rebaptism" for many who had been baptized as infants. The writers of the Schleitheim Articles, most notably Michael Sattler, were aware of the danger this doctrine carried among the Lutheran and Zwinglian camps in Protestant Switzerland. The execution of Felix Manz, one of the founding Anabaptists, for heresy in Zürich in 1527 was undoubtedly fresh in their minds as they gathered in Schaffhausen.[50] The Articles do not apologize for their dissent from the other Christian denominations and the world at large, declaring that the world is made up of "two classes, good and bad, believing and

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[48] *RB*, 119.
[49] John Cassian, *The Conferences of John Cassian*, ed. Colm Luibhéid and E. Pichery (Philadelphia: Xlibris Corp., 2002), 8.
[50] Strübind, "The Swiss Anabaptists," 415.

unbelieving, darkness and light, the world and those who [have come] out of the world, God's temple and idols." The Articles go on to describe how this distinction is made in their physical actions, specifically avoiding traditional vices like gambling and drinking, as well as spiritual separation by not participating in non-Anabaptist church commitments and even government in general.[51] The distinction is not just between good/bad and belief/unbelief but the world as a whole and those who have come out of it. The effect of sin and depravity is so great that the individual Anabaptist cannot even be described as part of the world after they have entered into the spiritually purified church and Kingdom of God. Their nonparticipation in government similarly flows from this recognition of the Anabaptist and the church as outside of the world. The Anabaptist's citizenship is "in heaven" and the power of secular authority is inherently of the world and the sin within it. Further, participation in the world is inherently violent. The Articles continually refer to secular magistrates and their power as "the sword" and describe how an Anabaptist cannot be involved even if chosen since the very act of taking power is to hold it over others. These actions are all founded in a desire to mimic Jesus and the authors reference Jesus' meekness towards power and his words in Matthew 20:25.[52]

The emphasis on monastic removal from the world and distinction between the flesh and spirit is continued in Michael Sattler's martyrdom account. After publishing the Schleitheim Articles, Sattler was forced to flee Switzerland into Austria. It was only four months after the publishing of the Articles in February of 1527 that Sattler was captured and drowned in southern Germany. Sattler's words at his trial were so poignant and

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[51] J. C. Wenger, trans., "The Schleitheim Confession of Faith, 1527," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* XIX, no. 4 (October 1945): 247–53.

[52] "But Jesus summoned them and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt." (MT 20:25 NABRE)

connected to Anabaptist doctrine that the Swiss Brethren even placed them as an appendix to some editions of the Articles.[53] In his trial, Sattler's monastic past is brought up several times and he declares monasticism to be akin to the idolatry of the papacy. Several inflammatory statements follow and Sattler says that it was the "pomp, pride, usury, and great whoredom of the monks" that drove him to reconsider the "unchristian and perilous state" that his soul was in prior to his conversion.[54] Sattler's exit from monastic vows was also one of the charges brought against him and, when asked directly about his decision before his sentence, he answered that "according to the flesh I was a lord (prior), but it is better as it is."[55] Sattler calls specific attention to the "flesh" and earthly title that accompanied his time in the monastery and undercuts it with a simple retort that it was in the past. The language in the rest of Sattler's responses continue the dualistic and reinvention themes of his Anabaptist contemporaries, decrying the idolatry of earthly titles and spiritual deficiencies of other monks whose faith and baptism were fraudulent. The polarity found in the Schleitheim Articles continues in his replies at his execution, separating life in and out of the heretical monastery in addition to the spiritual separation from worldly power and life among the "citizenship of heaven."

The Schleitheim Articles lay out a theology of separation using language centered around "flesh" and "spiritual citizenship," both concepts that Sattler relates as pivotal in his own journey away from monasticism. These words are echoed in Benedictine spirituality through the list of "Instruments," even containing strikingly similar language

[53] George Huntston Williams and Angel M. Mergal, eds., *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, The Library of Christian Classics 25 (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 138.
[54] Williams and Mergal, 140–41.
[55] Williams and Mergal, 143.

against the "desires of the flesh."[56] Sattler notably uses the same language to describe his exit from monastic life, labeling the monastery as the very place of sin and darkness that the monks were designed to stand against. Because of these parallels, the connections between Michael Sattler and monastic theology go beyond common themes and into how monks understand community. The Anabaptists were explicit in their hatred of consecrated and monastic life and Sattler saw its traditions and structure as an idolatrous removal from God. Instead of a select few living out this separation from the world and purity of heart, Sattler and other Anabaptists envisioned the entire Christian church existing in that state of perfection. The monk was not needed because his life and connection to the spiritual world should be the life and connection that every Christian has to God. The monastic life had been tried and found wanting of the total dedication "to love the Lord God with the whole heart, the whole soul and the whole strength" that Benedict says empower everything a monk does.[57] Instead, Sattler's rejection of Benedictine structure is also rejection of the confines and traditions of the monastery and a continuation of its dualism and individual perfection into every person, not just chosen monks. The removal of the divine office, mass, and especially the Rule made sure that the Anabaptists did not reconstruct Benedictine life in a way identifiable to Benedict.[58] However, the Anabaptist theology laid out by Michael Sattler pushes the Christian purity developed within the monastery onto the everyday believer, showing that his conversion and subsequent theology cannot be removed from its distinctly Benedictine roots.

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[56] *RB*, 129.
[57] *RB*, 28.
[58] Snyder, "Monastic Origins of Swiss Anabaptist Sectarianism," 25.

The personal sin of monks and failure of Benedictine community that Sattler experienced in his priory is shared with other former monks, even ones that did not enter into Anabaptism with him. Nowhere were these theological concerns more present than in Ambrosius Blaurer. Born in Constance, on the German side of the eastern Swiss border, Ambrosius was deeply involved in the intellectual traditions of the day and joined a prominent Benedictine monastery in Bavaria and served as its prior and studied across Europe. However, after encountering Luther's teachings and presenting them to his monastic community, Ambrosius was called an apostate by his former brothers and he left the monastery in 1522, eventually finding his footing in Zwinglian circles around St. Gallen and Bern. It is during this period of transition and instability in his life that he directly describes his life in the monastery and the theological ideas that convinced him to leave. Ambrosius, in the mold of his contemporary reformers, was a prolific writer and engaged in extensive correspondence with his brother, Thomas Blaurer.[59] Ambrosius' description of leaving his former monastic and spiritual home is permeated with a profound sense of loss and pain. However, even in loss he is still animated in his desire for authentic Christian living. A key component of Ambrosius' letters on his monastic past are the moral failures among the monastic leadership and brothers. He specifically compares them to the Christian purity of Martin Luther and Zwingli and rejoices when he finds an egalitarian Christian community in his newfound Protestant faith.

Ambrosius' criticism of his former monastic brothers stresses the failure of monastic living on multiple levels, from charitable Christian community to the support of his personal prayer life. His letters contain vivid language regarding the spiritual

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[59] The letters have been transcribed from their original Latin. All translations for this document and later archival sources have by done by me.

discipline of other Christians. In describing his efforts to convert his fellow monks to his brother, Ambrosius says that the men have been permanently morphed by their adherence to traditions. In one vivid passage he says that, "fiercer are the morals of these men, than that they may be tamed by any care and duty of mine… where the truth has degenerated into a lie and Christ into a codex."[60] Not only are the morals of the professed brothers so physically disturbing (Ambrosius uses the Latin word *ferocia*, which is also used for wild animals, to describe their behavior) that they could not be reformed, but their spirituality restricted Christ and Christian living into a "codex" of rules and traditions. Ambrosius goes on to describe how the brothers tried to limit his access to the works that, "re-gave heart to my monastic traditions and constitutions and could keep them more alive."[61] In his view, the monastic vocation, from its liturgies to the relationships between the brothers, is self-defeating since it prevented the study that enlivened his prayer life in favor of empty traditions. Ambrosius' writings also contain a distinct desire for the scriptural living called for by Benedict, lamenting that the words of scripture were not being lived out. In one powerful letter, he cries out that he felt that "forbidden was Christ, who never shined clearer, never more delightful smiled, and is never more present than in

[60] Ambrosius Blaurer to Thomas Blaurer, September 10, 1523, in *Briefwechsel der Brüder Ambrosius und Thomas Blaurer, 1509-1548*, ed. Traugott Schiess, Vol. 1–3 (Freiburg: F.E Fehsenfeld, 1908), 83. "Ferociores enim esse istorum mores, quam ut ulla mea cura et officiosi- tate mansuescere possint, prasertim cum etiam et irregularis, ut vocant, illis videar adeoque opus habeam apostolica dispensatione, sic enim loquuntur, cuius beneficio fidelium communioni re- stituar, quam tunc certe impetrare perrecturus sim, ubi admissi facinoris me pcenituerit, hoc est ubi veritas in mendacium et Christus in cacode monem degeneraverit."

[61] Ambrosius Blaurer to Thomas Blaurer, July 25, 1522, in *Briefwechsel der Brüder Ambrosius und Thomas Blaurer, 1509-1548*, ed. Traugott Schiess, 47. "Quid enim aliud sperarem, cum spes meas illi, quas de se conceperam, fortiter eluderent et me a lectione earum literarum, qua animum monachicis traditionibus ac constitutiunculis ieiunum iam et exanguem vegetare rursus ac succulentiorem reddere poterant, arcerent? Discessi igitur Christi consilium sequutus, qui discipulos iubebat, ut ex ea civitate discederent, qua verbum suum non recepisset."

the divine letters [of St. Paul] and sent to us from heaven."[62] He further connects his longing to the monastic traditions he left, describing his desire to return to a spirituality away from "broken men and their most tenacious superstitions"[63]

Ambrosius further contrasts the personal holiness and common preaching of Luther with his monastic past while seeking the same goals that he desired in monastic living. Ambrosius' emphasis on Luther's preaching to the common masses is repeated by his brother, Thomas' writings,[64] who revels in the joy of celebrating a Protestant communion without fear of his sins stopping Christ from reaching them.[65] The description of open preaching and communion, both contrasting with the abstract preaching and heavy weight of sin that an academic like Ambrosius would have been familiar with, marks an interesting point of departure and continuity. Ambrosius is able to reinvent his spirituality outside of the confines of monastic tradition and spirituality, yet common living (which he continues with other early reformers after he leaves the monastery) and liturgical celebration of communion remain important parts of his life. Ambrosius' previous Benedictine identity can be seen as having a direct relationship with his theological development. Where the Rule stressed obedience, Ambrosius saw moral laxity and spiritual stagnation, if not outright blasphemy. Where the Rule saw beauty in

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[62] Ambrosius Blaurer to Theobald von Geroldseck, July 25, 1522, 49-50. "Interdictum erat lectione, qua fratreis monachos ab hominum traditionibus deterrere inque libertatem vere christianam adserere solebam, et ut semel dicam: Interdictum erat Christo, qui nusquam expressius relucet, nusquam gratius adridet, nusquam adestpræsentius quam in divinis illis et a se nobis e cœlo delatis literis."

[63] Ambrosius Blaurer to Johann von Botzheim, July 25, 1522, in *Briefwechsel der Brüder Ambrosius und Thomas Blaurer, 1509-1548*, ed. Traugott Schiess, 50. "Verum ubi spem meam sua pertinacia quotidie eluderent (ut est prafractum hoc hominum genus et sua superstitionis tenacissimum) et operam et impensam meam perditam viderem, satius esse duxi vel uni mihi consulere quam moras apud illos nectentem una cum illis (periculum enim erat) involvi."

[64] Thomas Blaurer to Johann von Botzheim, February 15, 1521, in *Briefwechsel der Brüder Ambrosius und Thomas Blaurer, 1509-1548*, ed. Traugott Schiess, 34.

[65] Ambrosius Blaurer to Thomas Blaurer, January 4, 1521, in *Briefwechsel der Brüder Ambrosius und Thomas Blaurer, 1509-1548*, ed. Traugott Schiess, 30.

tradition, Ambrosius saw a removal of authentic biblical foundations and encounter with the person of Jesus. In both of these areas, Ambrosius' Benedictine heritage informed his path to Protestant theologies that were able to reinvent and spiritually nourish the parts of his faith that languished in vowed life.

While many individual monks and even entire monasteries felt personally called to leave their stations, others remained in their faith even when the surrounding area converted. The Abbey of St. Gall held this unique distinction in its interactions with the neighboring town of St. Gallen, which initially grew around the monastery and converted during the Reformation. The abbey's situation was likewise complicated by their own canton's politics. Unlike the cantons of Zürich, Bern, and Basel. which were dominated by their titular city-republics, or the rural "forest cantons" of Swyz, Lucerne, Uri, and Unterwalden in central Switzerland, St. Gallen was closer to the prince-bishops and prince-abbots found in the Holy Roman Empire. The monastery had many connections to the papacy and was defined as a "Princely-Abbey" (*Fürstsabtei*) legally subject only to the Holy Roman Emperor instead of the Old Swiss Confederation, although the Swiss victory in the Swabian War made this distinction unenforceable. The town was not situated on a river or trade route, like cities in the cantons above, but was defined by its connection to the titular Abbey of St. Gall. This situation did not stop the city from growing, however, and the town's recent success led to significant tension with the monastery. The city gained autonomy from the monastery in 1457, but its territory was limited, and the monastery still controlled the rural land around the city and the abbot held authority as a prince-elector in the Holy Roman Empire. This divide between monastery and city expanded into direct conflict prior to the Reformation when the abbot

tried to move his personal residence from the monastery into the city walls in 1489-1490. The citizens responded with violence and destroyed the new buildings.[66]

The political and religious tensions from the Reformation were inextricably linked to Zürich. St. Gallen was an independent city and economically connected to the larger cities, especially Zürich, but was not a full member of the Swiss Confederacy at the time. The rise of Protestant challenges in Zürich had a dramatic influence on St. Gallen's own religious change. Several humanists and clergymen from St. Gallen attended the 1523 Zürich Disputation and brought back Protestant ideals with them. The city did not have a singular voice for reform like Zwingli in Zürich or Johannes Oecolampadius in Basel. Instead, the Reformation was initiated by several "Bible reading" groups led by laymen. These groups combined public readings of scriptures with sermons and Lutheran commentaries.[67] The abbot, for his part, formally complained to the St. Gallen city council about the new teachings. But his words were not heeded as the council did not ban Johannes Kessler, the most prominent of the "readers" and certainly someone known by the council, but instead his brother George Guegi, a Protestant pastor who did not even preach in St. Gallen.[68] The abbey eventually lost their fight in 1525 and the council not only permitted Bible readings and Lutheran sermons in public spaces and large guild halls but also within churches in the city. The council also undercut the abbey's influence by expanding these powers to churches it traditionally staffed.[69]

The abbey's own interactions with Protestant theology were most often recorded through the city council records. In numerous city meetings and letters, the monks

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[66] Snyder, "Communication and the People: The Case of Reformation St. Gall," 154–55.
[67] Snyder, "Communication and the People: The Case of Reformation St. Gall," 159.
[68] Snyder, "Communication and the People: The Case of Reformation St. Gall," 161.
[69] Sundar Henny, "Failed Reformations," 270.

engaged in a losing battle for their rights and properties within the city. These writings do not deal with their Benedictine identity, rather their position as a secular landowner surrounding the city and the only Catholic presence in the city. Communications during the period of Reformation within the city are thus limited and not very detailed outside of their political arguments. Even within a relatively quick and nonviolent Reformation – aside from some iconoclastic attacks on Catholic churches and assaults on monks outside of the monastery's walls in 1532[70] –the monastery was unable to change the tide. However, the abbey's ecclesiastical importance was substantiated by the Holy See. The Holy See still saw the abbey as important, and several papacies engaged in correspondences with abbots about the Reformation until the 1590s. These letters, even almost sixty years removed from events of the Reformation, still reference Reformation issues and implore the monastery to continue its work against the Protestants. Most importantly, these letters bring up the abbey's distinct Benedictine life and spirituality as a response to Reformation theology.

The abbey's particular spirituality was closely connected to its Benedictine roots of cloistered life and physical connection to the land around them. The famous "Plan of St. Gall" was created for the early monastic community in the ninth-century and displayed the ideal medieval monastic compound complete with a school and agricultural field within its walls. While the Plan was never fully built, it still reveals a community that identified its spirituality in traditional cloistered prayer and interacting with the nearby land through education and farming.[71] The St. Gallen community observed a strict separation of living and worship, building a wall around the community and maintaining

[70] Snyder, "Communication and the People: The Case Of Reformation St. Gall," 165.
[71] Danielle B Joyner, "A Savin Bush in the Cloister," 2023, 59.

monastic-only sections in accordance with the Rule, but also conducted itself as a steward of the land surrounding them. This particular understanding of Benedictine living became a theme in the monastery's spirituality that would continue throughout the Middle Ages as they developed into a Princely-Abbey and controlled the land around the city.[72]

Even before the official conversion of the city to Protestantism in 1525, the Abbey of St. Gall was engaged in conversations about their Benedictine role alongside the emerging Protestant community. Several letters sent between the papal court and inquisitors of Hadrian VI and the abbey in 1522 detail the challenges that the monastery faced as well as the uniquely Benedictine role they had in enforcing orthodoxy. The most prominent of these letters was sent in October of 1522, coinciding with the first public act against Catholic practices in the "Affair of the Sausages" and Zwingli's first publications. With such a close connection between the St. Gallen and Zürich regions and the failure of the church in Switzerland to stop Protestant ideas,[73] the abbey was one of the few Catholic institutions that the papacy could look to for support.

The October 1522 letter between the papacy and the abbey directly connects the abbey's local identity to the fight against Reformation theology. The letter starts with a typical condemnation of heretics as an affront to truth and the church. However, the Inquisition author continually references the physical connection the monastery has to the land around them in relationship to their correction of Protestant theology. The abbot of the monastery is called to address the spiritual care of the people like a shepherd would his sheep, so that "all heretical corruption be removed from the minds of men, and that

[72] Erich Bryner, "The Reformation in St. Gallen and Appenzell," in Burnett and Campi, *A Companion to the Swiss Reformation*, 242.
[73] Norman Birnbaum, "The Zwinglian Reformation in Zürich," *Past and Present* 15 (1959): 33.

the sheep be diligently brought back from wandering to the sheepfold of Dominic."[74] While shepherd imagery is not uncommon in reference to spiritual care, the control the monks of St. Gall had over the surrounding land is directly connected to their particular monastic vocation. The Plan of St. Gall described a monastery that was intimately connected to the land around it through farming and service to the local people. Continuing from the plan that bore their name, the medieval monastery of St. Gall may have served a city, but it was initially founded in a rural area and still maintained considerable control of the surrounding pastoral land. The letter's shepherd language brings this identification to the forefront and places it in conjunction with the imminent theological threat. The letter is even more explicit in connecting the physical boundaries of the monastery to its spiritual mission. The monastery's responsibility extends to all who "reside in the… jurisdiction of the aforementioned monastery," and "any other from any part of the country where heresy is unpunished," and even those who "come to you in your monastery." The letter is also specific that this jurisdiction includes every local person, whether they be layman or cleric, man or woman, religious or secular priest. The letter does limit their reach to Swiss people and not "Italians or Spaniards" who were under the Inquisition's authority.

The uniquely Benedictine response of the monastery towards Protestant theology is also emphasized in this letter. When describing how they should approach Protestants under their spiritual guidance, the abbey is told to assign each repentant heretic "a

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[74] Correspondence from Pope Adrian VI to Franz von Gaisberg, abbot of the monastery of St. Gall, 11 October 1522, Urk. B3 G1a, Stiftsarchiv St. Gallen, St. Gallen, Switzerland. "Nos, quibus in primis cordie est tut omnis haerectica pravitas et mentibus hominum tollatur, et oues ab errantes ad caulam Dominici gregis sedulo reducantur, cunctorumque Christifidelium saluti providem consulatur, ac summopere cupientes, ut sancta Catholica, et orthodoxa Fides ubique floreat et augeatur atque ut haereses, et errores facilius refellere, et confutare possis."

salutary penance as a mode of guilt… as you know to be expedient for the salvation."[75] There is a connection in this command between the penances assigned and the person assigning it, a monk. The penance given to the person serves to perfect them, a deeply Benedictine idea. Personal penance and sacrifice are exhorted within Benedictine tradition. Benedict himself calls monks to live their vows as a perpetual Lenten sacrifice from which they "wash away… the negligence of other times" and are thus better prepared to receive God.[76] Who else for a penitent heretic to go to than the people whose life has been spent in penance? Further, the monk's Benedictine life of penance is emphasized as a salve to those caught in the sway of Protestantism. In both their penitential knowledge and local focus, the Abbey of St. Gall's particular monastic vows are recognized and encouraged within the context of Protestant theology.

Other Benedictine monasteries around the Abbey of St. Gall were also involved in the broader theological challenges of the Reformation to their faith. Communication with these communities went beyond the focus of the Abbey of St. Gall yet still retained a distinct understanding of their Benedictine character. An April 1532 letter from a papal nuncio to Pfäfers Abbey, a suffragan monastery of the Abbey of St. Gall, describes the return of their former abbot, Johann Jakob, to the monastery after the death of Zwingli in

[75]Correspondence from Pope Adrian VI to Franz von Gaisberg, abbot of the monastery of St. Gall, 11 October 1522, Urk. B3 G1a, Stiftsarchiv St. Gallen, St. Gallen, Switzerland. "poentiotes quidem ab excommunienis suspensionis, et interdictium, aliusque ecclecis sententiums, censuris, et poenis, quas propter haereses et excesus habemus quinimmo incurrerint dum modo in Judicio delati, aut condemnati, aut in haereses, schisma, et errores elapse non fuerint (de quibus nihilominus sumus de noster Pape, seu sanctae Romanae, et univers alis Inquisitionis Officium consulatur) ac dommudo corde sincere et fide non fieta haereses, schisma, et errores suos detesu fuerint, anathematizauerint, et abiurauerint, ac in gremium Sanctae Matris Ecclesiae recipi et admitti bumiliter postulauerint atque praestito per eos oretenus iureuirando promiserint de cetero ab habemus haeresibus, schismatae, et erroribuac alius similibus excessibus penitus abstinere in forma ecclesiae consueta, iniuneta inde eis, et eorum cuilibet pro modo culpae poenitentia salutary, et alius iniungendis, prout eroum saluti expedire cognoueris, per te ipsum in utres Foro absoluere, et in gremium Sanctae Matris Ecclesiae recipere et reconcilare"

[76] *RB*, 135.

the Second War of Kappel and advises the monastery on its course. The letter opens with language that calls back to the iconoclastic violence that occurred during the Reformation in St. Gallen, describing the removal of Jakob's habit as equivalent to the "burning the images of the church" The letter is predictably critical of the abbot's former heretical beliefs and the nuncio gives his blessing that the abbot may return, but, outside of a refutation of Lutheran and Zwinglian views, he leaves the specific penance open for the monastery to decide. This is an important point as the nuncio recognizes the monastery's right to govern itself and decide punishment, reinforcing its communal autonomy. The sacramental character of the monastery's spirituality is also highlighted, as the nuncio mentions the importance of reintegrating him into "the life of the order and altar." As seen in Benedict's Rule, monastic life was ordered around liturgical prayer and the sacraments. The former abbot's return would necessarily mean entering into these prayers and sacraments, especially the Eucharist on the altar. In addition, his authority as an abbot is mentioned only in the past tense, indicating that any future he has in the monastery will not be as a leader, his presence at prayer and mass is expected as a condition of reentry.[77]

[77]Correspondence from Nuncio Ennius to Johann Jakob, abbot of the monastery of Pfäfers, 14 April 1532, Urk. 14.04.1532, Stiftsarchiv Pfäfers, St. Gallen, Switzerland. "Exposuit nobis nuper dilectus nobis in excerpo Joannes Jacobus Rusinger Abbas Sacri monasterium sanctae mariae virginis fabarientum ordinis sancti Benedicti curientum dio ex quod alias nescitum quo spectatu ductus relicto suo monastico habitu exuendo se fide christiona et induendo sectas luthērananem et zwinglianom comburendo imagines mi ecclesia seu ecclesius existentem, ob excestu et reatctum habemos iarrit excolecationem censuras ecclesias et irregularoritonem quapropter nobis humiliter supplicanuit ut eidem super his de absolutionis benefitio pater consulerm et opportunit deispensationis gratia prouidere de benignitate sedis apticae dignaremur. Nos Attendentum sedem Aptieam cuius legationis siue conmissionis offitio fungimur Recirrentbus ad eam post excessuim cum humilitate personis gremium hanid claudere soleres Discretiom uren authoritate aposalica qua per lyras einsdem sedis sufficienti facultate mumti fungimur mi hac parrte tenore pontium conmittimmus et Mandamus quitis si est ita et abuirata prius per upsum habet heresy ac reassumpto habita sue religionis upsum Ionem Jacobui si id hamiliter petierit ab apostasie reatu habet et sectis luterna et Zwingliana predictis exconicatione aliusque ecclesiasticis sententius censuris et perris a iure uel ab hominum quanis occasionum uel causa latis et premissorum occasionum quibus aicque abbius quomodolibet innoatum et quomodocumque contractum et propterea per enim mi currsis hac uiae duntaxat

The language in the letters connects with the community focus of the St. Gallen monastery and Benedictine life in general. The same “Instruments of Good Works” in the Rule includes the sacraments and daily conversion of life as the defining features of community life.[78] Even for a brother who has fallen away in a situation as serious as Pfäfers’ former abbot, his daily life and sacramental participation are still at the forefront of the conversation of re-involving him in community life. The Protestant life that he led before was not only defined by the brothers by the lack of orthodox beliefs or habit, but also by his lack of sacramental life and liturgical prayer. Involving him in both was just as essential in “purifying” him as his written refutation of Zwingli. Likewise, the monastery’s discretion to assign penance to the former abbot highlights its individual autonomy and self-governance.

“Pilgrims and Strangers in This World:” Franciscans Encountering Protestantism

Franciscans live in radical contrast to Benedictines. While Benedictine life revolved around stability within the monastery, liturgical adherence, and service to the immediate area, Franciscans saw their vocation in their commitment to apostolic living, personal poverty, and service to the poor. Particularly inspired by the person of Saint Francis who founded the order and became its namesake, Franciscans thought of themselves as a movement that sought out Christian joy through simplicity.[79] Franciscan

in forma ecclesie adsueta absoluatis minuetis uide sibi pro modo culpa pemtemia salutary et abius de vire m irigendis et demum super ireegularitate premissos occasionare per eun quomodolibet adtractam quodque suseeptis per eum vite etionem salvis et potratus ordinibus etiam m altaris ministerio uti libere et hicite ac dicit sacrium monasteriun suum somete morrie virginissaborrientem ordinis sancti Benedicti curentem dioces et ahala benefitia ecclesiea cannonice abtenta et sui ordinis obtiminda recipere et quodnixerit retinerium possit et valeat orem ab eo irregularitatis et in fommie moleulan siue notrum premissolf occasionum adtractam”

[78] *RB*, 129.

[79] Lázaro De Aspurz-Iriarte, *The Franciscan Calling* (Chicago: Franciscan Harold Press, 1974), 11.

lives were part of a new vocation that pushed monastic living into the streets, all centered on the life of their founder St. Francis and, by extension, Jesus. While Franciscan spirituality was initially defined through literally following St. Francis, his way of life was also codified in the *Rule of St. Francis* in 1221. However, the order's unity had waned over the following centuries and Franciscans found themselves facing a dramatic showdown over the interpretation of the Rule on the eve of the Reformation. Broadly separated into Conventual and Observant factions, these two groups had intense disagreements over the handling of money, which was expressly forbidden in the Rule, but had become a practical handicap for their religious ministries, and how involved Franciscans should be with academic and clerical institutions instead of their traditional work among the poor. The Observant friars, who became the majority in Italy, France, and Spain, developed a stricter interpretation of poverty and life away from the larger, urban friaries of the Conventuals, who were dominant in Germany and Switzerland.[80] The split in interpretation intensified in the fifteenth-century and would only be solved with an official decree by Pope Leo X in 1517 splitting the order in two.

Franciscans within Switzerland also entered the Reformation with debates over their fundamental identity. The traditional Reformation criticisms of moral laxity within orders were also leveled against Franciscans. The Franciscan friary in Basel, for example, was accused of hypocrisy for begging while also engaging in renting and selling property across the city. While the extent that these deals made their lives ones of luxury rather than poverty has been debated among historians like Paul Nyhus,[81] the precarious

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[80] Bert Roest, "Franciscans Between Observance and Reformation: The Low Countries (ca. 1400-1600)," *Franciscan Studies* 63, no. 1 (2005): 413–14.
[81] Nyhus, 7.

position of Franciscan in Switzerland added local distrust on top of the increasing institutional discord about their purpose. The order's commitment to their own ecclesiastical members also put stress on their relationship with city councils and some bishops. In a theological dispute between a bishop residing in Basel and the papacy in 1482, the Franciscan convent sided with the pope, going so far as to be the only local religious order to follow the pope's command to shut off spiritual services to locals. Eventually the dispute was resolved when the offending bishop was imprisoned and took his own life, but their actions demonstrated a devotion to the institutional church that often intersected with local political and religious figures.[82]

Faced with an evolving understanding of their core ideals and a relationship with the church that put them at between the papacy and local government, it is little wonder that Franciscans spoke up in the earliest debates involving Protestant theology in Switzerland. Some of the first voices from religious during the first Zürich Disputation come from Franciscans unhappy with the local church's efforts. After hearing Zwingli's arguments against the mass and the saints, a Franciscan friar named Sebastian Hoffmeister spoke up in support of the new doctrine, saying that they were scripturally sound since "there was no one there who could bring forward, upon frequent requests, anything more from the Scriptures." He also described how his faith in the institutional church had also been shaken because of its failure to uphold faithful doctrines. Hoffmeister called specific attention to his removal from public ministry in the city of Lucerne upon preaching against saintly intercession. After seeing the bishop's representative "pretending" to have found verses to affirm Catholic teaching and boasting

[82] Nyhus, 9.

of imprisoning a similar priest accused of heresy in the disputation, Hoffmeister went to the side of the reformers, accepting the cries of heresy "with many thanks."[83] The feeling of spiritual discovery and disappointment with the church are repeated soon after in the disputation by another Franciscan friar named Sebastian Meyer. Meyer attended both the first and second disputations in Zürich and spoke at several points, using language that is distinctly Franciscan. When voicing support for Zwingli, Meyer connected the plight and spiritual revelation of the reformers to the early church and the marginalized that Jesus revealed himself to, extolling them to "remember that God has always by means of the smallest and weakest caused His divine word and will to appear in the world." Meyer finishes his interjection by referring directly to his role as a lector among the brothers in Bern, not a public preacher.[84]

While it is not particularly unusual for reformers to draw explicit connections between their revelation and that of the early church, Hoffmeister and Meyer express their interaction with Protestant theology through their vowed life. For Hoffmeister, the failure of ecclesiastical authorities to address the scriptural proofs of the Reformation added onto an already existing personal distrust. He declares that he was faithful and honorable in his vows, but the bishops and wider church had not been. Franciscan life is centered on lowliness but also contained a strong emphasis on obedience both towards God and the broader church. While we have to take Hoffmeister at his word that his vows were truly an integral part of his life, his few words at the end directed at the bishop seem intensely personal within the broader context of the transcript. Hoffmeister's initial statements of support had been cut off by the bishop's representative who said that he had

[83] Zwingli, 79.
[84] Zwingli, 88–89.

broken his promises to the bishop and the church and was no better than "a reed in the wind."[85] Meyer's testimony also reveals a deeply Franciscan mindset. Meyer purposefully identifies the reform movement with the "smallest and weakest," and later explicitly identifies himself as a lector in his community, not an esteemed preacher or representative of the cathedral like the other authorities present. The importance of identifying with the marginalized and "smallest" is a pillar of Franciscan thought[86] and Meyer's inclusion of his station among the brothers and clear separation from the bishop at the end of his speech is indicative of an approach to Zwingli's theology that is rooted in his Franciscan heritage yet also aware of conflicts within the church.

Following the dramatic end of the first disputation, where the Catholic authorities were found theologically lacking, there was a period of instability and violence towards traditional Catholic institutions. The anti-ecclesial voices within the first disputation provoked an intense public debate, and even led to several instances of iconoclastic violence and looting in surrounding Catholic churches.[87] As the Zürich City Council had previously stepped in with the city's Dominican convent of Oetenbach, taking ecclesiastical decisions that were normally reserved for the bishop, the city called for a second disputation to settle the debate. The disputation's anti-Catholic lean was already pronounced prior to any opening arguments. The summons sent to local clergy called for their appearance so that, "the Evangelical doctrine and the truth of the sacred scriptures," may be better elaborated on, with "Evangelical" being another word for Zwinglian Protestants. The letter clarifies that the strife between Catholic and Protestant factions

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[85] Zwingli, 88.
[86] Geoffrey Dipple, *"Just as in the Time of the Apostles": Uses of History in the Radical Reformation* (Kitchener: Pandora Press, 2005), 33.
[87] Campi, "The Reformation in Zurich," 75.

necessitated another disputation but only describes the Protestant argument fully, stating that "indeed while one tries to retain the former doctrine, another thinks that the people of Christ [the Church] were previously too maliciously and fraudulently instituted."[88] The Catholic stance is only identified with a few words as the "former doctrine" while the Protestants are able to ascribe "malice" and "fraud" to their Catholic rivals. The second disputation would occur ten months later from October 26-28, 1523. Franciscans would still play key roles in the reform faction and the words of Sebastian Hoffmeister would introduce the debate on October 26th. In his opening speech, he praised the insight and truth of the reformers' theology regarding icons, a theological topic that he lost his previous position as preacher over. Hoffmeister even doubles down on his scriptural appeals, having expressed his disappointment with the Church's failure to present scriptural or pastoral support for him, removing him from his preaching post; he cites scripture extensively in his remarks and even ends them with a final call for the assembled to "bring forth the Scriptures and reserve his comments to his own genius."[89]

Franciscan reflections on Protestant theology were not limited to official disputations. Conrad Pellican's reflections on his own life as a Franciscan friar and academic in Bern prior to his conversion reveal another approach towards leaving

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[88] Kidd, *Documents Illustrative of the Continental Reformation*, 427. "Non ignoratis quidem ut Evangelical doctrina et sacrae scripturae veritas hoc saeculo nostro clarius sese proferat, et purius quam antehac factum sit praedicetur. Quae res apud imperiots et rerum rudes homines multum contentionis et dissidii parere consuevit; dum videlicet alius quidem pristinam doctrinam retinere conatur, alius vero christi populum antehac nimis maligne et fraudulenter institutum esse existimat. Quum vero intra anni spatium omnibus, qui in ditione nostra agunt ecclesiarum ministris in publicam synodum convocatis per nos iniunctum simul et praeceptum sit, ne qui vel in urbe vel in agro nostro praedicent, quam quod S.S. testimoniis approbari et defendi queat."

[89] Kidd, 429. "Quoniam Leo confrater meus dilectus planissimum Scripturae locum prouxit, quo luce clarius docetur, etiamsi nullos alios praeter hunc unicum haberemus, imagines in Christiano populo, in templis maxime, nequaquam ferendas (domi, si quis volet, vel plaustra simulacris onusta habeat!) nec modo non adorandas esse sed nec haberi nec pingi aut fingi debere: necesse erit, ut qui simulacra tueri conetur, divina Scripturae testimoniis illa servari aut retineri ergo his contradicendum esse putarit, Scripturas proferat et sui ingenii commenta sibi reservet!"

religious life that is likewise dramatically connected to aspects of his Franciscan past. Unlike contemporary converts such as Ambrosius Blaurer or Michael Sattler, Pellican[90] does not point to the failure of Christian fraternity or personal moral failures within the monastery as incentivizing his conversion. Instead, he describes his conversion through incremental scholastic growth and questioning of Catholic doctrines, first harboring doubts after agreeing with of Martin Luther's 1516 writings against Purgatory and ultimately receiving the inspiration to leave religious life from Zwingli in 1526. Pellican is unique among Reformation writers in that his writing spends a great deal of time not just chronicling the individuals moments of his life or points of theological departure but also commenting the emotional impact of his conversion. The emotion of his reflection is felt in the first page, where he dedicates his work to his son, Samuel, so that he may not only "have the fear of God" but also read about the family legacy which, to Pellican's sorrow, "has been denied me: the history of your ancestors, their origins, pursuits, places of residence, and fortunes, not only as instruction, admonition, and an example in virtue to you."[91] Samuel and his younger brother, Conrad, continue to come up throughout Pellican's work, giving the author space to personally explain his motives. Pellican starts off his *Chronicle* by noting how firmly ingrained in the church and Franciscan thought his pre-conversion life was. Growing up in a very poor household and attending a boy's school, Pellican was bitten by the academic bug early and would borrow books from the

[90] While he was born Conrad Kürsner, he latinized his name to Conrad Pellicanus in the style of other humanists when he began his academic career. His name is most often displayed in the German form as Konrad Pellikan or anglicized as Conrad Pellican. The anglicized form is used in the most recent English translation of his *Chronicle* and will be the one I use for this paper.
[91] Frederick Christian Ahrens, "The Chronicle of Conrad Pellican 1478-1556/ Translated from the Latin Manuscript (Zentralbibliothek Zurich A. 158) and Provided with an Introduction and Notes," (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1950). 1–2. Conrad Pellican and the Franciscan communities in Switzerland belonged to the Conventual faction.

brothers at a local Franciscan monastery, eventually spending more and more time with them until he joined at the age of twelve. The particular way of life of the brothers did not seem to be something that weighed on the mind of the young Pellican, and he describes his parent's opinion as grateful since his only other alternative was to become a beggar while studying.[92] He quickly inserted himself into the order's leadership after his vows. He was chosen to travel to Rome amid the official split between the Conventual and Observant branches of Order in 1517 and was named the theological instructor to the friary in Basel, all by the age of 24.[93] In keeping with a long line of Franciscan scholarship, Pellican also studied and worked as a prominent Hebrew scholar and humanist in the order's schools.

Upon joining the friars, Pellican remarked on his appreciation of the personal life in the monastery and how he was instructed and treated "kindly and … faithfully," especially when stricken with the plague in his first year with the brothers.[94] His positive feelings are still present, albeit with some trepidation and appeals to God, upon his promotion to Basel, saying that he was progressing in his spiritual life, though "hardly in accordance with my hopes."[95] His entrance into Bern also served as a point where reflections on his fellow friars and their communal life also began to show his greater skepticism and reference to the Franciscan Rule. In contrast to his tepid entrance into the monastery, Pellican's comments on the Rule and Franciscan life become more present in his writings as his questions towards his faith and vocation increase.

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[92] Ahrens, 21–22.
[93] Ahrens, 56.
[94] Ahrens, 23–24.
[95] Ahrens, 42.

After many years serving as a guardian in communities in Switzerland and noting his support of Martin Luther's theses in a general conference with other brothers,[96] Pellican was accused of heresy at a regional meeting. In response, he wrote several letters to Franciscan leadership between the years of 1523 and 1526 defending the teachings of Luther and, at least initially, the orthodoxy of his faith. The letters use distinctly Franciscan concepts of poverty and the apostalic-living. In his first letter, written in 1523 against the first accusations of heresy, Pellican refrains from a total commitment to Protestant doctrine while keeping Gospel-centric language, a hallmark of both Lutheran and Franciscan theology, at the forefront. In describing his stance, he clarifies that he is dedicated to the church, but says that he will follow the "decision of pious, learned, modest, and faithful men, who despise worldly things and venerate only the Word of God, … for the glory of God, the advancement of the Gospel and pious living."[97] As opposed to the men who do not have the Christian qualities he listed, Pellican is particular that his faith that is centered on God's glory and a Gospel-centered life, both phrases that are connected to the Rule and Franciscan life in general.

The language of Gospel witness and spirituality that Pellican uses in the letter is also found within the Franciscan Rule. The *Rule of St. Francis* places such an emphasis on living out the Gospel that its opening statement reads, "The Rule and Life of the Friars Minor is this, namely, to observe the Gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ."[98] The idea of living like the earliest church forms the source and goal of Christian living in both Pellican's writings and the Rule. Even under accusations from other brothers and

[96] Ahrens, 144–45.
[97] Ahrens, 183.
[98] Celsus O'Brien, *The Rule of the Friars Minor: A Brief Commentary* (Dublin, Ireland: Assisi Press, 1954), 20.

questioning of his own faith, Pellican still relies on it to determines whether the decisions made by the brothers and the church are spiritually true. In the same letter, he directly comments on the place of the Rule within the order, speaking against the importance placed on vows over their intended message of charity. He says that he tried to "console them [the brothers under his watch] with the others by means of the Holy Scriptures and exhort them to serve God with a free conscience according to the Gospel as professed in the Rule of the Order; I did not wish the obligations of vows to be regarded as highly as the command of God, the sum and purpose of which is charity." Further, he even proposes the order move all suspected Lutheran brothers to his convent and remove their "persecutors" to other friaries so that peace within the houses can be reached.[99] The Rule still plays a large role in how he understands his Christian obligations though he pushes against them in favor of a deeper reverence for fraternal love and God. In his perspective, the ultimate end of Franciscan spirituality is giving oneself totally to God and the removal of worldly connections, both goals that he maintains even as he begins his journey away from the order. There is precedent for this within Franciscan Rule and spirituality as well. The emphasis on apostolic living within the Franciscan Rule is not just limited to material poverty, but extends into personal reflections. The Rule calls for the brothers to be "as pilgrims and strangers in this world," materially separated from the world by begging for money and food, and also inwardly experiencing separation and isolation.[100]

Pellican is even more confrontational towards the Rule in his second letter to his superiors. Written in 1526, only a few months before he would leave his post at Basel and

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[99] Ahrens, 192.
[100] O'Brian, 4.

convert in Zürich, his second and final letter before leaving the brotherhood directly references the person of St. Francis and the failure of the order to reflect the apostolic living and charity. In this extremely personal rebuke, Pellican returns to his son Samuel and his younger brother, Conrad, in an aside, clarifying his desire not to attack the church in an "act of bad faith."[101] Much like the previous part of his *Chronicle*, Pellican grieves at the distrust that his brothers and superiors have in him, noting that he had "loved the brothers and the Order and have always loved them, although I am now loved little." Pellican still reiterates his desire to remain within the order, claiming that he will, "live not only as is pleasing to our Lord Jesus Christ, if He grant me grace thereto, but also to St. Francis," however this life will also be "without any privileges from the Roman See and without useless or pernicious human traditions."[102] Pellican draws a line between the order and the church, preferring the life of St. Francis but not the traditions of the church. Similarly, Pellican saw the order's reliance on worldly institutions as a sign of their failure in fully following Christ. Pellican was present for the 1517 general convocation that resulted in the separation between Conventual and Observant factions, a debate that represented the crux of arguments about how strictly to interpret the Rule, so discussions about laxity were very familiar to him. He references this laxity, challenging the friars who disagree with his study of Lutheran and Zwinglian writings to "hold fast to your papal privileges and invoke them contrary to the testament of St. Francis, defend the institutions of the Roman See, and live in idleness only by begging."[103] The Rule, "or testament," as Pellican calls it here, is held above the objective of the order. It is the

[101] Ahrens, 198.
[102] Ahrens, 203–4.
[103] Ahrens, 205.

order's focus on broader institutions and finding legalistic exceptions to true Franciscan and Gospel living that drives them away from the directives of their saintly founder. Instead of begging like "pilgrims and strangers," the brothers pervert their poverty through their desires and make themselves slothful.

Pellican's final departure from the friars and religious life is similarly rooted in this desire to follow the example of St. Francis more directly, even outside of an explicitly monastic context. After his second letter, Pellican entered into regular communication with Zwingli and other Reformation leaders, eventually accepting an invitation to join them in Zürich as a Hebrew teacher. After a few months among them and at the prompting of Zwingli, he, "laid aside my cowl, all by myself, and put on these worldly clothes, not without a great feeling of strangeness, but without any hesitation of conscience." While the act of taking off the habit is probably the most distinctive rejection of monastic life, Franciscan spirituality concerning poverty was deeply connected to dramatic physical acts, such as not wearing shoes or even touching money.[104] It is also striking that in the moments after removing the habit, he is given several coins with St. Francis' face imprinted on them[105] and he reflects on Francis and what his new life, symbolized through the handling of money, really means. Pellican never regarded the Rule above his Christian duties, and he makes a point in his letters to call out brothers whom he saw as making an idol of them above God so his handling of money does not seem to have the same weight as his external wearing of the habit.

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[104] O'Brien, 30–35.

[105] The coin Pellican sees appears to be a gold coin minted by the Italian Duchy of Mirandola in the 1520's. At the time, Zürich was nominally part of the Holy Roman Empire and involved in trade routes between Italy and Germany so a coin of an Italian city within the Holy Roman Empire is possible. See Lucia Travaini, "San Francesco Nella Ricerca Numismatica: Iconografia, e Non Solo," in *Francesco Da Assisi: Storia, Arte, Mito*, eds. Marina Benedetti and Tomaso Subini (Roma: Carocci editore, 2019). See also Figure #1 in the Appendix for an image of the coin.

Instead of seeking to cast out his past and leave it all behind him, he took the sight of St. Francis in the coins, "as an omen that the good St. Francis did not abhor me for changing my habit. He also did not despise gold, although he was loved and blessed by God; for it is more blessed to give than to receive, more blessed to work than to be idle, and more blessed to do good than to be in want."[106] Even when leaving the order he had known most of his life, Pellican continues to look back to the person of St. Francis and Franciscan spirituality. When he takes up the money at the end, he directly justifies himself through St. Francis; almost seeming to apologize for leaving and appealing for the saint's confirmation of his choice. In the dramatic final few lines, Pellican reiterates a traditional Franciscan understanding of work and poverty, focusing on the giving of self through work.

These lines are also completed with a rejection of total poverty. Rather than praising the 'want' of extreme poverty and identification with the poor, Pellican says that it is simply to do good that is more blessed and holy. His final words, specifically his exhortations of the blessedness of giving over receiving, working rather than idleness, and doing good to wanting, echo the writings of Blessed Giles of Assisi, an influential early Franciscan. The records of his life and preaching, compiled into a 13th century collection titled *The Golden Sayings of Brother Giles*, highlight many of the same iconic Franciscan ideals of service and faith and uses the same "blessing" structure: "Blessed is he who loveth and doth not therefore desire to be loved; blessed is he who feareth and doth not therefore desire to be feared; blessed is he who serveth and doth not therefore desire to be served; blessed is he who behaveth well toward others and doth not desire

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[106]Ahrens, 222.

that others behave well toward him."[107] Through allusions to his Franciscan forefathers and direct references to St. Francis, Pellican's spiritual past is not rejected out of hand but is a pivotal part of his theological grappling and rationalization against Catholicism.

Reflections on Franciscan life alongside Protestant theology were not limited to those who converted or even to male experiences. Franciscan spirituality has a deep history of female involement and their unique places within consecrated life. As St. Francis' original companions formed the first Franciscan groups of friars based on his life, so too did women with St. Clare, a close friend and spiritual companion to Francis. These women, known as "Poor Clares," had a spirituality was very similar their male counterparts, emphasizing the personal poverty, service to the poor, and living out the Gospel message, but deviated in several key points. The sisters brought a cloistered and penetential character to their expression of Franciscan life. Though they lived in cloistered convents, Franciscan women were "sisters," not nuns like female Benedictines, and their recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours was to be intentionally plain in order to participate in the "privilage of poverty" that Jesus had, all accompanied by very strict fasting requirements. These requirements also expanded in some communities into self-mortification like flagellation and hair shirts.[108] Their convents were also cloistered away from outside visitors and they were forbidden from owning excessive land around the

[107] Giles of Assisi, *The Golden Sayings of the Blessed Brother Giles of Assisi*, trans. Rev. Fr. Paschal Robinson (Philadelphia, PA: Dolphin Press, 1907), 5. This is also thought to be the basis of the well-known "Prayer of St. Francis."
[108] Joan Mueller, *The Privilege of Poverty: Clare of Assisi, Agnes of Prague, and the Struggle for a Franciscan Rule for Women* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 114–16. It is also worth mentioning that de Jussie's convent was part of the Colettine Poor Clares, a reform branch established in the early 1400s which emphasized more intense poverty.

physical buildings they lived and prayed in, making them unable to become feudal landlords like other cloistered orders.[109]

The Poor Clare convents, unlike their Francsican brothers, were not involved in centuries-long debates over the Rule. This ascetic and cloistered life carried into Switzerland in much the same way as the rest of medieval Europe, making its way to Geneva when a small group of women who took vows and established the Convent of Saint Clare in 1473.[110] One of the sisters in the convent, was Jeanne de Jussie who wrote a *Short Chronicle* to describe the beginning of the Reformation in Geneva and the convent's eventual relocation to France. De Jussie's account provides an interesting take on the Reformation, presenting a remarkably thorough description and commentary of the events before the Reformation in Geneva, all leading up to an attack on her community and their escape to France. The document carries with it the obvious biases of a Catholic religious communtiy that was forced out of their home and into a foreign land and de Jussie takes a strong moral position in her description of events. She describes the hostility from both the increasingly Protestant City Council (which overthrew the previous prince-bishop) and population, with Reformed ministers and family members visiting them and denouncing Catholic doctrine. The sections are broken down by months

[109] Mueller, 117.
[110] The city of Geneva operates in an uncomfortable position within the medieval history of Switzerland. Geneva has traditionally been an integral part of Swiss histories, operating as an independent city-state with a unique territorial relationship with the counts of Savoy, but maintaining membership in the Old Confederacy as an "associate canton" through a close relationship with Bern. The emergence of John Calvin and Reformed theology in the city only a few years after the death of Zwingli has been seen as a continuation of the broader Swiss Reformation rather than an original event. (see Bruce Gordon, "The Swiss," in Reformation and Early Modern Europe: A Guide to Research, (ed.) David M. Whitford (Kirksville, mo.: Truman State University Press, 2008), 309–27). However, more recent historians like Amy Nelson Burnett and Emidio Campi have argued that the canton does not work it as a model of Swiss reform, pointing to their lack of complete cantonal status until the development of the current Swiss Confederacy in the 19th century and its relatively late adoption of the Reformation.

or specific events, functioning like a diary of sorts, as she describes the events and offers commentary with biblical and theological allusions to their struggle. It is clear in de Jussie's description of events that the theological beliefs and heritage of her convent are at the forefront of her mind when interacting with Protestants. The actions of Protestants, such as the washing of clothes on feast days[111] and their arguments against monastic and celibate life, often within the context of Protestant sermons mandated by the city council,[112] are described as profane, different from her Catholic heritage and therefore wrong. De Jussie also uses charged language and moments of divine intervention to further this theological separation, describing the "treasonous" and "heretical" nature of fellow Franciscans who left their habit,[113] Eucharistic miracles,[114] and even spontaneous death for blasphemous actions by Protestants.[115] Even though the Reformation and Catholic positions are not set against each other in the terms of a debate, there is theological tension with every action that the sisters took, whether explicitly compared to their Protestant neighbors or within their walls. It was not the political violence, which constituted an unfortunate reality for life during the Reformation, but theological change that was the chief concern for the sisters.

This intense theological struggle became intimately tied to monastic identity within a community that still believed in their vows. For de Jussie and her convent, continuing their lives and traditions as cloistered Franciscan religious was an essential part of their Catholic faith. During a period of religious violence in Geneva, punctuated

[111] Jussie, 103.
[112] Jussie, 130.
[113] Jussie, 102.
[114] Jussie, 113.
[115] Jussie, 102.

by looting and destruction of local monasteries by Bernese Protestant forces, the community could only "watch for them [the Protestants] every night, praying to God for the holy religion and for the poor world, and they all disciplined themselves after matins and asked God for mercy."[116] In describing a moment of desperation and fear, de Jussie points to their liturgical and devotional life as Poor Clares. They gather to pray the Divine Office of Matins and engage in "discipline," an allusion to self-mortification, both distinctive parts of monastic and Franciscan spirituality, when confronted by an immanent Protestant threat. The community does not just continue in their lifestyle of liturgical prayer and communal life that Reformed theology opposed, but leans even more into it. In de Jussie's community, Protestant theology served as an impetus to enter deeper into their spirituality and further demonstrate their Catholic identity.

De Jussie's reaction to conversions in other religious communities also demonstrates the threat that Reformation theology brought to the sisters' vocational security. De Jussie, as is typical, does not mince words when describing Martin Luther's past as an Augustinian friar. In her eyes, the "pestiferous dragon," lacking respect for his own vocation, saw fit to hunt out and confuse those in religious vocations as well, spreading his lies against the holy practices of celibacy and monastic community.[117] For a monk to not only fall in his own vocation, but bring others into error with him, is a damnable offense for de Jussie. De Jussie goes on to lament the downfall of other congregations, whose members have been misled by Protestantism and abandoned a holy way of life. However, de Jussie also takes pride in her own community's religious purity, stating that:

[116] Jussie, 54.
[117] Jussie, 62.

> There were perversions among all the orders of the world, except among the nuns of Madame Saint Clare of the Reformation of the Blessed Colette, where not a single nun was ever perverted or unfaithful, except for one who had not entered the convent through the proper door of good intentions, but by feigned and wicked hypocrisy. She was not truly worthy of Our Lord and was easily led astray and removed from the order and convent in Geneva.[118]

The sister, later revealed to be the same sister Blaisine Varembert that appealed to the newly Protestant authorities to shut down the convent, is not even identified as a member of the convent following her betrayal and de Jussie avoids mentioning her by name for most of the book, calling her the "apostate" and at one point introducing her as a "woman filled with the poison of malice, the miserable apostate."[119]

Similarly, the convent guides Protestant reverts back to the cloth with explicitly Catholic traditions. De Jussie tells of a fellow Franciscan who came to the sisters for guidance after regretting his public departure from religious life. The sisters took him in with pity and generosity but also referred the former friar the convent's father confessor who "did his duty to correct him" and "give him a very good lecture and… general absolution." The sisters rejoice in his return, but are quick to remind him of the falseness of the teachings he had followed as well as refer him to the sacraments (absolution) and authority of the church (a lecture from the confessor) before allowing him to return fully to religious life and put back on the habit.[120] Even though the formal instruction and sacraments are reserved for their priest, the sisters still receive the person with distinctive

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[118] Jussie, 62. The phrase "of the Reformation of the Blessed Colette" refer to the convent's Colettine origins.
[119] Jussie, 132.
[120] Jussie, 103-104.

Franciscan charity that treats all "lovingly and kindly."[121] The sisters' witness was so powerful that the newly absolved friar, ministering in France several months later, wrote the convent thanking them, "for their kindness in helping him in his salvation."[122] Even in moments of redemption, the specter of Protestant theology looms over the sisters, and they must look again towards their monastic vocation and Catholic identity to fully accept others.

The sisters' arrival in Annecy, in modern-day France under the protection of the Catholic Duke of Savoy, also utilized distinctly Franciscan actions. After being received by the Duke and receiving a simple meal in the morning, the sisters arrived at their new convent, prostrated themselves in the choir, and sang a *Salve Regina* in thanks. Later that day, they visited two other monasteries, saying vespers with those communities and singing a *De Profundis* and another *Salve*. Their *Salve* in one monastery was so powerful that another miracle occurred in their midst, bringing a stillborn baby back to life. After returning to their new monastery, from which "they never left again," de Jussie emphasizes the harshness of the conditions within the monastery, including the "very sharp and jagged stones" that littered the floor of the kitchen and their prickly straw beds, both extreme discomforts for Poor Clares who normally went barefoot. However, their monastic life still serves as the ground for their life and de Jussie makes a point to end her description of the monastery by mentioning their devotion to their prayers as "the Divine Office has been said in the convent day and night ever since then, until today, in all piety and reverence."[123] The prayers and simple living that typified Poor Clare spirituality

[121] O'Brian, 7.
[122] Jussie, 104
[123] Jussie, 484- 485.

continued in their new life in the convent in Annecy. From emphasizing their cloistered status to their penitential new surroundings to the inclusion of the divine office, de Jussie and her convent's as first acts in their new home intentionally reaffirm the cloister, penance, and prayer that comprised their spirituality.

Conclusion: Counter-Reformation and Continuing Reform

The departure of de Jussie's convent in 1535 corresponded with the end of the most dangerous era for Swiss monasteries. The areas that experienced the most aggressive anti-monastic movements, Zürich, Bern, Basel, and Geneva, had each shut down local monasteries soon after their conversions, like the Fraumünster in Zürich after the second disputation, or had allowed them to relocate to Catholic areas after an uneasy peace, like the Poor Clares of Geneva. The confessionalization of individual Swiss cantons became ingrained through armed conflict, although this did not universally apply to nearby monasteries. The Kappel Wars of 1529 and 1531 overtook central and eastern Switzerland and formalized the free confessional decisions of cantons, allowing for a wide diversity of approaches. Some cantons only allowed one denomination in their borders, like Catholic Lucerne and Reformed Basel, while others took mixed approaches where Catholic churches and monasteries were accepted in the countryside but only Protestantism in the cities, as seen in St. Gallen and Zürich. Plans even accommodated the splitting of cantons in two, which Appenzell did in 1597 to create the Catholic canton of Inner Rhoden and the Reformed canton Outer Rhoden (modern-day Appenzell Innerrhoden and Appenzell Ausserroden). Bern and Geneva also ended a protracted struggle with the Catholic Duke of Savoy in the 1530's that would effectively end his

influence in western Switzerland and allow Bern to take control of the modern-day canton of Vaud in 1536 and spread the Reformation there undeterred.[124]

Theologically, Swiss Reformation leaders remained committed to their anti-monastic stances even while seeking religious unity with other Protestant movements. The most famous of these inter-denominational meetings was the failed 1529 Marburg Colloquy between Martin Luther and Zwingli that resulted in a strict break between Lutheran consubstantiation and Zwinglian symbolism regarding the Eucharist.[125] Many Lutherans saw Zwingli's influence and combative personality as the main deterrent to unity and only attempted to unify Lutheran and Zwinglian theologies after his death in 1531. These meetings culminated in the 1536 Wittenberg Concord that attempted to bridge the gap through softer language on the Eucharist. However, lingering animosity between the factions, especially after Luther's comments that equated Zwingli with the hated Anabaptists, limited the Concord's acceptance to the Swiss canton of Bern.[126] Heinrich Bullinger, Zwingli's heir to the church in Zürich, began discussions with John Calvin to unite their theologies in the 1540's. Spurred on by political pressure against Protestants in France and Germany, the two leaders agreed to a document that reaffirmed their symbolic view of the Eucharist while side-stepping the necessity of sacraments that had sunk the Wittenberg Concord. The *Consensus Tigurinus*, published in 1551, would set the Swiss churches and Reformed theology as a whole distinctly outside of

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[124] Francisca Loetz, "Bridging the Gap: Confessionalisation in Switzerland," in *The Republican Alternative: The Netherlands and Switzerland Compared*, ed. André Holenstein, Thomas Maissen, and Maarten Prak (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 78–79.

[125] E. Bonjour, H.S. Offler, and G. R. Potter, 159–60.

[126] Amy Nelson Burnett, "From Concord to Confession: The Wittenberg Concord and the Consensus Tigurinus in Historical Perspective," *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 18, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 53.

Lutheranism and created a broadly unified Protestant faith across Switzerland.[127] Although the traditional head of the Protestant church in Switzerland was Zürich, Geneva would particularly grow to eclipse it as a haven for Reformed Christians from France and Italy beginning in the 1560's.[128]

Protestant efforts towards unification were not met laying down by Catholics and the remaining monasteries. While the Kappel Wars set the geographic lines that divided faiths, Catholic cantons and existing religious orders also pushed for internal reform as part of a "Counter-Reformation" proposed in the Council of Trent. Alongside the consolidation of Protestant churches in the latter half of the sixteenth century, Catholic cantons embraced Trenten reforms and brought in the Jesuit and Capuchin orders to run schools and re-evangelize local religious life.[129]

Swiss monasteries also shared the Counter-Reformation's desire for religious renewal within the context of their vocational identities. The Abbey of St. Gall entered into a "reformation" of the monastery from the 1570's through the 1590's, receiving visits from papal officials who commented on their observance of the Rule. The correspondences around these interactions continue the same vocationally distinct language about Benedictine traditions and "shepherding" the people as the 1522 letter, but explicitly connect these actions to their witness to the Protestant city that they remained connected to. A November 1595 letter from Pope Clement VIII mentions their monastic traditions as safeguards against heretical influence and opportunities for

[127] Ian D. Bunting, "The Consensus Tigurinus," *Journal of Presbyterian History (1962-1985)* 44, no. 1 (March 1966): 48; Burnett, "From Concord to Confession," 56.
[128] Ole Peter Grell, *Brethren in Christ: A Calvinist Network in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 32.
[129] Bruce Gordon, "Switzerland," in *The Early Reformation in Europe*, ed. Andrew Pettegree (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 91.

evangelization. The monks are told that they are strengthened against heretical influences through distinctive Benedictine actions like wearing the habit as well as their "propagation of the Catholic religion," to the local heretics. Both their historical habits and newfound preaching are identified as "pious labors," an allusion to the monastic "Instruments of Good Works" found in Benedict's Rule, that puts the monastic reform in relation to the Protestant theology. There is likewise a continued emphasis on the abbey's particular vocation to the Swiss community around the monastery. The shepherd imagery of the earlier 1522 correspondence is reiterated, calling the monks to bring "many flocks [of heretics] into the heavenly barn,"[130]

In another letter written from the Inquisition to the abbot in February of 1595, the 1522 letter's description of monastery's territorial responsibilities are repeated, specifically stating that the abbot's pastoral care extends to, "all and whomsoever reside in the district and jurisdiction of the aforesaid monastery and others under the expostulation of so many heretics who march unpunished to you in your monastery," but not "the Italians, or the Spaniards, or others among whom the sacred Office of the Inquisition flourishes."[131] The abbey's vocational identity, both as Benedictines and specifically caring for the local Swiss population, is affirmed and directly connected to

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[130] Correspondence from Pope Clement VIII to Bernhard Müller, abbot of the monastery of St. Gall, 13 November 1595, Urk. B4 B15, Stiftsarchiv St. Gallen, St. Gallen, Switzerland. "Pro corum portione adiutores nostri sunt a te uero fili dilecte multi consolationis materia nobis praebetur, dum ielum Tuum et regularis disciplinia vestituendae ac reliigionis catholica conscruanda et propaganada stadium audimus benedicat desus cogitations tuas et opera tua et pios labores tuos et ipse tibi in aterna benediction copiosam… manipulos multus Deo adiutore in horreum celeste cum exultation importes."

[131] Correspondence from Pope Clement VIII and the General Inquisitors of the Holy See to Bernhard Müller, abbot of the monastery of St. Gall, 16 February 1595, Urk. B3 D6, Stiftsarchiv St. Gallen, St. Gallen, Switzerland. "Nec non etiam ut omnes et quoscunque in districtu et iurisdictionem praedicti Monasterium commorantes et alios undercunque expartibus tantium ubi haereses impunem grassantur ad te in tuo monasterio, siue in eius districtum, et iurisdictione constitutum, seu residentem spontem venientes utriusque sexus tan laicos, quam clericos sexulares, et cuiusuisordinis Regulares haereticos, schismaticos, et ad fide catholica aberaantes, illonisque credents None tamen Italos, vel Hispanos aut alios apud quos uiget sacrum Inquisitionis Officium."

their work against Protestant theology. The abbey's internal reform is grounded in Benedictine traditions of spiritual purity and religious habits, but is expanded to include their connection to the land around the abbey, all in the context of Protestant advances. Even after sixty years, Protestant theology is still confronted by the abbey through language distinct to their monastic living.

The later correspondences of the Abbey of St. Gall emphasize the deep connection Swiss monastics saw between their particular religious charisms and Protestant theology throughout the Reformation. From its earliest days of the Reformation in the Zürich Disputations, monks and friars were involved in the conversations around reform. As the Reformation expanded, monastic communities that were not subject to the rounds of immediate closure after the disputations, were forced to engage with members and lay people who had taken up the Reformation. Conversation within Benedictine communities about reform revolved around the same language of Christian community and distinct Benedictine actions like wearing the habit and service to the surrounding area within a cloistered context. The conversion writings of the former Benedictines Michael Sattler and Ambrosius Blaurer are rooted in their monastic vocation. Sattler's anabaptist theology shared a similarly strong emphasis on communal living and removal from the world of "flesh" [132] with the Benedictine Rule, ideas that he would directly connect to his monastic past during his execution.[133] Ambrosius Blaurer likewise contrasted his personal dissatisfaction in the Benedictine monastery with the joy of "purer" Christian community and worship with Protestant reformers. The scripture and life of Christ that was "forbidden" to him in the monastery was lived out in an open

[132] J. C. Wenger, 243–53.
[133] Williams and Mergal, 143.

celebration of communion among friends. Benedictine communities that remained Catholic still utilized their vocation in response to opposing theology. The Abbey of St. Gall's pastoral lineage and care for the local Swiss population are continually mentioned in communications with the Inquisition as well as the unique graces afforded to their evangelization efforts from their penitent lives.

Swiss Franciscans also included their vocational calls into their experiences with Protestant theology. The early witnesses of Franciscan friars Sebastian Hoffmeister and Sebastian Meyer in the Zurich Disputations included numerous mentions of their desire for scriptural teaching and their personal disappointment at the failure of Catholic leadership, directly challenging the Church's support of the Franciscan calls to apostolic living and obedience. Conrad Pellican's conversion story involved a gradual intellectual disillusionment with Catholic doctrine, culminating in a dramatic scene in the streets of Zurich where he received a coin with an imprint of St. Francis and took it as a sign of the saint's favor of his conversion. Vocational identity even played a part in Jeanne de Jussie's reaction to Protestantism in Geneva. The sisters emphasized their cloistered and Franciscan identity against proselytization, embracing stricter observances of liturgical prayer and welcoming back former converts from religious life through the sacraments and generosity, living out their distinct Franciscan call to service and cloistered prayer. Their community remained a key part of their lives even as they left their original convent, leaving the sisters in the graveyard with one last *De Profundis* before their trek to Annecy.

In each instance, Benedictine and Franciscan communities and individuals interacted with Protestant theology through their distinct spiritual identities. Those who

left the habit often did so while harshly criticizing what they saw as empty monastic promises of Christian community and biblical living in their former monasteries. Former monks like Blaurer and Pellican ultimately fulfilled those original monastic promises in their new Protestant communities while Sattler was influential in crafting an entirely new theology that sought to make the entire church a sort of monastery. Conversely, the remaining Catholic communities went deeper in their spiritualities when confronted by Protestant theology. The Abbey of St. Gall fell back to their traditional identities as pastors for the local Swiss population as well as their penitential knowledge gained through monastic observance. It is telling that the response of de Jussie's Poor Clares to the first attack from Protestant forces was to dive deeper into their traditions of liturgical prayer and self-mortification. During the violence the sisters "[disciplined] themselves after Matins and asked God for mercy. Then they lit wax candles and some of them recited the fine "*Benedicatur*," bowing all the way down to the ground in the name of Jesus Christ. Others knelt and recited the '*Ave benigne Jesu*.'"[134]

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[134] Jussie, 54.

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Appendix:

Figure #1:

Picture taken from Lorenzo Bellesia, "La Zecca di MirandoLa – Parte I – Da Gian Francesco II Pico (1499-1533) a Galeotto III Pico (1568-1597)," *Bollettino Di Numismatica Online*, Materiali 25 (2015), 24.