

The Franciscan Tradition: Retrieval and Innovation

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SHORT PAPER ABSTRACTS

Brenda Abbott (Independent scholar):

Eric Doyle OFM: Hidden Architect of the Retrieval of the Franciscan Tradition: A Christological Understanding of Original Sin.

A study of developments in Christology over the past thirty years has convinced me that the Franciscan Order ought to enter into a more sustained and extensive dialogue with its theological tradition, especially in the period from the conversion of St Francis to the death of Duns Scotus. I believe we possess a treasure of inestimable riches. The Franciscan theological tradition has a distinctive, indeed unique approach to reality which has a relevance now greater than ever before....

My plea is therefore that we initiate a fresh dialogue with our theological past. It will bring us speedily into fruitful dialogue with our own time.¹

Eric Doyle OFM (1938–1984), a founding father of the Franciscan Study Centre in Canterbury, was arguably the most gifted English Franciscan theologian of the twentieth century. A prolific theologian, scholar, lecturer, writer and broadcaster, his work was, in many areas, ahead of its time, and as such remains of vital importance as the Franciscan fraternity seeks avenues for innovation of their retrieved tradition. In the wake of Vatican II, Doyle introduced the Franciscan family to their own neglected theology and spirituality, notably locating the ‘Franciscan charism’ as ending with the death of Bl Duns Scotus and his doctrine on the Primacy of Christ and teaching on *haecceitas*. Contemporary relevance of theology was important for Doyle, and he saw applications for Franciscan theology and spirituality in the areas of Christian anthropology, creation, ecumenism, and the place of Christ in an evolving cosmos. A hitherto unexplored area of Doyle’s thought is his own Christological approach to original sin, seen in the light of Scotus’ Christology, an ‘innovation’ which this paper will examine and ask whether this may be a development of that doctrine.

Dom Abbott (KU Leuven and Uantwerpen):

Medieval Christological Innovation: Christ’s Role in the Universe in Bonaventure and Duns Scotus.

The preeminent Bonaventurian scholar Zachary Hayes OFM astutely described Bonaventure of Bagnoregio’s Christology as a ‘cosmic Christology’. Given that Bonaventure cannot properly conceive of a universe without Christ, his theology is viewed as Christocentric. Bonaventure seems to display, however, a theology remarkably preoccupied with the narrative of sin and redemption. This is in stark contrast to John Duns Scotus, whose theology of the Incarnation is also radically Christocentric, yet in a different way. This paper examines Christ’s place in the created order, and the motivation of the incarnation, across the works of both Bonaventure and Scotus. This comparative examination functions as a case study to help evaluate the notions of Christocentricity and indeed ‘Franciscan Christology’ in general, and to see the Christological innovations of both of these prominent medieval Franciscan scholastics.

Favin Alemão (Pontifical Gregorian University):

The End of Inquiry: ‘status’ in Bonaventure’s epistemology.

Philosophical inquiry aims at discovering the causes of things, and ultimately their first principle. In these first principles, the mind, according to Bonaventure, comes to a *status*, that in which one’s knowledge has a firm grounding. Yet not all inquiry arrives at a *status* in the same manner. For example, Albert the Great shows that there are at least two ways to proceed towards a first principle: (1) following a line of generation, as from son to father, back to a ‘first father’; or (2) from species to genus, as from man to animal, back to the highest genus. These two lines of inquiry, however, do not seem to converge, and so result in at least two diverse *status*. This plurality of *status* demonstrates an insufficiency of this and many epistemologies. As Bonaventure says, “No *status* is found except in unity”. In this paper, I argue that Bonaventure manages to resolve these diverse lines of inquiry

¹ Eric Doyle, ‘St Francis and Franciscan Theology’ in *The Cord* 31.8 (1981), 226-27.

into one by rethinking the species-genus line in terms of generation: we are led back from all knowable things to the Eternal Generation, and from there to the *Primitas* of the Father. In Him, finally, we find the stable ground, the *status*, of knowledge.

Andrew Baker (Independent scholar):

Rediscovering the Franciscan Musical Tradition.

The ancient and medieval cosmos, as defined in detail in Bonaventure's Journey of the Soul, is formed according to an inherent law of Harmony or Number which guides the formation of everything. Because Creation is Good and has this divine Law within it (which is inseparable from the Word) Creation is free to form infinitely varied works drawn by Love to reveal the Word.

From the very beginning music was an essential part of Franciscan tradition - from Francis's imaginary violin, his all-inclusive Canticle - the first specially composed polyphonic liturgy for the basilica at Assisi - Franciscan musical theorists explaining that music can convey meaning beyond the words - the use of Carols in England - to the great Renaissance musical mystic Francesco Giorgi's Harmony of the World (1525) which shows how the three worlds, Angelic, Harmony and this World, can all be in harmony through Christ.

Though this unified vision was lost in the 16th century, and we began to separate God from Creation, it survived in unexpected places - most wonderfully in the Puritan Peter Sterry.

Riccardo Battiloro, TOR (Pontifical Gregorian University):

The Construction of the Third Order Regular of St Francis' Identity through Retrieval and Innovation.

The Construction of the Third Order Regular of St Francis' Identity through Retrieval and Innovation The Third Order Regular of St Francis has been able to survive and adapt throughout its centuries-long history various ecclesiological and social changes, managing to justify its existence precisely through the instruments of retrieval and innovation. Two important moments in the definition of the Order's identity will be considered: its post-Tridentine and post-Vatican II reorganization and repositioning in the ecclesial structure. These are intertwined because the former was the object of retrieval by the actors of the latter. A sample of the themes involved in these processes will be extrapolated from two agile booklets intended for the formation of the members of institutes that share the same Rule of Life with the TOR and for the legitimisation and illustration of this peculiar identity: *Ai diletti frati del Terzo Ordine di s. Francesco congregati nella città di Reggio detti del Paruolo* by Antonio Silli (1605) and *La tradizione storica e spirituale del nostro movimento* by the TOR International Historical Commission (1980). The analysis and comparison of what (and how) they "use" of the tradition of the Third Order in two different historical milieus is intended to enlighten the mutual relationship between retrieval and innovation in the construction of a Franciscan identity.

Matthieu Bernard (Lyon Catholic University):

St. Francis and Bonaventure's Dialectic of Innovation.

Reflection on innovation is coextensive with the Franciscan tradition: Celano's *Vita prima* already recognizes in Francis a "holy newness", as showed by W. Short. The way in which Saint Bonaventure approaches this question is worthy of interest. Recently, M.B. Ingham noted in his *Commentary on the Sentences* the idea of "*novas compositiones*" and suggested that the consideration of Francis reinforces this rhetoric of novelty. This is what our paper proposes to explore. First, we recall the conception of grace as new life in a *Sermon* on circumcision. Then we detect, in the *Legenda Major*, a dialectic: some accounts (approval of the first proposal of life, the crib) downplay the innovation, while other passages, on the contrary, exalt the unheard-of love of poverty and the stigmata. Third, Bonaventure's use of apocalyptic motifs serves to resolve this dialectic: we demonstrate, in the light of recent work on the apocalyptic literary genre, that it expresses the paradoxical irruption of "all things new" in the continuity of a salvation history. Finally, we show how this rhetoric of novelty legitimizes the relevance of the biblical hermeneutics expounded in the *Hexaëmeron*, in particular the "seemingly infinite" theories which consist in a sapiential contemplation of the *Verbum crucifixum et inspiratum* in the life of the Church.

Ian Campbell (Queen's University Belfast):

Cardinal Lorenzo Brancati da Lauria (1612-1693) and Angelo Volpi da Montepeloso (d. 1647): Retrieval, Innovation, and Orthodoxy in Later Seventeenth Century Franciscan Political Thought.

Cardinal Lorenzo Brancati was described by Diomede Scaramuzzi in 1927 as 'the most luminous figure of the golden century of Scotism'; he was certainly the most institutionally powerful Scotist theologian in Rome during the second half of the seventeenth century. Graduate of the College of St Bonaventure in the Conventual

Franciscan house of SS. XII Apostoli, Brancati taught at Conventual *studia* throughout Italy before obtaining the chair in Holy Scripture at the Sapienza in 1654. He was nominated consultor and qualificator at the Inquisition in 1658, and prefect of studies at the Collegio Urbano de Propaganda Fide in 1665. He was appointed keeper of the Vatican Library in 1670. Innocent XI created him cardinal in 1681. Scaramuzzi argued that Brancati's *Commentaria* on the third and fourth books of John Duns Scotus's *Ordinatio* interpreted Scotus as a far-sighted precursor of the Council of Trent. Brancati defended Scotus vigorously against Jesuit criticism, and sought to bring the Scotist theological textbook of his former senior colleague, Angelo Volpi da Montepeloso, to a conclusion. Is Scaramuzzi's argument that Brancati sought to make Scotus safe for the Counter-Reformation true with regard to Scotus's political doctrines? In what ways did Brancati retrieve or innovate doctrines of virtue, natural law, the origins of human society, and the powers of the prince? This paper will explore these questions, alongside the possibility that Brancati defended Volpi's *Sacrae Theologiae Summa Ioannis Duns Scoti* against criticism in the Roman Inquisition during the 1650s, delaying the wholesale condemnation of Volpi's combative and erratic brand of Scotism by fifty years.

Brian Casey (Durham University):

The creation and rediscovery of the charism of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood.

Missionary work came to be the exemplar of the transnational nature of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood, encapsulated by their religious charism that focuses upon being Franciscan women; being missionaries and a devotion to the Divine Motherhood. The identities of religious communities are tied in with their charism and the institution's foundation. Their functional objectives, such as teaching, nursing, praying the Divine Office or an appearance of joyfulness form part of this identity. This identity was also concentrated on fostering their personal relationship with Jesus Christ, which was achieved through interior and exterior embrace of the congregation's religious charism. A charism is inspired by the intangible aspects of faith and spiritual writings of saints, mystics and holy men and women that help to form an identity and way for religious men and women to live a gospel-centred life. Charisms are seen and experienced as a gift from God – something deeper and more profound than a mere corporate identity, a phrase that lacks the appropriate nuance and depth necessary to understand the centrality of charism in religious life.

The charism of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood is about bearing witness in local communities while being attentive to the congregation's globality, internationality and expansion from the 1940s. It attracted women that wanted to be religious missionaries in an international congregation by 'giving birth to Christ' while living as Franciscan women. Historians can be reductionist in understandings of the place of a transcendental God in the lives and existence of religious communities. This paper explores the creation and rediscovery of the charism of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood and why historians need to be more attentive to the place of religious charism as central to the formation of religious communities.

William Crozier (Durham University):

Franciscan Physics: Colour, Light, and Transparency in St Bonaventure's Quaestiones de colore.

This paper focuses on the only independent "scientific" treatise which can be attributed to St. Bonaventure - the unedited *Quaestiones de colore* (*QDC*). Found in a notebook which it is claimed is written in the Seraphic Doctor's own hand, the *QDC* explores the "physics" of colour - that is to say, the questions of how colour is generated through the interplay of light, transparency, and matter, and how, in turn, it affects the eye. The paper shows how the theory of colour in the *QDC* possesses an explicitly Avicennian basis, yet it also draws upon, in a by no means insignificant way, the wider Islamicate tradition on colour and light, particularly the thinking of Averroes. In turn, mention is also made of how the *QDC* appropriates the ideas of Aristotle while also converging with some of the claims made by the likes of Euclid and Ptolemy. As part of its investigation, the paper explores some of the arguments for attributing the *QDC* - both thematic and palaeographical - to Bonaventure. Finally, it takes note of the longstanding claim that Bonaventure turned his back on the scientific study of nature, leaving this to the likes of Aquinas, Albert the Great, and Roger Bacon. It contends that the *QDC* invites us to reconsider this assertion, especially when it is viewed in relation to some of the scientific reflection which is nested within Bonaventure's already edited theological works, particularly his *Sentences* commentary.

Christopher Dyczek, PhD, OFM (Independent scholar):

Contingencies of Compassion in the 16th - 17th century era of Ingenuity.

Friars Minor added the name 'Recollects' before they began training students at Douai. By 1616 Bonaventure Jackson had published his 'Manuductions in the Pallace of Trueth.' Coordinating philosophical and theological concerns required learning patterns for unfavourable circumstances. We recognise strategies with some similarities in work by three writers. Anthony Parkinson became professor of Philosophy in 1695, subsequent to

Antoine Le Grand's research period. As Minister Provincial, Parkinson recorded multiple challenges for friars and Poor Clares in his *Notebooks* (1713-1715). Prior to this, in the Roman Recollect Province, Charles of Sezze joined in 1635 as a lay brother. He sought teaching without deceit, emulated Teresa of Avila as a 'spirit of prophecy' and wrote a sermon on Christ's Passion and his *Autobiography*. The third name, from Leon, was the missionary Bernardino de Sahagun (1499?-1590). His *Esercicio quotidiano* and *Universal History of the things of New Spain* show the friars' policy of a school for every Native Mexican, missionary proficiency in Nahuatl, with a humanities, arts and trades curriculum.

Kelly Fitzgerald (University College Dublin):

Irish Franciscans and Irish vernacular culture.

The Irish Folklore Commission was established in 1935 but much of the lineage of the collected material in what is now the National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin stems from an earlier time. The direct origin of oral narrative in the medieval past may be questioned but the life of a narrative is often traceable to the nineteenth century. An example of this phenomenon is a version of the tale 'Cromwell and the Friar', in this instance, a Franciscan friar, collected for the Irish Folklore Commission from Marcus Ó Neachtain (29) by Liam Mac Coisdeala in August of 1935. Marcus learned this tale from his father, Eoghan who in turn learned the tale from his father, Marcus hence placing this version of the tale firmly in the nineteenth century. Further research may well indicate that the tale may be placed in the seventeenth century as that was the height of Franciscan influence in Ireland. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the number of members of OFM were less than one hundred. Although, due to the nature of their order and sense of pastoral care and responsibility, their contacts and relationships within the community were extremely strong. This paper will examine and reflect on the impact of Franciscan material as found in the ethnographic material in the National Folklore Collection in the twentieth century.

Garrett Galvin (President/Rector Franciscan School of Theology):

St. Francis 'lived in the Scriptures' (2 Cel 104): St. Francis' Creative Reception of Scripture and the Biblical Roots of Franciscan Spirituality.

One of St. Francis' earliest biographers, Thomas of Celano, tells us that Francis "lived in the Scriptures." Francis' innovations have been described as bringing Christ out of the cloister in the Middle Ages. While the importance of 1 Peter is well known, the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are very important for their missionary zeal. The disciples are on a journey of preaching, teaching, and healing with Jesus. St. Francis and his disciples were also on a journey. The Gospel of John injects the Holy Spirit into this journey in a manner that focuses us on community. The Psalms and Isaiah complete this picture. This gospel inspiration matches up with an emphasis on deeds and concrete details over abstract ideas, a hallmark of Franciscan spirituality. We will discover how much St. Francis was motivated by a biblical vision through looking at five elements of Franciscan spirituality and discovering their scriptural basis within the writings of St. Francis. The retrieval of St. Francis' writings leads those interested in Franciscan spirituality to renew Franciscan foundations through the Bible.

Jared Goff (Ss. Cyril & Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary):

David Burr and Bartholomew Barberi on Bonaventure's Account of Transubstantiation: Contemporary and Early Modern Receptions.

In 1984 David Burr published an important study on Eucharistic Presence and Conversion in Late Thirteenth Century Franciscan Thought. Therein he argued for an identity between Thomas Aquinas's and Bonaventure's accounts on the sufficiency of transubstantiation to explain the presence of Christ in Eucharist through transubstantiation, calling this the "Thomist-Bonaventurean thesis." This identification served to give the impression that Thomas's and Bonaventure's accounts of transubstantiation itself were identical. In the seventeenth century, the Capuchin Bonaventuran Bartholomew Barberi, however, had earlier argued that Bonaventure's account of transubstantiation was quite distinct from Thomas's. He contended that Bonaventure articulated a theory of transubstantiation and Eucharistic presence that anticipated John Duns Scotus's theory of "adduction." This paper will explore the differing accounts of Burr and Barberi to arrive at a clearer sense of Bonaventure's mind, the context and reception of his teaching, and its impact on Scotus's later account of Eucharist presence and conversion.

Michael Hahn (Sarum College):

Historical Theology and Theological History: Franciscan Retrieval and the Historical Study of Franciscans in the Cases of Francis of Assisi and Angela of Foligno.

Increasingly, scholars interested in the history texts, figures and movements of the Franciscan traditions could be divided into: i) those who see the living Franciscan orders today as direct inheritors of the 13th-century traditions

and view this all as one singular traditions; and, ii) those who argue that if we are to seriously examine the 13th-century sources historically, we are to divorce them from the expectations and concerns of Franciscans today. In this paper, I argue much of this division is due to methodological confusion because most theologians would draw all engagement with historical texts from Christian traditions as 'historical theology' regardless of how sources are being used. Against this, I introduce Walter Principe's differentiation between 'historical theology' and 'theological history' and argue that this distinction can bring both camps of scholars' voices back into dialogue. I will draw particularly from the example of two thirteenth-century 'Franciscan' figures, Francis of Assisi and Angela of Foligno.

Benjamin Luke Johnson, OFM Cap. (University of Notre Dame, Australia):

Humility and Poverty: Insights for Contemporary Franciscan Living.

To this day, St Francis of Assisi remains an intriguing figure both within Christianity and beyond. His personal poverty stimulates much discussion and reflection amongst his followers, especially in formation houses. For these discussions, I propose that we must situate the ideal of Franciscan poverty in the context of humility. With this contextualization, we will be able to capture Francis' relational affinity to poverty, one that is truly personal rather than a disembodied external mimicry. Our exploration of Franciscan humility will reveal that poverty, both material and spiritual, aid the followers of Francis to be conformed to the crucified Christ through the person's relational capacity. Therefore, in this examination of the ideals of humility and poverty we will be able to perceive in a greater way the manner in which these can be lived out authentically in our contemporary world.

Liam Kelly, OFM (Mary Immaculate College, Limerick):

The End of the Romance: Exploring St Francis of Assisi and his movement through the lens of René Girard's mimetic theory.

Romantic characterizations of St Francis of Assisi and his movement have both popularized the figure of St Francis and obscured his historical and theological importance. From the mid-nineteenth century innumerable romanticized biographies helped to renew interest in St. Francis. From the mid-twentieth century critical-historical scholarship on St Francis and the early Franciscans has helped to redress, though arguably not yet overcome, the romantic Francis of this period. In this paper I will explore the insights of literary critic and cultural theorist René Girard, i.e., mimetic theory. I will argue that Girard's work can further challenge the dominant romantic tradition and thereby offer a more historically accurate and theologically compelling saint and founder. Romantic characterizations of St Francis initially rescued the saint from relative obscurity, making him a hero of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, according to Girard, romanticism also produces contemporary interpretations of St Francis as anti-hero. Mimetic theory makes possible another Francis of Assisi; a man who is neither hero nor anti-hero. The Francis which emerges is a man of his own time, whose message and movement remains compelling and relevant to our times.

Fr Liam Kelly (Independent scholar):

A Much-Travelled 1644 Franciscan Chalice.

In 1644 a gold-plated chalice was presented to the newly established Irish Franciscan friary, near the village of Jamestown, in County Leitrim. However, just nine years later on 19 March 1653, Jamestown was captured by the Cromwellian forces and the friars were ordered to leave the country within a period of one month and they were told not 'to exercise their function' until they did so. The friars opted to flee into the woods and mountains of south Leitrim, bringing the chalice with them. Somehow the chalice survived the Penal era despite being hauled from place to place by the roving friars. Then, in the decades after the Great Famine (1847-49), the chalice was brought to America, most likely to Santa Fe or Albuquerque in the state of New Mexico, by Irish Franciscan missionaries. The American Sisters of Charity also had a mission there and the Franciscan priests used to celebrate Mass in their convent. It is thought that this is how the chalice came into the possession of the Sisters of Charity and this order of nuns held the chalice in their mother-house in Cincinnati, Ohio, for more than one hundred years. In October 2022 the chalice was returned to Ireland and it is now on display in the St George's.

Elizabeth Kent (St John's College, Durham):

The retrieval of treasures from the Franciscan Tradition by evangelical Protestantism through engagement with the popular novel 'Chasing Francis'.

In 2006 the book 'Chasing Francis – A pilgrims tale' was written by US Episcopalian priest Ian Morgan Cron. It sits within the genre of Socratic dialogue or wisdom literature and charts the journey of fictional character Chase Falson, an American evangelical Megachurch pastor, who 'loses' his faith and rediscovers it through taking a

pilgrimage to Italy and discovering St Francis' life and teaching and retrieving St Francis' vital significance for today. The novel was celebrated and widely discussed among UK leaders within the Fresh Expressions movement (around 2006-2012) as an antidote to the perceived deficiencies of the US Megachurch model and the rise of far right politics in US Evangelicalism, and sparked an interest in St Francis himself and the Franciscan tradition among those who would not normally have looked to the Catholic Church or engaged with saints.

The paper explores how the novel draws upon the wealth of literature written about St Francis and communicates it in a compelling form, identifying riches within Franciscan tradition which can bless and restore the wider church. It is argued that this engagement with St Francis from an unlikely quarter illustrates a renewal of Protestant theology and experience through a retrieval of Franciscan emphases and charisms.

Anthony Lajato, OFM Conv. (Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology WI):

Scientia in fonte: Recovering the Centrality of Bonaventure's Gospel Commentaries.

The Gospel commentaries were written during Bonaventure's biblical baccalaureate from 1248-1250 and were subsequently revised and published after he had obtained his magisterium. Therefore, these works represent the core of his teaching activity at the Franciscan studium as its regent master from 1254-1257. Being the fruit of years of theological maturation, the prominence of the postillae cannot be overestimated. While it is true that his academic writings are characteristic of the predominating trend of the more speculative approach of the scholastic method, his postillae and sermons likewise make clear that the center and foundation of Bonaventure's theology is doctrinal exegesis. Because Bonaventure repeatedly prioritized divine revelation over any type of human science, identifying Scripture as the veritable source of knowledge, we can find cohesion, original terms, and arguments, distinguishable across Bonaventure's entire body of work which can be traced in some way back to his doctrinal exegesis of Luke and John. However, the scriptural commentaries are disproportionately underrepresented in the scholarly treatments of Bonaventure's writings and the postillae do not tend to be factored into syntheses of his theology. Our presentation aims to promote a recovery of Scripture as the basis of Bonaventure's scholastic theology, hoping to demonstrate how his doctrinal exegesis can provide not only a more thorough understanding of his system of thought, but also a fruitful starting point to engage contemporary theological discussions.

Dr Jennifer Lane (Brigham Young University):

Compassio for the Twenty-first Century?

The late medieval Franciscan emphasis on *compassio*, participation in the Passion, is often associated with extremes of self-induced physical suffering. While some approaches to this religious goal were particular to a distant culture, dimensions of *compassio* are needed today. Retrieval of the sense of personal connection with Christ and the immediacy of his love and sacrifice can be a helpful corrective for many dimensions of Christian worship that have drifted into the sentimental.

The immediacy of Greccio has been muted with a multiplication of crèches. The intensity of being "transformed into Him Who chose to be crucified out of the excess of his love" is often replaced with bumper-sticker slogans proclaiming the love of God (*FAED* 2:632). But the Franciscan legacy of *compassio* offers resources for connecting people to Christ in a deep personal way. Their promotion of *compassio* can be seen in late medieval Jerusalem pilgrimage, devotional literature, art, music, and substitute pilgrimage practices. Through meditation on the experience of Christ's sufferings, his divine presence was also accessible. These strategies for intense meditation and the experience of participation are a valuable resource for a contemporary Christian landscape in which the life and suffering of Christ can seem too far distant.

Amanda Langley (Queen Mary University of London):

'An Excellent Path Plagued with Bad Behaviour: Revelations about the Franciscan Order in the Visiones cuiusdam virginis²'

The *Visiones cuiusdam virginis* – a text recording the revelations of an anonymous holy women in Vienna – was written by a Franciscan friar and reflects many of the issues present in the order at the close of the thirteenth century. This paper will consider the portrayal of the Order within the text. This includes both praise for adherence to the rule and their place in the afterlife, but also issues of apostasy, laxity, arrogance, and those being a bad example to those around them. I will also consider the emphasis placed on humility in the text, as well as the

² In the extant scholarship this work is referred to as the *Life and Revelations of Agnes Blannbekin*. My work stresses the anonymity of the mystic in the text, hence the rejection of the title.

comparatively lack of attention given to poverty, in an examination of how the virtues most associated with the order factor into the advice given to the prospective audience of the text.

Jo Luyten (KADOC-KU Leuven):

Quo vadis provincia? Or how Belgian Franciscans introduced strict Recollect observance in the UK and Ireland (1858-1887).

On 19 April 1842, a new monastic province of the Order of Friars Minor was founded in Belgium according to the strict and contemplative sixteenth-century Recollect observance. Fairly quickly, the institute there experienced considerable growth, both in terms of monasteries and membership. In the early 1850s, it was even able to take on foreign missions, and exploratory talks were held to send Belgian Friars Minor Recollects as missionaries to Britain and Ireland. In 1858, the first Belgian Recollects settled in Gorey and Sclerder, and in the decades that followed, the religious were to leave an indelible spiritual mark on the later Franciscan order community on British-Irish soil, which in 1887 formed an independent custodia separate from the Belgian province.

In my talk, I will explain how a Belgian-British network prepared this Belgian Franciscan mission, and I will substantiate in what way the Belgian Friars Minor shaped the (re)formation of a strict Recollect observance within the community of the British-Irish Franciscans. This model of Belgian Franciscan Recollects was successful. This may be evidenced by the fact that British Franciscans remained faithful to this time-honoured strict monastic ideal well into the 20th century. On the other hand, the continental model of strict Recollect observance also brought with it tensions, including the parish work offered by English and Scottish bishops and the adherence to strict monastic observance. This tension will also be discussed in my talk. The lecture brings new insights and is based on extensive source analysis, both in Belgian and British archival and library collections.

Tomasz Mantyk, OFM Cap. (Catholic University of Lublin and KU Leuven):

Retrieval and Innovation in Renaissance Paraphrases of the Bible.

This paper proposes to compare New Testament paraphrases of Erasmus of Rotterdam and his less known Franciscan adversary, Titelmans. Biblical paraphrase was a literary genre (re)invented by Erasmus, whose biblical scholarship also included pioneering work on the critical edition of the Greek text of New Testament and its philological translation into Latin. Franciscus Titelmans, a lecturer in Holy Scriptures at the Franciscan study house in Leuven, was highly critical of Erasmus' philological approach to the Bible. Despite reservations regarding his more famous colleague's methodology, he took up publishing his own paraphrases of the Bible in a barely disguised competition with the Prince of Humanists. In this paper I intend to analyse chosen passages from paraphrases of both authors in order to confront their methodological approaches and theological stances. Both authors' works were an exercise in retrieval, for they strove to render scriptural message in a better, more "classical" Latin style. At the same time there were significant differences between them. While Erasmus hoped that his innovative philological method could help to retrieve "true" Christian theology, liberated from scholastic absurdities, Titelmans was suspicious of it and considered doctrinal orthodoxy as a strict limit on philological method.

Simon McMurtary, TSSF (Independent scholar):

Harmony in Simplicity: Utilising Franciscan insights into Poverty in Contemporary Interfaith Engagement with Zen Buddhism.

This paper explores the mutual flourishing that can occur through interfaith engagement between the Franciscan tradition and Zen Buddhism. Taking a qualitative case study approach, I theologially reflect on my experience of engaging in Zen practice as a professed Franciscan over the last thirteen years, inspired by Francis' own interfaith encounters.

The exploration highlights the resonances between Francis' insights into living *sine proprio*, and the metaphysical reality pointed to by Zen teachers such as Seung Sahn, Kōdō Sawaki, Kōshō Uchiyama, and Francis' contemporary Dōgen Zenji. Zen terms, such as "Don't know mind" and "Beginner's mind" are considered, and their relationship to Franciscan poverty examined. Furthermore, the study sheds light on the practical and theological implications of dual religious practice as well as exploring issues of cultural sensitivity and what the two traditions can learn from one another.

In conclusion, the research suggests how the core principles of peace, simplicity, and openness to dialogue found within the historic Franciscan tradition might inspire contemporary engagement with other traditions for the common good in the twenty first century.

Bronagh Ann McShane (Trinity College Dublin):

Praying Hearts: The Poor Clare Order and Digital Media.

In 2018 Pope Francis issued the directive, *Cor Orans* ('Praying Heart'), which gave official sanction for the use of digital media by cloistered nuns. The publication of *Cor Orans* was a major step-change in Vatican directives regulating religious life for enclosed nuns since it was the first time that use of digital media by cloistered communities of women was given official sanction. But the pontiff's authorisation was not unqualified since it urged the women to use technology with 'sobriety and discretion not only with regard to the contents but also to the quantity of information and the type'. To date, we lack any critical assessment of how communities of nuns themselves have responded to the pontiff's directive at a local level (if in fact they have responded at all). This paper begins an initial assessment of this subject by presenting a case study of the Order of St Clare (OSC), established in 1221 by St Clare of Assisi (1194-1253). How do women for whom strict removal from the outside world is at the very heart of their identity, contend with the vast opportunities for outside communication offered by digital media? What tensions arise between 'online' presence and 'offline' communal and individual religious identities and affiliations and how can these tensions be mediated? As one of the most austere religious orders in the Roman Catholic Church, the order is an ideal case study for investigating the acute tensions that can arise between the religious ideal of enclosure and withdrawal from the world and the potential for infinite engagement offered by digital and social media.

Martin Murray (University of the West of Scotland):

Renewal of Franciscan life in the English province in the light of Vatican II: a personal reflection.

In 1965 the Second Vatican Council Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life *Perfectae Caritatis*, encouraged members of religious orders to return to the original spirit of their order. *Perfectae Caritatis* went on to encourage orders to promote an adequate knowledge of the social conditions of the time and place in which they live so that they may be better able to assist the people more effectively. Furthermore, *Perfectae Caritatis* went on to discuss the role of lay members of religious orders, in particular lay members of men's orders that included both clergy and laity within their communities.

I first contacted the OFM friars in 1987 and entered the noviciate at Chilworth friary in 1990. I stayed with the order for a total of 6 years.

In this short paper, I intend to discuss my own experience of the English OFM Province attempting to return to the original spirit of the order. I intend to explore two particular aspects of that retrieval of Franciscan life; firstly, the commitment to live for, with and as the poor and secondly the changing role of the lay brother at that time.

Joanne Myers (Gettysburg College):

Retrieval and innovation in the bookscape of the Poor Clares in Exile, 1609-1799.

The goal of this paper is to survey explicitly Franciscan material represented in both the print and manuscript libraries and give an overview of other spiritual traditions introduced that would highlight the communities' engagement with post-Tridentine developments. I will focus this by looking at the anthologies compiled by Sr. Cecily Cornwallis, a long-time scribe in the Poor Clares' Rouen convent.

Tiago Tavares Oliveira (University of Lisbon):

The Importance of Franciscan Historiography in Brazil through Novo Orbe Seráfico Brasílico.

This communication aims to present an 18th century Franciscan chronicle related to Brazil and, through it, emphasize the importance of Franciscan missionary work and historiography in Brazil. The work in question is the *Novo Orbe Seráfico Brasílico* by friar António Santa Maria Jaboatão (1695-1779). The purpose of this paper is to analyse why Franciscan historiography has been overshadowed and undervalued in comparison to the Company of Jesus. In the second stage, we will present the descriptions of the seventeen native indigenous peoples that Jaboatão characterizes in the preamble of his work. From these descriptions, one can grasp the Franciscan representations and the human geography of these populations, including their geographical locations, their daily life, and how they related to one another. This communication seems highly relevant as it attempts to address the historiographical gap that still exists concerning Brazilian Franciscan sources.

Elizabeth Peck (Independent scholar):

A Vision for Franciscan Education in Homes and Schools.

Despite notable encouraging phenomena such as this conference and the founding of *The Franciscan Publishing Company* on 8th December 2021, there are relatively few people choosing the Franciscan way of life in the UK. One reason for this is the obvious fact that most people in the U.K., including Christians, are not familiar with Franciscanism. Innovation is needed in this area, to find ways to raise awareness of Franciscan theology and spirituality, and to offer it more widely to families, and to children in particular. This paper suggests ways to do so, drawing on the retrieved charism from Francis to Scotus, and on the work of C.S. Lewis, Aristotle, and Rosenshine among others. Building on ideas presented at the Franciscan Conference in 2019, and on those published in 2023 in *Forming Franciscan Minds and Hearts*, it also considers how Franciscanism can respond to contemporary educational challenges. Ideas explored include how educators can weave principles such as the Primacy of Christ and haecceitas into pupils' imaginations; how they can help to shape the habits and tastes of the children in their care in accordance with the values of littleness, fraternity and poverty; and how Franciscan practices can be nurtured within the family. The paper includes a theologically and educationally attractive vision for Franciscan schools.

Thomas Piolata, OFM Cap. (Durham University and Pontifical Antonianum University):

Bonaventure on the Circularity of Divine Life and the Procession of the Holy Spirit.

As is well known, one of Bonaventure's favourite images is the "intelligible circle." For the Seraphic Doctor, the symbol of the circle represents the metaphysical structure of created being (egressio, regressio). In addition, however, the "circle" also bespeaks something of the dynamic life itself of the Holy Trinity. While authors have rightly noted this, no one has yet offered a critical explication of such divine "circularity" according to Bonaventure. What does it mean, that is, to describe divine life in terms of circularity? This paper answers this question. It aims to explain why this symbol can be applied to the Holy Trinity; it argues that key, in this regard, is Bonaventure's theology of the procession of the Holy Spirit. Franciscan Laity and the Vocation of Caregiving: The Spirituality of Interdependence

Darleen Pryds (Franciscan School of Theology/University of San Diego):

Franciscan Laity and the Vocation of Caregiving: The Spirituality of Interdependence.

Caregiving is central to Franciscan lives, and yet the service of direct care and the particular quality of presence in offering direct care requires studied reflection and consideration for any retrieval and application today. Using Joan Tronto's typology of care, this paper examines Franciscan caregiving in order to retrieve the particular qualities that can be retrieved and applied with clarity in the modern world in which care has become professionalized. It is notable that both Francis and Clare included the responsibility of the brothers and sisters to care for one another in their Rule/Form of Life. But how this care was carried out is not always documented because such visceral details were deemed either unnecessary for recorded history or unbecoming for the kinds of sources that are extant.

This paper looks at the variety of experiences of care as offered by lay practitioners including Jacopa's care for Francis at his life's end; Elizabeth of Hungary's care for the unnamed poor; Margaret of Cortona's trusted work as a midwife; and Peter the Comemaker's development of an intentional community centered on caring for the ill. As a conclusion this paper examines the spirituality of interdependence as a quality of Franciscan spirituality and explores how caring for the ill and dying cultivated Franciscan practitioners' spirituality. The paper considers the modern professionalization of caregiving as well as the growing experience of caring for aging parents in an effort to present a model of caregiving as spiritual practice that is at the heart of lay experiences of faith as affiliated with Franciscans in the first century of the tradition.

Willem Marie Speelman, ofs (Tilburg University):

Transitus, or how Franciscans discover the Mystery behind their personal problems (and reinvent Franciscan core values).

Gabriel Marcel distinguished two different approaches towards reality, the one considering it as a problem to be solved and the other considering the same matter as a mystery. Michel de Certeau discovered that spiritual lives are always narratives of a lack, which indeed might be considered as a problem or a mystery. In the Dutch culture, where religious life is seriously confronted with its own end, the question comes up: what will be lacking if there are no more religious people left?

I have interviewed fourteen Franciscans and Poor Clares, starting with the question: In a time when community and life form is going to end, what was it that held you and what did you hold (cf. 2EpCl 12)? After having

transcribed and analyzed their stories, I found that their spiritual lives indeed started with a lack, each his and her own. But I also found that the story of their lives slowly transformed that lack into abundance, that problem into the mystery that lies behind it. And what is more, they all re-invented Franciscan core values, like brotherhood and humility, in a personal and genuine way. Not because they are formulated in the Rule or the Franciscan 'habit', but because these core values appeared in their own lives. Perhaps the so-called 'topoi' of a saint's life are not so much added by the pleading biographer, but truly found in the life itself.

Gregory Stacey (University of Leeds):

Franciscan Scholastics on the Modal Depths of God's Love.

Late Scholastic philosophers engaged in fierce debates about the metaphysics of modality, seeking to reconcile the claim that there are necessary truths concerning creatures with the Christian doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. One of their recently neglected disagreements concerned God's love for possible creatures. Many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Franciscans followed Duns Scotus in claiming that God loves even those possible creatures which He does not choose to create, whereas Dominican and some Jesuit authors argued that the metaphysical status of possible creatures renders them unlovable.

In this paper, I provide a brief retrieval of this debate, and explain its relevance for modern philosophical theology. I first lay out some Late Scholastic views on the nature of *possibilia*, before exploring the ways in which Franciscan philosophers understand love and how this enables them to argue that God loves possible creatures. I further explain how why Dominican and Jesuit authors denied this claim. I conclude by showing how the Franciscan affirmation that God loves possible creatures can be applied to recent philosophical debates about the motivation for God's creative action and the nature of creatures.

Liam Temple (Durham University):

"This holy ambition is stirring amongst us": The English Capuchins and the seventh centenary celebrations of the 1920s.

In 2021 a joint committee formed of the three Franciscan First Order families and several Third Order groups was established to prepare for the multitude of upcoming eighth centenary celebrations. These included anniversaries for the later *Rule* of Saint Francis and the Christmas at Greccio in 2023, the Stigmata in 2024, the Canticum of the Creatures in 2025 and the Easter of Francis in 2026. Together these became a 'multifaceted Centenary', to be celebrated across the three years as these anniversaries arrived. 'Imagination and creativity must be brought to bear', the committee has written, 'so that the centenaries impact outwardly upon non-ecclesial social and cultural environments'. This paper explores a similar spirit of renewal which arose from celebrations marking the seventh centenary of the arrival of Agnellus of Pisa and the friars in England in 1224. It gives a brief overview of the celebrations which took place at Canterbury and Oxford in 1924, placing them within the wider context of a revival of the Franciscans more generally in England from the mid nineteenth century onwards. Using the English Capuchins as a case study, it explores how the celebrations were harnessed by Provincial Cuthbert of Brighton to undertake sweeping reforms within the province, encouraging the friars to focus on the social and cultural impact they could have by taking inspiration from the earliest friars in England.

Jacob W. Torbeck (Briar Cliff University Sioux City, Iowa):

The Path of Peace: Retrieving the Mystical Politics of the Divine Ideas in Bonaventure's Itinerarium.

"His place is in peace," Bonaventure writes, reminding his brothers of the words of the Psalmist. As Bonaventure reflects upon his own literal ascent up Mount Alvernia, he utters this word again and again, "pacem... pacem... pacem..." It is peace he hopes to bring to the friars through his mystical itinerary, which he hopes will lead them to peace through a conversion of heart that comes through contemplation. Intriguingly, Bonaventure would not be the last to turn toward mystical itineraries to put an end to quarrels – Nicholas of Cusa would attempt the same in the mid-15th century, drawing upon similar mystical sources to lead a small community in shared contemplation toward greater harmony. Why do these theologians expect mystical itineraries to be effective? What can these attempts at peacemaking offer similar quarrelling communities today? In this essay, I argue that the divine ideas tradition that supports Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* and other mystical exercises underpins an understanding of the creatures' relationship with their Creator that suggests a mystical politics of peace. A creative retrieval of this worldview in religious communities and academic settings has potential not just for the purposes of spiritual formation but for the work of peacemaking in wider ecclesial and societal spaces.

Panel Proposal: Tuesday 12 March, 14:50-16.20

Franciscan Observance in Portugal: contexts, materialities and (re)significances.

The Portuguese Franciscan Observance had several phases from the 14th to the 16th centuries and took on different forms, contents and proposals. Supported by royalty and privileged social groups, friars could build their convents and received the necessary resources for their life in community. At the same time, they were recognised as mentors, confessors and ambassadors of power. Their establishment in the territory is fundamental to understanding the way of life they have chosen and how they influence the communities that seek them out and around which they build their home, their convent. However, the Portuguese dissolution of the religious orders in 1834 led to the compulsory abandonment of these spaces of life and worship. Today, an understanding of the heritage values embedded in these places motivates policies that are geared towards their rehabilitation. However, this raises important questions: what should be done, and which strategies should be defined? What options should be taken? How can the spiritual legacy of these places be combined with contemporary meanings and uses, and hopefully new ones? These are some of the questions that arise and that stimulate a dialogue between tradition and innovation in the context of the legacy of Franciscan observance.

João Luís Fontes (New University of Lisbon) **and Maria Filomena Andrade** (Open University, Portugal):

To reform and to support: from the Franciscan observance to the strict observance.

Rolando Volzone (IEM - NOVA FCSH, Portugal):

Understanding the ecological and cultural systems of Franciscan observance.

Victor Mestre (Independent researcher at VMSA architects, Portugal) **and Sofia Aleixo** (CHAM – FCSH NOVA; EA and IHC-pólo CEHFCi – UÉvora):

Rescuing places of cultural memory, (re)building spiritual environments.