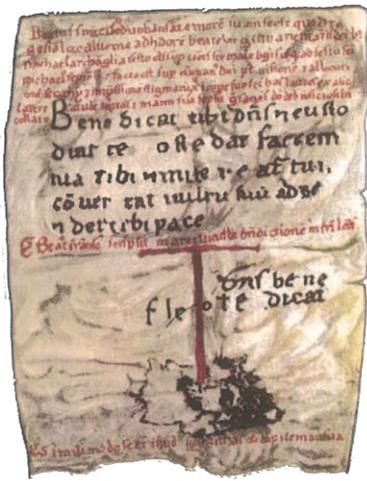


Bringing out of our storehouse the flesh and blood of our tradition in such a way as to feed future generations . . .

*The Prophetic Heart* (1994) — Joseph P. Chinnici OFM



## The TAU

From the time of Ezekiel the sign of the **TAU**, marked on the forehead of those turning to God in faith and repentance has long represented faithfulness and wholehearted love. It was used for healing and victory.

Pope Innocent III, evoked the sign of the **TAU from Ezekiel** when opening the Fourth Lateran Council in 1216 calling for the renewal of the Church, “*Mercy will be granted to those to bear the TAU, a mark of a life of penance and renewal in Christ.*”

And so Francis, who was present at the Council, wanted to sign himself with the **TAU**, and his brothers along with him. The **TAU** became the sign of the little Band’s mission: the preaching of faith and repentance (Rule of 1221:23).

Thomas of Celano, writing in 1252, notes, “The **TAU** symbol had, above all others, his preference. Francis used it as a signature for his letters, and he painted a drawing of it on the walls of all the cells.” One of these paintings, believed to be created by Francis, is found in the little chapel of Mary Magdalen at Fonte Columbo in the Rieti Valley where Francis wrote his Rule.

Another very precious document, housed in the Basilica of St. Francis, is Francis’ own handwritten blessing for Brother Leo — signed with the **TAU**.

*Above all else, the TAU meant mission for Francis: a mission to proclaim the Goodness of God by a wholehearted following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ because of whom all life is sacred.*



## Christ Our Teacher: Love’s Wisdom

Reflection by Anthony Carrozzo OFM



Rose window of Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris

**A journey through the Cathedral of Life to answer Jesus’ question,  
*Who do you say that I am?*  
and finding Bonaventure in the sanctuary.**

Years ago whenever I preached on **Matthew 16:13-16** I followed the example of the Apostles telling Jesus first who people thought he was, then turning to who they say He is. I have come to believe that the two questions are dependent, one upon the other, because I come to know Jesus with the help of others.

First, it was my family with their deeply rooted Italian heritage that was a tradition of images and stories with which my grandfather particularly loved to entertain us. When I started school it was the Allegany Franciscan Sisters along with the Franciscan priests who taught us about Jesus. Oftentimes, though, the priests had stricter images of Jesus than my family or the Sisters did. So my response to what I thought of Jesus was a bit confused but I know I preferred my grandfather’s images and stories.

Later, when I went to the minor seminary everyone seemed to be reading **Romano Guardini’s** *The Lord*, a beautifully written, often poetic book that focused on the God of revelation and His incarnate Son. It was easy to begin to see that the Incarnation was fundamental to Guardini’s theology and so it became important in my response to the second question Jesus proposed.

My novitiate year as a Franciscan was not very helpful here. We learned the Recollected way of Francis of Osuna and the virtuous way of David of Augsburg. Virtue and recollection overshadowed identity issues.



Romano Guardini

The theological study years are blurry, still the days of textbook theology that did not offer much other than “memorize and repeated theology.” The years of Vatican II surely changed our lives with their practices but our theology changed more slowly.

It was around this time that I encountered two selections that had a profound effect upon my answer to these questions proposed by the Christ. First it was Caryll Houselander<sup>2</sup> who had a life altering experience on the London Underground about which she says *“I came out into the street and walked for a long time in the crowds. It was the same here, on every side, in every passer-by, everywhere — Christ.”* Thomas Merton had a similar experience on the corner of Fourth and Walnut in Louisville. It broke down monastic walls for him.

Isn't this precisely what St. Francis experienced as he created **The Canticle of Creation**? Christ is experienced in all of creation. Fraternity is not a cloistered notion but an opening for us to discover Jesus everywhere, in brothers and sisters everywhere and in all of creation. What a difference this makes for our answer to Jesus' questions!

Then I stepped into the **Medieval Institute** in Toronto after years of formation and retreat ministry that the answers to these questions crystallized for me. I was looking for guidance in the study of St. Bonaventure.

**Walter Principe**,<sup>3</sup> a renowned Basilian theologian, agreed to be my mentor. We began to reflect together on one of Bonaventure's sermons **Christ the One Teacher of Us All**,<sup>4</sup> certainly not an easy read and I suspect even more difficult for young Franciscans to listen to as Bonaventure preached. And why did it have to be so complex?

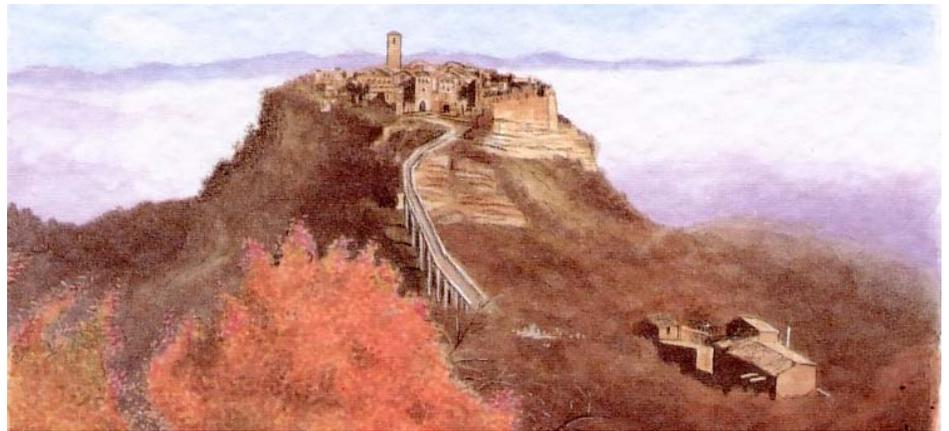


Walter Principe

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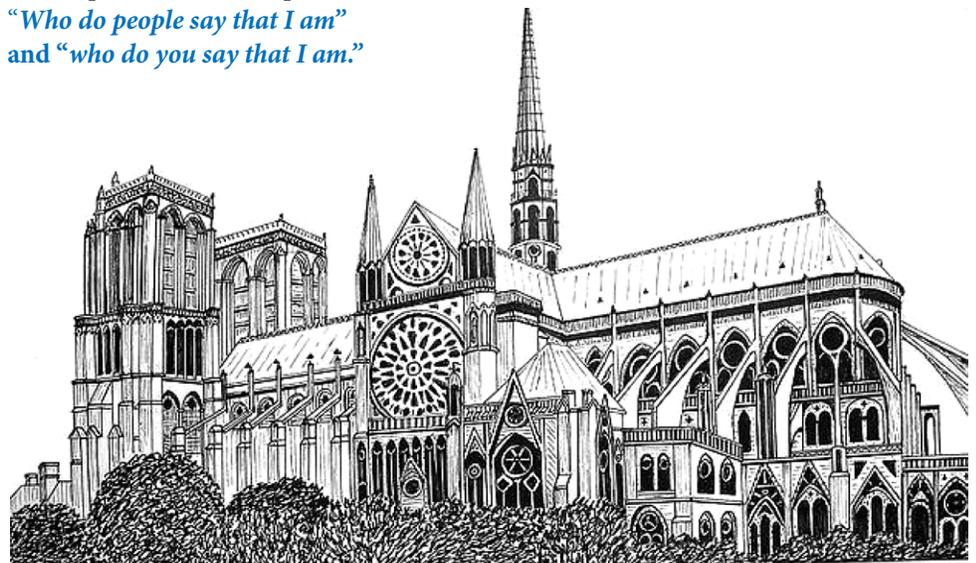
Years later, while watching **Notre Dame Cathedral** burn it dawned on me.



Bonaventure came from the smallest of mountain towns — **Bagnoregio**.

Now he was in cosmopolitan Paris. Talk about culture shock! Each day walking to class he passed what would become **Notre Dame Cathedral**. He must have lingered many a day to watch its construction. Eventually he roamed through its elaborate structure, stopping to pray at what had become his favorite spot. I suspect **Christ the One Teacher of Us All** is Bonaventure's Christological building, a place to linger and contemplate on the dual questions of Jesus

*“Who do people say that I am”  
and “who do you say that I am.”*



NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL  
PARIS

Etienne 5-10

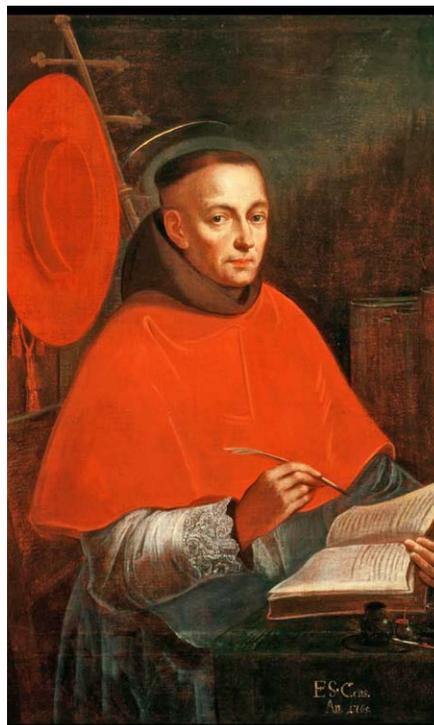


There are many shrines in this cathedral which Bonaventure visits while preaching this sermon but I prefer to *remain in the nave* to keep our focus on Bonaventure's Christology. The detours would distract us from this focus.

When I first began at the **Medieval Institute**, I must admit a certain disappointment that my mentor chose this text from among the many more beautiful and certainly more well known of Bonaventure's works. This was more complex than other more devotional texts as well. Perhaps you now have the same concern. But I trust that, like me, you will come to understand why Fr. Principe did this. It is clearly a work that conveys, perhaps better than any other of Bonaventure's works, our Franciscan Christology — only hinted at in more famous works like *the Soul's Journey into God* or *The Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* or even the poetic *Tree of Life*. It is certainly a text that is foreign to any of Francis' writings and prayers but it most assuredly expresses the deepest sentiments of both Francis, Clare and the early followers of the Movement. Even the well educated **Anthony of Padua** might have scratched his head if he had been there to listen to this sermon, but a sermon it was.

The sermon begins **Christ is the teacher**, a line taken from Mt. 23:10. It is very appropriate because Bonaventure is preaching to faculty and students at the University of Paris. So if we were to ask Bonaventure "Who is Christ for you?" He would respond "the teacher." Then we must ask "What does He teach us?" For Catholics we might too readily respond "The Creed." But creeds are human creations, most often created in response to heresies. Rather Christ teaches us because He is "the foundation of all wisdom" or to borrow from the Italian theologian Bruno Forte, He is "**love's wisdom.**" This is a very apt phrase for us to understand Bonaventure's Christology. Yes, Jesus is Truth not doctrine. This demands more than consent. It requires that we enter into relationship with the Truth who is the Christ. As in any relationship, as we live with and experience one another, we understand one another more and better.

As Bonaventure preached this sermon it must have dawned on his listeners, and now it dawns on us that Bonaventure is articulating a *living*,



### **From Thomas Merton**

In Louisville, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all these people, that they were mine and I theirs; that we could not be alien to one another even though they were total strangers. It was like waking from a dream of separateness, of spurious self-isolation in a special world.

This sense of liberation from an illusory difference was such a relief and such a joy to me that I almost laughed out loud ... I have the immense joy of being a man, a member of a race to which God Himself became incarnate. As if the sorrows and stupidities of the human condition could overwhelm me, now that I realize what we all are. And if only everybody could realize this! But it cannot be explained. There is no way of telling people that they are **all walking around shining like the sun!**

Then it was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts ... the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God's eyes.

### **Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander**



### From St. Bonaventure

Christ shares His existence with each and every thing: with the stones He shares existence; with the plants He shares life; with the animals sensation, and with the angels He shares intelligence. Therefore, all things are said to be transformed in Christ since, by virtue of His humanity, He embraces something of every creature in Himself when he is transfigured.

*Sermon 1 for Second Sunday of Lent on the primacy of Christ.*

### From Eric Doyle OFM

39 years ago, Eric Doyle OFM,<sup>5</sup> beloved Franciscan theologian from Canterbury, England, challenged:

*"We should immerse ourselves in our theological tradition and enter into fresh dialogue with it, until it becomes part of the very air we breathe and forms the structures of our vision of God, humanity, and the world."*

*"Saint Francis and Theology"*  
The CORD, 1982

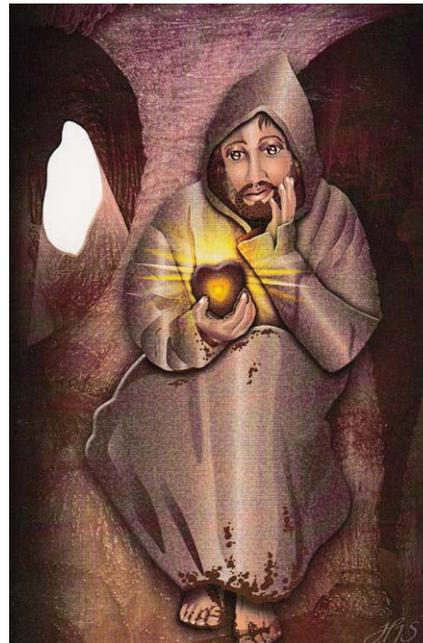
### From Gerard Manley Hopkins S.J.

I say more: the just man justices;  
... acts in God's eyes what in God's eyes he is — Christ. For Christ plays out in ten thousand places,/ Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his/ To the Father through the features of men's faces.

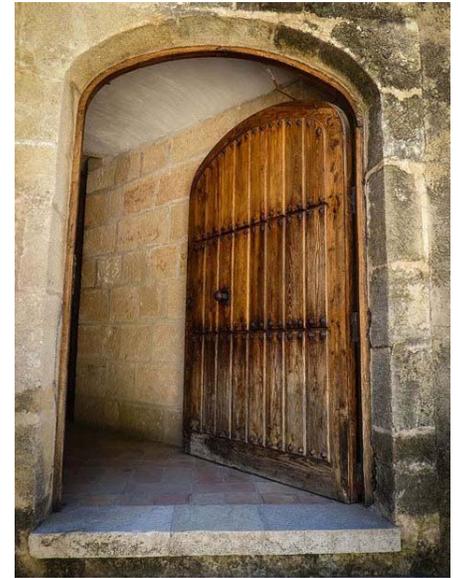
*"As Kingfishers Catch Fire"*

**vibrant Christology.** He wants to make clear that we grasp what he was preaching so he appeals to another Jesus image: *"I am the light (Jn 8:12),"* proclaiming *"He came into the mind as a light."* I have often heard students say that Bonaventure was never loved as Francis is because he was too bright. That brightness however reveals what Francis experienced through the Stigmata: total union with Christ, an implosion from within that expressed itself even in his body. Bonaventure's understanding of Christ is both outside himself and within himself.

**Franciscan Christology** is not theoretical even though theory helps us to understand it better. It is experiential. To repeat Forte's fortuitous phrase it is **"love's wisdom."** For knowledge **to become wisdom love is necessary and love must be experienced.**



**Bonaventure**, the teacher himself, does not want to mislead his listeners so he warns that *"a light can be obscured."* What is required is not "created intelligence" but "uncreated intelligence." This **wisdom** is a gift that needs nurturing and testing in an ever expanding experience **of fraternity.** Bonaventure would have none of contemporary piety that oozes "the Jesus in me loves the Jesus in you"



because we all live in Jesus. Where I live we have a very well kept *fish tank*. I often sit and observe the fish because the tank filled with fish presents a far better image. We are like the fish and Jesus is the water in which we live and breathe and have our being. Bonaventure concludes *"the light of created intelligence does not suffice for a certain comprehension of anything without the light of the eternal Word."*

Bonaventure then makes a significant addition: *"Christ is the teacher of contemplative knowledge."* He would not approve of mindless contemplation! Rather he preaches that Jesus is the **door** (Jn 10:9). Doors are used "to go in" and "to go out." With such an image he points out that the *going in* experience is an experience of divinity and the *going out* an experience of humanity. Contemplation unites our humanity with Jesus's divinity, once again pointing out not only an active contemplation but also a **Christology of experience through wisdom.**

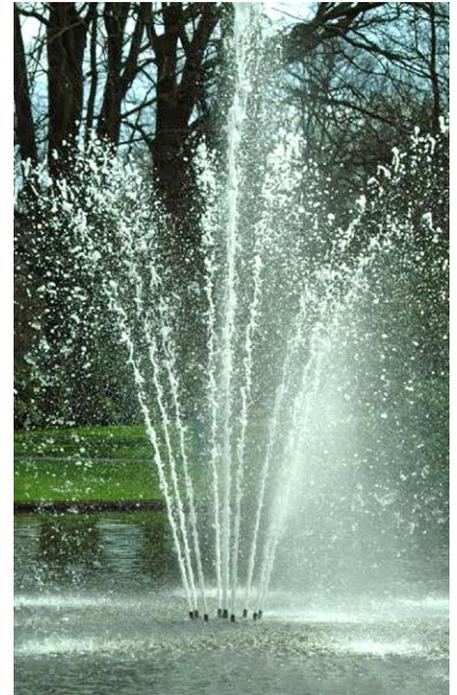
By now I hope you have become aware of how different this *Franciscan* outlook on Christology is from so many other approaches to the question. One cannot take a course in Christology and think he or she grasped it. One must *engage in it*, become part of it, be changed by it.

**Ilia Delio**<sup>6</sup> is among the most creative thinkers on the Franciscan scene today. She is no *repeater* of the Tradition. Rather she breathes *new* life into it through the uniting of faith and science. Of Teilhard de Chardin she writes “to grasp his ideas one must follow the threads of his tapestry which begins in his integration of faith and science.” The same can be said of Ilia. Her *newness* is due to this **integration** of faith and science within her *Franciscan* heart. She calls us to a life filled “with a sense of spiritual adventure.” She has surprised me for years.

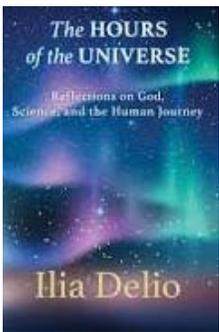


*that God is poor. It is not that God does not see our tears, but God too is weeping. Only a humble God who bent so low to pitch it all away in love can heal us and make us whole.”* How different this from scholastic omnipotence. With this new, highly Franciscan understanding of God, Ilia leads us into **christogenesis** which simply put is that there is “a *Christic dimension to all of life.*” So she offers us a new and exciting understanding of Christology which unites faith with science.

Ilia reminds us of that wonderful Bonaventuran image where God is presented as “a *fountain fullness of love,*” a love so immense that God bends low to embrace us where we are.” That fountain is overflowing, creating. She is right on target when she observes that we are best “*not (at) planned retreats but (at) unplanned contemplation that takes place anywhere and anytime — the alert mind in a dynamic world.*” Houselander and Merton, as we have noted previously, would certainly agree: Christ is everywhere. Graham Green’s whiskey priest would also agree: grace is everywhere.



As contemporary Franciscans we should embrace the vision that Ilia presents to us. Perhaps, we are living at a time when there is a new Bonaventure in our midst, not a medievalist but a faith-filled scientist and theologian. Her Franciscan heart is not to be overlooked.



I first read her work **The Humility of God** the essence of which she reiterates in her latest work **The Hours of the Universe**, writing “*it is not that God is deaf to the cry of the poor. It is, rather,*

### From Ilia Delio OSF

**The Stained Glass Window** — Bonaventure described the created universe as the *fountain-fullness of God’s expressed being*. As God expresses God’s self in creation, creation, in turn, expresses the Creator. We can compare the manifold variety of things in creation to the **stain-glassed windows of a great cathedral**. Just as light strikes the various panes of glass and diffracts into an array of colors, so too the divine light emanates through the Word and diffracts in the universe, producing a myriad of “colors” expressed in a myriad of things, all reflecting the divine light in some way.

*Ilia Delio OSF Simply Bonaventure. Page 60; Bonaventure, Collationes in Hexaemeron, XIII, 14.*



### From Caryl Houselander

I was in an underground train, a crowded train in which all sorts of people jostled together, sitting and strap-hanging — workers of every description going home at the end of the day. Quite suddenly I saw with my mind but as vividly as a wonderful picture, *Christ in them all*. But I saw more than that: not only was Christ in every one of them, living in them, dying in them, rejoicing in them, sorrowing in them — but because He was in them, and because they were here, the whole world was here too — here in this underground train: not only the world as it was at that moment; not only all the peoples in all the countries of the world, but all those people who had lived in the past, and all those to come.

I came out into the street and walked for a long time in the crowds. *It was the same here, on every side, in every passer-by, everywhere — CHRIST.*

*A Rocking Horse Catholic*

Permit me now to return to the images and stories that were very much part my Italian-American family. It was not an overly religious family but images of the **Sacred Heart of Jesus** were not only in my grandparents home but also in all their children's homes including my parents. I took them for granted until I was taking a course on the images of Jesus in an episcopal seminary in New York City. It was a small, congenial group where much discussion took place. In one class a student asked me about this image which she said repulsed her. The question was asked politely so I responded accordingly, suggesting that the image was significant in my family perhaps because it was a revelation of **love** for our immigrant family living in the hostile environment of World War II because the Italians were at war with the Americans. It led to a lengthy discussion that would be even more appropriate today in our anti-immigrant society. *Images matter.* They tell us much about ourselves and our beliefs. Images mattered to Francis as



well, so much so that he became an image of Christ for the people of his times and for us. This “Other Christ” challenged them and us to reflect on our new identity in Christ. But there is a challenge here for us ... for we must ask ourselves *what images are we projecting?* Are those the images we want to project? How can we improve the images we project?

Then there were the stories that my grandfather told me. Most frequently they were about friars who lived in the hills around the small village in which he lived. They came into town to preach and to beg. This was my initiation into the **Rule for Hermitages** long before I even knew such a rule existed. The work of our brother Andre Cirino has helped us to appreciate the value of this Rule. It also gives deeper meaning to Bonaventure's use of the **door** from which we can go in and out ... the door in our self-imposed hermitage into the world which is our cloister. Thus we gain a contemplative understanding of our birth-given humanity and gift-given divinity. Our Christocentricity cannot be reduced to a belief. As we leave the **nave of the Cathedral**, we go out into the world breathing in fresh, christ-filled air because we have answered Jesus' questions and through the answers we have come to experience anew our unique Franciscan identity, for **if we know who Christ is, we know who we are.**

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> **Romano Guardini** (1885 – 1968) — Influential figure in the liturgical movement of early 20th Century; Professor of Philosophy at University of Munich, 1948-1962; generally regarded as the father of the liturgical movement in Germany; among his “intellectual disciples” was Jorge Mario Bergoglio (Pope Francis) who cited his *The End of The Modern World* eight times in *Laudato si*.
- <sup>2</sup> **Caryll Houselander**. (1901-1954) Born in Bath, England was well-known for both her wit and her wisdom. With the depth and insight of a theologian, she was a popular Catholic religious writer, poet and modern mystic whose guidance and comfort to a generation of English Catholics during and after the two World Wars was well acknowledged.
- <sup>3</sup> **Walter Principe CSB** (1922 – 1996) — PhD, in Medieval Studies; theologian and historian of the faculty of the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, Canada. His work strengthened the ties between historical study and contemporary theology and philosophical thought.
- <sup>4</sup> **Christ the One Teacher of Us All**. St. Bonaventure (1217-1274) beautiful **sermon** based on text of Matthew 16:13-16. This is a substantive philosophical text which provides a useful introduction to the distinctive character of Bonaventure's philosophical thought.
- <sup>5</sup> **Eric Doyle OFM** (1938-1984) — beloved Franciscan theologian from Canterbury, England who died at age 46 in Guildford, England. One of the founders of the Franciscan International Study Center, Canterbury; renowned scholar of St. Bonaventure and faculty member of the Sacred Science Summer Program, St. Bonaventure University, NY for over 12 years.
- <sup>6</sup> **Ilia Delio OSF** holds the J.C. Connelly Chair in Christian Theology of Villanova University. Her doctorates are in Pharmacology (Rutgers University Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences), and Historical Theology (Fordham University, NY). Ilia is the author of 23 books, and founder of the Center for Christogenesis, an online spiritual and educational resource for the integration of science, religion and culture.

**AUTHOR:**

**Anthony Carrozzo OFM**, born in Winsted, CT, Friar of Holy Name Province, NY since 1960, has been a catalyst for re-vitalization within the Franciscan Movement since Vatican II's challenge to return to its founding charism. Most of his ministry has been devoted to preaching, formation and spiritual direction.



Director of St. Francis Retreat Center, Rye Beach, NH and teacher of Spirituality and especially the theology of St. Bonaventure, Anthony initiated many new scholars to the thought of the Seraphic Doctor.

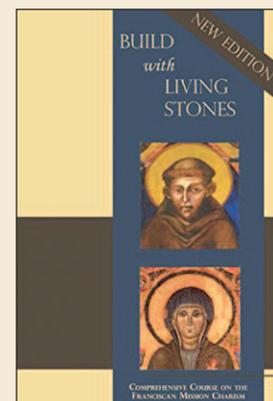
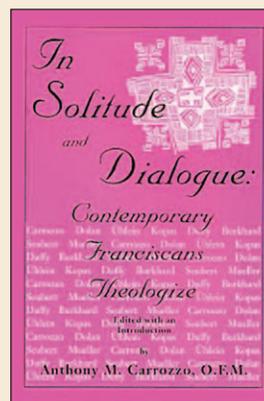
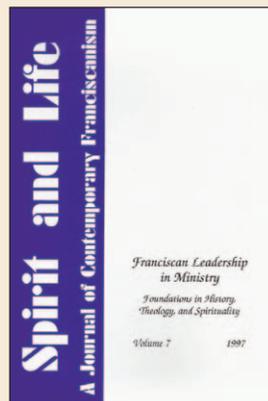
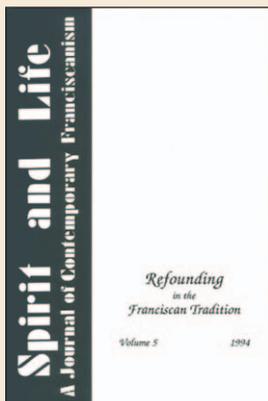
His nine years as the Minister Provincial of Holy Name Province, 1987-1996, gave special meaning to "Refounding" as the friars shared the challenges of his vision especially regarding new urban ministries. These years also witnessed a whole new energy of collaboration around the Franciscan Heritage within the Franciscan family. Anthony was instrumental in the remarkable 1992 Denver Symposium, "The Experience of Christ in North America," with distinguish keynoters, Rosemary Haughton and Robert Bellah.

During these years he also gave presentations for the Franciscan Federation TOR like the Dubuque, IA Seminar on "Spiritual Direction in the Franciscan Tradition; and the Seminar on Higher Education and the Tradition at Neumann University, Aston PA; for several Spiritual Centers including Aston, PA on "The Artist Within": Bonaventure's *Reduction of the Arts*, as well as his signature series on "Prayer in Ordinary Time" for the Third Order Regular Sisters of the Eastern Common Novitiate Program, Kearney, NJ.

After leadership ministry Anthony Carrozzo, was Vice President for Franciscan Charism at St. Bonaventure University, NY as well as Director of the Franciscan Institute, SBU. As such he initiated the valuable Franciscan Institute Forums held in Colorado Springs, CO each Spring. These 10 Forums deepened experience of the best of Franciscan scholars' publications on theology, (especially Christology), Mission, Scripture, The 3 volumes of *The Early Documents*, Clare Studies, Franciscan Moral Vision. A forum also presented the revised American version of the International Franciscan Missionary Correspondence course. Anthony chaired the editorial board of that revision, *Build with Living Stones*. Editor: Tom Blow OFM.

From 2004-2013, Anthony Carrozzo with Sister Mary Petrosky FMM and fellow friar, Tony LaGalbo, founded the Center for Franciscan Spirituality and Spiritual Direction from St. Francis of Assisi Church, NY . . . coming full circle from Rye Beach days. Since 2013, while living at St. Anthony Friary, St. Petersburg, FL, Anthony assists at the Allegany OSF's Franciscan Center in Tampa, FL and as chaplain in the Sisters' St. Elizabeth retirement home.

As Editor and Contributor, Anthony has published: *Refounding in the Franciscan Tradition*, *Franciscan Leadership as Ministry*, *In Solitude and Dialogue: Contemporary Franciscans Theologize*, *Build With Living Stones*, revised. Publications of The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, NY.



**ART: St. Bonaventure** – Studio of Johann Andreas Herrlein, 1765, in Friary of Frauenberg, Fulda, Germany  
**St. Francis – Heart** – Howard Schroeder. [www.PAINTEDPSALMS.com](http://www.PAINTEDPSALMS.com)  
**Sacred Heart** – Pompeo Batoni – 1708 - 1787

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