

BONAVENTURE

The Seraphic Doctor. 1221-1274. Seventh Minister General of the Franciscans. Contemporary of Aquinas, but why less famous outside Roman Catholic world? His theology has a different emphasis, distinctly Franciscan, a different attitude to Creation that makes him more significant for our time.

And Francis – Francis inspires whole of B's theology – simplicity, humility, poverty.

Life of St Francis – as exemplar of Christian life. To counteract prophetic extremism that threatened the order

A unified vision of theology. Intense philosophy – but “no knowledge without love, understanding without humility.”

THEMES

TRINITY – “Christianity is the religion of the Trinity”. What does the Trinity mean to us?

The Nature of God. A climax of a long tradition from Pseudo-Dionysius, to the Victorines and Thomas Gallus, becoming distinctly Franciscan. Love at the heart of all things. God's freedom to create. Circumcession. Relationship expresses God's nature. “God is all Good” is key to Trinity and Creation.

READING SCRIPTURE AND CREATION

“Scripture” includes the whole of creation. Three “books” – The Word, Creation, Scripture. The many ways of reading “the forest of scripture”. How do we “read” Creation?

THE NATURE OF CREATION

Creation is “a beautiful song.” What is our relationship with Creation? How can we see God in Creation?

What do we think of when we say “Nature”? What does NATURE mean to the 13th century mind? Francis's Canticle is a guide. Nature is everything in the “sublunary” (changeable) world. Everything that exists and that happens.

Creation is intimately related to God – a window rather than something separate. Things are emanations – but God has freedom. Creation is not made separate from God.

What are “created things”?

Exemplars. Vestiges.

Reconciling Platonism. Everything is an expression of The Word. (Duns Scotus would emphasise individuality.) Things express unity and truth by being themselves. All things are expressions of The Word.

Things have freedom to become expressions of the word. A hint of evolution - all things change, have potential.

Francis was someone who could read “the word of Creation”, “through the footprints impressed on things he followed his beloved everywhere.”

THE INCARNATION

A completion of Creation, to lead Creation back to God.

SPIRITUALITY

Combines the new idea of finding God in Creation with negative spirituality of Dionysius, Cloud of Unknowing etc. “The Souls Journey into God” – three stages. God in Creation, In the Soul, and to God alone.

THE TREE OF LIFE

An imaginative and affective involvement with the Life of Christ, a precursor of Ignatius.

ARTICLE ON TSSF WEBSITE

http://www.tssf.org.uk/attachments/article/213/Creation_in_the_thought_of_Francis_and_Bonaventure.pdf

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

A Franciscan View of Creation: Learning to Live in a Sacramental World (The Franciscan Heritage Series, Vol. 2) Paperback

by Ilia Delio

- Paperback: 80 pages
- Publisher: The Franciscan Institute; First edition (January 15, 2003)
- Language: English
- ISBN-10: 1576592014
- ISBN-13: 978-1576592014

Simply Bonaventure: An Introduction to His Life Thought and Writings Paperback

by Ilia Delio

- Paperback: 208 pages
- Publisher: New City Press (October 1, 2001)
- Language: English
- ISBN-10: 1565481615
- ISBN-13: 978-1565481619

Bonaventure: The Soul's Journey into God, the Tree of Life, the Life of St. Francis (The Classics of Western Spirituality) Paperback

by Ewert Cousins (Author)

- Series: The Classics of Western Spirituality
- Paperback: 384 pages
- Publisher: Paulist Pr (January 1, 1978)
- Language: English
- ISBN-10: 0809121212
- ISBN-13: 978-0809121212