

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.



The Artist Within

Anthony M. Carrozzo OFM

In her poem *The Face*, Sally Read¹ captures the infant Jesus and Mary gazing at each other in wonder. She writes

His body is swaddled head to foot,
But his face is a window: one small pool of light.
Lady, see the depth of his dark eyes. . . .
This locked gaze is what keeps God and man together.
It is true prayer: he holding fast to your face
like a constellated sky, you tumbling softly
into him with no lights but those eyes.

We are immediately struck by a mother and infant being mesmerized by one another with a *locked gaze* in which they encounter each other.

More than that, it is about our ability to see. How do we learn to see as this mother and child? To look into the eyes of another? It is far more difficult for us because we are born into a sinful reality which blurs our vision making seeing clearly problematic as St. Paul points out when writing to the Corinthians: *Now we see but a dim reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known (I Cor. 13:12).*





Stratsborg Cathedral

Creation and Humility of God

Francis rejoiced in all the works of the Lord's hand . . . with a feeling of unprecedented devotion he savored in each and every creature — as in so many rivulets — that Goodness which is their fountain source.

And Francis perceived a heavenly harmony in the consonance of powers and activities God has given them.

Bonaventure's, *Legenda Maior IX.1*



St. Bonaventure in his complex work *De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam*² shows us how this Pauline transformation from mirrors to reality takes place. He summarizes this for us in the *Breviloquium*: *Not only is grace given freely by God, it also conforms to God and leads to God as an end, so that the work that came from God might return to God (V:1, 6)*, so he begins this work with an oft quoted selection from James: *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above coming down from the Father of Lights (James 1:17)*. Bonaventure's theme in this work then is that what comes from God must be returned to God.



In his *De Reductione* Bonaventure leads us through this process of returning with us deepening our ability to see more clearly through different intensities of light: **(1) exterior light:** *God sheds His light on things which are external to the human person and intended for the needs of the body*, **(2) inferior light:** *light of sense*

knowledge, **(3) interior light:** *humanity is enlightened as regards the truth of life, the truth of knowledge and the truth of doctrine* and **(4) superior light:** *it leads to higher things by revealing truths which transcend reason and which comes down from the God of Lights*.

For many of us exterior light and inferior light are sufficient to become artisans of our spiritual well being. It is as if we remain satisfied to paint by numbers all our lives. This can produce many beautiful tints and colors but it will never reveal the uniqueness of the self. Yet many books for spiritual reading present us with this outer world where we learn norms and practices recommended to us by others to make us better Christians. Perhaps some will but they will never lead us to see *face to face* as Jesus and Mary do in the poem or as Paul foresees for us.

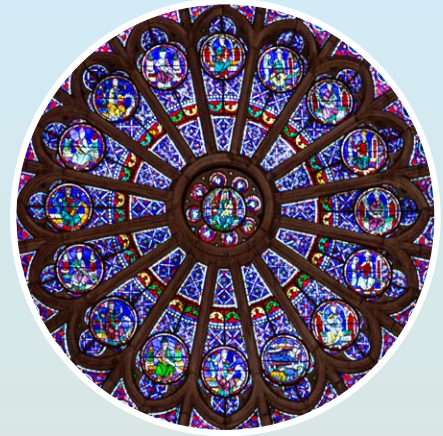


To do that we must move from **exterior** reality to see with our **interior** light. It is in this light that we begin to see and to sketch ourselves in the presence of the Christ within. For many of us who were brought up in a pre Vatican II Church we will discover a good deal of sin produced mainly by a guilt orientated spirituality. We identify ourselves as sinners so our portraits will be scarred and infested. We see now as Paul says *through a mirror* and as Bonaventure adds *The mirror of the external world put before them is of little or no avail unless the mirror of our soul has been cleaned and polished* (Itin: Prol, 4). So we clean and polish the image we are creating but it is to little avail as well.

While sketching in his presence we move almost unconsciously but *contemplatively*, perhaps because we have tired of the task at hand, into superior light where Christ places his hand over our hand guiding us to draw a true portrait of ourselves for it reveals to us how Christ sees us in our uniqueness and loveliness.

Bonaventure summarizes this: *For as long as our reason is turned toward higher things it is illuminated, cleansed and perfected as long as it gazes upon the eternal laws and the unchangeable character of divine power and equity, it is strengthened and made whole in the good.* (I Sent, art 2, qu 2).

The Gaze. I gaze at Jesus, Jesus gazes at me. We see now face to face. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we recognize Jesus as we sit at table and see one another.



Rose Window — Notre Dame

A Window to the Divine

**God the Creator appears
as an artist**

**Whose signature is
a beauty that**

Is both tender and awesome.

**God the Creator is
the Divine Artist**

**Who brings forth a world
that is fit**

**To open the human spirit
To beauty, goodness, and love.**

And for the eye of faith,

**The world which God
is even now**

Fashioning is truly

A window to the divine.

Zachary Hayes OFM





National Cathedral, Washington D.C.

Sketched Deep within My Heart

**“O spring like crystal!
If only, on your silvered face,
You would suddenly form
The eyes I have desired,
Which I bear sketched deep
within My heart.”**

**When John decries the destructive
counsel of inexperienced
spiritual directors, it is because
they cause their directees to
“lose the sublime image God
was painting within them.”**

John of the Cross
The Spiritual Canticle 12;11.12



So Paul says *when I was a child I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became an adult I put away the things of a child (I Cor. 13:11)*. Now it is time to put away the paint by number spiritual portraits and continue to sketch a true self portrait with Jesus.



But the **De Reductione** offers yet another stage: *ad theologiam*, returning to theology.

Today this may mean theological reflection or even more appropriately spiritual direction where we can unpack and name this process.

In another of Sally Read poem's "*Peter: The Transfiguration*", Peter reflects *we were not ready to see*. There is a readiness to see that would be appropriate for a person to unravel with his or her spiritual director. Some directed must first be freed of their guilt centered portrait before proceeding. Then perhaps Read's poem "*The Prophetess Sees the Christ Child*" clears the way forward:

**in the tight dark of fasting and prayer
I was earthbound like a seed,
feeding on waiting and the close art
of listening then this: the coming of him
in luminous flesh in her arms.
I dream him in darkness see him
now and will see him again.**

Anna never heard of the Bonaventuran process but it is clear from the poem that her life was one of *tight dark, earthbound, listening until Then this...embracing the child and seeing*.

The essayist Greg Gerke³ in his work *See What I See* reflects on art observing *Why we come to art in the first place is to enable an encounter that might in some way change us*. We have viewed the world of art from three diverse though overlapping perspectives: Saint Bonaventure's works, the poetry of Sally Read, and the Scriptures, all of which have, in the words of Gerke, *The overriding aliveness of a work of art, how it keeps speaking after time has gone by*.

With Jesus guiding us, we can project a work of art that can be alive because it enables an encounter that changes us and also those who see us face to face. We reveal Christ and the handiwork He has helped us draw.



Fountain Fullness

Bonaventure described the created universe as the fountain-fullness of God's expressed being.

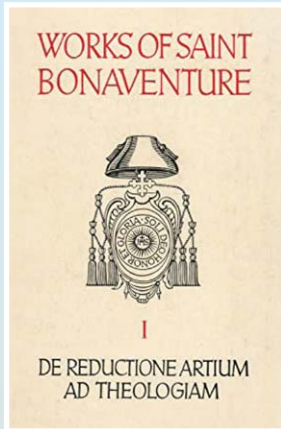
As God expresses God's self in creation, creation in turn, expresses the Creation. We can compare the manifold variety of things in creation to the stain-glassed windows of a great cathedral. Just as light strikes the various panes of glass and diffracts into an array of colors, so too the divine light 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, p. 60

Bonaventure, *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, XIII, 14





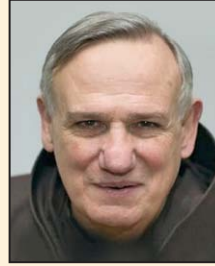
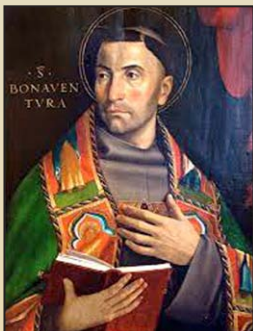
From *De Reductione Artium*, 26

This is the fruit of all the sciences,
that in all,

faith may be strengthened,
God may be honored,
character may be formed and
consolation may be derived
from the union of the
Spouse with His beloved,

A union which takes place through
charity... a *charity* without
which all knowledge is vain
because no one comes to
the Son except through the Holy
Spirit who teaches us all the truth,
who is blessed forever. Amen

St. Bonaventure



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.

As Director of St. Francis Retreat Center, Rye Beach NH and teacher of 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 of over 400 participants, "**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*.

Anthony's ministry at the Allegany Sisters' Franciscan Center of Tampa, FL as Spiritual Director and Retreat/Program conductor was recognized throughout the U.S. . . . As was his signature series on "Prayer as Franciscan" for the Eastern Common Novitiate Program of the Franciscan Federation, Kearney, NJ.

After leadership ministry Anthony Carrozzo, was Vice President for Franciscan Charism at St. Bonaventure University, NY, followed by 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 Mary Petrosky, FMM and fellow friar, Tony LaGalbo, founded the Center for Franciscan Spirituality and Spiritual Direction from St. Francis of Assisi Church, NYC . . . coming full circle from Rye Beach days.

Since 2013, while living at St. Anthony Friary, St. Petersburg, FL, Anthony has written several valuable reflections using the works of St. Bonaventure and others to cast a fresh light on their contemporary relevance and need. These articles have been published in:

- Spirit+Prayer, Malta: "Cathedral of The Heart," "Virtuous Life Lived in Fraternity," "Becoming a Prayer," "Experiencing The Transfiguration," Franciscanstudies.com
- Franciscan Connections, St. Bonaventure University, NY, "Images of Bonaventure," "A New Greccio," "Rebuilding Our Prayer Life," Franciscanconnections.com
- Franciscan Publishing, U.K., "Rebel with a Cause: Jacopone da Todi". Franciscanpublishing.com
- Tau Magazine, India, "Experiencing Our Rules."

Tau Series/TOR, Aston, PA and Rome, TAU #19 "Christ Our Teacher". www.osfphila.org/spirituality/prayer

Soon to come

- Spiritual Direction articles: "The Franciscan Approach to S.D," "Spiritual Direction for the Elderly." *Presence Magazine*. Sdicompanions.org
- "The Artist Within" — Tau Series/TOR, Aston, PA and Rome, TAU #22
- "Darkness Fell on The Land," Franciscan Publishing, U.K.

- "Possessed by Love," Tau Magazine, India
- "Bernardino," and "Eden Bound," Franciscan Connections.

Books published by Anthony Carrozzo are *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.

Footnotes and Credits

- ¹ Sally Read born in Suffolk, England is a poet, writer and former psychiatric nurse. A lifelong atheist, she converted to Catholicism in 2010. She lives with her husband and daughter in Santa Marinella, near Rome.



Among her works are *Night's Bright Darkness* (Ignatius Press, 2016) and *Annunciation: A Call to Faith in a Broken World* (Ignatius Press, 2019) www.sallyread.wixsite.com/godsgrandchild

- ² De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam — Work of St. Bonaventure (1221-1274) in which he outlines in Christ the close and interconnecting relationship of all the sciences. Christ is presented as the center of the Trinity, the Universe and the human person. He is Center, Mediator and Healer.

- ³ Greg Gerke, NY — Essayist, Poet, fiction and non-fiction writer is famous for his collection of essays, *See What I See*, a new and expanded edition, Zerogram Press, 2019, written for those for whom Art is a passion, not a profession or a pastime but a way of life. This collection celebrates the aliveness cultivated through literature and film.



ART: Baby in Swaddling clothes — Justine Nelson. jenedypaige.com
Anna in Temple — Rembrandt

This TAU Series . . . TOR #22

can be downloaded for free from The International Franciscan Conference, TOR Rome, Italy, www.ifc-tor.org
and on The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia website, <https://osfphila.org/spiritualityprayer>

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