



Second Issue | April 2025

Introductory Message

Greetings,

I hope that this message finds you well. It is with great enthusiasm that I present to you the second issue of Kuntatt for this academic year. What struck me most during the process of preparing this edition was noticing how the diverse backgrounds of both students and lecturers intertwined with the Theology they have studied, resulting in truly captivating pieces. To me, this highlights the invaluable role of the Theology Student Association. It serves as a vibrant platform where students from varied walks of life come together, share common interests, and exchange ideas on a variety of theological topics.

As we journey through the reflective season of Lent, many of the contributions in this issue delve into themes closely associated with this liturgical time. You are invited to explore a compelling piece by Prof. Rev. Martin Micallef, examining how the passion narratives in the Fourth Gospel can give us a new hope amidst suffering. Additionally, you can delve into the Vatican II Dogmatic Constitution, *Dei Verbum*. One can also admire a theologically rich and beautifully crafted art piece by our vice-president. For those intrigued by personal perspectives, a student completing her studies in Theology with Psychology offers her thoughtful evaluation of how this interdisciplinary course has shaped her understanding of faith. I hope that you find this issue interesting.

If you would like to be involved in the next issue of Kuntatt, or are a theology student and want to join the association, email us at ghst@um.edu.mt.

Enjoy,

Adam Baldacchino
GhST President 24/25

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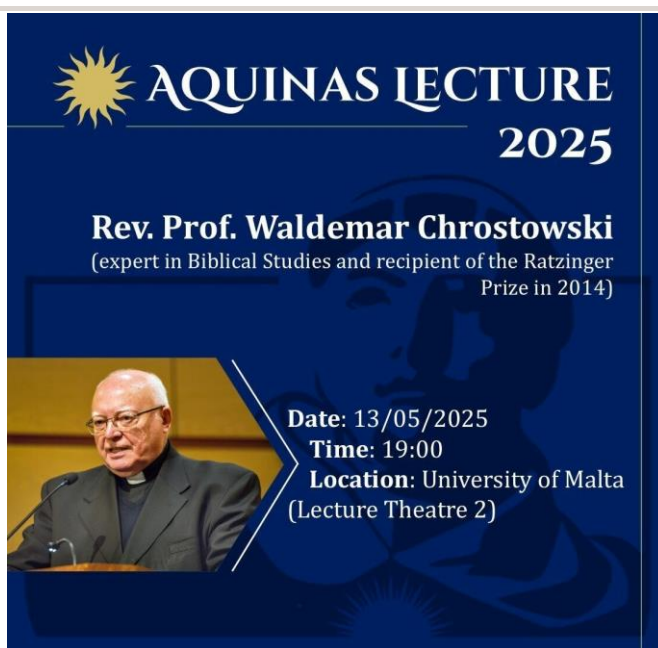


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**AQUINAS LECTURE
2025**

Rev. Prof. Waldemar Chrostowski
(expert in Biblical Studies and recipient of the Ratzinger
Prize in 2014)

Date: 13/05/2025
Time: 19:00
Location: University of Malta
(Lecture Theatre 2)

A Moment of Magisterium



Dei Verbum | Janet Sultana, B.A. (Hons.) Theology student

The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum* (DV), was promulgated by the Vatican Council II to clarify the Church's teachings on divine revelation, particularly the Bible. You can read the text [here](#).

In the first chapter, DV taught that God reveals Himself through multiple means: nature, historical events, prophets, Scripture, Tradition, and ultimately through Jesus Christ. Revelation occurs through both words and deeds, which are interconnected—God's actions confirm His words, and His words explain His deeds.

The Council affirmed in the second chapter of DV that divine revelation is transmitted through both Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition as one unified deposit of faith. The two are not separate or conflicting, but complementary, requiring equal reverence.

The third chapter of DV taught that Scripture is divinely inspired. The human authors wrote precisely what God intended, ensuring that the Bible contains no errors in matters of faith and salvation. The Council declared that "everything asserted by the inspired authors must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit," affirming both inspiration and inerrancy. However, the meaning of Scripture needs to be

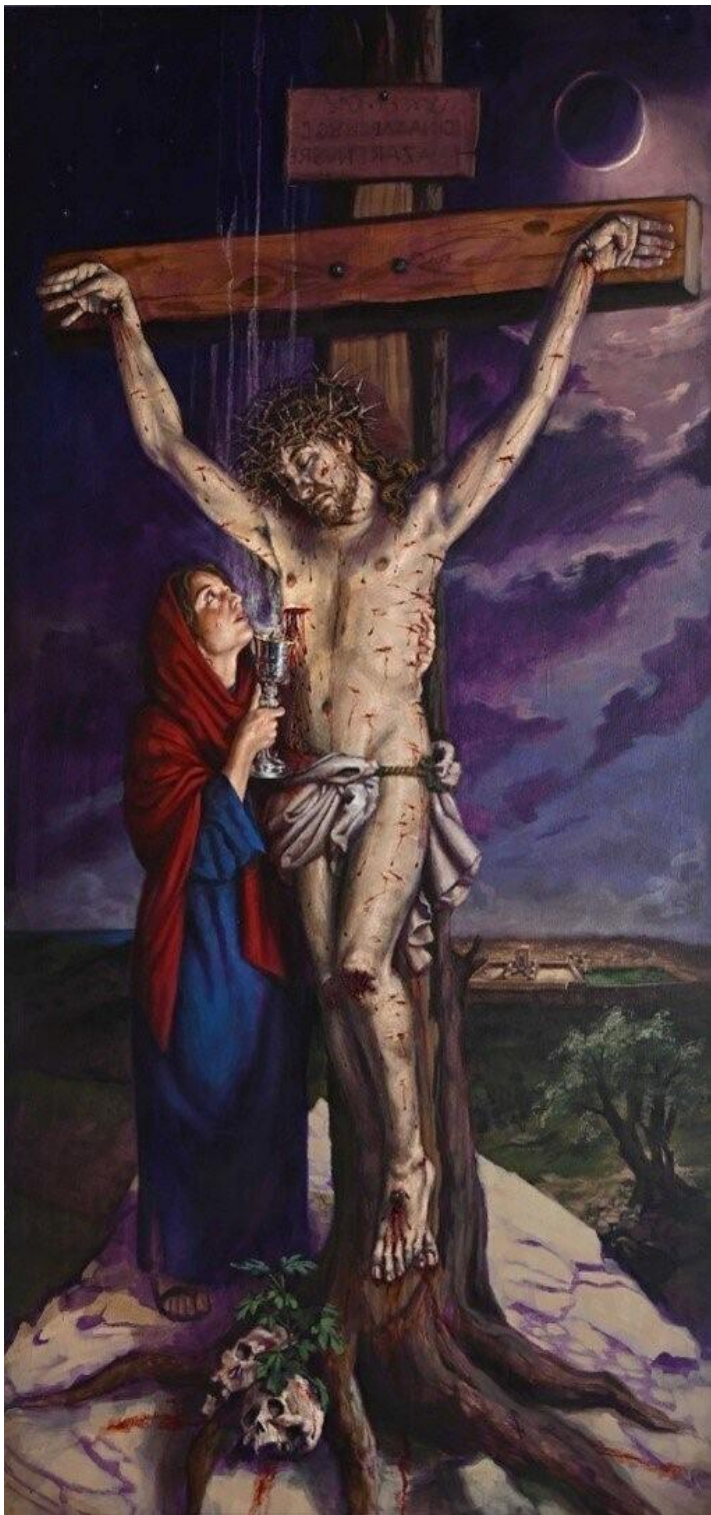
carefully examined through an understanding of the literary genres used and other literary tools which help clarify the meaning of a text given the time, culture and language it was written in. DV highlights the importance of seeing each book of the Bible in the context of the meaning of the entire Bible.

Chapters four and five speak about the Old and New Testament. The Old Testament remains relevant for all believers, revealing God's plan and preparing for Christ. The New Testament, particularly the Gospels, presents the fulfillment of this revelation.

In the sixth chapter, DV urged all Catholics—clergy, religious, and laity—to read, study and meditate on Scripture. It emphasised that Scripture should be at the heart of theology and spiritual life, with careful study guided by the Church's teaching authority. It called for a renewal in the way that Catholics consider the Bible, equating it with the Eucharist: "The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the body of the Lord" (DV 21).

Though the shortest of all Vatican Council II's constitutions, Dei Verbum went straight to the heart of Catholic life on many levels. It leads us as Catholics to ask ourselves how well we understand Scripture, what importance we give it and – most importantly – what impact it is having on our lives.

A Picture Worth a Thousand Words



The New Adam and Eve | painted by Marcio Ghigo with a reflection by the artist, B.A. (Hons.) Theology student

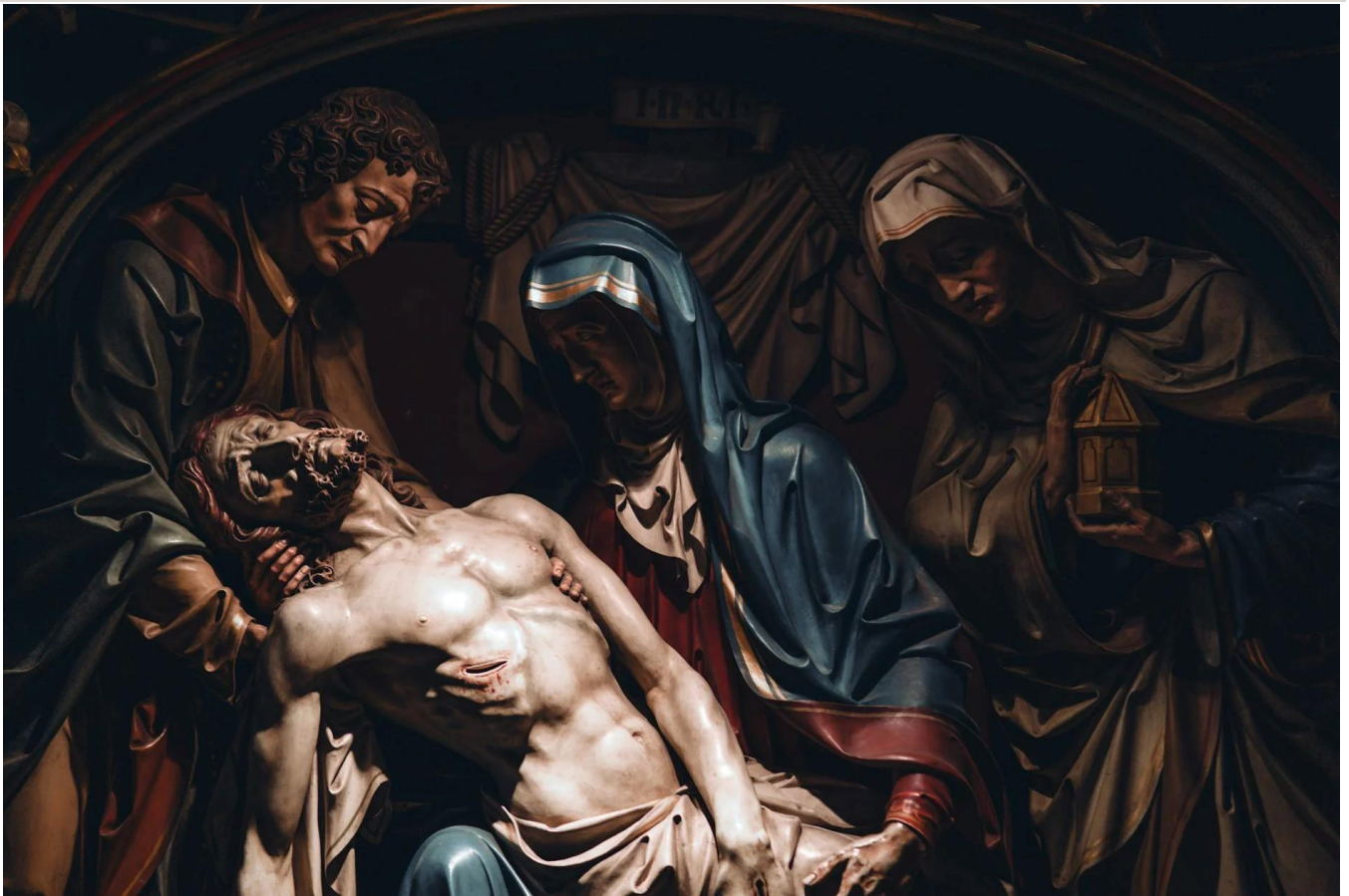
This painting is part of a cycle of sacred artworks in my first exhibition, titled “It is Finished”.

Saint Augustine described the Cross as the marriage bed of Christ, because Christ consummated his union with his Bride, the Church (Sermon 220, PL 38:1089). This imagery suggests that the crucifixion is more than an act of suffering. It is a divine marriage—an act of union and a new life. Christ was lifted upon the wood of the Cross and gave himself, just as spouses give themselves to one another in marriage, exactly as he declared in the Last Supper: “This is my body, given for you; do this in memory of me” (Lk 22:19–20). Therefore, the Eucharistic mystery is a continuation of this union, where the spouses offer their respective lives to one another. Pope Benedict XVI asks: “Is there a greater ‘mad eros’ (N. Cabasilas, *Vita in Cristo*, 648) than that which led the Son of God to become one of us, even to the point of suffering, as if they were His own, the consequences of our sins?”

This image of union is further emphasized by the presence of Mary at the foot of her crucified Son. She is not only the Mother of Christ, but also the mystical figure of the Church—the New Eve—“standing beside” the New Adam. (Jn 19:25). Just as Eve was formed from Adam’s side, so too the Church was born from the side of Christ. As blood and water flowed from His body, so too the

sacraments of the Eucharist and Baptism flow from the chalice to give life to the Church. Like marriage, this mystical union bears fruit. The Beloved Disciple, John, is born—a model for all of us to be reborn through the love between the new Adam and Eve. When Christ declares, “Woman, behold your son,” (Jn 19:26) he is literally announcing the spiritual fruit of his sacrifice. Every Christian, reborn in Baptism, is a child of this mystical marriage.

Therefore, the crucifixion is not merely a place of death or an ending, but the very place where Christ weds His Church. Here, we find no legal contract, but a sacrificial gift. The Eucharist is thus nuptial. It is a celebration of this divine marriage, where Christ’s words continue to renew His union with the faithful of every age: “This is my body, given for you” (Lk 22:19)



Hope Amidst Suffering | Prof. Rev. Martin Micallef

The passion narratives which form the longest section in each gospel, are not just a historical event that took place over two thousand years ago; they are also the fulfillment of God's plan for salvation foretold in the Old Testament; the ultimate expression of the Son's obedience which he maintained till the end (Jn 19:30); the Father's "command" to the Son to lay down his life (Jn 10:18); the "cup" he had to drink (Jn 18:11); and the "hour" during which he was distressed (Jn 12:27). Ultimately, they are the last mode of revelation: "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me" (Jn 8:28).

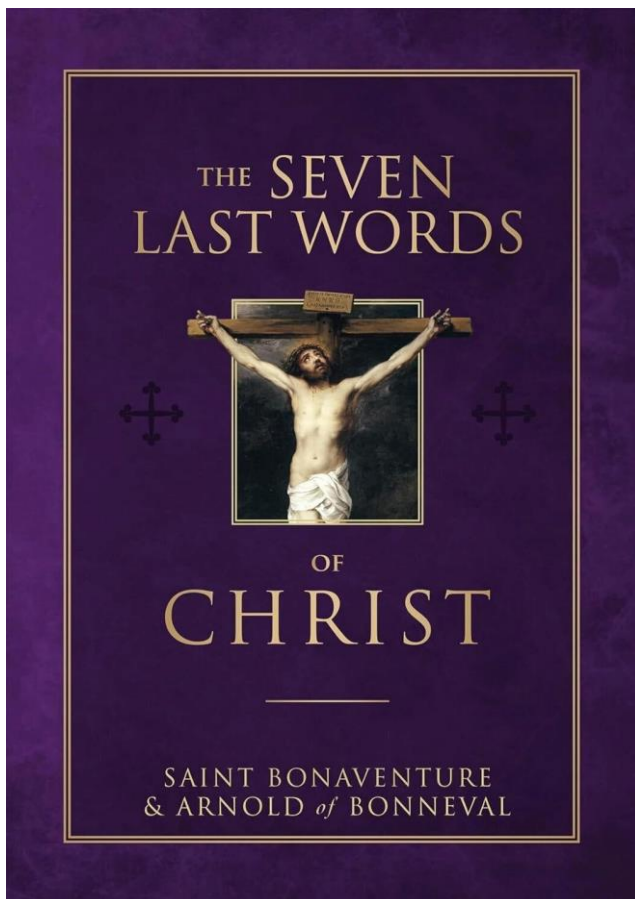
As readers of the Gospel, we are invited to engage in the world and the systems of values contained within these narratives, including the image of God and his relation to human suffering. The theological conversation about God and suffering was evidenced in a special way by the Shoah during which massive suffering was inflicted during World War II, and raised challenging theological questions, such as: where was God in all this?

Theologians were forced to think about such issues in a renewed way, insisting that God's transcendence is realized in his pain and suffering for humanity which contrasts the concept of an impassible God that was developed in Christian theology with the aid of Greek philosophy. "The Deus impassibilis is a God without heart and without compassion, a cold heavenly power" (Jürgen Moltmann, *In the End – The beginning: The Life of Hope*, trans. Margaret Kohl [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004], 70). In so doing, these theologians tried to enable others to relate to God in the face of unspeakable suffering.

Such theological categories, however, remain incapable of defining the mystery of God who is faithful to us. We should remain aware of our theologies of suffering and to allow our own perspectives to talk with God to offer lessons on sacrifice and hope. “I believe in You, God of Israel, even though You have done everything to stop me from believing in

You ... I bow my head before Your greatness, but will not kiss the lash with which You strike me” (Yossel Rakover, quoted in Daniel Harrington, *Why Do We Suffer?* [Franklin/Wisconsin: Sheed & Ward, 2000], 1).

Reading Nook



The Seven Last Words of Christ by St. Bonaventure and Arnold of Bonneval

| Tyrone Camilleri Galdes, B.A. (Hons.) Theology student

At the very culmination of His earthly ministry, having reached the pinnacle of His life-giving kenosis, Christ uses His cross as a pulpit to deliver His most powerful sermon yet, written in His own blood. The seraphic doctor St. Bonaventure and the Benedictine abbot Arnold of Bonneval provide profound insights into these final utterances, breaking them down into an accessible format that enables deep spiritual reflection.

These are words that have nourished Christians for two thousand years, and reflecting upon them helps the reader return to the foot of the cross, partaking in a feast of spiritual insight. This book offers a powerful meditation on Christ's sacrifice and it should be on any Christian's "to be read" list this Lent.

Thinking Out Aloud



Reflections on Studying Theology | Anna Mifsud, B.A. (Hons.) Theology with Psychology student

When we reach middle age, we often reflect on the paths we have taken and the dreams we have set aside. This long process of inner discernment led me to embark on the journey of pursuing a B.A. in Theology and Psychology. As a mature student, I had to undergo an eligibility interview, where I was advised to surround myself with a strong faith community, as seeking the truth could lead to doubts in my faith - and indeed, it did.

Studying theology has presented challenges I had not anticipated. Throughout this journey, I have wrestled with doubt and embraced the concept of *fides quaerens intellectum* - faith seeking understanding. Surprisingly enough is the fact that I am confronting my doubts through a historical lens. While the struggles of the Church Fathers and early Christians were often shaped by political contexts and the formation of a new identity for the people of God, they also reveal a deep resolve in those willing to die for their faith. This historical resilience has caused me to reflect on my own beliefs and faith journey.

My aspiration is to become a religion and ethics teacher. However, the realization of how limited my knowledge of my faith and its practices was, has inspired me to go beyond merely covering the school syllabus. I aim to impart a fraction of what I have learnt during this course, because I understood that the lack of knowledge risks the compartmentalizing of what individuals learn and how they adapt it to their daily lives.

Embracing Christianity brings "Joy and Hope" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1965) through living faith in everyday life, but it also comes with challenges, which can be overcome by keeping our focus on God - the God within us, who is shaped in our hearts through our paths of life: the joys and sorrows, the loneliness and the meaningful relationships, the light and the darkness. Whenever faith fails me, I go to my God

and pray: God, help me. If I abandon my faith, to whom shall I go? (Jn 6:68) And God answers: "So, do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." (Is 41:10)

A Window into The Soul



Franciscan Spirituality | Dustin Balzan, M.A. in Spiritual Companionship student

To some, perhaps the first things that come to mind on hearing the term 'Franciscan Spirituality', would be a scrawny St. Francis running in the fields, a bird-bath statue, the unsteady gait of Friar Tuck in Robin Hood, or all three. Franciscan Spirituality is actually rather surprising: it gave rise to some dogmatic elements in the history of the Church but is also an evolving and dynamic Spirituality that updates with the exigencies and signs of the times.

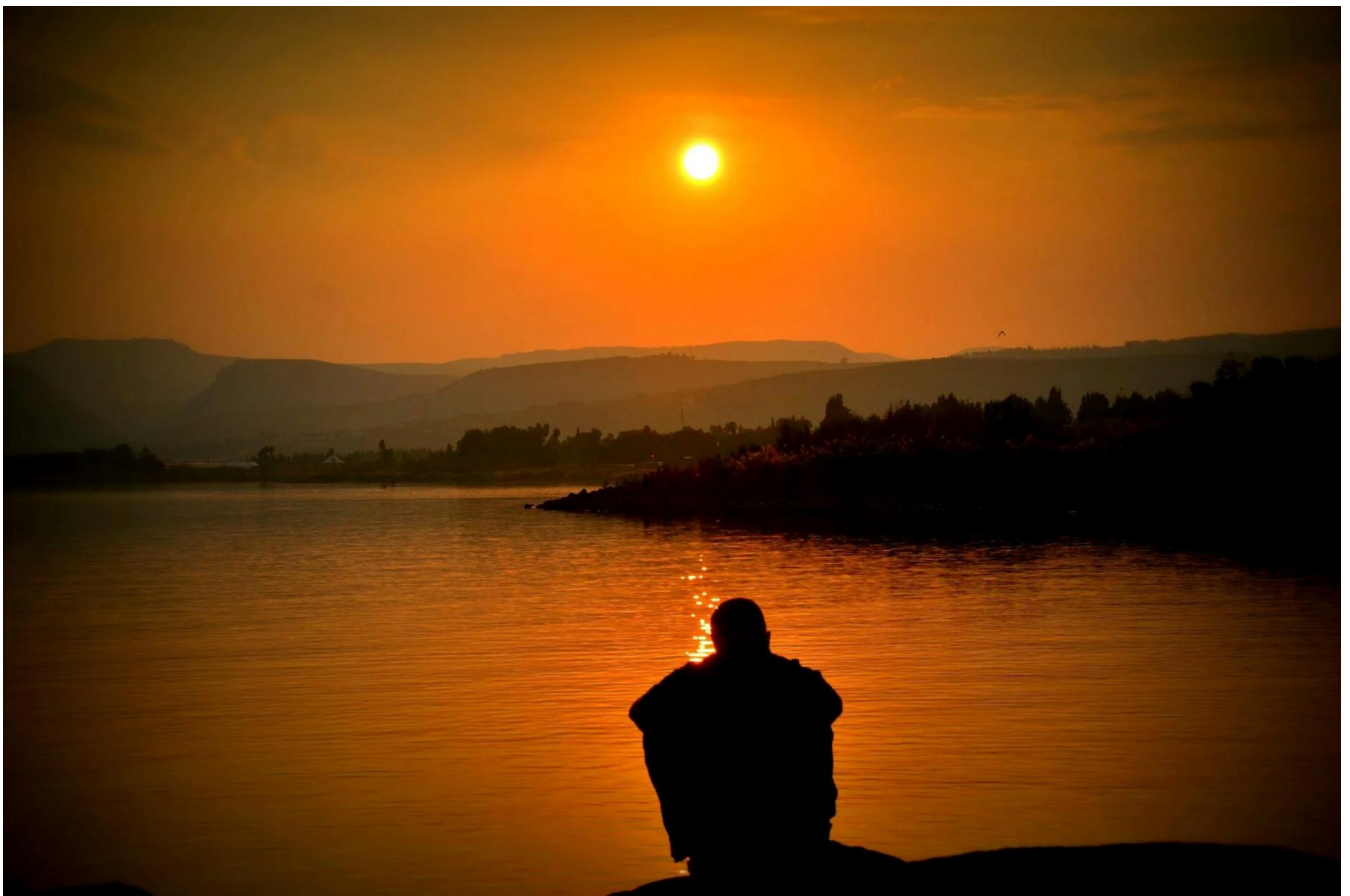
This Spirituality is really Trinitarian, with a pivotal aspect of Franciscan theology being the absolute primacy of Christ, as a member of the Holy Trinity, with a profound emphasis that God actually 'willed' his incarnation, and not in reaction to any deed that the human race is responsible for. Christ is a revelation of God himself in the world that we can touch and experience. Through the Franciscan 'Canticle of Creatures', God the Creator is praised through all creatures, animate and inanimate, and those who are steadfast in God's will are blessed, as the latter get to experience God. This spirituality thus invites all of us, being created in the image and likeness of God, to live our actual life, consecrated or secular, in a Christ-like manner.

This Spirituality has a special reverence to the Church, surely not for its faultlessness but because it is on a fraternal journey to perfection, as we are called to be; the Church created and led by the Holy Spirit. It would be of value to mention the phenomenon of St. Anthony of Padua, the Evangelical

doctor of the Church. St. Francis was never prepared for the reality that the simple group of mendicant brothers had to have in their midst such a theologian and preacher like St. Anthony, but trusting the Holy Spirit, this gave rise to the famous diminutive message or 'ticket' as most know it, where Francis consented St. Anthony to preach as long as it did not interfere with the spirit of prayer. This small message speaks volumes about Franciscan spirituality; with its emphasis on prayer, Franciscans are really itinerant contemplatives in action. It is really an invitation for mysticism, in that it has to be personal, experiential and undoubted.

If you are interested in learning more about this Spirituality, a good text to start from is the Testament of St. Francis, a text written from the heart of the Saint on his passing, a genuine testimonial of the mystical union he experienced. You can find the text [here](#).

Questions?



Why is the Eucharist called the “source and summit of ecclesial life”?

Lumen gentium, one of the four constitutions promulgated at Vatican Council II, famously calls the Eucharist “the source and summit of ecclesial life”. The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains this [here](#). The Eucharist is that toward which all the sacraments and all the works of the church are oriented. In this sense, it is both the source which animates the church as well as the communion which it strives to imitate. The Eucharistic celebrations, which have continued uninterruptedly for two thousand years, challenge us to accept that we are radically loved and send us out, with the final ‘Go, the mass is ended’, to share this unconditional love with others. This is not possible through an act of the will but by the gift of grace.

Dulcis in Fundo



From [Inherit the Mirth Cartoons](#)

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