

Module Title:	Soul's Journey into God/Praying with Francis and Clare
Module Code:	441FSJP
Level:	4
Credit Rating:	20
Duration:	Student Learning Time: 200 hours
Teaching Hours:	40 hours
Academic Responsibility:	Andre Cirino OFM, STM

Module Aims:

This module delves into an examination of the mystical theology of Bonaventure's ancient text *The Itinerarium Mentis* (259) and seeks to connect Bonaventure's theology to that of Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi. An exploration of the prayer experience of Saints Francis and Clare is included, situating some prayer forms in the context of Franciscan Sources. An experience of each of these prayer forms with a view towards integration into the student's own prayer life.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

1. Show the development of a Franciscan theology within the Franciscan intellectual tradition
2. Recognize what makes Bonaventure's theology Franciscan and Identify basic concepts of Bonaventure's theology
3. Comprehend elements of Bonaventure's mystical theology in order to have the foundation to read and examine Bonaventure's other mystical writings
4. Have an awareness of traditional Franciscan prayer forms and situate these forms within the context of the Franciscan Sources, i.e. Understand and know how to use St. Francis' *Office of the Passion*
5. See how these prayer forms relate to the Franciscan charism; distinguish between meditation and contemplation in the Franciscan tradition
6. Begin to appreciate the experience of solitude necessary for one's prayer life

Indicative Module Content:

This module begins with power-point introduction to the life of St. Bonaventure through art and literature in order to provide a context for the study of this work, followed by an in-depth examination of the content of his mystical journey as it unfolds in this text. Basic

concepts such as the coincidence of opposites, his use of *speculum*—mirror image, and *summum bonum* will be examined as well as his nature mysticism in creation itself and also in the process of sense perception, looking at God outside the human person. Then the presence of God within the human person—soul mysticism—will be considered from the operation of the three human faculties—memory, intellect and will. Also the presence of grace and the hierarchic operations are treated. Then a consideration of the God who is transcendent, beyond—what may be called “God Mysticism”—as Bonaventure treats of God as Being and Good. In this module, five approaches to Franciscan prayer are considered:

- *Meditative prayer* based on the guidance we find in the life and writings of Francis.
- *Contemplative prayer* as cultivated by Clare and mirrored in her biography and writings.
- Biblical/liturgical prayer typified by the rich text we know as St. Francis’ *Office of the Passion*.
- *Prayer of solitude* and silence as proposed in Francis’ *Document on Solitude*.
- The creation of *personal prayer forms* in the Franciscan tradition.

Learning and Teaching Strategies:

Students will be taught by Lectures, Power Point presentations, group discussions, and an experience of prayer forms examined during the module on a four- day weekend together at a retreat centre or monastery.

Assessment:

This module will be assessed by two of the following:

- 2,500 word essay
- an equivalent interview examination
- an equivalent class presentation
- book review

Illustrative Bibliography

Armstrong, R., Hellmann, W., Short, W.,(1999–2001).	<i>Francis of Assisi: Early Documents The Saint, The Founder, The Prophet</i>	New City Press
Calisi, Maria (2008)	<i>Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition</i>	Franciscan Institute
Cullen, Christopher (2006)	<i>Bonaventure</i>	OUP

Cirino, André (2010)	<i>The Cross Was Their Book: Meditations on St. Francis' Prayer Before a Crucifix</i>	<i>Tau Publishing</i>
Delio, I. (2004)	<i>Franciscan Prayer</i>	St. Anthony Messenger Press
---- (2001)	<i>Simply Bonaventure</i>	NCP
Martignetti, Richard (2004)	<i>St. Bonaventure's Tree of Life</i>	Rome, Quaracchi

Journals

Bartoli, Marco (2010)	"St.Clare: Beyond the Legend" <i>St. Anthony Messenger</i>	
Brunelli, Delir (2002)	"Contemplation in the Following of Jesus Christ, The Experience of Clare of Assisi," <i>The Cord</i>	