

THINKERS AND *Blinkers*



“

The real “me” is what I am inside: my beliefs and my behaviours which I'm willing to manifest when there is nobody watching me or when I go to a place where nobody knows me

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BONAVENTURA

“

Inauguration speech

No one can afford to ignore or be blind to its computations. What is awash in the newsrooms, social media, religious conventions, and above all in many scientific, political, and economic debates is nothing but...

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Interview of Fr. Chiso from page 13

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EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

We are proud to present to you the inaugural issue of our thinkers and blinkers magazine which showcases the diverse voices and interests of our students and lecturers. In this issue, we have explored a wide range of topics, from the students and lecturers and it features a vocation story of one of our priests in the campus.

We believe that our magazine serves as a reflection of our community, highlighting the unique experiences and perspectives of our students. This issue also includes the rector's inaugural speech for the academic year.

Our gallery section celebrates the creativity of the editors and individuality of our students some caught unaware and others aware.

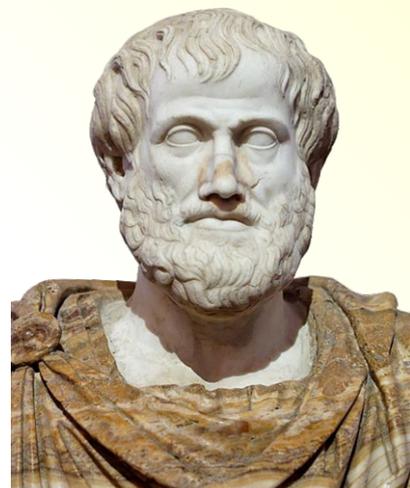
As a university magazine, we understand the importance of providing a platform for critical thinking and intellectual exploration. We hope that our publication inspires you to engage with the world around you and to think deeply about the issues that matter most.

We would like to extend our gratitude to our talented team of writers, editors, and designers, who have worked tirelessly to bring you this first edition. We hope that this is just the beginning of a long and fruitful journey and we look forward to continuing to share our stories with you.

Sincerely

Zunza Brandon OFM

EDITOR



2023-2024 – ACADEMIC YEAR INAUGURATION SPEECH

In the sacred aura of the opening Mass and the commencement of the academic year, our esteemed Rector delivered an impactful address. Against the backdrop of this ceremonial occasion, the Rector's words assumed a global significance, shining a spotlight on the theme 'Sustainable Instruments of Peace in a World Menaced by Climate Change.' With unwavering determination, the Rector underscored the imperative of fostering awareness about climate change, transforming the speech into both a compelling call to action and a declaration of our shared responsibility.

Mine is a Reflection on the theme of the day: Sustainable Instruments of Peace in the World Threatened by Climate Change!

This morning's convention officially marks the beginning of the 2023-24 Academic year. It is, therefore, fitting that we mark it with a deserving awareness. Our particular operations and activities as an institution fit into a bigger context of the globe into which we daily thrive to safeguard our space. As we usher a temporal framework or a time cycle, it is essential that we do so in view of the universal perspective. It is no longer an issue restricted to certain echelons only but it has become a trending issue; climate change or global warming. No one can afford to ignore or be blind to its computations. What is awash in the newsrooms, social media, religious conventions, and above all in many scientific, political, and economic debates is nothing but climate change or global warming. Some might not be able to discuss the reality of climate variability eloquently but they are feeling its impact intensely.

In the past and even currently, various conventions have been deliberating on the same issue and how it can be responded to both individually and collectively. Both

theoretically and practically. In as much as there are calls to take action, there is equally a call to come up with the orthopraxis and methods to respond to the impending threat posed by global warming.

As philosophers, we are not terraced in this campaign; neither are we nudged to the peripheries. We are instead invited to the fore together with those outstanding voices of different proponents from different walks of life. How can Philosophers make a viable and sustainable contribution to the fight against global warming?



We are invited to use our philosophical persuasion to draw people to focus on the looming threat in a syllogistic manner. A more appealing form of thinking that is cleansed of biases and myths. In short, we are called to verify the logical correctness of global warming.

On the other hand, philosophers are called to submit and admit that some of the traditional philosophical substructures and theories need to be reviewed and retested for their relevance. For instance, the 17th-century philosopher, Rene Descartes who is renowned for being the initiator of modernity, in his Cartesian ontology is known for establishing life sciences that were like the emerging physical sciences. In his philosophical submissions, he emphasized strongly the idea of an animal machine. This idea postulated that living things are nothing but just “inert matter organized in a complex way.” This consequently assumed that of all the mattered beings both living and non-living, only human beings have in essence a substantial soul of a distinct nature, thereby making humanity essentially the only respectable species among many. Implicitly, nature living and inert form part of the world of mere objects that are at humanity's wanton disposal.

Inquisitively, Descartes' perception of nature is questioned. His disregard for nature is alleged to contribute to the promotion of the utilitarian use of the environment which has led to the current multi-threatening climatic prescriptions.

As custodians and perpetrators of philosophical traditions, we are confronted with a reality that needs

our honest review, a reality that calls for a Copernican revolution. The idea of promoting anthropocentrism is being challenged. Placing man at the center of ecology has proved futile. This therefore means that man needs to dislodge himself from the centre of the ecological underpinnings and place himself at par with all other members of the ecological web. A position where “a philosophy of totality that integrates humans with living organisms and inert beings as a whole without granting them the status of superiority.”

In his philosophical reflection on Climate change, a Belgian philosopher and Biologist, Bernard Fritz asserted that “humanity is in a state of debt. Year after year it consumes more resources than nature can provide. This overconsumption has a direct effect on climate change...” Fellow humans, there is a looming danger that none of us can escape but at the same time, all of us can curb its impact. As a learning community of St. Bonaventure University, I invite you to take heed of this alarming call. Let us incorporate measures to mitigate global warming in all our operations. Let us have a friendly attitude towards planet Earth.

As we sit down to research, let us research more on how best we can leave a viable legacy for future generations. Let us make sure that our time here will take matters of climate as a preferential option.

As the year unfolds, be assured that this university will support you in your studies, in your religious formation, and in your general well-being. The teaching staff is ready to disseminate knowledge



and the formators are geared to take you through all formative drills. The administration promises you their availability in all matters of progress. As we are marking the beginning of the second term of our mandate in administration, we wish to promise you that there will be progress in our studies. New systematic methods will be availed and we will continue to improve our infrastructure to meet your needs. Our request to you is that you may be malleable during your time here and responsible learners and religious brothers. May this academic year be a different one, let's all make the best of what we get in contact with.

I finally welcome all the first-year student brothers to this university. I officially hand over to you the academic and religious formation torch. I say to you all, Arise and shine for it is your time to do so. Remember fortune knocks on a man's door once in life. This is your chance, make use of it. To all the new lecturers, new formators, new administration staff and ancillary staff, I welcome you all. The same goes to all the returning students, the veteran lecturers and staff, I say *aluta continua* you are the ones who make this university great.

With these words! I declare the academic year 2023-2024 Open!

I thank you and God Bless you!

Friar **Alfigio Tunha, OFM.**
RECTOR


Dear Students and Lecturers.

We hope this message finds you well and brimming with creativity! It's that time of the year again when we come together to showcase the talents, thoughts, and stories that make our school community truly special. Yes, we're talking about the second edition of our beloved school magazine, and we need YOUR voice to make it extraordinary!

Whether you're a budding poet, a storyteller with tales to share, a keen observer with insightful articles, or an artist ready to breathe life into the pages, we want to hear from you. This is your chance to contribute to a publication that captures the essence of our school experience.

Those who wish to write their articles are encouraged to do so in advance, before the 14th Of February. We so much appreciate your contributions.

Yours Fraternally
Zunza Brandon OFM
Chief editor

NEGLIGENCE FOSTERING GLOBAL WARMING



Friar Nicholas Weke Odongo OFM Conv
Philosophy 3 (2021-2024)

Pope John Paul II, in his Encyclical Faith and Reason, proclaims that faith and reason are like two wings that work together to reach the absolute truth. They work together in that, neither faith nor reason precedes the other. Faith directs reason to reach the absolute truth. Therefore, it will be biased to talk about the universe, particularly the earth, without reconciling Faith and Reason (Theology and Philosophy).

God created the world and all in it and saw that it was good. He created man in his likeness to take care of all other creatures. Because we men are corrupt, we have failed in this responsibility. It is evident because currently, we live in a world full of different challenges and threats to human life. Our world today is full of environmental, social, political, and financial problems. These problems primarily, arise from human activities, in the process of striving to find his or her essence. As Sartre states, “Existence precedes essence.” We exist naturally to create our

essence which is not predefined. This leads us to the question, who is a human being?

Philosophically we understand human beings as an impossible possibility that cannot be fully comprehended through natural reason. However, in the impossibility of human beings, man can be explored to some extent. In this process of studying human beings, we come to the realization that man has a free will that is naturally endowed giving him or her - ontological freedom. Though this freedom is not generally accepted in the political domain, it is an entity of man. Sartre asserts that “human beings are free but everywhere in chains.” Though man is free, he or she has to be responsible. Therefore, in all our actions guided by free will, we should take full responsibility for the consequences.

Responsibility entails self-consciousness and awareness. Human beings should be fully conscious of their actions and project the consequences that might come with them. This is why Aristotle stated that human beings should not be controlled by the appetite but by the intellect. Intellect gives us the capacity to reason and project the consequences of our actions. This is because ideally, man in his or her transcendental nature, should struggle to go beyond his or her corporeal actions. Corporeal actions are mainly appetitive. These actions include the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and overpopulation among others in fulfilling the daily needs of the flesh. These activities, for example, the burning of fossil fuels emits CO₂ to the atmosphere which in turn destroys the ozone layer. As a result, there will be direct sunlight radiation on the surface

¹Pope John II, *Encyclical Letter: Fides Et Ratio*, (Rome: Paulines Publication, 1998), 1.

²Jerusalem Bible, Genesis 1:1-2:15.

³Samuel Enoch Stumpf, James Fieser, *Socrates to Sartre and Beyond: History of Philosophy*, (McGraw Hill Education, 2012), 476.

THE FOUR CORNERS OF MY ROOM

of the earth leading to global warming. Additionally, trees, through photosynthesis, consume CO₂ from the atmosphere which in turn helps to sustain the ozone layer to prevent direct radiation. Therefore, the lack of forest conservation gradually leads to global warming.

Furthermore, in the study of human beings, we also realize that man is a transcendental being, that is, in the material nature, man strives to go beyond the limits of time, space, and history through the intellect - the spiritual part of man. Intellect is superior to the appetites of the body and controls them thus giving man the capacity to reason and judge actions. To this end, man can evaluate the consequences of an action before acting to come up with a proper reasonable judgment. If human beings could put this into play, they would realize the need for environmental conservation. Similarly, they will come to realize the problem caused by unexamined actions and how those actions affect the present and future generations.

Finally, it is worth noting that, there is an urgent need for environmental education and campaigns to awaken people who are unaware of the benefits of environmental conservation. Mass actions like debates on global warming should be promoted and encouraged at all levels. Institutions should take full responsibility for promoting such public awareness. Besides all these, writing habits on climate change should be encouraged and supported in all institutions to help in promoting environmental care. Remember, it is my duty, it is your duty, it is our duty to ensure that the environment is taken good care of at all costs.

Only the four corners of my room knew mess I was getting into each time I lock the door. I was once upon a time a brilliant child with sharp brains and a high I.Q everyone looked up to me and believed in me thinking all was cool. I would dawn in my white shirts looking smart as I walk in my pointed shoe, who would tell I needed help cause only my room knew I was turning into a fool. A fake smile was ever on my face, as... I... tried hard to face myself but no redemption was found yet it only got worse. I never accepted that I was addicted, the bottle became my best friend till things got complicated. I started with 2, then 3,4,5,6 it was more and slowly I couldn't count and the problem grew big such that I couldn't fix. It got worse when I started stared depending on a brown ended stick lightened with fire on the end. When I couldn't confidently stand in front of people minus sniffing some white substances that I would call ken. (Cocaine) nobody to help me cause only the four corners of my room could watch the drama, they say even walls can talk but oh no mine kept my secret. In all this my addictions got worse my sensual appetites got intense but the guilty conscious never left me cause at this stage I was turning into nuisance. My personal confidence dropped to zero I could only feel free when am in my room cause there I was my own hero.

Now my life is destroyed I can't stand on my own I keep asking myself why I was born I keep looking back to the past, wondering where the good old days have gone how a pretty life that I once enjoyed has been stained , Will I ever find the way? Is the question that I ask myself.

Poem by
Innocent Kondwani Soko

⁴M. Heidegger, Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics, tr.it., Silva, Genova 1962, 275-276. Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre*, 477.

⁵Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, (North Chelmsford: Courier Corporation, 2012), 21.

⁶N. Abhagnano, *Introduzione all'esistenzialismo (Introduction to Existentialism)*, (11 Saggintorc: Milan 1968), 29.

⁷Ronald C. Kramer, *Carbon criminals, climate crimes*, (New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 2020), 27-33.

⁸N. Abhagnano, *Introduzione all'esistenzialismo (Introduction to Existentialism)*, 29.



THE CATHOLIC UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ITS RELEVANCE TO MODERN SOCIETY

Social justice is a core principle within the Catholic faith, rooted in the belief that all individuals have inherent dignity and worth. In today's modern society, the Catholic understanding of social justice remains relevant and provides guidance for addressing the pressing issues of our time. This article explores the Catholic understanding of social justice, its foundations, and its implications for modern society.

The Catholic understanding of social justice is deeply rooted in Scripture, particularly in the teachings of Jesus Christ. The Gospel calls for love, compassion, and justice for all people, especially the poor and marginalized. This call remains relevant in today's world especially in Africa where the children of God in most countries are leaving under oppression. Christ teaches us how we can be catholic in such scenarios e.g. fighting for the right to vote. The principles of social justice are also informed by the Church's rich tradition and the writings of various Catholic theologians and scholars.

At the heart of Catholic social teaching is the recognition of the inherent dignity of every human

person. In modern society, where human rights violations, discrimination, and inequality persist, the Catholic understanding of social justice reminds us of the importance of upholding human dignity and promoting solidarity. It calls for a society that values and respects the rights and worth of every individual, regardless of their race, gender, socioeconomic status, or any other characteristic. However, promotion of such rights and their practice must bring the church into disrepute and scandalize the world

In a world marked by economic disparities and poverty, the Catholic Church's emphasis on the preferential option for the poor remains highly



Friar Benedict Sibanda OFM
Philosophy 3 (2021-2024)



World philosophy Day



School development project



Random shoots



First year team



Salesians basketball team



First years class



SBU basketball team



Second year team



Third year team

INTERVIEW

Join us as Fr Patrick Chiso OMI unfolds the chapters of his vocation story, a narrative that intertwines academia and spirituality in a unique tapestry. In this brief yet powerful interview, discover the roots of a divine calling that has shaped [his] life and enriched the lives of those around him.

**A**

Can you share some insights into your personal background and the journey of your formation as an Oblate priest?

I was born and grew up in Lusaka. I was a member of the Sacred Heart Parish (now Good Sheperd) in Kabwata. I was confirmed in 1994 and immediately thereafter Sr. Joan Murphy, a sister of the Irish Religious sisters of Charity, invited, nah more like nudged me to start teaching a confirmation class of teenagers. I remember feeling inadequate for the task. It was a difficult yet fulfilling work. The difficulty stemmed from the fact that I was young (I was 16 or 17), and most of my students, though a bit younger than me, were from my age bracket. Anyway, a good time was had by all. I count Sr. Joan as one of those who helped me discern towards the priesthood.

At the parish I belonged to the following groups: the Altar Boys Club, the Youth Group (organized at the Small Christian Community level) and the Vocations Club. The latter concentrated and somewhat clarified my desire. Sacred Heart Parish was very dynamic, faith filled and I believe that

the general atmosphere of the Parish lent itself to interest in the vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life. A good number of young people from my era showed interest in the priesthood and/or the religious life.

For formal education I went to Burma Road Primary school and then onto Kabulonga school for boys. I graduated in 1990. I enjoyed my school years, especially the secondary school years. At secondary school, I was fascinated by science in general but by scientific experiments in particular. Through science I realized that reality was not what it seems to be at face value. This led me to be inquisitively skeptical. Inquisitiveness has stayed with me such that I see reality as a phenomenon (in the Kantian sense). In this way, reality is something that is shown, or that which is revealed, where the revealed and revealer are not radically divorced from each other. This is important as a worldview because my place in reality, then, is not a passive one. It is as a phenomenon that we (me, the other, nature etc.) push the boundary of that which is by embracing

nonbeing as a condition for the creative progression of creation in general and of humanity in particular.

In a grade eight history class I had a mini crisis of faith. The first topic we had in this class was "Ukutendeka" or the beginning. In this topic, we were introduced to the theory of evolution. In the textbook there was a compelling drawing of the progression of primate evolution. To a naïve 16-year-old, that there was a gradual evolution of organisms, from simple to complex ones was flabbergasting to say the least. That and the fact that this seemed, at that time, to go against Genesis Chapter 1 which speaks of an instantaneous creation through God's command. This only added to my skepticism.

B

Priesthood and the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

The seemingly normal and usual life of an altar boy, a member of the youth group etc. gradually led me to consider the vocation to the priesthood. I am convinced that another thing that added to this gradual awakening desire was the selfless dedication, friendliness, and holiness of the clergy and religious men and women of our parish. That and the mystic of the liturgy especially the high liturgies with all the plumes of incense smoke and the bells. The realization that God could have been calling me, I have to emphasize, was not a straightforward path rather it was a haphazard but steady path.

Over the years I had considered other vocational paths with accompanying career choices. For some time, I had thought of pursuing something in chemistry and/or teaching or both. Towards the end of my school years, I had at the back of my mind a career in Mass Communication. I was drawn to Mass communication because of the emerging technologies in the field. Beyond that I was captivated by the transmission of images and of voice. To think that this transmission was a product of the theory of waves or something similar was miraculous to me. This and other

scientific marvels were for me epistemological curiosities. By the end of my school years, I had more or less made up my mind that I wanted to be a priest. What remained was which order would be suitable for me.

For a month in 1988, I lived at Koinonia, a communal farm in Lusaka West. The farm was established by a Comboni priest, Fr. Renato "Kizito" Sesana. The idea of the farm was simple: live according to the ideals of Acts 2:44-45. There, a group of mainly young people, some single and others married, worked the land and lived a community life where they shared everything. I was very much touched by this lifestyle and sincerely believed that it was my calling. The members of the community looked content. I believe Koinonia, the farm and the ideal, was my first attraction to the religious life.

In my search for a compatible congregation, I attended my share of come and see programs. I am not sure what I was looking for at that time. Nevertheless, in 1989, a certain priest from our parish asked me to inquire with the newly arrived Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (the Oblates had arrived in Zambia in 1984). He had known them in the United States and he said that they were good men and good missionaries. I got in touch with them and the reception was very warm. Later that year, we travelled to Sancta Maria Mission in Lukulu, Western Province, for a vocations' workshop/retreat. The mission is beautifully situated on the banks of the Zambezi River. Needless to say, that I was sold, not only by the beauty of the mission but more so by the ministry the Oblates were engaged in. For the week that we were there, one could see that these missionaries loved the people and were really close to them. The motto for the Oblates is: evangelizare pauperibus misit me (he has sent me to preach the good news to the poor. The hospitality shown to us on the workshop/retreat by the scholastic brothers from Lesotho was incomparable to the other come and see programs that I had been on.



Family and Friends attitude

I was asked whether my family was supportive of my intention to become a priest. In the main, they were supportive but there was a bit of resistance and I was openly encouraged to consider another vocational and career path. This was not a pleasant time. I do understand this resistance. It is not normal to be a priest, that is why it called a call and a sacrifice. I can volunteer another rationale for the reluctance by my family. They could have had doubts that this human being who they had known, seen grow, a flawed human being for that matter could stand in the gap between God and God's people. This thought could have been humbling and sobering. For me it is still a humbling realization. In persona Christi (in the person of Christ) sounds fancy but just a casual reflection makes one shiver: at the table of the Eucharist the reconciliation of the cosmic powers is happening. Who am I to be at the center of this act. I can only say with Simon Peter, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"

The reluctant impasse was only resolved through the intervention of the then Parish Priest Fr. Edgar Pillet, a straight-talking Missionary of Africa. Nevertheless, when I entered the order, there was and has continued to be support and acceptance from my family and friends.



Service and Ministry

I joined the Missionary Oblates in 1991 as a Pre-novice (Postulant). After two years I went to the novitiate. I had a profound experience at the novitiate which has stayed with me. I always say jokingly that if there was a time that I was a saint, it could have been in the novitiate. I professed religious vows in 1994. After the novitiate, I did scholasticate formation and philosophical and theological studies in South Africa and in Rome. The emphasis in this phase was a holistic academic formation. I enjoyed many of the courses that is in both in Philosophy and in Theology. Many people are surprised when

I tell them I think that theology is the more sublime of the two. I say this without betraying my "team". I also appreciate my scholastic years for the many friendships and fraternal bonds created with Oblates from all over the world.

I was ordained a priest in the jubilee year 2000. My first assignment was St. Lawrence of Brindisi in Mongu diocese. After that I moved to our Pre-Novitiate (postulancy) in Lusaka as a formator. Subsequently, I went to our scholasticate in South Africa as formator and lecturer in philosophy. After that I went as pastor to St. Michael's Parish in Kalabo of the diocese of Mongu.

After Kalabo, I went to the United States. There I worked in a parish and then I was assigned to a specialized ministry called "Mission to secularity". This ministry was premised on the number of people who do not claim to be of any religious persuasion (colloquially termed the unchurched). The ministry endeavored to reach out to such people through creative and innovative ways which were not linked to parish life. The concept is simple and clear but in practice it is difficult. It needs a lot of creativity and the courage of our watchtower brothers and sisters. After this ministry I went on to upgrade my academic qualification. Armed with a qualification in philosophy, I came to Zambia and began teaching philosophy at St. Bonaventure University.



Challenges in Formation and the Priesthood

Priesthood, though a very a rewarding calling, has its own challenges. The challenges in formation were mainly at the beginning. For example, there was a challenge of how to transition from a home/family culture to a religious/formation culture. I had my own images of what formation and religious life was all about. It was mainly a naïve and a holy "stupidity" which comprised of an initial idealism of how to live the evangelical counsels. This "stupidity", now I realize, was necessary because often I have to go back to this idealism to remind myself of what

attracted me to the priesthood and to the Oblate religious life. In addition, the years of formation brought with them the challenge of the balance between academics and religious life formation. This challenge is perennial. I smile when I hear students complain that they cannot balance studies and community life.

The priesthood itself has its own challenges. As a young priest and a young religious, it was obvious that I was counter culture. Above, I said that the priesthood is not normal. Normal here is equivalent to the cultural normative. In fact, I would dare assert that in no culture is the priesthood normative. The priesthood and religious life are counter intuitive or precisely counter natural survival instincts. As such the "normal" is always pulling me towards itself away from the vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. Without a recourse to the original and renewed commitment, the normative vortex can swallow one's vocational direction.



Given a second chance--

If I were to go back, I would still choose to be an Oblate of Mary Immaculate. This is where I am fulfilled in my person and in my ministry. As an Oblate priest, I have been evangelized by the poor as much as I might have evangelized them. In short, I am happy among my brother Oblates (I hope the feeling is mutual!). Oblates are famed for fraternity among themselves and hospitality towards all. Eugene de Mazenod, our holy founder, at his deathbed, left us a legacy: among yourselves charity charity charity at all times, and outside, zeal for the salvation of souls.



Philosophy and ministry

My love for philosophy started in the Pre-Novitiate. We were introduced to philosophy as a preparation for later studies. The Catholic Encyclopedia was the go-to reference at that time, not only for philosophy but for other puzzling issues in science, theology etc. In my

scholastic years, the love of philosophy grew. I was inspired and encouraged by my confrere and mentor, the late James Datko OMI. It didn't hurt that he gifted me some of his prized philosophical books including all the volumes of Frederick Copleston's History of Philosophy. In addition, he bequeathed me a three-volume collection of the Summa Theologica.

There are many instances where philosophy has been of help in my life as a religious priest. This is more so in my preaching and teaching of the faith. Faith, as a deposit of what is believed, is actually logical because through the utility of philosophy it asks you to consider the alternative which, in many instances, is illogical or inconsistent with what we know (what we believe in, in this case) about God and God's interaction with us. In addition, philosophy has helped me to come up with a non-dualistic view of my ministry. The unitary ministry has two sides: Service at the table of the Eucharist and service at the table in the market place. In this, the two tables are a seamless whole, where the space between the sacred and the secular is minimal. Here I have to acknowledge the influence of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's "The Mass On The World". This is chapter one from his book Hymn of the Universe. In it, Teilhard de Chardin writes:

Since once again, Lord — though this time not in the forests of the Aisne but in the steppes of Asia — I have neither bread, nor wine, nor altar, I will raise myself beyond these symbols, up to the pure majesty of the real itself; I, your priest, will make the whole earth my altar and on it will offer you all the labours and sufferings of the world.

I seek to have such a vision of my role as a religious priest. A priest who becomes an offering for the suffering of the other and the for imperfections of the cosmos, The challenge for me to move from an intellectual appreciation of these truths to an affective appreciation leading to an incarnated praxis. The telos of all this is well expressed by de Chardin himself:

Once upon a time men took into your temple the first fruits of their harvests, the flower of their flocks. But the offering you really want, the offering you mysteriously need every day to appease your hunger, to slake your thirst is nothing less than the growth of the world borne ever onwards in the stream of universal becoming.

This universal becoming is particularized in the individual beings of the cosmos wherein the becoming is in fact Being as such, marching with ever increasing justice towards other creatures but all marching towards heaven. This indeed is the recapitulation of all things to God through Christ, the Christ in whose stead I act. Nachepa ine.

H **Teaching Philosophy at St. Bonaventure as a religious priest**
I have been at St. Bonaventure University for 5 years and these years have been full of joy and faith filled experiences. Overall, the students and the staff make the place conducive to pursue the intellectual vocation. When I arrived, the class sizes, I have to admit, were intimidating. I had to adjust.

The fact that I am a priest and that most of our students are studying for the Catholic priesthood, definitely informs my approach to the material that I present. To begin with, knowledge or strictly speaking the creation of knowledge, as an intersection of the mind and the "external" world (it can be argued that the mind is part of the external world too, though this is a discussion for another day) is a privileged moment and can be described as a moment of, in a manner of speaking, spiritual awakening. As such there is some aura of creatio ex-nihilo for which the removal of sandals is warranted.

In addition, often I try to help the students realize the theological implications of some of the philosophical concepts which we encounter in class. In this way, Reason and Faith (Philosophy and Theology) are truly complementary and serve to lead us to the comprehensive truth, who for us

is the human being, Jesus the Christ. To get to this person, both preambles and articles of faith are essential and both are truly illumined by a philosophical leaning education. As such, in class discussions, we try to push the discussions towards implications of statements students make so that they become accustomed to think through their claims. I am convinced that one who is accustomed to reflecting on their statements would be a good homilist. Not only that, I think this attitude helps in many growth areas, including growth spiritual in insight.

Philosophy as a discipline gives us the metaphysical latitude to understand some of the underpinnings of our faith and opens us up to the acceptance of mystery. Therefore, traditional metaphysics is an indispensable tool for theological insights. One of the insights, borrowed from Teilhard de Chardin, is that the universe is the altar and that the profane and the sacred are in some sort of dialectical entanglement. This compresses the boundary of that which is sacred and that which is profane... because God saw that it was good! Here we have it, from a metaphysical consideration to a mystical appreciation of the created order.

I **Free Time and Hobbies**
For my free time, a rare concept I have to admit, I watch soccer. The teams I support are carefully chosen. Even in mundane things like soccer, philosophical discernment is needed on and above emotion attachments. I also read current affairs concerning international geopolitical matters. I also delve into new scientific discoveries. During the long winter vacation, I like to travel to rural parts of the country for "fresh air" and for a renewal of the primordial urge to go back to the pristine. I also take care of a few ducks and I also have a small backyard garden of vegetables. Animals and plants remind me that there is a tomorrow because of the way they devise a myriad ways to survive and flourish.

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relevant. This principle challenges the structures and systems that perpetuate inequality and calls for a society that prioritizes the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized. It reminds us of the importance of addressing issues such as poverty, lack of access to education and healthcare, and social exclusion

In modern society, where decision-making processes often exclude marginalized voices, the Catholic principle of subsidiarity and participation offers a valuable perspective. It emphasizes the importance of decision-making at the most local level possible, ensuring that individuals and communities have a say in shaping the policies and decisions that affect their lives. This principle promotes inclusivity, empowerment, and the development of a just society.

The Catholic Church's call for a just distribution of resources is highly relevant in a world marked by economic disparities and limited access to basic necessities. It challenges the structures and systems that perpetuate inequality and advocates for a society that ensures everyone has access to the resources they need to live a dignified life. This includes addressing issues such as fair wages, affordable housing, healthcare, and education. The Catholic understanding of social justice remains highly relevant to modern society. It provides a moral compass for addressing the pressing issues of our time, such as inequality, poverty, discrimination, and social exclusion. The principles of human dignity, solidarity, the preferential option for the poor, subsidiarity, and just distribution of resources guide the Church's commitment to creating a more just and equitable society. By embracing these principles, individuals and communities can work towards building a world where everyone can flourish and live with dignity.

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The Intrinsic Transformative Power of Philosophical Discourses

Accounting for an explanation of the foundation of philosophy, Aristotle made a profound and self-evident statement. “All Men by nature desire to know” My stay at St. Bonaventure University can attest to the assertion above. The nature of philosophy involves an inevitable tendency of reshaping one's perspective of things around him/her. The case has not been different with me.

Many who misunderstand the work of Philosophy argue that it always makes obvious things complicated. As that may be the case I would like to believe that actually Philosophy as a discipline endeavors to give explanations of obvious entities in a systematic and understandable manner. It does not take advantage of fundamental questions of reality.

Through philosophical undertakings, one's outlook on life changes. For instance rational discussions of morality exposes one to not only question why certain actions are considered wrong while others right. But discover the rationale behind them. That discovery is what transforms our way of looking at things. With Philosophy life and all that surrounds it are explained rationally thereby reshaping our ordinary way of understanding the world and all that it offers.



Brother Alfred Mutale Maango OMJ
Philosophy 2 (2022-2025)

DISBANDING

DUALISM

Any student who receives a diploma or a degree in Philosophy without having confronted the thoughts of the French Philosopher René Descartes is not worth his salt. However, even for those who are worth their salt, most, if not all, may have not yet taken the pains to relate Descartes's philosophy to their daily lives. The reality is that Descartes's Dualism is very much part of the life of most students: and this must be banished.

Dualism in Cartesian Philosophy tries to confront the complex relationship between mind and body. In religious terms one could loosely infer from the word “Pharisaism” or “hypocrisy” to denote a Cartesian equivalence – but these would be too strong. In any case the idea of the struggle between the “real me” and the “other me” is evident. The first area where this dualistic struggle in us needs to be investigated is in formation. When the outward appearance of the student doesn't correspond to the inner self then there is clearly a problem. The real “me” is what I am inside: my beliefs and my behaviours which I'm willing to manifest when there is nobody watching me or when I go to a place where nobody knows me. In the meantime, I will continue to manifest an outward appearance in formation or religious environment that seem to conform to the instruction I'm receiving - but which is just pretence. Sometimes this is called “the submarine effect”.

It is only when the student is perpetually professed or ordained that the real self becomes evident. This would mean that the formator would have wasted



Friar Cascarino Valentine OFM
LECTURER

time forming someone else and not the “real me”. This would also spell a disaster as we would be walking into a spiritual and professional environment, into our ministries, without the necessary skills and preparation. This is decisively one of the reasons the Church throughout its history, and especially in our own time, is going through a difficult period because of the moral situation of some of its consecrated persons. The various scandals speak for themselves.

Another area where the Cartesian Dualism is rife in the student's life is in their academic preferences. Some students deliberately choose which subjects to put emphases on. Usually, these are on courses that are mainly philosophical which carry credits, and which would ultimately add to the student's average to guarantee that a degree is obtained and not a diploma. Courses like Franciscan Spirituality are

not taken seriously because they carry no credits. There are a few problems with this mindset. Studies are part of human and spiritual formation, and they must be approached holistically. A well-integrated student must be balanced in the sphere of faith and reason, science and doctrine. When emphases are placed on just the philosophical courses then reason flourishes and faith suffers. The reverse is true. But the real problem is that all Franciscan students – and indeed religious and diocesan students preparing for the priesthood – were inspired to join the consecrated life by their Founders and other important figures in their Congregations. By undermining religious and spiritual studies they are defeating the purpose for which they had joined their respective Congregations and for which the Church would be ordaining them. Priests are not ordained to preach Plato or Levinas but to preach Jesus. Apart from the New Testament, another way of knowing Jesus is through the lives of Saints – and this is precisely what some students reject when they give preference to philosophy.

Cartesian Dualism was met with robust challenges from many philosophers because of its inability to demonstrate how both mind and body, forming the human person, function as an integrated whole. In the same spirit, students having dualistic approaches to formation and studies must quickly disband this mentality or else pay a heavy price.



Conclusion and Last Words to Students

I am sure the students would not want to have more words from me. In any case, here they are. Firstly, it is my usual mantra: do not aim for general knowledge. I constantly emphasize that in their three years at the University, they should learn something, but more than that they must go out with their own enlightened and new thoughts or concepts. These in fact should be inspirations for their final dissertation (Long Essay Paper). In the same vein, I would urge students to be prepared to forego some of the old concepts that they might have come with. This or at least be open to new ideas and ways of looking at things. They have to learn that we can hold two or more opposed ideas in our minds without falling apart. In other words, we can walk and chew gum at the same time.

Secondly, I would advise the students to make the years at the university profitable and not to study for exams only but also to study for spiritual and personal growth. The Socratic injunction comes to mind: “Man (sic) know thyself”. I am convinced that a full-fledged philosopher/philosophy student naturally transitions into a mystic because the contemplation of the self and the other leads to awe-inspiring visions of both. In this way, one becomes the philosophy one contemplates. Please learn from the ancients: to know the good is to do the good. Optimistic, yes, but helpful.

Lastly, I cannot neglect to mention that studying philosophy or theology is a vocation within a vocation. In other words, to study is an integral part of one's vocation. The academic life is not an obstacle to jump over on the way to the priesthood. So, buckle up and enjoy the ride while you are at!

Interview by Innocent k Soko



St. Bonaventure University Faces Mixed Results in Sports Day Showdown at St. Dominic's Major Seminary

St. Bonaventure University's sports teams experienced a rollercoaster of emotions as they participated in a spirited Sports Day and interaction at St. Dominic's Major Seminary on October 15, 2023. The event showcased a variety of sports, including chess, basketball, volleyball, and football.

In the realm of chess, St. Bonaventure University faced a tough challenge, ultimately succumbing to a humbling defeat. St. Dominic's Major Seminary demonstrated their prowess with a commanding 18 points, while St. Bonaventure University managed only 4 points, leaving the chess enthusiasts of St. Bonaventure with valuable lessons to take away.

The basketball court witnessed intense competition, with St. Dominic's Major Seminary securing a notable victory. Their team showcased exceptional skills, scoring 60 baskets, while St. Bonaventure University fought valiantly, accumulating 54 baskets in a closely contested match.

Despite the setbacks, St. Bonaventure University found redemption on the volleyball court, claiming victory in the spirited competition. The team demonstrated unity and skill, securing a well-deserved win in this fiercely contested sport.

The football matches brought a mix of excitement and disappointment for St. Bonaventure University. The first game concluded in a thrilling two-all draw, with St. Dominic's Major Seminary showcasing resilience in a come-from-behind effort. However, the highlight of the day, or perhaps the low point for St. Bonaventure, was the main football match featuring first-class players from both teams. St. Bonaventure faced a challenging 6-0 loss against the formidable St. Dominic's Major Seminary, emphasizing the need for reflection and improvement in the team's strategy.

To close the events of the day, Fr. Lesa Ofm Conv from St. Bonaventure emphasized the enduring impact of the bonds formed among students and seminarians, foreseeing their significance even in their future roles as priests. Stressing the importance of socialization, Fr. Sokota quoted a philosopher, highlighting how interactions and shared experiences shape individuals. Both speakers underscored that these sports events go beyond mere competition, serving as opportunities for personal growth, mutual understanding, and the foundation of lasting connections that will resonate throughout the participants' lives.

Innocent Kondwani Soko OFM CONV





Synod
2021
2023