

THINKERS AND *Blinkers*



ST. BONAVENTURE UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

CHIEF EDITOR



Martin Mamfunda OFM Conv

ASST CHIEF EDITOR



Joseph Mwenya OFM Cap

EDITORIAL TEAM



Frank Mvula OFM Conv



Bernard Shamboko OFM Conv



Espoir Ishmwe OFM

LAYOUT DESIGNER



Innocent Soko OFM Conv

TEAM MEMBERS



Brown Daka OMI



Stephen Marie OFM Cap



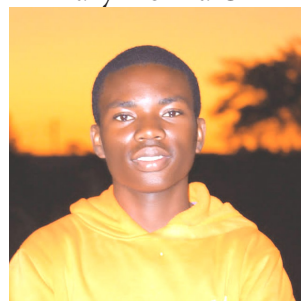
Hilary Donha OFM



Vusimuzi Martin CP



Emmanuel Kabalumpa CP



Ephraim Kanyembo OMI

5-6

Message from
the Rector

13

Freedom: The Law
of Love or the Licence
to Do Anything?

19

Presence, Purpose
and Roasted Meat:
The Journey of Fr. Godfrey
Odunga OFM Cap

7

Remember
Forgiveness is a must

14

Littering
as a Moral Failure
in Our Shared World

20

Development:
Chapel Extension

8

Did you
Know?

15-17

Interview
Fr. Valentine Cascarino
OFM

21 - 22

Sports

9

Power of
Writing

17

The Journey
of Self - Discovery

10

Randomm
Shots

18

Striking a Balance:
Ethical Relativism
vs. Natural Law Theory

11-12

Gallery



EDITORIAL

Dear Esteemed Readers,

With profound joy and gratitude, we present the second issue of Thinkers and Blinkers Magazine. This publication is more than a collection of articles; it is a reflection of the intellectual vitality, creative depth and dynamic growth within our University community. In these pages, you will encounter the thoughtful contributions of our students and esteemed lecturers, as well as notable developments that continue to shape life at St. Bonaventure.

Ours is a community enriched by diverse nationalities and experiences, united in a shared pursuit of holistic formation - intellectual, social, spiritual, and cultural.

We believe that authentic education forms not only the mind but also the character and conscience. For this reason, we remain committed to providing platforms that encourage intellectual inquiry, social dialogue, and religious reflection, enabling both students and lecturers to share their insights with the wider world.

It is our sincere hope that this edition will not only inform you about the life and progress of our University but also inspire deeper reflection and engagement with the issues that surround us. May it awaken curiosity, nurture critical thinking, and strengthen our shared commitment to truth and growth.

We extend heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated team of writers, designers, editors, and contributors whose time and talent made this publication possible. We also express our deep appreciation to the University administration for their steadfast support and guidance.

Sincerely,
Friar Mamfunda Martin OFM Conv
Editor

RECTOR'S MESSAGE



To the Readers of Blinkers,

We find ourselves at a historical crossroads where the air is thick with the scent of explosives and the cloud of uncertainty. Today, the world watches with restrained breath as the Middle East—specifically the escalating conflict in Iran—staggers on the edge of a total eclipse.

We are witnessing a shift in the nature of modern wars. While ballistic missiles dominate the headlines, the true "atomic option" of our era is the potential blockage of the Strait of Hormuz. In this interconnected world, the strangulation of a single maritime artery is more destructive than a thousand kinetic strikes; it is an act of global economic warfare that spares no home, regardless of distance from the front lines.

This catastrophe is exacerbated by what appears to be invertebrate leadership from the world's most powerful offices. When the Presidency of the United States wavers in its resolve or acts without a moral compass, the vacuum is filled by proxy wars and opportunism. We see lives sacrificed on the altar of geopolitical chess, where human dignity is treated as a secondary concern to strategic positioning.

There is an old proverb: "When two bulls fight, it is the grass that suffers." As an African continent, we find ourselves in the role of that grass. We do not cast the missiles, nor do we command the proxies, yet we bear the brunt of the fallout. From soaring energy costs to disrupted supply chains and the diverted attention of humanitarian aid, Africa pays the price for a fire it did not start. To silence the guns in the Middle East is not just a regional necessity; it is a global imperative for our own survival and sovereignty.

In these darkening hours, the ancient words of Plato feel less like dusty theory and more like a desperate remedy. Plato argued that until philosophers become kings, or kings follow the spirit of philosophy, there would be no rest from the ills of the state.

Philosophy teaches us to look past the immediate rage of the "bulls" and seek the universal Good. A Philosopher King does not rule by the impulse of the ego or the pressure of the lobbyist, but by an unwavering commitment to reason and justice. To save a world at the brink of collapse, we must re-echo these sentiments: we need leaders who fear the consequences of their power more than they desire the expansion of it.

While the world outside may feel as though it is fracturing, the university remains a sanctuary for the mind. Here, we must continue to interrogate these crises with the rigor they deserve.

I invite you to turn these pages and engage with the brilliance of your peers. Let this issue be a reminder that even in the shadow of giants, the light of intellect and the warmth of community cannot be extinguished.

Enjoy this edition of Blinkers.

Fr Alfio Tunha OFM
Rector

IN MEMORY OF FR. PETER CLIFF MILANZI OFM CONV



Friar Peter Cliff Milanzi was born in Luangwa on January 24, 1980 and was the first born son in a family of two; he had a young sister. Both parents are deceased. He attended Mumbwa Secondary School and completed his Grade 12 in 2001.

He joined the Conventual Franciscan Friars in 2006, did his Potulancy at St Joseph's Formation House in Kalumbwa and then proceeded to San Damiano Noviate House in Ndola until the time of his temporary profession in Ibenga on July 18, 2009. He studied Philosophy at St Bonaventure College in Lusaka from 2009 to 2012 and thereafter did his Theology at Tangaza University College, Nairobi from 2012 to 2016. He made his Solemn Profession on July 26, 2014 at St. Anthony of Padua, Franciscan Centre in Ndola. He was Ordained Deacon at Marist International College Chapel, Karen, Nairobi in 2015. Thereafter, was Ordained Priest at St Daniel's Cathedral, Solwezi on July 22, 2017.

In the same year (2017), He left for further studies in Italy where he undertook Spiritual Theology and Franciscan Spirituality graduating in September, 2022.

He was then assigned to St Bonaventure University as Lecturer teaching Franciscan Spirituality until August, 2024 when he was given another appointment as Guardian and Rector of the Postulants at St Joseph's Formation House in Kalumbwa. He was always a jovial, calm, friendly and welcoming Friar and Lecturer. His memory will forever be remembered.

He met sister death on Sunday, November 3rd, 2024 a few days after being involved in a road traffic accident on Wednesday, October 30th, 2024.

**May the soul of Friar Peter Cliff Milanzi OFM Conv
continue Resting in Peace.**



By Friar Martin
Philosophy 2 (2024-2027)

REMEMBER: FORGIVENESS IS A PROCESS

In our university journey, we often encounter misunderstandings, disappointments, and emotional wounds. Whether they come from friends, lecturers, brothers or formators, we are all called to forgive not just once, but over and over again. Forgiveness is not just a one-time act; it is a lifelong adventure. It's a journey that leads us toward healing, wholeness, and freedom. Some theologians suggest that Jesus gradually came to understand who He truly was. We go through a similar process in our own lives: as we grow, we develop a deeper and clearer sense of our identity and the person we aspire to be. We start to understand our parents, our surroundings, and ourselves better. Likewise, when we think about forgiveness, we should view it as a natural and evolving experience. Forgiveness is an ongoing inner journey toward wholeness. Just like a student begins their education at a young age and steadily works toward graduation, we too embark on the path of forgiveness, moving closer to the goal of inner healing with each step. Every stage brings us nearer to that destination. As we fully commit ourselves to the pursuit of forgiveness, we gain a richer and clearer understanding of what it truly means. Gradually, more and more of our being is touched, healed, and renewed through this process.

Think of the subconscious mind as an endless treasure chest. Throughout our lives, we fill it with a myriad of experiences both joyful and painful. Every single moment, from our time in the womb to our childhood, teenage years, and into adulthood, adds to this incredible collection of memories. Some of these experiences carry feelings of resentment or a sense of being "unloved." When we feel unloved, a quiet voice inside us might whisper, "You should love me. Why don't you love me like others do?" With so many buried feelings of pain and neglect, the journey to forgiveness becomes essential. As these hidden memories come to light, we have the chance to acknowledge them and consciously forgive. It's not uncommon to forgive someone today, only to find ourselves needing to forgive them again a year later. This is not a sign of failure; it is a beautiful act of grace. It is the Lord inviting us to explore a deeper level of forgiveness, encouraging us to confront and heal wounds we weren't ready to face before.

Life's experiences can really be categorized into two types: momentary and long-term. A momentary experience, like a car accident, can often heal pretty quickly. On the other hand, a long-term experience, such as a difficult relationship with a parent that

stretches over many years, demands a more gradual and profound healing process. The longer we endure something, the deeper its impact on us and that means we need to be more patient with ourselves as we work through forgiveness.

When it comes to forgiveness, it unfolds in two distinct ways: First, there is the forgiveness of the will, where we consciously decide, "I want to forgive." Then, there is the healing of our emotions, which takes time as our feelings gradually shift. We might genuinely choose to forgive, yet still feel tense, angry, or uneasy when we encounter the person who hurt us. That's completely normal, it just shows that our emotions still need some healing. Some wounds like those from separation, divorce, rape, or murder are incredibly painful and can't be faced right away. In these situations, we need time and grace before our hearts can truly forgive. So, forgiveness is not just a decision, it is also a journey of emotional healing. Both aspects require time, patience, and an openness to God's grace.

As I look back on my life and the experiences of those around me, it's evident that the journey of forgiveness is one we navigate throughout our entire lives. Each year brings new insights into areas that need healing. Old memories can bubble up, nudging us to let go of grudges and embrace peace. We should never lose heart as long as we are committed to doing well and keeping our hearts open to God. If we are genuinely striving to follow the Lord's guidance, we are already on the path to healing and true forgiveness.

In our everyday lives through prayer, worship, reading Scripture, and connecting with others the Holy Spirit works within us, mending our emotions and our will. Those uplifting moments of praise, especially when we gather as a community, often bring a profound grace that facilitates forgiveness. When we direct our hearts toward Jesus, the Spirit can move more freely, guiding us to deeper levels of peace. Sometimes, as the Spirit heals us, we find that old feelings of hatred, resentment, or bitterness start to fade away. This is all part of the healing journey. Nothing makes us more vulnerable to negativity than holding onto unforgiveness or resentment. But remember what Jesus said: "I have come to set the captives free." (Luke 4:18). We can take comfort in knowing we are on this journey making progress. Just like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we encounter Jesus along the path of forgiveness, and He heals us as we walk with Him. Jesus also promised: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10). So, we could say that Jesus came so we could experience forgiveness in abundance.

St. Bonaventure offers us a profound insight: “If you wish to know how far you have advanced, see how much you love.” Forgiveness stands as one of the truest forms of love. It reflects our spiritual growth and serves as the gateway to inner peace. So, let’s embark on this journey with open hearts, believing that each act of forgiveness brings us closer to experiencing the fullness of life in Christ.



By: Friar Rafael Cutxi, OFMConv.
Philosophy 3 (2023-2026)

DID YOU KNOW?

St Bonaventure University has been in existence since May 1984 with only five (5) students at the start and it was by then known as Franciscan House of Studies. At this time it was located in historic town of Livingstone. It traces its roots to an earlier collaborative venture between the three families of the Order of Friars Minor precisely in 1978 when the Zambian Capchin Chapter viewed out the possibility of establishing a joint facility for post-novitiate formation. This idea was explored by the then South-East African Capchin Association (SEACA) in 1981 and looked into the possibility of establishing a house for Philosophical studies in Zambia, with English as a common Language. In 1982, the two Conventual Custodies in Zambia expressed an interest in participating in his venture and further meetings in 1983 resulted in a substantial degree of agreement concerning the aims and programmes of such a venture.

Later on in 1986 the Friars Minor in Zimbabwe inquired about their possible participation and all welcomed it. As the number of staff had continued to grow, it soon became apparent that the premises in Livingstone would need to be expanded or a new Institute funded. After a series of meetings between the representatives of the three Franciscan families and consent of the Zambia Episcopal Conference, St. Bonaventure College - Franciscan Formation Centre was founded in Lusaka. On 20th January 1988 the Ministers of the three families of the Franciscans in Southern Africa signed a formal agreement to found St. Bonaventure College. Construction begun in November 1988 and the cornerstone of the University was blessed by H.E Josef Cardinal Tomko, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of the peoples, on 5th May, 1990, in the presence of all the Bishops of the Zambia Episcopal Conference, numerous friars and local people. The first students moved from Livingstone to Lusaka in July 1991 and classes commenced in November the same year. Thus, SBC came to life.

On the 27th June 1992, the three Ministers General of the Order of Friars Minor officially blessed the college. Then from 9th June 1994, St. Bonaventure College was registered as a Private School by the Ministry of Education of the Zambian government, and renewed every year. Over the years, up to twenty jurisdictions of Friars Minor have involved themselves in this project and other Religious Congregations have shown interest of being part of the College. Among the notable ones are: Mariannahill Missionaries (CMM), Divine Word Missionaries (SVD), Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), Passionist Fathers (CP), Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB) and others study at the University.



By: Friar Pascoal Machava OFM
Philosophy 2 (2024-2027)

Power of Writing!!!

“Either Write Something worth Reading or Do Something worth Writing.”

Benjamini Franklin

The only way I know to become a good writer is to be a bad writer and keep on improving.” Dr. Thomas Sowell shared this advice in response to letters he received from young writers seeking guidance on how to write or get published. The early stages of writing are often complicated, accompanied by fear and self-doubt. Writers may wonder: How can I write on this topic? Will it be accepted? I am not a famous person! These are just a few common concerns. It is in this context that Sowell’s response to young writers becomes so encouraging, as it urges them to begin to write from the very start, even if their writing feels weak or they judge it harshly. The simple act of starting allows them to improve over time. As we know from the famous English saying, “Practice makes perfect.” This idea is reinforced by the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in his ‘I Have a Dream’ speech, paraphrased here: “If you can’t fly, run; if you can’t run, then walk; if you can’t walk, then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward.” So, writers must keep writing, because as they write, they improve. As Sowell added, “Learn to write by trial and error.” A writer writes, fails, writes again, and ultimately wins. There is also a Swahili saying: “Mali bila ya daftari huisha bila ya habari,” which loosely translates to, “Wealth without records will perish unknowingly.” This raises an important question regarding the heritage and faith of any religious system. Consider Judaism, Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam. What would have become of their followers today if there had been no records of their faith preserved from the beginning? Would those religious heritages still exist? What if the Vedas, the Bible, or the Quran had never been written? Would we still have what we now call Hinduism, Christianity, or Islam? Oh, how I respect writings! What great value you hold!

New ideas often come to mind instantly, like bullets. If you do not write down spontaneous ideas as they come, there is a high possibility of forgetting them—and thus losing them forever. Condoleezza Rice asserts, “We share ideas, we share interests, and together we make a difference.” Through writing, a writer is able to free themselves, allowing the mind to open up to more possibilities and creative ideas. This leads to intellectual freedom, or what I might call intellectual orgasm (appealing to St. Thomas Aquinas’ perspective).

My Testimony on the Power of Writing

One day, I was at St. Peter Claver Parish’s adoration chapel before the Blessed Sacrament. I had my diary, pen, and a book to read. I remember that day vividly: an idea came to my mind: “Write a book!” I asked myself, “Me? Write a book? But books are written by influential people—professors, leaders, priests. How can I? Will I manage?” Nevertheless, I motivated myself: “I can try.” Then another idea came: “What should the title be?” A title formed in my

mind: “I Am Valuable, You Are Valuable, and We Are Valuable.” The moment that idea came, I immediately wrote it down in my diary just as it had come to me. Do you know what happened later? That single idea became my first book, which I authored and published in December 2017 in Swahili, titled *Thamani Yetu* (in English, ‘Our Value’). It received the imprimatur from the late Msgr. Deogratius Mbiku. Through this book, I came to know and connect with Capuchin Friar Br. Cyril Riziki Njau (OFM Cap), who introduced me to Vocation Director David Elias Mwangu. Now, I am a Capuchin Franciscan friar. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! It was during the Tanzanian Movement of Catholic Students (TMCS) Christmas Conference from December 26–31, 2018, in the Mwanza region, where I went to sell my books to the youth, that I met Br. Njau for the first time. He had been invited to give a talk on repentance. Do you see? From selling books came a Capuchin friar. Of course, each person is called and connected in their own unique way, but writing was vital in my journey.

The purpose of sharing my testimony on the power of writing here is not out of pride—as one might assume—but as encouragement for writing. It is positive sharing. I am glorifying our Lord for the strength He gave me to write. I encourage you: if you have the conviction and passion to write a book, just begin. Start. Start now. Do not wait any longer. You have been waiting for a long time. How much longer will you wait? Perhaps there are people waiting to read your book. It is time to wake from your sleep, my dear friend. (Romans 13:11). As one influential Kenyan preacher, Elizabeth Mokoro, said, “Start Simple, Start Small, and Start Now.”

Quotes on the Power of Writing

“A writer is a world trapped in a person.” — Victor Hugo

“A word after a word after a word is power.” — Margaret Atwood

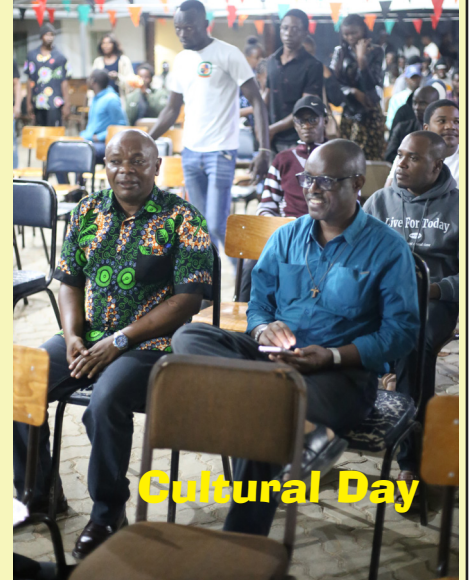
“If you want to change the world, pick up your pen and write.” — Martin Luther



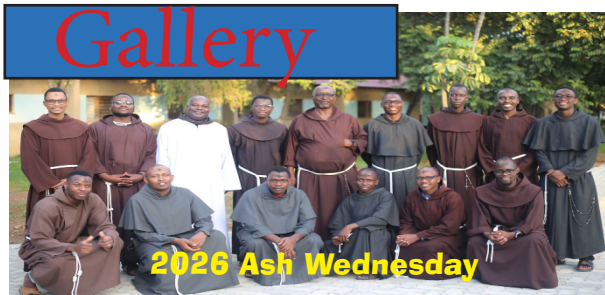
Friar Benjamini Soteri Mbowe OFM Cap.

Philosophy 3 (2023-2026)

RANDOM SHOTS



Gallery



2026 Ash Wednesday



2025 Cultural Day



University Choir



2025 Cultural Day



Blood Donation





Third Year Class (2025-2026)



Second Year Class (2025-2026)



2025 Graduates



First Year Class (2025-2026)



ST BONAVENTURE UNIVERSITY
Commemorates
2024 WORLD PHILOSOPHY DAY



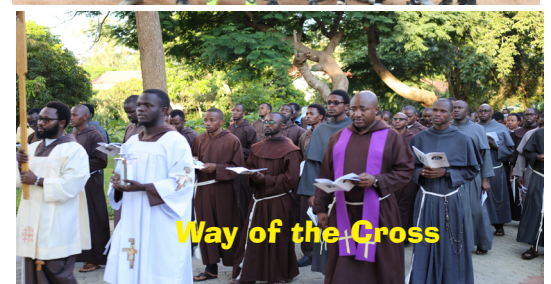
Debate team



Conventual Team



SDB team



Way of the Cross



Combined Team



OFM CAPCHIN Team



OFM Team



OMI Team



Freedom: The Law of Love or the Licence to Do Anything?

The term freedom has appeared in various discussions throughout human history, particularly as an expression of the rational faculty that distinguishes human beings. Even today, debates surrounding freedom persist because of the many interpretations offered by thinkers across philosophy, politics, religion, and social life. For instance, during the African colonial era, freedom fighters often understood freedom as liberation from oppressive foreign rule—a reclaiming of dignity, identity, and self-determination. In political discourse, freedom is commonly associated with rights such as free speech, expression, and civil liberties. In religion, it may involve the ability to worship, praise, and pray without interference. On a more individual level, some define freedom simply as the ability to act or speak according to one's will.

However, this raises a deeper philosophical question: is freedom merely the license to do anything one desires, or is it something more meaningful and structured? A richer understanding of freedom suggests that it is not simply about unrestricted choice, but about the responsible and purposeful use of that choice.

In this regard, freedom can be understood as a license for love. The philosopher Erich Fromm argued that true love requires freedom and spontaneity. According to Fromm, love cannot be forced or imposed; it must arise from a free and willing individual. When people are free to choose, they can express love authentically, without coercion, fear, or obligation. This kind of freedom allows individuals to give themselves to others genuinely, fostering deeper human connections and a stronger sense of community. Thus, freedom becomes not a tool for self-indulgence, but a foundation for meaningful relationships.

This perspective challenges the idea that freedom is simply the ability to do anything. Instead, it emphasizes that actions carried out in freedom should not be self-centered or destructive. True freedom involves responsibility. It calls individuals to act not merely according to impulse, but according to moral duty. In this sense, freedom aligns with a deontological framework, where

actions are guided by principles and obligations rather than mere personal desire. Freedom, therefore, is not the absence of limits, but the presence of moral direction.

A similar insight can be found in the thought of Augustine of Hippo, who explored the relationship between free will and moral evil. Augustine argued that evil does not originate from God but from the misuse of free will by created beings. According to him, both angels and humans were created good and endowed with the capacity to choose. However, when this freedom is directed away from the good—toward selfishness or pride—it results in moral evil. The example of Satan illustrates this: not created evil, but becoming evil through the deliberate choice to prioritize self over God.

This understanding reinforces the idea that freedom is not inherently good or bad; its value depends on how it is used. When freedom is exercised in love, truth, and responsibility, it leads to human flourishing. But when it is misused as a license to act without regard for others or for moral truth, it leads to harm and disorder.

In conclusion, freedom should not be reduced to the mere ability to do anything one desires. Rather, it should be understood as the capacity to choose the good—especially the good of loving others. True freedom is fulfilled not in selfish autonomy, but in responsible, loving action. It is, ultimately, the law of love rather than the license of chaos.



Br. Chabala Mwanza SAC
Philosophy 2 (2024-2027)

Mental Health and Alienation

In today's fast-paced world, mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression, and feelings of isolation are becoming increasingly visible, particularly among young people crossing High School and University life. While the causes are multifaceted, ranging from economic pressures to social media influence, the experience of alienation remains a central concern. Alienation, in philosophical terms, is not merely loneliness; it is the sense of disconnection from oneself, from others, and from the broader structures of society that shape our lives. Reflecting on this through the lens of classical and modern philosophers can offer valuable insight into both the origins of our struggles and potential paths toward self-understanding and resilience.

Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy provides a profound lens to understand the existential aspect of mental health. Nietzsche warned of the *nihilism* that arises when traditional values collapse, leaving individuals without clear guidance for meaning (Nietzsche, 1886). In modern society, the abundance of choices and constant comparison—amplified by social media, can intensify feelings of inadequacy and alienation. Nietzsche challenges us to confront this condition not with despair, but with an ethic of self-overcoming: the creation of personal values and the courage to define one's life on one's own terms. In the context of mental health, this perspective encourages active engagement with one's own growth rather than passive resignation to societal pressures.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel complements this insight by situating alienation within social life. Hegel's concept of recognition emphasizes that individuals realize their full potential only through interaction with others (Hegel, 1807). Alienation, therefore, can occur when social structures, whether educational institutions, workplaces, or family dynamics, fail to acknowledge individual dignity and contribution. For students, this can be evident as pressure to conform, fear of judgment, or isolation in competitive academic environments. Hegel's thought reminds us that mental health is not solely a private struggle; it is deeply connected to the social recognition we receive and the ethical life we cultivate collectively.

Immanuel Kant offers another crucial perspective through his moral philosophy. Kantian ethics insists on the inherent dignity of human beings and the duty to respect oneself as well as others (Kant, 1785). From a mental health standpoint, Kant's philosophy emphasizes the importance of self-care as a moral obligation, not merely a personal preference. Attending to one's mental well-being, through reflection, rest, or seeking support, is an expression of respect for oneself as a rational being capable of moral agency. This framing challenges the stigma around mental health, positioning it as an ethical concern rather than a personal failing.

René Descartes' dualistic view of mind and body offers yet another useful insight. By distinguishing the

thinking self from the physical body, Descartes invites reflection on the mind's capacity for reasoned thought, self-examination, and problem-solving (Descartes, 1641). Mental health struggles, when understood through this lens, are not merely biochemical or social phenomena; they are also experiences that can be approached through deliberate reflection, awareness, and rational intervention. Techniques such as journaling, meditation, and cognitive strategies can be understood as practical applications of Cartesian self-reflection, empowering individuals to navigate internal challenges with clarity.

Together, these philosophical perspectives illuminate the complexity of mental health in modern society. Nietzsche challenges individuals to confront the meaninglessness of life; Hegel situates mental health within social relations; Kant emphasizes the moral duty of self-care; and Descartes highlights the power of reflective thought. The convergence of these insights suggests that addressing mental health requires both personal responsibility and social awareness. Students, educators, and communities alike have roles to play in fostering supportive networks, cultivating ethical habits of self-respect, and encouraging reflective practices that strengthen both mind and character.

In conclusion, mental health and alienation are not merely individual problems, they are philosophical, ethical, and social challenges that demand careful attention. By drawing on the wisdom of Nietzsche, Hegel, Kant, and Descartes, we can approach these issues with depth and compassion, recognizing that our struggles are part of the broader human condition. Ultimately, the path toward mental well-being lies in self-reflection, social recognition, ethical self-care, and the courage to create meaning in an often complex and alienating world.

References:

- Kant, I. (1785). *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*.
- Nietzsche, F. (1886). *Beyond Good and Evil*.
- Hegel, G. W. F. (1807). *Phenomenology of Spirit*.
- Descartes, R. (1641). *Meditations on First Philosophy*.



Friar Odhiambo Elly OFM.
Philosophy 1 (2025-2028)

Join us as we dive into the life journey of Fr. Valentine Cascarino OFM

A Can you share some insights into your personal background, such as where and when you were born?

I was born in Victoria, which is a small fishing town on the West Atlantic coast of Cameroon. Today this town is called Limbe and is known for its oil refinery and a famous football club called Victoria United (Opopo). My parents weren't involved in the fishing or petroleum industries. They were Subsistent farmers. My family was small – mum, dad, a twin brother called Victor and my half-sister Charlotte. I lost both parents before the age of 13 and was raised by my grandmother – who has since gone to the Lord together with my twin brother. I immigrated to Johannesburg in South Africa, in my teens, where I did tertiary education in media and writing - first with the Universities of Rhodes and Witswatersrand, and later with the International Institute for Journalist in Washington. I worked as both newspaper journalist and Radio talk show host before joining the Franciscans.

B What inspired you to become a priest, and why did you specifically choose to become a Franciscan?

In December 2024 I wrote a bit on this in a German magazine. Basically, my vocation journey began when I was about 8-9 years old. At sunset one Christmas day, while descending a small hill with my twin brother and half-sister – from visiting some relatives, I suddenly felt a profound and bitter sadness within me. It was the fact that Christmas had come to an end. We had spent months preparing for it, but it had just come and gone so fast. It was the first and lasting brutal reality of the ephemeral nature of this passing world and all its pleasures. It etched in my soul a deep longing for joy that will never pass away – an eternal Christmas. What followed that experience were the subsequent deaths of my mother at 33 of cancer and my best friend Julius.

The conviction grew that the joys of this world were never to be pursued as ends in themselves.

Eventually, as an altar server at the Cathedral of Christ the King in Johannesburg I began to develop a love for the priesthood. I didn't know which congregation to join except that I did not want to live in one place all my life. I wanted a missionary congregation. That effectively knocked out the monastic life and the diocesan priesthood. I began journeying with the Jesuits and was about to join them when two things happened. Firstly, Fr Claudio Rossi SJ, my spiritual director gave me the biography of Servant of God John Bradburne – a lay English Franciscan who was martyred in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) in 1979. The book



is titled *Strange Vagabond of God*. It completely turned my world around and left me at the crossroads whether to continue with the Jesuits or try the Franciscans. One day in November I had a dream in which I was standing at a railway station with the Jesuit provincial at that time - having a conversation. A woman dressed in the Franciscan habit approached us and pull me away from the Jesuit provincial. When I woke up, I tried to make the meaning of the dream. Who was this woman in my dream? I instinctively knew she was a saint – but who exactly? I soon realised that the dream had taken place on the 17th of November which is the feast of St Elizabeth of Hungary – who happens to be the patron saint of Third Order Franciscans. I left the Jesuits and joined the Franciscans in Pretoria in South Africa on the 25th of January 2006.

C How did your family and friends respond when you decided to pursue this vocation?

They were livid, as you can imagine. I was the only educated person in the family. Friends and relatives thought I was throwing my life away. To compound things, I had to look for a way to leave my job and and my three-year relationship with my Polish girlfriend. In the long run my grandmother, who was a staunch Catholic and a member of the Catholic Women's Association, made peace with my decision. But she also made a prophecy. She said if I became a priest then the family name and lineage would end. A few years after I'd joined, she died. Then my twin brother later died leaving behind a daughter. That effectively ended my direct family lineage. Her prophecy had come true.

D Could you take us through your formation journey? What were some significant moments along the way?

I did all my formation in South Africa - including studies in Philosophy and Theology. Although I was at home with the Franciscan way of life it was by no means easy. I almost left twice. The first time was in the novitiate in December 2008 - just three weeks before first profession. This was down to the love connection that still lingered between me and my ex. The second time was in 2014 – again about 6 months before perpetual vows. This time it was due to several misunderstandings with a formator. While I do accept some blame in the sage, however, it is a well-known fact that in religious institutions (as in many other fields) the most

suitable persons with proper training are not always sent to the formation environment. After my ordination to the priesthood in December 2015 I went to Rome to study at the Pontifical University of St Anthony. I did a Masters in Formation, a Licence and a Doctorate in Spiritual theology. After that I was sent to Zambia as formator and lecturer at the University of St Bonaventure in Lusaka.

E What are some of the challenges you've faced during your formation and as a priest?

When I joined the Franciscans, coming from a media background, I had the misconception that priests were very knowledgeable (intellectuals) and saintly. I thought I would be able to discuss, randomly with any priest, issues ranging from philosophy, arts, cosmology, politics, mystical theology etc. I was clearly under a deep illusion. My first challenge in formation was to accept all of these realities – including the human side of priests and brothers. Then there was the issue of poverty. From earning thousands of Rands a month as a journalist to being giving R100 monthly pocket allowance was just weird! Dying to my pride and passions – till today – is still cumbersome although there is some growth. After my ordination, I worked for a few months as assistant parish priest in the Diocese of Kokstad in South Africa. There were three of us friars with a huge parish and 14 big outstations. About six months after my ordination, I left for Rome. As a matter of fact, I had been informed as a deacon that I would be going to study in Rome. Since then, I have been chaplains to the Poor Clares and Dominican Sisters in Rome. I worked in the Basilica of Saint Margaret in Cortona and other places, but one must remember that the parish setup in Europe is a bit different from what we have in Africa. I must add that I was a substitute confessor at the Lateran Basilica where I heard so many confessions especially during the summer months. I gave lots of retreats in Italy and preached several times on Padre Pio TV. I enjoyed Europe and toured the continent extensively from Portugal to Hungary and as far north as Estonia, Finland, Sweden and Denmark – but also England and Ireland. I learned German in Austria. My greatest challenge as a priest has been to wear the Franciscan habit in public against the background of the clerical abuses and scandals in the Church.

F If you had the chance to choose again, would you still decide to become a priest? Why or why not?

This is an interesting question which I must try and answer philosophically. If the conditions that made me decide on the priesthood will be constant, then I will still choose the same because I would be guided by those same conditions. If the conditions will be different, then the opposite will be true. However, those conditions will always be there because natural law is constant: the joy of this world is transient. This is what led me to the priest-

hood. So, if I had the chance to choose again it will most likely be the priesthood.

G How did you feel about your appointment as a formator, and what is it like to be a lecturer teaching Franciscan studies?

One of the reasons why I agreed to go and do formation in Rome was due to the formation experience in my Franciscan Province in South Africa. My goal has since been to right the wrongs in formation. This can only be done through better professional preparation and self-dedication. I have always been involved in youth ministry since the time i was studying Philosophy. From this perspective, coming to Lusaka was a joy to me because it was a continuation of my youth ministry and the formation of young friars. I also like the fact that Lusaka is multicultural and multi-religious environment. The same could be said about teaching Franciscan studies. What most people know about Saints Francis, Clare and Anthony are coming from the Fioretti or Little Flowers of St Francis. This book is problematic in the sense that it is not totally historical – it's anecdotal with its morals. But most people don't know this and so they believe everything in it to be true. However, when you try and study the writings of these saints you will see a different picture. Let me give you a few quick examples of obvious mistakes we make. Firstly, Franciscans are called to "repair the house" of God – not to rebuild. The wrong terminology "rebuild" had serious theological and ecclesiological ramifications that are inherently heretical. Yet some friars shout from the pulpit regularly that their mandate as Franciscans is to "rebuild" the house of God. Secondly, it is believed that Franciscans must love animals from the stories of the life of their founder. However, in the Rule of 1221 (RnB 15)

Francis forbids friars not "to have animals of any kind." If I refuse dogs and cats in our community people will definitely say I'm not a true Franciscan but would they be saying this out of fact or out of misguided common sense?

Finally, we all know Francis to be a lover of the environment, but this has nothing to do with some of the ideologies of nature preservation today. Saint Francis's approach to nature was to call humanity to repent from sins which led to ingratitude shown to God through the mistreatment of all he created to serve mankind's needs. For Saint Francis it would have been scandalous for anyone to try and preserve the environment if that person did not believe in God, was not a Catholic, did not do penance and was living in sin. It is evident that imparting the cor



H When you have free time, what do you enjoy doing? Do you have any hobbies or activities that bring you joy?

I love farming (manual work), football, volleyball and jogging. I do a lot of reading and research as is required especially of anyone who has done postgraduate studies. On weekends I watch TV programs on science and religion – but also football. I support Sunderland in the English Premier League. In Scotland I support Celtic and in Portugal I support Benfica. In Italy I support Roma. In Croatia I support Dinamo Zagreb and Borussia Dortmund in Germany. I'm a Real Madrid fan and my most iconic footballer of all time is Cristiano Ronaldo. I do follow basketball news now and again because I support Boston Celtic. In rugby I love the Lions in South Africa and St Helens in England. In American football, I support the San Francisco 49ers.

I As a final thought, what advice or words would you like to share with students at the University?

Never regret the decision you made to radically follow Jesus by becoming a religious. It is the only vocation linking heaven and earth because apart from the fact that you're a priest forever; as religious, you would have begun living heaven here on earth. This is because the religious life corresponds, in some way, to the life in heaven were "they neither marry nor be given in marriage" (Mark 12:25).



By Friar Innocent Soko OFM Conv
Philosophy 3 (2022-2025)

THE JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY

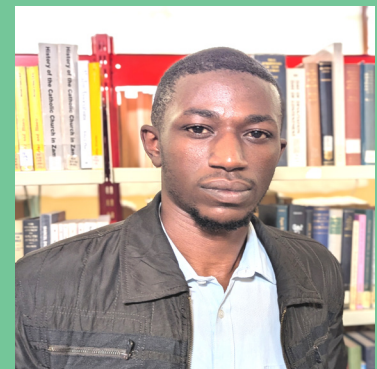
I believe that everything in life is a lesson. The Stoic philosopher Epictetus would say, "It's not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters." Every challenge we face holds an opportunity for growth. When confronted with adversity, we should seek out the lessons embedded within it. Life is not meant to be a burden but a journey of discovery. There is an opportunity to learn from everything.

You are only young once, so you should enjoy it, and you shouldn't be in such a hurry to grow up. Kierkegaard would say, "Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards." In our haste to grow up, we may overlook the beauty of the present moment. Regarding the struggles we endure, Friedrich Nietzsche famously stated, "What does not kill me makes me stronger." This means that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger in everything you do and in all the decisions you make.

There is such a thing as destiny and fate, but it only takes you so far. You have to help yourself along the way. In life, the end product is certainly important, but it's how you got there that matters the most. No one wants to look back on their life and regret half of what they did. Aristotle noted, "The end of life is to be like God, and the soul of man is to become like God."

You're going to have to choose between many things in your life. Sometimes the choice will be easy, sometimes it will be hard. But remember that you are not alone, and everyone goes through what you are going through. Martin Heidegger reminds us, "Every man is born as many men and dies as a single one." Each decision shapes our identity and experience. You'll cry; you'll get your heart broken at least once, and you'll probably break someone else's heart at least once. Remember that you're not alone in this journey. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "For every minute you are angry, you lose sixty seconds of happiness."

We suffer more often in imagination than in reality. It is essential to maintain control over your narrative and not allow external forces to dictate your life's direction. Good things will happen to you, and bad things will happen to you. But no matter what, don't let anything or anyone control or radically change your life.



Br. Banda Frank CMM
Philosophy 3 (2023-2026)

Striking a Balance: Ethical Relativism vs. Natural Law Theory

In the realm of ethics, two contrasting philosophies stand at opposite ends of the spectrum: Ethical Relativism and Natural Law Theory. The quest for universal ethical and moral standards has been a subject of ongoing debate among philosophers, ethicists, and scholars. These discussions have left the field of ethics grappling with the challenge of establishing a common moral ground. This article explores the intricacies of these theories and considers possible solutions to this enduring philosophical dilemma.

Ethical Relativism posits that moral judgments are shaped by cultural, historical, or personal contexts. According to this theory, what is considered right or wrong depends on individual perspectives or societal norms, thereby rejecting the notion of objective moral principles. Ethical Relativism emphasizes the diversity of moral beliefs and practices, highlighting the importance of tolerance and cross-cultural understanding.

In contrast, Natural Law Theory proposes that moral laws are inherent to human nature and can be discovered through reason. This theory maintains that certain moral principles are universal and objective, applying to all human beings regardless of context. Natural Law Theory underscores the significance of human dignity, well-being, and the common good.

The question then arises: how can we reconcile these opposing viewpoints in order to establish universal ethical standards? The tension between Ethical Relativism and Natural Law Theory raises a fundamental issue: can universal moral standards exist if moral judgments are inherently relative and context-dependent? And if moral principles are not objective, is it still possible to find common ground? To address these questions, we must consider several potential solutions.

Overlapping Consensus: Philosopher John Rawls introduced the concept of overlapping consensus, which suggests that despite differing moral beliefs, people can still agree on certain fundamental principles. This consensus can serve as a foundation for universal ethical standards.

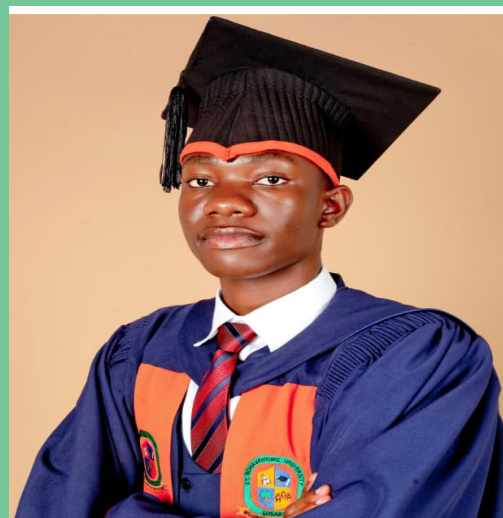
Human Rights: The United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights offers a framework for moral standards by affirming the inherent dignity and worth of every human being. Human rights can function as a common moral ground that transcends cultural and individual differences.

Moral Pluralism: Moral pluralism acknowledges the diversity of moral beliefs while seeking common ground through dialogue and mutual un-

derstanding. By engaging with various perspectives, we can identify shared moral values and principles.

From this discussion, it becomes evident that neither Ethical Relativism nor Natural Law Theory alone provides a fully satisfactory basis for universal ethical standards. Rather than viewing these theories as mutually exclusive, we may consider them as complementary lenses through which to examine morality. By integrating insights from both Ethical Relativism and Natural Law Theory, we can work toward a more nuanced understanding of ethics—one that respects both universality and diversity.

The debate between Ethical Relativism and Natural Law Theory highlights the complexities involved in establishing universal ethical standards. However, by exploring concepts such as overlapping consensus, human rights, and moral pluralism, we can move closer to a shared moral foundation. Ultimately, the pursuit of universal ethical and moral standards requires ongoing philosophical reflection, open dialogue, and a genuine willingness to engage with diverse perspectives.



Br. Choza Junior Chipoya
Philosophy 3 (2022-2025)

PRESENCE, PURPOSE, AND ROASTED MEAT THE JOURNEY OF FR. GODFREY ODUNGA OFM CAP

In the quiet, disciplined world of spiritual formation, Friar Godfrey Odunga, OFM Capuchin, stands out as a man defined by one powerful word: “Availability”. As a spiritual director to various communities, his life reflects a deep and unwavering commitment, not merely to a title, but to a calling rooted in presence, service, and attentiveness to those seeking a path to the divine.

A Calling Tested by Fire

Friar Odunga’s journey to the priesthood was anything but easy. Before finding his home among the Franciscans, he applied to eight different religious congregations, searching for one that embodied a deeper Marian devotion. The Franciscans were the first to respond, a moment he discerned as a sign. Yet, the path ahead would test his resolve.

Upon arriving in Nairobi to begin his journey, he was robbed of all his belongings, including his essential academic certificates. Left with nothing but a small bag containing roasted meat, a moment at which many would have turned back but he did not. Instead, he pressed forward to Mpeketoni in North Eastern Kenya to begin his aspirancy. His determination revealed a profound truth: a vocation is not carried in a suitcase, it is carried in the heart.

A Lifetime of Formation

Friar Odunga’s formation reflects years of dedication, discipline, and spiritual growth. His early formation began at St. Peter’s Minor Seminary in Mukumu, Kakamega County, where he studied from Form One to Four. He later entered postulancy on August 5, 1990, completing it in April 1991. In July 1991, he joined the novitiate. On August 16, 1992, the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary, he professed his first vows in Nairobi. He spent seven years at St. Padre Pio Friary, where he even studied philosophy at the Consolata Institute before advancing to theological studies. In the year 2000, he was ordained a priest, marking the beginning of his lifelong pastoral mission.

Wisdom for the Next Generation

While serving students at St. Bonaventure University, Friar Odunga continued to shape lives with a message both simple and profound: “You are here for a reason.”

He reminds students that their presence, at the University and in life is neither accidental nor random, but a privilege and an opportunity for praise. He emphasizes that identity comes first from being religious, not merely academic. His most cherished words echo through his teaching: *“God is good all the time, and all the time God is good—that is His nature.”* He also underscores the uniqueness of



formation where he states that “Academic and formation discipline is not offered anywhere else.” His call is clear; “seize the opportunity before it passes.”

The Spiritual Blueprint

For those discerning religious life, or seeking to deepen their spiritual journey, Friar Odunga offers guidance rooted in Scripture and tradition where He points to: The Call of Samuel (1 Samuel 3:1–10)

The Mission of Christ (Luke 4:18–20)

Practical spiritual advice includes:

- Prioritize the Word, take Scripture and prayer seriously.
- Daily Devotion, Remain faithful to daily Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours and the Holy Rosary.
- He also reminds us of the urgency of vocation: “The harvest is great, but the laborers are few.”

A Life That Speaks

From the streets of Nairobi, left with nothing but roasted meat, to the halls of St. Bonaventure University, Friar Godfrey Odunga’s journey is one of resilience, faith, and unwavering availability.

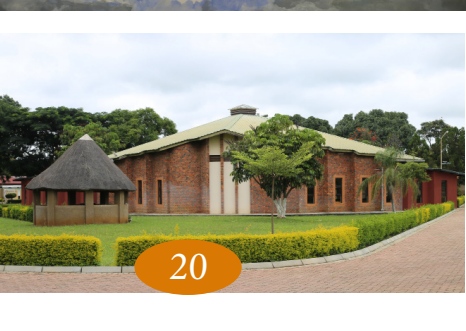
He is, in every sense, a shepherd of availability, a man who shows that when God calls, the only requirement is a heart ready to listen. Fr. Odunga served at St. Bonaventure from 2019 to 2025. He was transferred last year 2025 to Kenya where he is currently serving at the Shrine of Our Lay Help of Christians in the Diocese Kakamega, Kenya.



By Friar Frank Mvula OFM Conv
Philosophy 1 (2025-2028)

DEVELOPMENT

Chapel Extension



2025-2026 UNIVERSITY INTER-COMMUNITIES TOURNAMENT

Combined! Combined! Combined! 🔥🏀

History was written on Tuesday February 24, 2026 in a thrilling and nerve-stretching final where the team for the Combined Brothers rose to the occasion and brought down the Conventual Friars with a hard-fought 2:1 victory in the finals of the University Inter-Community Competition.

It was not merely a game; it was a contest of spirit, discipline, and brotherhood. Every pass carried hope, every tackle demanded courage, and every goal echoed determination. The Conventual Friars fought valiantly, proving that true competition is not about hostility but about excellence meeting excellence. Yet, as life itself teaches us, every contest crowns one victor at a time.

On that day, triumph smiled upon the Combined Brothers. 🏆 Their victory reminds us of a simple philosophical truth: success is never accidental - it is born from unity, perseverance, and the willingness to rise after every challenge.

A huge congratulations to the combined team for emerging victorious in this year's tournament! And heartfelt appreciation to all the teams who participated in various disciplines (Volleyball, Basketball, and beyond) giving their very best and turning sport into a celebration of community and character.

The tournament may end, but the spirit it has awakened continues. Until the next whistle blows, let the echoes of this victory inspire us all!

The tournament officially ended with an award giving ceremony to all the deserving participants of the

tournament which was done by the University vice Rector Fr. Lawrence Mondoka OFM Conv. This was done after the remarks from the sports moderator Fr. John Lesa OFM Conv who thanked all the brothers who took part in the tournament and also congratulated the winners for their victory as well as encouraging those who had lost to never give up as there is always a next time.



By Br. Joseph Mwenya OFM Cap
Philosophy 2 (2024-2027)



ST. BONAVENTURE BATTLES IT OUT AGAINST ST. AUGUSTINE MAJOR SEMINARY IN A SPORT TOURNAMENT IN KABWE

When Rivalry Met Friendship: St. Bonaventure vs. St. Augustine Sports Day

Saturday, November 8th, went down as one of those unforgettable days when energy, laughter, and teamwork lit up the fields of Kabwe. St. Bonaventure University and St. Augustine Major Seminary faced off in an epic inter-institutional sports showdown filled with passion, skill, and plenty of cheering from both sides.

In volleyball, Bonaventure came in strong, taking all three sets with solid teamwork and precise coordination. But the tables turned on the Basketball court, where St. Augustine pulled off a nail-biting 35:34 win, just one point making all the difference!

Over at the Chess tables, calm minds and clever strategies ruled the day as St. Augustine swept all matches with confidence and class. Then came the roar of the Football field, the first set ended in a draw, but Team B saw St. Augustine rise to victory with a 2:0 scoreline. The crowd loved every moment.

What made the day special wasn't just the competition, but the spirit behind it; sportsmanship, respect, and friendship that went beyond the scores. Both teams walked away not just as

players, but as brothers in the shared pursuit of excellence.

In the end, the games reminded everyone that sports, much like life, are about giving your best, learning from every play, and celebrating both victory and defeat with heart.

"In every match, we don't just chase victory — we discover the strength of unity."



Friar Cedric Iradukunda OFM
Philosophy 3 (2023-2026)
SBU Media Personnel

