

Reflection Thursday Week 15 St Bonaventure 2021

St Bonaventure was born in Bagnoregio, Etruria, around 1218. Becoming a Franciscan in 1243, he studied philosophy and theology in Paris. He became a famous teacher and philosopher, part of the intellectual flowering of the 13th century. He was a friend and colleague of St Thomas Aquinas. The friars were a new and revolutionary force in the Church, and their embrace of poverty and rejection of institutional structures raised suspicion and opposition. Bonaventure defended the Franciscan Order and, on being elected their general in 1255, he ruled with wisdom and prudence. He is regarded as the second founder of the Order. He declined the archbishopric of York in 1265 but was made cardinal bishop of Albano in 1273, dying a year later in 1274. He wrote extensively on philosophy and theology, making a permanent mark on intellectual history, insisting that the simple and uneducated could have a clearer knowledge of God than the wise. He was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1588 by Pope Sixtus V.

I repeat. St Bonaventure, a great philosopher and theologian of the Church, insists that the simple and uneducated can have a clearer knowledge of God than the wise. St Paul wrote something similar in his letter to the Ephesians: *“Out of his infinite glory, may God give you power through his Spirit for your inner self, your faith, to grow strong; so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, (not in you heads but in your hearts). Then, planted in love and built on love, you will, with all the saints, be able to grasp the breadth, length, height and depth of the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, and be filled with the utter fullness of God.”*

- **All the great Greek philosophers died as they lived...** *A long time ago, and probably in Greece*
- *Was it hard to adopt nihilism as your personal philosophy? Of course not, there was nothing to it.*
- **What do you call a monk with a philosophy degree?** *A deep friar.*