

Bonaventure

(1221–1274)

1. His Life

- Giovanni Fidanza, born in Bagnorea
- Franciscan of the second generation

- theology professor (*magister*) at the University of Paris

- Minister General of the Franciscan Order (1257); Cardinal (1273)

- contemporary of Thomas Aquinas

- rejected Aristotle

- spirituality is the center of his theology: *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*
 - The empirical world is a road to God.
 - Three steps of ascension:
 1. corporeal: finding “shadows” and “vestiges” of God in the empirical world
 2. spiritual: finding God’s “image” in our soul
 3. divine: beyond creatures finding God in Himself—and adoring Him (mystical contemplation)

Theology Understood as Faith Theology

- The subject of theology: "what can be believed, but only insofar as it becomes a subject of the intellect, this occurring through the addition of reason" [*credibile, prout tamen credibile transit in rationem intelligibilis, et hoc per additamentum rationis*]. (*Sentenzenkommentar*, Prolog, Q. 1).
- different from Anselm of Canterbury: "faith seeking understanding" [*fides quaerens intellectum*]
 - Anselm was seeking necessary causes [*causae necessariae*.] for the teachings of faith
 - the ontological proof of the existence of God
 - "If God is God, then God is."¹ [*Si Deus est Deus, Deus est*]
 - Cf. Chapter 5, nr. 3
 - and end of nr. 6: "Whence if God names primary, eternal, most simple, most actual, most perfect being; it is impossible that it is thought to not to be, nor to be except as only one thing."

The Pinacle of the Soul

- the primary source for Karl Rahner's theology, i. e., for his understanding of the experience of God
- beyond reason
- a *tasting* of God (*Deum admirandum et etiam degustandum*)
- *Apex affectus*
 - 'Chap. 1, nr. 6: "Therefore alongside [*iuxta*] the six steps of ascension into God, there are six steps of the soul's powers [*potentiarum*] through which we climb thoroughly from the depths towards the heights, from exterior things towards things most interior, from temporal things we ascend together towards eternal, that is the sense, the imagination, the reason, the intellect,

¹ Bonaventura, *De mysterio Trinitatis*, I, 1, 29 [V, 48].

the intelligence, and the apex of the mind or the spark of synderesis. These steps we have planted [*habemus plantatos*] in us by nature, deformed by fault, reformed by grace; are to be purged by justice, exercised by knowledge [*scientia*], perfected by wisdom."

– Chap. 7, nr. 4: "Moreover in this transit, if one be perfect, it is proper that all intellectual activities be relinquished, and the whole apex of affection be transferred and transformed into God. However this is mystical and most secret, because no one knows it, except him who accepts it, nor does he accept it unless he be one who desires it, nor does he desire it unless he be one whom the fire of the Holy Spirit, which Christ sent upon earth, inflames to the marrow of his bones [*medullitus*]."

- a mystical exstasis, or excess (*excessus mentis, ecstasis*)
- *excessus contemplationis* (9a, 53 u. 58)

- Title of Chapter 7: "On the Mental and Mystical Excess, in Which Rest Is Given to the Intellect, by an Affection Passing Wholly Into God Through Excess"

- Chapter 7, nr. 3: "Which also has been shown to blessed Francis, when in an excess of contemplation on the exalted mountaing – where those things, which have been written, he treated with his mind – there appeared the Seraph of six wings fastened [*confixus*] upon a cross, as I and many others have heard about in the same place from his companion, who was with him at that time; where he passed over into God through an excess of contemplation; and has been placed as an example [*in exemplum*] of perfect contemplation; as first he had been of action, as if another Jacob and Israel, so that God may invite all truly spiritual men through him to a transit of this kind and an excess of the mind more by example than by word."

- a *speculatio*

- rapture beyond the spirit:
 - Chapter 1, nr. 7: "He has thoroughly taught the knowledge of the truth according to the threefold manner of theology, that is, the symbolic, the proper, and the mystical, so that through the symbol we rightly use the sensible, through the proper we rightly use the intelligible, through the mystical we be rapt to super-mental excesses [*per mysticam rapiamur ad super-mentales excessus*]."