

Life and Love Transfigured: Exploring New Horizons in the Franciscan Tradition

A Conference to Mark the 800th Anniversary of the Death of St. Francis of Assisi

Tuesday 14th to Thursday 16th April 2026
Durham University, UK

Call for Papers and Workshop Proposals

To mark the 800th anniversary of the death of St. Francis of Assisi, the Centre for Catholic Studies (CCS) at Durham University will hold its third international Franciscan Studies conference. The Transitus of Saint Francis in 1226 completed the *Poverello's* earthly life. Successive generations have interpreted and carried forward the witness and teachings of the Saint and his early followers. This conference seeks to celebrate and share the fruits of this legacy against new horizons, addressing contemporary challenges and concerns.

The aim of the conference will be to bring together people from different walks of life – academic and non-academic, religious and lay – who have a deep love for St. Francis of Assisi, the Franciscan tradition, and the abiding relevance of the Franciscan charism for the modern world. The conference will be held at locations in Durham itself as well as at Ushaw College, a former Roman Catholic Seminary a few miles outside of Durham.

The conference will consist of academic panels and plenary lectures by world leading scholars of the Franciscan tradition, as well as public talks by those working in contemporary Franciscan evangelisation, workshops on the Franciscan way of life and Franciscan ministry, ecumenical worship, and opportunities for fellowship and communal reflection.

The conference will have three main strands: (1) Franciscan theology and philosophy; (2) Franciscan history; and (3) Franciscan spirituality, aesthetics, and evangelism. The conference organisers welcome papers from researchers in fields including, but not limited to, Franciscan theology, Franciscan history, Franciscan science, Franciscan literary studies, Franciscan philosophy, Franciscan spirituality, the Poor Clare and wider female Franciscan traditions, the Franciscan Tertiary tradition, Franciscan ecumenism and interreligious dialogue, Franciscan art, poetry, and music, Franciscan education, Franciscan liturgical thought and practice, Franciscan economic and political philosophy, as well as Franciscan ministry and Franciscan contributions to peace studies, outreach, and pastoral-social work.

Confirmed speakers include:

Fr Casey Cole, OFM (Digital Evangelist and Creator of *Breaking in the Habit* podcast).
Prof. Richard Cross (University of Notre Dame, Indiana)
Fr Dr Michael Cusato OFM (Scholar-in-Residence, St. Bonaventure Friary, NY)
Prof. Daniel Horan (St Mary's College in Notre Dame, Indiana)
Dr William Hyland (University of St Andrews)
Prof. John McCafferty (University College Dublin)
Dr Darleen Pryds (Franciscan School of Theology, University of San Diego)
Prof. Lydia Schumacher (Kings College London)

We invite proposals for 20-minute papers. Panel proposals consisting of three speakers are also encouraged.

We also invite proposals for 90-minute workshops offering a space for delegates to come together to discuss issues or subjects important to Franciscans, e.g. ministry, outreach, issues relation to community life, the Franciscan voice in the church, etc.

Please submit proposals for papers or workshops (c. 200 words) via the form at <https://forms.office.com/e/s06nt9CrNW> by **30 October 2025** at the latest.

Contact for any queries: Dr William Crozier – william.e.crozier@durham.ac.uk