Our Mission & Values

The statue of our patron, Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, in front of Devereux Hall.

18 58

ST BONAVENTURE UNIVERSITY

The Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes was hand built during the 1924-25 academic year with cobblestones gathered from across campus by students and workers. The beautiful space on the southwest side of campus was renovated in 2016 thanks to the generosity of the Classes of 1964, 1965 and 2015.

During the Middle Ages, Franciscan Friars played a leading role in establishing the great universities of Europe: Oxford and Cambridge, Cologne and Paris.

In 1858, Franciscan Friars came to Western New York to continue that tradition of educational excellence. They founded what would become

St. Bonaventure University

The world of education has changed dramatically since then, but one thing remains unchanged:

The enduring value of a Franciscan education.

We welcome you to share in our story, as we journey towards our university's 200th anniversary. And we share with you the

Mission and Values

that make us who we are as a Catholic university dedicated to educational excellence in the Franciscan tradition.

Education that makes a difference

Many colleges and universities see education either as an end in itself or merely a means for making of money.

At St. Bonaventure University, we see things differently.

In the words of our patron, we believe that

there is no knowledge without love.

Knowledge is a joy and money a useful tool.

Education is a privilege.
It has the power to change your life and our world.

Everything we do at St. Bonaventure University flows from this guiding vision of our Franciscan tradition.

The First Franciscan

The mission and values of St. Bonaventure University go back to the Middle Ages and the life of Giovanni "Francesco" di Bernardone, known the world over today as **St. Francis of Assisi.**

The son of a wealthy merchant, St. Francis lived a life of privilege and prosperity. He dreamed of becoming a powerful knight and a famous nobleman. How different his life turned out to be! In a real sense, it surpassed all his hopes and dreams.

After a brief, disillusioning career as a soldier, St. Francis searched for a new and deeper meaning for his life. He found it in the most surprising of places, among the most incredible of people. He discovered it at the bottom of the social ladder, among the poor, the sick, the abandoned: lepers. As he described it in his brief autobiography, his Testament,

> ***The Lord Himself led me among them***
> ***and I performed mercy with them.***
> ***And that which had seemed bitter to me***
> ***was changed into sweetness of soul and body.***

During Mass one day, St. Francis heard the voice of God speaking to him through the words of the Gospel. God was inviting him to share the Good News of God's unconditional love with all people through a life of poverty and simplicity, kindness and love. He set out barefoot and penniless, preaching this simple message with lively joy.

Soon, a circle of Brothers – Friars – formed around him. Word of their good deeds and open hearts began to spread. In 1209, Pope Innocent III approved their "rule and life" as a religious community. They became the Order of Friars Minor, known today simply as Franciscans.

Franciscan Friars continue to live and serve at St. Bonaventure University, as do other members of the broad Franciscan Family.

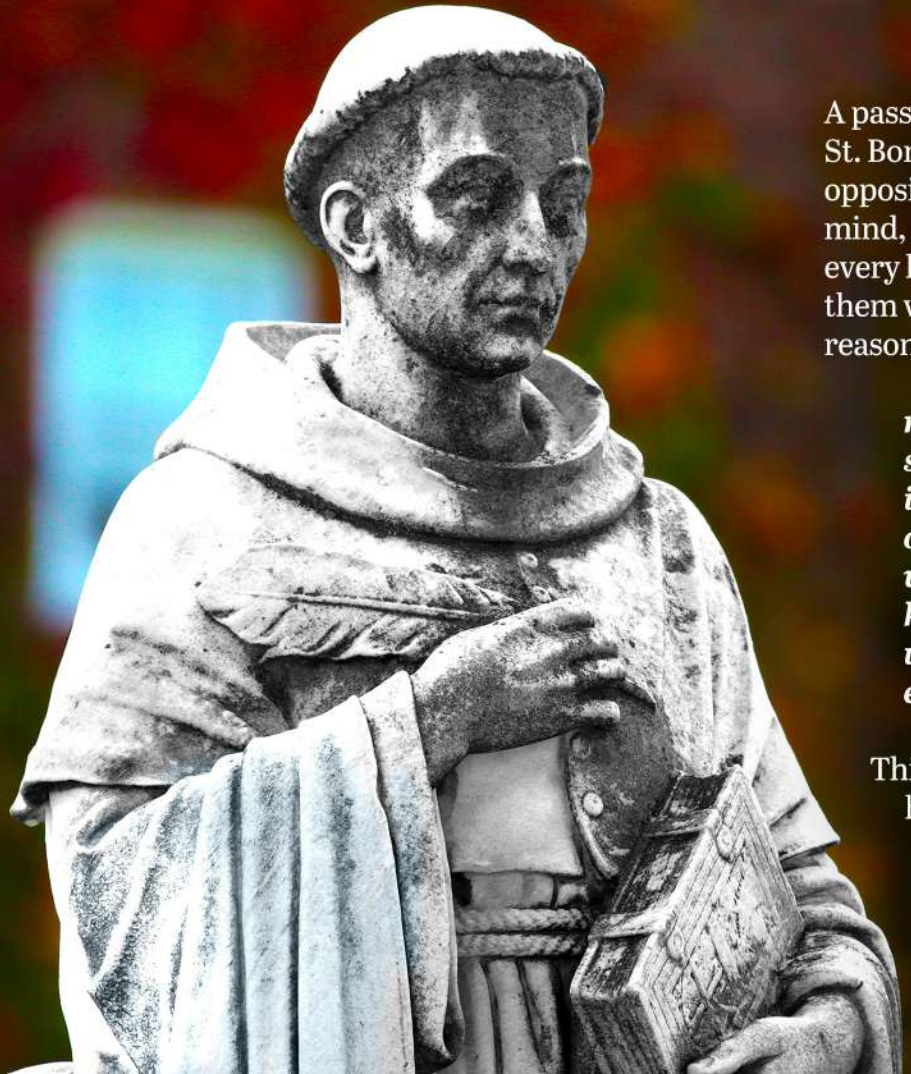
Saint & Scholar

St. Francis died in 1226. Seventeen years later, a student at the University of Paris was so inspired by the Saint's life that he entered the Franciscans. The name of this budding scholar was Giovanni di Fidanza. The world knows him today as

St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio.

Like St. Francis, he lived a life of poverty and simplicity, joyfully proclaiming the Good News of God's love. Unlike St. Francis, he pursued his calling as a scholar. He became a renowned professor and one of the leading intellectual lights of his day.

In St. Bonaventure's day, some people saw only division between the "life of the spirit" and the "life of the mind" – or "faith" and "science" as some divide them today. St. Bonaventure looked upon life with different eyes.



A passionate scholar and a spiritual master, St. Bonaventure united these apparent opposites in his own person. He saw heart and mind, faith and reason are necessary aspects of every human being. To live without any one of them would be to live only half a life. For this reason, he taught his students that,

reading is insufficient without fervor,
speculation without devotion,
investigation without wonder,
observation without joy,
work without piety,
knowledge without love,
understanding without humility,
endeavor without divine grace.

This same commitment to educating the whole human person guides our dedication to excellence at St. Bonaventure University.

ALL THE DARKNESS IN THE WORLD CANNOT EXTINGUISH THE LIGHT OF A SINGLE CANDLE
ST. FRANCIS
SBU
2015

A Transformative University

A committed Christian, St. Bonaventure believed that an intelligent, compassionate, educated person cannot separate knowledge and love of the things of this world – of creation – from knowledge and love of God – of the Creator. A Catholic university in the Franciscan tradition, St. Bonaventure University shares this belief.

We pursue knowledge for the sake of truth.
And for the true good of all people.

For many members of our community, the fullness of all truth is found in God – God who has revealed the depth of divine love in the person of Jesus Christ, the savior and brother of the world. It is precisely this faith that impels St. Bonaventure University to embrace students, faculty, and staff of all faiths and cultures, and to strive to bring out the best in every "Bonnie" through meaningful, mutual relationships.

As an academic and spiritual community, St. Bonaventure University prepares its students for the challenges they will face in both their professional careers and their personal lives. We do this by offering them a transformative education, one that will engender in them a lifelong commitment to serve the good of everyone with whom they will share their lives.

As so many Bonnies say, ***"St. Bonaventure isn't four years. St. Bonaventure is forever!"***

In light of this profound heritage, St. Bonaventure proudly shares with you

Our Mission

St. Bonaventure is a Catholic university dedicated to educational excellence as informed by our Franciscan and liberal arts traditions. In the words of our patron, we believe that there should be "no knowledge without love," and thus seek to transform the lives of our students, inspiring in them a lifelong commitment to service and citizenship.

St. Bonaventure embraces students, faculty and staff of all faiths and cultures and strives to bring out the best in every individual through meaningful relationships. As an academic and spiritual community, we endeavor to prepare our students for the challenges they will face in their professional careers and personal lives.

Our Values

We are a **community** ...

nurturing
compassion,

seeking
wisdom,

building
integrity.

"You should not run rapidly over these considerations, but should mull them over slowly and with the greatest care." — *St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio*

We are a community ...

Our Franciscan community affirms the unique dignity of everyone, each person reflecting the goodness of God, and invites all of our sisters and brothers to forge bonds of mutual acceptance and understanding that create a true sense of belonging.

"I did not come to be served but to serve," says the Lord *(cf. Gospel of Matthew 10:28)*. **Those who are placed in a position of authority over others should glory in such an office only as much as they would if they were assigned the task of washing the feet of their brothers and sisters.**

— St. Francis of Assisi, *Admonition IV*

Nurturing Compassion

We are convinced that all of creation is God's gift,
an awareness that calls forth a sense of solidarity
with ***everyone and everything.***
As images of God, we strive to share
God's unconditional love, particularly
with those on the margins of society —
the needy,
the ignored,
and ***the excluded.***

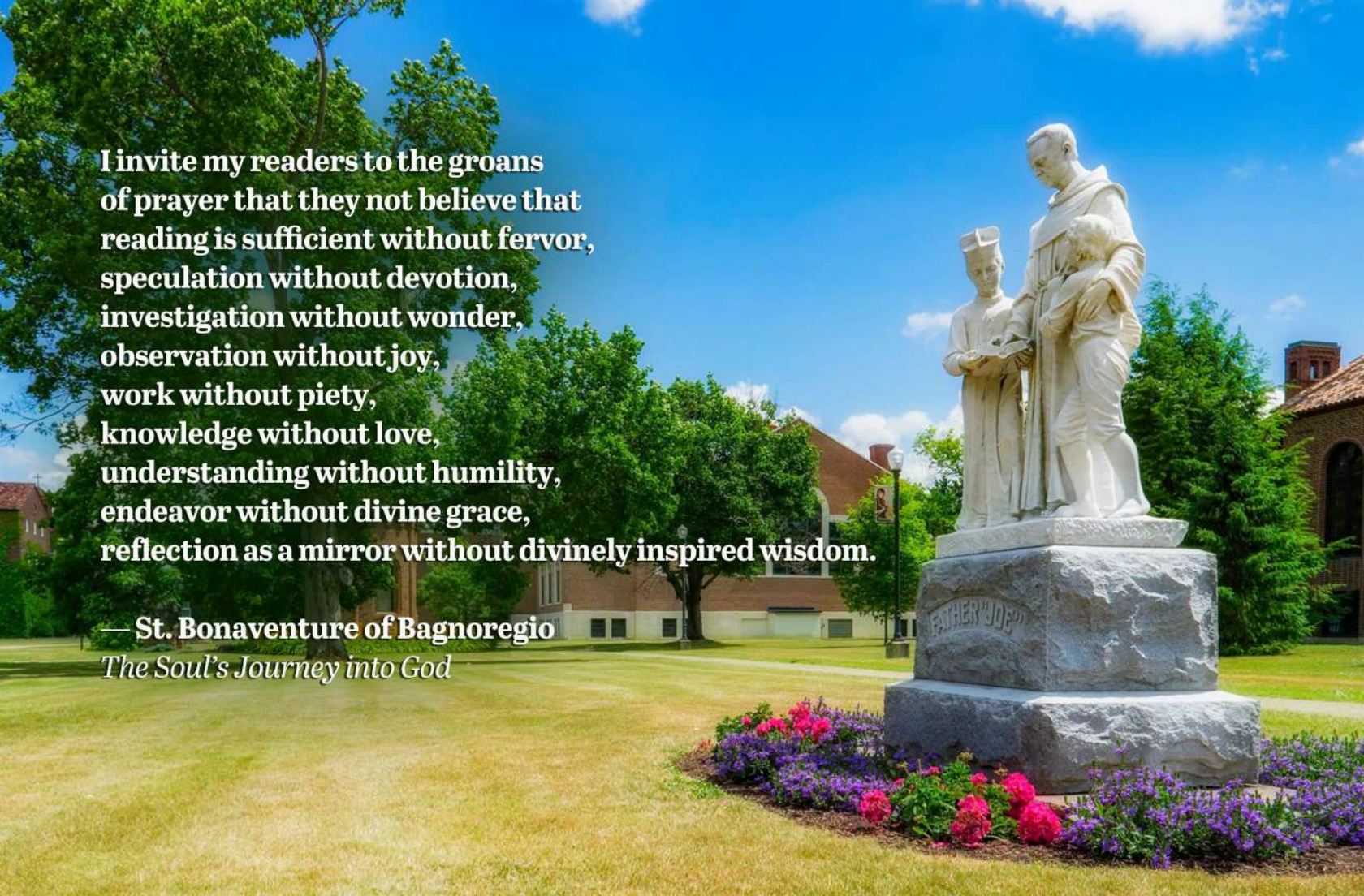
The Lord granted me, Brother Francis, to begin to do penance in this way: while I was in sin, it seemed very bitter to me to see lepers, but the Lord Himself led me among them and I performed mercy with them. And that which had seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness of soul and body.

— St. Francis of Assisi, *Testament*

Seeking Wisdom

We are convinced that education must be transformative of the whole person, concerned not only with the intellect but also with *the will, the heart, and the body*.

Education must be eminently practical, not just about learning concepts and skills, but discerning how to truly live *humanly, deeply, and well* in the world.



I invite my readers to the groans of prayer that they not believe that reading is sufficient without fervor, speculation without devotion, investigation without wonder, observation without joy, work without piety, knowledge without love, understanding without humility, endeavor without divine grace, reflection as a mirror without divinely inspired wisdom.

— St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio
The Soul's Journey into God

Building Integrity

We are convinced that each of us must accept responsibility for our actions and that our relationships should be based on respect for the dignity of others, honesty, and transparency, realizing that the values we espouse mean little unless they are embodied in our personal and professional lives.

Blessed are those who love and respect a brother as much when he is far from them as when he is near to them, and blessed are those who would say nothing behind a sister's back which in charity they would not also say to her face.

— St. Francis of Assisi, *Admonition XXXV*

Epilogue

Much has changed since 1858.

Many more changes will no doubt take place between now and the 200th anniversary of St. Bonaventure University.

We welcome you to share in that history — to share in our story.

We hope you will become a part of it and likewise we hope that you will permit it to become a part of you.

ST BONAVENTURE
UNIVERSITY

Peace and all good!

St. Francis of Assisi,
traditional greeting