

# Franciscan Leadership

First Bi-Annual Virtual Conference of the  
*International Association of Franciscan Studies*



International Association  
of  
Franciscan Studies

Tuesday 14 July 2026

Wednesday 15 July 2026

Teams Virtual Conference

9.00 am – 3.00 pm (EDT) / 15.00 20.00 (CET)

9.00 am – 3.00 pm (EDT) / 15.00 21.00 (CET)

## Program Tuesday 14 July 2026

9.00-9.30 EDT (15.00-15.30 CET)

David Couturier OFM Cap. and Krijn Pansters, introduction

**THE ACT OF LEADING** Chair: Krijn Pansters

9.30-10.00 EDT (15.30-16.00 CET)

Willem Marie Speelman OFS, *Discover Places Where the Sacred Resides: Towards a Franciscan Leadership Theory*

10.15-10.45 EDT (16.15-16.45 CET)

Katherine Wrisley-Shelby, *Bonaventurean Leadership: The Search for Peace in the Midst of Polarization*

10.45-11.15 EDT (16.45-17.15 CET)

Joachim Ostermann OFM, *The Place of Nature and Natural Acting in Franciscan Leadership*

**THE PROCESS OF LEADING** Chair: Katherine Wrisley-Shelby

11.45-12.15 EDT (17.45-18.15 CET)

Krijn Pansters, *Led – Letting the Process Lead: A Franciscan Perspective*

**Keynote Lecture**

1.00-2.00 EDT (19.00-20.00 CET)

Darleen Pryds, *The Challenge of Collaborative Leadership in a Hierarchical World: The Franciscan Family and the Potential for Counter-Cultural Change*

## Program Wednesday 15 July 2026

**SOURCES OF LEADERSHIP** Chair: David Couturier OFM Cap.

9.00-9.30 EDT (15.00-15.30 CET)

Shatonda S. Jones, *Leading from the Margins: Franciscan Leadership Through a Womanist Theological Lens*

9.30-10.00 EDT (15.30-16.00 CET)

Nicole Schilling and Jason Margolis, *Compassion, Wisdom, Integrity: A Franciscan Approach to Preparing Educational Leaders*

10.00-10.30 EDT (16.00-16.30 CET)

Deogratias Fikiri SJ, *Re-Centering Christ in Leadership: Synodal Leadership and the Limits of Corporate Leadership Models*

**ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP I** Chair: Willem Marie Speelman OFS

11.00-11.30 EDT (17.00-17.30 CET)

Paolo Santori, *Fraternity in the Workplace: An Alternative to Positive Leadership and Followership*

11.30-12.00 EDT (17.30-18.00 CET)

Thomas Dienberg OFM Cap., *Agility and Franciscan Leadership*

**ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP II** Chair: Krijn Pansters

12.45-1.15 EDT (18.45-19.15 CET)

Roderic Hewlett OFS, *Franciscan Servant Leadership and Stakeholder Theory: Integrating Care, ESG, and Organizational Purpose*

1.15-1.45 EDT (19.15-19.45 CET)

David Couturier OFM Cap., *Franciscan Leadership and Moral Imagination: Minority and Organizational Decision-Making*

1.45-2.30 EDT (19.45-20.30 CET)

Conclusion and Launch of the new *International Association of Franciscan Studies (IAFS)*

## Theme

The commemoration of the 800th anniversary of the death of Francis of Assisi in 2026 offers a timely opportunity to reflect on his life and legacy in dialogue with our own vocations, charisms, actions, and forms of leadership. This online conference gathers scholars from diverse disciplines and cultural contexts to explore the meaning of inspirational leadership, past and present. It seeks, on the one hand, to enrich contemporary leadership debates through Franciscan ideals and insights, and on the other, to critically reassess the practical relevance of Franciscan leadership styles in today's world. Rooted in the Franciscan sources, Franciscan leadership is fundamentally servant-centred, emphasizing service to the dignity and well-being of both individuals and communities. The conference invites dialogue between this distinctive service-oriented vision and modern leadership theories, allowing each to illuminate the other. By examining themes such as inspiration, vision, receptivity, relationality, fraternity, and transformation, the contributions translate Franciscan leadership wisdom into resources for contemporary leaders. The conference also marks the official launch of the *International Association of Franciscan Studies*.

## Date

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Teams Virtual Conference

## Registration

Register at:

<https://www.sbu.edu/academics/academic-resources/franciscan-institute/programs-conferences>

After registration, participants will receive a link to the Teams Virtual Conference.

Registration is free.

## Further information

<https://www.sbu.edu/academics/academic-resources/franciscan-institute/programs-conferences>

## Or contact

Dr. Dr. Krijn Pansters: [k.pansters@tilburguniversity.edu](mailto:k.pansters@tilburguniversity.edu)

Fr. David B. Couturier, OFM. Cap.: [dcouturi@sbu.edu](mailto:dcouturi@sbu.edu)

