

Timothy J. Johnson (Ed)
Franciscans at Prayer
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For those wanting a scholarly read taking them to the roots of the Franciscan spiritual tradition, this is one of the core books that you will want to explore. It is priced for libraries, but if you can find a copy then do not surrender it until you have immersed yourself in its contents. Many of the most well known Franciscan scholars are here, from Wayne Hellmann to Mary Beth Ingham to William Short. Each has produced a chapter on aspects of Franciscan prayer ranging from the writings of Francis through Clare, Bonaventure, and Duns Scotus, to the Recollects of sixteenth century Spain. The balance is finely maintained between the intellectuals from the universities and the poets such as Jacopone da Todi, though it must be admitted that the (excellent) index has rather more references to Bonaventure than to God. Themed chapters explore such matters as interfaith connections, liturgical prayer, and the influence of Byzantine icons on Franciscan prayer, the latter including some excellent colour illustrations. Each chapter is necessarily something of an introduction, but with full footnotes for further study and plenty of encouragement to go back and read the primary texts. A select bibliography would have been helpful, but maybe it would just have been hopelessly long. If you are looking for a short introduction to these matters, William Short's *Poverty and Joy* is the best starter in this reviewer's opinion, with Cirino and Raischl's *Franciscan Solitude* a good follow-up; but this present compilation takes the reader further at every stage and will be an invaluable reference work for years to come.

Nicholas Alan SSF