

Il Ministro Generale
dell'Ordine dei Frati Minori

Br. Keith Douglas Warner, ofm
President of the Franciscan School of Theology
San Diego, CA 92110

Rome, 17 September 2026

Dear Brother Keith,

May the Lord give you peace!

On the day of your installation as President of the Franciscan School of Theology, I send you, in the name of the whole Order of Friars Minor, a fraternal greeting and my heartfelt good wishes.

You take up a charge with deep roots. Franciscans have taught theology in California since the early days of the state itself — from the apostolic college chartered at Mission Santa Barbara in 1854, through the long seminary years, the decades in Berkeley within the Graduate Theological Union, and now the school's home alongside the University of San Diego. Few institutions can claim such an unbroken lineage, and this one remains the only freestanding Franciscan graduate school of theology in North America devoted to our intellectual tradition. What has been handed to you is not an archive to guard but a workshop still running.

It matters that it keep running, and not for us alone. The change of epoch we so often speak of poses theology harder questions than a change of subjects would, and the Franciscan school is well fitted to meet them. Beneath them all lies the anthropological question — what it means to be human — and here our tradition has something the age needs to hear: Scotus's insistence on the dignity of the singular, this irreplaceable person and not merely a type; Bonaventure's reading of every creature as a trace of God; the primacy of love over calculation. Where culture reduces the person to what can be measured or reproduced, that inheritance pushes back.

From the same root come the challenges you name. To speak of God in a secularized society, the Franciscan way has always begun where Bonaventure began — in experience and affection, in the world read as a book about its Maker — and Francis himself showed that a life can be the argument. The new fields press on the same nerve: the digital world and artificial intelligence raise again the question of what presence is and what in a person cannot be copied; care for our common home was Francis's concern long before it gave a papal letter its name; and peace was his greeting

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before the Sultan and remains ours. These are not departments to bolt onto the tradition. They are the tradition, asked what it has not yet been asked.

No school will carry this alone. I look with hope toward a closer conversation among our centers of Franciscan study across the Americas — north and south, in several languages — and toward whatever forms of shared work may grow from it. I would welcome the chance to think this through together. The same applies to the documents the Order has been entrusting to the brothers in recent years: they deserve study that tests them and a reception that puts them to work, and a school such as yours can give them both.

I entrust you, the faculty, and the students to Saint Francis and Saint Clare, and I pray that under your guidance the school will keep thinking with the Church and for the world. Know that you carry the affection and trust of your brothers across the Order.

Fraternally, in Christ and Saint Francis,

SIG. MINISTRI GENLIS. TOTIUS ORD. FRATR. MINORUM

Br. Massimo Fusarelli, ofm
Minister General

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