



ACI WEBINAR

SIGNS OF THE TIMES: FROM ALPHONSE GRATRY TO VATICAN II

Madonna Clare Adams & Stefan Gigacz

FRI MARCH 18 2022, 11.30AM AEDT

Exploring the legacy of French philosopher and theologian, Fr Alphonse Gratry (1805-1872), pioneer of the "inductive method" that forms the basis of Cardijn's "see-judge-act" and the Vatican II Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*.

Register: www.australiancardijninstitute.org



ACI Webinar: Signs of the Times: From Alphonse Gratry to Vatican II, Fri 17 March 2022

ACI's March webinar focuses on a long-forgotten precursor of Vatican II, the French philosopher and theologian, Fr Alphonse Gratry, who died 150 years ago in 1872.

Born in 1805, young Gratry was a gifted student, who studied at the Ecole Polytechnique (Polytechnic School) in Paris, where he prepared a doctoral thesis on the scientific method before a spiritual conversion experience led him to the priesthood.

In 1840, he became principal of Stanislas College in 1840, where he recruited Society of St Vincent de Paul founder, Frédéric Ozanam, to teach. Six years later in 1846, he took up the role of chaplain to the elite Ecole Normale Supérieure, a post-graduate school for future university staff

During this period, he began to write a series of landmark philosophical books that would win him admission to the *Académie Française*. Breaking with other Catholic philosophers, who remained wedded to the Scholastic philosophy of St Thomas, Gratry foreshadowed a completely "new philosophy" that would do for the emerging industrial, democratic, modern world what Aquinas' philosophy had achieved for the mediaeval era.

Reading the signs of the times

Challenging the Church's traditional "deductive" approach, which sought to apply Catholic teaching to society, Gratry espoused a theory of induction based on "reading the signs of times," an approach that would eventually provide the foundation for Cardijn's see-judge-act method.

When the (First) Vatican Council opened in 1870, he led the opposition to the very broad declaration of papal infallibility sought by some Council Fathers. Meanwhile, as war between Prussia (Germany) and France threatened, he joined a "Peace League" that sought unsuccessfully to prevent war between the two nations.

Gratry thus found himself marginalised by many of his former philosophical and theological colleagues. Soon after he developed the cancer that would take his life on 7 February 1872.

Nevertheless, his influence lived on, particularly in the work of Maurice Blondel, often now regarded as "the philosopher of Vatican II."

Australian time: Friday 18 March 11.30m AEDT

US times: Thursday 17 March 5.30pm West, 8.30pm East

Registration: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAlfuCrrzgpGtJF5LhklzjJ70blIQ4uziHW>

Speakers

Madonna Clare Adams

Madonna Clare Adams holds an STM from Yale Divinity School and a doctorate in Philosophy from Catholic University of America in Ancient and History of Philosophy. She directed a NY State Liberty Partnership Program for at-risk high school students, and was Director for the Center for Applied Ethics at Pace University, NY.

She has articles in the Dictionary on Catholic Spirituality, and has written on Plato's political thought and modern democratic theory; the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori in relation to Plato's education for citizenship, Aristotle's philosophy of nature, and Marx's concept of work; and Medieval Philosophers and the Environment.

A student of Dr. Mary L. O'Hara, CSJ, she assisted in the publication of her translation of *Gratry's Philosophy: A Translation of Julián Marías' La Filosofía del Padre Gratry* (Adelaide: ATF Press Publishing, 2020) the first major work on Gratry in English. Retired from Caldwell University and living in Whittier, California.

Stefan Gigacz

Originally from Melbourne, Stefan Gigacz worked for a short time as a personal injuries lawyer. While at university, he became involved in a local parish YCW group. In 1978, he became a fulltime worker for the movement, working in Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney and later for the International YCW.

In 2019, he completed his PhD thesis on the role of Joseph Cardijn at the Second Vatican Council, now published under the title "[The Leaven in the Council: Joseph Cardijn and the Jocist Network at Vatican II.](#)"

He is also the coordinator of the [Joseph Cardijn Digital Library](#), an online repository of Cardijn's writings and associated biographical material. He publishes his continuing research on his [Cardijn Research](#) blog.

More information: Stefan Gigacz: aci@australiancardijninstitute.org

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