

**Dr Monica Tobon, FISC**

# **Two Poor Ones in the Desert: Bonaventure and Evagrius**



**Thursday 8 June 2017, 7.00-8.00**

**Franciscan International Study Centre, Giles Lane, Canterbury**

Bonaventure introduces his *Journey of the Mind into God* as ‘the speculation of a poor one in the desert’. His ‘desert’ is spiritual rather than physical, but his use of Dionysius links the main contours of his ‘speculation’ to the thought of the fourth century desert monk Evagrius. Even where material influence can be ruled out these two ‘poor ones in the desert’ are to be found thinking alike. A creative misreading of Dionysius by Bonaventure inspired by his Augustinian perspective makes the thirteenth century Franciscan in some ways a more faithful interpreter of Evagrius than the sixth century monk. We shall explore parallels between Bonaventure and Evagrius in relation to themes including the spiritual life as a journey; the visible creation as the sign of the invisible creation; the threefold way; the graded ascent of the mind from sense perception through natural reason to its uplifting by grace; illumination; the interior tabernacle, and the apophatic summit. We shall note similarities and differences between the approaches of Dionysius, Evagrius, and Augustine, and how Bonaventure draws on all three in producing his own authentically Franciscan synthesis.

**All welcome. For more information call 01227 769349**