



Theology after Fergus Kerr

July 8-9, 2026 | Blackfriars, Oxford

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Conference Description

“The principal task for the theologian now would seem to be the assimilation of this new understanding of man, this new experience, which we are accustomed to explore and to invoke in literature, plastic art, film, music, the social sciences, and so on: a ‘modern theology’ would issue from that.” - Kerr, ‘Christianity and the Liberal Vision’, *Slant* 9, 1966

Fr Fergus Kerr OP’s (1931-2025) two *After’s* – *Aquinas* and *Wittgenstein* – present a legacy of critical and faithful inquiry into the Catholic intellectual tradition and its reception. By assimilating the insights of contemporary philosophies while clinging to the essential of his tradition, Fr Fergus modelled a sympathetic yet critical attitude toward the diverse intellectual traditions with which he interacted. In turn, we too might examine how new ways of thinking can be the issue and issuer of theology today, how thinking like Fr Fergus might be continued in the academy as well as in the church. Indeed, it is not trivial to emphasise that Kerr was not only a scholar but a Priest and a Dominican at that. As Prior at Oxford during some of its most turbulent years – in and around the Second Vatican Council – he managed to mediate, sometimes painfully, between different currents in Catholicism and the Religious order amidst a time of social revolution. Attending to the needs of the community by listening properly then speaking wisely are fruits of Fr Fergus’ ministry, intellectual virtues that we too might cultivate through a faithful reading of his life and work.

If what comes *After* might be taken as a key theme of Fr Fergus’ work, then this only comes by understanding what came *before* and what the future might become after the moment of rupture. These ruptures might be intellectual – the kind of transformed self-conception instigated by Descartes and Wittgenstein – or cultural – what the various liberations of the twentieth century might mean for how we live together with less oppression. Taking the thought of Fr Fergus as a guide might, then, give us a way to critically imagine a future that we can inspire the next generation to realise.

Confirmed speakers include Fritz Bauerschmidt, John Berkman, Simon Hewitt, Karen Kilby, Gerard Loughlin, John Milbank, Paul Murray, Jack Norman, Simon Oliver, Fr Albert Robertson, Graham Ward.

Please join us for two days of personal recollections and scholarly discussion.



Call for Papers

We invite proposals for papers of no more than 15 minutes on topics related to the life and work of Fr Fergus.

Deadline: 17th April 2026

Submit proposals and queries: blackfriarstheology@gmail.com

Registration details can be [found here](#) or via the QR code