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Twenty-First Recipient of the Franciscan Institute Medal 20
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**LAUDATIO IN HONOR OF
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Our celebration during this first conference has been about intersections: intersections among scholars from a variety of nations, intersections among old friends and colleagues, intersections among junior and senior scholars. This first conference in honor of Duns Scotus and Allan Wolter has sought to widen the circle of discourse and to bring many people together. During this weekend, we have been celebrating the scholarly intersection at the first session of our Scotus Quadruple Congress. And yet, we celebrate not merely the past, for we stand this evening very close to the intersection of two millennia. In our time and in each of our countries, we witness the intersection of cultures and, in our world, the unfortunately violent intersection of political, cultural and religious worldviews. Intersections open to transcendence only when a focus, a meeting point can be determined and mined. As we look at our time and place, we can affirm the power of intersections and the life that can come when we bring ideas, people and viewpoints together.

The scholar whom we honor this evening is no stranger to intersections. His academic life has been the focal point for a number of important intersections. Of modern philosophy with medieval; of theology with philosophy; of Innsbruck, Bonn, Trier, Berlin; of critical editions and scientific conferences; of national and international debates and discussions; of scientific inquiry and everyday practical decision making, of the highest and noblest of human intellectual ambitions with the smallest, most precious gift we have: the gift of life.

These intersections form the pattern for our celebration this evening. On behalf of the faculty of the Franciscan Institute, I am pleased to be able to give this brief tribute to our honoree, Professor Dr. Ludger Honnefelder, the 21st recipi-

ent of the Franciscan Institute Medal. This evening we honor Professor Honnefelder according to a three-fold thematic of intersections. We honor him first, for his scholarly work in the field of medieval philosophy, and the work he has done to point out the key role of continuity within this history: the continuity represented by the great medieval thinkers. Second, we honor him for his many publications and scholarly attention to one Franciscan in particular, John Duns Scotus. Finally, we honor him for the manner he has brought to fruition his life of study and writing: for his role in contemporary discussions that lie at the intersection of science and ethics, in particular for his leadership in European reflection in medical ethics.

First, for his work in medieval philosophy. Too many philosophers regard the field of medieval philosophy as a subset of theology, a domain that does not deserve our scholarly attention. From his earliest scholarly works, his seminal *Ens in quantum ens*, where he studied the concept of being in Scotist metaphysics, and following this, his *Scientia transcendens. Die formale Bestimmung der Seiendheit und Realität in der Metaphysik des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit*, Ludger Honnefelder has mined the rich tradition of medieval philosophy in order to show its place both in the history of western thought, but also as a point of intersection between ancient texts and modern insights. The centrality of being, in its richness and beauty, was the point of contact and shift from Aquinas and Scotus, to Suarez, Wolff and Kant. In his research on these key western thinkers, Professor Honnefelder has demonstrated that distinction within the realm of being, rather than division, is the most fruitful path by which to approach human perfection and fulfillment. The distinction between scientific inquiry and faith tradition reveals the depth of that reality whose transcendence lies beyond each, and whose fullest experience we can only attempt to understand.

We honor him specifically tonight for his work on John Duns Scotus. In the domain of German scholarship, the name of Ludger Honnefelder crowns the list of eminent academicians. Many of us here this evening remember the wonderful 1994 Skotus-Tagung as an exceptional gathering of interna-

tional scholars who explored and celebrated the metaphysical and ethical dimensions of Scotist thought. Indeed, at the close of that conference, we marveled aloud at the high level of collaboration and cooperation in the discussions. It was truly an example of the rich intellectual discourse that is possible within the academy. The tone of that conference owed much to his leadership.

Ludger Honnefelder holds a pre-eminent place in the circle of Scotus scholars, not just in Germany or the European Union, but throughout the world. He has not been content to explore the themes of continuity within medieval philosophy, but he has also highlighted how, in the work of Duns Scotus, one can point to the concept of being as a second beginning of western metaphysics and to Scotus's notion of freedom as a "turning point" toward modernity. And here, another intersection comes to light. This is the intersection between Latin and Arab medieval theories of causality in the will. Scotus's innovative treatment of rational freedom is increasingly studied and discussed in graduate classes and international conferences. An authentic retrieval of Scotus's insights would be impossible without the attention to historical context and influences, balanced with the systematic rigor that typifies the highest levels of scholarship. The prolific and magisterial work of Professor Honnefelder, in his publications on Scotus's ethics, in the conferences he has hosted and the several volumes he has edited contributes to the widening circle of scholars who appreciate and use Scotist thought.

We honor him, finally, for his work in the field of ethics and medical ethics. In this regard, Ludger Honnefelder follows the Franciscan tradition of putting rational inquiry to the work of the common good. In this, he offers not merely a scholarly legacy, but a personal legacy that attests to the supreme value of scientific inquiry, not for itself alone, but for the common good. As our world becomes more technologically advanced than ever before, we need scholars who are able to address the fundamental human questions of personal dignity, justice, concern for the disadvantaged, human value and the common good. Ludger's most recent work and several conferences on bioethics and the impact of techno-

logical advances on ethical questions should be considered, I think, his greatest scholarly legacy.

In the authentic tradition of Franciscan thought, Professor Honnefelder's metaphysical analysis has informed his ethical reflection and, more importantly, extended into practical concerns that benefit not merely the historians of medieval philosophy, not merely the systematic reflection on philosophical ideas and their mutation and influence over time and into modernity, but indeed current society and reflection on the meaning of human life and those insights that promote the flourishing of the human person.

One cannot work on John Duns Scotus without being dramatically influenced by the thought of the Subtle Doctor. Such is the case for Professor Ludger Honnefelder, the scholar whose life and work we honor this evening. Dr. Honnefelder, though trained in Medieval Philosophy, has in recent years, begun to play a significant role in ethical questions, and in particular, in questions of medical ethics. In the words of Scotus, this is *valde consona* with the thrust of all philosophical and metaphysical thinking: that all human intellectual endeavors ultimately pour forth into excellent human *praxis*: action within the concrete setting where human perfection is found.

My introduction would not be complete without reference to the leadership Prof. Honnefelder has played in the German academic world, from his days as Professor of Philosophy at the University of Trier, to his years at the Freie Universität Berlin and to his role as Direktor des Philosophischen Seminar B, Direktor of the Albertus Magnus Institut, Institut für Wissenschaft und Ethik und Direktor des Deutsches Referenzzentrum für Ethik in den Biowissenschaft. In all of this, his life and work give testimony to the highest standards of scientific research and to the intersection of that knowledge with a fully human life.

Professor Honnefelder, on behalf of the faculty of the Franciscan Institute, it is our privilege to award you the 21st Franciscan Institute Medal. Congratulations!

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