

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

# The Hank Center

September 2025



## From the Director

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Not long after the clear-sighted warning President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued about the creeping nature of the “military industrial complex” and its dangerous cultural ascent as he left office in 1961, his classmate at West Point, General Omar Bradley, observed a point of equal, albeit different gravity:

“Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than we know about living. We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount.” It appears that sometimes it takes two generals who have experienced every inch of war to speak with authority when it comes to making the case for peace. There is a refreshing credibility here, not least because brothers in arms prefer to brothers in peace and know the reason why.

Bradley's astute insight was referenced by Archbishop John Wester of Santa Fe on the recent "[Pilgrimage of Hope](#)" I experienced along with a community of clergy, colleagues and students from Loyola--and several other US and Japanese schools--to commemorate the

80th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. To be perfectly frank, I have not quite yet returned from this trip as it was among the most affecting, soul-shaking, and transformative experiences of my life—and I bow in gratitude to my new Japanese friends who welcomed us with such grace and warmth. There are many stories of peacemaking to tell from the pilgrimage, thanks be to God, but they bloom mainly from an intoxicated soil—from a wound that is still open. While bearing witness to the artifacts and experiences of the unspeakable violence of nuclear attack in a close quarters exhibit room in [Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum](#), I witnessed a confluence of actions that manifested the living wound in real time—and that immediately took my heart and legs from me: the lone Japanese baby crying in an otherwise silent room, a 12-year Japanese old boy vomiting profusely at the sight of the horrors he saw, a very old Japanese man weeping alone in a corner. These haunting memories—this living tableau of human pain—will stay with me the rest of my days.

To hear Archbishop Wester, speaking at the campus of Assumption of Mary Cathedral in Hiroshima, warn us about the ways we are "sleepwalking into a new and more dangerous nuclear age than the first" meant something much more to this American man (i.e, yours truly) than it usually might; and when one hears such a message shared on the historical site of nuclear holocaust, can it be any surprise? The ghosts of Japanese Catholics were speaking too. Those who bore witness to the one essential truth they lived for before 1945 (that of the saving love our Redeemer and the dignity of all persons), bore witness again to another, very different truth on those decimating August days in 1945. These spirits--these martyrs-- filled our minds and hearts with tough lessons about the eternal capacity for human violence and the fury that destroys the world—this time delivered as a "clinical strike" and first fruit harvest of an advanced human technology.

Our Spring issue of *Nexus* is titled *Nuclear Legacies: Reflections on War, Peace, and Human Dignity* and is devoted exploring and contemplating these complicated and arresting issues. It is already shaping up to be a powerful, consequential, set of readings and reflections—offered by bishops, scholars, artists, and students who walked the Japan pilgrimage together. We look forward to sharing the issue with you, and we get the ball rolling in this newsletter with a student reflection by Billy Wade, class of 2026. Billy studies Psychology and Catholic Studies and thank you for your fine reflection, Billy.

Our work at the Hank Center continues this fall and we are grateful for it. Three compelling events to highlight here taking place in the very near future:

1. An online book discussion **tomorrow night** featuring Paul Elie and his truly superb new book, *The Last Supper: Art, Faith, Sex, and Controversy in the 1980s*. Wednesday, September 17 from 7-8 PM.
2. *Our Annual Jesuit Lecture* featuring Fr. Mark Massa, SJ. This year's subject: Catholic Fundamentalism in America. **Thursday, September 25th** from 7-8:15 PM. Ignatius House, Lakeshore Campus.
3. Interreligious Dialogues-- On *Laudato si'*: Islamic and Catholic Approaches featuring "The Green Shaykh" Abdul Aziz bin Ali Al Nuaimi and yours truly. **Wednesday, October 1<sup>st</sup> at 7:30 PM**. Cuneo Hall, Room 209, Lakeshore Campus.

Please read on for further information and details about registration.

I close this note-- too quickly, to be sure-- on the spectre of human violence and warmaking. The first of the two atomic bombs was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6th, 1945--the Feast of the Transfiguration. As in the New Testament, the hypocenters of the bombs produced a blinding white light. This, of course, is not the kind of light we want to see; and we can do without the kind of light that seeks to mimic divine power, the kind of light that is an upside-down human parody of God's peaceful, life-giving luminosity. Let us never forget that the Zealots and the messianic faithful of the first century were expecting the arrival of a sword-wielding Messiah to abate their suffering and injustice. What they got instead was the Prince of Peace whose face "shone like sun" and who preached and modelled a different way of proceeding. I am grateful that my Japanese and American pilgrimage community reminded me in profound ways just how precious true peace is-- how very simple and how very near it is.

On behalf of our Hank team, I thank God for calling us together and for calling us to this good work. We pray that the light of Christ will engender true and lasting peace--in our hearts, in

our actions, and in our lives together.

Warmest regards,

Dr. Michael P. Murphy

## Hank Center Highlights

### Fall 2025 Events Calendar

The screenshot shows a calendar for September 2025. Key events include:
 

- SEP 3 TO 24**: Pedagogy Series with *Reading Life* (Wednesdays 12-1:30PM).
- SEP 17-18**: Family Festival: All Things *Reading* (Wednesdays 4-6PM, Thursdays 10-11:30AM).
- SEP 24-25**: Catholic Studies Consortium National Conference (Presidents College, NY).
- SEP 25**: Book Lecture: *The Last Supper* by Paul Elie (7:30-8:30PM CDT).
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We hope to see you at our upcoming events!

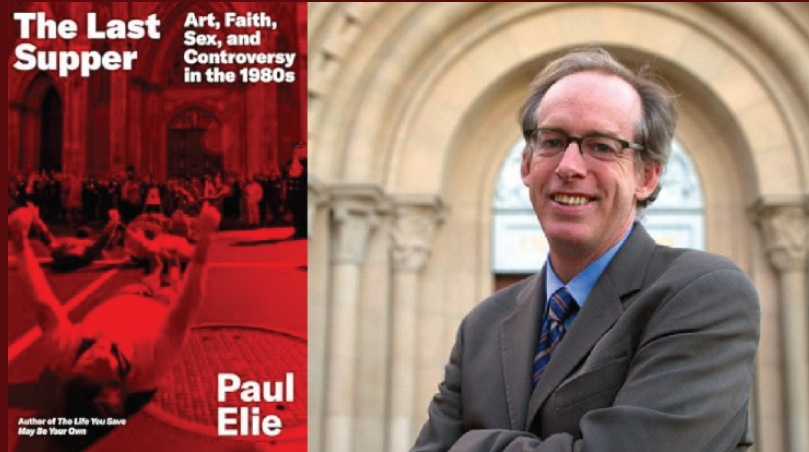
## VIDEO NOW AVAILABLE! Fourth Annual Way Forward Conference: *Fratelli tutti: Cultivating the Politics of Communion and Compassion*



This year's meeting, *Fratelli tutti: Cultivating the Politics of Communion and Compassion* brought together a select group

## UPCOMING EVENT!

### Book Lecture, *The Last Supper: Art, Faith, Sex, and Controversy in the 1980s* by Paul Elie



Wednesday, September 17, 2025, 7 - 8:30 PM  
Zoom Only, Registration Required

The Hank Center welcomes National Book Critics Circle Award finalist Paul Elie to discuss his new book, *The Last Supper*, a vibrant study of how a diverse coterie of artists engaged in the "early skirmishes in the culture wars" that profoundly informed and described life in the U.S. in the 1980s. In his explorations--ranging from Leonard Cohen's Psalmist grade "Hallelujah" to Andy Warhol's adapting Leonardo's *The Last Supper* in response to the AIDS pandemic to Martin Scorsese's provocative cinematic rendering of Kazantzakis's *The Last Temptation of Christ*, Elie traces the beginning of our age of postsecularism, in which the religious imagination--and religious affiliation--is both surging and in decline. In Elie's new book, the creators (not the politicians) are the protagonists, and the work they make speaks to conflicts that have only escalated since the consequential days of the long 1980s.

*This event is free, open to the public, and all were welcome to join!*

Event Information

Register for the Book Discussion

of Cardinals, other Bishops, scholars, public-facing Catholics, and journalists to focus on Pope Francis' encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, its specific themes of social friendship and a "better kind of politics," and the reception of these themes in the Catholic church in the US.

Learn more about these proceedings below. The stellar video, produced by America Media, **will win awards.**

Read: Fordham University hosts conference dedicated to spreading Pope's vision in US

Watch the Amazing Conference Summary Video

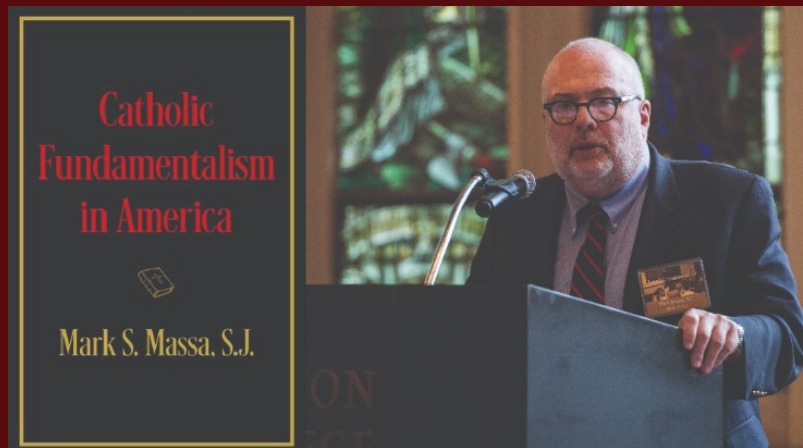
### UPCOMING EVENT!



*The Hank Center is proud to be involved in a number of events commemorating the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home:*

**Laudato si' @ 10: The Promise & Peril of Technology with Eugene McCarragher and Christine Rosen**

### UPCOMING EVENT! Annual Jesuit Lecture featuring Fr. Mark Massa, SJ "Catholic Fundamentalisms"



**Thursday, September 25, 2025, 7 - 8:30 PM**  
**Ignatius House Jesuit Community, Lakeshore Campus**

The Hank Center is pleased to welcome Fr. Mark Massa, SJ of Boston College's Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life, for its 2025 Jesuit Lecture. He will speak about his new book, *Catholic Fundamentalism in America*.

The term "fundamentalism" has its roots in specific forms of American Protestantism that arose around the turn of the twentieth century in reaction to liberalizing and modernizing trends within the church. In this book, Mark Massa argues that an analogously reactive, militant, and sectarian "fundamentalist" movement emerged within American Catholicism in the decades after World War II, for a similarly complex mix of theological and cultural reasons. In *Catholic Fundamentalism in America* Massa gives the first account of the Catholic form of the anti-modernist impulse. Through seven portraits of individuals and movements that embody the Catholic fundamentalist impulse, Massa demonstrates how the Catholic Right, like its evangelical Protestant counterpart, has reacted to--and fought against--modern American culture.

[More Event Information](#)

### UPCOMING EVENT! Interreligious Dialogues: *On Laudato si'*, Islamic and Catholic Approaches with Abdul Aziz bin Ali Al Nuaimi and Michael Murphy

**October 15, 2025  
7-8:30 PM  
Information  
Commons, 4th Floor,  
LSC  
Livestream Available**

For our mid-October dialogue, the Hank Center will convene (in partnership with John Carroll University) the sixth installment of our year-long celebration of Pope Francis' landmark encyclical, *Laudato si'* on its 10th anniversary. We welcome Eugene McCarragher and Christine Rosen to discuss "The Promise and Peril of Technology: *Laudato si'*, AI, and the Experience of Being Human."

[More Information](#)

### **10th Anniversary of the Papal Encyclical, *Laudato Si'* Virtual Series**



**Watch Past Proceedings from *Laudato Si' @ 10* Series: *Envisioning a Livable Future***

**January 29, February 17, March 11, March 15, April 9, 2025**

An online, 7-part serial symposium in collaboration with John Carroll University, marking the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care*



## **Interreligious Dialogues: On *Laudato si'*, Islamic and Catholic Approaches**

with Abdul Aziz bin Ali Al Nuaimi and Michael Murphy  
Moderated by Omer Mozaffar

**Wednesday, October 1, 2025 at 7:30 PM  
Cuneo Hall, Room 209, Lakeshore Campus**

An Islamic Scholar and member of the Royal Government of the UAE, Abdul Aziz bin Ali Al Nuaimi, also known as the Green Sheikh, will be giving a presentation on environmentalism in Islam. Dr. Michael Murphy will provide a Catholic response and the dialogue will be moderated by Omer Moxaffar, Muslim Chaplain at Loyola University Chicago.

### **Hank Center Associate Director Dr. Joseph Vukov Wins St. Ignatius Teaching Award**



*Dr. Vukov accepts the St. Ignatius of Loyola Teaching Award at the 2025 University Convocation from Loyola President Mark Reed and Provost Doug Woods*

### **Remarks by Dr. Joseph Vukov, Associate Director of the Hank Center, Associate Professor of Philosophy**

The recent Vatican document *Dignitas Infinita* lays out a vision of what it means to affirm the fundamental dignity of human beings: "Every human person possesses an infinite dignity, inalienably grounded in his or her very being, which prevails in

for Our Common Home.

Videos are now available from Spring Semester 2025. You can watch these by clicking the links below.

### Topics Include:

#### [January 29: The Current State of Climate Change.](#)

What's happening? Are we too late? Can we bend the curve even now? What has changed since 2015? Furthermore, what needs to be done, by when, and how to do it?

#### [February 17: The Contribution of Catholic Social](#)

*Thought*, Ten years after the publication of *Laudato Si'*, what are, or ought to be, the growing edges of Catholic social thought? What does it have to contribute to our understanding of the climate crisis and the development of an ecological conscience?

#### [March 11: The Political Economy of Climate Change.](#)

How do we move from what Pope Francis has called an "economy that kills" both people and planet to an economy that is truly sustainable and just? What are the levers of such a system change, and what are the obstacles to it?

#### [March 15: Pope Francis and Caring For Our Common Home Today](#)

Loyola University Chicago was the first U.S. university to respond to Pope Francis' encyclical in 2015--and we were

and beyond every circumstance, state, or situation the person may ever encounter." Applied to our teaching, this affirmation of the universal, fundamental dignity of each person—*of each student*—has the potential to transform our educational practices. Our students are not mere names on a roster. Nor are they mere repositories of knowledge. Nor are they reducible to their capacity for academic, personal, and vocational success, the metrics by which a liberal arts education is often evaluated. They are rather individuals, created in the image of God, and bearers of fundamental value. This is the vision of the human person that underlies St. Ignatius's *Spiritual Exercises*. And it is the vision that underlies the Jesuit, Catholic approach to education. Do I succeed at viewing and treating my students as bearers of infinite dignity? If I'm honest, not always. But this is, I believe, the standard by which we should evaluate ourselves as educators. It is a standard worthy of our aspiration.

**Great work, Joe-- and Congratulations on a job well done.**  
Wee

### Hank Center Representatives Visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Honor of the 80th Anniversary of the Dropping of the Atomic Bomb



*The pilgrimage group from all representative Catholic Universities praying for peace in Hiroshima*

**Reflection by:**  
**William Wade,**  
**Senior, Catholic**  
**Studies Program**

#### **"Conversation in Convalescence"**

How have I seen the Saints in the suffering of post-war Japan? Our LUC patron and guide, Ignatius of Loyola, who underwent a particular period of difficulty and literal woundedness in



proud to host a special panel this year: *Laudato Si'* @10: Pope Francis and Caring for Our Common Home Today, featuring Christiana Zenner (Fordham University), Thomas Hibbs (Baylor University), Channelle Robinson (College of the Holy Cross), and Br. Mark Mackey, S.J. (Loyola University).

#### **April 9:** **Environmental** **Politics.**

How do we move from what Pope Francis has called an “economy that kills” both people and planet to an economy that is truly sustainable and just? What are the levers of such a system change, and what are the obstacles to it?

*Laudato Si'*  
Panel Event  
Information

#### **Loyola Remembers** **Pope Francis**



"With a papacy defined by the same values that drive Loyola University Chicago's mission, it's no surprise that the first Jesuit pope built a cherished connection with Loyola. From direct meetings with Loyola students and staff, to wisdom that drove worldwide initiatives, Pope Francis's legacy will continue to live on through the Loyola community..."

his life, was a companion to me as I walked as a pilgrim of hope with Japanese and American friends about a month ago.

After fighting as a soldier in Pamplona, Ignatius suffered from a cannonball wound, leaving him bedridden for months. When Jesuits at Loyola University reference this “Cannonball Moment”, there is always mention of Ignatius' convalescence. This period in Basque Spain was at Casa Loyola in 1521, where Ignatius read literature, prayed, and was transformed.

Convalescence stems from the Latin *com* (i.e., with/together) and *valere* (i.e., strength). In order to regain health, one must grow strong in recovery. The tragedies of the Atomic Bombings of both Nagasaki and Hiroshima left the nation of Japan weak. Where from within, the locals suffered unimaginable torment; and from outside, all in American may have felt was the wince or pinch of a headline. A sort of post-war chasm of reticence and firmness swallowed the Japanese and made the United States rigid in her thinking. There was no Magdalena-figure (Ignatius's aid and sister-in-law) to bring structure, faith, and hope post-disaster.

Healing doesn't occur overnight, nor does reconciliation. A true convalescence is gradual, discerning, and unhurried. While the expense of the unspoken hurt perpetrated against the people of Japan amassed both subtle and direct animosity in the short term (even decades later), the long term has re-emphasized growth. More so, growth towards health, which in the case of U.S. and Japanese relations manifests in dialogue, support, and trust. There now exists some distance from the initial clutch of diplomatic tension, and more can lend an ear to the accounts of widespread pain and ruin from the atomic tragedies.

There is a gentleness in this tragedy's distinct convalescence that only the Holy Spirit can frame. Two worlds: culturally distinct, oceans apart, and each domestically hard-nosed. Yet, with many years and a steady pace, there has emerged a “conversation in convalescence”. The U.S. Catholic University pilgrimage was one smooth bay in the tumultuous ocean that so ravenously seeks peace. An opportunity for students, professionals, and clerics not to mourn together, but to mark together, a time in which we can sit, speak, and work towards healing and growth. Ignatius' convalescence never simply “ended”. With a lifelong limp and chip on his shoulder, he took these unlikely gifts of the Spirit and brought them to the Lord — giving up his liberty, memory, understanding, and even his entire will. In this loss he gained life, and in this life he found hope. The intentional dialogues between students, academic discussions from professors, and commentary and global unions from bishops have brought the United States and the Catholic Church to their stride toward peace. And through this momentum, trust, and growth from our personal convalescences, I do believe we are right to go forth as can continue as Pilgrims of Hope in this 2025 Jubilee year.

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**"How Catholics Encounter the Bible"**  
**2025 Catholic Biblical Association Annual Meeting**  
**Reflection**

Read on...



**Reflection by:**  
**Julian Sieber,**  
**Hank Center Graduate**  
**Student Assistant,**  
**PhD Candidate, New**  
**Testament and Early**  
**Christianity**



Loyola University Chicago recently hosted the 87th Annual Meeting of the Catholic Biblical Association, the flagship

American society for Catholic biblical scholarship. For the conference's opening plenary session, the Hank Center was delighted to host a panel discussion of Michael Peppard's new book, *How Catholics Encounter the Bible*.

As graduate research assistant for the Hank Center, I had the privilege of facilitating the panel discussion with Michael Peppard, award-winning biblical scholar and professor of theology at Fordham University, and with responses by **Theresa Gross-Diaz**, Associate Professor of History and Director of the Medieval Studies Program at Loyola University Chicago, **Felipe de J. Legarreta**, Clinical Assistant Professor at the Institute of Pastoral Studies, **Anathea Portier-Young**, Associate Professor of Old Testament at Duke Divinity School, and **Brian Yong Lee**, Assistant Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at Loyola University Chicago. All four responses contributed an electric and diverse mixture of scholarly and personal reflections on the book, a testament to Peppard's nuanced presentation of the breadth and variety of ways the Bible is encountered in Catholic liturgy, spirituality, art, and imagination. You can watch the full recording of the panel discussion [here](#).

As a way to experience tangible glimpses into the varied historical Catholic encounters with Scripture covered in Peppard's book, the panel was supplemented with an

opportunity over the following days of the Annual Meeting to visit a display of medieval and early modern manuscripts curated and presented by Kathy Young of Loyola's Archives and Special Collections. You can watch a short video tour of some of the highlights of the collection by Mark Lester [here](#).

And of course, I wholeheartedly recommend encountering for yourself Peppard's book, *How Catholics Encounter the Bible* (Oxford University Press, 2024). It is written in a style that is compelling for any Catholic-curious reader—as well as any reader interested in the Bible and biblical reception. Peppard takes a thoughtful, historically-sound approach, yet writes with a refreshingly personal touch. He begins from the experience of growing up with a Protestant mother who was constantly reading her Bible and a Catholic father who never touched his—emblematic of the kinds of everyday cross-denominational biblical interactions that many readers will find relatable and insightful. As Peppard writes in the introduction to his book, while it may be tempting to see his childhood as “half-full of the Bible,” given that his dad didn't pick it up and read it like his mom, he instead concludes that his dad “knew the stories, and for him, that was enough. The stories, the Mass, the prayer... for him, that was the Bible. It turns out that my childhood was not half-empty of the Bible, but completely full—and deeper than I had imagined.”

[More about the 2025 CBA Annual Meeting](#)

**The Hank Center Honors Fr. Michael Garanzini, SJ  
with Change to Graduate Fellowship Program:**

***The Michael J. Garanzini, S.J.  
Fellowships in the Catholic  
Intellectual Tradition***



The Michael J. Garanzini, S.J.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Garanzini, S.J." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fellowships in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition

We are pleased to announce our newly-renamed Michael J. Garanzini, S.J., Fellowships in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. These fellowships (formerly Hank Fellowships in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition) encourage and support graduate students in their exploration of the Catholic intellectual tradition in its many disciplinary and creative forms—in theology and

philosophy, literature and the arts, natural and social sciences, social movements and culture, pedagogy and pastoral life. Named for Fr. Michael Garanzini, SJ, whose tenure as President of Loyola University Chicago from 2001-2015 was a profoundly transformational, watershed example of leadership and vision. The Garanzini Fellowships support the next generation of Catholic scholars across the United States as they engage life-giving scholarship in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition.

### **Spotlight: Hank Center Summer Graduate Student Fellowship**

**Meet our Fellows!**

*Megan Efron*



Megan Efron is a Ph.D. candidate in Systematic Theology at the University of Notre Dame. She holds a Master of Divinity from Notre Dame and a B.A. in English from UCLA. It was through literature that she first discovered an interest in theology, and her theological research interests continue

to revolve around the power of the word. She is especially passionate about preaching and is stimulated by questions regarding the relationship between word and sacrament, the fourfold presence of Christ in the liturgy, the movement of the Holy Spirit in the liturgical preaching event, the active participation of all the faithful within the liturgy, and the responsibility of all the baptized to go forth and announce the Gospel. Her research interests lie at the intersection of ecclesiology, pneumatology, sacramental theology, and feminist theology.

Her dissertation draws on the writings of French Dominican Yves Congar as a foundation from which to construct a theology of preaching, with a particular focus on lay preaching. While many scholars concentrate on one area of Congar's expertise, this dissertation takes an integrative approach to Congar's corpus by drawing together his writings on preaching with his writings on the church, the Holy Spirit, liturgy, and the laity. Though Congar himself was a member of the Order of Preachers, little has been written about his theology in connection with preaching. This is a somewhat surprising gap in scholarship given that Congar described his vocation as a friar preacher as one of the decisive elements for why he practiced theology. The method of this dissertation is not only integrative but also constructive; I build upon and move beyond Congar's theology by advocating for authorizing lay preaching at the Eucharist in order to meet the needs of the people of God today. In listening sessions conducted around the world for the Synod on Synodality, Catholics lamented the poor quality of homilies and also called for greater participation by lay people and by women in particular in the ministry of the church. My dissertation offers fresh grounding from the theological tradition for the possibility of an instituted liturgical ministry that would authorize qualified lay people to preach the homily at Mass, a pastoral initiative many have called for in order to better serve the church's needs today.

***Emma Emrich***



Emma Emrich is a Ph.D. candidate in Philosophy at Fordham University. She received her B.A. from Thomas Aquinas College in 2020 and her M.A. in Philosophy from Fordham in 2022. Emma's dissertation compares the thought of Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) and Richard of Mediavilla (c.1249–c.1308) on the question of the unity of the soul. Her work focuses on the philosophical principles concerning the soul as substantial form. This understanding of the soul as substantial form underpins the Catholic teachings on the human person, especially the Catholic understanding of the relationship between body and soul, and the immateriality and immortality of the human soul. Yet this understanding of the soul as substantial form was also the source of debate in 13th century debates concerning whether Aristotelian principles were reconcilable with Church teaching. The comparison of Richard and Thomas aims to highlight that, despite their differing views on the substantial forms, Thomas and Richard offer surprisingly similar accounts of the unity of the soul as final cause. This analysis highlights how both Thomas and Richard's accounts of the soul showcase a rich commitment to synthesizing Catholic dogma with Aristotelian metaphysics in the 13th century.

*Berit Guidotti*



Berit Guidotti is a Ph.D. candidate in Theological Ethics at Boston College. She holds an M.T.S. from the University of Notre Dame and a B.A. in Religious Studies and Political Science from Emory University, with a minor in Catholic Studies. Berit's dissertation examines the ethical challenges of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for human moral action in light of Catholic social teaching and theological anthropology. Berit's dissertation affirms the basic intuition that advanced science and technology should be secondary to and not constitutive of a flourishing life. Specifically, by amplifying the experiences of those most affected by algorithmic power, Berit's dissertation evaluates the material, social, and spiritual harms of AI and the need for a "technoperipheral" Catholic ethical framework for technological innovation, ordered toward the common good rather than individual benefit, corporate profit, or technocratic control. Berit's other research interests include virtue ethics, bioethics, and political theology. Before beginning her doctoral studies, Berit worked as a management consultant in the technology and manufacturing industries.

[Meet All of Our Fellows!](#)



In the spirit of cultivating the Catholic intellectual and artistic tradition, CCIH recommends new and notable books several times a year that integrate, interrogate, and celebrate Catholicism in dialogue with the world.

This month's recommendations feature the landmark encyclicals of Pope Francis along with autobiographical, biographical, and critical work written for both scholarly and popular audiences.

### [The Last Supper: Art, Faith, Sex, and Controversy in the 1980s \(2025\)](#)

Author: Paul Elie, Publisher: Macmillan Publishers

Circa 1980, tradition and authority are in the ascendant, both in Catholicism (via Pope John Paul II) and in American civic life (through the Moral Majority and the so-called televangelists). But the public is deeply divided on issues of body and soul, devotion and desire.

Enter the figures Paul Elie calls "crypto-religious." Here is Leonard Cohen writing "Hallelujah" on his knees in a Times Square hotel room; Andy Warhol adapting Leonardo's *The Last Supper* in response to the AIDS pandemic; Prince making the cross and altar into "signs o' the times." Through Toni Morrison, spirits speak from the grave; Patti Smith and Bruce Springsteen deepen the tent-revival intensity of their work; Wim Wenders offers an angel's-eye view of Berlin; U2, the Neville Brothers, and Sinéad O'Connor reckon with their Christian roots in music of mystic yearning. And Martin Scorsese overcomes fundamentalist ire to make *The Last Temptation of Christ*—a struggle that anticipates Salman Rushdie's struggle with Islam in *The Satanic Verses*.

In Elie's acclaimed first book, *The Life You Save May Be Your Own*, Catholic writers ventured out into the wilds of postwar America; in this book, creative figures who were raised religious go to the margins of conventional belief, calling forth controversy. Episodes such as the boycott sparked by Madonna's "Like a Prayer" video and the tearing-up of Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ* in Congress are early skirmishes in the culture wars—but here the creators (not the politicians) are the protagonists, and the work they make speaks to conflicts that remain unsettled.

*The Last Supper* explores the bold and unexpected forms an encounter with belief can take. It traces the beginnings of our postsecular age, in which religion is at once surging and in decline. Through a propulsive narrative, it reveals the crypto-religious imagination as complex, credible, daring, and vividly recognizable.

### [Catholic Fundamentalism in America \(2025\)](#)

Author: Mark S. Massa, SJ, Publisher: Oxford University Press

The term "fundamentalism" has its roots in specific forms of American Protestantism that arose around the turn of the twentieth century in reaction to liberalizing and modernizing trends within the church. In this book, Mark Massa argues that an analogously reactive, militant, and sectarian "fundamentalist" movement emerged within American Catholicism in the decades after World War II, for a similarly complex mix of theological and cultural reasons. In *Catholic Fundamentalism in America* Massa gives the first account of the Catholic form of the anti-modernist impulse.

Massa recounts how Catholic fundamentalism has reacted both to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and to the tensions of America's pluralist, secular culture. Like their Protestant cousins, Catholic fundamentalists combine a sectarian understanding of religion with an aggressive anti-progressive stance. Their main enemies were not Protestants or secular Americans, but other Catholics who didn't share their extreme views. Also like the Protestant fundamentalists, Catholic devotees of the fundamentalist impulse have sought (and found) political conservatives with whom to make common cause on a range of issues, such as the place of women in American culture, the value of pluralism within the Church and

the larger culture, and the importance of cooperation with non-Catholics. Contemporary Catholic conservatives merge theological and political impulses into movements that "punch above their weight" within the community through their clever use of social media.

Through seven portraits of individuals and movements that embody the Catholic fundamentalist impulse, Massa demonstrates how the Catholic Right, like its evangelical Protestant counterpart, has reacted to—and fought against—modern American culture.

Fr. Massa will provide our Jesuit Lecture this year and we hope to see you in-person on 9/25.

### [Laudato Si and Laudate Deum \(2025\)](#)

Author: Pope Francis, Publisher: OSV Catholic Bookstore

In this combined edition of the full texts of *Laudato Si'* and *Laudate Deum*, Pope Francis draws all Christians into a dialogue with every person on the planet about our common home. As human beings we are united by concern for our planet and every living thing that dwells on it, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.

### [Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation \(2020\)](#)

Author: Kristin Kobes Du Mez, Publisher: Liveright

For a superb companion book to Fr. Massa's *Catholic Fundementalism*, look no further than *Jesus and John Wayne*, a sweeping, revisionist history of the last seventy-five years of white evangelicalism. The book reveals how evangelicals have worked to replace the Jesus of the Gospels with an idol of rugged masculinity and Christian nationalism—or in the words of one modern chaplain, with “a spiritual badass.”

As acclaimed scholar Kristin Du Mez explains, the key to understanding this transformation is to recognize the centrality of popular culture in contemporary American evangelicalism. Many of today's evangelicals might not be theologically astute, but they know their VeggieTales, they've read John Eldredge's *Wild at Heart*, and they learned about purity before they learned about sex—and they have a silver ring to prove it. Evangelical books, films, music, clothing, and merchandise shape the beliefs of millions. And evangelical culture is teeming with muscular heroes—mythical warriors and rugged soldiers, men like Oliver North, Ronald Reagan, Mel Gibson, and the Duck Dynasty clan, who assert white masculine power in defense of “Christian America.” Chief among these evangelical legends is John Wayne, an icon of a lost time when men were uncowed by political correctness, unafraid to tell it like it was, and did what needed to be done.

Challenging the commonly held assumption that the “moral majority” backed Donald Trump in 2016 and 2020 for purely pragmatic reasons, Du Mez reveals that Trump in fact represented the fulfillment, rather than the betrayal, of white evangelicals' most deeply held values: patriarchy, authoritarian rule, aggressive foreign policy, fear of Islam, ambivalence toward #MeToo, and opposition to Black Lives Matter and the LGBTQ community. A much-needed reexamination of perhaps the most influential subculture in this country, *Jesus and John Wayne* shows that, far from adhering to biblical principles, modern white evangelicals have utterly remade their faith, with enduring consequences for all Americans.

### [Renewing Theology: Ignatian Spirituality and Karl Rahner, Ignacio Ellacuría, and Pope Francis \(2022\)](#)

Author: J. Matthew Ashley, Publisher: Notre Dame Press

Over several centuries, spirituality has come to define a field of concerns and themes increasingly treated separately from those of academic theology, as if the latter had little relation to the former. This raises the question for us today: How is spirituality related to the practice of theology? In *Renewing Theology*, J. Matthew Ashley provides an answer by turning to Ignatian spirituality and three prominent twentieth-century theologians who embraced its spiritual resources: Karl Rahner, Ignacio Ellacuría, and Jorge Mario Bergoglio—that is, Pope Francis.

Ashley begins his investigation by considering the historical origins of the widening separation between spirituality and academic theology in the Christian West. He provides an initial overview of Ignatian spirituality, focusing on the openness and multidimensionality of Ignatius of Loyola's Spiritual Exercises, presented here as a text in which the conditions of modernity that defined its author's world are present, at least incipiently. Ashley then offers three case studies in order to show how each Jesuit—Rahner, Ellacuría, and Pope Francis—responded to the challenges of modernity in a way that is uniquely nourished and illuminated by themes

constitutive of Ignatian spirituality. Their theologies, Ashley suggests, evince a particular clarity and force when the Ignatian spirituality that animates them is foregrounded. Providing new and productive avenues into understanding the theologies of these three individuals, this sophisticated and enlightening book will interest scholars and students of systematic theology, as well as readers who are interested in the future of theology and spirituality in a fragmented age.

### [Why Religion Went Obsolete: The Demise of Traditional Faith in America \(2025\)](#)

Edited by Christian Smith, Publisher: Oxford University Press

To really lay the hammer down on "living in a fragmented age," we turn to Notre Dame sociologist, Christian Smith-- who asks bluntly: Is traditional American religion doomed?

Traditional religion in the United States has suffered huge losses in recent decades. The number of Americans identifying as "not religious" has increased remarkably. Religious affiliation, service attendance, and belief in God have declined. More and more people claim to be "spiritual but not religious." Religious organizations have been reeling from revelations of sexual and financial scandals and cover-ups. Public trust in "organized religion" has declined significantly. Crucially, these religious losses are concentrated among younger generations. This means that, barring unlikely religious revivals among youth, the losses will continue and accelerate in time, as less-religious younger Americans replace older more-religious ones and increasingly fewer American children are raised by religious parents.

All this is clear. But what is less clear is exactly why this is happening. We know a lot more about the fact that traditional American religion has declined than we do about why this is so.

*Why Religion Went Obsolete* aims to change that. Drawing on survey data and hundreds of interviews, Christian Smith offers a sweeping, multifaceted account of why many Americans have lost faith in traditional religion. An array of large-scale social forces--everything from the end of the Cold War to the rise of the internet to shifting ideas about gender and sexuality--came together to render traditional religion culturally obsolete. For growing numbers of Americans, traditional religion no longer seems useful or relevant. Using quantitative empirical measures of big-picture changes over time as well as exploring the larger cultural environment--the cultural "zeitgeist"--Smith explains why this is the case and what it means for the future. Crucially, he argues, it does not mean a strictly secular future. Rather, Americans' spiritual impulses are being channelled in new and interesting directions.

*Why Religion Went Obsolete* is a tour de force from one of our leading chroniclers of religion in America.

### [After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory, Third Edition \(2007\)](#)

Author: Alasdair MacIntyre, Publisher: Notre Dame Press

After reading the above, it may be advisable to get back on the ground with a late modern classic from the late Alasdair MacIntyre. When *After Virtue* first appeared in 1981, it was recognized as a significant and potentially controversial critique of contemporary moral philosophy. Newsweek called it "a stunning new study of ethics by one of the foremost moral philosophers in the English-speaking world." Since that time, the book has been translated into more than fifteen foreign languages and has sold over one hundred thousand copies. Now, twenty-five years later, the University of Notre Dame Press is pleased to release the third edition of *After Virtue*, which includes a new prologue "*After Virtue* after a Quarter of a Century."

In this classic work, Alasdair MacIntyre examines the historical and conceptual roots of the idea of virtue, diagnoses the reasons for its absence in personal and public life, and offers a tentative proposal for its recovery. While the individual chapters are wide-ranging, once pieced together they comprise a penetrating and focused argument about the price of modernity. In the Third Edition prologue, MacIntyre revisits the central theses of the book and concludes that although he has learned a great deal and has supplemented and refined his theses and arguments in other works, he has "as yet found no reason for abandoning the major contentions" of this book. While he recognizes that his conception of human beings as virtuous or vicious needed not only a metaphysical but also a biological grounding, ultimately he remains "committed to the thesis that it is only from the standpoint of a very different tradition, one whose beliefs and presuppositions were articulated in their classical form by Aristotle, that we can understand both the genesis and the predicament of moral modernity."

### [Beautiful Ugliness: Christianity, Modernity, and the Arts \(2023\)](#)

Author: Mark William Roche, Publisher: Notre Dame Press

The University of Notre Dame is emerging in this version of Recommended Reading as the show horse, and that is OK--especially when we figure Mark Roche's new book into the mix. This is a very exciting book for anybody interested in Catholic imaginations. Many great artworks include elements of ugliness: repugnant content, disproportionate forms, unresolved dissonance, and unintegrated parts. Mark William Roche's authoritative monograph *Beautiful Ugliness: Christianity, Modernity, and the Arts* challenges current practices of the dominant aesthetic schools by exploring the role of ugliness in art and literature. Roche offers a comprehensive and unique framework that integrates philosophical and theological reflection, intellectual-historical analysis, and interpretations of a large number of works from the arts. The study is driven by the recognition that, though ugliness is usually understood as the opposite of beauty, ugliness nonetheless contributes significantly to the beauty of many artworks.

Roche's analysis unfolds in three parts. The first offers a refreshing conceptual analysis of ugliness in art. The second considers the history of ugliness in art and literature, with special attention to its role in Christian art and its central place in modern and contemporary art. The third synthesizes earlier material, offering a taxonomy of beautiful ugliness derived from Hegelian philosophical categories. Roche mesmerizes the reader with an extraordinary range of literary scholarship and expertise, with a particular focus on English, Latin, and German literature, and with a broad range of analyzed phenomena, including fine arts, architecture, and music.

Including 63 color illustrations, *Beautiful Ugliness* will draw in readers from multiple disciplines as well as those from beyond the academy who wish to make sense of today's complex art world.

### [Pioneers of Latino Ministry: Claretians and the Evolving World \(2025\)](#)

Author: Deborah E. Kanter, Publisher: NYU Press

Happy to share news of this new book which provides a fresh look at an important history. *Pioneers of Latino Ministry* tells the story of the Claretian Missionaries, a male Catholic congregation, dedicated to Latin American immigrants and their families on the margins of US society since 1902. The Claretians' accompaniment of Latinos makes them distinct in American Catholic history. When the first Claretians arrived from Mexico, Spanish speakers were a small, often unrecognized part of Catholic America. Today Latinos constitute half of US Catholics.

*Pioneers of Latino Ministry* charts the history of the Claretians and their influence on Latino Catholics in the US, as well as on broader American Catholicism. Filled with compelling stories, the volume offers a vital portrait of unexplored Catholic American history.

### [Immigrant Church, The: New York's Irish and German Catholics, 1815-1865 \(1983\)](#)

Author: Jay P. Dolan, Publisher: University of Notre Dame Press

A view of urban Catholicism, *The Immigrant Church* focuses on the people in the pews and furnishes a comparison of Irish and German Catholic life in mid-nineteenth-century New York City. Nearly one-half of the city's population in 1865 consisted of Irish and German Catholics. Singling out three parishes (one Irish, one German, and one a mixed group of Germans and Irish), Dolan examines the role of religion in strengthening group life in these ethnic communities, traces the development of the Catholic Church in the city, and reveals the relationship between urban and church growth.

### [A Song for Nagasaki, The Story of Takashi Nagai: Scientist, Convert, and Survivor of the Atomic Bomb](#)

Author: Paul Glynn, SM, Publisher: Angelus Press

On August 9, 1945, an American B-29 dropped an atomic bomb on Nagasaki, Japan, killing tens of thousands of people in the blink of an eye, while fatally injuring and poisoning thousands more. Among the survivors was Takashi Nagai, a pioneer in radiology research and a convert to the Catholic Faith. Living in the rubble of the ruined city and suffering from leukemia caused by over-exposure to radiation, Nagai lived out the remainder of his remarkable life by bringing physical and spiritual healing to his war-weary people. *A Song for Nagasaki* tells the moving story of this extraordinary man, beginning with his boyhood and the heroic tales and stoic virtues of his family's Shinto religion. It reveals the inspiring story of Nagai's remarkable spiritual journey from Shintoism to atheism to Catholicism.

Mixed with interesting details about Japanese history and culture, the biography traces Nagai's spiritual quest as he studied medicine at Nagasaki University, served as a medic with the Japanese army during its occupation of Manchuria, and returned to Nagasaki to dedicate himself to the science of radiology. The historic Catholic district of the city, where Nagai became a Catholic and began a family, was ground zero for the atomic bomb. After the bomb disaster that killed thousands, including Nagai's beloved wife, Nagai, then Dean of Radiology at Nagasaki University, threw himself into service to the countless victims of the bomb explosion, even though it meant deadly exposure to the radiation which eventually would cause his own death. While dying, he also wrote powerful books that became best-sellers in Japan. These included *The Bells of Nagasaki*, which resonated deeply with the Japanese people in their great suffering as it explores the Christian message of love and forgiveness.

Nagai became a highly revered man and is considered a saint by many Japanese people.

### [Atomic Doctors: Conscious and Complicity at the Dawn of the Nuclear Age \(2020\)](#)

Author: James L. Nolan, Jr, Publisher: Harvard University Press

After his father died, James L. Nolan, Jr., took possession of a box of private family materials. To his surprise, the small secret archive contained a treasure trove of information about his grandfather's role as a doctor in the Manhattan Project. Dr. Nolan, it turned out, had been a significant figure. A talented ob-gyn radiologist, he cared for the scientists on the project, organized safety and evacuation plans for the Trinity test at Alamogordo, escorted the "Little Boy" bomb from Los Alamos to the Pacific Islands, and was one of the first Americans to enter the irradiated ruins of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Participation on the project challenged Dr. Nolan's instincts as a healer. He and his medical colleagues were often conflicted, torn between their duty and desire to win the war and their oaths to protect life. *Atomic Doctors* follows these physicians as they sought to maximize the health and safety of those exposed to nuclear radiation, all the while serving leaders determined to minimize delays and maintain secrecy. Called upon both to guard against the harmful effects of radiation and to downplay its hazards, doctors struggled with the ethics of ending the deadliest of all wars using the most lethal of all weapons. Their work became a very human drama of ideals, co-optation, and complicity.

A vital and vivid account of a largely unknown chapter in atomic history, *Atomic Doctors* is a profound meditation on the moral dilemmas that ordinary people face in extraordinary times.

### [All Souls \(2023\)](#)

Author: Saskia Hamilton, Publisher: Gray Wolf Press

In *All Souls*, Saskia Hamilton transforms compassion, fear, expectation, and memory into art of the highest order. Judgment is suspended as the poems and lyric fragments make an inventory of truths that carry us through night's reckoning with mortal hope into daylight. But even daylight—with its escapements and unbreakable numbers, "restless, / irregular light and shadow, awakened"—can't appease the crisis of survival at the heart of this collection. Marked with a new openness and freedom—a new way of saying that is itself a study of what can and can't be said—the poems give way to Hamilton's mind, and her unerring descriptions of everyday life: "the asphalt velvety in the rain."

The central suite of poems vibrates with a ghostly radioactive attentiveness, with care unbounded by time or space. Its impossible charge is to acknowledge and ease suffering with a gaze that both widens and narrows its aperture. Lightly told, told without sentimentality, the story is devastating. A mother prepares to take leave of a young son. Impossible departure. "A disturbance within the order of moments." One that can't be stopped, though in these poems language does arrest and in some essential ways fix time.

Tenderness, courage, refusal, and acceptance infuse this work, illuminating what Elizabeth Hardwick called "the universal unsealed wound of existence."

## **Contact Us**

Loyola University Chicago

[The Joan and Bill Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage](#)

Cuneo Hall, Room 421

1032 W. Sheridan Rd. Chicago, IL 60660 Ph: (773) 508-3820

Email: [HankCenter@luc.edu](mailto:HankCenter@luc.edu)

### About the Center

The Joan and Bill Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage exists to help faculty and students recognize and research Roman Catholic thought and its link to all academic disciplines in the university. It also seeks to convey that thought to other audiences inside and outside Loyola University Chicago.



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