



CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

PRESIDENT MARÍA PILAR AQUINO'S LETTER: REPORTING IN TIMES OF CRISIS

REPORT OF THE BOARD, JUNE 2020

June 12, 2020

This month, for the first time in its seventy-five years of existence, the Society was unable to gather for its regular annual convention due to the Covid-19 pandemic. These days I share with you deep sorrow for the deaths of people near and far who became victims of the pandemic and for the deaths of Black people in our communities who have departed before their time as a result of systemic racism. Moreover, with you I share a keen sense of solidarity with religious actors who have participated in social movements across the nation and throughout the world. We join them in working for the elimination of racialized violence and racial injustice, and for the just reconstruction of social structures and relationships. There is hope on the horizon as the interventions of global civil society for radical change bring to light the life-giving dynamics taking place in our world today.

As the Board continues to discern constructive ways to move forward in times of crisis, we have decided to employ an exceptional procedure for fulfilling reporting responsibilities under the current circumstances. In light of the fact that this year no regular Board meeting and no regular business meeting took place to receive and accept reports, this is a contextual and a temporary procedure to accomplish annual reporting to Society members. An informative presidential letter composed of summarized reports from the reporting constituency seemed to be appropriate and practical. Devised to reach you by the date in which the regular business meeting would have taken place, we hope that you welcome this letter.

1. María Pilar Aquino, President

A. Donations to the Convention. Thanks to the following institutions for their generous donations to help support the convention: Fairfield University (Center for Catholic Studies), University of San Diego (College of Arts and Sciences), Fordham University (Office of the Provost), University of Notre Dame (Theology Department), Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University (Office of the Dean), Catholic Theological Union (Office of the President), Boston College (Office of the Provost and Dean of Faculties), St. Mary's Seminary & University (Office of the President-Rector), and St. Mary's Ecumenical Institute (Office of the Dean). With only one exception, all institutions generously agreed to let the CTSA keep the donations and apply them toward next year's convention. The Society has expressed its gratitude to these institutions.

B. CTSA Board Statement. A statement from the Board on "Racial Injustice and State Violence" was approved by the Board on June 3, 2020. The members who contributed to produce this statement include the leadership of the CTSA Committee on Underrepresented Ethnic and Racial Groups (CUERG), Cristina Lledo Gomez and Melissa Pagán-Rubalcaba, with a special intervention by Joseph Flipper in consultation with Bryan Massingale, and Board members María Pilar Aquino, Paul Lakeland, and Kevin Burke. The Board is grateful for their contribution. At this crucial time, the Board intends to continue conversations about the most appropriate ways to proceed.

C. Joint Meeting of USCCB Committee on Doctrine and Catholic Learned Societies. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the USCCB Committee on Doctrine cancelled the meeting with representatives of learned societies scheduled to take place this past March 2020. The CTSA members who accepted to serve as our representatives were Christine Firer Hinze (CTSA President-Elect, Fordham University), Jame Schaefer (Marquette University), and Daniel Scheid (Duquesne University). The CTSA is prepared to welcome the invitation from the USCCB Committee to attend a future meeting when the committee considers it to be safe and appropriate as the circumstances permit.

D. Bishop and Theologians Reading Groups. Three reading groups were able to meet with local bishops during 2019-2020. This past September 2019, faculty and staff members of Loyola University Chicago and the Institute of Pastoral Studies met with Auxiliary Bishop Ron Hicks for dialogue on *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*. In December 2019, faculty members of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of San Diego met with Bishop Robert W. McElroy for dialogue on the encyclical letter *Laudato Si'*. This year in February 2020, faculty members of the College of Saint Mary and Creighton University met with Archbishop George Lucas for dialogue on "The Third Article of the Creed," chapter in *Spirit of God: Short Writings on the Holy Spirit*, by Yves Congar, O.P. The Board encourages submission of proposals for CTSA funding for dialogue with local bishops for 2020-

2021, as conditions allow. Please see: <https://www.ctsa-online.org/TheologicalGroupDiscussions>.

E. Nominations Committee. The recommended nominations for Vice-President and new Board members for June 2020 were postponed for election next year at the 2021 convention. All candidates graciously accepted to run for office next year. The elected members will begin their term on the Sunday following the 2021 convention. The Nominations Committee is composed by Peter Phan (Chair), Shawnee M. Daniels-Sykes, and Susan K. Wood.

F. Admissions Committee. Please see the communication released today on the CTSA listserv concerning electronic voting as an exceptional procedure to accept new members and change of status requests. This year's Admissions Committee members are Kevin Ahern, Laurie Johnston, Darren J. Dias, Rachel Bundang, and Hosffman Ospino, *ex officio*. Voting will begin on June 15 and close on June 22.

G. CTSA Treasurer. The Board has ratified the nomination of a new treasurer as recommended by the Ad Hoc Treasurer Search Committee of the CTSA Board. With regret, the Board has accepted the resignation of John D. Dadosky as CTSA Treasurer due to his appointment as Director of the recently established Msgr. John Mary Fraser Centre for Practical Theology at Regis College at the University of Toronto. We are deeply grateful for his outstanding service to the Society in the past four years and for his willingness to continue service for one more year until June 2021. The Ad Hoc committee was composed by Timothy Matovina (Chair), Julie Rubio, Kevin F. Burke, and Hosffman Ospino. Voting for approval of the new treasurer will take place at the 2021 convention. The new treasurer would assume duties after voting at the Friday business meeting.

H. CTSA Awards: The selected awardees for the 2020 convention, the John Courtney Murray Award and the Catherine Mowry LaCugna Award, will be receiving the awards next year at the 2021 convention.

I. CTSA Parliamentarian. William P. Loewe has accepted to continue service as parliamentarian for one more year until June 2021.

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to Society members for overwhelmingly affirming the extension of service for an additional year for the current officers and directors. My gratitude as well to all members of the CTSA committees for their generous service to the Society, to Board members and to the Executive Director for their support and assistance during the past year.

2. Christine Firer Hinze, President -Elect

In the wake of the difficult, but necessary, decision this past March to cancel our June, 2020 convention in Baltimore, MD, I have been grateful for the leadership of our

President, María Pilar Aquino, and for the wonderfully collaborative spirit among our officers, board members, and executive director, as we've worked together to plan our memorial liturgy for June 13, and set our sights on rescheduling our 75th convention, under the theme, "All You Who Labor... Work, Economy, and Theology" for June, 2021 in Portland, OR. I am thankful and happy to report that all our plenary speakers and respondents have affirmed their commitment to be presenters for the 2021 meetings. Our expert graduate assistant, Elyse Raby, has also generously agreed to continue in this position for 2020-2021. I am also most grateful for the responsive, collegial efforts of our section conveners, administrative teams, and program participants as we work to confirm the details of the 2021 convention schedule.

In the spirit of the decision made by the CTSA board, our plan is to keep the 2020 convention program largely intact for the June 2021 gathering, including our plans to formally celebrate the Society's 75th anniversary. Simultaneously, the altered milieu created by the global pandemic in tandem with resurgent and unprecedented protests against systemic racial injustice in the wake of horrific killings of unarmed Black US citizens, lends different resonances and heightened urgency to our convention's focus on labor, workers, and economy from theological perspectives. Given this changed context, at least some sessions and/or presenters may reframe or shift approaches or content to incorporate attention to the pandemic and its wide-ranging impacts, economic and otherwise. In addition, we are keenly aware that all CTSA members are facing varied and continuing uncertainties, fluctuating circumstances, and previously-unanticipated institutional and economic constraints, all with potential implications for our upcoming convention. Over the months ahead, along with the rest of our leadership, Elyse and I will continue to communicate with everyone involved in planning our program, and we'll strive to be as responsive and responsible as possible to new changes and challenges that may come to light. In the meantime, thank you for your attention, patience, and support. During this extraordinary time, it is my great honor to continue to serve the Society in the capacity of president-elect.

3. Francis X. Clooney, S.J., Vice-President

We all know that being vice president of an academic organization is a time for learning, and the office of Vice President of the CTSA is no exception. From the first board meeting I attended after the CTSA in Pittsburgh in June 2019, and then at the Board meeting in October in Chicago, it was a pleasure to see the Board at work, generously doing all that was needed for the Society and its mission. My actual tasks were small. I had been ready to receive any resolutions that would come in for consideration at our 2020 convention. I had arranged the new members breakfast, which in 2020 was to have the theme, "Getting Started in Publishing." Ten longtime members of the Society graciously agreed to attend the breakfast, including several editors, and I was confident that many of our new members would have attended and benefitted greatly from the practical advice we could offer. We will keep the same theme next year.

When the enormity of the Covid-19 crisis gradually became clear in February and early March, it was edifying to see how everyone in the presidential line, and then the whole Board, pulled together to discuss the at first unimaginable prospect of cancelling the 2020 convention in Baltimore. As President, María Pilar Aquino led the way in our thinking our way toward the decision, guided by the expertise and experience of Mary Jane Ponyik, our Executive Director. Past President Paul Lakeland was a source of wise advice on the topic. It was edifying in particular to see how President-Elect Christine Firer Hinze graciously accepted the fact of the postponement of her convention to 2021, and immediately began to work out the details and implications of the postponement.

As for the convention when I am President-Elect— now, if all goes well, Atlanta in 2022—I had spent much time in the summer and fall of 2019 writing up my theme, “Thinking Catholic Interreligiously.” I had lined up my plenary speakers and respondents, matching longtime members as plenary speakers with new members as respondents. The same theme and mostly same speakers will still be there in 2022, but like everything else in our lives, it all will be different, pandemic-inflected: how are we Catholic, how do we think theologically, and how do we live interreligiously in the face of this deadly reminder of our mortality, and amid other woes facing our country and our world?

4. John D. Dadosky, Treasurer

The CTSA remains in a strong financial position despite the intense economic downturn. Our conservative and diverse investment strategy helped to stave off a significant downturn in our portfolio. During the initial March crash, the main stock indices (Dow Jones and S&P 500) went down about 30% each. In comparison, by March 31st the CTSA investments had declined by about 13% and have continued to come back since then. As of June 8, 2020, the balance was \$660,837.00; up about 2% for the year. Please see the last two pages for a “Comparative Balance Sheet” and a “Statement of Revenues and Expenses.”

The recipients of the 2020 Dolores L. Christie Convention Scholarships have been informed that they will have the option to use the scholarship at the 2021 convention in Portland, OR. The auditor of our annual statements, Richard Childs, has retired and so we are happy to welcome J. Daniel Daly, S.J. who has graciously accepted the position. We are grateful to Rich for his faithful service to the Society.

5. Hosffman Ospino, Secretary

This year we received 19 applications for Associate Membership and 49 applications for Active membership (25 new applicants and 24 Associate members requesting transition to Active status). The Admissions Committee vetted the applications and made its final recommendations. The lists of applicants for Associate and Active

membership are available on the “Members Only” section of the Society’s website. Current Active Members are receiving instructions to submit their electronic vote by Monday, June 22, 2020 to approve the applications for new membership and change of status. A word of gratitude goes to the members of the Admissions Committee for their generosity and insight: Rachel Bundang, Laurie Johnston, Kevin Ahern and Darren J. Dias. It was a pleasure to work with them. Other matters related to my service to the CTSA as Secretary went well this year.

6. Mary Jane Ponyik, Executive Director

On March 23, 2020, the CTSA was released from its contract with the Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel, Baltimore, Maryland. At that time, 191 members were registered to attend the convention, 13 publishing houses were to be represented, and 11 ads were sold. All funds collected were refunded. I wish to offer my appreciation to Daniel Castillo and Nicole Reibe, Loyola University Maryland, LaReine Mosely, Notre Dame of Maryland University, and Elyse Raby, Boston College, for their service to the CTSA in the planning of the 2020 convention.

Next year, the CTSA will host its 75th convention at the Marriott Portland Downtown Waterfront Hotel (\$175++), Portland, OR, June 10-13. As we are unable to gather in person this year, the CTSA will host a virtual liturgical/memorial service led by Antonio Alonso, Emory University, on June 13th at 7:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) / 4:00 p.m. (Pacific Time). The CTSA and Commonweal are hosting a virtual breakfast/lunch meeting at 12:00 noon (Eastern Time) / 9:00 a.m. (Pacific Time) for new and junior members. We hope that to you are able to participate.

As with every year, I close with a housekeeping reminder. Please take a moment to log into the CTSA website to view and update your profile information. To log in, you will use the email address you have on file with the CTSA and your member number. Once you have logged in, click on your name located in the upper right-hand corner to view your profile. In this area, you are able to view your payment history. If, to date, you have not submitted your 2020 membership dues, you will see a notice that your dues are outstanding when you log in. Covid-19 has been harsh on American’s health and finances. If such circumstances apply to you, please let me know so I may assist you. Meanwhile, I wish everyone good health and peace of mind and heart.

7. B. Kevin Brown, CTSA Proceedings Editor

With the absence of an annual convention, there will not be a new volume of the *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* published in 2020. Instead, a special issue will be released online through the *Proceedings*’ normal online portal. Since this will be a special issue, it will not affect the volume numbering of the *Proceedings*. This issue will include 1) A brief note explaining the absence of a new volume, 2) This letter from the CTSA President to the membership, and 3) The information on new members and new associated members that would have been

included in a new volume had it been published this year. This special issue will not be available for print-on-demand services. However, copies of it will be provided to the CTSA archivist. Volumes 1-74 of the *Proceedings* continue to be available for purchase on a print-on-demand basis. Information on ordering these volumes can be found on the CTSA website under the *Proceedings* tab. Volume 75 of the *Proceedings* will be published in 2021, following the 75th Convention of the CTSA.

8. Paul F. Lakeland, Past President; Presidential Commission on Clerical Sexual Abuse

As a result of my participation in the advisory board of two highly funded inquiries in clerical sexual abuse at Fordham University and at Durham University in the U.K., I have found it necessary to accumulate additional information on what actually has been or is being done on the academic campuses of our CTSA members relative to this issue. At the end of March with the approval of our president and with the help of Mary Jane Ponyik, I sent a letter to all active CTSA members asking them for this information. A month or so later the letter was resent. As of today, I have approximately 50 responses, from a total of about 40 institutions. One or two institutions are represented more than once by individual respondents (Boston College wins this award), and several of the first responses I received came with warm support from retired CTSA members who were unable to provide any information.

On the whole, it looks like most institutions have held some kind of event or talk, while only a few have institutionalized their concern. Over the next few months I will tabulate exactly what I have received according to the nature of the event(s) at different institutions, and then directly target institutions from whom I have not heard to try to get a clearer idea of what the CTSA might want to do to stimulate ongoing work, whether within the convention structure or by offering assistance to our members to conduct programs at their own institutions. At that point I should be well positioned to determine if an application for external funding would be (a) likely to succeed and (b) would lead to valuable conclusions.

9. Cristina Lledo Gomez, Chair of the Committee on Underrepresented Ethnic and Racial Groups (CUERG)

The leadership of CUERG have been in conversation in the last month about the goals for CUERG for 2019-2020. Given the COVID-19 developments and the cancellation of this year's convention, the time period has been extended to 2021.

The main goal of the CUERG leadership is to find ways to increase the visibility of the underrepresented ethnic and racial groups or CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) communities and individuals within the Catholic Theological Society of America's conventions and associated academies and institutions. We intend to achieve this by contacting our respective groups (Asian, Latinx, and African-American

Catholics) as well as the rest of the CTSA membership via a questionnaire email distributed through the executive director, Mary Jane Ponyik. These ideas would then be collated before they are presented as a series of proposals to be considered for further action or approval at the 2021 convention.

Examples of such proposals include: (1) Acknowledging the first peoples on the land which the Society gathers, at the beginning of conventions; and (2) The promotion of the use of scholarship from CALD communities throughout the courses taught by the Society's members.

Two more concrete and recent developments or achievements resulting from the work of CUERG leadership are: (1) Discounted CUERG luncheon tickets for unwaged and student members at the Society's conventions, paid by the CTSA; (2) Engaged in the process of drafting the "Statement on Racial Injustice and State Violence" that the Board of Directors released recently. The statement was a response to the deaths of Black Americans under the hands of police and other aggressors. We especially thank Joseph S. Flipper for providing an initial statement and Bryan Massingale for refining it, along with other board members.

Meanwhile as the leadership of CUERG are aware of the impact of both the Covid-19 pandemic and racial violence upon our CALD communities, we continue to seek ways to respond theologically and practically, and to help strengthen the influence and visibility of the underrepresented and ethnic groups in both the CTSA and our respective theological faculties, locally and globally.

10. Stephen Okey, Chair of Blog Editorial Committee

Between July 2019 and June 2020, the CTSA Blog has published 23 blog posts, including a report from INSeCT, information on theologians meeting with bishops, and remembrances of recently deceased members of the society. In addition to these, the blog committee (Lisa Fullam, Mary Doak, and Stephen Okey) have been discussing opportunities for hosting theological conversations within the blog. If you are interested in submitting a post to the blog, please contact Stephen Okey, the blog committee chair, at Stephen.okey@saintleo.edu.

11. Ramón Luzárraga, CTSA Representative to the International Network of Societies for Catholic Theology (INSeCT)

The members of INSeCT have been in contact through email. What we have been doing is reorganizing ourselves following the untimely death of our friend and colleague Gerard Mannion. We have been discussing when we, as a group, should meet in person. However, that effort has been sidelined by the COVID-19 outbreak. I have emailed the group and have asked about meeting online and not wait for the travel restrictions to be lifted, and plan the next moves forward.

Finally, as we continue to journey together through times of anxiety and uncertainty, let us keep one another in our daily prayers. We on the board welcome hearing from you about any concerns you might have about our work as a Society. And, if you think there is some way that I can be of assistance regarding anything that you think deserves our attention, please do not hesitate to contact me. I wish plenty of health, wisdom, and fortitude to you all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "María Pilar Aquino". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

María Pilar Aquino
President
Catholic Theological Society of America

COMPARATIVE BALANCE SHEET

As of December 31, 2019

Assets	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
Cash in Checking	\$18,551.21	\$12,619.01
Investments	648,035.45	574,679.53
University Agency Account	2,225.69	6,863.65
Total Assets	<u>\$668,812.35</u>	<u>\$594,162.19</u>
 Liabilities & Fund Balances		
CTSA Fund Balance beginning of the year	594,162.19	641,399.78
Net Surplus (Deficit)	74,650.16	(47,237.59)
Total Liabilities and Fund Balances	<u>\$668,812.35</u>	<u>\$594,162.19</u>

STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES

Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2019 and 2018

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
Revenues		
Dues	\$99,095.26	\$96,174.00
Proceedings	60.00	100.00
Convention*	0.00	0.00
Sales of labels and miscellaneous	800.00	800.00
Contributions*	0.00	0.00
Other	962.88	3,042.88
Gross Operating Revenues	<u>100,918.14</u>	<u>100,116.88</u>
Operating Expenses		
Convention*	103,846.15	92,723.15
Proceedings expenses	5,074.62	5,300.87
Administration*	0.00	0.00
Fall Board Meeting*	0.00	0.00
Grants:		
Theological Initiative with Bishops	755.66	500.00
INSECT	1,396.76	1,587.30
Total Operating Expenses	<u>111,073.19</u>	<u>100,111.32</u>
Net Operating Revenues (Deficit)	-10,155.05	5.56
Net Gains (Losses) from Investment Activities	98,355.92	-22,304.80
	<u>\$88,200.87</u>	<u>-\$22,299.24</u>