

REPORT ON THE 2021-2022 MID-YEAR GATHERINGS

Fall Topic: Taking Up the Call: Anti-Racism in the Undergraduate Classroom
 Date: December 2, 2021
 Moderator: Christine Firer Hinze, Fordham University
 Presenters: Julia Feder, Creighton University
 Dennis Doyle, University of Dayton
 Julia Brumbaugh, Regis University

Spring Topic: _____
 Date: April 27, 2022
 Moderator: Christian Krokus, University of Scranton
 Presenters: James Fredericks, Loyola Marymount University
 Rita George-Tvrtković, Benedictine University
 Stephanie Wong, Valpraiso Univeristy

Building on the success of the first two mid-year gatherings held via Zoom during the 2020-2021 academic year, the Society continued the practice of holding two online gatherings this year. The sessions were organized by a committee composed of Craig A. Ford, Jr. (St. Norbert's College), Elyse Raby (Santa Clara University), and Meghan J. Clarke (St. John's University [New York] and CTSA Board Member).

The theme of the first meeting was "Taking Up the Call: Anti-Racism in the Undergraduate Classroom." It met on December 2, 2021. The gathering sought to respond to M. Shawn Copeland's summons to the Society membership, issued in her 2021 plenary panel address, to do more "[a]s the world's largest professional association of Catholic scholars, ... to grapple with the systemic white racism that permeates our nation, our church, our parishes, our colleges and universities and seminaries." In that address she challenges the Society's membership, "We must do something! What kind of Catholic theologians are we, if racial justice is deemed optional to Christian discipleship? This is an altar call: I ask you to pledge here and now to take action in the coming Fall semester to introduce and facilitate discussion in your parish, during Advent and/or Lent, of a theological work that addresses racism or that offers a Black, Indigenous, Mexican American, Latinx, or Asian perspective. I ask you to pledge *here and now* to take action in the Fall semester to include in your syllabi theological works by Black or Indigenous or Mexican American or Latinx or Asian or feminist thinkers. I ask you to pledge *here and now* to take action in the Fall semester to introduce and facilitate an *interdisciplinary* faculty discussion in your college or university or seminary of a relevant book that addresses racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, anti-Semitism, Islamaphobia, or hatred of Asians and Pacific Islanders." The three presenters—Julia Feder, Dennis Doyle, and Julia Brumbaugh each addressed how, in the classroom, they ask students to face the realities of "relentless white supremacy" from a theological perspective. Each presenter spoke of specific pedagogical strategies, theological texts that have worked well with students (e.g., Copeland's *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being*), creative course designs that aim to introduce students to the wisdom of prophets of justice within the Christian tradition (e.g., Thea Bowman), and the challenges of both addressing a topic

that many students are uncomfortable addressing and doing so from a theological perspective in the core curriculum, where many students have little familiarity with theological method and sources. Following the three presentations, attendees participated in breakout sessions before reporting back to the large groups the central insights and questions that emerged in their small groups.

The theme of the second meeting was _____. It met on April 27, 2022. The gathering sought to respond to the commitments of the June 2020 CTSA Board Statement on Racial Injustice and to foreground the coming annual convention, with its theme, “Thinking Catholic Interreligiously,” by discussing Pope Francis’ encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*. James Fredericks, Rita George Tvrtković, and Stephanie Wong explored the interfaith implications of *Fratelli Tutti* through the lens of their work as comparative theologians and their distinct approaches to—and contributions to the development of—comparative theology. Following the presentations, participants continued the discussion in the breakout groups. In the breakoutgroups, several participants expressed appreciation for the way that this online meeting served as a type of primer—introducing members to several of the critical questions and themes being discussed in the field of comparative theology—prior to this year’s annual convention in Atlanta.

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