

**APPENDIX II:
JOHN COURTNEY MURRAY AWARD CITATION**

for
MARY CATHERINE HILKERT, O.P.
University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana

For the past forty years, the recipient of the CTSA’s 2024 John Courtney Murray Award for Distinguished Achievement in Theology has leavened and led the theological community in major academic institutions, international venues, and our guild itself. The awardee has centered the foundational role of proclamation in our craft with intellectual depth and prophetic vision. Through an integration of theological rigor, pastoral expertise, and generous mentorship, the honoree has modeled excellence and invited us into an expansive understanding of our shared vocation.

Our awardee hails from a family of ten, including one other member of this society. She attended St. Sebastian grade school and St. Vincent High School before joining the Dominican Sisters of Akron, Ohio (now the Dominican Sisters of Peace). After graduating from the University of Dayton with B.A. in English (1971) she taught English and religious studies at St. Vincent-St. Mary High School in Akron before earning an M.A. and Ph.D. in systematic theology from the Catholic University of America (1979, 1984). There her doctoral dissertation traced evolving shifts in Edward Schillebeeckx’s approach to a theology of revelation, with corresponding shifts in his hermeneutics of tradition, as the basis for constructing a Catholic theological approach to the ministry of preaching. That early work served as the basis for three of her major contributions to the field in subsequent decades: first, her now-classic work on a theology of preaching as “naming grace;” second, her internationally esteemed expertise in the field of Schillebeeckx studies—indeed she earned the admiration of Schillebeeckx himself in his lifetime—and, finally, research and teaching in fields of fundamental theology, theological anthropology, and feminist theology and spirituality.

A scholarly career spanning these topics has yielded several monographs: *Naming Grace: Speaking with Authority* (1997); *Catherine of Siena and the Voices of Women Today* (2008); and, out last year, *A Time to Keep Silence and a Time to Speak*. She has also published three edited volumes, treating the thought of Schillebeeckx and William Hill, and nearly 70 articles and book chapters. Her expertise has occasioned over 60 major lecture invitations from across the United States and Rome, Fribourg, Nijmegen, Leuven, and Pietermaritzburg.

These major contributions have also been recognized with four honorary doctorates, as well as the Washington Theological Union’s Sophia Award for

Theological Excellence in Service of Ministry; Barry University's Yves Congar Award for Theological Excellence; and our own Ann O'Hara Graff Award. She has served on two international theological commissions of the Order of Preachers for studies related to the Order's preaching mission. Her work remains incomparable in contemporary Catholic homiletic scholarship, nourished by and shared through decades of lecturing and preaching in Catholic and ecumenical contexts in the United States, Canada, Ireland, the Netherlands, Australia, and South Africa.

Taking deeply seriously her role as "teaching-scholar," our honoree has mentored generations of leading theologians, including many women and Latine scholars, in particular. She taught at Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis for eleven years before joining the faculty of Theology at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, where she has taught systematic theology for nearly twenty years. She has held visiting appointments at Radboud University in Nijmegen, Candler School of Theology at Emory University, and the Catholic University of America. During her years at Notre Dame, she has directed more than twenty dissertations and has served on nearly twice that number of other dissertation committees, while also receiving two university awards for undergraduate teaching. Through her pedagogy, ministry of presence, and preaching at 10:00 p.m. lay-led liturgical services in residence halls, she has inspired and sustained the vocations of countless colleagues within our field and beyond.

Here in the CTSA, after planning our 2005 meeting on the "Resurrection of the Body," our honoree served as president during a period of restructuring our annual conventions. Her presidential address, treating "Dialogue, Proclamation, and the Sacramental Imagination" remains most relevant for today's polarized contexts. In reflecting recently on the enduring contributions of Catherine of Siena, our awardee wrote, "One of the major challenges of our day is...to cultivate...a contemplative vision and wise judgment[,...]the true source of the bold speech and action...so needed in the Church and the world."¹ As her career and very way of being attest, the author is herself an exemplar in this regard.

As her identity may be now becoming more apparent, I conclude by adding that she is aptly honored with her very own namesake "society," which gathers annually over breakfast at our convention. It is with enduring gratitude for this unfolding legacy and with sincere delight that here tonight, in Baltimore, the Catholic Theological Society of America confers the John Courtney Murray Award for Distinguished Achievement in Theology upon Mary Catherine Hilkert, of the Order of Preachers.

Presented by the President of the Catholic Theological Society of America

KRISTIN E. HEYER

Boston College

Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

June 15, 2024

¹ Mary Catherine Hilkert, *A Time to Keep Silence and a Time to Speak* (Los Angeles: Marymount Institute Press, 2023), 8.