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THINKING INTERRELIGIOUSLY WITH MUSLIMS: "A PRACTICAL, NOT PRIMARILY A THEORETICAL, MATTER"[1]

AMIR HUSSAIN
Loyola Marymount University
Los Angeles, California

Thank you to our president, Professor Christine Hinze, for her kind introduction, and to Fr. Ott for his benediction and welcome, especially his words about right relationships. Thanks also for the land acknowledgement. I grew up in Canada, blessed to have a number of First Nations teachers, especially from the Anishinaabe, Cree, and Haida. The shirt I am wearing comes from a friend, Haida artist Dorothy Grant. I will say more about it at the end of my remarks. I know that our relationships with First Nations have not always been good, have not always been right. Nevertheless, we work to make them better. At CTSA, I think of Sr. Eva Solomon, C.S.J. and daughter of Anishinaabe elder Art Solomon. Some thirty years ago, she made this medicine wheel for me as a reminder both of the work ahead of us and the resources for that work.

Thanks to Professor Frank Clooney for inviting me to speak with you tonight, and to Mary Jane Ponyik for all of her work as the CTSA Executive Director. Thanks in advance to Dr. Axel Takács for his response. Having had the opportunity of knowing him for a few years, I am privileged to be his opening act. He is one of those extraordinary young scholars that makes me thankful that I am gainfully employed. Thank you, in particular, to the extraordinary comparative theologians who are with us, as well as more generally to all of you who are here tonight. I joined the CTSA in 2009 and have been a member since then. I was last at a convention in 2012 in St. Louis, so it is a joy to be back here with you after a decade away.

I will be talking with you for the next 30 minutes or so. The students at my university tell me that I can keep their interest for about half an hour, so I am hoping you will indulge me with that same time frame. As you have already realized, I will not be reading a paper at you. Scholarly texts rarely make good performative pieces. As someone who lives and works in Los Angeles, I have been able to connect with people in the film and television industries. One of my favorite gigs was working on the three seasons of *The Story of God with Morgan Freeman* on the National Geographic Channel. I was able to shoot an episode with Mr. Freeman in Washington, DC, and before we did that I was talking with one of the producers, and I asked if I

[1] Author's note: My remarks were delivered as a conversation with the audience, not a scholarly paper to be read silently. My thanks to *Proceedings* editor Professor B. Kevin Brown for allowing me to preserve that version of my plenary address.

would have the opportunity to rehearse with Mr. Freeman. He looked at me with a wry smile that suggested he was thinking something like "oh you poor dear boy," and just said, "With all due respect, you don't have the acting chops to run lines with Mr. Freeman. So the two of you will just have a conversation and we'll film it and see what we can use for the show." It was a lovely reminder that even though we as professors may have certain theatrical skills that we deploy in our classes, they aren't anything at the level of A-list, Oscar winning actors. So I will not be reading to you, but talking with you.

In this time with you tonight, I want to tell a story about Catholics and Muslims. I come from a land, Canada, that has a rich tradition of storytellers and songwriters. I will weave some of those lines into my talk with you tonight. I start with the greatest songwriter that my country has produced. No, it's not Drake, or Justin Bieber, the Weeknd or even the blessed Rabbi Eleazar, also known as Leonard Cohen. After Lenny died in 2016, an old friend got in touch to say that he thought it was Lenny, and not Bob Dylan who should have won the Nobel Prize in literature that year. In the interest of full disclosure, I worship at Lenny's altar, but he doesn't hold a candle to Bobby D, either in catalogue or impact. And I had to remind my friend of the misogyny that is at work in the music industry, and that our greatest songwriter is still very much alive and with us, the incomparable Joni Mitchell. Whenever possible, I try to sneak in these lines from "A Case of You":

> … I remember that time you told me
> You said, "Love is touching souls"
> Surely you touched mine
> 'Cause part of you pours out of me
> In these lines from time to time …

What is astonishing about Joni's talent is that she sees herself primarily as a painter, not as a songwriter. So, for example, in this same song, "A Case of You," she sang about being a lonely painter, living in a box of paints. Music is her side-hustle, and she is the greatest songwriter Canada has even produced. In the demo version of the song, Joni originally sang the last line as "part of you pours out of me, in these black and white designs", a nod to her artistic work. She then changed it to "in these lines from time to time". I am teaching a class this summer with a writing flag, and I tell my students that with eight books and some sixty articles to my credit, I feel comfortable in my writing. But I could write for a thousand years and not come up with these lines from Joni. In a sense, I think they summarize my talk about relationships between Catholics and Muslims. We are enmeshed in each other's lives. After Axel's response, we can have conversations as should happen in a Catholic or Muslim setting, over something to eat and drink at the reception. I want to thank my university, especially the office of our president, Professor Timothy Law Snyder, for helping to sponsor the reception.

Let me start by telling a bit of my story, talking about myself, not to be a typically self-indulgent Angelino, but to tell an origin story of this particular Muslim, and how I came to think interreligiously. With the number of clergy here at the CTSA, let me begin with a confession. I was born in a Catholic missionary hospital in Pakistan, St. Raphael's, literally brought into the world at the hands of a nun, Sr. Elizabeth. So I

guess Holy Mother Church eventually brings all of us home to her [said in jest and with a smile]. And I know that Frank has asked all of us to speak as much as we can about the Jesuits and their extraordinary contributions to all things Catholic, especially in this Ignatian Year,[2] and I promise to do that, but I also need to acknowledge the sisters, and their important works, both practical and theoretical. I grew up working class poor, in the Toronto neighborhood of Parkdale, then as now a landing place for "new Canadians." That's me, with my mother and little sister, over fifty years ago; and yes, as a good Muslim boy, I am in fact holding a gun [again, said in jest and with a smile].

Figure 1: The author (r) as a child with his sister and mother.

I came to Loyola Marymount University in 2005, a refugee from the California State University system, and its then-chancellor who proudly proclaimed that the role of the CSU was to "create educated workers for the California workforce." Since I was more interested in creating educated citizens for the world, a Catholic university rooted in the liberal arts had a great appeal for me. In 2009 I became the first non-Christian tenured in the theology department, and in 2020, for my sins, which are both grievous and many, I became chair, the first Muslim to hold that position. In preparation for that work, I asked one of the Jesuits, Fr. Randy Roche, to give me the *Spiritual Exercises* (see Frank, I am including Jesuits and Ignatian pedagogy as I promised I would do). That was the nineteenth annotation, given over about thirty-five weeks. I needed it to help me with the issues that I knew I would face as chair. But what I did not realize is that it would also deepen my understanding of certain Catholic ideas and practices such as the Incarnation, or the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, or the observances of Good Friday. In addition, I was struck by how similar the *Exercises* were to certain Islamic spiritual practices, not simply in the coincidence of spiritual discipline, but some actual practices such as thanks and praise to God. I had great conversations with another Jesuit, Fr. Pat Ryan the McGinley Chair at Fordham, about this—the connections between Ignatian and Muslim spiritual practices.

[2] The convention took place during an Ignatian Year (May 2021 – July 2022), declared by Jesuit Superior General Arturo Sosa, S.J., to celebrate the five-hundredth anniversary of Ignatius Loyola's conversion and the four-hundredth anniversary of the canonizations of Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier.

So that is the first point I want to make, the extraordinary work the Jesuits in particular and Catholics in general have done on Islam. Done at its best, it involves not just studying something called "Islam," but living and working with Muslims. I think here of Pat or Fr. Tom Michel who have both lived half of their lives among Muslims, or Fr. Dan Madigan, an extraordinary scholar of the Qur'an who is here with us. Or Christian Krokus, and his marvelous work on Louis Massignon. Or one of my mentors, Jane McAuliffe, who is perhaps the Catholic woman that knows the most about the Qur'an, and has helped both Catholics and Muslims to better understand that text. Or I think of the conference that my Muslim sister, Professor Aysha Hidayatullah, did on Muslim-Catholic dialogue at the University of San Francisco, another Jesuit school, in 2015 that had participants from 23 of the 27 Jesuit schools in the United States. Or the work of Pim Valkenberg at the Catholic University of America, or Scott Alexander at the Catholic Theological Union. There is also the more general work that Catholics have done on comparative theology, for example that of my retired LMU colleague Fr. James Fredericks. Or John Borelli or Peter Phan, who have done great work at Georgetown University. But I don't need to go into those details, as they should be known to you here at the CTSA. As should the work on Catholic–Muslim dialogue since *Nostra Aetate*. Or that this work goes back centuries, with for example the Franciscans having in their rule instructions for how they were to live among and with Muslims, since before there was such an order as the Franciscans, the man who would become the blessed St. Francis met with the Muslim sultan in 1219. I think here of my Franciscan friends, the icon writer Br. Robert Lentz, or the academic, Fr. Michael Calabria, at St. Bonaventure who work on the influence of Islam on Franciscan thought. Last year, Br. Robert wrote an icon for me that we had been talking about for a decade, Our Lady of the Qur'an.

Figure 2: Our Lady of the Qur'an, *by Robert Lentz, O.F.M. © 2021. Used with permission*

The nineteenth chapter of the Qur'an is Surah Maryam, the chapter of Mary. In that chapter, as in the Gospel of Luke, the angel Gabriel

appears to Mary to tell her that she will have a son, even though no man has touched her. When she asks how this is possible, Gabriel replies, "Your Lord says, 'It is easy for Me, We will make him a sign for humanity and a Mercy from Us'" (Qur'an 19:21). That is one of my favorite Qur'anic titles for Jesus, a sign for humanity and a mercy from God. The chapter goes on to describe Mary giving birth to Jesus under a palm tree, with ripe dates to feed her and her child.

Mary holds her child, Jesus, in the folds of her robe, and I can see in the icon the Qur'anic story of how Mary was once criticized by some in her community who could not accept the virgin birth of Jesus. In the story, Mary points to the child, indicating that he should speak for himself. That is one of the many miracles of Jesus in the Qur'an, that he speaks as an infant: "But they said, 'How shall we speak to one who is still in the cradle, a little child?' Jesus said, 'Behold, I am God's servant; God has given me the Book and made me a prophet. God has made me blessed, wherever I may be; and God has enjoined me to pray and to give alms so long as I live, and likewise to cherish my mother; God has not made me arrogant or unblessed. Peace be upon me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I am raised up alive'" (Qur'an 19:30–35).

In the Islamic tradition, one sees flames around the heads of holy people, similar to halos in Christianity. The Arabic text at the bottom of the icon is from the Qur'an 3:42, another line that might surprise some Christians since it comes not from the Gospel of Luke, but from the Qur'an: "O Mary, surely God has elected you, purified you, and exalted you above the women in all of the worlds." Mary appears in the Qur'an, to Muslims, as she appears to other people across history and geography. I begin my comparative theology classes with Mary, quoting two simple words, "Our Lady." I ask the students, what does the "Our" in that title mean? Does she listen to the petitions of *all* of her children, or only those who are Catholic, or an even smaller subset of those who are in the good graces of the Catholic Church? For some three years now, I've been trying to get a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe on our campus, in honor of Our Lady, and in memory of my friend, our brother, the blessed David Sánchez. This is the maquette, done by the sculptor Will Pupa. Every morning, when I speak with Our Lady and offer some

Figure 3: Photograph of the maquette of Our Lady of Guadalupe, *by Will Pupa. Used with permission.*

incense in her honor (don't get me started on the fact that I have to be careful about when I burn incense for Our Lady, because of the sensitivities of my colleagues who find such rituals to be problematic), I ask that if she wants this on our campus at LMU, that she make it happen. I have my own relationship to Our Lady, with its own origin story. Here I think of another song, "Song of Bernadette," written by Jennifer Warnes and the blessed Leonard Cohen:

> … We've been around, we fall, we fly
> We mostly fall, we mostly run
> And every now and then we try
> To mend the damage that we've done
> Tonight, tonight I just can't rest
> I've got this joy inside my breast …

We are delighted to welcome back with us to the CTSA Professor Rita George-Tvrtković who teaches at Benedictine University and has a marvelous book on how Our Lady has been used by Muslims and Catholics.[3] Rita returns today from Rome where she was a consultor for the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

In thinking historically, I think also of the many, many connections between Muslim and Catholic thinkers in the medieval world. I was fortunate to do my graduate work at the University of Toronto with people like Jane McAuliffe, or the blessed Norman Daniel, who was working on a revision of his magisterial book, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image*. Or of the blessed Michael Marmura, who did extraordinary work on Ibn Sina, Avicenna, and showed how Ibn Sina was not only a transmitter of Greek thought, but was one of the key people in rethinking that work in the medieval period. I think of one of our CTSA members and 2009 John Courtney Murray award winner, Fr. David Burrell, who has done amazing work on these connections of medieval thought between Jews, Muslims, and Catholics.

In turn, this makes me think of my master at the University of Toronto, the blessed Wilfred Cantwell Smith, who wrote so eloquently about the unity of humanity. I sing one song, and it is the song of my master, who wrote: "Those who believe in the unity of humankind, and those who believe in the unity of God, should be prepared therefore to discover a unity of humankind's religious history. We are not so prepared, however".[4]

In my classes, I use these lines from Jack Miles' *Religion as we Know It* about the interplay between science and religion told as a marvelous story of two boys playing,

> Isaac Newton…wrote famously, and rather poignantly: "I do not know what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been only a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me." …

[3] Rita George-Tvrtković, *Christians, Muslims, and Mary: A History* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2018).

[4] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Towards a World Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1981), 4.

> And I think of religion as a second boy playing with that first boy on the beach but saying to him at a certain point, "This has been fun, but it's getting dark, the tide is coming in, supper may be almost ready, and I'm going home. The ocean will still be there tomorrow. If you come along, I promise to tell you a story on the way."[5]

I think of Jack's words about the work that we do, and the importance of play in that work, alongside of the words of my master, the blessed Wilfred Cantwell Smith. In 1981's *Towards a World Theology*, he wrote: "To read a statement in a Sanskrit or Arabic text one must know what it says but also what it takes for granted. One must listen to what people leave unsaid, be sensitive to their failures, recognize what they do in terms of what they are trying to do."[6] Wilfred continued with words that, read in hindsight, I realize have shaped my work and my thought about thinking interreligiously for over thirty years. He wrote,

> Fundamentally, one makes a rather stupid historian if one fails to recognize that other people are in fact human beings like ourselves. This statement seems so obvious, and so innocent, and yet the depth of our academic crisis [and remember, he's writing this in 1981, when I was still in high school, and the concern in universities was for a certain kind of "scientific" knowledge and something called "objectivity" in the humane sciences] lies in the fact that it is so radical. If one does not see and feel that the people whom one studies are human beings like ourselves—and if as teacher and scholar one does not enable one's students and one's readers to see and to feel it—then one has failed as an historian, has failed to arrive at knowledge. If some wish to call this kind of humane knowledge "unscientific" I do not much mind; I would rather be on the right track than orthodox.[7]

In that same text, *Towards a World Theology*, Wilfred gave me the title of this talk, where he imagined a Muslim responding to a Christian theology of comparative religion with the line that, "Piety, for us, is a practical, not primarily a theoretical, matter."[8] That is my second point about thinking interreligiously, a focus on what the Church speaks of as the "dialogue of life," about how we live in the world. We need to pay more attention to that, to what our president, Professor Hinze, will speak about in her CTSA presidential plenary on Sunday, as the "work in our time."

This November, I become the president of another scholarly society, the American Academy of Religion. I have not made my theme public yet, but I am happy to announce that theme to friends here, with the request that you do not publicize it until it comes out officially from the AAR this fall. This fall, I will have lived for the past

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[5] Jack Miles, *Religion as We Know It: An Origin Story* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2020), 139-140.

[6] Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, 65.

[7] Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, 65.

[8] Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, 134.

25 years in Los Angeles, and will deliver my AAR presidential address in November 2023 in San Antonio. In those cities, as well as in the Southwest more broadly, the dominant language is not English, but Spanish. I don't *habla* well enough to give my address in Spanish, but I want the title to be in Spanish, to reflect what is also the dominant language of the American Catholic Church. The next AAR Presidential theme will be *la obra de nuestras manos*, the work of our hands. I do not mean to graft myself onto the struggle, or claim to be part of La Raza, or anything like that. But I cut my teeth at California State University, Northridge in the late 1990s, one of the key places in Los Angeles for what was then known as Chicano studies, under the guidance of the OG, Professor Rudy Acuña, whose *Occupied America* was one of the first books I read about my new location. I want to acknowledge where I am, and where I work, a Muslim Guadalupano, where Spanish is the dominant language but often is not recognized as such. When I first came up with the title, child that I am of working class, immigrant parents, the only word I knew for work was *trabajo*, but my friends that I discussed it with thought *obra* was the better term. It is in this dialogue of life that most of us do our work.

Wilfred wrote about the problems with some of that work, especially about the fallacy of "discipline":

> Just as the Christian missionary wrote for Christians, so the sociologist has tended to write for sociologists. And this, not as a foible, like his jargon; but on principle. I suggest that there is an intellectual flaw here. The thing is amusingly sectarian: one writes only for those who share certain presuppositions (and whose ritual is certain methodologies). This fallacy is enshrined in the contemporary concept of 'discipline', which postulates a particular body of people who esoterically share a certain body of knowledge. It has come to be the case that, both in practice and in theory, academics of the objectivist, as distinct from the humane, sort read (academically) only within their own discipline, accept as authoritative criticism the judgement only of their 'peers', by which they mean other members of their group. And so on. This is subjectivity with a vengeance![9]

A third point here, and I do not mean to be impolite or ungrateful for the opportunities accorded to me either at LMU or the CTSA, is to mention Catholics and Islamophobia. I think here of the important work of the Bridge Initiative at Georgetown University, and the writings of Jordan Duffner. Axel, who has been waiting patiently for his turn, which I promise will come soon, has an outstanding article from earlier this year in *Horizons*, the journal of the College Theology Society, "Undoing and Unsaying Islamophobia: Toward a Restorative and Praxis-Oriented Catholic Theology with Islam." In that article, he wrote that his work "challenges Catholic theologians of Islam, members of the Catholic hierarchy, and educators at the university, secondary, and parish level, particularly in North America and Europe, to adopt an actively anti-Islamophobic theology that should inform interreligious practice with communities of

[9] Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, 74.

Muslims; just as it is not enough 'not to be racist' to abolish racism (rather one must be actively antiracist), similarly it is not enough 'not to express anti-Muslim bigotry' to abolish Islamophobia."[10]

In thinking about a comparative theology of religion, I again go back to Wilfred's work.

> When Muslims have in the past read Western studies of Islamics, they usually have not liked them, to put it mildly. They have resented the arrogance, inherent in those days in most Christian, most secularist and all behaviourist orientations. They have been repelled by the distortions, introduced by externalist viewing. They have been made uncomfortable, by having what were premises turned into objects of scrutiny. None the less, there is at least a grain of truth—and sometimes, much more than a grain—in many of these alien observations.[11]

You know about this when it is applied to the Catholic tradition. Philip Jenkins has written eloquently in *The New Anti-Catholicism* about anti-Catholic discrimination. You know this history, that two hundred years ago there was a concern for immigrants who came to this country, bringing with them their strange, violent, un-American religion in a language other than English. It was not Islam and Muslims they were talking about, but Catholicism and Catholics. You are all sadly familiar with the anti-Catholic cartoon from Thomas Nast, first published on September 30, 1871, "American River Ganges".

With all respect, I think of the hateful questions I have gotten when I speak to Christians, unfortunately sometimes in Catholic settings. You, American Catholics, should know better, as you were once us. But now you have become American, and unfortunately sometimes you forget your history. Think of us, American Muslims, as your brothers and sisters. Remember the lines that the master taught us from Matthew's Gospel, the Parable of the Great Banquet (Mt 25:31-46) applied not only to Christians, but to all of us human beings. Again, I go back to Wilfred, and his lines: "Our solidarity precedes our particularity, and is part of our self-transcendence. The truth of all of us is part of the truth of each of us. It is self-consciously we who differ."[12] He continued,

> A Christian theology of comparative religion is, therefore, not a view from within one tradition or community out upon the others. To conceive it so has been the chief error until now, and is inherently bound to fail, whether the other tradition or community perceived as object be considered critically or charitably. Rather, that theology, if it is to be true, becomes a Christian view (and I stress the adjective) from within all. It postulates that we see ourselves as participants in one community, the human: that the Christians see the Christian

[10] Axel Marc Oaks Takacs, "Undoing and Unsaying Islamophobia: Toward a Restorative and Praxis-Oriented Catholic Theology with Islam," *Horizons* 48 (2021): 3.

[11] Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, 99.

[12] Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, 103.

> group and other groups as fellow participants in that one community.[13]

In discussing historiography, he writes,

> The clearing away of later 'accretions', the exploding and dismissal of accumulated legends, the analysis of everything into the parts out of which it was made up, the tracing back of those parts each to its origin, the search for causes (not for effects): all these constitute the zeal of the historical researcher. It leads to what I have called 'studying history backwards', the so-called historical outlook having become one that looks at anything and perceives it in terms of its antecedents; forgetting that in fact time's arrow points the other way. History is not the past; history is process."[14]

A fourth point in our shared lives is in the training of priests in interfaith and Muslim–Catholic dialogue. We do this at LMU, mostly in our graduate program in Pastoral theology, often with priests from India and Africa. African and Indian Catholics, by their location, are engaged in comparative theology. Priests need to be able to handle the questions that their parishioners pose to them about Islam and Muslims.

My final point about our shared lives is about classroom teaching, what we teach in our Catholic schools. Do we teach about Islam and Muslims with honesty and integrity? Axel will speak about this, about the need to teach interreligiously, and not to tack this on to the end of a course as some kind of footnote. He concluded his *Horizons* article with this magisterial line, and it is with his words that I draw to a close: "A Catholic theology with Islam seeks to be interreligious by bringing these communities together to strive for the impossible: justice in this world."[15] I mentioned at the beginning that I would say more about my shirt. The shirt that I am wearing has a Haida image of humans, done by my friend, the Haida artist Dorothy Grant. We always need to keep in mind our common humanity, that despite our differences, which may be considerable, we are all human beings who live and work together. Thank you!

Figure 4: The author presenting at the with the shirt bearing the Haida image of humans by the Haida artist, Dorothy Grant.

[13] Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, 103.
[14] Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, 155.
[15] Takacs, "Undoing and Unsaying Islamophobia," 47.

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A RESPONSE TO AMIR HUSSAIN'S "THINKING INTERRELIGIOUSLY WITH MUSLIMS: 'A PRACTICAL, NOT PRIMARILY A THEORETICAL MATTER'"

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REMEMBERING THE PAST AND IMAGINING THE FUTURE OF CHRISTIAN–MUSLIM RELATIONS: THE CREATIVE AND DESTRUCTIVE POWER AT THE BORDERS

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Good evening. Thank you, Amir, for such a rich and discerning talk on the import of "thinking interreligiously with Muslims." It is apparent that both your personal, spiritual autobiography and your professional career illustrate the creative and constructive potential that emerges when Catholics and Catholic institutions intentionally decide to think interreligiously with Muslims and the Islamic traditions historically and presently. My gratitude also extends to Frank Clooney, without whose mentorship and attention I would not be where I am today in my academic career, and without whom I would never have met my spouse—but that's a story for another time. Thank you for this invitation. Finally, I extend my gratitude to Executive Director Mary Jane Ponyik and all other organizers of the Seventy-Sixth Annual Convention of the Catholic Theological Society of America in Atlanta, along with the food service, technology, cleaning, and other hospitality staff making our stay possible.

I would like to reaffirm that we are currently conversing on the land of the Muscogee Creek Nation, and that I do my teaching, research, writing, gardening, parenting, cooking, eating, playing, and praying on Lenapehoking, the ancestral lands of the Lenni Lenape indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. Some may say that these acknowledgements are merely *pro forma*—perhaps. However, in this case, thinking interreligiously with Muslims requires recognizing how Old World relations with Muslims and Jews were extended and mapped onto the religious and racial other in the New World, from indigenous peoples to Black America to immigrant America. Thinking interreligiously with Muslims should therefore be a decolonial project.

In responding to Amir, I plan to make two points, both related to borders, border talk, and the creative and/or destructive ideas they produce. Amir's talk illustrates how the in-between spaces wherein Muslims and Christians meet have power—power for creation, but also power for destruction.

First, Amir's subtitle to his "Thinking Interreligiously with Muslims" is "a practical, not merely theoretical matter." And how true is that! A rather obvious point that somehow remains overlooked practically is that Catholic theology has always been interreligious—Jewish thought, Greek and Hellenic thought, Islamic thought, North African indigenous ideas, European pagan ideas, and so on into the global missionary movements, colonial projects, and postcolonial world—when has Catholic theology ever not been interreligious and intercultural? We really need to stop lying to ourselves! Therefore, embedding interreligious engagement within departments of religion and theology at Catholic institutions and in scholarship is not as novel as some suggest. Here, the borders between Christian-majority regions and Muslim-majority regions historically have engendered creative permutations of divine revelation and its interpretation. Nonetheless, our religiously plural world is one in which religiously minoritized communities suffer the brunt of political and economic marginalization—and therefore justice demands that Catholic theology is performed interreligiously. Catholics were once marginalized in the American context. We should now use our relative political power and economic advantage to make space for non-Christian theologies in our departments—from hiring practices to courses and scholarship. That's the first point.

The second point: using theological engagement with the Islamic traditions as an example, I seek to underscore the necessity of integrating Catholic theology and comparative theology with the critical study of religion and interreligious studies. In brief, doing Catholic theology interreligiously with Muslims demands that we recognize the social process called the racialization of religion and how dominant global political and economic structures continue to marginalize Muslim communities from Dearborn, Michigan and the Banlieues of Paris, to Yemen, Xinjiang Province (China), Palestine, and beyond.[1] We cannot attend to Islamic thought on paper—be it classical or post-classical Islamic philosophy, theology, art, and spirituality—without attending to the lived realities of societies of Muslims worldwide who are daily experiencing global anti-Muslim racism.[2] Here, the borders between Christian-majority regions and Muslim-majority regions historically have produced not a little bit of conflict and race-making practices—such as the *limpieza de sangre* system in the Iberian peninsula and the racialization of Muslims and Jews.

[1] "The *racialization of religion* is a process in which particular religions are associated with certain physical appearances and human differences come to be treated as absolute, fundamental, and heritable, like race." Khyati Joshi, *White Christian Privilege* (New York: New York University Press, 2020), 46.

[2] The danger of attending to theology, spirituality, and "culture talk" to the exclusion of global political and economic histories of oppression risks occluding the ways in which neocolonialism, empire, and anti-Muslim racism shape the lives of contemporary Muslims. For an example of this, see Axel Takacs, "Critical Pedagogies in the Interfaith/Interreligious Studies Classroom: From the Editor-in-Chief," *Journal of Interreligious Studies* no. 36, 1-8, especially 4-8 (https://irstudies.org/index.php/jirs/article/view/763).

FIRST POINT: THE CREATIVE POWER AT CHRISTIAN–MUSLIM BORDERS

Catholic theology has always been interreligious. Amir offered an autobiographical account of his journey from Pakistan to Canada and California, settling down at Loyola Marymount in Los Angeles and now serving as chair of the department; so let me offer one similarly, though briefly. People often ask me how I came to study what I study. I honestly do not recall any single event that thrust me into this learning trajectory. But, like Augustine and other great autobiographers, I can tell a story that connects the dots and maps my present self onto my past self. I began and finished my career as a computer science major at St. Louis University. I had some interest in theology but did not pursue it. However, those were the days when even a computer science major had to take three classes in theology, three classes in philosophy, and three classes in history. Yes, those were the "good ole days." It was in those required courses that I decided I could no longer ignore my intellectual and spiritual passion for theology and philosophy. So, I added a theology major, along with history and philosophy minors. I finished up my two degrees in computer science and theology.

In taking classes on Islam, both in undergraduate and, then, later in graduate school, I became intrigued by the biblical imaginary and philosophical languages shared between Islamic and Christian traditions. I found it analytically fascinating to learn how two traditions with so much shared vocabulary developed in their own unique ways. Even more fascinating was the historical, lived realities of communities of Christians and Muslims exchanging theological ideas, and how the development of medieval scholastic theology and even Christian spirituality were shaped in conversation with the Islamic traditions and in proximity to societies of Muslims, at and beyond the border, as it were. In this case, cross-religious and cross-cultural transmissions engendered creative contributions to Catholic thought. Indeed, one may ask perhaps rhetorically: "when has Catholic theology ever *not* been interreligious?" Amir made note of the work of Michael Marmura and David Burrell and their scholarship on Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), or Avicenna, whose Islamic philosophy made possible later Christian medieval scholastic theology. Now, allow me to get technical for a moment. What we must recall is that Ibn Sīnā's arguably most formative contribution to medieval scholastic theology—the distinction between essence and existence—was itself inspired by earlier *kalām*, or Islamic theological, arguments on the distinction between a "thing" (*shay'*) and its existence. Furthermore, their largely non-Aristotelian understanding of "thingness" (*shay'iyya*) comes from the Qur'ān and Qur'ānic vocabulary, such as Surah 16 (*an-nahl*), vs. 40: "If We ever will *a thing* to exist, all We say is: 'Be!' And it is!'" So how do we reimagine the history of Catholic theology differently, that is, interreligiously? For example, in elaborating his metaphysics of glory, the twentieth-century Catholic theologian, Hans Urs von Balthasar, contends that it is only through the "real distinction" between *actus essendi* and the various *essentiae* (existence and the various essences), "*uniquely* grasped by Thomas Aquinas,"[3] that a theology of glory emerges able to perceive the wonder of

[3] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics, Vol. 5, The Realm of Metaphysics in the Modern Age*, trans. Oliver Davies, John Saward, Rowen Douglas

being, of creation. Ibn Sīnā himself was reading *kalām* arguments on this distinction and so was shaped by Islamic theological discourses as much as Aristotle—who gave him other conceptual language to express it.[4] Well, then, without Quranic revelation, proclaimed by Muhammad, without very early *kalām* interpretations of the Qur'ān, we might never have had that distinction. In this case, we can perceive the wonder of being and creation in a Catholic idiom because of an early Islamic theological hermeneutics of revelation.[5] Similar stories could be told about Spanish mysticism, Dante's Divine Comedy, Syriac-speaking Christian ascetics in the Levant, and more.

Williams, Andrew Louth, Brian McNeil, C.R.V. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press; Crossroads Publications, 1991), 446.

[4] See Jon McGinnis, *Avicenna* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 251ff, and David Burrell, *Knowing the Unknowable God: Ibn Sina, Maimonides, Aquinas* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986). Wisnovsky demonstrates how Ibn Sīnā first engaged the categories (such as *shay'iyya*, or thingness) of the *mutakallimūn*, or Islamic theologians, when discussing the essence/existence distinction. Later, he adopts the language of Arabic Aristotle and al-Fārābī (d. 950): "Part of the reason for this is that Avicenna straddled two worlds: the world of *falsafa* and the world of *kalām*. His discussions of the relationship between thing and existent are clearly informed by previous *kalām* debates: both the terminology and the issues at stake are identical. But when Avicenna adopts the language of the Arabic Aristotle and of al-Fārābī, a slight conceptual shift is detectable. Instead of analyzing the relationship between thing and existent, Avicenna speaks of the relationship between essence (*māhiyya*, literally "whatness") and existence (*wujūd*). The term he uses for essence, *māhiyya*, comes from the Arabic version of the various logic texts that constitute the *Organon*, in which a definition, when properly constructed, is held to indicate the essence (*māhiyya*) of a thing" (Robert Wisnovsky, "Avicenna," *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, ed. Peter Adamson and Richard Taylor [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005], 109). It is true that Balthasar does not ignore the pivotal importance Ibn Sīnā had in the development of Christian theology, to be sure. See volume V of *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics, the Realm of Metaphysics in the Modern Age*, 10, 17, 48, 91, and 560. In later works of his trilogy, he effectively equates Thomas's and Ibn Sīnā's ontology. See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory: Prolegomena, Vol. 1*, trans. G. Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 550-551, as well as *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory: Dramatis Personae: Man in God, Vol. 2*, trans. G. Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 245–246. What Balthasar does not know is that this distinction was informed by Islamic theology first, and was arguably made possible because of early *kalām* arguments over thingness and their interpretations of Qur'ānic revelation.

[5] Finally, what Catholic systematic theologians and historians of theology, particularly medieval scholastic theology, fail to realize is that historically parallel to the development of Christian thought, Ibn Sīnā's distinction had foundational and formative impact on the development of Islamic theology, philosophy, and the *ṣūfī*-philosophical amalgam of classical and post-classical Islamic intellectual thought. This distinction produces a unique and different tradition, from Ibn ʿArabī to Mulla Ṣadrā (d. 1640) to contemporary Islamic thought in Iran—all worthy of further investigation in a comparative light. Most scholars of medieval theology simply wish to learn about the so-called "Islamic Golden Age" of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as if that is when Islamic philosophy and theology peaked, thereby equating Islamic philosophy as a mere conveyer of Greek thought to European Christian thought. This could not be further from the truth, as Islamic theology, philosophy, and Sufism coalesced into a *ṣūfī*-philosophical amalgam that offered creative and innovative interpretations, distinct from how Thomas Aquinas and his successors developed it. See, for example, Robert Wisnovsky, "The Nature and Scope of Arabic Philosophical Commentary in Post-Classical (ca.1100-1900) Islamic

Let me return to borders and connect what I have said to Amir's point about Spanish-speaking Catholic communities in the South, at the border, on the border, and beyond the border: We do well to learn from Gloria Anzaldúa and her mestiza or *nepantla* theory. As many Mexican, Mexican American, and indigenous people will readily proclaim, being situated within and between borders facilitates hybridity, syncretism, and assuming multiple religious and cultural identities. Anzaldúa uses the language of the mestiza and the related notion of *nepantla*, which is a Nahuatl term for middle or in-betweenness. Learning from Chicana cultural, feminist, and queer theory, we benefit from recognizing that being mixed points to a capacity to embrace ambivalence and affirm the fuzziness of religious and cultural traditions; from this we may affirm the permeable nature of all boundaries and the artificial nature of all borders. This contrasts with the popular and conservative expectation that our identities and traditions are bounded territories, fixed, monolithic, and sharply demarcated. The Nahuatl word, *nepantla*, refers specifically to the space between two figurative or literal bodies of water, and there is an Qur'ānic Arabic term that refers similarly to the space wherein two bodies of water meet: the *barzakh* (Qur'ān 55:19-20: "He released the two seas, they meet, between them is a *barzakh* they do not exceed.") The *barzakh*, according to Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240), the famous thirteenth-century mystical philosopher, is a liminal space situated between two things, "but it is not identical to any of those two things, though it possesses the power of both."[6] Keep this in mind, it possesses the *power* of both. Likewise, the *barzakh* "is nothing but the imagination"[7] and finally, "there is nothing in the world but *barzakh*s"[8] that is, the whole world is a collection of in-between, liminal spaces, and for our purposes we can say, a collection of meeting points between religious and cultural traditions. Whether *nepantla* or *barzakh*, both speak to the intelligence, imagination, and proficiency to see the world not in terms of rigidly demarcated religions or cultures, but rather as mutually co-constituting and co-dependent, ever transforming imaginaries and traditions. To cultivate this interreligious and intercultural intelligence and proficiency, drawing from Christine Hong's excellent

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Intellectual History: Some Preliminary Observations," in *Philosophy, Science and Exegesis in Greek, Arabic and Latin Commentaries*, ed. Peter Adamson, Han Balthussen, and M.W.F. Stone, vol. 2 (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2004), 149-191, and Robert Wisnovsky, "One Aspect of The Avicennian Turn in Sunni Theology," in *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 14, 1 (2004): 65–100. See also Ayman Shihadeh, "From Al-Ghazali to Al-Razi: 6th/12th Century Developments in Muslim Philosophical Theologyl," in *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 15, 1 (2005), 141–179, and Ayman Shihadeh, *Sufism and Theology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007). The existence-essence distinction elaborated by Ibn Sīnā merged with the School of Ibn ʿArabī in the commentaries of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 1274) and Dawūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 1350), both disciples of Ibn ʿArabī. This *ṣūfī*-philosophical amalgam continued to be explicated and constructively developed by many innovative authors from the fourteenth century until today (particularly by Iranian scholars). Arguably, the most influential philosopher within this *ṣūfī*-philosophical tradition was Mulla Ṣadrā Shīrāzī.

[6] Ibn ʿArabī, *Al-Futūḥāt Al-Makkīyah*, ed. Osman Yahya (Bayrūt: Dār Ṣādir, 1968), I.304.20 (Vol.Page.Line). This is found in Chapter 63 "Concerning the Recognition of the Subsistence of the People in the *Barzarkh*/Liminal Space Between this World and the Resurrection."

[7] Ibn ʿArabī, *Al-Futūḥāt Al-Makkīyah*, I.304.20-22.

[8] Ibn ʿArabī, *Al-Futūḥāt Al-Makkīyah*, III.156.27

book, *Decolonial Futures*, is to see traditions as constantly changing in relation to each other.[9] In this case, where religious traditions meet, there is the power of imagination to create something new.

But thinking Catholic interreligiously must consider the social and power constructs that shape our world. True, history and present-day experiences demonstrate how syncretism, hybridity, and interreligious and intercultural transformation and relations were and are the norm. However, the hegemony of our current political and economic power constructs continues to marginalize religiously and culturally minoritized communities, and so we must take this global reality into consideration when we theologize interreligiously—especially with Muslims. As Amir reminded us, Catholics were very much once "strangers in a foreign land," excluded and marginalized in the United States. Given the relative power and advantage of Catholic institutions of higher learning today, we must make space for non-Christian theologies and scholars in our departments, courses, scholarship, and praxis. Doing Catholic theology interreligiously requires structural changes to Catholic departments. There is, of course, neither a straightforward nor one-size-fits-all strategy in making Catholic departments of religion and theological studies interreligious. It is no easy task to negotiate, on the one hand, the import of the Catholic sense of "tradition" with, on the other, the necessity to move creatively and interreligiously beyond tradition all at the same time. Though, if we recognize "tradition" to be always ever only interreligious, the tension can be reconciled.

SECOND POINT: THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER AT CHRISTIAN–MUSLIM BORDERS

In the first point, borders engendered creative and imaginative theologies—philosophy, spirituality, poetry, art, and more. The borders between Muslim and Christian communities produced imaginative interpretations of the Christian and Islamic revelations, often in implicit or explicit conversation with each other. In this case, the power of the liminal space, the *barzakh* or *nepantla*, is creative, imaginative, and generally positive. In this second point, however, borders engender not merely conflict, but race-making ideologies and destruction. Here, the power of the liminal space is destructive, or at least harnessed for destruction because of human brokenness. Over the course of my academic career, it has become clear to me that the history of Christian interactions with Muslims in the medieval period shaped the European history of colonization, warfare, and empire building from 1492 until 2022—from Ayiti or Hispaniola to Iraq, from Turtle Island to Yemen and so much more in between, from the Spanish encomienda system and the Transatlantic Slave Trade to the half a million children dead from malnutrition in Iraq because of US sanctions in the 90s, or the 38 million mostly Muslim refugees caused by post-9/11 US-Led wars, also the cause of 200,000 Iraqi civilian deaths, 71,000 civilian deaths in the Afghanistan/Pakistan warzone, 250,000 deaths in Yemen since the 2014 US-backed war, and so on. While a coincidence, it is certainly ominous that 1492 marks both the

[9] See Christine Hong, *Decolonial Futures: Intercultural and Interreligious Intelligence for Theological Education* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021), as well as my review of her book in the *Journal of Interreligious Studies* no. 33, 113-116 (https://irstudies.org/index.php/jirs/article/view/667).

beginning of the enslavement, sex trafficking, genocide, gendercide, and land dispossession of the indigenous in the Americas and the expulsion of Jews from Spain, to be followed later by the expulsion of Muslims—*conversos* and *Moriscos*.

Consensus among scholars is that 1492 marks the invention of race, even if there is significant evidence to suggest race-making was happening throughout the medieval period.[10] Suffice it to say, the colonization of the Americas by Europeans coincided with the development and implementation of the *limpieza de sangre* system, or blood purity laws, in the Iberian peninsula and the racialization of Muslims and Jews, which carried over into the racialized practices against the indigenous peoples of the Americas and Africa. Junaid Rana summarizes it best:

> The racialization of Islam emerged from the Old World, was placed on New World indigenous peoples, and subsequently took on a continued significance in relation to Black America and the world of Muslim immigrants. Thus, the category of Muslim in the U.S. is simultaneously a religious category and one that encompasses a broad race concept that connects a history of Native America to Black America to immigrant America in the consolidation of anti-Muslim racism.[11]

From this point a critical inquiry emerges: how do we think Catholic interreligiously in a social context that has racialized religions—Muslim, Hindu, Jain, Sikh, and so on? The critical study of religion and interreligious studies tells us that we can no longer

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[10] Whether "race" existed in the Middle Ages is an open argument; see, e.g., Chapter 8 ("Was There Race before Modernity? The Example of 'Jewish' Blood in Late Medieval Spain") in David Nirenberg, *Neighboring Faiths: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in the Middle Ages and Today* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014). However, it seems certain that at least "race-making" was a process that began well before 1492, and as early as the eleventh century, as Geraldine Heng argues. Her thesis is "that 'race' is one of the primary names we have—a name we retain for the strategic, epistemological, and political commitments it recognizes—attached to a repeating tendency, of the gravest import, to demarcate human beings through differences among humans that are selectively essentialized as absolute and fundamental, in order to distribute positions and powers differentially to human groups. Race-making thus operates as specific historical occasions in which strategic essentialisms are posited and assigned through a variety of practices and pressures, so as to construct a hierarchy of peoples for differential treatment" (Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019], 27). The process inventing race is intertwined with theology, which employed religious difference "both socioculturally *and* biopolitically: subjecting peoples of a detested faith, for instance, to a political theology that can biologize, define, and essentialize an entire community as fundamentally and absolutely different in an interknotted cluster of ways. Nature and the sociocultural should not thus be seen as bifurcated spheres in medieval race-formation: they often crisscross in the practices, institutions, functions, and laws of a political—and a *bio*politica—theology operationalized on the bodies and lives of individuals and groups" (Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*, 27). The story of Islamophobia may go even further back to Christian supersessionist discourse; see, Axel Takacs, "Undoing and Unsaying Islamophobia: Toward a Restorative and Praxis-Oriented Catholic Theology with Islam," *Horizons*, 48 (2021): 320–366.

[11] Janaid Rana, "The Story of Islamophobia," *Souls* 9:2, 151.

essentialize religions—they are not monolithic essences abstracted from the world—rather, they are embodied, emplaced, and enacted in the world, and they have been racialized by ideologies and social structures whether we like it or not.

Furthermore, Alan Mikhail has demonstrated how the threat of Islam and Muslims in Europe fueled the colonization of the Americas: "Islam was the mold that cast the history of European racial and ethnic thinking in the Americas, as well as the history of warfare in the Western Hemisphere."[12] If the history of Muslim–Christian conflict in part produced our current unjust and inequitable global economic and political racist order, then Muslim–Christian solidarity, co-resistance, and co-creation will be necessary to repair the harm and to create a more just and equitable society.[13]

The recent encyclical by Pope Francis compels us to think Catholic interreligiously and especially with Muslims. In *Fratelli Tutti*, Francis implicitly models how interreligious thinking with Muslims moves beyond dialogue and toward co-resistance and co-creation.[14] Together we can resist structures and ideologies of oppression and

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[12] Alan Mikhail, *God's Shadow: Sultan Selim, His Ottoman Empire, and the Making of the Modern World* (Liveright Publishing Corporation, a Division of W. W. Norton & Company, 2020), 396. "Filtering their experiences in the Americas through the lens of their wars with Muslims, Europeans in the New World engaged in a new version of their very old Crusades, a new kind of Catholic jihad. Long after the many Matamoros—Moor-slayers—who sailed to the Americas aboard Columbus's ships were dead themselves, Islam would continue to forge the histories of both Europe and the New World and the relationship between the two" (386). Elsewhere, Mikhail concludes: "Indeed, the idea that Islam is a deep existential threat to the Americas is one of the oldest cultural tropes in the New World. Its history is as long as the history of European colonialism and disease. It must, therefore, be a part of any understanding of the history of the Americas. After 1492, European colonialism, as we have seen, folded the Americas into the long history of European-Islamic relations. Seeing American history in this way allows us to give a more holistic accounting of the American past. The history of the United States does not begin with Plymouth Rock and Thanksgiving. The first European foothold in what would become the continental United States was not Jamestown, but a Spanish Catholic outpost in Florida. The origins of the American people must obviously include the history of the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean and the Americas, West Africans, and the Jewish and Catholic subjects of mainland European polities. This history must also include Muslims, both African slaves and Selim's Ottomans, for Islam was the mold that cast the history of European racial and ethnic thinking in the Americas, as well as the history of warfare in the Western Hemisphere" (396).

[13] See a forthcoming article by Axel Takacs in *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* tentatively entitled "Drawing Near to God, Drawing Near to Others: On *Fratelli Tutti*, Friendship (*Walāya*), and Muslim-Christian Co-Resistance."

[14] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* (October 3, 2020), https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html (hereafter cited as *FT*).

A forthcoming article by Takacs in *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* in part argues for this reading of *Fratelli Tutti*. However, a subsection of the encyclical entitled "Beginning with the least" (*FT* 233-235) nearly explicitly makes this case: "Building social friendship does not only call for rapprochement between groups who took different sides at some troubled period of history," say, Christians and Muslims, "but also for a renewed encounter with the most impoverished and vulnerable sectors of society" (*FT* 233). Here we see Francis prioritize solidarity (co-resistance and co-creation) over dialogue, without excluding the import of the latter. He then adds, "For peace 'is not merely absence of war but a tireless commitment – especially on the part of those of us charged with greater responsibility – to recognize, protect

create structures and interreligious theologies of liberation. Indeed, global demographics suggest that Christians and Muslims are increasing in numbers at a rate faster than other religious traditions or the religiously disaffiliated. Furthermore, it is global majority Christians and Muslims of Latin and South America, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, and Asia that are suffering the brunt of unjust political and economic ideologies and systems that are the target of Pope Francis's critiques in *Fratelli Tutti*. He names neoliberalism, but we do well to add neocolonial, racial capitalism, from China to the United States. Moreover, 76 percent of all migrants in the world identify as Muslim or Christian; that number will increase alongside anthropogenic climate disasters. These demographic trends underscore the fact that Islam, Christianity, and Muslim-Christian relations will be a necessary feature for any successful movement for social justice and peacebuilding in the world.

But Pope Francis in *Fratelli Tutti* acknowledges the necessity for both spiritual and embodied transformation, personal and political transformation. *Fratelli Tutti* is in effect a theology of religions that has moved well beyond questions of whether and how revelation, truth, and salvation are found in other religious traditions; it already assumes that this is the case. Instead, it is an implicit theology of religions that prioritizes the marginalized and asks how other religious traditions provide avenues for interreligious co-resistance and co-creation.

So Christian–Muslim borders have been marked both by imaginative creations of interreligious and intercultural theologies and by destructive ideologies and systems of race-making, warfare, colonialism, and empire-building. These are the two stories—the two parallel histories of the borders between Christians and Muslims—that must be told about Christian–Muslim relations. As Catholic theologians and educators, we have the responsibility, yes, to tell both stories, but also to construct a future yet unknown in which we decide to co-create in solidarity not merely with our Muslim siblings and neighbors, but with the many non-Christian siblings and neighbors around and among us. How do we do this?

First, quite simply and obviously, are course offerings. For example, the courses I offer fall broadly under three categories.

- First are the courses on Islam in and of itself: Islamic Spirituality and Mysticism, Arts and Literature of Islam and Muslim Cultures, Islamic Theology and Philosophy, Islamic Liberation Theology, and so on. These allow students to learn of the rich, complex, and beautiful expression of theology in the Islamic traditions historically and presently among societies of Muslims in their search for beauty, truth, goodness, and justice.

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and concretely restore the dignity, so often overlooked or ignored, of our brothers and sisters, so that they can see themselves as the principal protagonists of the destiny of their nation'" (*FT* 233, citing Francis, Meeting *with the Authorities, Civil Society and the Diplomatic Corps*, Maputo, Mozambique [September 5, 2019]: *L'Osservatore Romano*, September 6, 2019, 6). Those of us "charged with greater responsibility" are those of us privileged with power in our current global politico-economic structure.

- Second are the comparative courses: Here, students understand the historical interactions among Islamic and Christian traditions and how they mutually shaped each other, and juxtapose theologies with very little historical connection, such as Persian Islamic Love Lyrics with the Latin Christian affective mystical tradition. These courses engage the ways in which Christian-Muslim borders create and imagine forth theological insights otherwise inaccessible without comparison or in isolation.

- Finally, the third set of classes are those that attend to how Christian-Muslim borders produced conflict and race-making ideologies and systems: we have to tell these histories so that we can undo the past and create a future, again, yet unknown.

In all these courses, we must recall that the structures and systems that racialize religion in our contemporary world demand that we attend not only to Islamic theology in classical and post-classical texts, but also to the lived experiences of communities of Muslims worldwide. Christian discourse has racialized religion; it is our task now to undo that process and renew the present so that we may create a future with eschatological hope, not merely utopian politics.

In addition to coursework, we must religiously diversify our departments. Catholics in the United States were once strangers in a foreign land, and it is our responsibility to use our relative economic and political power to make space for non-Christian scholars in our departments.

Finally, we need to think Catholic interreligiously beyond the undergraduate and graduate classroom and into our seminaries. We can follow the lead of some our Protestant siblings and their seminaries and incorporate some required courses in interreligious studies and comparative theology in the intellectual and spiritual formation of Catholic priests. These priests will become pastors at parishes whose members are increasingly becoming indoctrinated not by Catholic social teaching, but by social media, not by Catholic theology, but by ideologies of misinformation, disinformation, and yes, of white and Christian supremacist hate. Seminarians need to be trained to address this with interreligious and intercultural intelligence and proficiency. Indeed, supersessionist language continues to lurk around every corner, despite Vatican II's explicit rejection of it; even Pope Francis was susceptible to supersessionist language in a homily he delivered last August.[15] It is only a small step from Christian supersessionist language to white supremacy, and its corollary, the right-wing "great replacement theory" a conspiracy theory "that states that nonwhite individuals are being brought into the United States and other Western countries to 'replace' white voters to achieve a political agenda. It is often touted by anti-immigration groups, white supremacists and others, according to the National

[15] Francis, *General Audience* (August 11, 2021), https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2021/documents/papa-francesco_20210811_udienza-generale.html

Immigration Forum,"[16] and, I might add, by Fox News' Tucker Carlson himself, whose show was the number one rated cable news show in 2021—highly watched by white Catholics.[17] And I need not remind this audience that the anti-Black, racist attack in Buffalo was in part motived by this conspiracy theory.

The point of all this: Thinking Catholic interreligiously needs to attend to both the spiritual and the political—and seminarians must be educated in this interreligious history and theology so that they have the tools to be effective pastors in an increasingly polarized world. We must remember that *the theologies of the past remain the politics of the present; and so, the theologies of the present can create the politics of the future*.

Finally, let me end by recalling Amir's story. He came to LMU in 2005, "a refugee from the California State University system, and its then chancellor who proudly proclaimed that the role of the CSU was to 'create educated workers for the California workforce.'" Amir was more interested in creating educated citizens for the world, and so a Catholic university rooted in the liberal arts appealed to him

Indeed, as a contingent faculty member myself, living in contractual precarity from year to year at an academic institution—like many in the United States—crushed under the weight of neoliberal logic and market metrics, I often wonder how much longer this will be the case. But if Catholic institutions abandon their missions—missions which in some degree or another effectively aim to educate for beauty, truth, goodness, and justice, and to do so with interreligious and intercultural aims—I fear the worst. It is the responsibility of Catholic institutions to put your money where your mouth is, or put your budgets where your university missions are, and maintain the liberal arts and humanities, particularly the study of religion and theology, and to do so interreligiously. Otherwise, I wouldn't be standing here today. Without those nine required courses in theology, philosophy, and history, I'd likely be coding for Amazon, perhaps perfecting surveillance systems that the government and corporations use to track Muslims and immigrants, or Facebook, fine-tuning algorithms that further polarize us, or for Raytheon or Lockheed Martin, improving guidance systems on drones targeting Yemeni, Muslim children. I would have never added my theology degree, at SLU nearly 20 years ago; I would never have been given the justice-oriented critical thinking skills to resist structures and ideologies of oppression and create structures and theologies of liberation—interreligiously and with Muslims. So, let's continue to work *ad majorem dei gloriam*—for the greater glory of God—but let's do so interreligiously. Thank you.

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[16] Dustin Jones, "What is the 'great replacement' and how is it tied to the Buffalo shooting suspect?," *NPR News*, May 16, 2022, https://www.npr.org/2022/05/16/1099034094/what-is-the-great-replacement-theory.

[17] For an analysis of Tucker Carlson's show in this respect, see the *New York Times* interactive presentation of their research (https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/04/30/us/tucker-carlson-tonight.html). See also Philip Bump, "Tucker Carlson plays dumb on 'replacement theory' — then espouses it," *Washington Post*, May 18, 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/05/18/tucker-carlson-plays-dumb-replacement-theory-and-then-espouses-it/, and Nicholas Confessore and Karen Yourish, "A Fringe Conspiracy Theory, Fostered Online, Is Refashioned by the G.O.P.", *New York Times*, May 15, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/15/us/replacement-theory-shooting-tucker-carlson.html.

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"WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?" RETHINKING THE PARTICULARITY OF CHRISTINAITY THROUGH THE RELIGIOUS OTHER

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> *A well-ordered love can only give to others the grace of its difference.*
>
> Stanislas Breton[1]

After centuries of insisting on the uniqueness of Christianity, and decades apologizing for it, there may be some openness to revisiting the topic in fresh ways. The notion of Christian uniqueness has traditionally focused on the belief in the unique salvific role of Jesus Christ, which itself has been transferred to the Church and its sacraments as the unique means of salvation, and which has inspired generations of selfless missionary dedication to the salvation of others, but also untold suffering caused by religious wars, colonization and the eradication of ancient cultures and traditions. Greater awareness of and openness to other religions mainly since the beginning of the twentieth century has led to serious critical self-reflection, and to rethinking Christian uniqueness in ways captured by the now very familiar paradigms of inclusivism, pluralism, exclusivism and particularism. These paradigms, each with their own internal variation, have more or less exhausted the possibilities for thinking about the uniqueness of Christianity (as of any other religion).

In spite of attempts to offer different names for the various paradigms, to reduce them all to the same, or to shift the discussion from questions of soteriology to epistemology (as I have done),[2] the theological debate on Christian uniqueness has reached a certain stalemate. Though still offering an important framework for situating oneself as a Christian within the reality of religious diversity, it says little about the actual uniqueness or distinctiveness of Christianity, and it offers little by way of

[1] Stanislas Breton, *Unicité et Monothéisme* (Paris : Editions du Cerf, 1981), 156.

[2] Catherine Cornille, "Soteriological Agnosticism and the Future of Theology of Interreligious Dialogue," in *The Past, Present and Future of Theologies of Interreligious Dialogue*, ed. Terrence Merrigan and John Friday (Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press, 2017) 201-215; "Soteriological Agnosticism and Interreligious Dialogue," in *From Vatican II to Pope Francis: Charting a Catholic Future*, ed. Paul Crowley (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2014) 112-126.

contribution to the dialogue between religions. It simply starts from *a priori* religious convictions, pondering how these may be adjusted or modified to allow for the reality and the validity of other religious traditions.

In reaction to traditional claims to uniqueness and exceptionalism, the tendency in pluralist and in post-colonial theology of religions has been to focus on the equivalence and equality of religions or to erase religious borders and distinctions. Advances in the study of religions have indeed drawn attention to the radical diversity within religious traditions, to the fluidity of religious borders and religious identities, and to the impossibility of identifying certain unchanging characteristics that would distinguish religious traditions from one another. In his fractal theory of religious diversity, Perry Schmidt-Leukel, for example, boldly states that "the differences that can be observed at the interreligious level are, to some extent, reflected at the intrareligious level in the internal differences discerned within the major religious traditions, and that they can be broken down at the intrasubjective level into different patterns or structures of the religious mind."[3] It is undeniable that one finds similar patterns in various religious traditions: similar tensions between apophatic and kataphatic notions of the divine, similar variations of dualistic and non-dualistic notions of the relationship between self and the ultimate reality, similar menstrual taboos, similar qualities of sainthood, similar forms of institutional patriarchy, similar ethical principles, etc. And attention to similarities certainly helps to address the bigotry, fear and antagonism that often colors the relationship between religions. But too much emphasis on similarity tends to reduce religions to a bland and monotone uniformity in which dialogue and mutual exchange itself eventually becomes superfluous. Fruitful dialogue requires awareness and celebration of religious differences and a willingness to advocate for one's own distinctive perspectives and priorities. "Each tradition," as Michael Barnes puts it, "has its own difference and particular virtues for living out a similar 'generosity of spirit' and commending it to others."[4]

It is however still risky, and even untoward to raise the question of the uniqueness or the particularity of a religion, especially Christianity. The idea of particularity may still be associated with notions of superiority, arrogance, exceptionalism, and even white supremacy. I myself would probably not have dared to give it much thought, were it not for the fact that I was recently asked to write a short article on my compatriot, Father Damien, who was unanimously voted by the secular Belgian population as the "greatest Belgian ever" (ahead even of the famous cyclist Eddy Merckx). While writing the article, I was asked to reflect on the distinctive Christian nature of Damien's calling and mission. Though somewhat reluctantly, I came to admit the fact that Damien's total commitment to the leper colony in Molokai and his eventual martyrdom as a victim himself were profoundly and ineluctably connected to and inspired by his Christian faith and devotion to Jesus Christ and his passion (he was a Passionist priest). His life had also become a source of inspiration to other great figures from other religions such as Mahatma Gandhi.

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[3] Perry Schmidt-Leukel, *Religious Pluralism and Interreligious Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017), 233.

[4] Michael Barnes, *Interreligious Learning. Dialogue, Spirituality and the Christian Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 119.

This then gradually led me to rethink the question of the uniqueness or the particularity of Christianity, not as an *a priori* given, but as a reality and awareness that might be discovered in and through the dialogue or engagement with other religions. One of the important fruits of an open and honest dialogue between religions, as of any dialogue, is indeed enhanced self-knowledge or awareness of one's own particularity. Dan Madigan has put this eloquently when he states, from the perspective of his dialogue with Islam, that:

> The fact that at certain points the parallels limp somewhat or even break down is a salutary reminder precisely of the uniqueness of the Christian proclamation that distinguishes it from its Islamic counterpart. So much of interreligious dialogue tends to be based on the finding of mutual echoes in sacred texts and common ethical teachings. Yet surely one of the great values of our encounter with the other—especially with an other who contests our version of the same tradition—is to discover our particular identity rather than any generic similarity.[5]

Dialogue and comparative theology have tended to focus mainly on what one can learn about and from other religious traditions. But learning may indeed also take the form of rediscovery and reaffirmation of aspects of one's own tradition that come into particular relief in relation to the other, and a repossession of those aspects of one's religious identity. The latter seems particularly pertinent as a combination of religious ignorance and scandal has often made Christians shy or weary to testify to their own tradition. Stanislas Breton, also observes that "in the restlessness that leads to the pilgrimage to the sources of the Orient, … we detect the malaise of a faith which is uncertain and tired, and which no longer has the strength to differentiate." [6] Dialogue, however, requires a give and take in which partners discover themselves through dialogue and then return the gift of their particularity to the other. Pope Francis also emphasizes the importance of realizing and assuming one's particularity in dialogue when he states:

> I dialogue with my identity but I'm going to listen to what the other person has to say, how I can be enriched by the other, who makes me realize my mistakes and see the contribution I can offer.[7]

In this paper, I wish to propose various ways or avenues in which religious particularity may come to light precisely in relation to the religious other: through spiritual nostalgia, holy envy and religious reaffirmation. These are meant to provide a

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[5] Daniel Madigan, "God's Word to the World. Jesus and the Qur'an, Incarnation and Recitation," in *Godhead Here in Hiding. Incarnation and the History of Human Suffering*, ed. Terrence Merrigan and Frederik Glorieux (Leuven: Peeters Press, 2011), 166.

[6] Breton, *Unicité et Monothéisme*, 156.

[7] Pope Francis, "Address to Representatives of Civil Society," Asuncion, Paraguay (July 11, 2015), http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/july/documents/papa-francesco_20150711_paraguay-societa-civile.html.

framework that may be applied to Christianity, but in fact also to any other religion, as it rediscovers its distinctiveness through other religions. I am here thus proposing a relational approach to Christian uniqueness, one that is as much dependent on the particularity of the specific tradition it engages as it is of Christianity itself. This means that, unlike earlier nineteenth and twentieth century attempts to discover an eternal and unchanging essence of Christianity, the identification of certain particularities will likely be variable and depending on the particularity of the concrete other. I will focus mainly on examples from the engagement with Hinduism, with which I am most familiar. But other contexts will likely uncover other particularities.

RELIGIOUS HYBRIDITY AND SPIRITUAL NOSTALGIA

Though a common and ancient custom in many parts of the world, especially in Asia, the phenomenon of religious hybridity or multiple religious belonging has only recently garnered scholarly attention in the West.[8] As individuals are more than ever exposed to various religious options, they increasingly combine elements from various religious traditions to form their personal religious identity. This may lead to a refusal or inability to identify with any particular religion, as is the case with those who call themselves "spiritual but not religious." But it may also lead to a continued identification with more than one religion, usually one's cradle tradition and one other religion. The study of this phenomenon has mainly focused on Christians and Jews who also identify with Buddhism or Hinduism, and the discussion so far has centered mainly on questions of the possibility, rationality, legitimacy and desirability of identifying with more than one religious tradition. [9]

Here, however, I will focus on the question of why religious hybrids still remain attached to their cradle religion, or what particular elements they would not want to lose or abandon in spite of the appeal of the other religion?

The phenomenon of religious hybridity is complex, with many types and degrees of identification with more than one religion. For some, it is a matter of identifying with the cultural context of one's home tradition but with the beliefs and practices of another tradition, for others it is a matter of identifying with the core beliefs of one's home tradition and with the hermeneutical framework of another tradition, and for yet others it is a matter of piecemeal combination of elements of both traditions, with or without much concern for theological or philosophical coherence. Though no single case may thus be seen to be representative or normative, I will offer a few examples of

[8] One of the first theological studies of this phenomenon was my edited volume *Many Mansions? Multiple Religious Belonging and Christian Identity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), republished by Wipf and Stock.

[9] Rose Drew, *Buddhist and Christian? An Exploration of Dual Belonging (*London: Routledge, 2011); Gavin D'Costa and Ross Thompson, *Buddhist-Christian Dual Belonging: Affirmations, Objections, Explorations* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2016); Peniel Jesudason Rajkumar and Joseph Dayam, eds., *Many Yet One? Multiple Religious Belonging* (Ferney: World Council of Churches, 2016); John Barnett, *Christian and Sikh: A Practical Theology of Multiple Religious Participation* (Durham: Sacristi Press, 2021); Daniel Soars and Nadya Pohran, eds., *Hindu-Christian Dual Belonging* (Abington: Routledge, 2022.)

more famous religious hybrids and what they have come to regard as distinctive of Christianity in relation to Hinduism.[10]

One of the earliest individuals to identify himself as a Hindu-Christian was Brahmanbandhab Upadhyaya (1861-1907). Born to a Hindu Brahmin family, he became familiar with Christianity through his education and involvement in the nineteenth century Hindu reform movement whose founders, Rammohan Roy and Keshab Chandra Sen were deeply inspired by Christianity. For Rammohan Roy, who has been called a "Protestant Hindu," it was in particular Jesus' ethics and monotheism that attracted him, and that framed his approach to Hindu reform.[11] And Keshab Chandra Sen was even more deeply shaped by the example and teaching of Jesus Christ as he sought to establish a "Hindu Church of Christ," the *Church of the New Dispensation* which would combine Christian teachings of self-sacrifice and forgiveness with Hindu cultural elements. He famously stated that "nothing short of self-sacrifice, of which Christ has furnished so bright an example, will regenerate India. … And the better to stimulate you to a life of self-denial, I hold up to you the cross on which Jesus died."[12] Unlike these reformers, Upadhyaya himself did convert to Christianity, but without fully renouncing his Hindu identity. Among the things that drew him to Christianity were the comprehensiveness and the universality of the teachings of Jesus. Contrasting this universality with the more ethnic tradition of Hinduism, he stated:

> Jesus Christ claims to have given to mankind the completest possible revelation of the nature and character of God, of the most comprehensive ideal of humanity, of the infinite malice of sin and of the only universal way to release from the bondage of evil (avidya). It is for *all* nations, for *all* ages, for *all* climes.[13]

Other elements that convinced Upadhyaya of the validity and truth of Christianity were the examples of what he calls a "superhuman love" which "moves towards objects not because of their having any attraction of their own but because God loves them." Citing the examples of St. Francis and Father Damien, he asks:

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[10] A more institutionalized or formal version of religious hybridity may be found in so called "interreligious ashrams" or "interreligious centers" where elements from different religions are brought together in a more shared set of beliefs and practices. Here, a community might follow the lead or direction of a particular individual, or else allow for personal choice among various religious offerings or options. Still, such interreligious institutions or settings must also make some selection from the different religious traditions on display. As such, there is some preconception of what any particular religion might contribute to a shared religious practice and experience. While some of those institutions may still have a dominant religious orientation, such as Fireflies ashram near Bangalore, others claim to be fully interreligious, such as the Ajatananda ashram in Rishikesh. Here, one might inquire into what the Christian "ingredient" might be in such interreligious constellation.

[11] M. M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ of the Hindu Renaissance* (London: SCM, 1969), 8 ff.

[12] Quoted in M.M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ of the Hindu Renaissance*, 57.

[13] Julius Lipner and George Gispert-Sauch, eds., *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, Vol II (Bangalore: United Theological College, 2002), 192.

> Where—we ask in wonder and amazement—where in the whole history of the world can you find instances of such heroic, supernatural love outside the fold of the Christian and Catholic Church?[14]

On the other hand, he also believed that Hinduism contained many noble and valuable ideas and practices and that it was possible to remain culturally a Hindu while religiously a Christian. In the end, he thus embraced most Christian teachings and practices while rejecting the Western garb in which Christianity was introduced in India.

The phenomenon of Hindu-Christian dual belonging or religious hybridity has come to often be associated with the figures of Henri Le Saux (Abhishiktananda) (1910-1973), Bede Griffiths (1906-1993), and Raimon Panikkar (1918-2010), who are all recognized as pioneers of the inculturation of Christianity in India and Hindu-Christian dialogue. Each of them was deeply steeped in the Christian tradition as monks and/or priests, but came to be personally transformed through their experience of living in India and immersing themselves in Indian spirituality, particularly in the tradition of Advaita Vedanta. Panikkar's journey in the world of religious hybridity is captured in his winged words: "I 'left' as a christian, I 'found' myself a hindu, and I 'return' a buddhist, without having ceased to be a christian."[15] Much of their reflection and commentary has focused on the possibility of interpreting or re-interpreting Christianity through the non-dual philosophical categories of Advaita Vedanta. Such exercise tends to diminish or even erase religious particularities in light of the undifferentiated understanding of ultimate reality. However, each of them also held on to elements of distinctiveness of Christianity which they believed to be of enduring value and which could also represent a contribution to Hinduism. For Abhishiktananda, the particularity of Christianity lies in its communal aspects and in its emphasis on love as the essence of the divine reality:

> Christianity is the revelation that Being is Love (cf. 1 Cor 13:2, 1 Jn 4:16).16

> The mystery of the Holy trinity reveals that Being is essentially a koinonia of love; it is communion, a reciprocal call to be; it is being-together, being-with, co-esse; its essence is a coming-from and going-to, a giving and receiving.17

> The Church is essentially agape (love) and koinonia (being-with, being-together). She is the sign and sacrament of the divine koinonia

[14] Lipner and Gispert-Sauch, eds., *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, Vol II, 24-26.

[15] Raimon Panikkar, *The Intra-Religious Dialogue* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), 42.

[16] Abhishiktananda, *Saccidananda*: *A Christian Approach to Advaitic Experience* (London: ISPCK, 1994), 136.

[17] Abhishiktananda, *Saccidananda*, p. 135.

> of Being. By her very nature she is communion in love and her function in mankind is to produce a ferment of love.[18]

Bede Griffiths similarly suggested that what distinguishes the Christian understanding is that "[b]eing is not only consciousness, but also love, that there is relationship at the heart of reality."[19] In his book, *The Marriage of East and West*, he also points to the importance of history and to the possibility of social and historical change as important Christian principles that should be preserved and that might complement what Hinduism could bring to the marriage. For Raimon Panikkar, for whom dialogue with another religion always "takes place in the depth of the person" and "in which one struggles with the angel, the daimon, and oneself,"[20] the encounter with Hinduism and Buddhism mainly resulted in a creative reinterpretation of scripture and of classical theological ideas. However, he also recognized and affirmed that what distinguishes Christianity—and what other religions might take from it—is its belief in the alterity of the divine reality and in the radical dependency of humans on divine providence and grace:

> The central Christian concern is a timely reminder to Buddhism and to all the humanisms that no amount of self-effort and goodwill suffices to handle the human predicament adequately; we must remain constantly open to unexpected and unforeseeable eruptions of Reality itself, which Christians may want to call God or divine Providence. Christianity stands for the unselfish and authentic defense of the primordial rights of Reality, of which we are not the masters.[21]

In a similar vein, Le Saux comments that "in the Christian's acceptance of his limitations and his involvement in time there is a depth of love and surrender which is beyond the understanding of the Stoic or the Vedantin."[22]

It is clear that the experiences of Hindu-Christian religious hybridity do not end up identifying a single or common set of elements as distinctive of Christianity. Though the theme of love seems to be a constant, the themes of providence, history, universality, sacrifice also appear, depending on what particular Hindu beliefs or practices are foregrounded and how the contrast is drawn. What is evident is that through the deep identification with another religious tradition, certain elements suddenly stand out, and acquire a new importance, first of all for oneself and one's own religious life, but also possibly beyond that, as religious hybrids may be regarded as the microcosmic personification of dialogue on a broader scale.

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[18] Abhishiktananda, *Saccidananda*, p. 137.

[19] Bede Griffiths, *The Marriage of East and West* (Spingfield, IL: Templegate Publishing, 1982), 35.

[20] Raimon Panikkar, *The Intra-Religious Dialogue*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1999) xvii.

[21] Panikkar, *The Intra-Religious Dialogue* , 131.

[22] Abhishiktananda, *Saccidananda*, 145.

HOLY ENVY OR SPIRITUAL REGRET OF RELIGIOUS OTHERS

Another way to discover and embrace one's religious particularity is through the eyes of the other. In the encounter between religions, members of other religious traditions often come to notice distinctive elements that believers themselves take for granted, or that are so familiar and part of an integrated system that one is oblivious to their particularity. To be sure, there will be many elements of particularity that will leave the religious other indifferent, amused or even contemptuous. But there may also be elements that become the source of genuine admiration. This may then evoke what Krister Stendahl has called "holy envy" [23] or Willis Yaeger "spiritual regret." It refers to teachings or practices in another religious tradition one wish were part of one's own tradition.

While the institution of the Church and Western Christianity were often the object of critique and even disdain on the part of Hindu reformers, most of them were deeply moved and inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus, who was regarded as the greatest ethical model and teacher in the history of religions. Though refusing to convert to a religion that was associated with Western imperialism, Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-1884) had a particular appreciation for Jesus' teachings of forgiveness and self-sacrifice, which were "so utterly opposed to the wisdom of the world, and so far exalted above its highest conceptions of rectitude."

The most famous Hindu to engage Christianity in depth is undoubtedly Mahatma (Mohandas) Gandhi. His experience of Christianity was filled with ambiguity. In his youth, he had an aversion for meat-eating and alcohol-drinking Christians.[24] But after arriving in England, Gandhi's perception of Christianity changed through his friendships with Christians and through reading the Bible. He states that the Sermon on the Mount "went straight to my heart," in particular the words "but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man take away thy coat let him have thy cloke [sic] too."[25] The cross became for Gandhi a symbol of nonviolence and voluntary suffering, as reflected in the following statement:

> Though I cannot claim to be a Christian in the sectarian sense, the example of Jesus' suffering is a factor in the composition of my underlying faith in non-violence, which rules all my actions, worldly

[23] He introduced this expression at the occasion of the inauguration of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints. In response to the opposition to this, he proposed his three principles of interfaith understanding, one of which is that one should always be willing to recognize elements in the other religion that one admires and that one wish could be incorporated in one's own religious tradition. The two other elements are "not to compare the best in one's own religion with the worst in the other" and "to seek understanding of the other religion by asking its adherents and not its enemies." For a further use of the term, see Barbara Brown Taylor, *Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others* (New York: Harper, 2019).

[24] Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Stories of My Experiments with Truth* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), 33-34.

[25] Gandhi, *Autobiography*, 68.

> and temporal. Jesus lived and died in vain if he did not teach us to regulate the whole of life by the eternal law of love.[26]

The centrality of self-sacrificing love was thus for Gandhi the distinctive element in the experience and teaching of Jesus. Though he did not accept the Christian belief in the meaning of the cross as atonement,[27] it did represent for him an example to follow. In addition to the "eternal law of love," Gandhi also singled out the radical forgiveness taught and exemplified by Jesus as a particular element of appeal:

> Jesus Christ prayed to God from the Cross to forgive those who had crucified him. It is my constant prayer to God that He may give me the strength to intercede even for my assassin. And it should be your prayer too that your faithful servant may be given the strength to forgive.[28]

While Gandhi thus admired these elements in the life and teaching of Jesus, he saw no reason to convert to Christianity. He believed that each religion contained within itself resources for attaining the highest end of salvation or liberation, and that the policies of conversion had more to do with institutional power than with spiritual development.

A general aversion to conversion combined with the development of a more nationalist and defensive orientation in Hinduism seems to have muted the inclination of Hindu thinkers to engage Christianity in positive and constructive ways, or to pay attention to the particularity of Christianity. A notable exception to this is the Hindu scholar Anatanand Rambachan, who is one of the foremost contemporary thinkers within the tradition of non-duality, *Advaita Vedanta.* In his early encounter with Christianity, it was in particular the Christian emphasis on justice that caught his attention.

Like Gandhi, he was also drawn by the Cross as a source of inspiration. While Hinduism has many divine manifestations, he acknowledges that none project the image of the divine "executed in pain and humiliation." The image of Jesus on the Cross is for him not only an example of non-violence (*ahimsa*), but of the depth of God's love that has no limits. The fact that this love expresses itself in a preferential option for the poor became for him the inspiration for developing his own Hindu theology of liberation, an example of Hindu-Christian comparative theology done from a Hindu perspective. Inspired by Mt 25:31-46, which he states is his "favorite Christian text," and by Catholic social teaching, he has attempted to find resources in the Hindu tradition that would affirm the dignity of every human being and that would combat problems of patriarchy, homophobia, casteism, anthropocentrism, and childism. [29]

It is clear that non-Christian perceptions of what is distinctive and admirable about Christianity are shaped by one's own particular location and familiarity with

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[26] From a conversation on the train to Bardoli, 1939, quoted in Gandhi, "The Jews and Zionism."

[27] Gandhi, *Autobiography*, 124.

[28] M.K. Gandhi, "Advice to Muslims," October 26, 1947. Quoted in William Emielsen, ed., *Gandhi's Bible* (London: ISPCK, 2009), 123.

[29] Anatanand Rambachan, *A Hindu Theology of Liberation* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2015).

Christianity. What seems to stand out from a Hindu perspective, is the emphasis on self-sacrificing love, forgiveness, and the care for the marginalized and the poor.

REAFFIRMATION IN CONTEXTUAL AND COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY

While seeing oneself through the eyes of the other may bring home certain elements of religious particularity, deep immersion in the religious life and experience of the other may also raise awareness of distinctive elements of one's own religion. This may occur through the missionary practice of inculturation, through interreligious dialogue, or through comparative theological engagement with another religion. Though inculturation is often seen as the rebirth of Christian faith in and from local cultures, it also involves active and constructive engagement with the religion or religions that have traditionally shaped that culture. Comparative theology on the other hand, involves deep theological engagement with the teachings and practices of another religion. In both cases, such engagement brings to light not only what one may learn from the other religion, but also what may be distinctive or unique about one's own religion, what one might be able to contribute to the other culture and tradition, or what one may feel called to reaffirm as a particularly valuable element in one's own faith and practice.[30] With regard to the discernment of the particularity of Christ and of Christianity, Indian Christian theologians have also made important contributions. The Indian Jesuit Michael Amaladoss makes the point that:

> The Word's incarnate manifestation in Jesus has a special role in the historical process. But it cannot be declared *a priori*, but discovered in and through other manifestations of the Word. This gives an important role to the Asian Churches because all of the world's religions have their origin in Asia. We have therefore a privileged task that we cannot renounce, because God has called us to it.[31]

An Indian Christian theologian who has embraced this task is the often overlooked Jesuit George Soares-Prabhu (1929-1995). Though primarily a biblical scholar, he also immersed himself deeply in the study of Indian traditions, and he sought to develop a Hindu hermeneutics of Christian scriptures.

He distances himself from the way in which the uniqueness of Jesus and of Christianity had been discussed in Western academic theology:

> The problem of the uniqueness of Christ as discussed in theology today seems to me an academic problem with little significance (for no one doubts that salvation exists outside the Christian community, and whether or not it is through "Christ" operating in some

[30] In my *Meaning and Method in Comparative Theology* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell), 137-142, I discuss at greater length "reaffirmation" as one of the types of learning in comparative theology.

[31] Michael Amaladoss, *Asian Theology for the Future* (Seoul: CAPS, 2012), 30-31.

> mysterious way, does not really seem to matter), and of much presumption (for it presumes to know the mind of God).[32]

Soares-Prabhu rejects any attempts to establish the superiority of one religion over the other as "neither practical nor wise" and celebrates the diversity of "forms of religiosity as abundantly as the flowers in a forest."[33] However, in most of his writings, he does reflect on the distinctiveness of Christianity, especially in relation to Hinduism and Buddhism. In this, he focuses mainly on the experience and on the teachings of Jesus. He argues that Jesus' experience of God as unconditional love was "absolutely unique,"[34] pointing in particular to the parent-child relationship, on the elements of intimacy, dependency, vulnerability, and mutual love and trust as characteristic of the Christian experience of God. He is quick to admit that this does not mean that Christianity has a rich set of teachings on prayer, and that compared with Hinduism or Buddhism "prayer techniques are poorly developed in Christianity."[35] However, he states that "what Jesus gives us is a new attitude in prayer, emerging out of a new experience of God."[36] Prayer is "an interpersonal 'conversation' with God, in which love is experienced and given, and relations of intimacy founded."[37]

Even more important with regard to Christian particularity is for him Jesus' insistence on the inseparability of love of God and love of neighbor:

> It is just this intimate pairing of the love of God and the love of neighbor that constituted the specificity and the uniqueness of the teaching of Jesus. Interhuman concern is obviously an element in all religious traditions. The liberated Buddha sends his disciples out on a mission 'for the profit of many, out of compassion for the world, for the bliss of many, for the welfare, the profit, the bliss of Gods and humankind. (Mahavagga I 10:31) … But the interhuman concern here is always a secondary attitude which follows from a prior religious experience (liberation) or a primary commitment to God (the Covenant). It is only with Jesus that the ethical attitude becomes, as it were, an integral part of the religious experience itself, for to experience God as 'Father" is to experience the neighbor as

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[32] George Soares-Prabhu, *The Dharma of Jesus*, ed. Francis D'Sa (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), 96.

[33] Soares-Prabhu, *The Dharma of Jesus*, 96.

[34] Soares-Prabhu, *The Dharma of Jesus*, 88.

[35] Soares-Prabhu, *The Dharma of Jesus*, 210. He adds that "Even the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola, one of the more technical treatises on prayer in the Christian tradition, would appear curiously unfinished to an Indian reader, accustomed to the meticulous instructions on diet, posture, breathing, and methods of concentration that are detailed in Indian texts on meditation" (p. 218). Abhishiktananda similarly states that "In the Gospel Jesus gave no teaching to his disciples either about methods of meditation, dhyana, or about systems of yoga. He simply commanded them to love one another." In Abhishiktananda, *Saccidananada*, 200.

[36] Soares-Prabhu, *The Dharma of Jesus*, 210.

[37] Soares-Prabhu, *The Dharma of Jesus*, 210,

> 'brother.' The horizontal is thus inseparably welded into the vertical, and love of neighbor is brought onto a level with love of God.[38]

Soares-Prabhu believes that this represents or should represent the distinctive Christian way of being in the world. "Like the Buddhist attitude of 'mindfulness,' the Christian attitude of agape is thus an existential attitude derived from a change in one's being."[39] This love is to focus in particular on the poor, the vulnerable and the marginalized, [40] and is to include one's enemies, as reflected in Jesus' table fellowship with sinners and outcastes.[41] Soares-Prabhu states that the command of loving one's enemies "is not a uniquely Christian demand, as is sometimes suggested."[42] But for him, "there is something particularly impressive in Jesus' command that we love our enemies" insofar as it calls for "not just the resolution of personal antagonisms within the group, but for the acceptance of members of alien and hostile groups as well."[43]

This high moral bar relates to another element of Christian particularity, its understanding of sin. Soares-Prabhu states that "Jesus has so radicalized the norms of right conduct (love) that all claims to sinlessness are effectively foreclosed."[44] This also connects with the distinctive Christian teaching of forgiveness. In summary, he comments that:

> The Indian reader would at once identify active concern and forgiveness as the two poles, positive and negative, of the Dharma of Jesus—of that complex blend of worldview and values, of beliefs and prescriptions which 'hold together' the followers of Jesus and integrates them into a recognizable community. For if these are not exclusively Christian attitudes, the importance given to them in the

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[38] Soares-Prabhu, *The Dharma of Jesus*, 198.

[39] Soares-Prabhu, *The Dharma of Jesus*, 92. He elsewhere puts this in more contrasting terms when he states "For Jesus, the ultimate goal is not unconditional freedom (as in Hinduism and Buddhism) but unconditional love" (170).

[40] Soares-Prabhu is thus particularly distressed about the fact that caste discrimination continues to exist in Christian communities in India and states that "the fact that Christian *Dalits* do exist (and suffer) among us is a sign of how little Christian we are, and of how much we stand in a state of serious and, one suspects, unrepentant sin. Soares-Prabhu, *The Dharma of Jesus*, 130.

[41] Soares-Prabhu, *The Dharma of Jesus*, 117. Soares-Prabhu also refers to the Jewish scholar Geza Vermez who mentions this as distinctive of Jesus' life.

[42] Soares-Prabhu, *The Dharma of Jesus*, 198. He states that "it probably features in some form or other in all religions and is certainly strikingly conspicuous in Buddhism. . . Indeed the "love command" for Buddhism (and Hinduism) is in a sense more comprehensive than that of the Christians, for it reaches out to all sentient beings and not to humankind alone. Christianity with its curious insensitivity to non-human life—its tolerance of bull-fighting and blood sports, of the ruthless hunting down of animals for fun, and the reckless extermination of while species of living things for 'profit,' has a lot to learn from the Hindu-Buddhist tradition of reverence for life."

[43] Soares-Prabhu, *The Dharma of Jesus*, 199.

[44] Soares-Prabhu, *The Dharma of Jesus*,. 225.

> teaching of Jesus and the concrete forms they assume in the New Testament give them a specifically Christian significance.[45]

In lifting up what may be unique to Christianity, Soares-Prabhu does not deny that there is much to learn from other traditions, even on how to live out the particularity of Christianity. For example, the attitude of forgiveness requires "the cultivation of a non-judgmental attitude toward self and others" which has been developed in particular in Buddhism, and from which Christians might learn.[46]

In the end, for Soares-Prabhu, the uniqueness or distinctiveness of Christianity is not to be argued in theoretical or doctrinal terms, but is to be shown through a particular way of being in the world, as he states that "[t]he true 'uniqueness' of Christ is the uniqueness of the way of solidarity and struggle (a way that is neither male nor female) that Jesus showed as the way to life. That uniqueness cannot be argued but must be lived."[47]

CONCLUSION

The theological question of the particularity or uniqueness of any tradition may be addressed or answered in various ways. It may be approached on the basis of the internal theological claims of a tradition, or it may be approached more phenomenologically and inductively, through engagement and dialogue with other religions. Here, we have explored how the particularity of Christianity may reveal itself through various forms of dialogue or engagement with Hinduism: through the experience and insights of individuals who are drawn to another religion but remain inspired by certain aspects of their home tradition, through the admiring gaze of other religions, and through the renewed self-awareness of individuals who are immersed in other cultures and religious traditions. Each of these approaches may of course be applied to reflection on the particularity of any religious tradition. The particularity discovered through this approach is always in relation to and thus also dependent on a concrete other, and is thus not to be regarded as timeless and universal, or as the essence of a particular religion. The elements of particularity that surface in relation to Hinduism, or to particular strands of Hinduism, are thus likely to differ from those that surface in relation to other strands, and to other traditions.

Religious particularity is both the fruit of dialogue and as a contribution to dialogue.

A new understanding of Christian particularity through the engagement with Hinduism has surfaced a number of themes: the emphasis on the ultimate reality as love, the inseparability of love of God and love of neighbor, in particular the poor and the marginalized, the call to self-sacrifice, the idea of sin, but especially of forgiveness,

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[45] Soares-Prabhu, *The Dharma of Jesus*, 220.

[46] "The way to self-forgiveness that would empower us to forgive others is the cultivation of a non-judgmental attitude toward ourselves and others. . . This will be particularly appreciated by the Indian reader, because in his tradition too non-judgmental awareness is the beginning (and the end) of wisdom and the heart of all forgiveness." Soares-Prabhu, *The Dharma of Jesus*, 224-225.

[47] Soares-Prabhu, *The Dharma of Jesus*, 97.

the notion of dependency on divine providence and grace. Any of these themes may be more or less emphasized, depending on the individual and the partner in dialogue. But they shed light on what Christians may bring to the dialogue with Hinduism, not as an exclusive claim, but as a particular contribution to the common good. Through repossessing and more consciously cultivating their own particularity, Christians may then return the gift of their distinctiveness to the other.

In his celebrated book, *The Dignity of Difference*, Jonathan Sachs calls on religions to respect the particularity of religions, and allow each its own integrity and autonomy.[48] This is an important message insofar as religious difference and particularity has often tended to be regarded as a threat to other religions and subject to erasure, especially by dominant and numerically powerful religions. The idea of respecting and affirming religious difference thus represents an important appeal. But the particularity or distinctiveness of religions may also represent an occasion for religions to learn from one another and to grow. Though it is certainly up to each tradition to determine what it might learn from other religions, the difference or distinctiveness of each religion may be regarded as not only a cherished possession but also as a possible gift or contribution.

This attention to the particularity of Christianity may be controversial. It may be regarded as an attempt to rescue or reinstate the superiority of Christianity, or even to prove it through concrete evidence, as only the more noble or enviable aspects of Christian particularity are foregrounded. However, the idea of relational particularity has various safeguards against traditional claims to superiority and exceptionalism. First, the relational understanding of particularity precludes any blanket or generalizing claims to superiority. While one may take some pride in the fact that certain elements of one's own tradition are regarded as admirable or valuable in relation to a particular other, they may not stand out in the same way in relation to other others. Secondly, but related to the previous point, the notion of particularity does not imply its exclusivity. While certain beliefs or practices may come into particularly sharp focus in relation to another tradition, they may not be absent or unimportant in that tradition. As religions develop through history, certain elements may come to be more explicitly emphasized or developed at the expense of others. Dialogue may then lead to a recovery or a reinvigoration of those elements in the other tradition. Thirdly, the particularity of one's own tradition naturally suggests the particularity of the religious other, and the fact that the other may also have much to offer to the dialogue and to one's own tradition. The very notion of particularity may indeed suggest some limitation, or emphasis on certain elements at the expense of other important teachings or values. The idea of relational particularity thus acknowledges a complementarity of religions, at the very least as historical realities and in the public square. In approaching Christian uniqueness or particularity not as a theological and religious given, but as a reality discovered in and through the dialogue with other religions, Christians may both attain greater humility while simultaneously assuming greater self-awareness and efficacy in the dialogue itself.

This relational, inductive and dialogical approach to the particularity of Christianity is not meant to supplant or replace the traditional theological discourse on

[48] Jonathan Sachs, *The Dignity of Difference. How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations*. London: Bloomsbury, 2003.

Christian uniqueness. The discourses of theological uniqueness and relational particularity, though not unconnected (insofar as the elements of particularity are based on the example and teachings of Jesus, who is believed to be the unique savior) operate on different registers. Each of the approaches has its importance and limitations. The belief in the unique and universal salvific role of Jesus Christ and of the Church remains a core matter of faith for all Christians, while it has relatively little importance for the religious other or for concrete interreligious life and collaboration (except insofar as certain theologies may inhibit collaboration and dialogue). And while the idea of the relational particularity of Christianity is relevant for other religions, it has less bearing on questions of ultimate truth and salvation. The results of the relational approach to Christian particularity do not imply its exclusivity. A believer may of course use the data from the relational approach to the distinctiveness of Christianity in apologetic terms to bolster or confirm their faith position. But this again offers little by way of actual contribution to the dialogue with other religions.

What matters for religious others, and for the common good, involves those elements of particularity or singularity that exercise a more universal religious and ethical appeal. Interreligious dialogue serves not only to become aware of what these particular religious elements are, but also to repossess them in a way that they become more effective in serving the religious other and the common good. Since religious faith and practice encompasses a complex whole of teachings which cannot all be assumed or embodied with the same intensity or passion, dialogue with the other may allow us to pay particular attention to, cultivate and embody those teachings and practices which make a genuine difference.

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A RESPONSE TO CATHERINE CORNILLE'S "'WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?' RETHINKING THE PARTICULARITY OF CHRISTINAITY THROUGH THE RELIGIOUS OTHER"

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RETHINKING CHRISTIAN UNIQUENESS FROM EXPERIENCE

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With the clarity and insight characteristic of her writing, Catherine Cornille seeks to breathe new life into the question of the uniqueness or particularity of Christianity by suggesting three ways in which engagement with the *religious other* can help rethink Christian uniqueness or the uniqueness of any other religious tradition for that matter. These three paths are: (1) experiences of nostalgia of religious hybrids; (2) holy envy or spiritual regret of religious others; and (3) reaffirmation of one's particularity through deep engagement with religious others of contextual and comparative theologians. In my brief response, I would like to reflect on these paths from where I stand, a stance defined both by the experiences that have shaped my worldview and the academic endeavors born from those experiences.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTE ON CHRISTIAN UNIQUENESS

Prior to joining the Jesuits (2002), I was majoring in math in my native Cameroon and, after joining them, I aspired to be a math teacher at a Jesuit high school. However, an event in my family would change those plans. An older cousin of mine, whom I love and admire greatly, received the sacrament of confirmation just before the beginning of my novitiate training. When I returned two years later, he was a devout Muslim. He had converted to Islam out of love for the one who is now his wife. I was taken aback: "Can one go from one religious tradition to the other the same way you would change shirts at the end of the day? What had gone wrong in my cousin's RCIA class for him to be so shallow in his Christian commitment?" These are some of the questions I battled with. My young and zealous self was worried about my cousin's salvation. I decided to learn more about Islam with the sole purpose of convincing my cousin that he needed to return to the "right path," the Catholic faith. This desire was

fueled by my perception of the superiority of Christianity. I started reading about Islam. I haven't stopped ever since.

The more I read, the less I was inclined to have the conversation I had planned on having with my cousin. That conversation has not taken place to this day, at least not in the terms I had initially envisaged. Not because I am establishing some cheap equivalence between Islam and Christianity. I am still aware of what Christianity has to offer but I no longer feel the need to negate another tradition to establish the uniqueness of the gift of Christianity. Instead, I perceive and embrace ways in which my understanding of Christianity and my Christian practice stand to benefit from constructive engagement with Muslims.

When the boundaries between faith traditions are not just out there but cut across your family, the terms in which you speak about the uniqueness of your faith tradition are bound to change. In this regard, theological reflection on Christian uniqueness would benefit greatly if it were accompanied by an openness to the gift of friendship that allows the religious other to somehow become a sibling, a fellow human being before anything else. When our social circle includes the religious other, that will inevitably be reflected in the language of our theology. A spirituality of friendship should consequently be part of our efforts to think Catholic Interreligiously.

A View on Hybridity from the "Sons of the Chameleon"

Fast forward three years, as a young Jesuit regent, I served in the Southeast of Senegal in a region mainly populated by the Bassari, one of the many ethno-linguistic communities populating Senegal. The first year of my regency, I noticed that our parish was completely deserted one weekend in April. From the usual hundreds of parishioners we had at Mass every weekend, we were barely fifty for Mass that weekend. Even the catechists and translators, our most dedicated parishioners, were absent. I later found out that it was the weekend marking the end of that year's initiation rituals during which young boys are ushered into adulthood. Our parishioners had consequently traveled to Salemata, a town at the border with Guinea Conakry, to be present for what was the annual high point of cultural and religious festivities for the Bassari people.

The following year, around the same period, when the parish was emptying itself, I took my motorbike and decided to follow our parishioners to Salemata. I spent the weekend with them at the camp site next to the sacred forest where the initiation took place. The camp site was used as a staging area for the families of the boys undergoing initiation. That's where the festivities related to the initiation took place. Each family had a hut where it could entertain its guests. The initiation rituals proper took place in the sacred forest a few kilometers away from the camp site. The pastor of the parish of Salemata, a Bassari himself, moved the weekend Mass to the camp site telling me that no one would show up if he held it at the parish church in town. Even at the camp site, only a dozen or so showed up for Mass. In my conversations with some of those present, I tried to learn from them how they viewed Christianity in relation to their cultural and religious roots. It came out that embracing Christianity helped them adjust and adapt to the complex life of the city. However, when it comes to what defines them deeply, their indigenous tradition remains their guiding light.

The Bassari have the chameleon as their totem and are known as "sons of the chameleon." It is well known that some species of chameleon can change their skin color for social signaling among chameleons, but equally as a camouflage as part of their survival and defense mechanism. The Bassari with whom I talked viewed Christianity as helping them adapt to a complex world, the world of the cities.[1] Some said: "We do not know where your Jesus is taking us but this [meaning their tradition] tells us who we are and where we are coming from."

One could be tempted to view the symbol of the chameleon and the adoption of Christianity as a survival mechanism as indicative of a lack of real conversion to Christianity. But the Bassari view it differently. They perceive their indigenous tradition and Christianity as fulfilling two different roles. In their assessment, there are questions for which Christianity can provide adequate answers but there are other questions where the efficacious solutions can only come from their indigenous traditions. The uniqueness of Christianity resides not in what it says or stands for but in what it can do, the role it fulfills for them in the real world. How does it help them cope with the challenges of life in a complex and often inhospitable world? In this light, Christian uniqueness can be thought of in terms of the function or role Christianity fulfills in the world. For instance, what is unique about Christianity's contribution to issues of social justice?

SEEING ONESELF THROUGH THE OTHER'S EYES

I carry out research on Muslim and Catholic pilgrimage practices in Senegal. On the Muslim side, I study the Grand Magal of Touba, a religious celebration of the Mourides, a Sufi *tariqa* or path, founded in the nineteenth century by Sheikh Ahmadu Bamba. The Grand Magal falls within the category of pilgrimage known as *Ziyara* or "pious visitation". In its most widespread form, *Ziyara* consists in visits to the tomb of a saintly figure, seeking a share in the *baraka*, the blessing or divine favor believed to be an enduring deposit of these figures, perpetuated in their biological and spiritual lineage. *Ziyara* does not replace the *hajj*, the canonical pilgrimage to Mecca, or the *umrah*, the lesser pilgrimage. However, it is a foremost symbol of the regional and cultural expressions of Islam, especially in the non-Arab world. The Catholic pilgrimage I study is associated with a Marian shrine dedicated to *Notre-Dame de la Delivrande* in a village called Poponguine. Devotion to *Notre Dame de la Delivrande*, a Black Madonna, originates from Normandy in Northwestern France. It was brought to Senegal by Spiritan missionaries desirous to supplant the cult of Koumba Thioupam, a jinn venerated by the Serere of the coastal region of Senegal, the same way devotion to her had been used to supplant the cult of the goddess Demeter in Normandy. Both pilgrimages started in the nineteenth century at the peak of the French colonial presence in West Africa.

My study of these pilgrimages includes auto-ethnography. My experience visiting these shrines back and forth is, indeed an important part of my theological reflection on their meaning. When visiting the Muslim shrine, my Catholic identity is both a source of opportunities underscoring the common ground on which we stood and challenges that highlighted our differences. Regarding opportunities, as a person with

[1] N.B.: Not all Bassari Christians will agree with this interpretation.

a faith commitment, I communicated with my Muslim hosts within shared plausibility structures. This is particularly useful when assessing hagiographical accounts about Sheikh Ahmadou Bamba. Stories about him spreading his prayer mat on the ocean to perform his *salat*, surviving being thrown into a cage of hungry lions, etc. These stories might not stand the test of historical criticism. However, they are important as constitutive narratives for the community. They enhance the status of Bamba as a *Wali* or friend of Allah in the eyes of his disciples. Factual or not, they are important for the Mourides' sense of identity. My ability to listen to these stories is helped by the fact that I belong to a faith community in which some of the narratives that structure the life of the community and foster identity-building may, similarly, not necessarily pass the test of historical criticism.

However, being a Catholic while visiting a Muslim shrine presents some challenges. This is particularly evident in ritual participation. There are limits to what I can do ritually. The limits of my participation ultimately depend on the one hand, on the extent of the ritual hospitality extended to me by my hosts, and, on the other hand, my level of spiritual and theological comfort within the boundaries defined by my hosts. This experience of discomfort is revelatory of what I hold as uniquely dear to me, the point beyond which I cannot go without ceasing to be me. That discomfort is only made possible by the encounter with the other.

A Final Note

In Senegal, the encounter between Christianity and Islam takes place within a cultural crucible defined by African traditional religion. Within this context, *teranga* or hospitality is very important. It is the cultural glue of the Senegalese social contract. In this regard, asked about the religious make up of his country, Leopold Sedar Senghor, the first president of independent Senegal famously said that Senegalese are 90% Muslims, 10% Christians and 100% adepts of African indigenous traditions. In this context, beyond doctrinal differences, the uniqueness of each religious tradition is expressed in what they have come to expect of each other over time. This is as simple as Senegalese Muslims' expectation on Good Friday that their Christian friends would offer them *ngalax*, a porridge made from millet. In like manner, during the celebration of *eid al adha* (the feast of sacrifice), Christians expect their Muslim neighbors to offer them some meat. These expectations are not connected to things that are essential to either Muslims' or Christians' self-understanding. However, in the social context of Senegal, they have become expressions of what they are uniquely placed to offer each other to foster *teranga*.

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COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY: PRESENT EXPERIENCE, REMEMBERED PASTS, IMAGINED FUTURES

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INTRODUCTION (REID B. LOCKLIN)

In the summer of 1991, thirty years before this annual meeting of the CTSA was originally scheduled, the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* brought out an article entitled, "The Study of Non-Christian Religions in the Post-Vatican II Roman Catholic Church."[1] Drawing on conversations that took place at the CTSA the previous year, this essay drew attention to a "generation gap" among theologians doing interreligious work, between "those whose theological education was essentially complete before Vatican II" and "the newer, 'post-Vatican II' theologians who were educated after the Council."[2] The consequences of this generational change, according to this interpreter, were profound for imagining how a scholar could or should approach the task of thinking Catholic interreligiously, as our conference theme would have it.

The primary differences between the two generations followed from their different starting points. The older generation received its theological formation prior to the council, and its members began from a shared assumption that the data of other religious paths could be located within "a coherent Catholic worldview" and an "already articulated Catholic language."[3] Scholars of the new generation, by contrast,

[1] Francis X. Clooney, "The Study of Non-Christian Religions in the Post-Vatican II Roman Catholic Church," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 28, no. 3 (Summer 1991): 482-94.

[2] Clooney, "The Study of Non-Christian Religions in the Post-Vatican II Roman Catholic Church," 483-84.

[3] Clooney, "The Study of Non-Christian Religions in the Post-Vatican II Roman Catholic Church," 484.

received their theological formation in the revolutionary atmosphere of the 1960s and 1970s, took the openness of the church to religious and cultural diversity for granted, and in many cases studied other traditions earlier in their formation and according to the professional methods of the secular academy.[4] The result? A cohort of "Post-Vatican II comparativists" who dwelt "among multiple Catholic vernaculars" and lacked "a single Catholic language" to ground their interreligious work.[5] This new generation tended to produce theologies "rich in examples, modest in systematizations" and less prescriptive about boundaries between Christian self and non-Christian other.[6]

The author of this article, as many might have guessed, was Francis Clooney, and he identified himself firmly among this younger generation of interreligious theologians. In the essay, he makes an early case for what would become known as the "new comparative theology," as an alternative and strident critique of "the theology of religions" in all of its variants. Clooney writes that

> It may be desirable for a time to reverse our priorities, to give a higher priority in our theological writing and educating to the practice of comparative theological experiments and the accumulation of the wisdom of such experiments, and a secondary, less prominent place to the construction of theories about religions and their relationships.[7]

It is important for our purposes, however, that Clooney makes this proposal and describes this transformation precisely in terms of generational change. The new comparative theology is not simply a logical development from earlier modes of interreligious engagement; it is the fruit of a new generation of theologians, shaped by their distinctive locations in place and time.

Of course, time does not stand still, and the cycle of generational change continues to turn. Clooney published his essay in the summer of 1991, as a Baby Boomer and early career faculty member at Boston College. That same summer, fresh from my undergraduate studies, I was in the process of relocating from Georgia to South Dakota and from my dorm apartment to a trailer home we called "the Big Pink." Mara Brecht was wrapping things up at Mrs. Fiorina's third grade class at Sacred Heart Elementary and starting a new chapter of her life in an in-house soccer league. And Stephanie Wong, for her part, was working on basic language development, with recent milestones like "more rice" and "go to park."

The task we set for ourselves in this essay—as a collaborative effort of Gen X and Millennial theologians—is to think together about the question of generational change in comparative and interreligious theology in the Catholic Church. Beyond simply speaking from our own distinctive histories, as Clooney did in his 1991 article, we hope

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[4] Clooney, "The Study of Non-Christian Religions in the Post-Vatican II Roman Catholic Church," 485-87.

[5] Clooney, "The Study of Non-Christian Religions in the Post-Vatican II Roman Catholic Church," 487.

[6] Clooney, "The Study of Non-Christian Religions in the Post-Vatican II Roman Catholic Church," 488.

[7] Clooney, "The Study of Non-Christian Religions in the Post-Vatican II Roman Catholic Church," 489.

also to explore a generational perspective on comparative theology *itself* as a scholarly discipline. That is, we attempt to reconsider comparative theology as an ongoing, multi-generational project informed by a remembered past, inspired and chastened by imagined futures, and enacted according to the distinctive social, institutional and historical exigencies of the present moment.

As a practical matter, the three of us prepared this piece together, as a single script, rather than presenting in series and only then entering into dialogue. We wanted, as much as possible, to build responses to one another into our individual sections. And we also decided to specialize, with each of us taking on one of the broadly generational perspectives of past, present and future. So, with apologies to Charles Dickens, I assume the role of the "Ghost of Comparative Theology Past," reflecting on how we remember prior generations of comparativists and the history of the discipline. As the "Ghost of Comparative Theology Future," Stephanie looks unflinchingly and hopefully to future generations of interreligious scholars. Before we offer these reflections, however, it seemed prudent to ask Mara, the "Ghost of Comparative Theology Present," to ground our thoughts about past and future firmly in the here and now.

PRESENT EXPERIENCE (MARA BRECHT)

April 12, 2020. Easter Sunday. Where were you? Were you in your living room watching a live streamed service? Saying Mass to an iPhone streaming video from an otherwise nearly-empty church? Answering FaceTime calls with *Alleluia He Is Risen*? At the highpoint of the liturgical year, Catholic religious practice looked a lot like the practices of millions of worshippers around the world: it took place through a screen.[8]

I was with my very large lockdown pod, which included my parents, sister, brother-in-law, and their five daughters, my husband and our children: three households and three generations. We were gathered in my sister's living room. My nieces had laid the makeshift altar. They'd then arranged themselves into a quintet—piano, violin, ukulele, clarinet, and guitar—to accompany my brother-in-law as cantor. My husband proclaimed the Easter Gospel. My mother gave the homily. My sister scattered holy water with a branch clipped from a forsythia bush in her yard. We shared cinnamon rolls and orange juice as a symbol of Eucharist.

We also had laptops around the room whose cameras steamed our liturgy to cousins, aunts and uncles, my brothers and nephews. Grandparents who we typically never see on Easter joined us that Sunday from hundreds of miles away. It was not the Easter Mass we were used to, but in my estimation it was among the richest liturgies I've ever experienced.

[8] Take, for examples, the following surveys of global Muslim and Buddhist practice during the earliest stage of the pandemic: Awra Ibrahim, "Praying a Time of COVID," *Al Jazeera,* April 6, 2020, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/4/6/praying-in-time-of-covid-19-how-worlds-largest-mosques-adapted; Alex Thurston, "Islamic Responses to COVID-19," *Project on Middle East Political Science Studies,* The COVID-19 Pandemic in the Middle East and North Africa 89, 15-18; Benjamin Schonthal and Tilak Jayatilake, "Religion Amid the Pandemic: A Buddhist Case Study" in *Covid-19 in Asia*, edited by Victor V. Ramraj (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

The pandemic hit many people around the world in different ways. In North America, 2020 was a year when digital reality became more firmly embedded in our "real" lives—when we held our faculty meetings, taught our classes, helped our children go to school, sang happy birthday, and wished anniversary cheers on Zoom. For some, a final goodbye to a dying loved one was mediated by a screen. We celebrated and grieved on FaceTime. Easter of that year represents a significant shift in how we practiced our faith—an unprecedented moment for celebrating liturgy digitally and practicing religion online.

Reid began this plenary with Frank Clooney's 1991 essay, in which Frank points to Vatican II as catalyzing a change in how Catholic theologians approached other, non-Christian religions. But Vatican II constituted other shifts as well, including the very conceptualizations of "church" and "theology." In the post-Conciliar period, the church became a community open to the world beyond, and theology became a discourse that attends to the "signs of the times."

As far as such signs go, Easter 2020 is—in my view—an interstate-highway-sized "sign of the times." It represents new confluences among digital reality, spiritual practice, and shifting patterns of religious belonging. These confluences were not caused by the pandemic, but they were accelerated by it, and they are now firmly a part of our lives.

A digitally-blended reality is, I contend, also a religiously blended one. There are bodies of research to support my claim, but I'll leave my evidence in the footnote and instead make my case anecdotally.[9] Friends of mine told me about an experience they had while watching their church's Sunday online services. When the livestream glitched, YouTube's algorithm kicked in and automatically sent another worship

[9] A recent overview of research on religious pluralism in online environments can be found in Anna Neumaier and Gritt Klinkhammer, "Interreligious Contact and Media: Introduction," *Religion*, 50, no. 3 (2020) 321-335. Neumaier and Klinhammer point out that the relationship between interreligious encounter and media is not yet comprehensively studied. Still, the authors acknowledge that online environments foster a range of interreligious interactions: "In times of electronic media, the frame of interreligious contact is generally expanding and changing: media enhances translocal exchange, it individualizes the participation in societal discourses, and it fosters the perception of pluralities of everyday life without necessarily being in local contact with them" (326). Heidi Campbell's research has been groundbreaking in considering the relationship between religious practice and new media, see: *When Religion Meets New Media* (New York: Routledge, 2010); *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds* (New York: Routledge, 2013); "Understanding the Relationship between Religious Practice Online and Offline in a Networked Society," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 80, no. 1 (2012): 64–93; with Brian Altenhofen, Wendi Bellar, and Kyong James Cho, "There's a Religious App for That!: A Framework for Studying Religious Mobile Applications," *Mobile Media & Communication.* 2, no 2 (2014): 154-172. Some scholars argue that online environments are "third spaces" that encourage new forms of religious hybridity (see Stewart Hoover and Nabil Echchaibi, "The Third Spaces of Digital Religion," working paper presented at the Center for Media, Religion, and Culture at the University of Colorado [2014], https://thirdspacesblog.files.wordpress.com/2014/05/third-spaces-and-media-theory-essay-2-0.pdf) and that online environments are "hypermediated religious spaces" in which online and offline participation are fluidly interactive (Giulia Evolvi, "Religion and the Internet: Digital Religion, [Hyper]mediated Spaces, and Materiality," *Zeitschrift fur Religion Gesellschaft und Politik* [2021]: 1–17).

opportunity to their iPad: a livestream of the *Hajj*. There's a boundlessness to digital reality, a mediated immediacy to worlds and communities beyond our own that is *just different* from what we experience in the slower, embodied world of analogue reality. Decades ago, a wrong turn on Main Street might have taken us to an unexpected church. Now, a moment of lagging bandwidth can send us careening into faith communities we've only read about.

In this context—in which we are ever more reliant on digital technologies, in which we transition back-and-forth between real and virtual, in which YouTube autoplays Muslim pilgrimage when we're trying to find our way to Mass—we must anticipate new ways of being Catholic that can accommodate the religiously pluralizing possibilities of digitally-blended reality. And I argue comparative theology—the practices of thinking Catholic and interreligiously—has much to teach us about navigating this present moment.

Let me begin by sketching the pandemic's effects on Catholic life. In November 2021, the Center for Applied Research on the Apostolate conducted a study of US Catholics' faith lives, trying to understand how parish-based formational programs are or aren't meeting the spiritual needs of younger Catholics.[10] Participants in the study were between ages eighteen and thirty-five years old.[11] Ninety-five percent of participants in the study identified as life-long Catholics.[12]

Prior to the pandemic, 13 percent of study participants reported weekly Mass attendance while about a third reported rarely attending Mass.[13] Prior to the pandemic, 6 percent reported being very involved in their parish, a third reported some involvement, and well over half reported no involvement with their parish.[14] Prior to the pandemic, 3 percent of respondents reported participating in reconciliation at least monthly while an overwhelming majority reported participating in the sacrament twice or once a year, or never at all.[15]

No, Mass attendance, parish involvement, and the sacrament of reconciliation aren't the only indicators of "being Catholic," but they are significant components of a

[10] Mark M. Gray, Michal J. Kramarek, Thomas P. Gaunt, "Faith and Spiritual Life of Catholics in the United States" (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2021), *hereafter cited as CARA.*

[11] Forty-three perecent of respondents to CARA's "Faith and Spiritual Life" survey identify as Hispanic; forty-four percent identify as white; thirteen percent identify as Asian, black, or identify with some other racial category. Fifty-five percent of respondents are women and 47 percent are men. CARA, 1.

[12] Seventy-five percent were baptized by age of one, 20 percent were baptized in their childhood or adolescence, and 5 percent became Catholic as adults. CARA, 2.

[13] Thirteen percent of participants in the study reported weekly Mass attendance; twenty-one percent reported attending monthly Mass attendance; thirty-one percent reported attending Mass a few times a year; thirty-seix percent say they rarely attend Mass. CARA, 3.

[14] Six percent of study participants reported high involvement with their parish; thirty percent reported some involvement with their parish; sixty-four percent reported no involvement with their parish. CARA, 3.

[15] Three percent of study participants to the CARA study reported participating in sacrament of reconciliation at least monthly; twenty-eight percent participated once or more than once a year; forty-nine percent reported participating in the sacrament of reconciliation less than once a year or never at all. CARA, 58.

church that sees itself as a eucharistic people whose vocation is to serve the world.[16] The religious lives of young Catholics are strikingly different from the vision encouraged by Vatican II's ecclesiology. And yet, participants in the study understand themselves as deeply connected in the Catholic tradition.

Almost all respondents agreed with that statement that it's possible to be a good Catholics without going to church every Sunday, 44 percent think of themselves as practicing Catholics, and 39 percent agree with the statement that they could never imagine leaving the Catholic Church.[17]

These reports raise the question of what it means to belong to a faith tradition that one has little or only intermittent concrete contact with. The question is intensified when we consider how spiritual practices are shaped in and by online contexts.

The pandemic awakened new digitally blended modes of practicing Catholic faith: Faith-formation groups met online. Ministries were conducted over Zoom. Masses were streamed. Motivated both by mission and ministry, as well as financial need, parishes migrated to the digital landscape.[18]

The CARA study also asked open-ended comparative questions about faith life *before* and *during* the pandemic. Before the pandemic a third of participants reported praying and a quarter reported going to Mass. After the pandemic, more than 40 percent reported praying, 15 percent reported taking part in a streaming Mass *or* doing some other online faith-related activity, and 15 percent reported doing nothing at all. In other words, the pandemic drove already-dwindling corporate Catholic faith practice largely in the direction of individualized practice, or no practice.

The stark reality laid bare by the CARA study is that Catholics who are my age and younger don't go to church. They aren't involved in parish life. They don't seek regular sacraments. To be sure, the cultural shifts that account for these patterns extend far beyond the pandemic and, yet, the pandemic accounts for an intensification of the

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[16] See Richard R. Gallardetz and Catherine Clifford's discussion of Vatican II's eucharistic ecclesiology in *Keys to the Council: Unlocking the Teaching of Vatican II* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), 66-75.

[17] Seventy-three percent of respondents agreed with that statement that it's possible to be a good Catholics without going to church every Sunday. Forty-four percent think of themselves as practicing Catholics. Thirty-nine percent agree with the statement that they could never imagine leaving the Catholic Church. Thirty-three percent are neutral on the question of whether they could leave the Catholic Church. Twenty-two percent disagree with the claim that they could never imagine leaving the Catholic Church (CARA, 4).

[18] Both economic interest and missionary principles motivated parishes to move Masses and ministries to the online environment, as the deleterious economic effects of the pandemic were forecast to be worse for those that parishes that didn't offer online Mass. In a study of the pandemic's financial impact on 169 parishes, Villanova's Center for Church Management found that parishes without online Masses had a greater drop in collections than those that did at the start of the pandemic. Matthew Manion and Alicia Strandberg, "Covid Parish Impact Study: Summary of Findings," *Villanova University Center for Church Management* (2020), https://villanovachurchmanagement.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/COVID-19-Parish-Impact-Study-Summary-of-Findings.pdf . Some theologians call for new understandings of liturgy and sacrament in online environments, for example: Deanna A. Thompson "Christ is Really Present, Even in Holy Communion via Online Worship," *Liturgy* 35, no. 4 (2020): 18–24; Katherine G. Schmidt, *Virtual Communion: Theology of the Internet and the Catholic Sacramental Imagination* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020).

shifts. The CARA study suggests that younger Catholics won't be returning to Mass post-pandemic, and that their ways of being Catholic will happen in other ways—ways that are often private, isolated, and, most importantly for my purposes, negotiated online.[19]

Young Catholics understand themselves as Catholic apart from specific, concrete communities of belonging. Catholics today are not formed and do not practice in a single-layered reality, but instead a digitally-blended one. As such, they will likely engage in "convergent practices" and "tinkering." These terms describe the highly-individualized, customizable, and often temporary practices of blending and assembling rituals and information that is fostered by doing religion online.[20] Because the internet offers limitless access to information and social media beckons us seemingly barrier-free to witness first-hand the rituals of other lives, a digitally-blended reality invites us to take, sample, experiment, test, assemble, collect, and connect what we find there. Scholars of online religion identify tinkering and convergent practice—both interreligious in nature—as characteristic of the digital age.

Way back in 1991 when I was not yet ten, Frank observed the effects of different contexts and therefore different patterns of formation on Catholic theologians:

> These newer scholars were not completely formed as Catholics, nor accomplished as theologians, before they began to visit Thailand and live among Buddhists … hence what they have seen and read in Thailand or India or Pakistan or Nigeria has inevitably become a part of how they present themselves as Catholics and as theologians.[21]

Where and with whom the scholars lived, read, and learned shaped them and their scholarship. Likewise, young Catholics are exposed to experiences and ideas daily that required world travels only a few decades ago. We carry interreligious exploration around with us in the palms of our hands. The pandemic forced even luddites to learn and use technology in new ways, and for spiritual formation. Thus, virtually all of us already have the tools of those first-generation of theologians about whom Frank wrote.

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[19] Early in the pandemic, commentators wondered if American worshippers would lose the habit of communal worship at churches, synagogues, mosques. It seems not to be the case. A 2020 Pew study found that, during the pandemic, 92 percent of regular worshipers expressed their intent to return in person, be that to the church, synagogue, mosque, or temple (Alan Cooperman, "Will the Coronavirus Permanently Convert In-Person Worshippers to Online Streamers? They Don't Think So" *Pew Research Center* [August 17, 2020], https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/08/17/will-the-coronavirus-permanently-convert-in-person-worshippers-to-online-streamers-they-dont-think-so/), and these predictions seem to have borne out. Another 2021 Pew study reported that religious congregations in America, broadly speaking, were on a path to return to normal (Pew Research Center, "Life in U.S Religious Congregations Slowly Edges Back Toward Normal," [March 22, 2021], 3) These trajectories seem to have continued into 2022.

[20] Heidi A. Campbell and Guilia Evolvi, "Contextualizing Current Digital Religion Research on Emerging Technologies," *Human Behavior & Emerging Technology* 2 (2012): 5–17; Paul McClure, "Tinkering with Technology and Religion in the Digital Age: The Effects of Internet Use on Religious Belief, Behavior and Belonging," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 56, no. 3 (2017): 481–497.

[21] Clooney 1991, 487.

Frank called for an important shift: Stop thinking *about* other religious traditions. Instead think "Christianly with a set of resources that includes non-Christian elements."[22] And here, as we look out on a post-pandemic future, we need another shift. We need to assume the kind of interreligious convergence and tinkering that emerges from a digitally-blended reality.

We need to think Catholic interreligiously for a digital age.

Consider this example: A decade ago, a Pew study found that 40 percent of Catholics report regularly meditating.[23] If we presuppose a blended context—a world shaped by the ubiquitous presence of unlimited information online and a culture that encourages constant exploration—it seems unlikely that Catholic meditators are shaped by traditions of *Christian* silent contemplation. It seems more likely, instead, that Catholics meditators subscribe to apps with names like *Chakra Balance* and *Zen Guided Meditation* just as much as they do *Word Among Us* and *Hallow*.

My own Catholic-school-attending children learn to do yoga at school. Though they do yoga during the P.E. part of the day, it's also not just about exercise. The school highlights yoga's social-emotional value, but even this framing—and I say this happily—is not devoid its religious valences. I've noticed that when my kids come home on yoga-days and show off their poses, they conclude with a few actions that they didn't learn at school: They offer a prayerful *namaste*. They also take off their "cosmo-noculars." These elements they picked up from doing *Cosmic Kids Yoga* during the many months of lockdown when many of us couldn't figure out what to do with our kids. Jamie instructs kids in yoga and helps them see into the many stories of the universe with the help of her trusty, trademark cosmo-noculars.

My point is this: My kids encounter yoga in multiple modes, at school and online. They organically incorporated an element they picked up in one place into the practice they learned in another. They tinkered. They blended. Do they understand the interreligious dynamic of their endeavor? No. But are they imaginatively interpreting multivalent ideas and exploring cultural crossovers that deepen their experience? Most definitely.

One way to approach these prodigious shifts is with a sense of loss—with sharper boundaries, stronger divisions. Or we can approach them—as I do—with hope and openness to the graces they offer. Comparative theology, it seems to me, gives us resources for handling the diversity and difference, the shifting boundaries of our blended worlds. This involves adopting comparative theological habits for use *within* "Catholic" life and practice: the habit of questioning the stability of boundaries, of problematizing neat separations and clear gaps, of prioritizing the actions of getting proximate to and intimate with difference.

As we look with Reid to the past and with Stephanie to the future, we'll think more concretely about the shifting contours of the field, and the way we narrate those contours, to help us further name the bestowals of comparative theology for a digitally and religiously blended reality.

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[22] Ibid., 488.

[23] Pew Research Center "America's Changing Religious Landscape," (May 12, 2015), retrieved at https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/

REMEMBERED PASTS (REID B. LOCKLIN)

In her account of our present moment in mid-late-pandemic North America, Mara draws our attention to connections between the "digitally-blended world" and a "religiously-blended world," so effectively symbolized by a YouTube Mass abruptly interrupted by a video of the Hajj. Such interruptions might just be that—brief moments of surprise, before we return to our digital and religious silos. But they also offer the possibility of something deeper, a transformation of consciousness and erosion of boundaries between persons and traditions once regarded as "other." In the profound disruption of stay-at-home orders, Zoom liturgies and imaginary "cosmo-noculars," on Mara's reading, we may be witnessing the birth of a new kind or new depth of thinking Catholic interreligiously.

Advocates of contemporary comparative theology have also tended to characterize our particular style of interreligious engagement as "new." We began this shared reflection with Clooney's essay in the year 1991. For his part, Paul Hedges marks the "emergence of the contemporary discipline" with the dates 1995, when Clooney published an important review essay in *Theological Studies* and 2006, when comparative theology was recognized as a unit of the American Academy of Religion.[24] Set against the full history of Christian theological reflection, then, the discipline is still very much in its infancy.

Or is it? In the last decade and a half, comparative theologians have become preoccupied with the longer history of our discipline. Inconveniently, the first book in English with the title *Comparative Theology* was published by a Scottish Episcopal theologian in 1700, and the legendary Orientalist Max Müller adopted the term to describe his own project in a series of lectures he gave at Oxford University in 1870.[25] Comparativists have often noted, with a wave of the hand, that interreligious engagement has defined most Christian thought, across generations. Now, it has begun to appear that our form of such engagement, as a scholarly discipline, stands in a more well-defined historical genealogy, tightly bound with the emergence of modernity.

Historical memory, however, is a complex thing, and it matters deeply what choices we make in remembering our collective pasts. So, in a few pages, I would like to reflect on the past—or, perhaps better, the pasts—that we could or should tell about comparative theology as a discipline and as a privileged mode of thinking Catholic interreligiously.

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[24] Paul Hedges, "Comparative Theology: A Critical and Methodological Perspective," *Theology* 1, no. 1 (2017): 2. He is citing Francis X. Clooney, "Comparative Theology: A Review of Recent Books (1989-1995)," *Theological Studies* 56, no. 3 (1995): 521-50; and he also takes note of the inclusion of Clooney's chapter on "Comparative Theology" in *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology*, ed. Kathryn Tanner, John Webster, and Iain R. Torrance (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 653-69.

[25] See Francis X. Clooney, *Comparative Theology: Deep Learning Across Religious Boundaries* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 30-33. He cites James Garden, *Comparative Theology; or the True and Solid Grounds of Pure and Peaceable Theology: A Subject Very Necessary, the hitherto almost wholly neglected* (Bristol: T. Caddell, 1756 [1700]); F. Max Müller, *Introduction to the Study of Religion* (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1873); and F. Max Müller, *Natural Religion: The Gifford Lectures* (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1889).

Before turning directly to these histories, I propose that we take a short detour through Dipesh Chakrabarty's now-classic 2000 monograph, *Provincializing Europe*.[26] In this work, Chakrabarty engages in an extended argument with Karl Marx about the very "idea of history."[27] Through a close reading of *Das Capital* and related works, Chakrabarty discerns two different, sharply contrasting approaches to the past. "History 1" represents the past as a single, totalizing and linear narrative. For Marx, this narrative rationalizes the emergence of capital, telling a history that centers on Europe and, over time, subsumes other places, peoples and cultures into itself.[28] "History 2," on the other hand, relates to the more local pasts of all those diverse places, peoples and cultures drawn into the ambit of History 1. To capture their diversity and locality, Chakrabarty usually uses the plural form, "History 2s."[29] These alternative accounts of the past persistently—and necessarily, for Marx's own interpretive purposes[30]—resist complete absorption by History 1 even as they become entangled with it through colonization and globalization. "History 2s," Chakrabarty argues, "are thus not pasts separate from capital; they inhere in capital and yet interrupt and punctuate the run of capital's own logic."[31]

What does this have to do with comparative theology? Well, I would contend that in recent years we have witnessed the emergence of something like a consensus narrative about our collective past. The seeds for this narrative were planted by Tomoko Masuzawa's brilliant 2005 historical genealogy, *The Invention of World Religions*.[32] It then entered the comparative theological mainstream through the work of Hugh Nicholson[33] and gained wide recognition as *the* history of the discipline, as revealed in introductory surveys by Clooney, Hedges and Catherine Cornille.[34] Stated simply, this telling of comparative theology's past views the contemporary discipline as an organic development from the 19th-century "old" comparative theologies of James Freeman Clark, F.D. Maurice, and George Matheson, among others. This earlier comparative theology represented a true advance in interreligious reflection, but it also translated the terms of European Christian hegemony into the putatively neutral, de-

[26] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, 2nd ed (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008 [2000]).

[27] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 47.

[28] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 49-57, 62-65.

[29] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 64-65.

[30] See especially the further discussion of Marx's vitalism and the importance of excess meaning in his critique of "abstract labor" in Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 58-62.

[31] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 64.

[32] Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

[33] Hugh Nicholson, "The Reunification of Theology and Comparison in the New Comparative Theology," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 77, no. 3 (2009): 609-646; and Hugh Nicholson, *Comparative Theology and the Problem of Religious Rivalry* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[34] Clooney, "Comparative Theology," 654-660; Clooney, *Comparative Theology*, 30-35; Hedges, "Comparative Theology," 5-10; and Catherine Cornille, *Meaning and Method in Comparative Theology* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2020), 11-18.

politicized language of "world religions."[35] Arguably, this translation functioned to rationalize the colonial project and to mask its violence. Nicholson, Clooney and Cornille, among others (including me), have tended to envision the contemporary discipline in a kind of dialectical relation to this colonial legacy, building on the good and correcting the bad.[36] For other interpreters, things are not so clear. On their reading, the "new" comparative theology may risk simply pouring the old wine of Christian triumphalism into new skins.[37]

Either way, this conversation has tended to reproduce the logic of what Chakrabarty calls History 1. That is, the past accepted by both advocates and critics of comparative theology is a universalized past "posited by" the contemporary discipline as its logical antecedent and necessary precondition.[38] It is a narrative of the past that begins in Europe and then, bit by bit, absorbs other places, times and cultures into a single, developmental and totalizing frame.

But what if this is not the only way to think about the discipline's past? What if, to adopt the language of Chakrabarty, in addition to this History 1, there are also diverse History 2s that deserve our attention? In *Provincializing Europe*, Chakrabarty locates such alternative histories in the diverse "life-worlds" of subaltern peasants and upper caste Bengalis in colonial India.[39] Where might we look for comparably dislocating pasts of thinking Catholic interreligiously, pasts with the potential to call into question

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[35] See Nicholson, *Comparative Theology and the Problem of Religious Rivalry*, 49-78; Hugh Nicholson, "The New Comparative Theology and Theological Hegemonism," in *The New Comparative Theology: Interreligious Insights from the Next Generation*, ed. Francis X. Clooney (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 43-62; and Reid B. Locklin and Hugh Nicholson, "The Return of Comparative Theology," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78, no. 2 (2010): 482-89.

[36] Nicholson, *Comparative Theology and the Problem of Religious Rivalry*, 79-105; Clooney, *Comparative Theology*, 35-37; Cornille, *Meaning and Method*, 104-108; Locklin and Nicholson, "Return of Comparative Theology," 489-99; and Reid B. Locklin, "Hinduism Compared," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Hinduism*, 2d ed., ed. Gavin Flood (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2022), 536-50.

[37] See Judith Grüber, (Un)Silencing Hybridity: A Postcolonial Critique of Comparative Theology," in *Comparative Theology in the Millennial Classroom*, ed. Mara Brecht and Reid B. Locklin (New York and London: Routledge, 2016), 21-35; Pravina Rodrigues, "A Critique of Comparative Theology," *Berkeley Journal of Religion and Theology* 3, no. 1 (2017): 68-90; Tracy Sayuki Tiemeier, "White Christian Privilege and the Decolonization of Comparative Theology" in *The Human in a Dehumanizing World: Reexamining Theological Anthropology and Its Implications*, edited by Jessica Coblentz and Daniel P. Horan, The Annual Volume of the College Theology Society, 2021, Vol. 66 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2022), 85-95; and the more nuanced assessments in Paul Hedges, "The Old and New Comparative Theologies: Discourse on Religion, the Theology of Religions, Orientalism and the Boundaries of Traditions," *Religions* 3, no. 4 (2012): 1120-37; and Hedges, "Comparative Theology," 27-58.

[38] This sentence deliberately mirrors Chakrabarty's account of "History 1" in *Provincializing Europe*, 63: ". . . Marx gave this history a name: he called it capital's antecedent 'posited by itself.' Here free labor is both a precondition of capitalist production and 'its invariable result.' This is the universal and necessary history we associate with capital. It forms the backbone of the usual narratives of transition to the capitalist mode of production. Let us call this history—a past possessed by itself as its precondition—History 1."

[39] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, e.g. 18-20, 72-96, 117-48.

any simple, linear progression from the old comparative theology to the new one? For the moment, let me suggest just three possibilities.

First, I think, we can look to contemporary mission studies. It is noteworthy that Clooney has not generally identified the nineteenth-century "old" comparative theology as the only or even the primary antecedent for the new one. Instead, he has also drawn our attention to the writings of early Jesuit missionaries in Asia and in the Americas.[40] And, as Stephanie will discuss in greater depth, recent scholarship has greatly broadened our understanding of global Christianity, including its missionary pasts. Thus, for example, Sundar John Boopalan has traced how the different social backgrounds of the Jesuits Roberto De Nobili (1577-1656) and Gonçalo Fernandes (1541-1619) informed their conflicting approaches to religious diversity in South Asia,[41] and my University of Toronto colleague, Nhung Tuyet Tran, has drawn on a repertoire of early modern vernacular letters, catechisms and testimonies to unfold a "Vietnamese Catholic cosmopolis" quite distinct in its negotiation of hungry ghosts, Confucian heavens and other markers of religious difference.[42] This Vietnamese textual record unsettles the privilege we grant to European sources in our collective remembering, whether these be Jesuit missionaries like DeNobili, Fernandes or Alexandre de Rhodes (1593-1660)[43] in the seventeenth century or comparativists like Max Müller, James Freeman Clark and J.A. MacCulloch in the nineteenth.[44]

Second, arguing along similar lines, Tracy Tiemeier has identified the trauma of the slave trade and Middle Passage as a stark challenge to Eurocentric histories and practices in the discipline.[45] In her 2021 essay, "White Christian Privilege and the Decolonization of Comparative Theology," Tiemeier draws on the work of Khyati Joshi and An Yountae to indict the discipline as—at least in its present configuration—irremediably bound up with structures of oppression.[46] Comparative theologians are "standing on the decks with the slavers" and building our scholarly project "on the backs and bodies of enslaved, colonized peoples."[47] But Tiemeier also draws attention to historical processes of creolization among Afro-Caribbean peoples as a liberatory

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[40] Clooney, *Comparative Theology*, 27-30; Francis X. Clooney, SJ, "A Charism for Dialogue: Advice from the Early Jesuit Missionaries in Our World of Religious Pluralism," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 34, no. 2 (2002): 1-39; and Francis X. Clooney, SJ, *The Future of Hindu-Christian Studies: A Theological Inquiry* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 23-46.

[41] Sunder John Boopalan, "Hindu-Christian Relations through the Lens of Caste," in *The Routledge Handbook of Hindu-Christian Relations*, edited by Chad M. Bauman and Michelle Voss Roberts (London and New York: Routledge, 2021), 169-92.

[42] Nhung Tuyet Tran, *Releasing the Soul*, unpublished manuscript provided by author.

[43] E.g. Peter C. Phan, *Mission and Catechesis: Alexandre de Rhodes and Inculturation in Seventeenth-century Vietnam* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998); and Peter Phan, *In Our Own Tongues: Perspectives from Asia on Mission and Inculturation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003).

[44] See Clooney, *Comparative Theology*, 30-35.

[45] Tiemeier, "White Christian Privilege," 85-87.

[46] Khyati Y. Joshi, *White Christian Privilege: The Illusion of Religious Equality in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2020); An Yountae, *The Decolonial Abyss: Mysticism and Cosmopolitics from the Ruins* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016).

[47] Tiemeier, "White Christian Privilege," 88.

alternative. "The theopoetic process of creolization," she writes, "was and is a process of relational solidarity and communal becoming in the colonial abyss. This process was also comparative and multireligious. … This is the comparative theology of the colonized, creolized peoples working actively to reconstruct their creolized God."[48] Tiemeier issues a prophetic call in and for the present; but she makes her case, at least in part, by recovering and reimagining a suppressed past.

Finally, we can look for History 2s, alternative pasts of comparative theology, among Indigenous peoples and nations here on Turtle Island. In her 2017 study, *A Clan Mother's Call*, Jeanette Rodriguez notes "three major contributions" offered by Haudenosaunee nations to all peoples in this land, namely, North American traditions of democracy, feminism and ecological awareness.[49] Perhaps the same could be said for North American traditions of comparative theology. Important work in this area has been done in relation to the Servant of God Nicholas Black Elk (1863-1950), including by Damian Costello and my Toronto School of Theology colleague Michael Stoeber.[50] The Kanien'kehá:ka Saint, Kateri Tekakwitha (1656-1680), also represents an intriguing example of not only thinking, but actively embodying Catholicism interreligiously in her life and ascetic practices,[51] and the Yakama scholar Michelle Jacob has highlighted the ways Kateri's legacy has been sustained in the annual Tekakwitha Conference.[52] For the moment, however, I would like to explore another figure that I find particularly compelling and disruptive: the Métis visionary Louis Riel (1844-1885).

Riel holds an important place in Canadian imaginaries as an Indigenous resistance leader, as the founder of the Province of Manitoba, and as a kind of martyr of Confederation.[53] In recent years, Thomas Flanagan and Jennifer Reid have also brought out the specifically religious character of Riel's messianic self-understanding.[54] As a

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[48] Tiemeier, "White Christian Privilege," 89.

[49] Jeanette Rodriguez, with Iakoiane Wakerahkats:teh, *A Clan Mother's Call: Reconstructing Haudenosaunee Cultural Memory* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2017), 7-9.

[50] Damian Costello, *Black Elk: Colonialism and Lakota Catholicism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005); Damian Costello, "Black Elk's Vision of Waníkiya: The Ghost Dance, Catholic Sacraments, and Lakota Ontology," *Journal of NAIITS* 16 (2018): 40-56; and Michael Stoeber, "Indigenous and Roman Catholic Canonizations of Nicholas Black Elk: Postcolonial Issues and Implications of *Black Elk Speaks*," *Theological Studies* 81, no. 3 (2020): 605–30.

[51] See especially Nancy Shoemaker, "Kateri Tekakwitha's Tortuous Path to Sainthood," in *Negotiators of Change*, ed. Nancy Shoemaker (New York: Routledge, 1994), 55–77 and Darren Bonaparte, *A Lily Among Thorns: The Mohawk Repatriation of Káteri Tekahkwí:tha* (Mohawk Territory of Akwasesne: Wampum Chronicles, 2009).

[52] Michelle M. Jacob, *Indian Pilgrims: Indigenous Journeys of Activism and Healing with Saint Kateri Tekakwitha* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2016).

[53] See Albert Raimundo Braz, *The False Traitor: Louis Riel in Canadian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

[54] Thomas Flanagan, *Louis 'David' Riel: 'Prophet of the New World'* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1979); Jennifer I.M. Reid, "'Faire Place à une Race Métisse': Colonial Crisis and the Vision of Louis Riel," in *Religion and Global Culture: New Terrain in the Study of Religion and the Work of Charles H. Long*, ed. Jennifer I.M. Reid (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), 51-66; and Jennifer Reid, *Louis Riel and the Creation*

Métis and as a former seminarian, Riel was uniquely positioned to articulate a vision of Catholicism that was theologically astute, cross-cultural and at least implicitly interreligious. Ultimately, he proposed radically original interpretations of the papacy, the Eucharist and the new people of God, all rooted firmly in the soil of Turtle Island.[55] Many of Riel's contemporaries recognized the threat that his religious and political vision posed to the colonial *status quo*. Catholic authorities sent him to the insane asylum; Protestant authorities sent him to the gallows.[56] His was a form of thinking Catholic inter-religiously with real consequences, both for Riel himself and for the settler state of Canada.

These three examples of History 2—in early modern Vietnam, in the trauma of the Middle Passage, and in the Métis Nation of the Red River—are each, I think, compelling and interesting in their own right. But what is their significance for comparative theology? One temptation might be to attempt a reconstruction of the field from the ground up, in light of one or another of these newly remembered pasts. Tiemeier, for example, calls for a complete "realignment of the field to decolonial liberation and relational solidarity," inspired by the histories of Afro-Caribbean creolization she highlights in her essay.[57]

Perhaps due to my own location as a white settler scholar, I find this call inspiring and beautiful, but hard to imagine in practice. So I find myself returning instead to Dipesh Chakrabarty. For, in *Provincializing Europe*, Chakrabarty does not disavow or diminish the importance of History 1.[58] Instead, he recommends a continual, self-conscious practice of interruption. "History 2," he writes, "is better thought of as a category charged with the function of constantly interrupting the totalizing thrusts of History 1."[59] He articulates a similar idea in more general terms elsewhere in his book, when he contends that "European thought is at once both indispensable and inadequate," in constant need of disruption "from and for the margins."[60]

Perhaps, then, we should not seek to displace or replace the Eurocentric narrative of comparative theologies, old and new. Instead, we can strive to render this narrative "both indispensable and inadequate," to give it a privileged place in our collective self-understanding while also resisting its totalizing ambitions. In this task, we are greatly helped by remembering those pasts of interreligious reflection that don't fit the narrative, in what might be regarded as an ascetic, continual practice of interruption.

In the next section, Stephanie surveys some future prospects for thinking Catholic interreligiously. The futures she imagines are not singular or coherent. They are

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of Modern Canada: Mythic Discourse and the Postcolonial State (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2012).

[55] See Flanagan, *Louis 'David' Riel*, 73-96; Reid, "Faire Place," 58-61; Reid, *Louis Riel*,187-201; Louis Riel, *The Diaries of Louis Riel*, ed. Thomas Flanagan (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1976), 57-88, esp. 63-66, 80; and the creative reinterpretation in David Day, *The Visions and Revelations of St. Louis the Métis* (Saskatoon: Thistledown Press, 1997).

[56] Cf. Hans V. Hansen, ed. *Riel's Defense: Perspectives on His Speeches* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2014).

[57] Tiemeier, "White Christian Privilege," 92.

[58] Chakrabarty is a Marxist interpreter, after all, and he depends upon ideas derived from History 1—including universal ideals of human rights—to advance his own interpretive agenda.

[59] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 66.

[60] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 16.

complex—and this makes good sense. The future is plural in no small part because the past is plural, and there is no obvious, linear path to the future, because there was no single, linear path that brought us to this point. But that does not mean that there are not a few more well-trodden paths, and real judgments to be made about how to move forward in a good way.

IMAGINED FUTURES (STEPHANIE WONG)

From the vantage of 2022, recognizing the plurality of the present and of the past, what might we say about comparative theology into the future? I'd like to begin with two metaphors for what Catholic comparative theology might need or try to do:

Imagine first that you sit in a submarine moving through the deep ocean. You're gazing out the round portal windows hoping to catch a glimpse of the mysteries of the sea. As a comparative theologian, you begin looking through your familiar window, but you take time to scoot over and take a studied, slow look through another window to see what you can see from there. *Was that a seahorse? There's a view of the coral from over here!* Indebted to the details of that other view, you return to your own window enriched. In this picture, comparative theology means going back and forth between the windows of religious tradition, looking there, looking here again.

Imagine now that you sit in the middle of a plaza, leaning back with eyes closed to enjoy the afternoon and holding a musical instrument. Others are already there in the plaza, and you listen as they play: *there's the relaxed pluck of a guitar, and, oh, now a driving beat from a djembe drum.* As a comparative theologian, you listen for a long time to hear the other's themes and improvisations unfolding, sometimes familiar and sometimes jarring to you. And you reconsider what you've got: Could the instrument you're holding harmonize alongside the melody, or would it do better as rhythm, coming in on the offbeat? You could even pull the keys out of your back pocket, and shake those; or maybe not play at all. In this picture, comparative theology means listening to the ongoing dynamisms of traditions in process, nearing and diverging.

In a nutshell, I am going to propose that Catholic comparative theology operates in both these ways today—both like looking through submarine windows and like hearing strains of music—but I will hypothesize, for three reasons, that comparative theology will be pulled more and more towards the latter mode.

Comparative Theology and the Academic Multiverse

First, comparative theology exists in an expanding academic multiverse, where scholars in myriad geographic and linguistic settings hope to account for that mix of History 1 and History 2s that Reid Locklin has mentioned. After all, we're in the midst of several parallel disciplinary expansions.

On the one hand, "theology of religions" has been nudged to make room for the more open-ended inquiry of "comparative theology."[61] Comparative theologians

[61] James Fredericks points out two problematic features of theology of religions: its *a priori* method, aspiring to work out a stance about other traditions independent of any empirical study of them; and its presumption to offer a totalizing perspective on religions as though from an

generally refrain from any initial soteriological judgment of other traditions to defer meaning and let the quest for insight unfold in a more genuinely inter-religious way. At the same time, "missiology" has been nudged—sometimes shoved—to make room for studies in Global or World Christianities. There, scholars hope to foreground not the perspective of foreign missionaries but the theological expressions of local Christian communities thinking in their own (often inter-religious) contexts.

Granted, in both cases, theorists have questioned how radical a break there is. Catherine Cornille and Kristin Kiblinger, have argued that comparative theologians inevitably presuppose some conception of the epistemological status of the other tradition[62] and do better to make that explicit.[63] Postcolonial scholars in intercultural studies, like Judith Gruber, have pointed out that paradigms of inculturation can still reinforce a Euro-American hegemony, leaving the West as the silent "center" of the tradition while highlighting voices from "from the margin" as inculturated theologies.[64]

I would argue the liabilities of each enterprise can be mitigated by doing them in conjunction. Comparative theology doesn't have to study Buddhist or Hindu ritual only as foreign *per se*, but a global church means doing theology from contexts where these are majority practice. Attention to the global South and East doesn't have to script contextual theologies as forever peripheral, but can and does serve as a platform for us to hear the voice of the Indonesian, Kenyan, or Brazilian theologians reflecting interreligiously on the traditions of their own environs.

As Paul Hedges has pointed out, the new comparative theology here has developed mostly "within modern and contemporary Western theologies." Here, comparative theology can be intensely self-conscious in trying to justify the practice of going between windows and prove itself as a scholarly academic subfield in the context of its containing submarine, the Western academy itself.

But we work at a marvelous time, when the wide world of interreligious and intercultural reflection is expanding our very sense of what theology is and what disciplines do. I recently became aware of a scholar in Hong Kong, Pak-Wah Lai, who engages in scholarly comparison of Traditional Chinese Medicine practice and early Greek Christian texts and rituals to look at issues of what we might call psychology and spiritual health.[65] So while Western academic comparative theology has been debating *whether* comparative theology does best to focus on sacred texts or might grapple with practice (and Marianne Moyaert has made compelling cases for the

objective place. Fredericks, *Faith Among Faiths: Christian Theology and Non-Christian Religions* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), 109-112.

[62] Catherine Cornille, "Is All Hindu Theology Comparative Theology?" *Harvard Theological Review* 112, no. 1 (2019): 126-132.

[63] Kristin Beise Kiblinger, "Relating Theology of Religions and Comparative Theology," in *The New Comparative Theology: Interreligious Insights from the Next Generation*, edited by Francis X. Clooney (New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 32.

[64] Judith Gruber, *Intercultural Theology: Exploring World Christianity After the Cultural Turn* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), 2013.

[65] For example, see Lai Pak-Wah "Patristic Studies and Chinese Medicine" Parts I and II, International Association of Patristics Studies (I.A.P.S), accessed May 7, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoyjMskDEL4>.

latter[66]), I see Chinese theologians largely assuming it, and then—if they interface the English-speaking academy at all—doing so in all kinds of idiosyncratic spots: biblical theology talking to ritual studies; Traditional Chinese Medicine showing up at the International Association of Patristics? Okay! Or in a Chinese theology conference, I saw a presentation on political art, where the painter had rendered his fleeing family with statues of the Buddha and Jesus, their faces peaceful but also oblivious to the vicissitudes of human life—a theologically provocative interreligious grappling, but turning up at the intersections of the Chinese theology and Chinese art disciplines. I'm willing to include these kinds of inquiries and critiques in the category of interreligious reflection, and would warn against drawing the circle of comparative theology too narrowly. For isn't it great when people pursue along axes that bust one's own sense of disciplinary lines?

My point is that there are a lot of different kinds of comparative theologies (plural), many not going under the moniker of "comparative theology" at all. From our academic plaza, we might hear sounds from yet other streets and spaces.

Comparative Theology and the Political

Second, I see comparative theology scholars and teachers eager to own the ethical responsibilities of choice-making: what do we choose to pay attention to, and how do we represent ourselves and the religious other to the public?

As we all know, the humanities here are under significant pressure to justify our place in higher education. Explaining the "so what" of it all—to college leadership, to prospective students, to the media—is not easy. Moreover, anybody working on dynamics of difference must navigate what Tamara Underiner has called the "rock of fetishization" and the "hard place of indifference."[67] Too often, the public cares about what we do only insofar as it facilitates either a faulty mimeses of finding oneself in the other (e.g., "their devotion to the Quran operates the same as our devotion to the Bible") or a shallow rejection of the other (e.g., "Jesus respected women and democracy, but those Confucians… nothing but patriarchal hierarchy!"). It takes time to get below stereotypes and into the workings of how exactly a religious world construes value.

Of course, a concern for epistemic fairness and scholarly responsibility is hardly new in comparative theology. From the beginning, early founding figures like Francis Clooney, James Fredericks and Catherine Cornille have been well aware of the risks of distortion. They've urged humility in inquiry, vulnerability to the insights of the "other" tradition, and the necessity of suspending as much as possible one's own

[66] Marianne Moyaert, "Broadening the Scope of Interreligious Studies: Interrituality," in *Interreligious Relations and the Negotiation of Ritual Boundaries: Explorations in Interrituality,"* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2019), 1-34; "Towards a Ritual Turn in Comparative Theology: Opportunities, Challenges and Problems," *Harvard Theological Review* 111 (2018): 1-23.

[67] Tamara Underiner, "Beyond Recognition: Toward a Pedagogy of Privilege." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 25, no. 4 (2000): 1295 quoted in in Mara Brecht, "Soteriological Privilege" in *Comparative Theology in the Millennial Classroom*, edited by Mara Brecht and Reid. B. Locklin (New York: Routledge, 2016), 92.

categorical assumptions to apprehend the other text or thinker on their "own terms." But as the conversation has developed, some have worried this ends up re-crystallizing tradition in terms of its most "traditional" dominant voice. Lynn Hofstad asks, "Could more connections be made with other traditions by including voices from the margins of theology?"[68] Judith Grüber wonders if comparative theology shouldn't have a more "profoundly unsettling impact … on its home tradition: an *exposure* of its constitutive ambivalence and internal diversity."[69] Probably the answer is a both-and, that we must really aspire to receive what the other is saying, and also let the process turn up the quieter voices in both traditions.

At any rate, the big question behind all this is: what sort of representations will the comparative theologian undertake, and what sort of generalizations will we put before the non-specialist as aides to better understanding?

The religious studies scholar Jonathan Z. Smith, being critical of his own discipline's tendency to extrapolate parts as wholes, once urged scholars to own more their role in constructing generalizations: "Too much work by scholars of religion," he said, "takes the form of a paraphrase, our style of ritual repetition, which is a particularly weak mode of translation, insufficiently different from its subject matter for purposes of thought. To summarize: a theory, a model, a conceptual category, a generalization cannot be simply the data writ large."[70] His point was that the scholar treads most dangerously when they imagine they are merely presenting the data. Comparativists do better to embrace the fact that we are always re-representing. So there is a deep call to responsibility in comparison, but it lies less in reproducing first-order data as second-order output, and more in making explicit what we have chosen to pay attention to and to the difference we have added in analysis.

Returning to my metaphors, we do have to undertake comparative theology with a concern for epistemic justice and service. But it may not be so much about achieving a kind of justice *between* traditions, in making sure we look at the Muslim fish as carefully as we looked at the Christian fish. Rather, I suspect that comparative theologians must rise to the challenge of explaining to our institutions and to the publics that care, what is going on in the pluralistic plazas we've sat in. For me, in the Chinese village plaza, why do we hear the Catholics setting off firecrackers at the consecration rather than bells, and why do we no longer hear the call to prayer from Uighur and Hui mosques? To pay attention in interreligious reflection is inevitably political.

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[68] Lynn Holfstad, "The Challenges of Comparative Theology: An Assessment of Kärkkäinen's *Doing the Work of Comparative Theology*," *How to Do Comparative Theology* 59, no. 4 (2020): 344-347.

[69] Grüber, "(Un)Silencing Hybridity," 31.

[70] Smith makes the case that generalization is, in itself, not a bad thing; indeed, we have a responsibility to own that we are generalizing and re-representing religious traditions to the non-specialist: "The cognitive power of any translation, model, map, generalization or re-description—as, for example, in the imagination of 'religion'—is, by this understanding, a result of its *difference* from the subject matter in question and not its congruence." Jonathan Z. Smith "A Twice-Told Tale: The History of the History of Religions' History," *Numen* 48, no. 2 (2001): 145.

Comparative Theology in the Age of Overwhelm

Finally, this concern for communicating understanding brings me to my third point about the generation yet to come, our Gen Z students and future colleagues. Comparative theology will proceed in an age where many of our students feel a weariness or even wariness about the sheer quantity of different perspectives that digital media brings just a click away.

Even though I'm here representing the 'young' generation, I am old enough to remember a different, perhaps more naive world. Though the internet existed, as an undergraduate student in 2010, I still imagined that if I could just read every page of my Abrahamic Traditions textbook or Buddhist Philosophy anthology then I'd have a beginning mastery of the subject and be ready to encounter our multicultural world in informed and positive ways.

Well, that world has passed away, and comparative theology sits more awkwardly amidst doubts and tensions over what sort of learning is worthwhile, what sort claims are to be believed:

First, given the internet-infused practices of higher education today, our students immediately feel the fragmented and potentially unlimited nature of information. Many professors have replaced traditional course textbooks or edited print anthologies with online resources. This is for good reasons, like broadening the canon or easing economic strain on students. But it means that students encounter the material for their various classes as a tumult of pdf files from Blackboard or Canvas, potentially unlimited and somewhat stripped of context until the instructors explains where the pages come from and why they have included the selection in the uploads. So too, when students conduct research, they often embark on open-ended Google searches that can take them into either distracting rabbit holes or fruitful interdisciplinary connections. Herbert Simon, a Nobel Prize winning political scientist and economist, noted in the 1970s that the Western world was moving into an "attention" economy, where attention—not sources—is "the bottleneck of human thought:" "a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention." For our undergraduates in 2022, it has always been obvious to them that you can't know it all, and all of our understanding is selective.

Second, writers from Foucault to Willie Jennings have urged us towards a healthy suspicion of the goal of epistemic mastery. Jennings has argued compellingly that theological education has all too often carried forth under a white ideal of the individualistic, self-sufficient man who has it all under his control.[71] Surely, the point is well taken. What could be more spiritually wrongheaded than to undertake theology as an exercise in "mastery" over the divine, or over the traditions or people we study?

But, third, the next generation of student-scholars is coming of age at a cultural moment that can trend deeply utilitarian on issues of global connectivity, and the constructedness of identity narratives. In their daily lives, they use and appreciate the efficiency of global communications. Yet for many Gen Zers, over-connectivity is how you get hacked! In their schoolwork, students are often asked to grapple with how history produces multiple narratives and they are very accustomed to seeing and

[71] Willie James Jennings, *After Whiteness: An Education in Belonging* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020).

participating in culture wars as contestations over narrative. In my former Rustbelt Midwestern institution, the politically Right students of Q-Anon wear t-shirts with words like: "January 6th: Keep questioning the narrative"—a postmodern statement if you ever saw one, taken up as a slogan for Far Right militancy. On the other hand, the politically Left students in the minority didn't like it, but interestingly, took it as natural that every group would have and promote its own narrative as a tool of identity formation and defense.

My point with these observations is just this: that our students and future colleagues are less likely to be marveling at a world coming into connection than the Gen Xers and Millennials were. They are native to more wary mental habits: trying to hold at bay the overwhelm of information, and always trying to work out the spin.

Still, our students are looking to us to help them parse the "liquid modernity" of our pluralistic world,[72] and I imagine that Gen Z comparativists might have much to help society to reclaim meaning and wonder in the years to come. For comparative theology stares multiplicity in the face, not looking away from the fact of religious and cultural plurality, acknowledging that religious "tradition" exists nowhere but the messy, murkily bordered, usually political dynamisms of history. And yet comparative theology still holds forth that it is possible to be an informed-enough construer of meaning and value to recognize gold where we find it.

If the comparative theologian puts their trowel to this or that spot digging for wisdom, it's undertaken in the trust that traditions *do* carry riches. The Orthodox theologian David Bentley Hart has written of religious traditions disclosing a "secret" or "hidden" drama that cuts against the sense that traditions are just records of "bare history"—events occurring in sequence.[73] John Thatamanil has spoken of different religious traditions as vast repositories of accumulated wisdom, which "groove" on particular kinds of wonder.[74] And Francis Clooney remains hopeful that if our faith can "suffer poetry and the drama of uncertain love," then the epistemic risks we take may be the risks of "loving God."[75]

Comparative theology can be one of the places of judgment where intellectuals do that vulnerable, tentative work of trying to decide—with a wide-top funnel and from our various starting points of hybridity trying to grasp towards and negotiate identity[76]—what is worth studying and pondering and reproducing in ongoing representations of value? If *we* don't embrace the responsibility of initially curating for

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[72] Zygmunt Bauman, *Consuming Life* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2007).

[73] David Bentley Hart, "Tradition and Authority: A Vaguely Gnostic Meditation," in *The Idea of Tradition in the Late Modern World*, edited by Tal Howard (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2020), 56-76.

[74]John Thatamanil, interview with Tripp Fuller, *Homebrewed Christianity*, audio podcast, February 16, 2021, https://trippfuller.com/2021/02/16/john-thatamanil-a-comparative-theology-of-religious-diversity/. Traditions are "attempts to gain comprehensive qualitative orientation," trying to read reality faithfully and conform to reality rightly, and reality and experience speaking back too; "vast repertoires" of accumulated wisdom of practices and conceptual wisdom" (46:00-50:00).

[75] Francis Clooney, *His Hiding Place is Darkness: A Hindu-Catholic Theopoetics of Divine Absence* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2013), 141.

[76] Judith Grüber, "(Un)Silencing Hybridity," in *Comparative Theology in the Millennial Classroom*, edited by Mara Brecht and Reid B. Locklin (New York: Routledge, 2016), 25.

them some really "golden" ideas to taste for themselves… then I am afraid the Q-Anons of the world will be all too happy to do that formative work.

Zhuangzi's "Useless Tree"

So in holding out hope for the ultimate to still surprise us through the particularities of tradition, I want to conclude with an account of comparison, where the unexpected does speak with ethico-political power.

It's a story from the early Chinese Daoist tradition, which was always a thorn in the side of the Confucians. The classical Confucian texts promoted programs of moral-self-cultivation, hinging often on metaphors of human agriculture and cultivating sprouts into predictable virtues. Meanwhile, the Daoist *Zhuangzi* gives us instead the resistant voice of *ziran* nature, in this passage, the voice of a feisty gnarled tree who has its own priorities in comparison:

> Shih the carpenter was on his way to the state of Chi. When he got to Chu Yuan, he saw an oak tree by the village shrine. The tree was large enough to shade several thousand oxen and was a hundred spans around. It towered above the hilltops with its lowest branches eighty feet from the ground. More than ten of its branches were big enough to be made into boats. There were crowds of people as in a marketplace. The master carpenter did not even turn his head but walked on without stopping… His apprentice took a long look then ran after Shih the carpenter and said, "Since I took up my ax and followed you, master, I have never seen timber as beautiful as this. But you do not even bother to look at it and walk on without stopping. Why is this?" Shih the carpenter replied, "Stop! Say no more! That tree is useless. A boat made from it would sink, a coffin would soon rot, a tool would split, a door would ooze sap, and a beam would have termites. It is worthless timber and is of no use. That is why it has reached such a ripe old age."[77]

Then the great part:

> After Shih the carpenter had returned home, the sacred oak appeared to him in a dream, saying, "What are you comparing me with?Why do you compare me so unfavorably? Are you comparing me with useful/cultivable (wen) trees? There are cherry, apple, pear, orange, citron, pomelo, and other fruit trees. As soon as the fruit is ripe, the trees are stripped and abused. Their large branches are split, and the smaller ones torn off. Their life is bitter because of their usefulness. That is why they do not live out their natural lives but are cut off in

[77] 匠石之齊，至於曲轅，見櫟社樹。其大蔽數千牛，黨之百圍，其高臨山十個而後有枝，其可以為舟者旁十數。觀者如市，匠伯不顧，遂行不輟。弟子厭觀之，走及匠石，曰：自吾執斧斤以隨夫子，未嘗見材如此其美也。先生不肯視，行不輟，何邪？曰：已矣，勿吉之矣！散木也，以為舟則沉，以為棺槨則速腐，以為器則速毀，以為門戶則液樠，以為柱則蠹。是不材之木也，無所可用，故能若是之壽。

> their prime. They attract the attentions of the common world. This is so for all things. As for me, I have been trying for a long time to be useless. I was almost destroyed several times. Finally I am useless, and this is very useful to me."[78]

What's important to notice is that the tree is embodying a kind of *wu-wei* efficacious uselessness (shading the cattle, the people, staying itself alive). It is only useless according to the carpenter's hierarchy of value, which compares what can be harvested from trees.

But when the tree shows up in the intimacy of his dream to speak its winsomely resistant piece—"Finally I am useless, and this is very useful to me!"—we see that the tree's ethic of comparison is not about fruitful profit & utility (*li* 利 and *yong* 用) but rather survival & sustainability (*shou* 壽). The story is typical of much early Daoist writings, which validated the ways of the natural world and often contained subtle critiques of the Confucian insistence on political philosophy and social education as doing a kind of violence upon people and their ability to live in harmony with the Dao. After all, the verb *zhuo* 斲, often used in pre-imperial literature to describe how philosophers parsed language, connotes cutting in the way that an axe splits apart wood, and the Daoists suspected that so much Confucian word-splitting was not conducive to the *wuwei* life.[79] Certainly, Zhuangzi's tree is on the side of living rather than being physically chopped up.

The *Zhuangzi*'s winsome critiques of comparison can delightfully disrupt and animate our efforts to invite studies into comparative studies of religion. Where I have had some success teaching Gen Zers is in teaching passages like these; for instance, I have assigned Zhuangzi's gnarled tree alongside the Gospel of Matthew's flowers of the field who do not labor or spin. We do the careful gazing, looking through the glass. But my favorite part is when the undergraduates—as utilitarian or cynical as they may be—still sit back a bit and the noise of conversation starts, wondering at Daoist trees and Second Temple Jewish flowers, and wondering whether they themselves are surviving according to what construal of value in their own years to come.

It is in those moments, that in the plaza of the classroom, I delight in not knowing who will say what next.

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[78] 匠石之齊，至乎曲轅，見櫟社樹。其大蔽數千牛，絜之百圍，其高臨山十仞而後有枝，其可以為舟者旁十數。觀者如市，匠伯不顧，遂行不輟。弟子厭觀之，走及匠石，曰：「自吾執斧斤以隨夫子，未嘗見材如此其美也。先生不肯視，行不輟，何邪？」曰：「已矣，勿言之矣！散木也，以為舟則沈，以為棺槨則速腐，以為器則速毀，以為門戶則液樠，以為柱則蠹。是不材之木也，無所可用，故能若是之壽。」匠石歸，櫟社見夢曰：「女將惡乎比予哉？若將比予於文木邪？夫柤、梨、橘、柚、果、蓏之屬，實熟則剝，剝則辱，大枝折，小枝泄。此以其能苦其生者也，故不終其天年而中道夭，自掊擊於世俗者也。物莫不若是。且予求無所可用久矣，幾死，乃今得之，為予大用。使予也而有用，且得有此大也邪？且也，若與予也皆物也，奈何哉其相物也？而幾死之散人，又惡知散木！」Zhuangzi 莊子, translated by James Legge (1891), available on the Chinese Text Project, accessed July 28, 2022, <https://ctext.org/zhuangzi>.

[79] Albert Galvany, "Discussing Usefulness: Trees as Metaphor in the Zhuangzi," *Monumenta Serica* 57 (2009), 79.

CONCLUSION (MARA BRECHT)

When Reid pulled our group together, he proposed the *Christmas Carol* ghosts as an organizing metaphor. For those of you who don't know Dickens' story, Ebeenzer Scrooge is a miserly moneylender, who's visited by the ghost of his former business partner Jacob Marley and then three other ghosts on Christmas Eve.

Reid's plan sounded good, but I have to admit I didn't think much about the ghosts beyond the way they neatly divide time. Dickens' ghosts, however, are more than just a device for narrative structure, they also serve an edifying, even moralizing role as characters in the story: there are things Scrooge needs to learn, and the ghosts come to teach him.

At the risk of carrying the metaphor too far—and in a spirit of adventurous comparison—I'd like to "deliberately juxtapose" Dickens' ghosts with our presentations to draw out the wisdom of these generational reflections *for all of us in this room*, be we comparative theologians, interreligious theologians, or just plain old theologians. This set-up puts us all in the position of Ebeneezer Scrooge. This doesn't mean that I think Catholic theologians have been saying "Bah! Humbug" to comparative or interreligious theology, but rather just that comparative theology has something to teach all of us.

In Dickens' story, the Ghost of Christmas Present is a jolly giant in a green Santa suit, with dark curls and sparkling eyes. The Ghost escorts Scrooge to other worlds in Scrooge's own time—to places he would never visit. When there, Scrooge hears laughter from an abyss and hears a withered Tiny Tim bless his family. Scrooge learns that people, places, and life situations that seemed to him impoverished turn out to be places of joy and hope. He discovers forms of wealth he didn't know existed, and comes to see the uselessness of his own wealth.

In my talk, I argued that the pandemic accelerated digital blending and, further, that these circumstances foster interreligious tinkering and convergent practices. At the same time, I sketched a church with unfilled pews, empty confessionals, and vacant parish council seats.

My message wasn't too far off Dickens': Scrooge is surprised to find mirth in humble places, and challenged to assess his standards of values. Likewise, I want us to be surprised by the spiritual treasures that rise out of unexpected blends and challenged to evaluate our presumed standards of a "full" church or a "credible" spiritual practice.

Going forward, our church will not look like—will not practice like—it did even a few decades ago. It already doesn't. Can we learn from comparative theology how to hold productive tension among divergent theological imaginations, how to search out the riches of intimate interreligious coalescences? Can we learn to not just think interreligiously, but to *live* and *be* interreligiously?

The ethereal Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge to his childhood, an unhappy time he recalls but doesn't want to have anything to do with. As he journeys through his past he finds himself interrupted by swells of affection and surges of joy for the past, as well as regret over the present. At each turn, Scrooge begs the Ghost to

take him away. But the Ghost insists, "I told you these were shadows of the things that have been. … They are what they are, do not blame me!"[80]

The Ghost of the Past forces Scrooge to see things as they are and not as Scrooge has constructed them. This is precisely the point of History 2s—they interrupt the dominant narrative.

Scrooge ultimately can't bear having his own personal History 1 disrupted. He grabs a candle extinguisher, and "though [he] pressed it down with all his force," Dickens writes, "he could not hide the light which streamed… in an unbroken flood upon the ground." History 2s resist being absorbed into the globalizing story of History 1. Their light will not be extinguished.

Reid applies Chakrabarty's theory to the more-or-less collective story of the "new" comparative theology, noting History 2s that contest the cohesiveness of that account (for example, the emergence of creolized religion in the context of colonialism and enslavement and Louis Riel's messianic self-understanding). The challenge that Reid raises to comparative theology's received History 1 can be generalized as a challenge for all of us—as individuals and in our families, in our departments and disciplines, in our parishes and neighborhoods: When we're confronted with memories that interrupt and contradict the teleologically-ordered stories we tell about ourselves, will we cry out, like Scrooge, "Show me no more!"? Or will we have the courage Scrooge lacks, and allow our grip to be loosened and the light of History 2s' memories to flood in?

The bell strikes twelve. A new ghost arrives, and not a pleasant one either. Scrooge beholds "a solemn… draped and hooded" phantom who takes him to a world that exists without him. He cries out in dread. He begs for reassurance, but is met with only a spectral hand pointing to a neglected grave. Confronted with his feeble unmourned, death, Scrooge calls out: "This is a fearful place. In leaving it, I shall not leave its lesson, trust me. Let us go!"

No, Stephanie's account is not so grim as the Ghost of Yet to Come. She does not lead us to our metaphorical grave. And yet, I think there are elements of warning in her comments.

The first warning is couched in a message of possibility. It's a marvelous time, Stephanie says, with the sounds of the wide world playing to us across the plaza. But we can all too easily tune into only the notes that ring familiar. It's not only the melodies we should pay attention to—their harmonies and discordances—but who makes the music, whose instruments are missing or broken, who isn't present, and who sits quietly aside.

Stephanie's second warning is plainer: The digital age isn't new for future generations. It's old. And it's wearying. With so much always coming at Gen Z from every direction all the time, best to find a story to believe and hold fast to it. Best to sign up for the useful major and get the other requirements out of the way. Best to carve a path of expediency and travel along it. The untended grave Stephanie points to is characterized by utility, cynicism, and wariness. Here, comparative theology may play an important role in inviting students to thoughtfully choose values.

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[80] Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol: A Ghost Story of Christmas* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1843), retrieved from https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/46.

To think Catholic interreligiously, by contrast, is to foster efficacious uselessness, to nurture wonder, to embrace surprise. With Scrooge let us pledge to not leave behind the lesson of the untended grave.

Dickens finishes his tale by returning to the present, showing us a Scrooge who has been both chastened by a possible future while also comforted and warmed by the past and present. We the readers are left to imagine what Scrooge's real Yet to Come might look like. Having explored with Reid the pasts of interreligious reflection that don't fit the dominant narrative and with Stephanie the future prospects for interreligious reflection in a universe that is at once expanding and contracting, we also are left to imagine our own interreligious Yet to Come and, like Scrooge, make good on our promises toward it.

There are no better words to close this address with than Tiny Tim's own: "'God bless us, every one!'"

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Presidential Address
REMEMBERING THE REST OF LIFE: TOWARD A REST-INFLECTED THEOLOGY OF WORK AND ACTION

CHRISTINE FIRER HINZE
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As we gather on this Sunday morning in Atlanta, we bring to mind and heart all of God's children who are suffering, at this very moment, amid the injustices and evils and tragedies of our world. From the searing absence around dinner tables of children in Uvalde, Texas or elders in Buffalo, New York; to millions of displaced war, political, and climate refugees; to vulnerable citizens in nations of the Global South deprived of COVID vaccines and medical care easily available to the rich; to the extreme weather, raging fires, melting ice, and rising sea levels signaling climate change; to the racial, economic, cultural and political polarizations fracturing our political and ecclesial communities—we are surrounded by the realities and legacies of wicked problems, bitter conflicts, personal and institutional failures, and suffering. Suffering. Suffering. People are bewildered, hurting, grieving, and weighed down, and it all seems too much too bear. Our many advantages as theologians, educators, and citizens notwithstanding, we, like so many of our neighbors, find our energies, our hope, our agency, and our capacities to understand what's going on, much less figure out what to do, under great strain.

Far better than can I, esteemed colleagues in this Society—María Pilar Aquino, Paul Lakeland, Shawn Copeland, and Gemma Tulud Cruz, to name just a few—have, at recent annual meetings, lifted up and analyzed these evils, and challenged us to play our parts in responding to them. These scholars emphasize the degraded and degrading anthropologies underlying the consumerism, racism, sexism, and militarism infecting our contemporary neoliberal institutions and culture. They underscore the dominant system's ideological power to blind us to the extent it has permeated our lifeworlds and seeped into the inner reaches of our individual and collective psyches. As Lakeland observes, "The worst of the dangers in neoliberalism is that it has become as invisible as the air we breathe and, for the most part, we regard it as "reality;" as all-encompassing and inevitable. It offers us a seriously debased version of the human person."[1] Cruz, Copeland, Aquino, et al. further elaborate the colonialist, racist, and

[1] Paul Lakeland, "Crisis and Engagement: The Role of the Servant Theologian," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 74 (2019): 73.

classist aspects of the crisis Lakeland describes.[2] Their message is stark: from so many directions—and most acutely for the poor, for the marginalized and for non-elites—human dignity, even human survival, are under serious threat. These sober realities obligate us urgently as theologians, believers, and citizens, "to act courageously in defense of authentic human selfhood and the whole of creation."[3] And to do so, we must "confront the awful reality of the anti-human systems under which we suffer, even as we in some ways benefit from them."[4]

In the face of this enormity, this urgency, and these stakes, it feels trivial, distracting, and, perhaps even wrong to devote a presidential address to the subject of "rest." Suffering and injustice call for action, not retreat or complacency. What's more, we are part of a tiny minority of people on the planet with the means, time, and energy to afford to sit and contemplate a subject like rest. Doesn't that very privilege obligate us to, instead, de-prioritize leisurely reveries, clamber out of our hammocks or our recliners, and immerse ourselves—in all aspects of our theological work—in the humanizing and transformative labor that so badly needs to be done? Faithfulness to our Christian and human callings, and to preferential solidarity with the world's vulnerable majorities and our earth, surely call for no less.

No matter how legitimately pandemic-weary we may be feeling, in the riven, blood- and tear-stained world we inhabit today, choosing to fix our theological or practical attention on "rest" can look suspiciously like either an exercise in elitism, a subtle way to succumb to selfishness, an insult to our obligations to our profession and to our communities, or all of these.

Acknowledging the truth of such caveats, in this essay I attempt to build the beginnings of a case for the following thesis: Theologies, ethics, and practices of *work* and *activity* at best fall short, and at worst become dangerously corrupted, unless they are mindfully and properly connected to wellsprings and rhythms of *rest*. Fundamental to survival and well-being, rest is a basic human right.[5] For Jews and Christians, rest is more—a divine command on par with God's command to keep and till the earth, and a fecund gift. Our human capacity and need, duty and privilege to work and to act in the world come with an equally fundamental capacity and need, duty and privilege: to rest—for our own good, the common good, and for sake of what Christian scriptures and tradition speak of as the reign and glory of God. Good theologies, ethics, and practices of work and action are mutually dependent upon good theologies, ethics, and practices of rest. Further, from the point of view of Catholic social ethics, to value and practice good rest, and to ensure and protect good rest for others, are essential to the

[2] Gemma Tulud Cruz, "Theology and (De)Humanizing Work in the Twenty-First Century," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 75 (2021): 1-17; M. Shawn Copeland, "Panel Presentation – The CTSA at 75: Looking Back, Around and Forward | Paper Three – An Imperative to Act" *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 75 (2021): 27-31; María Pilar Aquino, "Theology Renewing Life: Prophetic Interventions and Enduring Commitments," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 75 (2021): 62-79.

[3] Lakeland, "Crisis and Engagement," 77.

[4] Lakeland, "Crisis and Engagement," 79.

[5] As is acknowledged in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70: 30 Articles on 30 Articles - Article 24," OHCHR, https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2018/12/universal-declaration-human-rights-70-30-articles-30-articles-article-24.

work of solidarity and the preferential option for the vulnerable, and for funding the resources we need to combat the powerful anti-human and anti-ecological forces that threaten us today.

Centering a theological ethic of rest does not mean denying the value, importance, and necessity of hard work. Indeed, our profession is replete with people who love and are dedicated to our work, and many of us love *to* work. Christian scripture and tradition support an ethos that esteems engaging in work, under dignified and just conditions, as a *bonum honestum*, as a way humans reflect the divine image, and as an integral part of the earthly life for which God has created us. That being said, in modern Catholic and Christian social thought and practice over the past century-plus, and especially in the United States, attention to work has far outrun attention to rest, to the detriment of the ways we understand and engage in both.[6]

Heightened interest in so-called "work-life balance" in the media and the general public in recent years further intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, issuing in a spate of articles, studies, and social media laments about overwork, rest deprivation, and their relationship to what many regard as an epidemic of anxiety, burnout, depression, and in some cases despair.[7] Delving into rest-related literature, one finds oneself navigating in a multidisciplinary sea of fascinating historical and contemporary, religious and secular, scholarly and popular writing on the subject. It quickly becomes clear that the intellectual and spiritual waters one might explore are vast, deep, and crisscrossed by many different and enticing currents. In this modest essay, I will seek only to scan a bit of the horizon, take some initial soundings, and set out "navigational buoy markers" at a number of sites meriting more extensive return expeditions.

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[6] Rest does receive some attention in modern Catholic social teaching. Recent examples are John Paul II, *Dies Domini* (May 31, 1998), https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1998/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_05071998_dies-domini.html; Francis, "General Audience of 12 September 2018" (September 12, 2018), https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2018/documents/papa-francesco_20180912_udienza-generale.html; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §2184-2188, https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM. Cf., Mark Oppenheimer, "Pope Francis Has a Few Words in Support of Leisure," *The New York Times*, April 26, 2013, https://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/27/us/pope-francis-has-a-few-words-in-support-of-leisure.html. For ecumenical, theological discussions of work and rest, see Theology of Work Project, "Balancing Rhythms of Rest and Work (Overview)," Theologyofwork.org, https://www.theologyofwork.org/key-topics/rest-and-work-overview.

[7] A tiny sample of this literature includes, Jonathan Malesic, "Opinion: The Pandemic Reminded Us: We Exist to Do More than Just Work," *The New York Times*, September 23, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/09/23/opinion/covid-return-to-work-rto.html; Charlie Warzel and Anne Helen Petersen, "How to Care Less about Work." *Atlantic Monthly (Boston, Mass.: 1993)*, December 5, 2021, https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/12/how-care-less-about-work/620902/; and the works of Cal Newport, e.g., "Why Do We Work Too Much?" *New Yorker*, August 30, 2021, https://www.newyorker.com/culture/office-space/why-do-we-work-too-much; Newport, *A World Without Email: Reimagining Work in an Age of Communication Overload* (New York: Random House/Penguin, 2021).

I. Setting Imaginative Coordinates

I propose that we set our course for this brief exploration of "work and the rest of life" within the imaginative vectors of two texts.

The first text is from the New Testament, Matthew's gospel chapter 11, verses 28-30. This text, from which the theme of our 2021 CTSA convention—"All you Who Labor…"—was drawn, reads:

> Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Mt 11:28-30).[8]

Here we see Jesus describe rest not as the cessation of our burdens or our labors, but rather as gift given in the midst of them. His listeners in that agricultural setting would have easily pictured the wood-hewn double yoke commonly used for working teams of oxen in the fields. They knew that in their scriptures, "yoke" could function as a symbol of servility or forced service; but that those same scriptures also spoke of obedience to Covenant law as taking on God's yoke. These farming people also knew that with a well-crafted yoke and experience, two oxen can become attuned to one another, enabling a collaboration in work that brings a certain companionship and ease, and that increases the power to accomplish it. Plowing is toilsome and exhausting labor—but a skilled driver, a properly fitted yoke, and the right partner can make the burden lighter.[9]

Our second text is a classic of 1960s rhythm & blues music gifted to the world by Otis Redding, a proud son of the state of Georgia and revered figure in the history of "southern soul." Born in 1941 on a sharecropper's farm in Jim Crow-era Dawson, Georgia, young Redding and his family later moved to Macon, Georgia where his father worked as a maintenance man and part-time preacher. Over a tragically short but remarkable career, Redding gained fame as a gifted performer who also composed some of the most iconic soul songs of the 1960s, including Aretha Franklin's signature hit song, "Respect." It is Redding's last and most universally recognized song, "Dock of the Bay," recorded in Memphis in December 1967 just three days before he was killed in a small-plane crash at the age of 26, that will enrich our reflection here. Its lyrics read:

> Sittin' in the morning sun . . . I'll be sittin' when the evening comes
> Watchin' the ships roll in . . . And I watch 'em roll away again

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[8] Holy Bible, NRSV Version. Cf. Nathan Bills, "Matthew 11.28-30: Jesus' Invitation to (Rest)ored Creation," *Leaven* 19, no. 2 (2012) https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven/vol19/iss2/6 ; Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Matthew 11;28-20: Jesus' Rest and the Sabbath," *Andres University Seminary Studies* 33, no. 3 (1984): 289-316.

[9] See Louis Isaac Rabinowitz, "Yoke," *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jewish Virtual Library, Gale Group, 2008), jewishvirtuallibrary.org/yoke; also, Beulah Wood, "Wisdom from and Ancient Implement," CBE International, March 4, 2016, https://www.cbeinternational.org/resource/article/mutuality-blog-magazine/wisdom-ancient-implement.

Oh I'm just sittin' on the dock of the bay, watchin' the tide roll away
Sittin' on the dock of the bay, wastin' time.

I left my home in Georgia, headin' for the Frisco Bay –
Cause I've had nothin' to live for, look like nothin' gonna come my way

So, I'm just sittin' on the dock of the bay, watchin' the tide roll away
Sittin' on the dock of the bay, wastin' time

Looks like nothing's gonna change;
Everything seems to remain the same
I can't do what ten people tell me to do,
So I guess I'll remain the same.

Sittin' here resting my bones,
This loneliness won't leave me alone
Listen, two thousand miles I roamed
Just to make this dock my home

Now, I'm just sittin' on the dock of the bay,
Watchin' the tide roll away
Sittin' on the dock of the bay, wastin' time …[10]

Wildly different as these two texts are, together they can help refract for us some of the multiple meanings of rest, both amid and beyond work. If, in the Ignatian spirit of composition of place, we let ourselves sink into the worlds their words paint, we might imagine ourselves in the crowd listening to Jesus, or on the dock, experiencing the sights, the sounds, the smells, the feelings of those places. Neither setting, we might notice, is particularly tranquil: Matthew records Jesus speaking these consoling words in the middle of discourses and pericopes where conflict and antagonism with the powers that be, misunderstandings by friends and followers, and Jesus' own frustrations with it are front and center.[11] And while the visual setting of "Dock of the Bay" is beautiful, its lyrics bespeak feelings of melancholy, disappointment, and potential impasse for the singer (a character Redding conjured as a sort of alter-ego during a brief seaside visit amid his whirlwind tour schedule, just as he was on the verge of his greatest popular success). Picturing the singer lingering on the dock, far from his home, we might also remember that in the gaze of a white-dominated society in 1967, this young Black man would be regarded at best with dismissal and more

[10] Otis Redding, "(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay," composed by Otis Redding with Steve Cropper, recorded December 1967, YouTube video/audio, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wyPKRcBTsFQ Cf. Stuart Miller, "Inside Otis Redding's Final Masterpiece '(Sittin on) the Dock of the Bay,'" *Rolling Stone*, December 10, 2017, https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/inside-otis-reddings-final-masterpiece-sittin-on-the-dock-of-the-bay-122170/.

[11] Bacchiocchi, "Matthew 11:28-20," 291-293.

likely with suspicion; assumed to be and treated as an out-of-place vagrant, a racially-otherized loiterer who is merely taking up space and, indeed, wasting time.

Read together, these two very different, classic texts invite manifold lines of reflection. Here they will help us illuminate truths about rest—rest's quiet invitation to encounter and to dwell in reality-*la realidad*, both amid and apart from the hubbub and striving of everyday life-*lo cotidiano*; rest's varied forms and textures; its status as necessity and right for people and for creation; and its healing, whole-ing, subversive, and transformative powers.[12]

II. Describing Rest

Rest refers to moments, states, dimensions of experience or periods of time free of effortful activity or goal-oriented striving. Rest connotes pause, a relaxing, a letting-go, receptivity, being rather than doing.[13] Tricia Hersey and Gemma Cruz note that rest is always embodied and personal; in rest one integrates or reconnects body and spirit.[14] Though we each rest as individuals, we depend on our communities to provide the conditions, support, and safety we need in order to rest. When we rest, we let our guard down and we are vulnerable; so we cannot and do not rest just anywhere, or with just anyone.

Rest is not work. It can be intertwined with work and with other kinds of effortful activity such as physical exercise, civic action, engaging in hobbies or crafts, communicating face-to-face or through media, and even purposive or nonpurposive "idle activity" like scrolling on one's phone or surfing the internet. Rest has elements

[12] On the rich connotations of the concepts of *lo cotidiano* and *la realidad*, see, e.g., Ada María Isasi-Díaz, "*Lo Cotidiano*: A Key Element of Mujerista Theology," *Journal of Hispanic / Latino Theology*, 10, no. 1 (2002) 5-17. Though space does not permit it here, Latine/x practices of *fiesta* (as well as *siesta*) are an important locus for studying how communities, especially marginalized communities, engage in culture-affirming forms of celebration and social rest, simultaneously creating spaces of embodied resistance to what Tricia Hersey calls "grind culture." E.g., Lydia Muñoz, "Fiesta: The Act of Resistance," *ResourceUMC*, June 30, 2020, https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/fiesta-the-act-of-resistance; Roberto Goizueta, "Fiesta: Life in the Subjunctive," in *From the Heart of Our People: Latino/a Explorations in Catholic Systematic Theology*, ed. Orland O. Espín and Miguel H. Díaz (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 84-99; Gabrielle Hickmon, "How Moving to Spain Changed My Approach to Wellness," *Domino*, March 23, 2019, 2022, https://www.domino.com/content/spain-culture-versus-us/.

[13] Some of these qualities are invoked as characterizing the state of leisure in philosopher Josef Pieper's renowned treatise, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press [1952] 2009), at 46-47, inter alia. Cf. Mortimer Adler's related, contemporaneous reflections on work and leisure in, e.g., Mortimer J. Adler, "The Use of Free Time," *Self-Educated American*, September 19, 2011, https://selfeducatedamerican.com/2011/09/19/the-use-of-free-time/; Mortimer J. Adler, n.d. "ADLER ARCHIVE: The Ideas of Work and Leisure – 5," *Radicalacademy*, https://radicalacademy.org/adlerworkleisure5.html

[14] Cruz, "(De)Humanizing Work," 8-13, provides an insightful treatment of "rest and embodiment" that complements and in many ways exceeds the one I present here; see also Tricia Hersey, "Rest Is Anything That Connects Your Mind and Body," *The Nap Ministry*, February 21, 2022, https://thenapministry.wordpress.com/2022/02/21/rest-is-anything-that-connects-your-mind-and-body/.

in common with the receptive, contemplative state of being that philosophers like Joseph Pieper call leisure, but rest and leisure activity are not one and the same.[15]

Our orienting texts point to two major ways we experience rest: rest-amid other kinds of activity and rest during time set apart from other kinds of activities.

Rest-amid. This is rest we may not consciously notice, but that we experience and depend upon, most basically in the embodied rhythms of physical activity—the pauses between breaths, between heartbeats, between steps: effort, rest, effort, rest. Whether during sleep or in the thick of strenuous physical activity, these kinds of "rest-amidst it all" are ever-present.

In his recent study, Conor Kelly discusses a different kind of rest-amid, associated with feelings of happiness, that positive psychologists have named "flow." A state of focus, easy efficacy and engaged repose, flow provides a sense of restfulness in the midst of energy-expending activities. Athletes, artists, surgeons, hobbyists, teachers, speakers, writers, skilled tradespersons, children at play—across an enormous variety of persons, activities, and cultures—all describe the experience of flow in similar ways: as feeling absorbed, present, and "in the zone," while time, along with any sense of anxiety or arduous striving, often seems to dissolve.[16]

Jesus' words in Matthew 11 about taking up his yoke and receiving rest for our souls point to yet another, spiritual kind of "rest-amid" into which he invites his disciples: a graced restfulness and serenity that can undergird our labors and leaven our spirits even in the midst of toil, trials, and troubles.[17] At the same time, the gospels depict Jesus as also keenly aware of the importance of taking time apart, for prayer, for solitude, and for rest.[18]

Rest-apart. This second basic kind of rest, which takes place outside of work and other utilitarian activities, is harkened to in Otis Redding's images of sitting on the dock of the bay. Rest-apart occurs in times and places when one ceases striving and puts aside work-related activities. Sleep, that primal human need, and physical relaxation are the most obvious examples of this kind of rest, but so are the rest of Sabbath in the Jewish tradition, or time set aside for meditation, for immersing oneself in natural beauty, for simple social gatherings, for celebrations, for worship or for other

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[15] In *The Fullness of Free Time: A Theological Account of Leisure and Recreation in the Moral Life* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2020), Conor Kelly parses time spent outside of waged labor and unpaid care work into three categories: self-care activities (sleep, grooming, etc.), leisure, and recreation. Building on western philosophy's long history of reflection on humanly-worthy and enriching leisure, Kelly proposes that authentic leisure has the capacity to evoke what contemporary positive psychologists describe as experiences of "flow." On 'flow,' see, the many works of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and colleagues, e.g., *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (New York: Basic Books, 1990.)

[16] In contrast to idleness, relaxing, or sleeping, Kelly argues, leisure is engaged, free-time activity whose intrinsic value lies in its capacity to induce flow, and in so doing, to offer a foretaste of the eternal Sabbath of God's kingdom (see Kelly, *The Fullness of Free* Time, ch 1, esp. 17-22). Leisure as Kelly describes it is not identical with the notion of rest discussed herein, nor is the experience of rest identical with the experience of flow. Flow and leisure contain dimensions of rest, but the category of rest is larger than, and thus not reducible to, either.

[17] This divine gift of "rest for the soul" amid trials is evoked elsewhere in Scriptures, perhaps most familiarly in the well-loved 23rd Psalm.

[18] Some examples are Mt 14:22-23; Lk 5:16; Mk 6:30-32; Mt 14:13; Mk 7:24; Mk 4:35-38.

forms of rest and refreshment apart from the everyday grind. Like Otis Redding's singer, a person engaging in rest-apart can appear to be wasting time, but that assumption betrays a narrowly capitalist or reductively utilitarian perspective.

Within these two broad categories, physician Saundra Dalton-Smith identifies a variety of types of rest that contribute to holistic human well-being.[19] She stresses the importance of learning to recognize and attend to the particular kind of rest-deficit one may be experiencing. If my fatigue is rooted in something other than a physical rest deficit, sleep alone is unlikely to not fully address or relieve it.

Besides **physical rest**, Dalton-Smith discusses six other kinds of rest. These include **mental rest**—taking a break from effortful thinking, or shifting one's concentration to a less taxing, more enjoyable subject. **Sensory rest** is taking one or more of our senses off-line, so to speak, for short periods of time. Resting your eyes, leaving a noisy place for a quiet one, unplugging from the lights and barrage of images on computer and phone screens are examples.[20] **Emotional rest** is "the cessation of emotional striving," experienced when one no longer feels "the need to perform or to meet external expectations." In emotional rest, I feel free and can allow myself to experience and honor the full gamut of my feelings, including, as in Redding's song, those that are difficult, painful, or sad. As "Dock of the Bay's" lyrics intimate, emotional rest does not preclude undergoing painful or negative emotions; rather, in emotional rest I am able to let my guard down, feel and acknowledge all the feelings, and "be" with the realities they disclose.[21] **Creative rest** "is the rest we feel when we immerse ourselves in…beauty whether natural or humanly made." We can access this kind of rest by, for example, spending time "near the ocean or shore or in the forest, looking at beautiful art or listening to beautiful music or performances.[22] Considered in these terms, "Dock of the Bay" depicts a person partaking in multiple forms of rest—including physical, emotional, and creative.

Social rest is finding comfort and solace in our relationships and social connections. Versus the rest-lessness of loneliness, isolation, and superficiality, social

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[19] Saundra Dalton-Smith, M.D., *Sacred Rest: Recover Your Life, Renew Your Energy, Restore Your Sanity* (New York: FaithWords, 2017). This book is representative of a currently popular genre wherein (often women, writing for other women) authors blend research-based and Christian perspectives to address the challenges and gifts of rest. Other examples are Glynnis Whitwer, *Doing Busy Better: Enjoying God's Gifts of Work and Rest* (Ada, MI: Revell, Baker Publishing Group, 2017); Kate H. Rademacher, *Reclaiming Rest: The Promise of Sabbath, Solitude, and Stillness in a Restless World* (Minneapolis, MN: Broadleaf Books, 2021).

[20] See Dalton-Smith, *Sacred Rest*, chs. 4, 5, and 9.

[21] Dalton-Smith, *Sacred Rest*, 58. Some commentators read "Dock of the Bay" as a song that verges on despair; e.g. philosopher Daniel Tarade writes, "This is the story of a scared, lonely person festering within a life devoid of meaning." Daniel Tarade, "Peak Plaintive: Sittin on the dock of the bay," LifeTypeStuff, https://www.lifetypestuff.com/blog/2019/7/9/wpxuw7iwp2ojzw3al3ni7kxn39yly. But to those familiar with the genres of blues and gospel, Redding's song depicts, rather, a person facing hard realities, acknowledging and lamenting the pain of them, but also affirming his dignity and tapping into hope as he rests on the dock. Cf. the illuminating decolonial, theological treatment of the blues in Rufus Burnett, Jr. *Decolonizing Revelation: A Spatial Reading of the Blues* (Lexington, KY: Fortress Academic, 2018).

[22] Dalton-Smith, *Sacred Rest*, 95-96.

rest, Dalton-Smith explains, is about "making space for those relationships that revive you and where you are acknowledged and valued."[23] Social rest can be experienced in a variety of forms and contexts from intimate relationships in private to large groups or public spaces where one experiences respect, belonging, and ease, as within a familiar faith congregation, or in a public hangout like a bar, a park, or a coffee shop. Finally, Dalton-Smith speaks of **spiritual, or soul rest**, as "the ability to connect beyond the physical and mental and feel a deep sense of belonging, love, acceptance and purpose," finding sanctuary and healing "in a security and peace" that comes from relationship with the spiritual or the Divine.[24] We will examine this kind of rest in more detail in Part IV.

III. The Eclipse of Rest in Late-Capitalist, Consumerist Society

Capitalism never rests. Consumer, finance, or surveillance capitalism—all of them run on an endless clock. For good or ill, their disembodied endlessness has infiltrated all of our "lifeworlds," and all of us. From its beginnings up through the mid-twentieth century, the US labor movement fought to shorten required weekly hours of waged work to free up time for workers and their families.[25] In the decades since, not less time at work, but higher salaries to increase consumer buying power became the driving goal.[26] This shift is emblematic of the insidious power of neoliberal economic culture to draw us into the interminable restlessness of the "world of total work," that moral

[23] Dalton-Smith, *Sacred Rest*, 79-80.

[24] Dalton-Smith, *Sacred Rest*, 67.

[25] The modern fight to reclaim free time for non-elite wage workers has a long history. In 1865, e.g., US labor advocate Ira Steward countered critics' claims that shorter hours would increase sloth and debauchery among the working classes, arguing that "it is long hours that have a debilitating effect on the nation's economy and culture," since people whose lives are consumed with wage-earning tend to be too exhausted to seek outside of work "anything more than will satisfy bodily necessities." Citing the example of a mechanic who labors fourteen hours a day, Steward asks: "How many newspapers or books can he read? What time has he to visit or receive visits? To take baths? To write letters? To cultivate flowers? To walk with his family? Will he not be quite as likely to vote in opposition to his real interests as a favor? … What will he most enjoy, works of art, or rum? Will he go to a meeting on Sunday? … His home means to him his food and his bed." Steward cited in Lawrence B. Glickman, *A Living Wage: U.S. Workers and the Making of Consumer Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 104. It is striking how easily Steward's words can be adapted to describe the effects on workers (both non-elite and professional) of enmeshment in the modern "work-spend-consume" cycle discussed by Schor and others. See Christine Firer Hinze, *Radical Sufficiency: Work, Livelihood and a U.S. Catholic Economic Ethic* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2021), chs. 5, 6; Mike Konczal, *Freedom from the Market: America's Fight to Liberate Itself from the Grip of the Invisible Hand* (New York: The New Press, 2021); also Guðmundur D. Haraldsson and Annie Spratt, "Going Public: Iceland's Journey to a Shorter Working Week," Autonomy.Work., 2021, https://autonomy.work/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ICELAND_4DW.pdf.

[26] For this history, see, e.g., Benjamin K. Hunnicutt, *Work Without End: Abandoning Shorter Wages for the Right to Work* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988); also Hunnicutt, "Monsignor John A. Ryan and the Shorter Hours of Labor: A Forgotten Vision of 'Genuine' Progress," *Catholic Historical Review* 69, no. 3 (1983): 384–402.

theologian Bernard Häring warned about in the early 1960s.[27] This is a world where "men are driven from their homes, farms, and families to build the earthly paradise of the workers, of the men without a Sabbath, men who *despite shorter hours and better working conditions* have become men without rest."[28] Three decades later, economist Juliet Schor's *The Overworked American* described an entrenched economic culture where people's time and energies had become even more captured by the "squirrel cage" of a work-spend-consume cycle.[29]

As Gemma Cruz, social theorists like Ulrich Beck, and many others point out, the abstract, 24/7 worlds of finance and mass production/consumerist capitalism are *not* synced to the embodied realities, rhythms, and needs of flesh-and-blood human beings or their communities.[30] Certainly, and this bears emphasizing, modern economic systems' innovation and productivity have made possible survival, health, and better lives for millions of people. But to the extent that we become servants to and reshaped in the image of the market system and its inherent restlessness, our humanity is degraded and threatened. Colonizing our time, encouraging addictive (that is, habituated, unfree, unhealthy, and ultimately dissatisfying) patterns of working and of filling our non-work time, the work-spend-consume culture breeds and sustains a world of total work, and total restlessness.[31]

Maintaining this state of affairs is very profitable for some, but harmful for the majority who are burdened by varied combinations of what researchers track as "time poverty" and "resource poverty."[32] The affluent who benefit from this *status quo* rarely

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[27] Josef Pieper is credited with coining the phrase "world of total work," in his treatise on leisure. See, e.g., *Leisure, the Basis of Culture,* 78: "More and more, at the present time…the world of work is becoming our entire world; it threatens to engulf us completely, and the demands of the world of work become greater and greater, till at last they make a 'total' claim upon the whole human nature."

[28] Bernard Haring, *The Law of Christ,* Vol. II: Special Moral Theology, trans. Edwin G. Kaiser (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1963), 325, emphasis supplied. Discussing Sunday/ Sabbath observance, he writes, "Without the sacred time of repose and worship man becomes a mere slave of work (325)."

[29] Juliet Schor, *The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

[30] See Cruz, "(De)Humanizing Work," esp. 1-7; and the works of Ulrich Beck, e.g., *Brave New World of Work,* trans. Patrick Camiller (Cambridge, UK: Policy Press, 2000), esp. chs. 3, 5. Beck's analysis of "risk society" adds social theoretical insight to Cruz's helpful treatment of the "precariat."

[31] Cf., Nicole Marie Shippen, *Decolonizing Time* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017.) For extended critiques of consumerism's negative effects by Catholic theologians, see e.g., John Kavanaugh, SJ, *Following Christ in a Consumer Society: 25th Anniversary ed.* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006); Vincent Miller, *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Culture in a Consumer Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2004); David Cloutier, *The Vice of Luxury: Economic Excess in a Consumer Age* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2015); Firer Hinze, *Radical Sufficiency,* ch. 6.

[32] S. Eries, Rania Antonopoulos, Thomas Masterson, Ajit Zacharias, Roberto Donadi, Paola Lorenzana, and Celina Hernández, "The Interlocking of Time and Income Deficits: Revisiting Poverty Measurement, Informing Policy Responses," Levyinstitute.org, 2012, https://www.levyinstitute.org/pubs/rpr_12_12.pdf. See also, Ajit Zacharias, "How Time Deficits and Hidden Poverty Undermine the Sustainable Development Goals," *Policy Notes* 4 (2017), Levy

resist it; we are too busy "singing in our chains."[33] Non-elites, and especially the poor and marginalized, have their hands full grappling with wearying, often soul-crushing degrees of both time and resource poverty. And those who do question or flout the restlessness regime are likely to pay consequences, as they will be neither understood nor rewarded by the powers that be. For addressing this apparent impasse, the wisdom and practices of religious traditions can offer important resources.

IV. Spiritual Rest and Sabbath Rest in Judaism and Christianity

Historically and today, spiritual and religious traditions offer visions and practices of work and rest that resist, challenge, and offer alternatives to the rest-less and dehumanizing "worlds of total work" inflicted upon Israel in ancient Egypt, or upon enslaved African Americans, or upon people in the concentration and work camps and gulags of the twentieth century, or upon sweat-shop laborers in factories of the global supply chain.[34]

The centrality of Sabbath-keeping in Jewish law and practice is one remarkable and instructive example.[35] As my colleague Sarit Kattan Gribetz has shown, over centuries, Jews' engagement in social and religious ordering of time has served to shape and maintain both their communal identity, and their communal difference from the non-Jewish world.[36] Keeping Sabbath serves both these functions, and has much to teach us about better ways of working and resting.

For both Jews and Christians, Sabbath rest and worship follow God's example and command. In observing Sabbath, God's people celebrate and participate in God's crowning creation—the rest, *menuha*, understood as "tranquility, serenity, peace, and repose"—of the seventh day; and they remember God's redemptive and liberative action on their history and lives.[37] On the Sabbath Jews are also to extend that liberative

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Institute.org, https://www.levyinstitute.org/publications/how-time-deficits-and-hidden-poverty-undermine-the-sustainable-development-goals. Cf., Claire Wolfteich, "Time Poverty, Women's Labor, and Catholic Social Teaching: A Practical Theological Exploration." *Journal of Moral Theology*, 2, no. 2 (June 2013): 40-59.

[33] Lakeland, "Crisis and Engagement," 73, quoting Robert Mangabeiro Unger, "The Dictatorship of No Alternatives," in *What Should the Left Propose?* (London: Verso, 2006), 4.

[34] Among many horrific historical examples of the degradation of human beings, the exploitation of their work, and the theft of their rest and restfulness, see the especially chilling eye-witness account of Charles Ball, who as an enslaved person experienced first-hand the installation and operation of the terror-based "gang work" system, designed to eke out maximum labor and profits from enslaved African American plantation workers in the early-nineteenth century US South. In Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), ch. 4.

[35] Many thanks to my Fordham Theology colleague Sarit Kattan Gribetz for generously sharing with me resources, ideas, and wisdom drawn from her studies of time, Sabbath, and rest in Judaism.

[36] Sarit Kattan Gribetz, *Time and Difference in Rabbinic Judaism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020).

[37] Abraham Heschel, *The Sabbath* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1951), 22-23. In this modern classic, Heschel notes that the term, *menuha,* also appears in Psalm 23, v. 2, "He leads me beside the restful waters" (23).

rest and freedom to servants and employees, neighbors and strangers, animals and the natural world.

Jewish scholar Eitan Fishbane centers this "rest-apart" in his description of Shabbat as a weekly recollection of *shalom*, the wholeness and redemption of the world. Sabbath, as Abraham Heschel writes, is about finding holiness in time. In the space of *menuha* created by Sabbath, "we intuit the interconnected unity of God, nature, and person."[38] As we rest, we know that "people suffer in our home cities and in distant regions of the world." And though the pain of poverty and the scourge of injustice "do not disappear with the lighting of the Sabbath candles," Fishbane continues, "Shabbat does open up a vision of a world redeemed; we taste the dream of an earth blessed with perfection, an ideal that we can work toward again with renewed strength in the week to come. The wholeness and illumination of Shabbat call us to raise up the brokenness of this world and all who are driven low by its pain."[39]

Writer Donna Schaper, taking a different tack, envisages Sabbath as also "rest-amid." For Schaper, the "sense of Sabbath" resides in any moment that actively includes the presence of God or Spirit. In our everyday lives, this Sabbath sense is accessible especially through "rituals that have the potential of unifying our fragmented days and time. Rituals keep time from becoming all of the same anxious pace and piece. … We ritualize time so that it can become expansive." Amid daily and weekly activities, such rituals—which may be as simple and mundane as the practices of cooking and gathering for a family meal, or the habit among traditional Jewish women of hanging out their wash on Monday mornings—can provide enriching and reliable moments for grounding, community, and restfulness.[40]

For millennia, Jewish Sabbath-keeping rituals have borne a wisdom that Harvard Business School researchers are now rediscovering and documenting in today's workplaces: people work and do better when their jobs include regular, *predictable and required* times away from work.[41] Sabbath-keeping also witnesses to a truth that privileged elites may too easily forget: creating space and time for rest takes work! Susanna Heschel, daughter of the renowned Rabbi Abraham Heschel, describes the flurry of work and preparation in her parents' home each Friday that preceded the pause and rest that descended as her mother kindled the Shabbat candles.[42] Observing this predictable, required time of cessation took planning, advance labor, and discipline. For observant Jews living in non-majority-Jewish cultures, keeping Shabbat also

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[38] Heschel, *The Sabbath.*

[39] Eitan Fishbane, "The Sabbath Soul: Mystical Reflections on the Transformative Power of Holy Time," *Spirituality and Practice*, at https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/22117. Cf. Fishbane, *The Sabbath Soul* (New York: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2012).

[40] Donna Schaper, "Sabbath Sense: A Spiritual Antidote for the Overworked," *Spirituality & Practice*, book excerpt, at https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/18225. Cf. Schaper, *Sabbath Sense,* (New York: Innisfree Press, 1997).

[41] Leslie A. Perlow and Jessica L. Porter, "Making Time off Predictable—and Required," *Harvard Business Review*, October 1, 2009, https://hbr.org/2009/10/making-time-off predictable-and-required.

[42] Susannah Heschel, "Introduction," in Heschel, *The Sabbath*, vii-ix. She goes on to describe the contrasting mood and peace of Shabbat time, where a spirit of *menuha* – "a restfulness [of body and soul] that is also a celebration" was practiced (xiv).

requires the willingness to be different. Through Shabbat and other religious festivals, Jews sustain and celebrate their communal identity and difference. They also resist, challenge, and place boundaries around today's "24/7-on" treatment of time.

Christians, too, are enjoined to observe the tradition of Sabbath, and for centuries have done so by partaking in communal worship and rest from work on Sundays, the day of Jesus' Easter resurrection. Today, however, at least for a majority of US Christians, this commandment seems to have dropped off the decalogue tablets. Pushing against this trend, Christian theologian David Jensen promotes Sabbath rest as a humanizing spiritual practice. He writes: "Israel's sabbath laws codify that people do not live for work, but from God's life." As the pattern of God's work in Genesis 1–2 shows, "good rest comes . . .where time is set aside, away from work, for no purposeful activity other than to rest and enjoy the world, one's companions, and the God who makes all things new." Importantly, taking Sabbath time "frees us from false dependence on our own work. We can rest and say that we have worked enough, in the end, because God is already at work for us." [43] Agreeing, Norman Witzka highlights nurturing relationships and "delight" as two important ways of partaking in Sabbath rest. He links the latter to Genesis 1–2, where YHWH completes and culminates creation on the seventh day, by bringing into being the Sabbath, and delighting in all that has been made.[44]

Sabbath points us back to Dalton-Smith's final form of rest, spiritual or soul rest. Soul rest "replaces striving when our identity is secure," Glynnis Whitwer writes.[45] "Spiritual rest is a deep sense of confidence and trust," a resting in God. "Soul rest is not circumstantial, nor does it need to be renewed. Rather, soul rest…is rooted in faith and confidence that we are deeply and unconditionally loved…and held safe." We rest when, even in the face of fears and insecurities, "we fully trust we are safe in the hands of God."[46]

Strikingly, Thomistic theology etches this condition of spiritual rest and repose into the very design of the human soul, in Aquinas's treatment of *complacentia.* Brian Traska recalls Frederick Crowe's famous analysis of Thomas on two types of love. The first is receptive—"complacency in the good"—resting, accepting, and delighting in the good that is. The second is active "concern for the good"—desiring and moving toward the good. The Latin phrase, *complacentia boni*, resting in the good, points to the starting point, as well as the terminus, for all of our loves and strivings: first, we rest; then we seek; then we rest. Thomas's treatment of *complacentia* also affirms a human predisposition for the deep rest in God to which spiritual rest refers.[47]

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[43] David Jensen, *Responsive Labor: A Theology of Work* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2006), 63.

[44] Norman Wirzba, *Living the Sabbath: Discovering the Rhythms of Rest and Delight,* foreword by Wendell Berry (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006). Wirzba, a Christian theologian, draws liberally upon Heschel's work.

[45] Whitwer, *Doing Busy Better,* 187.

[46] Whitwer, *Doing Busy Better,* 67, citing Rom 8:38-39.

[47] Brian Traska, "Can Mindfulness Make You A Better Lover?" *Lonergan Institute Blog*, July 18, 2018, accessed at https://bclonergan.org/can-mindfulness-make-you-a-better-lover-part-one-of-a-four-part-series/; Frederick E. Crowe, SJ, "Complacency and Concern in the Thought of St. Thomas," *Theological Studies* 20, no. 1 (1959), 1-39. Cf. St Philip's Seminary,

On the level of practice, putting rest into our days and weeks opens up time and space for the slower, more intuitive reflection and patient "waiting for reality to reveal itself" that that are constitutive of the contemplative and spiritual—and I would add, scholarly—life.[48] In this regard, Francis Clooney, in his 2003 CTSA plenary address, describes the work of comparative theology as, at bottom, learning new ways of *seeing*, by plying a form of theologizing that is "based on insight and instinct, prolonged attentiveness, beauty, and bliss, going broad by going deep." On this path of learning to see, Clooney continues, "we learn to let go," and "we see ourselves anew."[49] Zen teacher and Christian theologian Ruben Habito writes eloquently of the right-brained approach of Zen, and on meditation and deep silence.[50] As a range of spiritual traditions attest, in times and postures of rest, the fertile, humanizing processes of imagination, insight, understanding, and wisdom have space to germinate and grow.

V. Rest as Resistance, Healing, and Empowerment

As Jewish Sabbath-keeping shows, prioritizing rest-amid and rest-apart from work is also a way of practicing spiritual and practical resistance to anti-human and anti-God forces afoot in one's world.[51] When we rest, and foster rest and restfulness within and around us, we engage in an ancient and powerful human strategy for surviving, opposing, and strengthening our capacities to subvert the necrophilic forces that threaten all around.

This insight is at the center of the work of Atlanta-based artist, womanist theologian, and founder of the Rest is Resistance/Nap Ministry, Tricia Hersey.[52] Hersey, who began this work while studying at Emory's Candler Divinity School, has drawn on Black, Afrofuturist, womanist, and theological sources to create what she calls the "Rest is Resistance" movement. Hersey's "rest is resistance manifesto"

"Complacent Love and the Role of the Holy Spirit in Creation," *St Philip's Seminary*, June 23, 2017, https://oratory-toronto.org/map-year/2017/06/23/complacent-love-role-holy-spirit-creation/.

[48] Douglas E. Christie, "Wasting Time Conscientiously," *Oneing* 10, no. 1, *Unveiled*, posted May 22, 2022., https://cac.org/news/wasting-time-conscientiously-by-douglas-e-christie-oneing-unveiled/.

[49] Francis X. Clooney, SJ, "Learning to See: Comparative Practice and the Widening of Theological Vision," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 58 (2003): 5.

[50] See, e.g., Ruben L. F. Habito, "Be Still and Know: A Zen Reading of a Biblical Saying," *Tricycle* Magazine, (Spring 2017), https://tricycle.org/magazine/pure-of-heart/; Habito, *Be Still and Know: Zen and the Bible* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017). Cf. "How to Relax," *Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation*, https://thichnhathanhfoundation.org/relax.

[51]Heschel speaks in this regard of Sabbath as a powerful, regular practice of stepping back from immersion in "technical civilization," thereby to attain a degree of detachment and freedom in relation to its dominant systems. "To set aside one day a week for freedom…a day of… detachment, of independence…, a day on which we stop worshiping the idols of a technical civilization, a day in which we use no money, a day of armistice in the economic struggle with our fellow man and the forces of nature – is there any other institution that holds out more hope for [human] progress than the Sabbath?" Heschel, *The Sabbath*,28.

[52] See Minneapolis Museum of Arts Talk, "Rest as a Portal For Healing," by Tricia Hersey, Nov. 14, 2020, accessed at https://vimeo.com/48370876; "The Nap Ministry," https://thenapministry.wordpress.com/; Tricia Hersey, *Rest is Resistance: A Manifesto* (New York, Hatchette/Little, Brown, 2022).

centers on four tenets: 1) Rest is a form of resistance because it disrupts and pushes back against capitalism and white supremacy. 2) Our bodies are a site of liberation. 3) Naps, rest, and sleep provide a healing portal to imagine, invent and heal. Hersey speaks of sleep and daydreaming as creating a Third Space (a notion that has some intriguing resonances with the physical "third places" being promoted among urban planners and civil-society advocates today)[53] where healing spiritual connections with ourselves, our ancestors, and communities (evocative of Christians' belief in the spiritual bonds among the living and dead of the communion of saints) can take place, and new, utopic/alternative visions and imaginations can gestate and be birthed. 4) In her final tenet, Hersey is explicit about her movement's concern to honor and make reparations for the rest—and space to dream—stolen from African-American ancestors: "Our Dream Space has been stolen and we want it back. We will reclaim it through rest." Referencing the work of M. Shawn Copeland, Hersey asks: "How do we care for our own bodies as sacred? How do we cooperate to craft a world in which all bodies can thrive?"[54] For Hersey, this requires what bell hooks calls a "meticulous love practice" grounded in community-care (versus individualist, commodified, self-care) and rest. "Exhaustion," she concludes, "will not save us. To imagine a new world that centers liberation, rest must be our foundation to invent, restore, imagine and build."[55]

Hersey's movement focuses on the many powers of "rest-apart," including rest's ability to nurture and replenish vision and energies vital to the fights against economic and racial injustice, and the fight for social transformation. She identifies a key locus for this work in popular social movements, wherein the experiences and determination of people at the grassroots witness to the presence and power of "rest-amid" struggles for a better world. Prodded by a holy restlessness for justice and peace, and immersed in the messiness and difficulties of efforts to attain them, Hersey invites change-seekers to find their fortitude and strength in community- and spiritually-grounded rest, both apart from and amid their strivings.

A beautiful example of this, recounted by Martin Luther King, Jr., concerns Mother Pollard, one of the elders of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, during the bus boycott of 1955 and 1956. This elderly, "poor and uneducated" Black woman deeply impressed the young King as "amazingly intelligent and…understanding of the meaning of the movement," and she became a valued source of love and inspiration for him. Though in her seventies, Mother Pollard walked to work daily during the bus boycott. Despite her advanced years, she refused to take the bus and was adamant that she would continue to walk to see change happen, explaining, poignantly, to Rev. King, "My feets is tired, but my soul is rested."[56]

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[53] On the critical social value of "third places," see Ray Oldenberg, *The Great Good Place* (New York: Hatchett Books, 1999), chs. 1, 2. Among other benefits, these third places offer spaces where "social rest" among neighbors and strangers can be enjoyed.

[54] Hersey, "A Portal for Healing," citing M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing History: Body, Race, and Being* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010).

[55] Hersey, "Rest as A Portal for Healing." Cf. Leah Fleming and Tiffany Griffith, "From a Historic Perspective, Rest Can Be a Form of Resistance," *Georgia Public Broadcasting*, October 8, 2021, https://www.gpb.org/news/2021/10/08/historic-perspective-rest-can-be-form-of-resistance.

[56] Recounted in Martin Luther King, Jr. *Strength to Love* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, [1963] 2010), 130-131.

One other deeply valuable form of the rest that resists, heals, and empowers merits marking for further exploration: humor, and its attendant laughter. In *Mortal Blessings,* a memoir of her mother's last days, Angela Alaimo O'Donnell reflects on humor and the comic as sacramental conduits to transcendence.[57] Laughter provides a peculiar, embodied and enspirited moment of "rest-amid" that refreshes by simultaneously taking us out of the moment, and grounding us in reality.[58] We laugh at the unexpected, the absurd, the incongruent, or at surprising, often paradoxical recognitions about what is true. Members of subordinated groups laugh at the folly of their supposed superiors. O'Donnell speaks of "redeeming laughter" as also signaling eschatological hope.

> Humor…allows us to suspend the rules of the ordinary world, if only temporarily, since it takes us out of ourselves and our current situation…and enables us to glimpse a consoling vision that delights. The humor may be momentary, but it highlights an "other reality," a world beyond our current troubles that is not yet but is promised.[59]

In sharing humor and laughter, even amid the stress and sadness of their mother's imminent death, O'Donnell and her sisters enjoyed blessed moments of release, enjoyment, and rest. In a similar vein, Anita Houck rightly argues the merit of retrieving for our day the Aristotelian and Thomistic virtue of *eutrapelia*, the virtue of playfulness and good humor. When practiced well, *eutrapelia* can encourage social bonds, bolster other virtues, refresh imaginations, and, amid the ups and downs of life, witness to and purvey soul-rest.[60]

VI. The Gifts and Powers of a Rest-Grounded Theological Ethic of Work

Properly understood and practiced, amid our labors and outside of them, rest bears a host of life-enhancing powers.

First, rest *connects* our embodied and enspirited selves, and reconnects us to others, to the earth, and to the Divine.

Second, by empowering us to *stop* and *step back* from absorption in the mundane and the *status quo*, resting creates sites and moments of *freedom*, and times and spaces where *reality*, in its beauty and its ugliness, can be received, contemplated, and

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[57] Angela Alaimo O'Donnell, *Mortal Blessings: A Sacramental Farewell* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2014), ch. 4. I thank my Fordham colleague for her generosity in sharing her work, and these passages.

[58] This "grounding" is intimated in humor's etymological root, *humus*, meaning soil or earth; the words "human" and "humility" share this same root. O'Donnell, *Mortal Blessings,* 68, referencing Ernest Kurtz and Katherine Ketcham, *The Spirituality of Imperfection* (New York: Bantam, 1992, 191.

[59] O'Donnell, *Mortal Blessings,* 68, referencing Peter Berger, *Redeeming Laughter: The Comic Dimension of Everyday Life* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997).

[60] Anita Houck, "The Play of Work: Virtue Discourses of Work and Vocation." Paper Presented at the 75th Annual Convention of the Catholic Theological Society of America (Virtual Meeting), June 12, 2021.

honestly faced. This includes the often painful but healing power to face, to take a long, loving look at, and to come to terms with our own reality.[61] For writer bell hooks, doing this is an indispensable step on the journey toward a living a justice-seeking life rooted in genuine love.

> Acknowledging the truth of our reality, both individual and collective, is a necessary stage for personal and political growth. This is usually the most painful stage in the process of learning to love—the one many of us seek to avoid. (Yet) once we choose love, we instinctively possess the inner resources to confront that pain. Moving through the pain to the other side we find the joy, the freedom of spirit that a love ethic brings.[62]

Third, as Tricia Hersey attests, rest bestows the gift of space and time *to daydream, to imagine, and to dream*, capacities that are critically necessary for shaking off the torpor of "the way things are" and envisioning, inventing, and enacting creative responses to the many deep crises of our time.[63]

Fourth, because to rest requires community-care, it nurtures our power *to allow ourselves to be vulnerable and cared for*; and in replenishing our body-spirits rest deepens another significant power, the power *to suffer and to endure* when suffering and enduring are justly called for, because we realize we are loved, and that we are not alone.

Finally, by renewing and sustaining our energies for love, work, and action for the common good, practicing rest-amid and rest-apart grants us the *power to resist and persist* in the long-haul labors needed to transform unjust and oppressive ideologies, systems and institutions.

In speaking of the manifold gifts and powers that pertain to rest, we ought not be naïve. There is no doubt that like our work, our rest can become corrupted. When our resting falls prey to vicious, exploitative, or commodifying dynamics, it can deteriorate into self-centered indolence, self-destructive patterns of behavior, or various forms of *acedia*/restlessness. Warnings that focusing on rest or spiritual practices can lead to withdrawal from social engagement, and thereby, acquiescence in unjust systems of power, are frequently on the lips of modern social critics, and these warnings should not be lightly dismissed. This is why understanding and practicing authentic rest is an ongoing project, and why, as we work to succeed at rest we need the guidance of wise and critically-aware teachers, mentors, and communities.

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[61] Walter J. Burghardt, "Contemplation: A Long Loving Look at the Real," Church (Winter 1989), https://www.alliesonthejourney.com/uploads/7/4/7/4/74742015/burghardt__contemplation_a_long_loving.pdf.

[62] bell hooks (Gloria Jean Watkins), "Love as the Practice of Freedom," UU College of Social Justice. May 2016, https://uucsj.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/bell-hooks-Love-as-the-Practice-of-Freedom.pdf.

[63] Cf. María Pilar Aquino's discussion of the function of utopias in, "Theology Renewing Life."

VII. Conclusion

As our brief voyage comes to an end, let me throw out one final buoy marker. Given rest's necessity, its power, and its serious state of disrepair, I believe it is important for we theologians and our institutions practice, model, promote, and support legible and compelling alternatives to the always-on, humanly- and ecologically-destructive patterns that so often pervade relationships to work and rest in the United States today.

"It was in college," recalls writer Glynnis Whitwer, "that I realized my work was never done." Holding down two jobs, relishing the always-more of learning, reading, and extracurriculars, for this energetic, talented, "do-er," "something took hold of me in college that I hadn't experienced before and became the foundation for a way of life where I was constantly driven to do more," and "I didn't dare stop working."[64] What Whitwer describes is not what we hope we are teaching or modeling for our students; but I wonder. In his 2021 CTSA presentation on "Sabbath Slowness," Craig Sanders underlined this need for us to intentionally craft ways of being and modeling something different, both in our labors as educators and church workers, and in our formative relations with family members and peers.[65] We know from experience, though, that in each of these roles, our salutary vocationally-focused commitments to the good work that needs doing are vulnerable—perhaps uniquely vulnerable—to being co-opted into driving our own versions of a "world of total work." The rest-lessness regime we need to challenge is thus not only cultural and systemic; a version of it is also ingrained in our own psyches. The down side of this hyper-committed work life is evinced in one academic colleague's tweeted weekend lament: "That Sunday morning realization that your teaching is a mostly full-time job, your service load is mostly a full-time job, your research and writing are mostly full-time jobs, and your existence will be frantic half-assing and triage until you drop dead from exhaustion."[66] In the face of the potential endlessness of all the good work to be done, how do we better understand, incorporate and advocate for good rest, not as a grudging accommodation to our finitude, but as an essential human, societal, and spiritual good?

In each person's life and work there will arise what Whitwer calls necessary "seasons of overcommitment."[67] But when busyness, overcommitment, and lack of Sabbath time become a job description or way of life, we risk being transmogrified from human beings—who were not created to never stop—to de-humanized images of the very system of total work and total restlessness that it is our mission, as theologians, as educators—especially in the liberal arts—as citizens, and as people of faith, to stand against. When we fail to resist, and acquiesce to the power of a dehumanizing *status quo*, we not only harm ourselves. We also create scandalous ripple effects; for this is what others, including students like Glynnis Whitwer, will see and may learn to

[64] Whitwer, *Doing Busy Better*, 26.

[65] Craig Sanders, "The Liberating Power of Sabbath Slowness," Paper presented at the 75th Annual Convention of the CTSA (Virtual Meeting), June 12, 2021.

[66] Julia Azari (@julia_azari), "That Sunday morning realization…" Twitter tweet, October 10, 2021, https://twitter.com/julia_azari/status/1447195594741661703?lang=bg. Azari fails to mention one further "mostly full-time job" we all hold—doing the unpaid work of the household, family, and neighborhood spheres.

[67] Whitwer, *Doing Busy Better*, 30.

emulate. As individuals, and in our relationships and work, how do we "order our days aright?" (Ps 90:12)[68] How do we become champions and practitioners of a *habitus* of rest-amid work, and rhythms of rest outside of work? And how, as Catherine Punsalan-Manlimos asks, might Catholic educational institutions draw on the rich heritages of their founders and faith traditions to guide our graduates toward lives of discernment in which "work has the possibility of being part of, and not all of, how they imagine the good life?"[69]

To move in this direction we need, first, to seriously embrace the essential value and generative, transformative power of rest. We need to see and acknowledge that, far from trivial distractions, practicing rest, and taking up the task of ensuring good rest for all, are critical to the survival and vitality of every single person, and likewise of every single sphere of human relationship and activity, from the familial, cultural, and civic to the ecclesial, political, and economic. In seeking conversion to a better theology and ethics of rest, we need to look to and learn from people, enterprises, and communities who do, intentionally and successfully, prioritize and engage in healthy patterns of rest and work. And we need to develop the persistent, at times disruptive, countercultural practice of foregrounding rest and its many humanizing facets, especially in our work-related thinking, choices, and activities.

As someone who is all-too-frequently Exhibit A for "rest ethic fail" myself, I know that many members of this Society are much wiser and better prepared to respond to these challenges than am I. Going forward, however, I hope to take my cues from Jesus of Nazareth and Otis Redding. Amid work, I am going to seek a lighter, more Gospel- and soul-rested yoke. And apart from work, I am going to take to heart a 1960s' soul song's—also gospel-based—invitation and exhortation to find my dock of the bay and to sit, watch the tide roll away, rest my bones, and—in all the best, most grace-filled and re-empowering senses—waste time. I hope to honor and work to make possible the same for our most burdened and tired neighbors, near at hand and across the globe. I hope the same for you.

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[68] Psalm 90:12, "Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain wisdom of heart." The phrase in Hebrew "can be translated as 'count your days,' suggesting that our days on this earth are limited, and therefore that we should gain wisdom and live well accordingly. 'Days' here can mean both individual days and also 'life.'" Sarit Kattan Gribetz, personal correspondence, June 16, 2022.

[69] Catherine Punsalan-Manlimosas quoted in Anita Houck, "Resisting Your Bliss: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Theology, Vocation, and Work," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 75 (2021): 102.

INTERFAITH COMMUNITY AND SPIRITUAL COMPANIONSHIP ON CAMPUS: HINDU, BUDDHIST, AND CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES – INVITED SESSION

Topic: Interfaith Community and Spiritual Companionship on Campus: Hindu, Buddhist, and Catholic Theological Perspectives
Convener: Francis X. Clooney, S.J., Harvard Divinity School
Moderator: John Borelli, Georgetown University
Presenters: Brahmacharini Shweta Chaitanya, Emory University
Venerable Priya Rakkhit Sraman, Emory University
Respondent: Callie Tabor, Emory University

Chaplains are truly chaplains was the initial point made by Hindu Chaplain Shweta Chaitanya opening presentation. As her colleague, Ven. Priya has been on the Emory University Office of Spiritual and Religious Life (OSRL) team less than eighteen months. She has found that those on campus seeking help need a trusting person to share their thoughts and concerns. Once an individual refers to a religious affiliation, she and her colleagues seek to direct individuals to that minister. She began service once Emory's campus opened up during the COVID-19 pandemic, truly in the middle and not at the beginning of an academic year. So, when the 2021-2022 academic year began, she and her colleagues designed a "pre-orientation" session for incoming students, Welcoming Interfaith and Spiritual Exploration (WISE). It provides a tour of religious traditions and sites with participants accompanying one another through various religious traditions and sacred spaces. The ministry team seeks to be companions and not gatekeepers. They hold regular events such as "*slokas* and snacks," when particular prayers or verses are shared with a snack break. They also created "Akbar's Court" for multifaith sharing and conversation. The reference is to the sixteenth century Mughal ruler in India who hosted interreligious conversations at his court. Herself a monastic in the Chinmaya Mission with training, including a year of study at Harvard Divinity School, Shweta emphasized patience and a willingness to acknowledge doubts. She illustrated these virtues with the story in the *Chandogya Upanishad*, chapter 4, where Prajapati accepts Virochana and Indra as disciples seeking the true self. After thirty-two years of practice, Prajapati instructed that the visible self, the outward self, is the true self. Satisfied, Virochana left, but Indra wasn't satisfied and stayed many more years to move beyond superficial learning to have the true self revealed.

Ven. Priya, the Buddhist chaplain, holds two master's degrees and teaches classes on Buddhism. He brought four years of experience as a chaplain at Tufts University with him to Emory. He cited the Pali *Upaddha Sutta*. The Ven. Ananda, companion of the Buddha, once said: "This is half of the holy life, lord: good friends, good companions, good associates." The Lord Buddha corrected him: "No, do not say that, good friends, good companions, and good associates are the whole of the spiritual life." Campus ministry is an opportunity to provide space and companionship. For example, he hosts one-night silent retreats. Most students are astounded at how much inward reflection they can accomplish in so short a time of silence. He emphasized that campus ministers are to be more than listeners. Ministers need to reply to speakers what they

have heard them say. He cited verse 76 of the *Dhammapada*: "Should one find a person who points out faults and who reproves, let one follow such a wise and sagacious person as one would a guide to hidden treasure. It is always better and never worse to cultivate such an association."

Callie Tabor offered a response to her colleagues. Tabor is not a chaplain, but associate director of the Aquinas Institute, a Catholic intellectual center serving both Emory and Catholics and others in greater Atlanta. She has taught Modern Catholicism, a core course in Catholic Studies. Founded as a Methodist University, Emory reports that 47.1 percent of current students identify as being religious. Of those, Catholics, approximately six hundred in number, constitute the second largest group, 7.9 percent to Protestants who are 21 percent. Because of the diverse representation on the OSRL staff, Catholics can learn through a pedagogy of encounter. Tabor has discerned that Catholic students divide into two groups, those seeking definitive knowledge and those seeking spiritual companionship and deeper religious understanding. At Emory, classes serve both groups, and with trust and listening, students can be directed towards deeper religious understanding. Classroom work, supplemented by interfaith campus ministry activities, helps students to lighten up any fears of being incorrect and to embrace opportunities. Tabor will join the faculty at Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut, in the fall. Through the Aquinas Institute, Catholics in greater Atlanta take advantage of ongoing religious education opportunities, and besides lectures, the Institute sponsored sessions for the synodal process.

With comments and questions from the audience, the point was reiterated that it doesn't make a great deal of difference what faith one professes in seeking advice from the OSRL team. All three panelists spoke of a layered approach and were grateful that programs could be adjusted easily with experience.

JOHN BORELLI
Georgetown University
Washington, District of Columbia

INTERRELIGIOUS LEARNING IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH – INVITED SESSION

Topic: Interreligious Learning the Global South
Convener: Peter Phan, Georgetown University
Moderator: Peter Phan, Georgetown University
Presenters: Devaka Premawardhana, Emory University
Arun Jones, Emory University
Respondent: Elaine Padilla, University of LaVerne

This session began with a paper from Devaka Premawardhana of Emory University entitled "Consolata Missions and the Discipline of Voluntary Displacement: A Model for Interreligious Learning." In his presentation, Premawardhana connected the history and spirituality of the Institute of Consolata Missionaries (founded in 1901), as well as his ethnographic observations of Consolata activities in contemporary Mozambique, to Henri Nouwen's notion of voluntary displacement as a spiritual discipline. He argued that, because of the stress they put on speaking languages other than their own, patiently studying and even participating in non-Christian religions, and living outside their comfort zones, Consolata missionaries offer a useful case study of interreligious learning in the Global South today. That they consider the slogan "to go beyond" one of their guiding principles makes them especially illustrative of Nouwen's virtue of displacement, an example for everyone—not just missionaries, he argued, and not just Catholics—of how engaging alterity can foster human flourishing at multiple scales.

The second paper, "Indian and European Catholic Perspectives on Interreligious Learning in South Asia" was delivered by Arun Jones of Emory University. In the paper, Jones described the life of an Indian Catholic ruler, Begum Sumru, who lived from 1750 to 1836 in North India and governed her territory of Sardhana, about fifty miles northeast of Delhi. The Begum—a title of female nobility, even royalty—was discovered at the age of fifteen as a beautiful Muslim dancing girl in Delhi by a European Catholic mercenary soldier named Walter Reinhardt. He paid a sum of money for her, and she became his mistress and companion for life. Within a year of his death in 1778 she had established herself as the leader of his army and then the owner of his *jagir* or fief of Sardhana. Two years later she converted to Catholicism, having been tutored in the faith by a Carmelite priest, Father Gregoria, who for thirty more years was her friend and advisor. Begum Sumru turned out to excel as an Indian ruler, her near brush with failure and death occurring when she tried to marry a French officer in her army. Jones argued that the Begum found in her expression of the Catholic faith—which was controversial among the Europeans who knew her—the religious and cultural resources to fulfill her duties as a typical Indian king. In the process of conversion, the Begum learned to use her new faith to negotiate a world that was filled with rulers who were men, vying for power and dominance, and to live among them as a ruler in her own right.

Elaine Padilla responded by integrating principles on interreligious and multiple belongings as defined by Peter Phan and on interculturality as argued by Raul Fornet-Betancourt. In agreement with Phan, Padilla stated that "to be religious today is to be

interreligious" due to how pluralistic our societies are. Religions have drawn and borrowed from each other because of globalization, migration, and many other political factors. The two key principles of being interreligious that Padilla understood to be of importance for this session's discussion were "dwelling together" and "sharing." For Phan, one is never just a Christian or a Catholic because one already grows up being multireligious, and as for Fornet-Betancourt, because one already belongs to more than one culture. She then posed some questions based on two scenarios illustrative of Christian missions in the Caribbean and the US southern borderlands. These examples were meant as a preliminary analysis and as starting points of further discussion. In her response, she argued that cultivating a common life and sharing one's faith can be signs not only of learning interreligiously but also of developing an awareness of one's being intercultural.

B. KEVIN BROWN
Gonzaga University
Spokane, Washington

JEWISH–CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM–CHRISTIAN THEOLOGIES AS CHALLENGES TO CATHOLIC THEOLOGY: THE VIEW FROM EUROPE – INVITED SESSION

Convener: Wilhelmus Valkenberg, Catholic University of America
Moderator: Wilhelmus Valkenberg, Catholic University of America
Presenters: Marianne Moyaert, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
Klaus von Stosch, Bonn University
Respondent: Rita George-Tvrtković, Benedictine University

This session was organized at the invitation of Francis X. Clooney, President-Elect of the CTSA to hear from two prominent Catholic comparative theologians on the European continent about their experiences with Christian–Jewish and Christian–Muslim theologies as challenges for Catholic Theology.

In her presentation, "Comparative Theologies Old and New: Exploring the Present of the Past," Marianne Moyaert told about her experiences in a program of interfaith pedagogy in the Netherlands. She reflected on the fact that in such a program, differences between faith traditions are easily de-politicized. That is they are seen as personal, not political issues. She mentioned the normative behavior of quite a few of her Dutch participants who saw themselves as examples of tolerance while they saw religious others, embodied by Muslim participants, as hiding their true identities under the veil of religion. Moyaert observed that many of these anti-Muslim forms of discourse reminded her of traditional Christian anti-Jewish phraseologies. She saw a paradoxical discourse of othering in which the ideal of "Dutch innocence" (a small but ethically just nation that has a liberal vision to offer to the world) intersected with "dialogical innocence" (the attitude of not intending to do harm but not implicating harm experienced by others). In this way, people who see themselves as tolerant and are proud of a history of tolerance can at the same time be very intolerant. The same people who see themselves as victims of political and ideological suppression by Spanish inquisition and Nazi racism can be unaware of the fact that they still bear the remnants of one of the largest colonial empires.

Klaus von Stosch gave a presentation on "The Qur'anic Theology as Catholic Challenge for Catholics." He tries to learn lessons from what is, in Germany, often called Israel-theology for Christians today in relationship with Muslims. He uses Qur'anic challenges to both Jews and Christians, such as the challenge of supersessionism, but also of imperialism. As Christians try to appreciate the vocation and the everlasting value of Israel, Muslim theologians try to appreciate Judaism and Christianity from the very middle of their own scripture. Von Stosch used a number of examples from the Qur'an to make clear how it interrogates Christians to find answers to its probing questions about the position of Jesus and Mary.

In her response, Rita George-Tvrtković confirmed the importance of trying to get the relations with Muslims at the level of relations with Jews, which she connected with the initiatives of Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago.

A discussion among the presenters and the attendees of the session followed the presentations.

WILHELMUS VALKENBERG
Catholic University of America
Washington, District of Columbia

BOOK PANEL ON *ATONEMENT AND COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY* – SELECTED SESSION

Convener: Catherine Cornille, Boston College
Moderator: Brian Robinette, Boston College
Presenters: John Thiel, Fairfield University
Julia Feder, Creighton University
Respondent: Klaus von Stosch, Bonn University

This book panel aimed to reflect on the challenges and opportunities of comparative theology for Christian systematic theology by reflecting on the newly published volume *Atonement and Comparative Theology. The Cross in Dialogue with Other Religions* (Fordham University Press, 2021). In this volume, Christian theologians with expertise in Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism and African traditional religions reflect on how engagement with these traditions may shed new light on the Christian understanding of atonement.

Two systematic theologians, John Thiel and Julia Feder, reflected on what they, as non-comparative theologians had gained from reading the volume, while one of the contributors, Klaus Von Stosch, responded to their comments. After offering a critique of the classical juridical theories of atonement, John Thiel admitted his own tendency to bypass the horrors of suffering and the cross in favor of the promise of the resurrection. He proposed a way of approaching the various articles in terms of various types of aesthetic approaches to the other religion, some focusing on aesthetics of repair (particularly in relation to Judaism) and others on an aesthetics of reconstruction (particularly in relation to Buddhism). An important insight gained from his engagement with the comparative theologians was the importance of squarely facing the elements of death and suffering that are part of the Christian doctrine of atonement and a realization that this may be viewed as a flight from Jewishness and a flight from the realities of embodiment.

Julia Feder, for her part, focused on the distinction between the exemplary and the non-exemplary approaches to atonement in the various articles, and the dangers as well as benefits of focusing on either. She used the sex abuse crisis in the church, and in particular the experience of victims and the reaction of the hierarchy, to illustrate this. The exemplary approach to atonement runs the risk that victims quietly accept their suffering as identification with the suffering of Christ. On the other hand, it may also function as a model for those in positions of responsibility in the church to fully account for their own failures and to suffer the consequences of their sins. The exemplary model may thus account for the importance of penance, which Bede Bidlack also emphasizes in his Daoist approach to atonement.

In his reflections and response to the papers, Klaus von Stosch first emphasized the importance of not distinguishing between confessional and comparative theology, as he firmly identifies with both and believes that all comparative theology is or should be confessional. In response to John Thiel, he argues that the idea of resurrection without the cross does not allow for a genuine recognition of human suffering, in particular the suffering of the innocent child (as discussed in the brothers Karamazov). Only a God who is somehow affected by the suffering of the child would be able to

offer solace, consolation and hope, he argues. It is only through the experience of the suffering of God in the person of Jesus that one may eventually be reconciled with God in the experience of suffering here and now. His response to Julia Feder focused mainly on the relationship between the intentionality of the priest and his sacramental power and authority. Though the cross certainly does carry an exemplary function, most of the articles also emphasize the non-exemplary nature of the Christian understanding of atonement, which is inseparable from the Christian understanding of sin and the uniqueness of Jesus Christ.

The discussion following the presentations focused on various alternative ways of understanding of atonement through poetic images or through classical Thomistic approaches. The presentations and discussion that followed illustrate the richness of the concept of atonement and the impossibility of capturing or explaining it through one single theory or model. It expresses both the solidarity of God in the experience of suffering as well as the hope for eternal harmony and liberation from suffering, the seriousness of sin and dependence on divine deliverance, the experience in this life and beyond of oneness with God, as well as the necessity for retribution of innocent suffering. The volume demonstrates that other religions may shed new light on any or all of these aspects, and may continue to deepen the Christian understanding, without presuming to offer a full explanation or a final theory that would capture all of its complexity and theological and spiritual richness.

CATHERINE CORNILLE
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

WORLD RELIGIONS AND GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY: THE LEGACY OF HANS KÜNG – SELECTED SESSION

Topic: World Religions and Global Responsibility: The Legacy of Hans Küng
Convener: Martin Madar, Xavier University
Moderator: William Madges, Xavier University
Presenters: Hille Haker, Loyola University Chicago
David Hollenbach, S.J., Georgetown University

Hans Küng was one of the most influential and controversial Catholic theologians of the twentieth century. He passed on April 6, 2021. This selected session was convened as an opportunity to reflect on his contribution to theology, and in this way to honor his memory. Küng wrote on a vast array of topics, but the session focused on his work in the area of interreligious dialogue in keeping with the theme of this year's convention, Being Catholic Interreligiously.

After a word of welcome from the convener, William Madges opened the session with a short introduction to Küng's life, focusing on how he became engaged in the study of world religions and interreligious dialogue. Madges also reminisced about his personal encounters with Küng at the University of Tübingen in the early 1980s while doing research for his dissertation.

Then Hille Haker and David Hollenbach delivered their presentations, which addressed Küng's project of a global ethic.

Haker, who is the Richard McCormick Endowed Chair in Ethics at Loyola University in Chicago and holds a PhD and Habilitation in ethics from Tübingen, titled her presentation as "Global Responsibility and the Call for Change in the Catholic Church: The Legacy of Hans Küng." She started with autobiographical remarks about her experience as an undergraduate student in Tübingen in the early 1980s. She remarked that she appreciated Küng for several reasons: for his fight against authoritarianism in the church, for being a pioneer in Tübingen in promoting the scholarship of women and feminist theology, and for making a case for faith that is not afraid of modernity. She then discussed Küng's project of a global ethic and critiqued it from the perspective of a critical political ethics rooted in the work of Johann Babtist Metz. She portrayed the difference between Küng and Metz in terms of a difference between a public and a political theologian. Haker sketched an alternative to Küng's approach. She argued that the fundamental principle of a global ethic ought to be suffering, not shared values as it is in the case of Küng. She also argued for the importance of vulnerability and diatopical hermeneutics. Overall, Haker appreciated parts of Küng's global ethic project, but also found it lacking, especially from a decolonial perspective.

Hollenbach, who is the Pedro Arrupe Distinguished Research Professor at Georgetown University, presented a paper titled "Religious Nationalism, a Global Ethic and the Culture of Encounter." In the first part he sketched the overall shape of the global ethic that Küng proposed. He then discussed how religious nationalism impedes the development of a global ethic and illustrated it in two examples. The first example was the current war that Russia is waging against Ukraine, and how it is legitimated in part by appeals to religious tradition. The second example was the United

States, where close to half of all Americans support a fusion of Christianity with American civic life and national identity. He also gave examples of how religious communities reject the currents of religious nationalism. Hollenbach pointed out that Küng is right when he finds the global ethic already embodied in the religions of the world. Hollenbach then noted that religious traditions also contain grounds for the ethical relevance of the national, cultural, and religious differences among peoples. He suggested that an adequate approach to a global ethic ought to offer guidance on whether the local or the global should take priority in concrete circumstances, a point that Küng's global ethic lacks. Lastly, Hollenbach discussed how Pope Francis's call to a culture of encounter in his encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, reinforces Küng's call for a global ethic. Hollenbach noted that the convergence of the work of Küng and Francis is ironic, due to Küng's earlier conflicts with the papacy. Yet it is also a source of hope for the church and for the larger world.

The session concluded with an insightful discussion between the members of the audience, the presenters, and the moderator.

MARTIN MADAR
Xavier University
Cincinnati, Ohio

THE GRACE NEEDED FOR SALVATION: THE INSIGHTS FROM THREE THOMISTS – SELECTED SESSION

Topic: The Grace Needed for Salvation: The Insights from Three Thomists
Convener: Ligita Ryliškytė, S.J.E., Boston College
Moderator: Jeremy W. Blackwood, Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology
Presenters: Richard Lennan, Boston College
Matthew Louis Petillo, Boston College
Roger Haight, S.J., Union Theological Seminary

By bringing into dialogue three Thomists— Karl Rahner, Bernard J. F. Lonergan, and Edward Schillebeeckx—the panel offered a systematic theological framework for contemporary attempts to uphold a non-exclusivist position on salvation outside the church. The panel began with twenty-five-minute presentations, followed by the panelists' responses to the comments and questions raised by several of the numerous attendees.

In his paper, "Beyond 'The Anonymous Christian': Reconsidering Rahner on Grace and Salvation," Richard Lennan pointed out that Rahner acknowledged freely that "the anonymous Christian," as a category, could be problematic. His interest was not in the term, but in understanding the universality of God's grace, and the access of all people to grace. Reception of Rahner's theology of salvation, however, has focused often on "the anonymous Christian," obscuring his broader framework. Lennan illuminated this framework by showing how, as uncreated, grace is the life-giving self-communication of God that brings creation into being, sustains it, and orients it to fulfilment in God. Grace is neither exceptional nor rare, but the defining constituent of the whole of creation. Likewise, the human capacity for the God of self-bestowing personal love is the central and abiding existential of human beings. Since the self-communicating God is also a transcendent God, human encounters with grace still can be "unthematic" and defy exhaustive analysis. Though universal, Lennan argued, grace for Rahner was never generic, never separable from its Christological, pneumatological, and ecclesiological dimensions. And yet, insisting both that salvation is not contingent on professed belief and that the fulfillment of grace is eschatological rather than historical, Rahner was at ease with the fact that a person receptive to grace might never embrace an explicit relationship to Christ and the church. Lennan concluded with explaining how Rahner associated salvific faith or the person's "Yes" to Christ with a broad sense of receptivity to the Spirit.

Building on Lonergan, Matthew Petillo proposed a theology of religions grounded on the historical mediations of grace. In his paper, "Divine Love as Conversational: New Directions in the Theology of Grace," Petillo first elucidated the transition from Aquinas' to Lonergan's theology of grace as a shift from "soul" to "subject," from powers of the soul to the complex dynamism of consciousness, from remote and proximate principles of acts to modes of self-presence. Next, Petillo demonstrated how this shift initiated a conversation that began to raise questions about grace in the terms generated by an intentionality analysis and offered a phenomenological language for expressing insights into religious data. Drawing on Lonergan's writings, especially his monumental philosophical work *Insight*, Petillo then considered what it might mean to

talk about the historical mediations of grace in a pluralistic context in a way that not only meets the demands of Lonergan's transcendental method, but also respects the concrete, embedded, relational, and deeply historical dimensions of religions. He proposed thinking of grace as a global and historical "integrator" and "operator": the source and mover of a series of ever more expansive and complex integrations of redemptive recurrences within the open field of history. Petillo concluded by proposing the meaning of "religion" as the concrete intelligibility of all spatio-temporal data on the vast ranges of redemptive flexible cycles of such recurrences, as inspired by divine love and informed by a divine Word.

Roger Haight's paper "Schillebeeckx and Theologies of Religious Pluralism," started off by clarifying how Schillebeeckx's views on creation were schooled by Thomas Aquinas, shaping an intrinsic basis and framework for his holistic Christian vision. Haight further argued that, for Schillebeeckx, *creatio ex nihilo* means that nothing can be brought between the world and God to interpret the relationship between them. Thus, neither "grace" nor "incarnation" represents a closer union of human existence with God than creation itself. Correspondingly, Schillebeeckx's understanding of salvation and Jesus Christ's role in it are located within the framework of creation faith and not alongside it. Jesus as "concentrated" creation is a revelation and embodiment of the God–human relationship. On this basis Christians can understand Jesus Christ in a non-supremacist, pluralist, non-zero-sum way that is dialogical and non-competitive. Haight concluded by reassuring that this position is not a universalist reduction of the religions but a comprehensive Christian interpretation of autonomous faith traditions. Such an interpretation affirms God's intimate loving presence in all creation without undermining Christ's divinity.

The subsequent discussion focused on normativity: If grace is not just universal but also specific and if Jesus Christ reveals both God and the goodness of creation, what does that mean for discerning the authentic manifestations of grace? Some differences between the interlocutors notwithstanding, all three panelists acknowledged that there might be certain prime instances that witness to human receptivity to grace: Lennan highlighted the love of neighbor, Petillo interpersonal love, such as among family members, while Haight stressed human collaboration in seeking the common good.

LIGITA RYLIŠKYTĖ, S.J.E.
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

THEOLOGIES OF HOPE IN LIGHT OF CONTEMPORARY MENTAL ILLNESSES – SELECTED SESSION

Topic: Theologies of Hope
Convener: Cristina Lledo Gomez, BBI-The Australian Institute of Theological Education
Moderator: Jessica Coblentz, Saint Mary's College,
Presenters: Kathleen Mroz, Emmanuel College
Cristina Lledo Gomez, BBI-The Australian Institute of Theological Education
Michele Saracino, Manhattan College

The panel proceeded with twenty-minute presentations from each speaker, followed by conversation between panelists and attendees. Kathleen Mroz, assistant professor in the theology and religious studies department of Emmanuel College, Boston, presented first. Her paper provided an entry point into the topic. It was entitled, "The Choice Between Faith and Recovery: The Need for Interreligious Cooperation When Talking About Mental Illness". Mroz argued three main points. First, she noted the importance of including a person's religious beliefs as part of mental health recovery plans. For example, suggested methods of recovery can run contrary to religious beliefs such as the referral of non-Christians to faith-based programs which can "make them uncomfortable," or the disregard of Jewish dietary laws which left some Orthodox Jewish women "in and out of eating disorder treatment centers" for many years. Mroz's second main argument was the necessity for religious literacy among clinicians, and inversely, mental health literacy among religious leaders. For example, "Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist patients…report struggling when working with dietitians who have never heard of the foods they and their families commonly eat." Inversely, suffering from mental illness can be viewed by religious ministers as having "a lack of faith," preventing their congregants from accessing appropriate mental health care. Last, Mroz highlighted the importance of dialogue between religious leaders and clinicians, and openness to each other's wisdoms.

The presentations then moved from the broader exploration of interreligious dialogue and mental health to the specificity of tapping into Filipin@ indigenous spirituality to better understand Christian values. The next presenter, Cristina Lledo Gomez, Presentation Sisters Theology Lecturer at BBI-The Australian Institute of Theological Education, and religion and society research fellow for the Public and Contextual Theology Research Centre, at Charles Sturt University, used the Filipin@ indigenous spiritual-cultural value of *kapwa* to help understand the dynamics of forgiveness, specifically within mother-daughter relationships. Lledo Gomez's paper, entitled "Forgiving the Perpetrator: Imagining Hope After Grief," was presented in four parts. The first provided contexts which called for a daughter's forgiveness of her mother. These included a mother's inability to parent due to mental illness resulting from abuse. Another is the passing on from mother to daughter of an inferiority complex due to colonial mentality. This mentality can lead to a daughter's own mental ill health ranging from eating disorders to suicidality. The second part of the paper explored examples of daughters forgiving their mothers, providing key elements

enabling forgiveness in the concrete. The third part affirmed these elements, considering Filipin@ indigenous understandings of forgiveness through *kapwa*. The final part posited the beginnings of a theology of hope using *kapwa* as a foundation for motivation towards forgiveness, true reconciliation, and ultimately into trinitarian communion with all, including between victim/survivor and perpetrator.

While the previous paper provided an example of how other spiritualities or religious traditions can provide depth into Christian values, the final paper called for the broadening of those values using the wisdom of other spiritualities or religious traditions. More specifically, Michele Saracino, professor of religious studies at Manhattan College, New York, turned to the Buddhist value of self-compassion to broaden Christian anthropologies which overemphasized being "other-oriented…to the detriment of personal being." Saracino's paper entitled "Self-Compassion: Our Last Hope (The Case for an *Antennae* in Anthropology)" was presented in two parts. The first argued for a case for self-compassion in Christian anthropology, where a "…balance might be struck between being focused on others and attending to oneself." In this section, Saracino highlighted the equal importance of "being kind, patient, and understanding of oneself in the middle of all [of] life's challenges" to living a life for others. She described this turn to the self, as "living an *antennae* in anthropology", gaining a sensitivity towards one's own needs, in order to have resources to attend to the needs of others. The second part of Saracino's paper sought to create a scaffold for "living the *antennae*". This entailed utilizing Buddhist notions of building "a home in oneself" and maintaining awareness or *payu*, alongside Lonerganian scholarship on self-understanding. This scholarship included Lonerganian notions of individual and dramatic bias (as dangers to turning to the self only) and Robert Doran's notion of psychic conversion (highlighting the importance of "dreams, images and affects" as also informative of the self).

The discussion consequently generated noted how interreligious engagement provided both depth and breadth into limited Christian and anthropological understandings.

CRISTINA LLEDO GOMEZ
BBI-The Australian Institute of Theological Education,
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Public and Contextual Theology Research Centre, Charles Sturt University
Barton, Australian Capital Territory, Australia

TRADITION AND APOCALYPSE: HISTORY, RACE, AND CHRISTIAN TEMPORAL BEING – SELECTED SESSION

Topic: Tradition and Apocalypse: History, Race, and Christian Temporal Being
Convener: Grant Kaplan, Saint Louis University
Moderator: Mark Miller, University of San Francisco
Presenters: Jennifer Newsome Martin, University of Notre Dame
Anne Carpenter, St. Mary's College of California
Grant Kaplan, Saint Louis University

The panel began with introductions by Mark Miller, and then proceeded with twenty-minute presentations by each of the three presenters to a well-attended group of in-person attendees.

In the first paper, "Our Once and Future Mother: Apocalyptic Mariology, Tradition, and the Religions," Jennifer Newsome Martin provided a critical assessment of some of the fundamental arguments of David Bentley Hart's recent *Tradition and Apocalypse*: *An Essay on the Future of Christian Belief* (2022), which offers a meta-critique of certain conceptualization of religious tradition. While Hart's book focused its primary critiques upon St. John Henry Newman and Maurice Blondel, Martin's response appealed to Charles Péguy's posthumous *Conjoined Note on Descartes and Cartesian Philosophy* (1924), recently translated alongside the *Note on Bergson and Bergsonism* (1914), both of which presuppose a Bergsonian philosophy of time and both of which offer an alternative view of theological history—though perhaps no less specified toward futurity—with Mariology and Christology firmly at its center. In her view, Péguy via Bergson can successfully navigate a narrow middle way between modern historicism and dogmatic traditionalism which is able to affirm the precarities of the historical expressions of tradition as corroborating rather than challenging their divine origin. Her paper suggested that a more rather than less dogmatically specified strategy for dealing with the problem of history and tradition preserves more robustly than Hart's essay the ecclesial community handed on when Christ says to John from the cross: "Behold thy mother," and to Mary, "Mother, behold thy Son."

Next, Anne Carpenter presented "Grace From Above and From Below: Blondel and Theologians of the Underside." The paper studied the way Blondel weights the life of Christian tradition itself with the duty of a Yes or No to God, and further weighted that duty with the burden of Christian tradition's modern "underside"—considered in the shape of the religiosity of Black persons enslaved in America, as recovered by M. Shawn Copeland. The paper argues, with Blondel and Copeland, that the "body" of Christian tradition is to be had in the letter of an action that contains in itself an infinite spirit—in what Blondel calls the literal practice of religion, and in what Copeland calls knowing Jesus crucified. Far from retreating into the invisible pneuma of a pure Christianity, or from sinking into the sightless eyes of a purely material Christianity, Blondel and Copeland suggest a living unity, one lived in human beings; a unity which, since human, persists in a hylomorphism of material contingence and spiritual exigence. Here is a living unity that becomes God's instrument for a human action that is able to bear God, and to bear God's judgment.

Following these two papers, Grant Kaplan presented "A Tainted Tradition? A Conversation with Hart and Jennings." In the presentation, Kaplan focused first on Willie James' Jennings's critique of tradition latent in some of his recent work, especially *After Whiteness*. The presentation began with an outline of the general shape of modern secularity's critique of tradition, and hinted at possible resources in Pieper and Gadamer. Kaplan then treated Jennings, not so much as an exception to, but instead exemplary of contemporary theological attitudes toward tradition. This section spent less time adjudicating Jennings' critique of a "diseased social imagination" than it did thinking through its potential consequences for Catholic theology. The presentation then skipped over its treatment of Hart, already taken up ably by Martin's presentation, to recall the Catholic Tübingen School's notion of "living tradition," a term that had raised eyebrows during much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but that was given a stamp of approval at the Second Vatican Council (*Dei Verbum*, 12). For purposes of brevity, Kaplan focused on the understanding of living tradition expounded by Johann Sebastian Drey in his 1819 "Spirit and Essence of Catholicism." Tradition, for Drey, functions something like language, and it notes both the inevitability of change within it, as well as the necessity of relying on the past.

Mark Miller deftly moderated a lively question and answer that lasted roughly forty minutes. The papers presented generated questions both to individual presenters and to the group.

GRANT KAPLAN
Saint Louis University
Saint Louis, Missouri

VOTING RIGHTS AND MORAL URGENCY – SELECTED SESSION

Topic: Voting Rights and Moral Urgency
Convener: Susan Bigelow Reynolds, Emory University
Moderator: David DeCosse, Santa Clara University
Presenters: Nichole M. Flores, University of Virginia
Rev. Kim Jackson, Episcopal Church of the Common Ground and the Georgia State Senate

This selected session was convened in order to think interreligiously about the right to vote, and in a particular way, to interrogate the conspicuous and painful absence of Catholic theologians from public moral discourse on voting rights. As a cradle of the ongoing struggle for civil rights and home to many of the movement's prophets and martyrs, Atlanta offered an auspicious context from which to engage the moral, theological, and political status of voting rights in 2022.

The session convened an ecumenical conversation between Rev. Senator Kim Jackson and Nichole M. Flores. Rev. Jackson is the Vicar of the Episcopal Church of the Common Ground in Atlanta, a church without walls that serves people who are currently unhoused. In 2020, she was elected to the Georgia State Senate for District 41, becoming the first openly LGBTQ state senator in Georgia. Due to COVID-19, Jackson joined the session remotely. Flores is associate professor of religious studies at the University of Virginia. Her work examines moral theology and democratic participation.

David DeCosse began the session by tracing contemporary national developments in voting rights and voter suppression. In response to this protracted struggle, DeCosse observed, Catholic bishops and theologians in the US "have had far too little to say… about a right that is grounded in the dignity of the person and in their corresponding responsibility to participate in political life" and "affects every other social justice concern of Catholic social teaching in this country." Indeed, DeCosse noted that the relatively low attendance in this session was perhaps reflective of broad Catholic ambivalence about investment in voting rights.

Turning to the local context, Susan Bigelow Reynolds observed in that in the 2020 election, Georgia voters elected two Democratic senators—Rev. Raphael Warnock, senior pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church and Georgia's first Black senator, and John Ossoff, Georgia's first Jewish senator—and helped to defeat incumbent president Donald Trump. In the months that followed this historic election, Georgia's Republican-controlled state legislature immediately moved to pass more restrictive voting laws. Under the guise of securing elections, these laws enacted roadblocks to voting, particularly for voters in minoritized communities, voters with disabilities and health vulnerabilities, and poor and unhoused voters. Meanwhile, revised electoral maps diluted the power of Black and minoritized voters. Atlanta is a city in which the ongoing struggle for the franchise is widely understood as inextricably spiritual and political, both pious and public work. Where, Reynolds asked Jackson and Flores, are Catholics in this holy struggle? And what should Catholics learn from the faithful activism of those in other denominations and faith traditions?

Flores responded by posing a question. Catholic social tradition prompts us to address myriad social, political, and economic challenges facing our world. Why should voting rights be considered an especially urgent priority among these many problems? Flores framed her response through a political theology of Guadalupe and Juan Diego, interpreting their encounter as one concerned, in part, with political empowerment of Juan Diego in colonial society. In a society riven by social, political, and economic inequality, she argued, we are called to lift up those most marginalized.

Jackson began her response by tracing key moments in the history of Black Americans' struggle for the franchise from Reconstruction through the present, emphasizing the role of the church as the organizing organ of the movement for voting rights. After Reconstruction and before Jim Crow, she noted, a number of Black men were elected to legislative office, a fact of which few in attendance at the session were aware. After the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Black churches took up the mantle of voter education; the ballot box, Jackson observed, was understood as a site of liberation. Tracing her own vocational path, Jackson emphasized the examples of those pastors, friends, and community members whose examples paved a path of activism and civic engagement motivated by faith and love. Emphasizing the ecumenical and interfaith dimensions of this work, she detailed how anti-death-penalty work placed her into relationship with Catholic communities, while campaigning against the Confederate Flag in South Carolina during her undergraduate years involved collaborative work with Black and Jewish faith leaders. Ultimately, she emphasized, her pastoral and legislative work are inextricably linked.

Next, DeCosse and Reynolds moderated a conversation between Jackson and Flores. Both shared formative stories from their own vocational work. Flores discussed the local response to the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, VA, while Jackson recalled how pastoral relationships with people experiencing homelessness grounds and motivates her legislative work. In response to a question about who they view as "patron saints" of the voting rights movement, Jackson lifted up educator, activist, and citizen-school founder Septima Clark; Flores cited the witness of organizer and activist Ella Baker. Turning the conversation to those in attendance, we rearranged our chairs into a circle to invite more organic discourse. The wide-ranging and probing conversation that followed dug into issues from contradictory voter identification laws to the creative roles of parishes and congregations in the struggle today. The session concluded as DeCosse collected the contact information of those in attendance, all of whom committed to remain in conversation about advancing Catholic participation in voting rights work.

SUSAN BIGELOW REYNOLDS
Emory University
Atlanta, Georgia

ZEN–IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY INSIGHTS ON "PASSING THE *KOAN"* OF THE THIRD DEGREE OF HUMILITY – SELECTED SESSION

Topic:	Zen–Ignatian Spirituality Insights on "Passing the *Koan"* of the Third Degree of Humility
Convenor:	James T. Bretzke, S.J., John Carroll University
Moderator:	Judith Merkle, S.N.D.deN., Niagara University
Presenter:	James T. Bretzke, S.J., Niagara University
Respondents:	Judith Merkle, S.N.D.deN., Niagara University Ruben Habito, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University

Because of a travel difficulty due to a flight cancellation Ruben Habito appeared via Zoom for this session, and while he therefore could not simultaneously see both the presenter and other respondents, as well as the attendees, they all could see and hear him, so this proved to be more of a minor difficulty rather than a critical obstacle.

The presenter, James Bretzke, had prepared a handout with his PowerPoint slides for each attendee (which proved helpful since, due to a miscommunication, there was no projector available). A fuller version of the "written" version of the paper had been circulated several weeks earlier to the two respondents. Links were also provided to the attendees for the script for the PowerPoint presentation, the fuller article, as well as the texts of each respondent (provided with their permission). These files can also be found online on Bretzke's academic webpage and at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-slnIMBhaxOi1gzgAcAn5NPl3XsqQPJ8/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=103519537108777764442&rtpof=true&sd=true.

Bretzke's presentation centered around using the Zen *Koan* as an interpretive key for a new understanding of the Ignatian Third Degree of Humility. The Zen *Koan* (公案) is often (mis)understood as an esoteric non-rational puzzle such as "the sound of one-hand clapping." While these riddles can guide practitioners to overcome the subject-object duality, real potential exists for inter-religious cross-fertilization leading to deeper insights into difficult problems in Christian spirituality, such as St. Ignatius' Meditation on the Third Degree of Humility proposed in the Second Week of his *Spiritual Exercises* (cf., #164-68). This insight is probed using the critical moment of "apostasy" in Shusaku Endo's well-known 1966 novel 沈黙（*Silence*) to break open the key grace of the Ignatian meditation.

In his response Ruben Habito took up the concept of the *Koan* and said,

> To practice with a Zen *Kōan*, it is often emphasized, is to be "faced with a matter of life and death." If one misses the appropriate response, being saddled with an attachment, or with a distracting thought, or with a hesitation to response out of cowardliness or fear, one loses one's life. If one responds at the right moment, one gains Life, and overcomes Death, and awakens to one's True Self—a True Self that embodies wisdom and compassion, and, in Ignatian terms, becomes a person for others, or one who lives no longer for oneself,

> but utterly at the service of others, toward the alleviation of the pain and suffering of the world, toward the fullness of well-being of all.

In her Response Judith Merkle reflected on the deeper understandings of religious experience provided by Vatican II which

> described religious life as a witness to grace and charity. It shifted this focus and image of the transformation involved in the lifestyle…yet language to express religious life remains part of the unfinished business of the council. However, we can appreciate the transformation required of Rodriquez before "the passing of the *koan*" when the heroic image of witness in times of persecution would have been the measure of faithfulness. Neither his spiritual culture nor the Japanese culture affirmed him. He lived in spiritual silence. People today do search for a re-enchantment which responds to modern sensibilities, and is centered in the faith of the Christian tradition. Is the *koan* facing the church today one to be a kenotic church, to depart from its previous triumphant stance, in order to witness to the kingdom?

The subsequent discussion by all those in attendance was a helpful elaboration on these presentations in light of the overall conference theme of "Thinking Catholic Interreligiously."

JAMES T. BRETZKE, S.J.
John Carroll University
University Heights, Ohio

ANTHROPOLOGY – TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Thinking Desire Interreligiously
Convener: Elizabeth Pyne, Mercyhurst University
Moderator: Heather DuBois, Boston College
Presenters: Tiffany Lee, Boston College
Greg Mileski, Boston College
Respondent: Won-Jae Hur, Xavier University

The Anthropology Topic Session hosted a panel featuring two papers and a response oriented to the overall convention theme.

Tiffany Lee's paper, "'The cure for addiction is suffering': Lessons in Deep Learning from Heruka's *Life of Milarepa,"* took as its point of departure a recent comment by actor Ben Affleck regarding his journey of addiction and recovery. She first examined the claim that "[t]he cure for addiction is suffering" in the context of Alcoholics Anonymous, a widely known support group and therapeutic program in which Affleck has participated. AA is strongly informed by the regnant medical model of addiction, which treats it as a treatable but fundamentally irreversible disease. Yet the arc of Affleck's self-narration points, Lee argued, to an alternative configuration of suffering, desire, and transformation, one better understood in terms of the deep learning model of addiction. After a brief introduction to the contemporary neuroscientific research behind this alternative model, Lee explored the rich vision of deep learning that emerges—as a complement to a more conventional movement from suffering to liberation—in the life of Milarepa, a twelfth century Vajrayana Tibetan Buddhist yogi. Lee then sketched how dialogue with this Buddhist account might contribute to a constructive Christian theological response to addiction. Whereas the standard disease model aligns closely with a dualistic Christian narrative of sin and suffering on the one hand and grace on the other, an interdisciplinary and interreligious approach to deep learning encourages us to see the working of grace and the transformation of desire in and amidst experiences of suffering.

Greg Mileski's paper, "Seeking A New Desire: Sāntideva's *Bodhicitta* and René Girard's Pacific Mimesis of Christ," adopted a Girardian lens on the nature of Christian life, centering the task of imitating Christ and Christ's desire as an antidote to the conflict, greed, and envy of rivalistic patterns of imitative desire that shape us in the world. Given the profound difficulty of converting one's desire—of learning to love like Christ loves—wisdom regarding the dynamics of imitation is welcome. Mileski proposed that, in charting a course toward the imitation of the enlightened Buddha, the eighth-century Indian author Śāntideva offers a trove of such wisdom from within one Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition. He focused on the notion of *boddhicita*, a mental orientation in which the desire for enlightenment and compassion for others converge, and drew out lessons from Śāntideva regarding the cultivation of such desire. Two insights are key: first, that the love we seek to imitate is primarily a love we have experienced, and, second, that it is essential not to instrumentalize others in our project of imitation. Thus, turning from this Buddhist path back to Christianity, Mileski concluded that "Śāntideva helps to illuminate the

ways in which the experience of being loved and accepted by God, and returning to that experience is foundational for developing the kind of love and compassion for others that Christ exemplified and that Christians are called to emulate."

Won-Jae Hur appreciatively engaged the presenters' work in a response (read in his absence by Katie Mahowski Mylorie of Boston College). Highlighting the fruitfulness of Lee's reading of Milarepa, Hur invited her to reflect on potential analogues within the Christian tradition and to probe further what might be entailed in a Vajrayana Buddhist perspective on what Christians understand as grace. Hur identified Mileski's emphasis on the experiential quality of transformed desire as an asset of his paper, and specifically drew out the "bodily, sensorial dimension of experience" as a theme. He also raised questions regarding how distinct conceptions of self and other in Buddhist and Christian traditions bear on Mileski's account of desire and the imitation of Christ.

To begin the discussion, Lee and Mileski elaborated on elements of their papers prompted by Hur's perceptive response. An open-ended initial question from the floor then proved especially generative as panelists shared first-person accounts of "what drew you to this kind of work [comparative theology]?" and did so with an eye toward broader conversation on the contributions of interreligious scholarship within Catholic theology.

ELIZABETH PYNE
Mercyhurst University
Erie, Pennsylvania

BIOETHICS AND HEALTHCARE – TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Organizational Ethics and Responding to Moral Distress
Convener: Michael McCarthy, Loyola University Chicago
Moderator: Nichole Flores, University of Virginia
Presenters: Daniel Daly, Boston College
Kate Jackson-Meyer, Boston College

The Bioethics and Healthcare topic session focused on a virtue-based approach to organizational ethics in Catholic healthcare (Daniel Daly) and how inter-religious inquiry can help shape responses to moral distress experienced by healthcare providers (Kate Jackson-Meyer).

Daly's "The Virtuous Hospital: Organizational Ethics for Catholic Healthcare" considers how Catholic and secular approaches to bioethics center typically on micro-level ethical questions at the bedside, while leaving macrolevel approaches to organizational ethics underdeveloped. He argues that Christian ethics has "overrated the influence of individual moral character and underrated the influence of institutional and organizational character regarding the production of social outcomes." As a corrective to this imbalance, Daly draws on the limited resources to sketch themes of an organizational healthcare ethics rooted in a theory of organizations.

Organizational ethics, Daly argues, requires a framework capable of guiding and assessing decision-making by drawing on a critical realist account of what an organization is and the connection between human agency within healthcare organizations. He draws on social theory-critical realism and notes that, within them, healthcare organizations have structures with positions of authority; these positions foster practices and norms; and the organization's culture is reflected in how "beliefs and values are endorsed and enforced." For Catholic healthcare, the core beliefs and culture of the organizations is structured around the "healing ministry of Jesus Christ" and function as a virtuous organization insofar as they "recognize and promote human dignity, human well-being, and the common good." In developing an ethical framework, Catholic healthcare organizations (HCO) must be capable of guiding and assessing decision-making by drawing on Catholic themes shaped by social thought in developing Cardinal organizational virtues.

Actions that align with organizational virtue require attention to the web of relationships and stakeholders within the HCO. Daly sketches an "org chart" that demonstrates the importance of structuring HCOs that prioritize and make possible the endorsement and enforcement of "ideas, language and values that recognize universal human dignity, the value of integral human well-being, and the common good." Cardinal organizational virtues—organizational justice, organizational beneficence, organizational solidarity, organizational prudence—serve as a way for an organization to gauge the fidelity to its mission. Through these organizational virtues, HCOs should draw on scientific social analysis and the normative language of virtue and vice to analyze the organization's structure and culture to evaluate how effectively the organizational structure promotes dignity, well-being, and the common good.

Jackson-Meyer delivered her paper, "Moral Distress and Moral Resilience: Areas in Need of Inter-religious Inquiry." She argues that moral distress is a critical issue for

healthcare professionals. To overcome moral distress, she posits that aspects of interreligious inquiry can lead to cultivating moral resilience. Her paper draws on foundational research in moral distress beginning with Andrew Jameton's classic definition in which individuals "know the right thing to do, but institutional constraints make it nearly impossible to pursue the right course of action." She utilizes narratives from the nursing literature to describe the feeling of moral distress and the ethical and existential challenges it can create. Conversely, moral resilience describes the "capacity of an individual to sustain or restore their integrity in response to moral complexity, confusion, distress, or setbacks."

Jackson-Meyer notes that while various interventions have been utilized to foster moral resilience, including "Moral Resilience Rounds," few interventions engage the wisdom and practices of religious traditions. She challenges Catholic healthcare to look at its own spiritual and moral tradition as a means to examine both the scope of the problem, including a consideration of tragic dilemmas, and the potential for solutions. Moreover, in an effort to cultivate greater moral resistance, she argues that Catholic healthcare should look beyond its own religious tradition and engage in interreligious inquiry, specifically between Christianity and Hinduism.

Jackson-Meyer identifies that Hinduism as an important dialogue partner in addressing moral distress because of the way the tradition reflects on moral decision-making. She draws from the Bhagavad Gita to demonstrate two concepts that have been important in cultivating moral resilience: meditation and vocation. Meditation, she argues, is central in the Gita and has also been shown to decrease moral distress. She sees a correlation between the Hindu meditation and a Christian meditation on hope that focuses on "anchoring our attention in the presence of God." Additionally, she draws on the idea of vocation that as a connection between Christian-Hindu inquiry; vocation "shapes self-understanding and combats self-doubt" generating a potential for growth and solace to those experiencing moral distress. Finally, she suggests a practical step to develop further opportunities for dialogue through interreligious conversation or a book discussion that allows for a religious framework to explore difficult ethical issues.

The session concluded with questions and conversation that touched on the importance of mental health, the social context in which both organizations exist and moral distress can develop, and the need to identify mentors with leadership capacity and foster the vocation of others.

MICHAEL MCCARTHY
Loyola University Chicago
Maywood, Illinois

CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT – TOPIC SESSION

Topic: *Thinking Interreligiously*
Convener: Patrick Flanagan, C.M., St. John's University
Moderator: Marcus Mescher, Xavier University
Presenters: David Cloutier, Catholic University of America
Michael VanZandt Collins, Boston College
Nicholas Hayes-Mota, Boston College

Historically, scholars and practitioners have employed Catholic social thought (CST) to critique the global village's political, economic, religious, and social systems and propose innovative action steps to rectify injustices. While CST enjoys respect among Catholics for its compelling insights and clear challenges, this session sought to answer whether CST had the same credibility among other religious traditions and cultures. Moreover, do those who value the import of CST in critical assessment and important decision-making adequately value and dialogue with members of other faiths? There is recent evidence of alliances in both these areas and, admittedly, the tensions of interreligious efforts vis-à-vis CST. These include areas such as environmental sustainability and peacebuilding in the world, as well as engagement with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In this CST topic session, Jens Mueller (University of Dayton, OH), William George (Dominican University, IL), and Patrick Flanagan, C.M. (St. John's University, NY) welcomed proposals on a range of topics that actively engaged CST "interreligiously." These included: the reception of CST among people of other faiths; the value of thinking interreligiously in formulating and applying CST; the areas of interreligious intersectionality and those of divergence in CST vis-à-vis other religious traditions and cultures; the reality of conflict in the application of CST among different religions and efforts to resolve differences; the import of CST in assisting other religions to build a similar, formidable system of social justice analysis; and, the important reflections and critical insights that non-Catholic religious traditions and non-religious persons have brought to bear on social analysis that CST has not incorporated.

The first to present their academic scholarship was David Cloutier (Catholic University of America). His paper was entitled "And Then There Were Nones? CST, Interreligious Dialogue, Fratelli *Tutti*, and the Secular Surge." David Campbell, Geoffrey Layman, and John Green's 2020 publication extensively discussed the phrase "secular surge." Cloutier explained their thesis that the recent "secular surge" in American politics has reconfigured the landscape due largely to rapid disaffiliation, especially among younger generations, towards historically valued structures, including organized religion. Commentary on the latter, "the rise of the nones," has been building for some time (often regarding church attendance or contested issues in sexual morality). Yet, Cloutier noted, little attention has been paid to the challenge nones pose to the commitments of Catholic *social* thought. Because of this, important questions arose for Cloutier: Are the "nones" simply another "religious group" in a pluralistic society? Or, are the challenges more complex than that?

Cloutier then examined magisterial documents from *Gaudium et Spes* onward, focusing his attention on Francis' writings, making two suggestions. First, Cloutier observed that the robust and positive interreligious language deployed by all the post-Vatican II popes, especially Francis, is in some significant tension with finding political common ground with the "nones." Secondly, Cloutier deemed CST as having done insufficient work to understand the distinctive make-up of American "nones." For Cloutier, they are neither systemic atheists (John Paul II's context) nor citizens of a post-war Europe deeply formed by Christian democracy (Benedict's context) nor the citizens of Latin American countries with thickly Catholic cultures (Francis' context). Both of these points contributed to Cloutier's modest conclusions about the place of God in CST discourse that is consciously interreligious in a "none"-saturated culture.

Michael VanZandt Collins (Boston College) then presented a paper entitled "Toward Rectifying Terrestrial Habits: 'Respect for Nature,' Muslim–Christian Dialogue and the Ethics of Recognition." In his research, VanZandt Collins examined "respect for nature" as both common good and potential virtue key in response to environmental degradation. VanZandt Collins considered a proposal by Indonesian Muslim scholar Zainal Abidin Bagir, a comparative theological perspective that evaluates the need to accommodate indigenous voices in order to protect creation. For VanZandt Collins, Bagir's reflections served as a case study that addresses the reception of CST, interreligious cooperation, and potentially reconciliation.

VanZandt Collins observed that Bagir believed Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* offered the most explicit expression of the growing awareness that faith communities must mobilize in response to environmental degradation. In particular, Bagir welcomed the "special care" and consideration of indigenous peoples as "principal dialogue partners" (*LS* 146) that the encyclical promotes. By way of example, VanZandt Collins referenced Bagir's work on deforestation. For Bagir, deforestation has become a primary concern in Indonesia, and indigenous rights are linked directly. Historically, as in Indonesia, paternalistic and colonial policies have marginalized indigenous voices. Moreover, as Bagir observed, so-called "world religions" such as Christianity and Islam have also historically dismissed and failed to recognize indigenous traditions.

Reconfiguring dialogue including indigenous peoples and their traditional ecological wisdom may facilitate "ecological conversion." First, it can resolve or, at best, balance the unequal power. Their inclusion can rectify past and current injustices. Although, as VanZandt Collins highlighted, in Bagir's study of *Laudato Si,* the encyclical still speaks of indigenous "cultures," not "religions." However, beyond acceptance and inclusion, accommodating indigenous wisdom theologically may transform "world religions." For VanZandt Collins, Bagir's suggestion that indigenous wisdom can help Muslims and Christians, environmental colonialists who have marginalized indigenous peoples, reappraise harmful "anthropocentric" tendencies.

While many might immediately turn toward solidarity, in conclusion, VanZandt Collins drew attention to similarities and differences in learning "respect for nature." What lessons might traditional indigenous wisdom provide for a CST and this Muslim reform perspective? From such a wellspring, VanZandt Collins believes, like Bagir, problematic "terrestrial habits" can be resolved interreligiously.

Nicholas Hayes-Mota (Boston College) presented the final paper entitled "Catholic in Principle, Interfaith in Practice? The Case of Faith-Based Organizing."

Hayes-Mota's precis was that faith-based community organizing (FBCO) in the United States today presents a paradox. On the one hand, Hayes-Mota noted that faith-based organizing is not only ecumenical but decidedly interfaith in orientation, drawing together institutions from across many religious traditions to collaborate for the common good of their local communities. Yet, on the other hand, Hayes-Mota admitted that, as some practitioners have observed, the core principles of faith-based organizing also appear to align most closely with one tradition, particularly Catholic social thought (CST). Hayes-Mota then asked how should the "interfaith" and the specifically "Catholic" aspects of faith-based organizing be understood in relation to each other? Secondly, what does this particular example reveal about how Catholic social thought can be effectively applied in a pluralistic, interfaith context?

Hayes-Mota explored these latter questions through a historical and ethical analysis of one prominent faith-based organizing network, the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). Hayes-Mota began by assessing the historical influence Catholics have actually exercised on the IAF since its founding by Saul Alinsky in 1940. Hayes-Mota then demonstrated that the IAF simultaneously draws its core principles of "practical philosophy" from CST while leaving these open for substantive theological elaboration by other religious traditions. In effect, Hayes-Mota argued, IAF organizing embodies a kind of overlapping "natural law" consensus, but one cultivated primarily through shared political *practice*, rather than explicit agreement on matters of theological or moral belief. Hayes-Mota concluded by suggesting that this practice-first approach represents a fruitful way forward for Catholic social thought.

Attendees found each of these scholars' presentations engaging, leading to a dynamic discussion about individual paper presentations and their intersectionality. Supportive colleagues encouraged Cloutier, VanZandt Collins, and Hayes-Mota to continue to use the promise of "thinking interreligiously," the 2022 CTSA conference theme, to examine the critical issues each of them presented. Such strident efforts can lead humanity into a deeper experience of solidarity among people of faith and perhaps even the "nones." For, as Pope Francis noted early on in his pontificate: "Interreligious dialogue is a sign of the times…(it is) a providential sign, in the sense that God Himself, in His wise plan, has inspired, in religious leaders and in many others, the desire to encounter and come to know one another in a way respectful of religious differences. Only in this way can we build together a habitable world for all, in peace." Moreover, dialogue rooted in respect can unite a fractured global village, unfortunately, presently rich with conflict and division.

PATRICK FLANAGAN, C.M.
Saint John's University
Jamaica, New York

CATHOLICITY AND MISSION – TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Thinking Catholic Interreligously
Convener: Sophia Park, S.N.J.M., Holy Names University
Moderator: Laurie Johnston, Emmanuel College
Presenters: Heejung Adele Cho, Regis College
Enrico Beltramini, Notre Dame de Namur University
Mary Doak, University of San Diego

Three engaging presentations explore the deep meaning of engaging with the other.

Heejung Cho, in her presentation entitled "From *Redemptoris Missio* to *Fratelli Tutti*: The Mission of the Church and Interreligious Dialogue," carefully examined how the church documents have changed the mode of mission and engagement with the other cultures and religions. Comparing two documents, *Redemptoris Missio* and *Fratelli Tutti*, Cho argues that there is a significant development, demonstrating a trajectory that the church is moving toward understanding its mission (*ad intra*) in the Church. This movement involves encountering complex issues and perspectives, which can contribute to a fuller and broader understanding of the truth.

Enrico Beltramini's presentation, entitled "Cosmic Christ and National God in Panikkar's The Unknown Christ of Hinduism," critiques how the worship of Christ constructed the identity of Jesus Christ as a national god. Exploring an Indian theologian Raymon Panikkar's concepts of worship of the national deity in Ancient Rome, Beltramini examines the Cosmic Christ, juxtaposing the Unknown God, introduced by Paul in the Acts of Apostle. Beltramini argues that seeking the hidden message of The Unknown is seeking Christ beyond one's understanding of God. In a sense, Christianity is quite unready to meet in Christ through the other religions. Then, it is mutual that the Unknown Christ of Hinduism is unknown to Christianity, and the Unknown Christ of Christianity is also unknown to Hinduism.

A third presentation, "Radical Hospitality: A Public and Prophetic Mission for a De-Colonized Church," was given by Mary Doak. She explores how the church, pretty much embodied in the colonial and Western dominant culture, can practice the culture of encounter. Doak engages the notion of radical hospitality, which can be a form of encounter but needs to be critiqued in so far as it reinforces Western centeredness. Further, work in Eucharistic hospitality challenges the practice of closed communion in the church. She raises the question of whether a table fellowship open to all might better express our ecclesial identity as the sacrament to the world of our ultimate, eschatological unity.

A vibrant and fruitful discussion followed the presentations. One central concern was about the binary thinking of "us and the other." Who is the other? And how can we find otherness in ourselves? The further discussion was about how we can encounter First Nation Peoples and how we reconcile the brutal history.

SOPHIA PARK, SNJM
Holy Names University
Oakland, California

CHRIST – TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Thinking Catholic Interreligiously
Convener: Elizabeth O'Donnell Gandolfo, Wake Forest University
Moderator: John Thiede, S.J., Marquette University
Presenters: James Robinson, Iona College
Mary Frohlich, Catholic Theological Union

The Christ Topic Session consisted of two paper presentations followed by a discussion among the presenters and attendees.

The first presenter, James Robinson, is a Clinical Lecturer in the Religious Studies Department and Associate Director of the Deignan Institute for Earth and Spirit at Iona College. His paper, entitled "'Jesus Christ destroys all our dualisms:' Raimon Panikkar's Cosmotheandric Christology," began with a brief biographical sketch of Panikkar's multireligious journey. Robinson then laid out the contours of Panikkar's cosmotheandric principle as a vision in which reality is experienced to be an "adualistic" and "interindependent" interplay "of the cosmos, God, and humanity." Although the fabric of reality is seamless, the relationship between God, humanity, and the cosmos has been ruptured and needs healing. In Panikkar's view, Jesus Christ "re-members" this broken body by destabilizing our dualisms and incarnating the cosmotheandic principle as the "Christian symbol for the whole of reality." Every being is a christophany, while the Eucharist "tangibly manifests Christ" and therefore "contains the entire reality" as a signification of Christ's "*incarnatio continua* [continuous incarnation]." In the next two sections of his presentation, Robinson drew out the implications of Panikkar's Christology for interreligious dialogue and ecological conversion. With regards to interreligious dialogue, the need for dialogue is embedded in the cosmotheandric principle, since relationality and radical interdependence are constitutive of our very nature. With regards to ecological conversion, Panikkar calls for a "radical metanoia" that will dissolve the dualistic and hierarchical relationship between humanity and the natural world. Christ functions here not only as redeemer of humanity, but as a cosmic embrace of "the restoration of the world; the cosmic *mandala*." An ecologically oriented cosmotheandric vision is thus grounded in mystical experience and embodied in the practice of what Panikkar calls "ecosophy," in which "human beings attune ourselves to the wisdom inherent in the earth." Robinson draws on Panikkar's own words to conclude that, once we recognize our interdependence with the earth, all that remains is to "spell it out in our own lives."

The second presenter, Mary Frohlich, is a Religious of the Sacred Heart and Professor Emerita of Spirituality at Catholic Theological Union. Her paper, entitled "Christ of the Forest: The 'New Animism' and Christology," began with a brief introduction to the "old animism" as a problematic term that Western anthropologists coined to describe "primitive" religions centered around "beliefs in non-empirical 'souls' or 'spirits' existing in animals, plants, landscape features, heavenly bodies, etc." Anthropologists have since rejected this term due to its condescension towards Indigenous peoples, its definition of Indigenous religious experience in terms of Western dualism between spirit and matter, and its assumption of cognitive belief as the defining feature of religion. The new animism has two main expressions: one in

which researchers seek to learn from Indigenous spiritualities of interdependence and harmony with other creatures and the other in which "denizens of the postmodern Western world" dialogue with Indigenous peoples but do not seek to root their movement in Indigenous spirituality *per se*. The new animism envisions and embodies intimate relationships with other-than-human creatures based on three underlying assumptions: first, there is no hierarchy of creatures; second, all beings are embedded in complex relationships with the world around them; and third, the human imagination is "a tool for guiding and enhancing engagement with the world." The new animism, therefore, rejects modern Western objectification of the world and embraces a vision of human beings as "participants in a living earth" that requires collaboration with, respect for, listening to and communication with other creatures. After laying out the methodology and evidence for the new animism, Frohlich went on to lay out several ways in which this movement might help us rethink Christology in light of the ecological crisis. First, the new animism's relational epistemology and ontology can ground Christology in an understanding of knowledge and being as participatory rather that dualistic. Second, the new animism can help to reimagine Christ's personhood as the foundational principle of personhood and "personing" for not only human beings, but all of creation. Third, the new animism helps to illuminate the cross and Eucharist as indicative of Jesus' full participation in the predator-prey relationships of an animate world in which creatures depend on killing and eating other creatures for survival. Ultimately, Frohlich concluded that the new animism has the potential to "awaken fresh thinking in an era of crisis."

The discussion that followed the two presentations touched on themes of soteriology; intersections between Christology, religious pluralism, and ecotheology; ontologies of personhood; and the reality of interdependence between humanity and creation. Participants noted the potential for fruitful dialogue between Panikkar's cosmotheandric principle and the new animism.

ELIZABETH O'DONNELL GANDOLFO
Wake Forest University
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

CHURCH/ECUMENISM – TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Synodality
Convener: Jakob Karl Rinderknecht, University of the Incarnate Word
Moderator: Kathryn L. Reinhard, Gwynedd Mercy University
Presenters: Brian P. Flanagan, Marymount University
Patrick Hornbeck, Fordham University
Phyllis Zagano, Hofstra University

The panel began with twenty-minute presentations, followed by conversation among panelists and the attendees.

Brian Flanagan's presentation, "Synodality Beyond Collegiality," argued that synodality is generally conceived as a form or a development of episcopal collegiality. Conceiving of it in this way, however, strongly limits the practice of synodality, which must attend not only to the collaboration of bishops with each other but involve bishops in conversation and discernment with lay Catholics, and indeed all people of good will. Arguing that the Eucharistic assembly is the primary analogue for considering a synod (which as a kind of liturgy is "celebrated" not "held"), we can see how Vatican II's ecclesiologies rooted in baptism lead to synodality. If the church is analyzed in terms of "One; Some; All," there are various necessary roles in the assembly that match up with primacy, collegiality, and synodality. As in the liturgy, all of these roles are necessary for a full celebration, and therefore, there is both a right and a duty for all the baptized to participate according to their various roles. When we consider synodality in this fashion, both papal primacy and episcopal collegiality find their meanings not primarily in relationship to each other, but in the context of the whole people of God celebrating the mystery of the church.

Patrick Hornbeck's paper was titled "Synodality and/with Disaffiliated Catholics" and argued that when those within the church see disaffiliated Catholics (or other Catholics with liminal relationships with the institutional church) as a problem to be understood and solved, true synodality is impossible. Although empirical studies of the causes and dynamics of disaffiliation have not been as comprehensive or reflective of racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity as one might hope, the extent of disaffiliation from the Roman Catholic Church is clear. A recent Pew Forum study indicated that nationwide, only 59 percent of U.S. adults who were raised Catholic continue to affiliate with the church.

Existing synodal processes at the diocesan, national, and global levels are not likely to reach disaffiliated Catholics for reasons both intentional and inadvertent. At the same time, Catholic theologies and canonical regimes concerning membership and belonging in the church do not leave adequate room for the judgments of conscience that many disaffiliated individuals have made. Therefore, synodal processes should focus on developing new categories and pastorally sensitive language for those whose relationships with the church do not cohere with the expectations of the magisterium. Room should be made for people to name their journeys, struggles, and joys; representatives of the church should not presume that the "right" outcome is that a person who has disaffiliated rejoins the church in a normative way; and the experiences of disaffiliated Catholics should inform theological, canonical, and pastoral work.

Phyllis Zagano presented a paper titled "The Problem with Synodality," in which she argued that the problem of synodality is synodality. The messy engagement beyond habitual patterns of consultation have been halting and even sometimes begrudging. Looking at recent synodal processes, especially the Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment (2018), and the early data from the present synod, Zagano noted the strong emphasis on the linked questions of clericalism and the place of women in the church whenever the laity are asked to discern a way forward. She noted that in the 2018 synod, the paragraph which appeared to receive the most negative feedback from voting members, all bishops, was called "the synodal form of the church," and focused on the idea that all the people of God participate in the life and mission of the church. Taken together with the spotty participation on behalf of dioceses and parishes in synodal processes, it is not difficult to discern a clerical distrust of a process that listens to and discerns with outsiders, lay persons, and specifically women. And yet this is precisely what practicing synodality attempts to do. In order to become synodal, the ministerial church will have to trust the whole people of God to be travelling companions on the way.

After the three papers, lively conversation began, centered on the various experiences of how synodality was beginning to be practiced in various local churches. One repeated emphasis was the difficulty of synodal processes, but analogy was made to a church, having once been a marathoner, now getting off the couch and going for a bad first run in the name of making a start. There was also extensive discussion of the category of "membership" and how it limits what Vatican II describes as "communion," capable of wide varieties of kinds of participation, to a single binary category.

JAKOB KARL RINDERKNECHT
University of the Incarnate Word
San Antonio, Texas

COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY – TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Emerging Methods in (Meta-)Confessional Comparative Theology
Convener: Peter Feldmeier, University of Toledo
Moderator: Reid Locklin, University of Toronto
Presenters: Laurel Marshall Potter, Boston College
Megan Hopkins, Boston College
Respondent: Marianne Moyaert, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Laurel Marshall Potter's paper was entitled "All Catholic Theology is Comparative Theology." She began the session by reflecting on the importance of the results of the 2019 Extraordinary Synod of the Amazon, both in its preparatory document and its post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Querida Amazonía*. Here, Pope Francis sought to promote and embrace a "church with an Amazonian face." In contrast to the typical comparative theological agenda whereby Christians meet the religious other in order to broaden Christian theological perspectives, Potter highlighted the need to apply this method *ad intra*, and examined the complexity in doing so. This included stretching boundaries in comparative categories, principally derived from Catherine Cornille's *Meaning and Method in Comparative Theology*, and providing a kind of ritual hospitality to the cultural and theological sensibilities/visions found in Amazonian (and Salvadorian) Catholicism. The Amazon Synod was controversial from the start, where the preparatory document was publicly denounced by prominent cardinals as "pantheistic idolatry" (Cardinal Brandmüller) and "a direct attack on the lordship of Christ," an "apostasy" (Cardinal Burke). What Potter was arguing for was a robust engagement with inculturation described in Vatican II's *Ad Gentes*. The central problem, Potter argues, is that there is a necessary permeability between Amazonian culture and Amazonian Catholicism. But this, she argued, is not different than the imagined normativity of European culture and European Catholicism, with its permeability. Drawing on Boaventura de Souza Santos's work that has striven to decolonize Catholicism from its "Epistemic North," and open a way to engage the "Epistemic South," Potter demonstrated with alacrity the staunch embeddedness of many of the nay-sayers to this larger inner-church dialogue. She also demonstrated that many of the same arguments against southern inculturation were used against liberation theology in decades past. Potter further argued that many of the tools of comparative theology can and ought to be used to make coherent sense of significant inner-church differences.

Megan Hopkins's paper was entitled "Ritual as Comparative Source Material: Illustrated through Eucharist and *Dhikr*." Drawing on insights from Marianne Moyaert, et al., she argued for greater emphasis in the comparative project on ritual as a key source. See especially Moyaert and Geldhof, *Ritual Participation and Interreligious Dialogue*. The discipline has, she argued, been so focused on comparative texts that it has become "dualistic, disembodied, patriarchal, and colonial." Without dismissing the importance of dialogue based on the textual traditions, she argued for "turning toward ritual and lived experience as primary source material…allowing the work of a comparative theologian to more accurately reflect lived religiosity." Hopkins demonstrated how the sources from which we theologize determine how we understand

the Divine as well as the kinds of questions or interests we bring to bear across religious traditions. To demonstrate how ritual comparison would work for a constructive comparative theological project, she compared Catholic Eucharist to the Muslim, Sufi ritual of *Dhikr*, the practice of the repetition of God's name or short devotional mantras in community while engaging in ritual movements. It is through this ritual that Muslim participants remember, represent, and participate in God's self-disclosed speech, with an ultimate aim of communion with God both personally and collectively. In comparing these two ritual traditions, Hopkins first framed the project from a "phenomenological approach," involving specific criteria with which comparativists should approach rituals. Then Hopkins provided a "theological approach" that included both first principles and intended transformations through the lenses of both traditions.

PETER FELDMEIER
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CREATION/ESCHATOLOGY – TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Thinking Catholic Interreligiously
Convener: Daniel P. Horan, O.F.M., Saint Mary's College
Moderator: Chelsea King, Sacred Heart University
Presenters: Elizabeth O'Donnell Gandolfo, Wake Forest University
Christopher Cimorelli, National Institute for Newman Studies
Respondent: Daniel P. Scheid, Duquesne University

This session focused on interreligious dialogue, decolonial theory, feminist theory, and the development of doctrine within the context of theologies of creation. It consisted of two papers and a response, which focused on the theme of the convention: "Thinking Catholic Interreligiously."

Elizabeth O'Donnell Gandolfo opened the session with a paper titled, "Redeeming the Commons of Creation: Towards an Interreligious, Decolonial, and Ecofeminist Theology of the Kin-dom of God." Gandolfo begins her paper with an introduction to the concept of the commons and then interrogates the history of Christian theology's complicity in the gendered and racialized process of enclosing the commons. After establishing this historical context, the paper takes a constructive turn in which Gandolfo highlights two ways in which Christian ecotheology can learn from dialogue with indigenous cosmovisions and practices of commoning in order to (a) deploy a decolonial logic of resistance against the coloniality of global capitalism and its reliance on patriarchy and racialized violence; and (b) reclaim "the commons of creation as a site of shared pursuit of human and planetary wellbeing." Gandolfo concludes by gesturing toward the ways that a commons-centered Christian theology may find paths toward interreligious dialogue with indigenous traditions and seek to share practical outcomes.

Christopher Cimorelli offered the second paper, titled, "The Fruits of Interreligious Dialogue on the Climate: Doctrinal Development and Creation Theology." Cimorelli opens his paper with an argument that global climate change is a unique focal point for engaging in interreligious dialogue because "it provides a common object to unite proponents of distinct worldviews." Additionally, climate change requires religious traditions, including Christianity, to engage in dialogue with the natural sciences. Drawing on the insights of John Henry Newman regarding the development of doctrine during particularly challenging moments in history, Cimorelli argues that climate change occasions such a challenge that may elicit mutual development of doctrine. The paper concludes with some consideration of what concrete developments might arise for theologies of creation from interreligious dialogue in this historical moment.

Daniel Scheid provided a response to the two papers presented in this panel. After highlighting several of the key elements of each paper and offering connections to additional resources in the theological tradition (e.g., deepening connections to Pope Francis's *Laudato Si'* in Cimorelli's paper and engaging the work on the commons as found in John Hart's research), Scheid then makes a case for how comparative theological methodology provides a valuable resource in the developing theologies of creation. This is illustrated in the work of Francis Clooney who, in *Comparative*

Theology: Deep Learning Across Religious Borders, makes the case that the aim ought to be striving to understand your dialogue partner or tradition on their own terms in order to return to one's originating tradition and see it anew. Pointing to the animist traditions Gandolfo references, Scheid notes that Christians might "see or hear resemblances in our Catholic tradition that may be otherwise hidden, neglected, unappreciated" prior to attending to such indigenous cosmovisions. Bringing together the distinctive contributions of both papers, Scheid concludes his response with the following assessment: "Climate change and mass extinction are indeed unique focal points for theological reflection, and we need continual dialogue with other religious traditions, and with the Earth and our fellow planetary creatures, in order that our Catholic tradition and doctrines of creation and eschatology might develop in a way that honors the Creator who calls us all to a greater fullness of life."

DANIEL P. HORAN, O.F.M.
Saint Mary's College
Notre Dame, Indiana

FUNDAMENTAL THEOLOGY/METHOD – TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Method in Theology/Religious Studies and Interreligious Dialogue
Convener: Jeremy D. Wilkins, Boston College
Moderator: Matthew Vale, University of Notre Dame
Presenters: Katie Mahowski Mylroie, Boston College
Anna Bonta Moreland, Villanova University
Kristin Haas, University of Notre Dame

This session explored method in Theology and Religious Studies as it relates to interreligious dialogue. In her opening paper, "Exploring Ecofeminist Methodology: Insights from Comparing Ivone Gebara's Trinitarian Theology with the Hindu Kali Tantric Tradition," Katie Mahowski Mylroie described an ecofeminist methodology grounded in the comparison of the Christian cycle of life, death, and resurrection with the Hindu cycle of *Saṃsāra*. Briefly describing the work of Christian female theologians such as the cosmological approach of Elizabeth Johnson, the work of Brazilian liberation theologian Ivone Gebara—and feminist efforts to transcend male–female dichotomies in general—she then detailed elements from papal addresses related to Christian ecological concerns and theology.

Mahowski Mylroie considered the six types of comparative learning in Catherine Cornille's *Meaning and Method in Comparative Theology* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2019): intensification, rectification, recovery, reinterpretation, appropriation, and reaffirmation. She demonstrated reaffirmation, in which the figure of Kali provides the occasion for a new appreciation of the truths in Gebara's Trinitarian theology, and also recovery, with the Tantric tradition's concrete bodily theology inspiring the recovery of embodied Christian theological epistemology. Highlighting throughout her central point that a tension exists between what Christian theology can learn from the Hindu Kali tradition and what cannot be absorbed from it, Mahowski Mylroie approached the presentation from the Christian perspective, asserting that Hindu ecotheology, and its thinkers, can help fill some gaps in the Christian tradition. In particular, the view of life and death as continuous in the Kali tradition of Hinduism was compared with the traditional Christian views (especially those of Gebara) of life, death, and resurrection.

In the Kali tradition death is always there, part of the same continuous process of evolution, and the Christian tradition can, likewise, consider life, death, and resurrection as continuous. The presenter's reflections on the resource selection process of comparative theologians engaging with a tradition that is different than one's "home tradition" was interesting. Questions and discussion related to this venturing into other traditions and how this impacts a theologian's own relationship to, and ideas about, their home tradition.

Anna Bonta Moreland followed with "Unifying the Methodologies of Comparative Theology: A Critical Analysis of Five Recent Works," in which she discussed comparative theology within the larger field of theology/religious studies (T/RS) through five recent academic publications. Moreland asserted that studies in method have recently become a necessity, as its heterogeneity threatens the unity of T/RS as a field. Scholarship in the area of comparative theology is produced "fast and furiously" and there is a need to ensure that the different academic developments are in conversation with one another. To that end, she put the following recent works on

method into dialogue: *Circling the Elephant: A Comparative Theology of Religious Diversity*, John J. Thatamanil (Fordham University Press, 2020); *The Enigma of Divine Revelation: Between Phenomenology and Comparative Theology*, Jean-Luc Marion and Christiaan Jacobs-Vandegeer, eds. (Springer, 2020); *Doing the Work of Comparative Theology: A Primer for Christians*, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (Eerdmans, 2020); *Considering Comparison: A Method for Religious Studies*, Oliver Freiberger (Oxford, 2019); and *Meaning and Method in Comparative Theology*, Catherine Cornille (Wiley-Blackwell, 2019). Comparative theology within T/RS can be seen as faith seeking understanding to help counter the diffusion that has been happening and bring such work all together into the one discipline.

The question-and-answer session mainly involved Moreland's exploration of identity and those with deeply held beliefs coupled with her framing of comparative theology as relational theology. Discussion ensued about religious pluralists, metaconfessional theologians (and their engagement with science and other approaches), evangelization, accountability to a particular ecclesial community, and the vulnerability that is part of engaging with the people, texts, and bodies, of those with different deeply-held beliefs.

In the final paper of the session, "Interreligious Dialogue and Foundations of Doctrinal Humility: A Critical Appreciation of Cornille's Contribution," Kristi Haas advanced the conversation about the work of Catherine Cornille in relation to comparative theology in light of the fundamental-theological basis for the virtue of "doctrinal humility" in interreligious dialogue. While taking inspiration from the works of Cornille on doctrinal humility, Haas took issue with and called into question Cornille's interpretation of the relationship of truth and humility in the historical Christian theological tradition, in particular the argument from eschatology and the reading of Bernard of Clairvaux, and demonstrated that her argumentation serves to undermine key theological justifications for humility. She highlighted both a strong form and a weak form of doctrinal humility in Cornille's works, one of which is more problematic than the other, and which scholars need to address in further theological treatment of the topic, especially at the level of fundamental theology. Rereading certain sources of Cornille's, such as the *De gradibus humilitatis* of Bernard of Clairvaux, and drawing on the methodology of Louis Bouyer, Haas revisited the relationship of truth and humility in selected biblical and historical sources to develop a more Christological and pneumatological account of doctrinal humility; this can serve to bolster the amenability to dialogue of theological justifications for humility.

During the question-and-answer session, discussion ensued about Bernard of Clairvoux's vision of Christian life as incomplete, the attitudinal posture of an appreciation of the goodness, grace, and mercy of God, and the relationship between certainty and doctrinal humility. A participant raised the question of whether humility about a faith tradition's doctrines is critical to interreligious dialogue or whether approaching the dialogue while holding in mind the unity with Christ and the healing and relationship to others that happens through Christ during interreligious dialogue might be the most important.

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Neumann University
Aston, Pennsylvania

GOD AND TRINITY – TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Thinking God/Trinity Interreligiously
Convener: Darren J. Dias, O.P., University of St. Michael's College
Moderator: Benjamin Lujan, University of St. Michael's College
Presenters: Jessica Coblentz, St. Mary's College
Charles A. Gillespie, Sacred Heart University

Jessica Coblentz gave the first paper entitled "Must a Good God be a Feeling God? An Interreligious and Interdisciplinary Reflection on Moral Arguments for Divine Passibility." If empathy is constitutive of good and right action, Coblentz queries whether God must be empathetic in order to be good. Since images of God inform what right relations look like, an unfeeling God would not act on behalf of others, but would remain distant and aloof. Coblenz problematizes her considerations noting that "empathy" is often framed in gendered ways. For example, compassionate solidarity is often characterized as a "feminine" quality, maternal and otherwise. Furthermore, God's empathy exonerates God from complicity in evil, so retrieving feelings for divine passability may have different consequences than intended. She draws on feminist scholars as well as Jewish political thinkers in her considerations. The paper concluded with Elizabeth Johnson's critique and concepts of a loving (as right action and not an affective state) God in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

The second paper presented by Charles A. Gillespie was entitled "Thinking Trinity Interreligiously." Gillespie examines classical Trinitarian categories in the light of drama and spectacle. He employs a prosoponic exegesis to trace the emergence of persona/prosopon from Trinitarian narrative. Thus, personhood is a dynamic personality that points outward and is in relation with something other than itself. In the emergence of the persona/prosopon from narrative, there is always surplus meaning. Gillespie then turns to the 2019 *Document on Human Fraternity and World Peace for Living Together* co-signed by Pope Francis and Sheik Amhad el-Tayeb as a model of interreligious hermeneutics where there is shared language and yet simultaneously the possibility of different meanings.

A very fruitful and animated conversation followed as a significant amount of time was reserved for discussion with and amongst the large and diverse audience.

DARREN J. DIAS, O.P.
University of St Michael's College
Toronto, Ontario

HISTORICAL THEOLOGY I– TOPIC SESSION

The second meeting of the Historical Theology Topic Session was cancelled prior to the convention due to unforeseen circumstances.

HISTORICAL THEOLOGY II – TOPIC SESSION

Convener: Kenneth Parker, Duquesne University
Moderator: Rita George-Tvrtković, Benedictine University
Presenters: Nicole Reibe, Loyola University Maryland
Wilhelmus Valkenberg, Catholic University of America
Respondent: Amir Hussain, Loyola Marymount University

Nicole Reibe's paper, "Troubled Waters: Bad Baptismal Theology in Fifteenth Century Spain," focused on two examples of what she called "bad baptismal theology" circulating in late medieval Castile, and various responses to it. The first example she discussed was forced baptism. She began with the story of Ferrán Martínez, who in 1391 whipped up a Christian mob that gave local Jews the choice of baptism or violence. That year, over fifty thousand Jews were killed, and between one hundred thousand and two hundred thousand converted, creating a new group, the *conversos*. While forced conversion was not unknown to Iberian Jews, in general, the "good theology" of the universal church was against it; for example, the writings of Pope Gregory the Great, St. Augustine, and the bishops of the Fourth Council of Toledo (633 CE), all explicitly rejected the practice of forced conversion. Yet fifteenth century Spain saw a record number of forced conversions, and Reibe analyzed *converso* writings which dealt with questions such as: Did baptism erase one's Jewish heritage? Were Christians of Jewish heritage lesser Christians than others? This last question led to the second example of bad theology Reibe discussed in her paper: that baptism does not in fact ever fully convert those with "Jewish blood." This new *limpieza de sangre* idea undergirded laws such as Toledo's 1449 *Sentencia-Estatuto*, which prohibited converts of Jewish descent from certain positions. The law was rooted in a new distinction between "Old" and "New" Christians; Old Christians saw themselves as superior to New Christians, not only because *conversos* had Jewish ancestry, but also because they were (believed to have been) still secretly practicing Judaism. In these new laws and theology, the Old Christians ignored the Fourth Council of Toledo, which not only prohibited forced conversion of the Jews, but also affirmed the efficacy of their baptism.

Wilhelmus Valkenberg likewise began in medieval Spain but ended up in twentieth-century Egypt. His paper, "Means and Methods of Interreligious Engagement: Converging Goals and Diverging Methods of Ramon Martí O.P. (1220-1285) and Georges Chehata Anawati O.P. (1905-1994)," compared the efforts of two Dominicans known for their lifelong engagement with religious others. In the case of Ramon Martí, the engagement took the form of polemics, most famously his *Pugio fidei* (Dagger of faith) against Jews and Muslims. His works were part of an early Dominican effort to educate Christians engaged with Jews and Muslims in present-day Spain and North Africa. In order for this missionary effort to succeed, adequate knowledge of languages was necessary, and therefore the Dominicans set up language schools in these areas. What strikes the present-day reader of Martí's works is the pairing of polemical zeal and an effort at scholarly objectivity, since no Jew (or Muslim) could be won for the true faith if the sources used were not interpreted correctly. A similar pairing of zeal and scholarship can be found in the work of Georges

Anawati, the Egyptian Dominican singled out by Marie-Dominique Chenu to start a Dominican institute for oriental studies in Cairo. However, in the case of Anawati, his background as a Christian in Egypt helped him to focus on dialogue and friendship as a central means for engagement with Muslims, so that he became one of the leading influences in the third paragraph of *Nostra Aetate*. As a Dominican, he argued that outreach towards Muslims should be based on serious study of the theological language of Islam in the form of *kalam*, in parallel with the Thomistic heritage of the Catholicism of his days. Considered separately and together, Ramon Martí and Georges Anawati show how Dominicans could find inspiration in their religious heritage to engage in studious missionary and dialogical engagement with Jews and Muslims.

Our respondent was Amir Hussain, a Muslim scholar of the history of Islam in America. In responding to Reibe's paper about *conversos*, Hussain connected convert-polemicists such as the medieval Pablo de Santa María, with contemporary polemical works about Islam and Muslims, written by Muslims who either have converted to Christianity or become atheist. He noted that while these may be useful as polemics, they don't help us to understand why Jews remain Jews, or Muslims remain Muslims. For Hussain, the connection between Reibe's and Valkenberg's papers is the usefulness of studying multiple languages to cross interreligious divides, be they converts such as Pablo de Santa María, or theologians engaging with Islam and Judaism such as Ramon Martí and Georges Anawati.

The subsequent discussion focused on the connections between race and religion, and the transfer of *limpieza de sangre* thinking from late medieval Spain to the early modern Americas.

RITA GEORGE-TVRTKOVIĆ
Benedictine University
Lisle, Illinois

LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS – TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Sacraments, Sacramentality and Liturgy: An Interreligious Approach
Convener: Sebastian Madathummuriyil, Duquesne University
Moderator: Layla Karst, Loyola Marymount University
Presenters: Jonathan Martin Ciraulo, St. Meinrad Seminary
Elizabeth Groppe, University of Dayton

The session began with thirty-minute presentations, followed by a discussion that helped the assembly delve deeper into some crucial questions that emerged from the two presentations.

Jonathan Ciraulo's paper, "The Ontological Demands of Cult in Hinduism and Christianity," analyzes the cultic practices of Hinduism and Christianity. It asks about the broader philosophical presuppositions of worldviews that consider material religious cult to be spiritually efficacious. His presentation makes a case for broadening the horizon of interreligious dialogue to include a positive analysis of the concrete religious practices of Hinduism, even though Catholics have historically tended towards appreciating the more philosophical and less cultic aspects of Hinduism (the Upanishads, Advaita Vedanta). He argues that strong notions of cultic efficacy in both Christianity and Hinduism tend to correspond to forms of metaphysical realism, such as the pairing of secondary causality and sacraments as instrumental causes in Aquinas. Similarly, in Hinduism, a denigration or minimization of religious cult tends to accompany views in which nature as a whole is illusory (Shankara), while those thinkers who attribute a real ontological density to the world (Ramanuja, Madhva) also have much higher valuations of cultic practices. Ciraulo explains how this ritual ontology leads toward a realism that is insistent upon the efficaciousness not only of ritual acts but also of all finite acts, which is seen with a particular clarity in Purva Mimamsa. Thus, he concludes by arguing that elevating rather than diminishing the role of cult in both Hinduism and Christianity can bring the Christian and the Hindu conceptions of God and the world closer together rather than farther apart.

Elena Procario-Foley, professor of religious studies at Iona College, read the paper of Elizabeth Groppe, "'My Harp is Turned to Mourning' (Job 30:31): Reimagining the Church's Response to the Destruction of the Temple Interreligiously," in her absence. Within the context of the convention theme "Thinking Catholic Interreligiously, Groppe's paper engaged the Jewish liturgy of *Tishah b'Av*, a day of communal lamentation and mourning, highlighting its nuances for the Jewish–Christian relationship. She started her presentation by outlining the practice of *Tishah b'Av* and analyzing its historical-theological context and implications. Then, she offered a comparison of the response to the destruction of the Temple in the Jewish liturgy with the response in some early Christian literature. She concluded with some reflections on Catholic practices stimulated by engagement with the Jewish liturgical tradition. She noted that because of the unique historical relationship between Christianity and Judaism, "thinking Catholic interreligiously" in terms of the Jewish tradition differs from engaging other religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism.

Layla Karst moderated the intense and lively discussion surrounding the questions and comments from those in attendance.

SEBASTIAN MADATHUMMURIYIL
Duquesne University
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

MORAL THEOLOGY – TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Thinking Catholic Interreligiously
Convener: Daniel Cosacchi, Marywood University
Moderator: Rachel Bundang, Santa Clara University
Presenters: Molly Greening, Loyola University Chicago
David Kwon, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota

This session was comprised of two papers, each approximately 25-30 minutes in length, followed by a question and answer session that filled the remainder of the allotted time.

In her paper, "Between Nepantla and Natural Law: How Definitions of Rationality Impact the Ethics of Interreligious Engagement," Molly Greening addressed the question, "Who gets perceived as a moral agent capable of making ethical claims amongst religious, sexual, and gendered differences?" Spanish Dominican Friar Francisco de Vitoria (1539) used the natural law to argue for the humanity and land rights of Indigenous people while denying that non-Catholic sexual or religious practices could be justified reasons for waging war. However, Greening argued that the supposed rationality of Christian conversion within Vitoria's natural law framework created less of a dialogue with actual stakeholders and more of an ethical monologue amongst scholastic European clerics, leading to definitions of humanness based on the universalization of very particular European notions of land ownership and gender hierarchy. Queer Chicana feminist author Gloria Anzaldúa (1942-2004) redefined rationality as *conocimiento*. Anzaldúa claimed that being in *nepantla*, or the in-betweenness of the physical, sexual, psychological, and/or spiritual borderlands, developed certain sensitivities and ways of knowing necessary for healing the wounds of colonial violence. Greening argued that Anzaldúa's concept of *nepantla* can be ethically theorized as a moral space of critical reflection that is more dialogical, privileging process and participation while taking experiences of concrete suffering as a normative starting point rather than needing an objective ontological criterion as a prerequisite for engagement.

In his paper, "A Confucian Contribution to the Catholic Just War Tradition," David Kwon provided an examination of just war theory in Western Catholicism, which reveals a shortcoming, a shortcoming that can be resolved by an examination of Confucian just war theory. His paper posited that traditional just war theory's stipulation of legitimate authority is weak both in terms of *jus ad bellum* and *jus post bellum*. Instead of the legitimate authority only being so because of legislative processes, they should also possess qualities fitting of a rulership position. To show this, Kwon first examined Confucian positions on *ren xing* (human nature) and the role it plays in the cultivation of the persons in the office. Kwon then incorporated these views into the *jus ad bellum* cause of legitimacy and extended them to the *jus post bellum* discourse. Finally, Kwon shared examples of the Confucian virtues to defend this new formulation that not only should the persons be legitimately eligible, but they should also exemplify certain moral qualities if they are to lead appropriately.

The discussion that followed prompted both presenters to move beyond their points. First, both panelists conversed for a few moments with one another about the

genesis of their respective projects. Tobias Winright remarked that both papers did an admirable job of pursuing the comparative nature of the just war tradition, considering that it has been "so tethered to the Roman Catholic tradition." Both panelists responded to this with other examples of how the tradition could be further expanded. Other questions dealt with the moderation of Confucianism, the role of *jus post bellum* in Confucianism, and the other elements of the just war tradition. In particular, one questioner asked about the relationship between the criteria already discussed and right intention and the possibility of creating a just peace. Finally, the session concluded with a very interesting discussion on whether or not war could be considered justified today. No unanimous verdict was reached!

DANIEL COSACCHI
The University of Scranton
Scranton, Pennsylvania

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY – TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Decoloniality and Comparative Cosmology in the Americas and Beyond
Convener: Elsie M. Miranda, Association of Theological Schools
Moderator: Susan Bigelow Reynolds, Emory University
Presenters: Rafael Luévano, Chapman University
Cecilia Titizano, Santa Clara University
Gustave Ineza, University of Toronto

In light of the theme of this year's convention, "Thinking Catholic Interreligiously," the Practical Theology topic session invited papers that engaged grassroots realities and lived religious practice through a comparative lens.

Rafael Luévano, a Roman Catholic priest in the Diocese of Orange and an associate professor in the Religious Studies Department and Catholic chaplain at Chapman University, began the session with his presentation, "Interreligious Pandemic Death Narratives in the US and Mexico." Luévano observed that in late 2019, while what would become the global COVID-19 pandemic loomed, both Mexico and the United States initially responded with denial. At the core of these parallel repudiations, he argued, resides the unique death narratives of Mexico and the United States. Employing a comparative theological and interdisciplinary methodology, Luévano traced these dual death narratives. Drawing on Octavio Paz and Gloria Anzaldúa, Luévano suggested that historical memories of indigeneity, conquest, and violation undergird present Mexican death narratives characterized at once by the "push and pull" of celebration and guilt. The United States, by contrast, approaches death with the "cleansing optimism" of future-looking denial and intentional historical forgetting of racist violence. Dramatically illustrating how these two narratives inhabit the psyches of the two nations, Luévano framed Mexican and US responses to the pandemic as manifestations of these historical and psychological foundations.

Next, Cecilia Titizano, Director of Latina/o Theology and Ministry Leadership Network of the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, presented a paper entitled "Decolonizing Religious Landscapes for a Pluriversal Church." Titizano began by posing a provocative question: "Is the church a peach or an onion?" A peach, she observed, is composed of a durable core with a dissolvable pulp. An onion, on the other hand, has no distinctive center and can only be known through its many layers. A Bolivia native of Quechua-Aymara descent, Titizano observed that across the *Abya Yala* continent, Indigenous people, including those who are Christians, are decolonizing the religious landscape, bringing their epistemologies and philosophical and spiritual principles to the theological table. Following Pope Francis' call to embody a synodal church and value indigenous peoples' cultures, Titizano stated, indigenous theologians endorse "epistemological disobedience" (citing Roberto Tomichá Charupá). They want to drink from the millennial spiritual wells of their cultures and heal from the colonial wound. Thus, Titizano suggested, that the first step to incarnating Francis's vision of intercultural encounter requires challenging current inculturation efforts that, despite best intentions, continue to endorse platonic essentialisms. Titizano proposed an alternate vision. First, she proposed "demission," or stopping missions and allowing indigenous communities to drink from their

ancestral wells and heal. If the church fails to demission, she argued, the church runs the risks of perpetuating what she called a monocultural and monotonous Christianity, contributing to the extinction of indigenous peoples' cultural identities. Second, using inter-religious, decolonial, and intercultural hermeneutics, she offered a glimpse into the depth of Andean cosmology, emphasizing its complex metaphysical system that challenges the common assumption of universality—that is, the notion of a single world or reality divided into many cultures. Attending to Andean cosmology invites us to forego Eurocentric ontological assumptions and be open instead to a pluriverse or many worlds. Ultimately, Titizano concluded that it is indeed the image of the onion that guides a Pluriversal Catholic church.

Finally, Gustave Ineza, a Rwandan-born Dominican friar and doctoral student at St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, presented a paper entitled, "Decolonizing Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the West." In Western countries, Ineza observed, engaging with Islam means overcoming deeply rooted colonial foundations. Ineza drew on several authors to present the challenges of deconstructing the Christian–Muslim dialogue established in colonial terms by medieval misrepresentations of Islam and the Prophet Muhammad. Highlighting the orientalist facets of certain Christian approaches to Islam constructed over the centuries, Ineza's paper proposed the reconstruction of a climate conducive to a healthier and more equitable dialogue between Muslims and Christians in the West through cultural humility, hospitality, and friendship.

Following these successive twenty-minute presentations, questions from those in attendance established a conversation among the papers to probe their theological, ecclesial, and interfaith implications.

SUSAN BIGELOW REYNOLDS
Emory University
Atlanta, Georgia

SPIRITUALITY – TOPIC SESSION

Convener: Julia Feder, Creighton University
Moderator: Axel Marc Oaks Takacs, Seton Hall University
Presenters: Vincent Miller, University of Dayton
Wilson Angelo Espiritu, KU Leuven and Ateneo de Manila University

In his paper titled, "The *Panata* to Nuestro Padre Jesus Nazareno: Filipino Popular Devotion as a Catalyst of Social Commitment," Wilson Angelo Espiritu explained that, in Filipino communities, *panata* is a Tagalog term that is often used to refer to a popular practice of devotion through which individuals take a pledge to their patron as a supplicatory prayer. The *panata* is used to negotiate with the spiritual world to gain a good life for oneself and one's family. This "negotiation process" is transferable between family members, often across generations and is rooted in Filipino indigenous beliefs that predate conversion to Catholicism. To combat the problematic tendency of "a-political holiness" in Filipino Catholic spirituality, Espiritu argues that the concept of *panata* can be developed to unite spiritual practices and socio-political reforms. Espiritu draws out exemplary practices of *panata* to the *Nuestro Padre Jesus Nazareno* of Quiapo, Manila to demonstrate how a confluence of spirituality and social commitment is embodied in Filipino Catholic life. Espiritu appeals to the Flemish theologian Edward Schillebeeckx to argue that the mystical and the political are inseparable aspects of Christian faith; each interacts productively to bring about "an integral experience of grace." Espiritu then maintains that a mystical-political performance of the *panata* manifests one's pledge to Christ through commitment to the common good. In this model, the *panata* practice is not confined to private spirituality but bears the fruit of political love. This is exemplified by devotees who join the Green Brigade to sweep the streets during the January *Traslacion* feast, distribute food and water to fellow devotees and unhoused community members, donate funds to support vulnerable community members, and who go on to public service as civil servants, all because of their *panata* to the *Nazareno*. In these instances, the *panata* fosters mystical solidarity with Christ and political solidarity with those who suffer.

In the discussion period that followed, listeners asked about what role the recovery of the historical Jesus might play in the unity of the mystical and political dimensions of Filipino Catholic spirituality. Listeners also wondered about the extent to which nineteenth century vocabulary of "spirituality" and "mysticism" transfer to the twenty-first century Filipino context. Espiritu acknowledged the crucial role of narratives about Jesus' public ministry in cultivating Filipino popular spirituality, but he noted that devotees to the *Nazareno* are not invested in scholarly debates defining "spirituality" or "mysticism." These terms are rarely used by Filipino Catholics, who refer to their popular spirituality in terms of *debusyon* or *panata*.

In his paper, "Hope, Affect and the Particular: An Engagement with Joanna Macy's Buddhist proposal for *Active Hope*," Vincent Miller argued that while Macy's Buddhist treatment of hope as a response to the climate crisis offers a way of transforming climate anxiety into action, it might not account for ecological grief for particular beings and proposed that Christian spirituality might offer resources for

doing so. Placing the doctrine of *paticca samuppada* (dependent co-arising, interbeing) into dialogue with biological systems theory and cybernetics, Macy offers a practice in which "attending to the pain of the world" alerts us to our interdependence with other beings and opens a path for acting on their behalf. Macy's approach reframes ecological distress into active responsibility, fostering attentiveness to ecological relationships. This practice is valuable to the concerns of integral ecology. It does not, however, value particular emotional attachments to or grief for other creatures, ecosystems or species. Christian forms of passion-centered medieval Marian spirituality provide a starting point for addressing this. The medieval emergence of a spirituality centered on Christ's passion mediated through the emotion-laden gaze of Mary, undergirds contemporary Catholic spiritual dispositions toward suffering. This spirituality offers a gaze on the particular and the ability to abide with profound suffering. This formation of sight and affect can provide a supplement to Macy's notion of active hope, one that finds in grief for the particular a motivation for acting with compassion.

In the discussion period that followed, listeners wondered what role Pope Francis's term "combative hope" or Douglas Christie's treatment of penthos might play in the formation of a Christian response to climate despair. Another member of the audience asked about whether active hope is a communal exercise. In response to both of these inquires, Miller highlighted his concern to keep the gaze upon ecological suffering specific and particular. Miller suggested that his own emphasis on gaze paralleled Espiritu's emphasis on touch; both presentations highlighted the role of sensory encounter with the particular in Christian spirituality.

JULIA FEDER
Creighton University
Omaha, Nebraska

THEOLOGY AND SCIENCE – TOPIC SESSION

Convener: Amanda R. Alexander, Diocese of San Bernardino
Moderator: Chelsea King, Sacred Heart University
Presenters: Joyce Ann Konigsburg, DePaul University
Kevin Frederick Vaughan, The College of St. Scholastica
Respondent: Megan Loumagne Ulishney, University of Nottingham

As Megan Loumagne Ulishney, of the University of Nottingham, astutely noted in her response, this panel provided an opportunity to reflect "on the role that interdisciplinary thinking between Theology and Science, in addition to interreligious thinking and practice, can play in helping us to address some of the serious challenges and crises that we face in our time."

Joyce Ann Konigsburg, from DePaul University, opened the panel by highlighting the many opportunities for interreligious and interdisciplinary encounters by which we can engage religious and indigenous traditions, as well as the scientific community, to develop an ethic of climate change. In her paper, "Thinking Catholic Interreligiously about the Ethics of Climate Change," Konigsburg noted that, whereas government evaluations of climate data are often done with a view toward anticipating the economic impact of forecasted changes, religious traditions consider how these changes will impact vulnerable and marginalized populations. Religious traditions also supply diverse and mutually enriching ways of imagining what it means to care for the global commons: Christian stewardship emphasizes the preservation of the environment for future generations; Judaism commands practices that protect vital ecosystems; Islam emphasizes an approach that treats "all things with care, awe, and compassion;" indigenous traditions emphasize responsibility, reciprocity, and interdependence. Within specific local contexts, these approaches are united in "interreligious ecological activities" that bring concrete and specific changes to the community. At the national and international level, interreligious cooperation sustains the work of initiatives that aim to mitigate climate issues globally. Thus, thinking Catholic interreligiously provides a path forward to global solidarity and climate justice.

In his paper, "She Blinded Me with Classics: Science in Dialogue with Religious Classics according to Pope Francis," Kevin Frederick Vaughan, of The College of St. Scholastica, explored Pope Francis' concept of a "religious classic" in order to understand why Francis, in *Laudato Si'*, suggests this as a "key means of dialogue with science on the topic of the environment." By tracing Francis' references to "religious classics" from addresses given in the 1970s up to the publication of *Laudato Si'*, Vaughan is able to conclude that, for Francis, "a classic… is a cultural artifact that represents the symbolic language that expresses the hard-one historical processes by which a people appropriate the ethical and spirituals values around which their identity takes shape." The classic thus has the power both "to return a people to its fundamental principles" and to prepare them "to face the challenge of the future." With respect to dialogue on the environment, classics express "universal ethical principles within the language of a particular people." These principles are expressed in "an experiential way" rather than in the language of doctrine. The religious classic, therefore, brings

"the historical experience of the identity of one's community" into dialogue not only with the present reality but also with other communities and their historical reality, enriching and helping to preserve the total cultural ecology of which the natural world is a necessary part.

In the response, Ulishney drew out the implicit argument in the papers presented by Konigsburg and Vaughan that religious traditions and communities have developed substantial resources and praxes that can be used to "develop pedagogies of desire that can be formative for shaping human action." Ulishney then connected desire and encounter to the role of aesthetics in the conversation about climate change. She noted that novelist Amitov Ghosh "argues that the climate crisis is not only a scientific crisis, but that it is also a crisis of desire and of the imagination." The "realms of the imaginative and the scientific" were "ripped apart" in the Enlightenment and must be brought back together if artistic gestures will ever have a chance at shaping our imagination and thus our ability to conceive of the world other than it is. The religious classic, Ulishney suggested, may have a profound role to play in shaping not only our desire but also our imagination so that we might dream of new ways of living and being in this time of crisis.

AMANDA R. ALEXANDER
Diocese of San Bernardino
San Bernardino, California

ASIAN/ASIAN-[NORTH] AMERICAN THEOLOGY – CONSULTATION

Topic: Peter Phan and Thinking Catholic "Interreligiously"
Convener: Julius-Kei Kato, King's University College at Western University
Moderator: Min-ah Cho, Georgetown University
Presenters: Erica Siu-Mui Lee, Regis College-University of Toronto
Anh Tran, S.J., Jesuit School of Theology-Santa Clara University
Leo Lefebure, Georgetown University
Respondent: Peter Phan, Georgetown University

This year's Asian/Asian-[North] American theology consultation session wanted both to honor the lifelong achievements of Peter Phan, particularly, in the area of interreligious theology and to showcase various aspects of Phan's theological work in this area. To that end, we gathered an intergenerational panel that would speak to various contributions of Phan to this year's theme.

We began with fifteen-minute presentations by our panelists, Erica Lee, Anh Tran, and Leo Lefebure on various aspects of Phan's work. That was followed by a brief response from Peter Phan himself. There ensued a very animated discussion on various topics that were highlighted either in the panelists' presentations or the response of Phan.

Erica Lee's presentation was entitled "Bernard Lonergan and Peter Phan: Trinitarian Reflections on Being and Thinking Catholic Interreligiously." It was based on her recently defended doctoral dissertation at Regis College, Toronto. She spoke on the mutual complementarity in the insights of Bernard Lonergan and Peter Phan for Christian trinitarian understandings of religious diversity as well as for being and thinking Catholic interreligiously, this year's theme. In his theological work, Lonergan aims at a more systematic understanding of religious plurality. Complementing that, Phan elaborates on different forms of Christology and an Asian pneumatology. One can say that Phan's in-depth knowledge of and familiarity with other religions enrich Lonergan's thought in our post-Vatican II context. Both thinkers emphasize orthodoxy and orthopraxy. While Lonergan analyzes human vertical self-transcendence from the trinitarian perspective, Phan encourages mutual learning among Christians and others to reach the Truth.

In a presentation which he described as "Religiously Betwixt and Between: Asian Catholic Theologians in the midst of Religious Pluralism," Anh Tran situated Peter Phan in the recent history of various related events and currents in Asian and Asian-North American theology. Tran emphasized how different factors such as the Asian Synod in 1998, the investigation of Peter Phan himself by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), as well as the various concerns of Asian-North American theologians in general about identity, context, marginalization, etc., have all played a role in shaping how Asian-North American theologians such as Phan do theology. Tran underlined in a particular way the importance of contextual theology as a way of doing theology embraced by many Asian-North American theologians. Some dominant characteristics of this style are the following: they start from the situation of poverty, exploitation, and oppression in Asia, and racism in the US; they deal with cultural marginalization "betwixt and between" Asia and North America; they value religious

diversity as a dominant factor in theology; they read the Bible through a postcolonial and cultural lens, stressing on God's preferential treatment of the poor and outcasts. These are all areas that Peter Phan has worked on and contributed significantly to.

Finally, Leo Lefebure spoke on "Peter Phan's Interreligious Theology." Lefebure used this occasion to showcase a recently published book begun by the late Gerard Mannion and brought to completion by Lefebure himself: *Theology without Borders: Essays in Honor of Peter C. Phan* (Georgetown University Press, 2022). Among many points, Lefebure highlighted Phan's proposal for "Reading *Nostra Aetate* in Reverse" and its importance for engagement with indigenous traditions. He also reflected on Phan's claim that outside of migration there is no salvation. Particularly noteworthy is Lefebure's observation that Phan highlights migration positively in a rather one-sided way. We should not forget though that migration in the Bible and later Christian tradition is profoundly ambiguous. This is clearly seen in different ways such as in Deuteronomy where Israel's "migration" into the promised land practically includes a divine command for mass murder of its inhabitants. Later on in Christian history, Christian migrants will likewise think of migration as mandated by God and this resulted at times in terrible crimes against their fellow humans, such as those against various indigenous populations.

In his brief response, Phan reflected on his investigation by the CDF, remarking that it was an opportunity to reread and reflect anew on his work. He also offered other brief thoughts about the ethics of memory and his work on the theology of migration.

The animated and friendly discussion that followed touched on questions and themes that came to the fore from the presentations. It ranged from the rich possibility of the Catholic teaching on purgatory vis-à-vis the Eastern concept of reincarnation and Lonergan's thought on freedom and how actions have significant consequences to questions on secularization-hybridity, the current "shout-down" culture, and Pope Francis' emphasis on a culture of encounter.

This session was a rich experience of the crucial contributions that Peter Phan has made to the theme of "Being Catholic Interreligiously." It showed that this theme as well as Phan's contributions to it will continue to be some of the most important areas of contemporary Catholic theology.

JULIUS-KEI KATO
King's University College at Western University
London, Ontario

HANS URS VON BALTHASAR – CONSULTATION

Topic: "Thinking Catholic Interreligiously"
Convener: Jennifer Newsome Martin, University of Notre Dame
Moderator: Megan Heeder, Marquette University
Presenters: Daniel Drain, St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry
Nathan Bradford Williams, University of Toronto
Respondent: Kathleen Cavender-McCoy, Marquette University

In his paper, "Crossing Deepest Hell: Balthasar's *Descensus* Theology," Daniel Drain examined the interaction of divine and human freedom in Hans Urs von Balthasar's narrative of Christ's death, descent into hell, and resurrection. Through a close engagement with and exegesis of Balthasarian texts across the trilogy which amplify themes of separation and even wrath, Drain identified as crucial the unity of Christ's life and mission in his analysis of the passive, obediential, but ultimately free quality of the *descensus*. "Rather than obfuscating the power of human freedom," Drain argues, "Christ's rule over the eschaton secures the seriousness of human freedom, presenting each eschatological state as a real possibility." Likewise, even the radical expression of divine freedom in the free descent into hell—the revelation of divine forsakenness—does not weaken the power of human freedom but rather allows "finite freedom to freely seize hold of God and not let go." Drain closed his reflections with an ecumenical appeal to Fr. Khaled Anatolios's gloss on sin and freedom in *Deification through the Cross* (2020), bringing insights from Balthasar and Adrienne von Speyr forward to highlight the "mutual recognition…of the Son's representation of humanity in and to the Trinity, and humanity's representation of the Son in and to the world," a representation which is "not merely moral but ontological and doxological."

In "Childlikeness: A Balthasarian Entrée to Comparative Theology," Nathan Bradford Williams suggests that, despite some of Balthasar's own (acknowledged) limitations with substantive and non-reductive engagements with other religious traditions, there are internal methodological resources for comparative theology in Balthasar via a recovery of his theology of childhood, which is not only anthropological but also Christological and trinitarian. Relying primarily upon Balthasar's *Unless You Become Like this Child* and Joshua Brown, "Strange Companions? Hans Urs von Balthasar as Resource for Comparative Theology" (*Theological Studies* 78:2 [2017]), Williams argued that Balthasar's late interest in the phenomenon of "childlikeness"—in clear dialogue with Ferdinand Ulrich's *Der Mensch als Anfang*—can be a useful resource for thinking interreligiously. His paper drew out such features of childlikeness as a recognition of one's own absolute need, a delight in developing mastery, the obediential readiness of Christ (the eternal, archetypal child!) to the will of the Father, and the ability to marvel and wonder at the givenness of all phenomena. As Balthasar reads John 14:28, when Christ says that "the Father is greater than I," the comparative between Christ and the Father as "other" expresses "the linguistic form of amazement" (*Unless*, 46). Williams advocated that an analogous subjective disposition be adopted by the comparativist which attenuates in a salutary way the temptation either to cultural appropriation or to ideological reduction.

In her response to the foregoing papers, Kathleen Cavender-McCoy offered an integrated essay which deployed and developed insights of the previous speakers. Her contribution elevated the presence of Erich Przywara as one of Balthasar's primary interlocutors, identified the theme of play and its connection to the virtue of childlikeness, and indicated the perduring quality of childlikeness, even in adulthood. Powerfully drawing together the themes of birth and childhood with the theme of death, Cavender-McCoy observed that both childhood and death are forms of a luminous poverty which expose vulnerability and dependence at the root of fundamental human experience. Her paper identified the poverty of Ignatian indifference, "the freedom to fully accept God's will for one's life," as a possible thread which joins Drain's and Williams's papers, and concluded with a brief discussion of how the theological fact that human beings are God's children may support the position of universal salvation.

A wide-ranging discussion followed in response to questions on the status of hell in Balthasar as "discarded sin," the phenomenon of loneliness in the church, the limits and possibilities of models of "representation" in soteriology, Balthasar's reading of Dante's *Inferno*, connections between childlikeness and liturgical modes of speech like prayer and confession, literary and spiritual figurations of childlikeness in Péguy's poetic Joan of Arc and Bernanos' novels (e.g. *Under the Sun of Satan, Diary of a Country Priest*, and *Joy*), and some practical implications for a disposition of wonder and childlikeness for interreligious dialogue and comparative theology.

JENNIFER NEWSOME MARTIN
University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana

BLACK CATHOLIC THEOLOGY – CONSULTATION (JOINT SESSION WITH THE LATINO/A THEOLOGY CONSULTATION)

Topic:	Resistance
Administrative Team:	Joseph Flipper, Emmanuel Osigwe, Chanelle Robinson
Convener:	Joseph Flipper, University of Dayton
Moderator:	Chanelle Robinson, Boston College
Presenters:	Michelle Maldonado, University of Scranton Nicole S. Symmonds, McAfee School of Theology Cecilia Titizano, University of San Francisco

In 2022, the Black Catholic Theology Consultation partnered with the Latino/a Theology Consultation to offer two combined sessions around the conference theme. Through this collaboration, two observations arose regarding the conference theme, "Thinking Catholic Interreligiously." First, the stories of Black and Latina/o Catholicism must be told together. Not only was it good to be together again in person, but theological collaboration between Black and Latinx members is a methodological necessity. Black, Latino, and Indigenous identities developed in relation over a long historical arc across the Atlantic. Second, the historical and social contexts of Black and Latinx Catholics are already interreligious. The "religious other" is not simply other. In this session we asked, "How do the interreligious lives of Black, Latinx, and Indigenous Catholics contribute to resistance?" In the subsequent session, we asked, "How do they contribute to healing?"

In "Interrogating Identity: White-skin and Christian Privilege within Latino/a Theology," Michelle Maldonado argued that the categories of Latino/a, Latinx, and Hispanic, while referring to ethnicity or culture, were deployed as racial categories. Whereas for Latin American liberation theologians, poverty and class constituted the "epistemic framework" to understand the situation of Latin America, US Latino/a theologians employed race as an epistemic framework. Due to the influence of Black liberation theology, Latino/a theology of the 1980s to the 2000s entered a landscape already shaped by a black-white racial dichotomy. And even though most of them were light skinned, Latino/a theologians employed "*mestizaje*, *mulatez*, *latinidad*, culture, and ethnicity" as "different ways of claiming a non-white identity as people of color." The internal national, cultural, linguistic, and racial diversity of those who are described as Latinos/as is vast. The categories we use often obscure this diversity by defining who Latinos/as are in contrast to white Anglo culture. This flattening of identity also occurs in relationship to the complexity of religious identities. The institutions that support the study of Latinx religion tend to favor those working within fields of Christianity, theology, or pastoral/ministerial work. Maldonado argued that categories such as panethnicity and ethnorace can help us to recognize the complexity of Latino/a identity and to escape the binary constructions of race that conceal this complexity.

In "The Black Body as Religion: Blackness as a Site of Interreligious Theology and Ethics," Nicole Symmonds observed that for ethicists and theologians "the project of liberation…is to set the Black body free from the constraints of colonized

Christianity. Yet, few theorize the Black body as a religion in and of itself." Drawing from Anthony Pinn and M. Shawn Copeland, she argued that the Black body should be understood as a "site of divine revelation and thus, a 'basic human sacrament'" and that the body, "as the physical dimension of existence and a part of a discursive formation," is a theological source. Building upon Charles Long's description of "religion as orientation," Symmonds described the Black body as the site of practices of liberation that orient towards freedom, the locus of power to reconfigure the spaces in which it has been cast and to "re-place" itself. Symmonds observed that, within the American Christian tradition, the assumption has been that whiteness possesses a monopoly on the power "to reconfigure space, socially, culturally, economically." Black bodies are viewed as a threat to this monopoly. But to think of the Black body as religion—as the site of orientation toward freedom—means to contend with the materiality of body as spiritual.

Cecilia Titizano, in "Ancestral Wisdoms as Sources for Peoples in Resistance," stated that Indigenous communities across the Americas have been in resistance to colonialism/coloniality for centuries. The principles and practice of their millennial spiritualities have been resources for resistance and healing. In European colonization an ontology of substance supported an ethics of domination of the human over other created beings, contributing to a blindness to disequilibrium of creation. Titizano explained that Andean cosmology contains an ontology of relation: creation is understood as a "relational community of beings." *Mama Pacha* refers to "the creative matrix, the advancing flow that makes the process of becoming possible." In Andean cosmology, "disequilibrium" is a strife "created by a human community that has forgotten their place and role in *Pacha*." She stated, "everything is alive, has awareness, volition, memory, and spirit" and each has a role. "Even the COVID-19 virus has life, spirit, will, and memory. This is why Quechuas and Aymaras have respectfully welcomed the virus among their midst." It is not a disregard of science or the virus's impact, she explained. Instead, the objective is *Suma Qamaña* (living well) in the community of beings rather than elimination of the virus.

Forty-four people attended this session and contributed to conversation on interrogating identity, the body, and "living well."

JOSEPH S. FLIPPER
University of Dayton
Dayton, Ohio

CHRISTIANITY AND JUDAISM – CONSULTATION

Topic: Rethinking Christianity's Relationship to Judaism
Convener: Elena Procario-Foley, Iona College
Moderator: Andrew Massena, Loras College
Presenter: Mia Theocharis, St. Michael's College, University of Toronto
Presenter: Ellen T. Charry, Princeton Theological Seminary
Respondent: Michael Berger, Emory University

Elena Procario-Foley opened the session and remarked at how pleased everyone was to be back together "in-person." Procario-Foley explained that circumstances related to the pandemic prevented Mia Theocharis from traveling and that Nicole Reibe, of Loyola University Maryland, would read Theocharis's paper. Procario-Foley introduced Andrew Massena who expertly moderated the session.

Responding to the convention theme, the consultation's call for papers focused on the responsibility of Christianity to rethink its relationship to Judaism. Ellen Charry's paper, "Augustine's Blinkered Israelology," did so by focusing on Saint Augustine's tract *Adversus Judaeos* (hereafter, *AJ*) and the harm that came to Jews at the hands of Christians because of Augustine's teaching. She argues that *AJ* "invents special missions to convert Jews." After a brief exposition of other scholars' interpretations of *AJ*, Charry offered a detailed analysis of Augustine's text. Charry insists that *AJ* is more an instructional manual for converting Jews than a sermon. The text, she explains, is "two discourses, one within the other." The first discourse has Augustine addressing a live audience of his students, and in the second he rebukes an imagined Jewish audience. Augustine employs the trope of Jewish "blindness." This so-called "blindness" constitutes a two-fold hermeneutical error. Augustine castigates Jews for refusing to use a Christological lens to interpret the Bible, and then derides the inability of Jews to read their text literally and recognize God's desire for the nations. Charry concluded by noting how ineffective Christian missions toward Jews have been, how successfully they generated "fear of and antipathy toward Jesus, the church, and Christianity," and how Augustine's complete supersessionism led to missionary efforts that were a "gentle form of genocide."

Mia Theocharis proposed the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Jewish thinker Franz Rosenzweig as a solution to the problematic language of "fulfillment" in the 2015 document issued by the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, "'The Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable' (Rom 11:29): A Reflection on Theological Questions Pertaining to Catholic–Jewish Relations on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of 'Nostra aetate' (No. 4)." Theocharis's introduction provided an overview of the status of the question of Catholic mission to the Jews since *Nostra Aetate*. She introduced the main ideas of "Gifts and Calling" and focused on the theological challenge of reconciling the seemingly irreconcilable: how does the church affirm God's covenant with the Jews *and* its belief in universal salvation through Jesus? Theocharis suggested that the significant issues of fulfillment language that harm Jewish–Christian relations can be solved if the covenants are presented as "*complementary* rather than as one being *fulfilled* by the other." Theocharis turns to Rosenzweig's *The Star of Redemption* to propose a theory of

complementarity. For Rosenzweig, Judaism and Christianity are intended by God to work together for the redemption of the world. Each religion has a role. Theocharis explained that "for Rosenzweig, Judaism is presented as the fire at the heart of the Star, the eternal *life* while Christianity is the disappearing rays, the eternal *way*…Jews are people of election who *are* with God while Christians are *on the way.*" Theocharis rejected Rosenzweig's insistence that Christians must proselytize (excepting Jews), but maintained that Rosenzweig's approach to the covenants could move Catholics beyond fulfillment language.

Michael Berger generously provided a Jewish response for the consultation. A quite exciting and lively discussion ensued. Berger presented two anecdotes that spoke to the "crucial" work of the consultation. About Charry's paper he wondered if Augustine's audience was Christian and not Jewish and if his "*ad hominem* attacks against the Jews" were really intended to bolster Augustine's "*audience's* belief in the core claim of Christianity." Berger also suggested that Augustine may have been perplexed by the fact of Jewish survival. Berger appreciated Theocharis's effort to mute fulfillment language and posed four questions: Rosenzweig excludes Islam and Asian religions, does complementarity obstruct the ability of Christianity to form relations with other religions? If Rosenzweig's theory is grounded in a Jewish doctrine of God that tilts the scales in favor of Judaism, then does his work really overcome the lack of parity in "fulfillment" language? Does complementarity truly overcome the Christian "no" to two paths to salvation? Does the Rosenzweig approach allow for the same understanding of Christianity on its own terms that Theocharis expects Christians in the dialogue to grant to Judaism? Finally, Berger concluded with an invitation to consider Joseph Soloveitchik's analysis in his article "Confrontation." While applauding the work of the consultation, he questioned whether our practice of inviting a Jewish respondent was warranted.

ELENA PROCARIO-FOLEY
Iona College
New Rochelle, New York

LATINO/A THEOLOGY – CONSULTATION
(JOINT SESSION WITH THE BLACK THEOLOGY CONSULTATION)

Topic: Healing
Administrative
Team: Leo Guardado, Cecilia González-Andrieu, Jennifer Owens-Jofré
Convener: Jennifer Owens-Jofré, University of San Diego
Moderator: Cristina Castillo, Barry University
Presenters: Marinus Chijioke Iwuchukwu, Duquesne University
Carolyn M. Jones Medine, University of Georgia
Mauricio Najarro, UC Berkeley-UCSF Joint Program in Medical Anthropology

In preparation for the 2022 convention, the administrative teams of the Black Theology and Latino/a Theology Consultations revived their practice of collaboration for two primary reasons. They acknowledged aspects of shared experience—both historically and contemporarily—among Black and Latine Catholics living in the United States, neither group belonging to the dominant culture of US American Catholicism. More concretely, in consideration of the conference theme, "Thinking Catholic Interreligiously," members of the administrative teams agreed that interreligiosity is an inherent part of those shared experiences, which do not fit into neatly defined divisions between thought and practice. They invited presenters to illuminate the conference theme by focusing their comments on how their interreligious experiences of life promote resistance, as well as healing. The second in this two-part effort, this session treated the latter theme of healing.

Marinus Chijioke Iwuchukwu opened his presentation by recounting the actions of Donald Trump on June 1, 2020, in the wake of protests of the murder of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officers. After making a brief statement, Trump crossed the street from the White House to the front of St. John's Episcopal Church for a photo opportunity with a Bible, which he held upside down. Iwuchukwu explained that he began that way to invoke the immoral legacy of Christian churches that have perpetuated racism in enslaving Black people, appropriating Indigenous lands, abusing Indigenous children at residential schools in efforts toward cultural erasure, and dehumanizing Latines. He points to the inconsistency in the position of Bartolome de las Casas, who argued for the humanity and consequent emancipation of Indigenous peoples from enslavement in the *encomienda* system, simultaneously requesting that Black Africans, whom he regarded "as more resilient and physically stronger," take their place. Iwuchukwu raises the question, "What have Christian churches and their leaders of our age done to ensure that the most outstanding structural, psychological, economic, and institutional recrudesce of slavery are effectively ended, as well as restituted, restored, repaired?" He notes how individual and institutional racism violate the most fundamental understanding of humanity as reflections of the *imago Dei* and recommends practices of restorative justice as potentially fruitful steps toward restitution and repair.

Carolyn Jones Medine contradistinguishes religious practice in the United States from religious practice in Japan, describing the former as somewhat suspicious of the

latter in its embrace of multiplicity. In doing so, she offers an example of an individual who practices Shinto, seeks a Buddhist priest to perform a funeral rite for a loved one, then participate in their own Christian or Shinto wedding, an example many Christians in the United States would discourage. Even so, Jones Medine treats the question of integration among practitioners who engage in dual religious belonging. To this end, she draws on the dialogue between American Zen Buddhist teacher, Robert Aitken, and Benedictine monk, David Steindl-Rast, in *The Ground We Share: Everyday Practice, Buddhist and Christian* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 1996). Jones Medine looks to silence and practice as potential sites for integration of both Buddhist and Christian commitments, cautioning against the limits of such integration within the individual. She encourages her audience to look to the fruit these practices bear, to "what happens when we get off the cushion and out of the church."

Mauricio Najarro offered reflections on Eucharist conceived in light of the Farmers' Protest in India (July 2020–December 2021). Drawing upon the notion of the "brown commons" as the grounds of encounter between Catholicism and South Asian religious traditions, Najarro discussed the ongoing relevance of neoliberal economic policies and the legacies of colonial oppression and dispossession as context for eucharistic liturgies today. Mindful of the Indian farmers' slogan, "No Farmers, No Food," he asked those gathered to consider what it would mean to say, "No Farmers, No Eucharist." Najarro concluded by offering lessons for Catholics from the victory of the Farmers' Protest at the borders of Delhi, especially recognizing and lifting up the expertise of those most affected by any policy.

JENNIFER OWENS-JOFRÉ
University of San Diego
San Diego, California

LONERGAN – CONSULTATION

Topic: Thinking Catholic Interreligiously
Convener: Brian Bajzek, Molloy University
Moderator: Fiona Li, Regis College, University of Toronto
Presenters: Andrew Vink, Mount St. Mary's University
Joseph Ogbonnaya, Marquette University
John Dadosky, Regis College, University of Toronto
Christian Krokus, University of Scranton

In his paper, "Integrated Evil: *El mal común*, Prophetic Responsibility, and the Integral Scale of Values," Andrew Vink proposes a holistic view for countering the evils in social injustice. He applies the theoretical discussion of Lonergan and Doran on an integral scale of value in crises brought about by the maldistribution of vital goods. In view of the reality of religious pluralism and bearing in mind that instances of suffering are unique in each context, his paper draws from both Christian and Muslim liberationist perspectives. Ignacio Ellacuría's concept of *el mal común* provides a concrete articulation of systemic evils with language from the natural law tradition. Liberationist Islamic thought emphasizes the prophetic duty of standing in solidarity with the oppressed. In bringing together these three lines of thought, Vink's paper offers an integrated vision in countering the common evils in instances of dehumanization.

In his paper, "Bernard Lonergan in World Christianity," Joseph Ogbonnaya reflects upon the contextuality of theologies in Christianity as a world religion. He resources Lonergan's distinction between the different ways of doing theology under two scenarios: (i) the classicist notion of culture in which one culture, usually the predominantly Western culture, is viewed as both universal and permanent, and (ii) the empirical notion of culture which recognizes the multiplicity of cultures. Seeking insight into Lonergan's empirical notion of culture and recognition of the importance of history for culture, Ogbonnaya argues that mutual appreciation of the contextuality of theologies could deepen the communion of theologies in world Christianity during intercultural encounters. Turning to the inculturation of the Gospel in Africa, his paper articulates the interrelationship of world Christian theologies in reflecting the communion of churches.

The paper, "What Are Comparative Theologians Doing When They Are Doing Comparative Theology?: A Lonerganian Perspective with Examples from the Engagement with Islam," reflects upon method within comparative theology in a fourth stage of meaning. Co-authored by John Dadosky, a Lonergan scholar who has carried out comparative theology, and Christian Krokus, a comparative theologian who has studied Lonergan, this paper draws upon Lonergan's eightfold method of functional specialties, in particular the relationship between the functional specialties of dialectic and foundations. Their paper offers an analysis of what comparative theologians are doing when they are doing comparative theology. In addressing how to proceed beyond the impasse in comparative theological method, the authors reference the pioneering and creative methods of Louis Massignon (1883–1962) and Paolo Dall'Oglio, S.J. (1951–), both of whom have deeply engaged Islam. Friendship, this paper suggests, is

a viable attitude and approach to cultivate deep sympathy and respect of other religious traditions and their claims of truth, while at the same time remaining committed to one's own tradition.

The conversation that followed addressed a variety of themes shared by all three papers, including the contextuality of theologies as well as the multiplicity of cultures and religious traditions. Attention is placed on the contributions of Lonergan in his discussion of theology as mediating between a cultural matrix and the role of a religion in that matrix, his articulation of the classicist and empirical notions of culture, the scale of values, and the eightfold method of functional specialties.

Audience members connected many of the themes in the presentations to our task of doing theology in the contemporary religiously pluralistic context with attentiveness to those who are oppressed due to cultural and religious divergences as well as economic injustice. The attendees also highlighted the interrelationality of Lonergan's functional specialties of dialectic and foundations. By attending to the root of divergence, one brings to light the different perspectives and presuppositions that underlie Christianity and other religious traditions. With reference to Lonergan's articulation of faith as the knowledge born of religious love, the discussion highlighted the vertical and horizontal dimensions of love, as love of God and love of others as well as the importance of understanding the religious other. The conversation also focused on the challenging task of expressing and communicating Christian doctrines in a culturally diverse context. The discussion then turned to the notion of friendship and the language associated with our commitment in friendship in interfaith encounters. Echoing the theme of "Thinking Catholic Interreligiously," the session concluded with brief reference to Lonergan's remarks of dialectic becoming dialogue.

ERICA SIU-MUI LEE
Regis College, University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario

RAHNER SOCIETY – CONSULTATION

Convener: Jakob Karl Rinderknecht, University of the Incarnate Word
Moderator: Mary Beth Yount, Neumann University
Presenters: Peter Fritz, College of the Holy Cross
Maeve Louise Heaney, Australian Catholic University
Respondent: Anthony Godzieba, Villanova University

The section began with two presentations, followed by a formal response, and ended with conversation among panelists and the attendees.

Peter Joseph Fritz's presentation, "Thinking Catholic Translatably: Revising Rahner on the World Church," develops Karl Rahner's 1981 call for a "global pastoral-strategic plan," in conversation with three theologians from the global South, Lamin O. Sanneh, Gemma Tulud Cruz, and Maria Clara L. Bingemer. From this conversation, Fritz argued that something like a global pastoral-strategic plan could emerge, and beneficially, but only if "translation" is its guiding principle. Rahner's transcendental thought tends to "associate globality or catholicity with the stripping away of historical conditions;" that is rightly criticized. However, at his best, Rahner is more precise, using "transcendental" to refer to shared characteristics that can only be described, known, and engaged precisely through the specificity of their various bearers.

Beginning with Sanneh's argument that Christianity is a "vernacular translation movement," Fritz argued that Rahner's vision of a global strategic plan for the church would require not only shifting the center of Christian practice, but also living into authentic developments that occur as the Christian "genetic code" is transformed by its translation into different cultures. This can lead, in the words of Cruz to an authentic "ecclesiogenesis" such that the church's catholicity becomes a kind of sacrament of universal solidarity. Such a church would have to acknowledge both the authentically Catholic, plural, symbolic worlds that emerge and which people navigate between (Bingemer). In this situation, a translatable Catholicism would still require something like Rahner's pastoral-strategic plan, in order to stand against the neoliberal settlement that does not work collaboratively and so leaves the most vulnerable to fend for themselves. Such a plan needs to emerge from ongoing synodality between the varieties of Catholicism that exist.

Maeve Heaney argued that it was necessary to think about Catholicism not only according to different cultural modes, but also by using different means of thinking Catholicism, including through symbolic systems such as music. Drawing on Rahner's insights into grace implicit in the world, she argued that music could provide a way of developing a theology of friendship that could be fruitful for Catholic interreligious engagement. Pairing Rahner's analysis with that of Bernard Lonergan, she argued that "musicking…is a theological act of meaning making that merits a place in the academic intent of theology" and that it "seeks to find ways to exteriorize conversion and re-name, or re-express doctrines according to the insights discovered therein."

This way of proceeding insists that symbol precedes theory in human meaning-making, and so attending to primary symbolic expressions grounds and allows for the kind of analysis that we more typically consider "theologizing." An important corollary to her argument is that engagements with Rahner should privilege his writings on

poetry and creative writing, alongside those on prayer and spirituality as "entry points" to his thought. Indeed, creative writing itself, for Rahner, can serve as a kind of "primordial words" (*Urworte*) that can unlock the depth of human experience.

A composition of Heaney's called "Meet My Friend" rooted her paper and provided the means for thinking through the question of interreligious friendship in light of Rahner's insistence that grace was universally available. The song arose out of her experience of interreligious friendship. In interpreting the song, she noted how friendship recognizes the grace already present in the other in their particularity, and therefore in their difference. We find, then resonances, "horizons [that] have colours that match." And in this recognition, friendship becomes the means by which interreligious engagement can thrive, and out of which Catholicism can be thought interreligiously.

Anthony Godzieba responded to both papers, noting that while the movement in Fritz's project was centrifugal (recognizing diversity and thus moving outward from traditional centers), Heaney's was primarily centripetal (emphasizing the unifying effect of Rahner's notion of "universal salvation"). He saw in Fritz's use of Sanneh's idea of a "relativized relativism" an extension of Rahner's thought that mirrors the contemporary default understanding that cultures are plural. He asked, however, whether this unity in diversity was sufficient to account for the New Testament's understanding of "no salvation in any other name" (Acts 4:12). He described Heaney's paper as developing a theological anthropology in which friendship is an incarnation of grace. Noting that the order of the presented paper was different from the pre-circulated text, he wondered to what extent the addition of the musical piece was a robust addition to the argument or whether it was more a recapitulation of the already-worked-out insights. He agreed with her position that "musicking" could broaden the articulation of the theological task beyond texts, at least as a metaphorical structure for describing development. He ended by noting that musicking has more to overcome in doing the work of theology in contemporary culture and for providng a "reason for [our] hope" (1 Peter 3:15).

A lively conversation ensued with those attending, with significant discussion about the role of embodiment, language, and music as theological loci.

JAKOB KARL RINDERKNECHT
University of the Incarnate Word
San Antonio, Texas

SEXUAL ABUSE CRISIS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH – CONSULTATION

Convener: Daniel P. Horan, O.F.M., Saint Mary's College
Moderator: Natalia Imperatori Lee, Manhattan College
Presenters: Megan K. McCabe, Gonzaga University
Michelle Wheatley, Gonzaga University
Jennifer Beste, College of St. Benedict/St. John's University

This consultation on the sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church was convened by CTSA President Professor Christine Hinze to interrogate the multifaceted phenomenon of sexual abuse and cover up in the Catholic Church in the United States. The primary focus of this consultation is to examine the ways in which academic theologians can contribute constructively to better understand the historical phenomena of sexual abuse in the church (and within Catholic institutions more broadly, including institutions of higher education), analyze the past and contemporary impacts and implications, and offer responses to the ongoing dynamics related to the sexual abuse crisis. This year's session constituted the first panel convened in this consultation and specifically sought to address two case studies arising from institutional responses to sexual abuse: a Pacific Northwest Jesuit-sponsored university and a Midwest Catholic Archdiocese.

Megan McCabe and Michelle Wheatley opened the session with a case study titled, "Challenges Working on Clergy Sexual Abuse in the University." They opened their remarks by situating their experience working on a university commission within the context of the December 2018 public reports that "focused on the horrifying predatory abuse of Alaska Native girls and women by a Jesuit, James Poole, who was eventually sent to live on a safety plan in a Jesuit-owned retirement facility and infirmary" on the university campus. The following semester, the university president established the university commission to "help [the] community make sense of these various reactions, but also to build on work that members of our community had already undertaken. The goal of the Commission was to recommend a set of formal actions our university should undertake in light of Catholic sexual abuse as well as Gonzaga's institutional experience of it."

McCabe and Wheatley summarize the painstaking care and attention that went into clarifying the charge and scope of the commission, noting that the commission must center the experiences and voices of the victim-survivors. Additionally, given the context of the university, the commission especially centered those communities of Native Alaskans women and girls, communities of color and marked by poverty, and other Native communities in the local Spokane, WA area that had been affected by the twofold travesties of sexual abuse and the history of religiously sanctioned colonization. As a result of this effort, McCabe and Wheatley note that the commission found itself asking an important question: "What is appropriate for a university to do?" Furthermore, what significance does the Catholic and Jesuit identity and mission of the university have on the response such an institution of higher education ought to provide?

During the work of the commission, McCabe and Wheatley identified five key themes that surfaced as central: academics, memorials and liturgies, mission identity,

policies and procedures, and tribal relations. McCabe and Wheatley identified several particular and systemic challenges that arose in each area as the university commission proceeded in its work, including from members of the university's sponsoring religious congregation and from institutional structures (such as departments responsible for external public relations) designed to protect the university's image and reputation. In conclusion, McCabe and Wheatley pointed to the potential power and influence Catholic universities (and, by extension, theologians) have to contribute constructively to the sexual abuse crises including through the growing number of lay university administrators, while also noting the ongoing challenges and difficulties that beset such efforts within the academy.

Jennifer Beste provided the second case study, titled, "Lived Theology Through the Lens of St. Paul/Minneapolis Archdiocesan Priest-Perpetrator Files." Beste provided a summation of one case study from among several she is currently researching that arise from analysis of archival resources of priest-perpetrators in the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis.

Beste presents and analyzes the archival records, which bear witness to the systemic manner in which church leaders, religious communities, and the laity continue to support a convicted priest child sexual abuser, who regularly invoked his criminal and sinful actions in a manner to elicit sympathy and support from those to whom he sought to minister. Beste's case study brings to light the complexity of the phenomenon of clericalism, not only among those ordained ministers of the church but also among the lay faithful, while also surfacing important questions about the deployment of theological topoi, doctrines, and interpretations that are used in dangerous and manipulative contexts. This case study shines a light on the ways "lived theology" has and continues to prioritize many priest-perpetrators over victim-survivors and the communities harmed by such clerical predation, sin, and crime.

DANIEL P. HORAN, O.F.M.
Saint Mary's College
Notre Dame, Indiana

THOMAS AQUINAS – CONSULTATION

Topic:	Thinking Catholic Interreligiously with Aquinas
Convener:	Dominic Langevin, O.P., Dominican House of Studies
Moderator:	Frederick C. Bauerschmidt, Loyola University of Maryland
Presenters:	Melanie Barrett, Mundelein Seminary/University of St. Mary of the Lake
	Bruce Marshall, Southern Methodist University
	David M. Lantigua, University of Notre Dame

Melanie Barrett, of Mundelein Seminary/University of St. Mary of the Lake, started the session with her paper, "A Thomist Reconsideration of the Torah for the Moral Life of Catholic Christians." She began by noting the difficulties inherent in a Christian consideration of the saving role of the Torah, and St. Paul's teaching on two phases of salvation, before and after Christ. Drawing on Aquinas to show the "abiding relevance of the Torah for Christians," Barrett argued that looking at the Torah can answer moral questions not addressed by the New Testament. In the *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas contends that the moral precepts oblige all human beings, including the Jewish people and Christians. Some are knowable by reason whereas others necessitate divine instruction. Within the Old Testament, Aquinas identifies the Decalogue as the privileged place where the moral precepts are found, because they were given by God. Aquinas acknowledges that additional divine precepts were given through Moses, but without identifying them. Barrett argued that an examination of Jewish traditions of interpretation of the Torah (e.g., the Midrash) can assist Christians in formulating principles that can be applied to moral questions such as the return of lost objects or the obligation to remove hazards from one's property. Barrett concluded that Jewish traditions of interpretation, as "bearers of wisdom," can "help us become better Christians." Discussion focused on Jewish "case-based" and Christian "principle-based" approaches to moral reasoning.

Bruce Marshall, of Southern Methodist University, then presented his paper entitled "Judaism among the Religions, according to Aquinas." Marshall noted that the title would more accurately be, "Aquinas on Religions *Other* than Judaism," since he focused on Aquinas's approach to the "worship of the gentiles" (*ritus infidelium*). Aquinas classifies non-Christian religions as "unbelief," and supports corresponding strictures on the availability of their practices in a Christian society, which must promote the common good by directing all to eternal beatitude, and therefore privilege Christian practice. The Judaism of his own time, while also classified as unbelief, is for him exempt from these strictures, because Jews do worship according to divine law. Marshall examined Aquinas's treatment of different forms of unbelief, noting that for him, it is rarely non-culpable. He then raised the question of how this squares with Aquinas's teaching on the natural virtue of religion, addressing the apparent paradox that natural law seems to require what God forbids. In fallen nature, the natural inclination to worship a superior by sacrifice will be sinfully directed to other gods unless the true God provides the help of grace. A lively discussion ensued about whether the "God of Aquinas's five ways" adequately identifies for non-Christians the true God.

David M. Lantigua, from the University of Notre Dame, presented the last paper in the session, entitled "Aristotle, Ancient Romans, and the Amerindians: Spanish Thomists on the Imperial Seduction of Pagan Virtue." Lantigua noted that his paper dovetailed well with Marshall's, since he would consider how the principle "*gratia non tollit naturae* gets applied as a political axiom to non-believers." Lantigua discussed Aquinas's treatment of pagan virtue in *Quaestiones Disputatae de Virtutibus* 2. He noted that in sixteenth century Spain, pagan virtue discourse included Augustine, Aquinas, Aristotle, and humanist sources, in the context of European contact with New World indigenous peoples. Early-modern Spanish humanists and Thomists both retrieved classical ideas about pagan virtue, but with opposite intent. Humanists argued that Indians were "barbarians" with no "political virtue" and so could be subjugated, seeking to justify European expansion in the Americas under the model of the Roman Empire. Thomists at Salamanca defended the native peoples as examples of true virtue, identifying the Spaniards, who exercised coercion and violence against the innocent, as the "pagans" and "barbarians"; in a nutshell, these Thomists argued that "the apostles were sent as sheep among wolves, not vice versa." Lantigua focused on the debate at Valladolid between the humanist Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda and the Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas to show how Spanish Thomists refuted claims of European imperialism, applying classical ideas about pagan virtue in the context of law and political thought. The evangelical challenge to pagan virtue (or counterfeit virtue) by Spanish Thomists would yield a robust self-critique of the imperial vices of European conquest and open new vistas for recognizing the goodness, rationality, and basic rights of non-Christians in the New World.

DARIA SPEZZANO
Providence College
Providence, Rhode Island

WOMEN'S CONSULTATION ON CONSTRUCTIVE THEOLOGY – CONSULTATION

Topic:	Dr. Eva Fleischner (1925-2020) and the Prospects for Interreligious Theological Thinking
Convener:	Kathryn Lila Cox, University of San Diego
Treasurer:	Jessica Coblentz, Saint Mary's College
Secretary:	Jennifer Owens-Jofré, University of San Diego
Moderator:	Rosemary Carbine, Whittier College
Presenter:	Heather Miller Rubens, Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies
Respondents:	Rabbi Dr. Ruth Abusch-Magder, Be'chol Lashon Elena G. Procario-Foley, Iona College

The panel began with brief comments from the moderator, who provided important context for the presentation and prepared responses that would follow. Rosemary Carbine reminded those present of comments made by María Pilar Aquino and M. Shawn Copeland at the previous year's convention in their presidential and plenary addresses, respectively, which invited members of the Society to continue to incorporate intersectional and anti-racist praxis into engagements with future convention themes. Carbine noted the ways in which anti-Black racism and anti-Semitism can be mutually reinforcing, citing recent atrocities by white nationalists during the Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville, VA, and the insurrection at the US Capitol on January 6, 2021. She also pointed to the ways in which interreligious dialogue and expressions of solidarity can provide a significant counter witness to such violence, as the collaboration between the Rev. Eric S.C. Manning of Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC, and Rabbi Jeffrey Myers of the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA, illustrates.

Heather Miller Rubens drew on the work of Eva Fleischner to make two claims. First, she argued that "dogmatic triumphalism is not the posture Catholic thinkers/practitioners should take when engaging thinkers/practitioners of other religions," and raised questions about what "a more generous epistemic and theological framework" might produce. In doing so, Miller Rubens provided an overview of Fleischner's biography and work and echoed Fleischner's call to reject what she described as Christian supremacy, especially as it is manifest in supersessionism, dogmatic triumphalism, and evangelism that focuses on baptism and conversion. Second, she proposed that, "a rejection of theological supersessionism has direct implications for Jews and Judaism, and it also has implications for Catholic engagement with other religions, as well as Catholic engagement with racism and colonialism." In such ways, Miller Ruben's presentation interwove thought and practice.

Ruth Abusch-Magder responded affectively, drawing on her experience as a scholar and a rabbi. She spoke to the challenge Fleischner's conversion from Judaism to Catholicism presented, likening it to a kind of abandonment, especially in the wake of the Shoah, which claimed the lives of some of her own loved ones. Abusch-Magder described the utter rage she experienced as a young person studying German in

Salzburg, when, in the absence of a Jewish community, she spent Shabbat on a park bench watching young Austrians enjoy the privilege of playing soccer. When she recounted her rage in the park to her Christian classmates, they encouraged her to forgive those who had participated in the genocide against her people only a generation before. That they would counsel forgiveness at that time added insult to injury. Even so, her reflection on Miller-Ruben's words alongside Krister Stendahl's notion of holy envy allowed her to recognize that walking toward forgiveness without letting go of her Judaism or her righteous anger can be a fruitful endeavor, one in which what is sacred can be present.

While Elena Procario-Foley's remarks were abbreviated, she focused on Miller Ruben's concerns regarding dogmatic triumphalism in Catholic theology, responding to her request "for a sorely needed epistemic humility" in reimagining Catholic relationships with Jews and Judaism, in practice and theologically. In addition, Procario-Foley acknowledged that many are able to join Miller Rubens in divesting from Christian supremacy. She also invited members of the audience who experience fear as a stumbling block to doing so to consider what letting go of that fear might entail.

The Ann O'Hara Graff Award was given to Francine J. Cardman posthumously.

JENNIFER OWENS-JOFRÉ
University of San Diego
San Diego, California

EXTRACTIVES AND CATHOLIC PEACEBUILDING – INTEREST GROUP

Topic: Extractives and Catholic Peacebuilding
Convener: Caesar A. Montevecchio, University of Notre Dame
Moderator: Laurie Johnston, Emmanuel College
Presenters: Lisa Sowle Cahill, Boston College
William George, Dominican University
Erin Lothes, St. Elizabeth University and *Laudato Si*' Movement

This was the third and final session of this interest group, which was connected to a broader initiative on extractives and peacebuilding by the Catholic Peacebuilding Network, at the University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. The interest group was directed toward the new book *Catholic Peacebuilding and Mining: Integral Peace, Development, and Ecology*,[231] and this third panel was a review discussion of the book.

The first commentator was Erin Lothes. Lothes had three main points regarding the book. First, its case studies help amplify the critique from Pope Francis of "ecological debt," whereby the global North owes a debt because of the way its consumption patterns have inflicted ecological harm disproportionately affecting those in the global South. In her assessment, the book's case studies help illustrate this debt and its ripple effects, but also show the potential for the church to be a mediator of a "deeper and more ambitious vision of justice." Second, Lothes observed that the book's analysis chapters offer a cogent critique of neocolonial exploitation. More particularly, Lothes commended the way the book emphasizes greater awareness of how individual consumerism attaches to neocolonialism, but also of the structural factors that sustain it. Lothes found the book to provide a useful vision of alternatives rather than stopping at articulating the negatives. Which led to her third and final point, that the book gives a "roadmap" for navigating the challenges and potentials of mining. She noted the book offers an emphasis on positive peace rooted in ecological, social, and economic justice; a call for restoration in cases of harm done by mining; and a radical vision rooted in the revolutionarily integral understanding of peace, development, and ecology in *Laudato Si*'.

William George presented next and began by highlighting the books availability as an open-access e-book, expressing gratitude that that would make it much more widely accessible, especially for students. Substantively, he observed that the book demonstrates a very collaborative approach, both among the authors with frequent intertextual references and within the content with chapters stressing the need for Catholics to engage with other religions, NGOs, secular and civil society groups, as well as mining companies. George also said that the book includes a global scope and effectively illustrates specific cases of peacebuilding praxis, which he called demonstrations of contextual theology in action. After explaining the value of the book's integrative approach, George singled out two chapters in particular. Tobias

[231] Caesar A. Montevecchio and Gerard F. Powers, eds. *Catholic Peacebuilding and Mining: Integral Peace, Development, and Ecology* (London: Routledge, 2022), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003094272.

Winright's, which drew an analogy between just war principles and principles of what might form a standard for just extraction, and Douglas Cassell's, which showed the potential in a stronger relationship between international human rights law, mining advocacy, and peacebuilding. George articulated several questions that he thought the book raised: 1) How do we bring more nuance to the accounting of tradeoffs between mining damages and positive benefits like clean energy technology? 2) Could focus on deep-sea mining have helped the book better confront vital questions of mining and international law? 3) How can we overcome intra-ecclesial divisions among Catholics with regard to mining? And, 4) does the Catholic community need to be better learners in order to effectively address the technical and business issues associated with the mining industry and to make Catholic social teaching more responsive to contemporary problems like mining? George closed by urging education that focuses on ethical issues of mining to be sure to engage the STEM community in order to develop a more truly integral approach to the problems involved.

Finally, Lisa Sowle Cahill gave comments focused primarily on gender. She called gender a significant blind spot in Catholic social teaching broadly, and in the book specifically. She reads this lacuna as especially lamentable because of the prevalence of women's advocacy in the mining sector and the way women are more greatly impacted by both mining and conflict. For example, she referred to the case of women in the Andes leading resistance to mining while coping with mining's consequences for water and agriculture and while facing more violent reactions to their resistance. Cahill added that while there are instances of local churches or other organizations supporting women's groups, including indigenous women, the important role of women is not frequently enough held up or publicized. Relatedly, she pointed out that the book chapter written by José Bayardo Chata Pacoricona from Derechos Humanos y Medio Ambiente-Puno (Peru), an organization that does mining advocacy work with indigenous women, did not mention women's roles in any particular way. Despite this area of critique, Cahill praised the book for showing a breadth of networking from local to international levels and for representing wide geographical diversity. She also affirmed the book for demonstrating the Catholic community's potential for structural impact with regard to mining and conflict.

CAESAR A. MONTEVECCHIO
Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies
University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana

POST-POST-CONCILIAR AND MILLENNIAL THEOLOGIANS – INTEREST GROUP

Topic: Post-Post-Conciliar and Millennial Theologians/Perspectives in Context
Convener: Michael Canaris, Loyola University Chicago
Moderator: Katherine G. Schmidt, Molloy University
Presenters: Jens Mueller, Loyola University Maryland
Byron Wratee, Boston College
Michael Magree, S.J., Boston College

For the third and final year, this interest group highlighted the work of early career theologians, so-called "Millennial" scholars who were born after the election of Pope John Paul II (1978). This year's panel focused on theological perspectives that highlighted the context of late capitalism and the technocratic paradigm both in theory and in the classroom. After consulting with the panelists, the moderator decided on an order of presentation that differs from the official program but is reflected below.

Jens Mueller presented a paper entitled, ""Teaching Theology during a Pandemic: Rethinking Teaching Strategies in Pluralist Contexts." Mueller began his presentation with a provocative statement that the "Students are not ok," which he also displayed on the screen. His thesis reflects a deep empathy for students' spiritual and mental well-being, especially during the global pandemic. Mueller highlighted how various stressors—both routine and exceptional (like the virus)—disproportionately affect students in marginalized populations. For example, students of color were much more likely to cancel their educational plans in light of COVID. Then Mueller drew on ecclesial resources on education, especially Pope Francis' encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, to highlight the theological concepts of solidarity and the preferential option for the poor.

Byron Wratee, the session's second presenter, offered a reflection on the "technocratic paradigm" a la Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*. Wratee interpreted Francis' critique as a one-dimensional understanding of our relationship to the created world, which Wratee helpfully countered with his own theological assessment of the role of creation in his upbringing. Wratee then offered the work of Howard Thurman, theologian, Civil Rights' activist, and modern mystic. Thurman's work, presented in the context of Wratee's own work as a Black theologian, offers strategies for what Wratee terms "surviving in a technocratic wilderness." His paper was entitled, "Sisters and Brothers in the Wilderness: The Technocratic Paradigm and Howard Thurman's Wilderness Theology."

Finally, Michael Magree, S.J., presented, ""Does the Past Have a Future? Theologies of Grace from the Temporal Margins." Magree's paper dovetailed nicely with the two papers above, as he laid out the disenchantment (Charles Taylor) of the context for doing and teaching theology. Magree argues that early Christian texts provide a space for experimentation in the classroom, as well as introduce students to a diversity in the tradition that is appealing and engaging. In addition, these texts provide "transformational theologies of grace," making them relevant to the persistence of change and conversion in both theological and ethical debates. In short, Magree argued for an expanded notion of "now" in the context of liberal narratives of progress and the future, using the past as a resource for this expansion.

The session was well-attended with eighteen total audience members. After the presentation, the presenters engaged in a dialogue about commonalities in their papers. Discussion amongst the presenters and later with the audience focused mostly on teaching theology in the context of late capitalism and the technocratic paradigm.

KATHERINE G. SCHMIDT
Molloy University
Rockville Centre, New York

TRANSNATIONAL CATHOLICITIES: FAITH AND POPULAR CULTURE IN GLOBAL DIALOGUE – INTEREST GROUP

Topic: Transnational Catholicities: Faith & Popular Culture in Global Dialogue
Conveners: Linh Hoang O.F.M., Siena College
Sophia Park S.N.J.M., Holy Names University
Moderator: Kevin P Considine, Catholic Theological Union (in absentia)
Presenters: Julia D.E. Prinz, V.D.M.F., Santa Clara University
Linh Hoang O.F.M., Siena College
Sophia Park S.N.J.M., Holy Names University

Julia D.E. Prinz, V.D.M.F., in her presentation entitled "Shadows: Photography as a Global Medium in Theological Discourse," parted from Johann Baptist Metz's formulation "the shortest definition of religion is interruption" by using photography to unfold the religious-spiritual meaning of global images. She followed the Jewish-Christian biblical and revelatory trajectory of "interruption" by carefully demonstrating photographs that changed the world in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries leading into the question of which kind of photographs hold the capacity of carrying unforgettable memories and, precisely because of that, are carrying hope for the future. Juxtaposing stock images with contemplative photographs she questioned the capacity of global church culture for creating visuals that are carrying hope and transformation, since the very use of stock images only labels concepts rather than seducing by their content, which is opposite to the mystagogical character of the church.

The presentation, "Food as Immigrant Experiences in a Transnational Catholic Context." by Linh Hoang, O.F.M., explored the ways in which food is pivotal to how immigrant communities negotiated their resettlement as well as their Catholic identity in a transnational context. Taking the Eucharist as the starting point to understanding Christian foodway, the invitatory action of Jesus is the exemplary dietary practice of sharing food and of engaging with others in social settings. The Eucharistic table continues both to inform how Christian communities define their role and to bring awareness to issues around food such as scarcity, insecurity, abundance, and taboos. Focusing on the Asian immigrants in America, he discussed how Asian food slowly started to blend into the American landscape and became an easy means of discrimination. For instance, food smells such as kim chi, fish sauce, and South Asian curries operate both as a sense of cultural remembrance and embarrassment when discriminatory gestures are lobbed against Asians based on pungent odors rather than considering the tastes of these foods. Nevertheless, these foods are now prevalent through the thousands of Asian restaurants, noodle houses, fusion food trucks, and banquet halls across the United States. The discussion turned also to the types of meat eaten throughout Christian history. Certain meats were prohibited because they were thought to have been previously offered to pagan idols. This is mirrored by how certain animals in Asian cuisine are acceptable edible delicacies but are looked with disdain by the larger American society. Thus, pungent odors and food types are used to lodge racist attitudes against Asians in their efforts to resettle in their new home. Food provides a rich object and environment to engage in theological reflection in a transnational catholic context.

Sophia Park, S.N.J.M., in her presentation entitled "Murals: Expressing Ordinary Catholic-(c)ities," explored the function of walls as space for posting communication through messages, drawings, or graffiti, which mirrors how the images represent the groups. Park argued that the locations of the wall determine the manner of communication. The interior walls operate as a space of remaining identity and expressing inner or core values, specifically for insiders. Messages on the interior wall assume agreement on the given knowledge or ideas among insiders. Thus, it emphasizes the universality of the group. The exterior wall demarcates the inside from the outside, protecting the building, house, and church. As a liminal space, the exterior wall is where the inside and the outside encounter one another or disintegrate. For example, the murals on the exterior wall of St. Peter parish at the Mission area of San Francisco side with the immigrants and the urban poor, advocating social justice by articulating and addressing their experience of suffering. Furthermore, Park showed murals on the street walls more directly engaging with the people, with images of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the suffering Jesus, or Oscar Romero, one of the most famous figures among murals in the Mission. People offer candles and flowers with sticky prayer notes around the murals. She indicated that the people of God find sacredness and expressions of their suffering and possible transformation on the street murals, and, perhaps, murals show where the church, the people of God, stands and worships.

The subsequent discussion noted the often-surprising intersections revealed by these presentations.

KEVIN P. CONSIDINE
Catholic Theological Union
Chicago, Illinois

FIELDWORK IN THEOLOGY – INTEREST GROUP

Topic: Encounters in Fieldwork
Conveners: Lorraine Cuddeback-Gedeon, Mercy High School
Jaisy Joseph, Villanova University
Layla Karst, Loyola Marymount University
Moderator: Susan Bigelow Reynolds, Emory University
Presenters: Emma McDonald, Boston College
Jonathan Metz, Marquette University
Jaisy Joseph, Villanova University

This session foregrounded the distinctive ways that fieldwork contributes to theological knowledge by attending to the topic of "Encounter." Each of the scholars in this session presented original fieldwork that engaged populations that often exist on the margins of theological and pastoral accounts of the church and offered conclusions that encouraged a more substantive theology rooted in the experiences and practices of living communities of faith.

Emma McDonald kicked off the session by presenting insights emerging from her research with Catholic women who have experienced infertility and with Catholic physicians who treat them. Her paper, "Catholic Women and Physicians' Moral Decision-Making Regarding Infertility Treatments," stands on the shoulders of previous studies that have demonstrated the minimal impact that magisterial teaching has had on the way Catholic laity make choices about their reproductive health. McDonald used a series of in-depth interviews to deepen our understanding of how women experiencing infertility make choices about their treatment and the relationship between these choices and their Catholic identity. McDonald identified two different understandings of Catholic identity that emerged consistently in her interviews: those (relatively few) who absorb and adhere to magisterial teachings regarding reproductive technology and those who have a selective disregard for magisterial authority. These identities in turn shaped how these women exercised moral agency—obedience for the first group and freedom to choose for the second. Through a rich array of women's voices, McDonald revealed the complex decisions that Catholic women navigate in pursuing treatment for infertility. Despite the diversity of views and practices among Catholic women around treatment choices, McDonald also noted a striking consistency among her informants: the sense of isolation, shame, and guilt these Catholic women experienced within the church. This isolation and stigma has deep implications, she suggested, both for the church's membership and the church's ability to meaningfully contribute to moral formation.

In his paper, "Called By their Gifts: A Phenological Study of the Parish Director of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee," Jonathan Metz presented the conclusions of his study of eleven lay and deacon parish directors in the archdiocese of Milwaukee. Metz argued that the parish director model seems to be working well throughout the diocese. In parishes led by deacons and lay persons, he found consistent evidence of parish renewal in the form of increasing engagement and better financial stability for the parish, parish leadership that is proactive rather than reactive, and healthy partnerships between parish directors and partner clergy. Metz situated this encouraging narrative

in the context of an archdiocese in which episcopal enthusiasm for this form of parish leadership has seemed to wane over the last 40 years. During this time, the archdiocesan seminary closed its doors to lay students and lay preaching has been increasingly restricted while increasing resources were devoted to recruiting young men to the priesthood. Parish directors feel this devaluation acutely. This emphasis on ordained leadership has come at a time when trust in this leadership has been challenged by the clergy sexual abuse crisis. Rather than seeing parish directors merely as a stop-gap measure for parish leadership, Metz argued that Catholics should be open to the possibility that this shift is a work of the Spirit that is breathing new life into the church.

Jaisy Joseph of Villanova University challenged prevailing assumptions about who is engaged in Catholic-interreligious encounters by first revealing and then challenging the ongoing racialization of perceived religious difference in the United States. Her paper, "The Racialization of Religion in the US: Eastern Catholics from Predominantly Muslim and Hindu Contexts," grows out of her fieldwork among second generation Melkite and Syro-Malabar Catholics in the United States. Joseph shared stories of how two Arabic speaking Melkites navigated their own religious and cultural identities amidst the post-9/11 Islamaphobia and she discussed the different responses among first- and second-generation Syro-Malabar Catholics in Boston to the murder of George Floyd in 2020. The everyday experiences of these Eastern Catholics revealed consistent patterns of bias against perceived religious differences that were based on skin color, language, and cultural dress, which suggest that in the United States perceived religious difference is often confronted with racialized attitudes and behaviors. While some of her informants interpreted these experiences as a negation of their religious and cultural identity, others saw themselves as bridge builders with a unique investment in the ongoing work of interreligious dialogue and racial justice. Joseph concluded her presentation by exploring the consequences of these insights for the ongoing work of Catholic theologians striving to think interreligiously. The recognition and inclusion of Eastern Catholics who are frequently perceived as Muslim and Hindu, Joseph argued, can offer an important interruption to theological claims to supremacy and universality.

After the presentations, participants were invited to engage in conversation with one another over emerging themes and insights. The substantive discussion that followed noted the challenges of conducting fieldwork in ecclesial settings and discussed the implications of this theological method.

LAYLA KARST
Loyola Marymount University
Los Angeles, California

THE LIBERATING THEOLOGY OF JAMES HAL CONE – INTEREST GROUP

Topic: Thinking Catholic Interreligiously: Black First and Everything Else Second
Conveners: Kathleen Dorsey Bellow, Xavier University of Louisiana
C. Vanessa White, Catholic Theological Union
Moderator: LaShaunda Reese, University of Loyola, Chicago
Presenters: Byron D. Wratee, Boston College
Chanelle Robinson, Boston College
Respondent: John Segun Odeyemi, Xavier University of Louisiana

"Thinking Catholic Interreligiously: Black First and Everything Else Second" is the second presentation of a three-year Interest Group whose focus is the **Liberating Theology of James Hal Cone**. In his critique of Black Catholic Theology featured in the December 2000 edition of *Theological Studies* subtitled "The Catholic Reception of Black Theology," the late Cone recalls Joseph Nearon's challenging inquiry to the CTSA at its 1975 annual convention: "To whom is the black theologian accountable?" and Nearon's response: "(T)he Black theologian is accountable to the black community" and "(t)he black theologian, like every theologian, is accountable to God." The Black community, writ large, is an amalgam of cultures and faith traditions practiced throughout the African diaspora. In their vocation as scholars shaped by the Black experience and accountable to God and the Black people of God, Black Catholic theologians are called to interreligious dialogue and collaboration committed to the liberation of the global Black community.

Byron Wratee began his presentation, "James, Malcolm and the Nation of Islam: An Exploration of Interreligious Comparison in Black Liberation," by characterizing Black Atlantic Religion as interreligious in nature based on the insights of historians Charles Long and Albert Raboteau. Enslaved and free Black communities of faith featured Christian and non-Christian coexistences, dialogue and engagement that have informed the cultures of African Americans even until today as evidenced by a recent Pew Research Center survey. In this work, Wratee discusses James Cone's black liberation theology in the context of Malcolm X's theology of black nationalism. Introducing Catherine Cornille's understandings of comparative theological processes—confessional and meta-confessional—Wratee asserts that Cone's articulations of theology reflect and confess his African Methodist traditions; however, in its critique of white supremacist Christianity, his liberation theology is meta-confessional in nature.

The Great Migration of 1910-1970, during which Blacks moved east, north and west to escape life in the South with its brutal racial and economic oppression, resulted in new African American religio-racial identities. Against that backdrop, Wratee describes the foundational theology of the Nation of Islam and its revolutionary, self-conscious impact on James Cone, an ordained AME elder and systematic theologian born in Arkansas in the late 1930s. Referring to Cone's texts, *Martin, Malcolm, and America* and *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody,* Wratee demonstrates Cone's engagement, dialogue, coexistence with Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam that demanded a Black liberation theology accountable to the African American struggle

for justice. Wratee concluded with a call to Catholic theologians to deeper comparative study with the Nation of Islam.

In "'Beyond the River': James Cone and Interreligious Ecotheology," Chanelle Robinson cited Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* (2015) that addresses the interrelatedness of all creation in the current environmental crisis. She adds that Catholic ecotheology must account for the unique experiences of Black people, referring to the late James Cone, who in his essay, "Whose Earth Is It Anyway?", centers a concern for the planet in Black liberation theology. In that light, Robinson proposes that the hierarchies of power that enable white supremacy also denigrate the natural environment. Robinson argues in this paper that an engagement with African Indigenous religions offers a liberative and intergenerational cosmology for ecotheologians.

Building her claim that the resources for thinking ecologically and interreligiously are embedded within an Africana sensibility, she outlines the contributions of Ecowomanism that offers a critical intervention in Black theology, especially because of its diasporic and interreligious resources, its insistence that the ecological experiences of Black women must serve as a primary starting point for theological reflection. Robinson introduces the Bakongo Cosmogram, a depiction of the particular worldview of a West African people, to demonstrate an Africana cosmology. She suggests that in its motif the Cosmogram offers an alternative understanding of planetary belonging. In particular, she focuses on the concept of *Kalûnga* as a site for unpacking intergenerational belonging and ecological healing.

She highlights Cone's expansion of the category of those oppressed to include the earth and refers to *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* in which he meditates on the Black arts. Robinson continues with a reflection on the African American spiritual, "Jesus, Keep me Near the Cross" in which she suggests that its ecological imagery aligns with a Bakongo vision of the world. She concludes her argument on the note that given the environmental crisis, humanity is at a critical crossroads. Cone's meditations on the cross and the earth challenge contemporary theologians to think beyond the confines of Western epistemologies to explore intercultural and multi-religious views of the planet and the cosmos.

John Segun Odeyemi and the assembly commended Wratee and Robinson for richly researched and brilliantly presented papers. A native Nigerian, who had recently travelled to his home country, Odeyemi shared perspectives from the continent on Black suffering, equality and the struggle for justice, issues with which Cone wrestled with integrity. He offered that Black theologians, Black Catholic theologians must continue to reflect upon **and** act together as people of faith and for the sake of humanity.

KATHLEEN DORSEY BELLOW
Xavier University of Louisiana
New Orleans, Louisiana

MENTAL HEALTH IN THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE – INTEREST GROUP

Conveners: Jessica Coblentz, St. Mary's College
Elizabeth Antus, Boston College
Moderator: Brianne Jacobs, Emmanuel College
Presenter: Peter Fay, Boston College
Respondents: Stephanie Edwards, Boston Theological Interreligious Consortium
Susan Abraham, Pacific School of Religion

Peter Fay presented a paper entitled "The Problems and Invitation of Positive Psychology's Happiness and Well-Being Practices for People with Schizophrenia: Martin E.P. Seligman and Catholic Accounts of Human Flourishing in Conversation." A few decades ago, Fay explains, Seligman originated the subfield of positive psychology, which focuses less on mental disorder and more on happiness, and—in Seligman's later work—on flourishing. With this later turn, he focuses on virtues, mindfulness meditation, and the cultivation of optimism. However, while appreciating Seligman's attention to what is required on the pathway toward greater flourishing, Fay argues that the lives of people with schizophrenia significantly complicate Seligman's recommendations. For example, schizophrenic people experience their hallucinations as real, so Seligman's enthusiasm about the human power to discipline thought patterns is overstated at best.

Overall, Fay critiques Seligman for suggesting that mindfulness and optimism are easy and argues that Seligman commits this error because of his elitism: he fails to take seriously how structural conditions (not only the symptoms of schizophrenia, but also the social stigmas attached to it) greatly circumscribe the possibility of flourishing for people with schizophrenia. Not everybody can think or feel their way to flourishing. People—especially those with schizophrenia—need some degree of peace and health even to have a chance of a livable life. Despite these flaws, Fay suggests that Seligman's reflections should spur Catholic ethicists to consider the virtues particular to schizophrenic people in the midst of their psychological and moral restraints, and not later at some hoped-for distant future when they would supposedly be free of such restraints (which matters given that there is no cure for schizophrenia). Catholic ethicists can do more to connect virtue ethics and social ethics in a way that speaks to the concrete difficulties of people's lives, especially those with schizophrenia.

In her response, Stephanie Edwards argues that Seligman's problematic messages show up often in mental healthcare contexts today in the optimistic insistence on patients' ability to heal themselves and the concomitant blaming of them when such progress does not materialize. Edwards therefore argues, first, that mental healthcare providers need more insight into how bodies biologically manifest humans' social experiences of trauma and oppression. In other words, they need to appreciate the emerging field of epigenetics, which studies the plasticity of human genetic expression (but without deterministically reifying patterns of social oppression at a biological level). Second, Edwards argues that it is necessary to reject a conflation of personhood and health status, and that, third, such rejection is crucial to refusing a facile "us-versus-them" binary that distances people with chronic mental health challenges from "normal" people.

In her response, Susan Abraham drew from three-thousand-year-old Hindu sources as well as contemporary cultural studies in order to destabilize a modern Western medical lens: "mental illness" has always existed, but what are other, radically different ways of naming and examining it? In Hindu traditions—as the arresting story of the Vishnu devotee Narada illustrates—there is a deep suspicion of the senses and a belief that the ability to grasp reality is an illusion. One's experience of the present therefore needs to be recontextualized within a much broader frame that encompasses past, future, and all of reality as such. This expansion allows for the opportunities to consider different "habits of temporality" aside from the Western emphasis on the immediate "now," and to consider the pain of loss and death within this wider sense of time. The spiritual malaise instigated by this pain can be channeled into the practiced attention to the divine. To bolster this point, Abraham draws upon the cultural theorist Byung-Chul Han to suggest that it is not a few troubled individuals who are mentally ill, but rather, the entire Western culture, particularly because of its neoliberal focus on compulsory happiness leading to ever-greater productivity. Han's critique underscores the ancient Hindu emphasis on stepping far back from the present moment to contemplate—rather than merely expunge—the pain and mystery of life.

The session then had an open question-and-answer period. This discussion highlighted many issues: the utility of using positive psychology at all; the relationship between academic scholars and mental healthcare practitioners; the implications of this discussion for the liturgy; and the possibility that many schizophrenic people operate not only with moral constraint, but also with (often unseen) moral integrity.

ELIZABETH L. ANTUS
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

CATHOLIC THEOLOGY AND THE CONTEMPORARY UNIVERSITY – INTEREST GROUP

Topic: The Catholic University in Church and World
Conveners: Edward P. Hahnenberg, John Carroll University
Catherine Punsalan-Manlimos, University of Detroit Mercy
Moderator: Edward P. Hahnenberg, John Carroll University
Presenters: Erin Brigham, University of San Francisco
Michael E. Lee, Fordham University

Catherine Punsalan-Manlimos introduced the inaugural session of the "Catholic Theology and the Contemporary University" interest group as an invitation to explore ways in which theology can inform how our institutions respond to the challenges facing higher education in the United States today. This three-year project seeks to surface critical issues and encourage members to bring their theological expertise to bear in addressing these issues. This year's panelists were asked to frame the conversation ecclesiologically by addressing the relationship of Catholic universities to the people of God that constitute the local church and to the social concerns of the local community.

Erin Brigham's paper, "Service as Accompaniment: The Relationship Between the Catholic University and the Local Church" (read by Nancy Dallavalle), began by noting the diversity at the University of San Francisco, where she serves as mission officer. Despite the school's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, many members of the community experience the Catholic Church as exclusionary, particularly with respect to gender. A recent self-study revealed a tendency to avoid discussing the university's role in "service to the church"—one of the characteristics of Jesuit higher education identified in the Mission Priority Examen. For Brigham, this offers an opportunity to reflect theologically on the meaning of both "church" and "service." Here the ecclesial vision of Pope Francis helps. Envisioning the church as the whole people of God, as field hospital, as continually going forth to the margins provides an "illuminative ecclesiology" (Stan Chu Ilo) that is particularly appealing. Similarly, service is not action for others, but with others. Such accompaniment requires closeness and openness to transformation. Brigham noted the challenges of bringing Pope Francis' vision to life in our Catholic universities. Few participated in efforts to engage in the synodal process at USF. Yet other initiatives—such as Black Catholic History Month and Faith and Justice Roundtables—have been more successful, offering concrete encounters with the local church as the people of God. Perhaps, Brigham concluded, the role of the theologian is to foster such spaces intentionally, reflect on them explicitly, and promote an ongoing and mutually transformative dialogue within the university and the church.

Michael Lee's paper, "University of the Poor: The Catholic University and the Social Context," began by acknowledging both the differences among Catholic universities and the difference between these universities and the church as a communion of faith. Still, much can be gained by drawing on contemporary ecclesiology to reflect on the mission of Catholic higher education. In doing so, we recognize that our institutions are themselves entangled in structural injustice. The

college degree is both decisive and deeply racialized. Universities are often in dialectical, and not just accidental, relationship to local communities—a fact that extends beyond town-gown tensions to include long histories of slave-holding, gentrification, exploitation, and extraction. Do we imagine our institutions as the Good Samaritan, the victim, the priest who passes by, or the robbers themselves? In other words, turning to images of church as people of God or communion can presume a reality that is more aspirational than actual. More fruitful reflection opens up from the image of the church of the poor found in Pope Francis and Latin American liberation theologians such as Ignacio Ellacuría. Adopting this image, what would it mean to speak of "universities of the poor"? This would require a double response: (1) How do universities open doors to poor and marginalized communities? (2) How do they make poverty and structural injustice the focus of knowledge production? The latter demands a standpoint epistemology in which research programs recognize that knowledge is socially situated and that marginalized people have a positional advantage in gaining certain forms of knowledge. For all their salutary effects, typical diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts can easily succumb to deferential approaches in which agendas are firmly controlled by a group's most advantaged people. Drawing on Olúfémi O. Táíwò's notion of elite capture, Lee argued that "universities of the poor" must developed constructive epistemologies oriented toward a coalitional politics that builds and rebuilds actual structures of social connection and movement.

Following the presentations, the twenty-five participants broke into small groups to take up a series of discussion questions. These conversations surfaced several themes: building trust with dioceses; the value of community-based learning models (rather than "service learning"); what our institutions do to train those who do the work of coalition building; theology's ecclesial context; the dominance of exclusively ethical modes of evaluation; and the importance of Catholicism as a multifaceted form of life.

EDWARD P. HAHNENBERG
John Carroll University
University Heights, Ohio

DECOLONIZING CATHOLIC THEOLOGY – INTEREST GROUP

Topic: Decolonial Turns in Catholic Theology
Convenor: Bradford Hinze, Fordham University
Moderator: Rufus Burnett, Jr., Fordham University
Presenters: Gerald Boodoo, Duquesne University
Joseph Drexler-Dreis, Xavier University of Louisiana
Melissa Pagán, Mount Saint Mary's University

This session was a panel discussion engaging three questions moderated by Rufus Burnett.

1. How has decolonial theory become a resource for your theology?

Joseph Drexler-Dreis has confronted the problems of inequality, exploitation, and expropriation in relation to a theology that calls itself progressive, but obliquely justifies these conditions, conceals them, and fails to question them. The decolonial turn offers resources to use in liberation theology to address these problems by offering an analysis of the world system that enables delinking from these situations and relinking with promising options. Bothered by the commodification of the aesthetics of radical discourse, decolonial theory criticizes dominant structures of meaning without abstractions and without avoiding material conditions in their world making projects.

Melissa Pagán discovered in decolonial theory a resource as a Catholic ethicist in the United States struggling with the gaps in many forms of post-colonialist and liberationist thinking that are not wrestling with situations in the Caribbean and Puerto Rico, in particular issues of bodies and land in relation to coloniality. Not initially influenced by the usual decolonial theorists, she was shaped by queer feminist theorists of color and preoccupied with the exploitation of the land in Catholic ethics. This enabled her to approach historical, biblical, and theological texts when considering relationality and norms and the fate of colonial and diasporic subjects by decentering Eurocentric ethics.

Gerald Boodoo was raised in Trinidad and Tobago and received a British education by scholars from the centers of power in Europe. They disregarded the wisdom and ways of knowing from his native home and from the global south more widely. When he returned home, he knew little about the lives of those from his native land. He desired to crack open his own culture and learn from post-colonial thinking from Caribbean and African authors. Decolonial theory offered an important resource in filling out the picture, but it is not everything.

2. What are the challenges that decolonial theory and praxis raise for liberationist and contextual approaches to theology?

Drexler-Dreis noted that Walter Mignolo's and Catherine Walsh's decolonial theory offers a perspective and connecting term that brings together the material world and ideological structures rather than an interdisciplinary system and offers a political strategy for delinking and relinking major themes in theology: Exodus, Reign of God, Queer Holiness.

Pagán explained that the types of challenges that decolonial thought brings to liberation theology include attention to who is being neglected, e.g., women of color and queer women. Liberation theologians often lack an engagement with Gloria Alzaldúla on border thinking. She argued that we need to confront the decolonial woes associated with liberationist grand approaches by reclaiming the voices of women of color without deferring to Eurocentric views of sexuality and gender. Decolonial feminism troubles our understanding of freedom.

Boodoo noted that all of our structures of living are shaped by and through coloniality. He argued that liberationist and contextual theologies are inevitably infected with colonialism.

3. How is decolonial theory criticized and what is your own assessment of this criticism?

Drexler-Dreis stated that we tend to use decolonial theory within theology with apologetic interests. Hermeneutical gymnastics can occur in which we try to make something fit that doesn't really fit. Radical aesthetics can be a tool of inclusion, rather than the exodus. Decolonization can be a metaphor for social justice and anti-capitalist projects. He noted several questions that must be considered and trends about which we should be cautious. Why is it necessary to use decolonization? We don't need to use it and we can stretch it too far. It can be excluding rather than including. We need to consider what it adds. We conflate inclusivist projects with decolonizing. Gloria Alzadúa and Franz Fanon would find this all confusing. Social location is conflated with border thinking and epistemic problems. To whom is decolonial theory responsible? It can become an episteme and not a historical struggle.

Pagán noted that the problem within decolonial theory is that it doesn't adequately address feminist ethics, gender, and sexuality. We haven't delinked these issues. Moreover, there is very little treatment of "the land" and this is a dangerous neglect, which otherwise simply contributes to patterns of colonization. All anticolonial projects need to explore how we address this issue more effectively.

Boodoo stated decolonial theory and liberation theology deserve this kind of critique. Decolonial theory includes Latin America into the history of colonization. The theological enterprise likes to feed on itself. Decolonizing thinking is trying to deprovincialize Latin America into global colonial history. This is very dangerous. The theological enterprise tries to feed on itself and must be critiqued.

BRADFORD E. HINZE
Fordham University
Bronx, New York

AT THE INTERSECTION OF RACE AND OUR MANY RELIGIONS – SPECIAL SESSION

Topic:	At the Intersection of Race and our Many Religions
Convener:	Frank Clooney, Harvard University
Moderator:	Susan Abraham, Pacific School of Religion
Presenters:	Balabhadra Bhattacarya Dasa, Vedic Friends Association
	Victoria Raggs, Atlanta Jews of Color Council
	Imam Plemon el-Amin, Atlanta Masjid of Al-Islam
Discussant:	SimonMary Aihiokai, University of Portland

A first of its kind session at CTSA was convened by Francis Clooney, president-elect of the CTSA, as a special panel discussion. The panel consisted of three speakers and a discussant, each of whom spoke about their religious, spiritual and theological identities as they intersected with racialized and gendered identities. Audience responses after the session revealed that it was a profoundly moving and spiritual experience for many gathered.

Sri Balabhadra Bhattacarya Das is the president of Vedic Friends Association (VFA). Previously director of VFA Atlanta, Sri Dasa is its first African American president. The VFA is an international community that has embraced the Vedic culture, including its systems of yoga, meditation, pranayama, languages and literature, Ayurveda, astrology, vegetarianism, forms of worship and spiritual knowledge. In his comments he spoke about how he had not known any people from India as a young man, but once he found out about Hinduism, he was drawn deeply to the tradition. He began to think about his former Christian identity and newer Hindu identity as becoming one through his idea of "Namaste Church." In his reflection on intersections, he asserted, that intersections reveal that we have many points from which to make considered decisions. Yet, many of us ignore the potential of intersections, and focus instead on a single or stable identity such as the physical body. We are, he said, much more than the physical body and intersectional thinking will reveal that to us.

Ms. Victoria Raggs is the co-founder and Executive Director of the Atlanta Jews of Color Council. She is a progressive strategist, DEI consultant, disability rights advocate, and lobbyist. Ms. Raggs spoke about her experience as a Jewish woman of color. Most people think of Jews as either Europeans or of Middle Eastern ethnic identities. "Race" is a constructed reality she argued, but it has the ability to influence social and political realities and was the reason she founded the organization Atlanta Jews of Color. As a woman, intersectionality is intertwined with her gendered reality. Ms. Raggs issued a deeply moving challenge to the audience present: Precisely because of intersectional realities and the many dimensions of oppression such a view reveals, Catholics cannot advocate for Catholics alone. Further, as religious people, we must necessarily talk about politics and political realities and ask hard questions about what exactly we mean by diversity and inclusion.

Plemon T. El-Amin is the Imam Emeritus of the *Atlanta Masjid of Al-Islam*, one of the largest and most progressive Mosques in the United States. Working as a close aide and supporter of Imam Warith Deen Mohammed, Imam El-Amin has traveled the nation and the world, representing the concerns and interests of Muslim Americans and

Interfaith adherents around the world. Imam Plemon recounted how as a native Atlantan, he grew up in the context of segregation and the triple assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Marin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy. Consequently, he became an activist for progressive and liberal ideals, but he began to see how there were no solutions forthcoming from Christian communities for the problem on the streets. The Nation of Islam presented itself as an option because it was articulating a new vision for America. As he emphasized, there is an instinct in us for newness and his encounters with groups like the Focolare and with teachers like Thomas Merton created in him the urge to answer the question: What is the history to which you must respond?

Dr. SimonMary Aihiokai then provided a profound reflection in response. He pointed out that the panelists challenged narrow ideas about the image of God we may carry because for so many of us, our theological and spiritual imaginations are colonized. In the bodies and lived lives of the panelists, we see how God wants to be encountered. A God of encounter is not a God of labels, but a God who transcends singular narratives. Consequently, he asserted, each of our panelists are "icons of encounter," whose inclusion in our gathering at CTSA challenges our understanding of the Eucharistic table as a place of saturated encounter because we make no room for the religious "other." He then invited us all to stand at the intersections, because intersections are places where we must let go of the power of the familiar.

At the close of the session, each participant provided words of encouragement and reconciliation to the community, with Ms. Raggs empowering the Society to become a beacon of inclusion and justice.

SUSAN ABRAHAM
Pacific School of Religion
Berkeley, California

REPORT ON THE 2021-2022 MID-YEAR GATHERINGS

Ad Hoc Board Committee on Virtual Events:
Meghan J. Clark, Craig A. Ford, Jr., Elyse Raby

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:	Pope Francis and Interreligious Dialogue: Reflections on *Fratelli Tutti*
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). Both meetings were well attended by members of the Society.

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, Islamophobia, 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 "Pope Francis and Interreligious Dialogue: Reflections on *Fratelli Tutti*." It met on April 27, 2022. The gathering sought to respond to foreground the coming annual convention, with its theme, "Thinking Catholic Interreligiously," by discussing Pope Francis' encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti* and interreligious dialogue. James Fredericks, Rita George Tvrtković, and Stephanie Wong explored the interfaith implications of *Fratelli Tutti* through the lens of their engagement with interreligious dialogue and their work as comparative theologians, including their distinct approaches to—and contributions to the development of—the field of comparative theology. Following the presentations, participants continued the discussion in the breakout groups. In the breakout groups, 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.

B. KEVIN BROWN
Gonzaga University
Spokane, Washington

SECRETARY'S REPORT
THE SEVENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL CONVENTION

The Catholic Theological Society of America held its seventy-sixth Annual Convention June 9-12, 2022, at the Sheraton Atlanta Hotel in Atlanta, GA. This was the first convention in person since 2019 as the United States, and the rest of the world, continue to recover from the effects and disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The theme of the convention was "Thinking Catholic Interreligiously." Registration for the convention was done electronically in the months leading to the meeting. The Women's Consultation on Constructive Theology met on Thursday, June 9, at 3:00-5:30 p.m. EST. The 2022 Ann O'Hara Graff Award was presented posthumously to Dr. Francine J. Cardman, Associate Professor of Historical Theology & Church History, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry. The Opening Session was led on Thursday, June 9, by CTSA President Christine Firer Hinze, starting with a Land Acknowledgement Statement. Rev. Jeffery Ott, O.P., Pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, gave a word of welcome to all convention participants on behalf of the Archbishop of Atlanta, the Most Reverend Gregory John Hartmayer, O.F.M., Conv., who for scheduling reasons could not be present that evening. Fr. Ott led those attending in prayer. President Christine Firer Hinze introduced the first plenary speaker, Dr. Amir Hussain from Loyola Marymount University. The evening concluded with a reception. The CTSA gratefully acknowledges the support provided by the following institutions: Fordham University, Georgetown University, Harvard School of Divinity, Harvard University, and Loyola Marymount University.

On Friday, June 10, the day began with a Memorial Service to remember and honor CTSA members who died within the last year. The service was followed by the second plenary session, delivered by Dr. Catherine Cornille from Boston College. After a day of sessions and conversations, the business meeting was held later on Friday afternoon from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. EST. Active members present at the business meeting welcomed the new Active and Associated members presented to them by the Admissions Committee. The president's reception for new and newer members followed the business meeting. An additional reception was also sponsored by Boston College, Liturgical Press, and Paulist Press. At 8:00 p.m. EST, a special session called "At the Intersection of Race and Our Many Religions" was held, bringing together leaders from various religious traditions in conversation.

After morning prayer on Saturday, June 11, the third plenary session took the form of a panel under the title "Comparative Theology: Present Experience, Remembered Pasts, Imagined Futures," presided by Rev. Francis X. Clooney, S.J. The conversation was followed by sessions and conversations throughout the day. At 6:00 p.m. EST, convention participants gathered at The Catholic Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Atlanta, GA to celebrate the Eucharist. Rev. Bryan Massingale presided at the liturgical celebration and President Christine Firer Hinze offered the reflection. After the liturgy, a reception and the convention banquet were held back at the Sheraton Atlanta Hotel. Toward the end of the meal, President Christine Firer Hinze read the citation and presented the John Courtney Murray Award to Dr. Daniel K. Finn.

On Sunday, June 12, after morning prayer, Dr. Christine Firer Hinze delivered her Presidential Address. After this, she formally concluded her term as CTSA President and introduced the new President, Rev. Francis X. Clooney, S.J.

Antonio E. Alonso, from Emory University, served as the Liturgical Aide. During the convention several special receptions, breakfasts, sessions, and other meetings took place. See the convention program below for more details.

CONVENTION PROGRAM

Convention Schedule At-a-Glance

Day and time (EST)	Event
Thursday, June 9, 2022	
9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.	CTSA Board Meeting
1:00–4:30 p.m. and 6:00–7:00 p.m.	Registration
1:00–5:00 p.m.	*Theological Studies* Board Meeting
1:00–7:00 p.m.	Exhibits
3:00–5:30 p.m.	Women's Consultation & Business Meeting
7:00–9:00 p.m.	Opening and First Plenary
9:00 p.m.	Opening Reception
Friday, June 10, 2022	
7:00–8:15 a.m.	Breakfast meetings*
7:00–8:15 a.m.	Mentorship breakfast*
7:15–8:15 a.m.	Zen Prayer/Meditation
8:30–9:00 a.m.	Memorial Service
8:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.	Exhibits
8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.	Registration
9:00–10:30 a.m.	Second Plenary
10:30–11:00 a.m.	Coffee Break
11:00 a.m.–12:45 p.m.	Concurrent Sessions I
1:00–2:15 p.m.	Women's Consultation luncheon*
1:00–2:15 p.m.	Hearing of the Resolutions Committee
2:30–4:15 p.m.	Concurrent Sessions II
4:30–6:00 p.m.	CTSA Business Meeting
6:15–7:45 p.m.	President's Reception for New Members
6:15–7:45 p.m.	Evening reception
8:00–9:30 p.m.	Special Session
Saturday, June 11, 2022	
7:15–8:45 a.m.	Breakfast meetings*
7:15–8:15 a.m.	Zen Prayer/Meditation
8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.	Exhibits
8:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.	Registration
9:00–10:30 a.m.	Third Plenary
10:30–11:00 a.m.	Coffee Break
11:00 a.m.–12:45 p.m.	Concurrent Sessions III
12:50–2:15 p.m.	*TS* Editorial Consultation Luncheon*
1:00–2:15 p.m.	CUERG Luncheon
2:30–4:15 p.m.	Concurrent Sessions IV
6:00 p.m.	Eucharist

7:30 p.m.	John Courtney Murray Award Banquet*
Sunday, June 12, 2022	
7:15–8:45 a.m.	Conveners' Breakfast
7:15–8:15 a.m.	Zen Prayer/Meditation
8:30–11:00 a.m.	Exhibits
9:00–10:00 a.m.	Fourth Plenary: Presidential Address
10:00 a.m.	Appointment of the New President
10:15 a.m.	Breakfast and Reception/Coffee
11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	CTSA Board Meeting

**prior registration required*

Concurrent Sessions At-A-Glance

I. Friday Morning

1. Anthropology
2. God/Trinity
3. Practical Theology
4. Lonergan
5. Christianity and Judaism
6. Extractives and Catholic Peacebuilding
7. The Liberating Theology of James Hal Cone
8. World Religions and Global Responsibilities: The Legacy of Hans Küng
9. Tradition & Apocalypse: History, Race and Christian Temporal Being
10. Interreligious Learning in the Global South
11. Creation/Eschatology

II. Friday Afternoon

1. Catholicity and Mission
2. Theology and Science
3. Moral Theology
4. Thomas Aquinas
5. Rahner Society
6. Black Catholic Theology
7. Fieldwork in Theology
8. Mental Health in Theological Perspective
9. Zen-Ignatian Spirituality Insights on "Passing the Koan" of the 3rd Degree of Humility
10. Jewish-Christian and Muslim-Christian Theologies as Challenges to Catholic Theology: The View from Europe
11. Spirituality

III. Saturday Morning

1. Theologies of Hope in Light of Contemporary Mental Illness
2. Church/Ecumenism
3. Bioethics/Healthcare
4. Liturgy and Sacraments
5. Sexual Abuse Crisis in the Catholic Church
6. Latino/a Theology
7. Transnational Catholicites: Faith and Popular Culture in Global Dialogue
8. Fundamental Theology/Method
9. Historical Theology
10. Atonement & Comparative Theologies: The Cross in Dialogue with Other Religions
11. Catholic Theology and the Contemporary University

IV. Saturday Afternoon

1. Hans Urs von Balthasar
2. Historical Theology
3. Decolonizing Catholic Theology
4. Catholic Social Thought
5. Christ
6. Comparative Theology
7. Asian/Asian-American Theology
8. Post-Post-Conciliar and Millennial Theologians
9. The Grace Needed for Salvation: The Insights from Three Thomists
10. Voting Rights & Moral Agency
11. Interfaith Community & Spiritual Companionship on Campus: Hindu, Buddhist, and Catholic Theological Perspectives

Pre-Convention Events, Thursday, June 9, 2022

CTSA Board Meeting 9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Executive Board Room–Level 3

***Theological Studies* Board Meeting** 1:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.
Georgia 3

CTEWC Training Session 12:45 p.m.–2:45 p.m.
"Short and to the Point: Writing for a General Audience" **Atlanta Ballroom**

Convener: **Christopher Vogt**, St. John's University
Presenter: **Hank Kilbanoff**, Emory University
Pre-registration required

Registration 1:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.
and 6:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m.
Georgia Prefunction

Exhibits 1:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m.
Georgia Prefunction

Women's Consultation on Constructive Theology 3:00 p.m.–5:30 p.m.
Georgia 7-9

Convener: **Kathryn Lilla Cox**, University of San Diego
Moderator: **Rosemary P. Carbine**, Whittier College

Presenter: **Heather Miller Rubens**, Executive Director and Roman Catholic Scholar at the Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies
Paper Title: "Dr. Eva Fleischner (1925-2020) and the Prospects for Interreligious Theological Thinking"

Respondent: **Rabbi Ruth Abusch-Magder**, Director of Education and Rabbi-in-Residence, Be'chol Lashon

Respondent: **Elena G. Procario-Foley**, Professor of Religious Studies and Br. John G. Driscoll Professor of Jewish-Catholic Studies, Iona College

Ann O'Hara Graff Memorial Award 4:30 p.m.
The 2022Ann O'Hara Graff Memorial Award will be awarded to ***Francine Cardman****, Associate Professor, Historical Theology & Church History, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry*

Business Meeting 5:15 p.m.–5:30 p.m.

WCCT Steering Committee Members:
Convener: **Kathryn Lilla Cox**, University of San Diego
Treasurer: **Jessica Coblentz**, St. Mary's College
Secretary: **Jennifer Owens-Jofré**, University of San Diego
Award Convener: **Julia Feder**, Creighton University
Members: **Elizabeth L. Antus**, Boston College
Rosemary P. Carbine, Whittier College
Colleen Carpenter, St. Catherine University
Elissa Cutter, Georgian Court University
Jaisy Joseph, Seattle University
Layla A. Karst, Loyola Marymount University
Cristina Lledo Gomez, BBI- The Australian Institute of Theological Education
Margaret M. Moore, Theology and Life Institute
Susan Bigelow Reynolds, Emory University
Annie Selak, Georgetown University

Thursday Evening, June 9, 2022

Opening and First Plenary Session 7:00–9:00 p.m.

Presiding: **María Pilar Aquino**, University of San Diego
President, CTSA

Land Acknowledgement

The Catholic Theological Society of America acknowledges the Muscogee — Creek — people who lived, worked, produced knowledge on, and nurtured the land of today's Atlanta where we are meeting in June 2022. We remember that in 1821, the Muscogee were forced to relinquish this land, and we recognize the sustained oppression, land dispossession, and involuntary removals of the Muscogee and Cherokee peoples from Georgia and the Southeast. In the spirit of today's interfaith learning and living, we will continue to honor the Muscogee Nation and other Indigenous caretakers of this and other lands by humbly seeking knowledge of their histories and by committing ourselves to respectful stewardship of the land here in Atlanta and in every place where we live and teach.

We likewise remember, in the same spirit of repentance, and likewise with a resolve to work for healing and reparation, the many Black women and men who have suffered and still suffer from the sins of slavery and racism here in Atlanta and in all the places where we live and work. Sadly, we need also to remember the eight people, including six Asian-American women, murdered in the spa shootings that occurred here in March 2021.

Welcome and Opening Prayer:
Rev. Jeffery Ott, O.P.
Pastor, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church

Address: **Amir Hussain**, Australian Catholic University

"Thinking Interreligiously with Muslims: 'A Practical, Not Primarily a Theoretical, Matter'"

Respondent: **Axel Marc Oaks Takacs**, Seton Hall University

Opening Reception 9:00 p.m.
Georgia Prefunction

Donors:

Fordham University
Georgetown University
Harvard School of Divinity, Harvard University
Loyola Marymount University

The CTSA is grateful for the generous support of these programs and institutions

Friday Morning, June 10, 2022

von Balthasar Society Breakfast 7:00–8:15 a.m.
Atlanta 4

Mentorship Breakfast: 7:00–8:15 a.m.
Transitioning into Careers in Theology **Atlanta 3**
Prior registration required

Schillebeeckx Breakfast 7:00–8:15 a.m.
Atlanta 2

Comparative Theology Reading Group Breakfast 7:00–8:15 a.m.
Atlanta 1

Zen Prayer/Meditation 7:15–8:15 a.m.
Georgia 10

Memorial Service 8:30–9:00 a.m.
Remembrance of Deceased CTSA Members **Capital Ballroom**

Exhibits 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Georgia Prefunction

Registration 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
Georgia Prefunction

Second Plenary Session 9:00–10:30 a.m.

Presiding: **María Pilar Aquino**, University of San Diego
Past President, CTSA

Address: **Catherine Cornille**, Boston College

"'Who Do You Say That I Am?' Rethinking Christian Particularity through the Religious Other"

Respondent: **Nougoutna Norbert Litoing, S.J.**, Harvard University

Coffee Break 10:30–11:00 a.m.
Georgia Prefunction

Concurrent Sessions I **11:00–12:45 p.m.**

I.1 Anthropology – Topic Session **Georgia 2**

Topic: Thinking Desire Interreligiously

Administrative Team: Heather DuBois, Elizabeth Pyne, Eric Meyer

Convener: **Elizabeth Pyne**, Mercyhurst University
Moderator: **Heather DuBois**, Stonehill College

Presenter: **Tiffany Lee**, Boston College
Paper Title: "'The cure for addiction is suffering': Lessons in Deep Learning from Heruka's *Life of Milarepa*"

Presenter: **Greg Mileski**, Boston College
Paper Title: "Seeking A New Desire: Sāntideva's *Bodhicitta* and René Girard's Pacific Mimesis of Christ"

Respondent: **Won-Jae Hur**, Xavier University

I.2 God and Trinity – Topic Session **Georgia 3**

Administrative Team: Darren Dias, O.P., Gloria Schaab, S.S.J., Susie Paulik Babka

Convener: **Darren Dias, O.P.**, St. Michael's College, University of Toronto
Moderator: **Benjamin Lujan**, University of St. Michael's College

Presenter: **Jessica Coblentz**, St. Mary's College
Paper Title: "Must a Good God Be a Feeling God? An Interreligious and Interdisciplinary Reflection on Moral Arguments for Divine Passibility"

Presenter: **Charles A. Gillespie**, Sacred Heart University
Paper Title: "Thinking Trinity Interreligiously"

I.3 Practical Theology – Topic Session **Georgia 4**

Administrative Team: Elsie M. Miranda, Karen Enriquez, Milton J. Bravo

Convener: **Elsie M. Miranda**, Association of Theological Schools
Moderators: **Susan Bigelow Reynolds**, Emory University
Milton J. Bravo, St. John's University

Presenter: **Rafael Luevano**, Chapman University
Paper Title: "Interreligious Pandemic Death Narratives in the U.S. and Mexico"

Presenter: **Cecilia Titizano**, University of San Francisco
Paper Title: "Decolonizing Religious Landscapes for a Pluricultural Church"

Presenter: **Gustave Ineza**, University of Toronto
Paper Title: "Decolonizing Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the West"

I.4 Lonergan – Consultation **Georgia 5**

Administrative Team: Brian Bajzek, Nicholas Olkovich, Kevin Vander Schel

Convener: **Brian Bajzek**, Marquette University
Moderator: **Fiona Li**, Regis College, University of Toronto

Presenter: **Andrew Vink**, Mount St. Mary's University
Paper Title: "Integrated Evil: El mal común, Prophetic Responsibility, and the Integral Scale of Values"

Presenter: **Joseph Ogbonnaya**, Marquette University
Paper Title: "Bernard Lonergan in World Christianity"

Presenters: **John Dadosky**, Regis College, University of Toronto
Christian Krokus, University of Scranton
Paper Title: "What are Comparative Theologians doing when they are doing Theology?: A Lonerganian Perspective with Examples from the Engagement with Islam"

I.5 Christianity and Judaism – Consultation **Georgia 6**

Administrative Team: Elena Procario-Foley, Nicole Reibe, Andrew Massena

Convener: **Elena Procario-Foley**, Iona College
Moderator: **Andrew Massena**, Loras College

Presenter: **Mia Theocharis**, St. Michael's College, University of Toronto
Paper title: "Franz Rosenzweig: An Alternative to the Issue of Fulfillment in 'Gifts and Calling'"

Presenter: **Ellen T. Charry**, Princeton Theological Seminary
Paper Title: "Augustine's Blinkered Israelology"

Respondent: **Michael Berger**, Emory University

I.6 Extractives and Catholic Peacebuilding – Topic Session **Georgia 7**

Topic: Catholic Peacebuilding and Mining: Integral Peace, Development, and Ecology

Administrative Team: Caesar A. Montevecchio, Tobias Winright, Laurie Johnston

Convener: **Caesar A. Montevecchio**, University of Notre Dame
Moderator: **Laurie Johnston**, Emmanuel College

Panelists: **Lisa Sowle Cahill**, Boston College
William George, Dominican University
Erin Lothes, Saint Elizabeth University; "*Laudato Si'* Movement"

I.7 The Liberating Theology of James Hal Cone – Interest Group **Georgia 8**

Administrative Team: Kathleen Dorsey Bellow, C. Vanessa White

Conveners: **Kathleen Dorsey Bellow**, Xavier University of Louisiana
C. Vanessa White, Catholic Theological Union
Moderator: **LaShaunda Reese**, Loyola University Chicago

Presenter: **Byron D. Wratee**, Boston College
Paper Title: "James, Malcolm, and the Nation of Islam: An Exploration of Interreligious Comparison in Black Liberation Theology"

Presenter: **Chanelle Robinson**, Boston College
Paper Title: "'Beyond the River': James Cone and Interreligious Ecotheology"

Respondent: **John Segun Odeyemi**, Xavier University of Louisiana

I.8 World Religions and Global Responsibility: The Legacy of Hans Küng – Selected Session **Georgia 9**

Convener: **Martin Madar**, Xavier University
Moderator: **William Madges**, Xavier University

Presenter: **David Hollenbach, S.J.**, Georgetown University
Paper Title: "Hans Küng, a Global Ethic, and Religious Diversity"

Presenter: **Hille Haker**, Loyola University Chicago
Paper Title: "Global Responsibility and the Call for Change in the Catholic Church: The Legacy of Hans Küng"

I.9 Tradition and Apocalypse: History, Race, and Christian Temporal Being – Selected Session **Georgia 10**

Convener: **Grant Kaplan**, Saint Louis University
Moderator: **Mark Miller**, University of San Francisco

Presenter: **Jennifer Newsome Martin**, University of Notre Dame
Paper Title: "Our Once and Future Mother: Apocalyptic Mariology, Tradition, and the Religions"

Presenter: **Anne Carpenter**, St. Mary's College of California
Paper Title: "Grace From Above and From Below: Blondel and Theologians of the Underside"

Presenter: **Grant Kaplan**, Saint Louis University
Paper Title: "A Tainted Tradition? A Conversation with Hart and Jennings"

I.10 Interreligious Learning in the Global South – Invited Session **Georgia 11 and 12**

Convener: **Peter Phan, S.J.**, Georgetown University
Moderator: **Peter Phan, S.J.**, Georgetown University

Presenter: **Devaka Premawardhana**, Emory University
Paper Title: "Consolata Missions and the Discipline of Voluntary Displacement: A Model for Interreligious Learning"

Presenter: **Arun Jones**, Emory University
Paper Title: "Indian and European Catholic Perspectives on Interreligious Learning in South Asia"

Respondent: **Elaine Padilla**, University of LaVerne

I.11 Creation/Eschatology – Topic Session **Georgia 13**

Administrative Team: Daniel Minch, Daniel Horan, Elizabeth Groppe

Convener: **Daniel Minch**, Karl-Franzens University Graz
Moderator: **Chelsea King**, Sacred Heart University

Presenter: **Elizabeth O'Donnell Gandolfo**, Wake Forest University
Paper Title: "Redeeming the Commons of Creation: Towards an Interreligious, Decolonial, and Ecofeminist Theology of the Kin-dom of God"

Presenter: **Christopher Cimorelli**, National Institute for Newman Studies
Paper Title: "The Fruits of Interreligious Dialogue on the Climate: Doctrinal Development and Creation Theology"

Respondent: **Daniel P. Scheid**, Duquesne University

Friday Afternoon, June 10, 2022

Women's Consultation on Constructive Theology Luncheon 1:00–2:15 p.m.
Atlanta 1 & 2

Hearing of the Resolutions Committee 1:00–2:15 p.m.
Capital Ballroom

Presiding: **Kristin Heyer**, Boston College
Vice President, CTSA

Parliamentarian: **William Loewe**, Catholic University of America

Concurrent Sessions II 2:30–4:15 p.m.

II.1 Catholicity and Mission – Topic Session **Georgia 2**

Administrative Team: Sophia Park, S.N.J.M., Laurie Johnston, Antonio Sison

Convener: **Sophia Park, S.N.J.M.**, Holy Names University
Moderator: **Laurie Johnston**, Emmanuel College

Presenter: **Heejung Adele Cho**, Regis College
Paper Title: "From Redemptoris Missio to Fratelli Tutti: The Mission of the Church and Interreligious Dialogue"

Presenter: **Enrico Beltramini**, Notre Dame de Namur University
Paper Title: "Cosmic Christ and National God in Panikkar's *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*"

Presenter: **Mary Doak**, University of San Diego
Paper Title: "Radical Hospitality: A Public and Prophetic Mission for a Postcolonial Church"

II.2 Theology and Science – Topic Session **Georgia 3**

Administrative Team: Amanda Alexander, Mark Fusco, S.J., Chelsea King

Convener: **Amanda Alexander**, Ministry Formation Institute
Moderator: **Chelsea King**, Sacred Heart University

Presenter: **Joyce Ann Konigsburg**, DePaul University
Paper Title: "Thinking Catholic Interreligiously about the Ethics of Climate Change"

Presenter: **Kevin Frederick Vaughan**, The College of St. Scholastica
Paper Title: "'She blinded me with Classics!': Science in Dialogue with Religious Classics according to Pope Francis"

Respondent: **Megan Loumagne Ulishney**, University of Nottingham

II.3 Moral Theology – Topic Session **Georgia 4**

Administrative Team: Daniel Cosacchi, Rachel Bundang, Kate Ward

Convener: **Daniel Cosacchi**, Marywood University
Moderator: **Rachel Bundang**, Santa Clara University

Presenter: **Molly Greening,** Loyola University Chicago
Paper Title: "Between Nepantla and Natural Law: How Definitions of Rationality Impact the Ethics of Interreligious Engagement"

Presenter: **David Kwon,** Saint Mary's University of Minnesota
Paper Title: "A Confucian Contribution to the Catholic Just War Tradition"

III.4 Thomas Aquinas – Consultation **Georgia 5**
Administrative Team: Dominic Langevin, O.P., Daria Spezzano, David Elliot

Convener: **Dominic M. Langevin, O.P.,** Dominican House of Studies
Moderator: **Frederick C. Bauerschmidt**, Loyola University of Maryland

Presenter: **Melanie Barrett**, Mundelein Seminary / University of St. Mary of the Lake
Paper Title: "A Thomist Reconsideration of the Torah for the Moral Life of Catholic Christians"

Presenter: **Bruce Marshall**, Southern Methodist University
Paper Title: "Judaism Among the Religions, According to Aquinas"

Presenter: **David M. Lantigua**, University of Notre Dame
Paper Title: "Aristotle, Ancient Romans, and the Amerindians: Spanish Thomists on the Imperial Seduction of Pagan Virtue"

II.5 Rahner Society – Consultation **Georgia 6**

Administrative Team: Brandon Peterson, Jakob Rinderknect, Michael Canaris, Mary Beth Yount, Erin Kidd

Convener: **Jakob Rinderknecht**, University of the Incarnate Word
Moderator: **Mary Beth Yount**, Neumann University

Presenter: **Peter Fritz**, College of the Holy Cross
Paper title: "Thinking Catholic Translatably: Revising Rahner on the World Church"

Presenter: **Maeve Louise Heaney**, Australian Catholic University
Paper Title: "Musicking Catholic Interreligiously through the Lens of Friendship"

Respondent: **Anthony Godzieba**, Villanova University

II.6 Black Catholic Theology – Consultation **Georgia 7**
Joint Session with Latino/a Theology

Topic: Resistance

Administrative Team: Joseph Flipper, Emmanuel Osigwe

Convener: **Jennifer Owens-Jofre**, University of San Diego
Moderator: **Chanelle Robinson**, Boston College
Presenter: **Michelle Maldonado**, University of Scranton
Paper Title: "Interrogating Identity: White-skin and Christian Privilege within Latino/a Theology"

Presenter: **Nicole S. Symmonds**, McAfee School of Theology
Paper Title: "The Black Body as Religion: Mapping Blackness as a Site of Interreligious Theology and Ethics"

Presenter: **Cecilia Titizano**, University of San Francisco
Paper Title: "Ancestral Wisdoms as Sources for Peoples in Resistance"

II.7 Fieldwork in Theology – Interest Group **Georgia 8**

Administrative Team: Lorraine Cuddeback-Gedeon, Jaisy Joseph, Layla Karst

Convener: **Lorraine Cuddeback-Gedeon**, Mercy High School
Moderator: **Susan Bigelow Reynolds**, Emory University

Presenter: **Emma McDonald**, Boston College
Paper Title: "Catholic Women and Physicians' Moral Decision-Making Regarding Infertility Treatments"

Presenter: **Jonathan Metz**, Marquette University
Paper Title: "Called by their Gifts: A Phenomenological Study on the Parish Directors of the Milwaukee Archdiocese"

Presenter: **Jaisy Joseph**, Seattle University
Paper Title: "Encountering the Other as Religious Minority: Eastern Catholics in Predominantly Muslim and Hindu Contexts"

II.8 Mental Health in Theological Perspective – Interest Group **Georgia 9**

Conveners: **Jessica Coblentz**, St. Mary's University
Elizabeth Antus, Boston College
Moderator: **Brianne Jacobs**, Emmanuel College

Presenter: **Peter Fay**, Boston College
Paper Title: "The Problems and Invitation of Positive Psychology's Happiness and Well-Being Practices for People with Schizophrenia: Martin E.P. Seligman and Catholic Accounts of Human Flourishing in Conversation"

Respondent: **Stephanie Edwards**, Boston Theological Interreligious Consortium

Respondent: **Susan Abraham**, Pacific School of Religion

II.9 Zen-Ignatian Spirituality Insights on "Passing the Koan" of the 3rd Degree of Humility – Selected Session **Georgia 10**

Convener: **James T. Bretzke, S.J.**, John Carroll University
Moderator: **Judith Merkle, S.N.D. deN**, Niagara University

Presenter: **James T. Bretzke, S.J.**, John Carroll University
Paper Title: "Zen-Ignatian Spirituality Insights on 'Passing the Koan': of the 3rd Degree of Humility"

Respondent: **Judith Merkle, S.N.D. deN**, Niagara University

Respondent: **Ruben Habito**, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University

II.10 Jewish–Christian and Muslim–Christian Theologies as Challenges to Catholic Theology: The View from Europe – Invited Session **Georgia 11 and 12**

Convener: **Wilhelmus Valkenberg**, Catholic University of America
Moderator: **Wilhelmus Valkenberg**, Catholic University of America

Presenter: **Marianne Moyaert**, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
Paper Title: "Comparative Theologies Old and New: Exploring the Present of the Past"

Presenter: **Klaus von Stosch**, Bonn University
Paper Title: "The Qur'anic Theology as Catholic Challenge for Catholics"

Respondent: **Rita George-Tvrtković**, Benedictine University

II.11 Spirituality – Topic Session **Georgia 13**

Administrative Team: Julia Feder, Mary Frohlich, Axel Marc Oaks Takacs

Convener: **Julia Feder**, Creighton University
Moderator: **Kevin Ahern**, Manhattan College

Presenter: **Vincent Miller**, University of Dayton
Paper Title: "Hope, Affect, and the Particular: An Engagement with Joanna Macy's Buddhist Proposal for 'Active Hope'"

Presenter: **Wilson Angelo Espiritu**, KU Leuven and Ateneo de Manila University
Paper Title: "The *Panata* to Nuestro Padre Jesus Nazareno: Filipino Popular Devotion as a Catalyst of Social Commitment"

Friday Evening, June 10, 2022

CTSA Business Meeting 4:30–6:00 p.m.

Presiding: **Christine Firer Hinze**, Fordham University
President, CTSA

Parliamentarian: **William Loewe**, Catholic University of America

Publishers' Reception 6:15–7:45 p.m.
Hosted by Boston College, Paulist Press, and Liturgical Press **Atlanta 3-5**

President's Reception for New/Newer Members 6:15–7:45 p.m.
Prior registration required/ticket provided in registration packet **Atlanta 1-2**

Special Session 8:00–9:30 p.m.
At the Intersection of Race and Our Many Religions **Capital Ballroom**

Presiding: **Susan Abraham**, Pacific School of Religion

Panelists: **Victoria Raggs**, Founder & Director,
Atlanta Jews of Color Council

Imam Plemon el-Amin, Imam Emeritus,
Atlanta Masjid of Al-Islam

Balabhadra Bhattacarya Dasa, President,
Vedic Friends Association

Discussant: **SimonMary Aihiokai**, University of Portland

Saturday Morning, June 11, 2022

Benedictine Universities and Colleges Breakfast 7:15–8:45 a.m.
Sponsored by Belmont Abbey College **Atlanta 1**

Breakfast Meeting: Karl Rahner Society 7:15–8:45 a.m.
Atlanta 2

Zen Prayer/Meditation 7:15–8:15 a.m.
Georgia 10

Morning Prayer 8:30–8:45 a.m.
Georgia 13

Exhibits 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Georgia Prefunction

Registration 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
Georgia Prefunction

Third Plenary Session 9:00–10:30 a.m.

Presiding: **Francis X. Clooney, S.J.**, Harvard Divinity School, Harvard University
President-Elect, CTSA

Panelists: **Mara Brecht**, Loyola University Chicago
Reid Locklin, St. Michael's College, University of Toronto
Stephanie Wong, Villanova University

"Comparative Theology: Present Experience, Remembered Pasts, Imagined Futures"

Coffee Break 10:30–11:00 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions III 11:00–12:45 p.m.

III.1 Theologies of Hope in Light of Contemporary Mental Illness – Selected Session **Georgia 2**

Convener: **Cristina Lledo Gomez**, BBI - The Australian Institute of Theological Education
Moderator: **Jessica Coblentz**, St. Mary's College

Presenter: **Kathleen Mroz**, Emmanuel College
Paper Title: "The Choice Between Faith and Recovery: The Need for Interreligious Cooperation When Talking About Mental Illness"

Presenter: **Cristina Lledo Gomez**, BBI - The Australian Institute of Theological Education
Paper Title: "Forgiving the Perpetrator: Imagining Hope After Grief"

Presenter: **Michele Saracino**, Manhattan College
Paper Title: "Self-Compassion: Our Last Hope"

III.2 Church/Ecumenism – Topic Session **Georgia 3**

Administrative Team: Jakob Rinderknecht, Natalia Imperatori-Lee, Kathryn L. Reinhard

Convener: **Jakob Rinderknecht**, University of the Incarnate Word
Moderator: **Kathryn L. Reinhard**, Gwynedd Mercy University

Presenter: **Brian P. Flanagan**, Marymount University
Paper Title: "Synodality Beyond Collegiality"

Presenter: **Patrick Hornbeck**, Fordham University
Paper Title: "Synodality and/with Disaffiliated Catholics"

Presenter: **Phyllis Zagano,** Hofstra University
Paper Title: "The Problem of Synodality"

III.3 Bioethics/Healthcare – Topic Session **Georgia 4**

Administrative Team: Michael McCarthy, Nichole Flores, Stephanie Edwards

Convener: **Michael McCarthy**, Loyola University Chicago
Moderator: **Cory Mitchell,** Mercy Health

Presenter: **Daniel J. Daly**, Boston College
Paper Title: "Envisioning the Virtuous Hospital: On an Ethical Framework Emerging from a Dialogue among Catholic and Secular Health Care Organizational Ethics"

Presenter: **Katherine Jackson-Meyer**, Boston College
Paper Title: "Moral Distress and Moral Resilience: Areas in Need of Interreligious Inquiry"

III.4 Liturgy and Sacraments – Topic Session **Georgia 5**

Administrative Team: Sebastian Madathummuriyil, Kimberly Belcher, Xavier M. Montecel

Convener: **Sebastian Madathummuriyil**, Duquesne Univeristy
Moderator: **Layla Karst,** Loyola Marymount University

Presenter: **Jonathan Martin Ciraulo**, St. Meinrad Seminary
Paper Title: "The Ontological Demands of Cult in Hinduism and Christianity"

Presenter: **Elizabeth Groppe**, University of Dayton
Paper Title: "'My Heart is Turned to Mourning' (Job 30:31): Reimagining the Church's Response to the Destruction of the Temple Interreligiously"

III.5 Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church – Consultation **Georgia 6**

Topic: Institutional Responses to Sexual Abuse: Tewo Cases

Administrative Team: Cristina Traina, Julia Feder, Stan Chu Ilo, Daniel Horan, Megan McCabe

Convener: **Cristina Traina**, Fordham University
Moderator: **Natalia Imperatori Lee**, Manhattan College

Panelists: **Megan K. McCabe**, Gonzaga University
Michelle Wheatley, Gonzaga University
Jennifer Beste, College of St. Benedict / St. John's University

III.6 Latino/a Theology – Consultation **Georgia 7**
Joint Session with Black Catholic Theology

Topic: Healing

Administrative Team: Cecilia Gonzalez-Andrieu, Leo Guardado, Jennifer Owens-Jofré

Convener: **Joseph Flipper**, University of Dayton
Moderator: **Cristina Castillo**, Diocese of San Bernadino

Presenter: **Marinus Chijioke Iwuchukwu**, Duquesne University
Paper Title: "Christian Churches in North America and the Imperatives of Dialogue Toward Restitution and Restorative Justice for Blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans—A Pragmatic Healing Response"

Presenter: **Carolyn M. Jones Medine**, University of Georgia
Paper Title: "Buddhist-Christian Integrated Practice: Meditation and Recollection"

Presenter: **Mauricio Najarro**, UC Berkeley-UCSF Joint Program in Medical Anthropology
Paper Title: "Responding to the Farmers' Call: Langar and Eucharist on the Delhi Border"

III.7 Transnational Catholicities: Faith and Popular Culture in Global Dialogue – Interest Group **Georgia 8**

Administrative Team: Kevin Considine, Linh Hoang, O.F.M., Sophia Park, S.N.J.M.

Conveners: **Sophia Park, S.N.J.M.**, Holy Names University
Linh Hoang, O.F.M., Siena College
Moderator: **Kevin Considine**, Marian Catholic High School

Presenter: **Julia Prinz, V.D.M.F.,** Santa Clara University
Paper Title: "Shadows: Photography as a Global Medium in Theological Discourse"

Presenter: **Linh Hoang, O.F.M.,** Siena College
Paper Title: "Food: Nourishment for Transnational Catholicities"

Presenter: **Sophia Park, S.N.J.M.,** Holy Names University
Paper Title: "Murals: An Expression of Intercultural Catholicity"

III.8 Fundamental Theology/Method – Topic Session **Georgia 9**

Administrative Team: Jeremy Wilkins, Mary Beth Yount, Ryan Dunns, S.J.

Convener: **Mary Beth Young**, Neumann University
Moderator: **Matthew Vale**, University of Notre Dame

Presenter: **Katie Mahowski Mylroie**, Boston College
Paper Title: "Exploring Ecofeminist Methodology: Insights from Comparing Ivone Gebara's Trinitarian Theology with the Hindu Kali Tantric Tradition"

Presenter: **Anna Bonta Moreland**, Villanova University
Paper Title: "Unifying the Methodologies of Comparative Theology: A Critical Analysis of Five Recent Works"

Presenter: **Kristin Haas**, University of Notre Dame
Paper Title: "Interreligious Dialogue and Foundations of Doctrinal Humility: A Critical Appreciation of Cornille's Contribution"

III.9 Historical Theology – Topic Session **Georgia 10**
Session Was Canceled Due to Unforeseen Circumstances

Administrative Team: Kenneth Parker, Elizabeth Huddleston, Rita George-Tvrtković

Convener: **Rita George-Tvrtković**, Benedictine University

Moderator: **Elizabeth Huddleston**, National Institute for Newman Studies

Presenter: **Joshua R. Brown**, Mount St. Mary's University
Paper Title: "The Problem of Creation in the Chinese Mission: An Assessment of Giulio Aleni's *True Origin of the Ten-Thousand Things*"

Presenter: **Xueying Wang**, Loyola University Chicago
Paper Title: "The Chinese Face of Our Lady: Alfonso Vagnone and the *Life of the Holy Mother*"

Presenter: **Robert Trent Pomplun**, University of Notre Dame
Paper Title: "Intentional and Unintentional Inculturation in Ippolito Desideri's Heart of Christian Doctrine (Ke ri se ste an kyi chos lugs kyi snying po)"

III.10 Atonement and Comparative Theology: The Cross in Dialogue with Other Religions – Selected Session — **Georgia 11 and 12**

Convener: **Catherine Cornille**, Boston College
Moderator: **Brian Robinette**, Boston College

Panelists: **John Thiel**, Fairfield University
Julia Feder, Creighton University
Klaus Von Stosch, Bonn University

III.11 Catholic Theology and the Contemporary University – Topic Session — **Georgia 13**

Topic: The Catholic University in Church and World

Administrative Team: Edward Hahnenberg, Catherine Punsalan-Manlimos

Convener: **Catherine Punsalan-Manlimos**, University of Detroit Mercy
Moderator: **Edward P. Hahnenberg**, John Carroll University

Panelists: **Erin Brigham,** University of San Francisco
Michael E. Lee, Fordham University

Saturday Afternoon, June 11, 2022

***Theological Studies* Editorial Consultation Luncheon** 12:50–2:15 p.m.
Atlanta 5

CUERG Luncheon 1:00–2:15 p.m.
Atlanta 4

Concurrent Sessions 2:30–4:15 p.m.

IV.1 Von Balthasar – Consultation **Georgia 2**

Administrative Team: Jennifer Newsome Martin, Charles Gillespie, Danielle Nussberger

Convener: **Jennifer Newsome Martin**, University of Notre Dame
Moderator: **Megan Heeder**, Marquette University

Presenter: **Daniel A. Drain**, Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family
Paper Title: "Crossing Deepest Hell: Balthasar's *Descensus* Theology"

Presenter: **Nathan Bradford Williams**, University of Toronto
Paper Title: "Childlikeness: A Balthasarian Entrée to Comparative Theology"

Respondent: **Kathleen Cavender-McCoy**, Marquette University

IV.2 Historical Theology – Topic Session **Georgia 3**

Administrative Team: Kenneth Parker, Elizabeth Huddleston, Rita George-Tvrtković

Convener: **Kenneth Parker**, Duquesne University
Moderator: **Rita George-Tvrtković**, Benedictine University

Presenter: **Nicole Reibe**, Loyola University Maryland
Paper Title: "When Good Theology Loses: The Failed Theology of Christian Unity in Late Medieval Spain"

Presenter: **Wilhelmus Valkenberg**, Catholic University of America
Paper Title: "Means and Methods of Interreligious Engagement: Converging Goals and Diverging Methods of Ramon Marti, O.P. (1220-1285) and Georges Chehata Anawati, O.P. (1905-1994)"

Respondent: **Amir Hussain**, Loyola Marymount University

IV.3 Decolonizing Catholic Theology – Interest Group **Georgia 4**

Administrative Team: Rufus Burnett, Elizabeth O'Donnell Gandolfo, Bradford Hinze

Convener: **Bradford Hinze**, Fordham University

Moderator: **Rufus Burnett, Jr.**, Fordham University

Panelists: **Melissa P**agán, Mount Saint Mary's University
Gerald Boodoo, Duquesne University
Joseph Drexler-Dreis, Xavier Uniersity of Louisiana"

IV.4 Catholic Social Thought – Topic Session **Georgia 5**

Administrative Team: Patrick Flanagan, C.M., Jens Mueller, William George

Convener: **Patrick Flanagan, C.M.**, St. John's University
Moderator: **Marcus Mescher**, Xavier University

Presenter: **David Cloutier**, Catholic University of America
Paper Title: "And Then There Were Nones? CST, Interreligious Dialogue, Fratelli Tutti, and the Secular Surge"

Presenter: **Michael VanZandt Collins**, Boston College
Paper Title: "Toward Rectifying Terrestrial Habits: 'Respect for Nature,' Muslim-Christian Dialogue and the Ethics of Recognition"

Presenter: **Nicholas Hayes-Mota**, Boston College
Paper Title: "Catholic in Principle, Interfaith in Practice? The Case of Faith-Based Organizing"

IV.5. Christ – Topic Session **Georgia 6**

Administrative Team: Elizabeth O'Donnell Gandolfo, John Thiede, S.J., Mary Kate Holman

Convener: **Elizabeth O'Donnell Gandolfo**, Wake Forest University
Moderator: **John Thiede, S.J.**, St. Marquette University

Presenter: **James Robinson**, Iona College
Paper Title: "'Jesus Christ destroys all our dualisms': Raimon Panikkar's Cosmotheandric Christology"

Presenter: **Mary Frohlich**, Catholic Theological Union
Paper Title: "Christ of the Forest: The 'New Animism' and Christology"

IV.6 Comparative Theology – Topic Session **Georgia 7**

Administrative Team: Peter Feldmeier, Reid Locklin, Stephanie Wong

Convener: **Peter Feldmeier**, University of Toledo
Moderator: **Reid Locklin**, University of Toronto

Presenter: **Laurel Marshall Potter**, Boston College
Paper Title: "All Catholic Theology is Comparative Theology"

Presenter: **Megan Hopkins**, Boston College
Paper Title: "Ritual as Comparative Source Material: Illustrated through Eucharist and Dhikr"

Respondent: **Marianne Moyaert**, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

IV.7 Asian/Asian American Theology – Consultation **Georgia 8**

Administrative Team: **Marianne Moyaert**, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Convener: **Julius-Kei Kato**, King's College-Western University
Moderator: **Min-Ah Cho**, Georgetown University

Presenter: **Erica Siu-Mui Lee**, Regis College, University of Toronto
Paper Title: "Bernard Lonergan and Peter Phan: Trinitarian Reflections on Being and Thinking Catholic Interreligiously"

Presenter: **Ang Q. Tran, S.J.**, Santa Clara University
Paper Title: "Religiously Betwixt and Between: Asian Catholic Theologians in the midst of Religious Pluralism"

Presenter: **Leo D. Lefebure**, Georgetown University
Paper Title: "Peter Phan's Interreligious Theology"

IV.8 Post-Post Conciliar and Millennial Theologians – Interest Group **Georgia 9**

Administrative Team: Katherine Schmidt, Michael Canaris, Mary Beth Yount

Convener: **Michael Canaris**, Loyola University Chicago
Moderator: **Katherine Schmidt**, Malloy College
Presenter: **Michael Magree, S.J.**, Boston College
Paper Title: "Does the Past Have a Future? Theologies of Grace from the Temporal Margins"

Presenter: **Jens Mueller**, University of Dayton
Paper Title: "Teaching Theology during a Pandemic: Rethinking Teaching Strategies in Pluralist Contexts"

Presenter: **Bryan Wratee**, Boston College
Paper Title: "Sisters and Brothers in the Wilderness: The Technocratic Paradigm and Howard Thurman's Wilderness Theology"

IV.9 The Grace Needed for Salvation: The Insights from Three Thomists – Selected Session **Georgia 10**

Convener: **Ligita Ryliškyté, S.J.E.**, Boston College
Moderator: **Jeremy W. Blackwood**, Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology

Presenter: **Richard Lennan**, Boston College
Paper Title: "Beyond 'The Anonymous Christian': Reconsidering Rahner on Grace and Salvation"

Presenter: **Matthew Louis Petillo**, Boston College
Paper Title: "Divine Love in a Global Context: Insights from Lonergan"

Presenter: **Roger Haight, S.J.**, Union Theological Seminary
Paper Title: "Schillebeeckx and Theologies of Religious Pluralism"

IV.10 Voting Rights and Moral Agency – Selected Session **Georgia 11 and 12**

Convener: **Susan Bigelow Reynolds**, Emory University
Moderator: **David DeCosse**, Santa Clara University

Panelists: **Nichole Flores**, University of Virginia
Rev. Kim Jackson, MDiv., Episcopal Church of the Common Ground and Georgia State Senator, District 41

IV.11 Interfaith Community and Spiritual Companionship on Campus: Hindu, Buddhist, and Catholic Theological Perspectives – Invited Session **Georgia 13**

Convener: **John Borelli**, Georgetown University
Moderator: **John Borelli**, Georgetown University

Presenter: **Brahmachari Shweta Chaitanya**, Emory University
Paper Title: "A Hindu Perspective on the Interreligious Realities of Campus Community and Spiritual Companionship Today"

Presenter: **Ven. Priya Rakkhit Sraman**, Emory University
Paper Title: "A Buddhist Perspective on the Interreligious Realities of Campus Community and Spiritual Companionship Today"

Presenter: **Callie Tabor**, Emory University
Paper Title: "A Catholic Perspective on the Interreligious Realities of Campus Community and Spiritual Companionship Today

Saturday Evening, June 11, 2022

Eucharist at The Catholic Shrine of the Immaculate Conception 6:00 p.m.
48 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. SW, Atlanta, Georgia

Walking Directions (Approximately a 19 minute walk / 0.8 Mile; mostly flat)

Exit hotel and turn left onto Courtland St. Walk Courtland for approximately 3 blocks to Edgewood Ave. Turn right onto Edgewood Ave and walk one block to Peachtree Center Ave. Turn left onto Peachtree Center Ave. (will become Central Ave) and walk 3 main blocks. The church will be on the left at Central Ave. & Martin Luther King Junior Drive.

Bus Transportation will be provided for those unable to walk to the church coach lines will be parked near the hotel entrance.

John Courtney Murray Award Banquet 7:30 p.m.
Capital North & Central

Sunday Morning, June 12, 2022

Conveners' Meeting 7:15–8:45 a.m.

New conveners (or their delegates) of Topic Sessions, Interest Groups, and Consultations will meet Francis X. Clooney, S.J.,, CTSA President-Elect, Kristin Heyer, CTSA Vice President, and Kevin Brown, Editor of Proceedings, for evaluation and preliminary planning for the 2023 convention.

Zen Prayer/Meditation 7:15–8:15 a.m.
Georgia 10

Morning Prayer 8:30–8:45 a.m.
Georgia 13

Exhibits 8:30–11:00 a.m.
Georgia Prefunction

Fourth Plenary Session: Presidential Address 9:00–10:30 a.m.

Presiding: **Kristin Heyer**
Boston College
Vice President, CTSA

Address: **Christine Firer Hinze**
Fordham University
President, CTSA

"Remembering the Rest of Life:
Toward a Rest-Inflected Theology of Work and Action"

Appointment of the New President 10:00 a.m.
Capital Ballroom South

Breakfast and Reception / Coffee 10:15 a.m.
Capital Prefunction

Appointment of the New President 10:00 a.m.
Capital Ballroom South

Meeting and Luncheon: CTSA Board of Directors 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
Executive Board Room

Catholic Theological Society of America
77th Annual Convention

"Freedom"

June 8–11, 2023
Hyatt Regency
Milwaukee, WI

The CTSA would like to thank the following members for their service and assistance with the annual convention:

Local Arrangements Committee

Susan Bigelow Reynolds, Candler School of Theology, Emory University
Callie Tabor, Aquinas Center of Theology, Emory University

Liturgical Aide

Antonio Alonso, Emory University

Parliamentarian

William Loewe, Catholic University of America

Photographer

Paul J. Schutz, Santa Clara University

Program Organization Assistant

Dorie Goehring, Boston College

Registration Team

Dorie Goehring, Boston College
Kristen Gibbs, Emory University
Mark A. Hernández, Oblate School of Theology
Sarah Kothe, Emory University
Emma McDonald, Boston College
Christine Mellick, John Carroll University
Huili (Kathy) Stout, University of Dayton

Videographer

David Rohrer Budiash, *Review for Religious*

JOHN COURTNEY MURRAY AWARD 2022

Citation from Dr. Christine Firer Hinze, CTSA President:

The John Courtney Murray Award for Distinguished Theological Achievement

The person upon whom we confer the Society's highest honor this evening, the fourth of eight children, showed an interest in thinking about the Catholic faith from an early age; at the start of the Second Vatican Council he had already begun pursuing theological studies. With a knack, as well, for numbers, and an interest in social justice, a bachelor's degree in Mathematics was followed by a year of community service as a VISTA volunteer working with African-American migrant laborers and marginal farm families. This experience, and the questions it prompted, led our colleague to master's and doctoral studies in two disciplines (including classes with four Nobel Laureates), and a lifelong commitment to connecting principled and informed thinking, judicious policy analysis, and practical, community-based engagement for change.

After joining the CTSA as a newly-minted Ph.D. in 1977 and landing a joint, tenure-track appointment at a distinguished midwestern Catholic university that same year, our talented awardee was quickly recognized for leadership and administrative as well as academic skills, and was named, in succession, chair of the university's largest department, dean of its school of theology, and to a professorship in an endowed chair. Likewise, during over 45 years of CTSA membership, our colleague's gifts, generosity of spirit, and dedication to Catholic theology, the church, and our Society have led to service as chair or member of numerous major committees and task forces, as a board member, and as president—remarkably, while compiling equally impressive records of service and leadership in several other national learned societies.

Our awardee is an award-winning teacher and researcher, deeply respected and beloved by students, mentees and colleagues near and far. Disciplined labors over five decades have yielded an enviable resumé of scholarly publications, including over a dozen scholarly monographs, scores of peer reviewed articles and chapters, and many edited or co -edited volumes. Additionally, with prolific contributions to general-audience publications, and invitations to speak or consult in over twenty-two countries, and our honoree is truly a public and globally-engaged intellectual. Further, in a field that encourages solo careerism, and in a time prone to intellectual, and ecclesial acrimony and siloing, he has been a purveyor of patient and civil conversation, a resolute bridge builder and a skilled collaborator, bringing together scholars of different generations, disciplines, and intellectual and ecclesial sensibilities in many fora, and in a range of creative, multi-year research and writing projects.

A person of multitudinous accomplishments and recipient of many well-deserved accolades including the Monica Hellwig Award for Outstanding Contributions to Catholic Intellectual Life from the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, our esteemed colleague is a person of modesty, grace and gratitude, who leads, as he will often say, 'a blessed life' both academically and personally. A loving spouse, Dad to two grown children Jacob and Stephanie, with us here this evening, he enjoys woodworking, gardening, playing poker and bridge, and spending time with his two young grandsons during regular visits to Seattle.

In recognition of and gratitude for all of this, and for the ways his life and labors have blessed so many, it is abundantly fitting, and my great joy and honor to bestow, on behalf of the whole membership of the Catholic Theological Society of America, this year's John Courtney Murray Award for lifetime achievement and service to Professor of Theology and Clemens Professor of Economics at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, and our beloved colleague, Daniel K. Finn.

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

Dr. Christine Firer Hinze called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m. EST.
Dr. William Loewe served as parliamentarian.

Report of the Admissions Committee

Dr. Rachel Bundang presented the report on behalf of the Admissions committee. Members of the Admissions Committee for 2021-2022 were Dr. Rachel Bundang, Dr. Darren J. Dias, O.P., and Dr. Steven Battin, and Dr. Hosffman Ospino, Secretary, *ex officio*. The Committee had several interactions via email and met via Zoom on May 18, 2022. The committee studied ninety-nine applications. From these, the committee discerned seven special cases, of which three were recommended to be presented to the membership. Four were not. A total of ninety-five names were forward to the membership. The following are the numbers of applicants in the three traditional membership categories: New Active membership applicants: forty; Associate Applicants applying to Active membership: eighteen; New Associate membership applicants: thirty-seven. The names of those the committee recommends for membership were posted on the Convention bulletin board. The CTSA Admissions Committee moved that those recommended for Associate and Active membership be approved.

The CTSA members present at the meeting approved the committee's recommendation by a voice vote. They were greeted with a round of applause. President Christine Firer Hinze asked all new members present at the meeting to stand up. She encouraged them to participate actively in the life of the Society, including elections. New members are found in the appendices to the CTSA Directory contained in this volume of the *Proceedings*.

Report of the Nominations Committee

After a process of receiving, vetting, and discerning nominations from the general membership, the members of the Nominations Committee, Dr. Susan K. Wood, S.C.L., (Chair), Dr. Bradford Hinze, and Dr. Susan Abraham submitted the names of candidates recommended to stand for election to serve on the Board. Dr. Susan K. Wood read the names proposed by the committee:

The slate of nominees proposed by the committee follow:

For Vice-President:	Dr. Michael E. Lee
	Dr. Nancy Pineda-Madrid
For board members:	Dr. Nancy A. Dallavalle
	Rev. Linh Hoang, O.F.M.
	Dr. Elaine Padilla
	Dr. Brian D. Robinette

There were no nominations from the floor.

President Christine Firer Hinze thanked all standing for election. As voting results became available, they were announced to the membership.

Dr. Nancy Pineda-Madrid was elected as Vice-President. Dr. Nancy A. Dallavalle and Rev. Linh Hoang, O.F.M., were elected as Board Members. Dr. Hosffman Ospino (Secretary) and Rev. Patrick Flanagan, C.M., (Treasurer) were reelected by acclamation for another one-year term.

Rev. Francis X. Clooney, S.J., assumes the Presidency for the year 2022-2023. Dr. Kristin Heyer becomes President-Elect. The rest of the Board of Directors are Dr. Christine Firer Hinze (Past President), and Christina Astorga and Edward Hahnenberg as Board Members.

The President thanked Dr. Michael E. Lee, Dr. Elaine Padilla and Dr. Brian D. Robinette for their generosity to stand for election.

Report of the President

The following is the text of the report read by Dr. Christine Firer Hinze:

1. Gratitude and Appreciation.

This is a Society that runs on generous service, and in turn, on gratitude and appreciation. So many people deserve our thanks—administrative team members; conveners; presenters; committee chairs and members, our student assistants, everyone at the Sheraton Atlanta Hotel, and more. *Thank you!* I express my special gratitude to our wonderful Board Members and Officers. It has been my honor and joy to collaborate with such a gifted and dedicated group of colleagues for the common good and future of the Society and its mission. Much respect and gratitude to our outgoing Board Members, Meghan Clark and Tim Matovina, and our continuing members Christina Astorga and Ed Hahnenberg. Many thanks also to our marvelous officers, Secretary Hosffman Ospino, Treasurer Patrick Flanagan, C.M., Vice President Kristin Heyer, President-Elect Frank Clooney, S.J., who has put together such a wonderful conference for us this year, Past President Maria Pilar Aquino; and to our indefatigable Executive Director, Mary Jane Ponyik, for your dedication and for all you have done for the CTSA cause over this past year, and in addition for the true kindness and great patience all of you have shown to me.

2. Gifts in Support of the 2022 Convention.

Thanks to generous responses from outreach to the home institutions of our presidential line and this year's plenary speakers, the CTSA received the following donations in support of the 2022 Convention. We gratefully acknowledge their contributions:

Fordham University	$3,000
Georgetown University	$5,000
Harvard University	$5,000
Loyola Marymount University	$2,500
Plus 8 Program Ad Purchases	$2,250

For a total of $17,750 toward defrayal of convention expenses.

I also want to acknowledge the individual members who have generously, and increasingly contributed to the CTSA. Between January 1, 2021, and June 2022 these individual donations have totaled over $6,500. These funds help to defray costs for events at and beyond the annual meeting, and to extend our ability to help defray convention costs students or others with limited incomes. Thank you so much.

3. Advancing Board & Society Commitments on Racial Injustice.
Pursuant to the public commitments articulated in the June 2020 CTSA Board Statement on Racial Injustice to strive, as theologians and teachers, and as a Society, to advance:

- *A deeper engagement in our scholarship and teaching with the theological contributions coming from communities directly impacted by racialized violence, especially from Black, Womanist, Feminist, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian thinkers.*
- *A respectful listening to the insights from advocates for racial justice from afflicted communities who have been too often ignored and underappreciated in formal theological scholarship.*
- *A commitment to mentoring the voices of future theological leaders from disadvantaged and underrepresented communities, so that the face of Catholic theological engagement better reflects the present diversity of the faith community.*

Over the past year the Board and Presidential Line have continued to prioritize these goals, working especially with the leadership of the Committee on Underrepresented Ethnic and Racial Groups to identify and support avenues for concretely advancing them. Efforts over the past year have included: designing and introducing a Land Acknowledgement statement in our opening plenary, (a new practice which we will work to further develop and enhance in Milwaukee next year and going forward); thanks to the work of the Virtual Events Committee and our Executive Director, an excellent, very well-received session focusing on anti-racist pedagogies which took place in early December; continued attention in our 2022 Convention planning to increasing programming that reflects these goals, in particular by incorporating and centering theological contributions from underrepresented groups.

I thank all members who are involved in this ongoing labor, and urge us to keep our eyes on the CTSA's commitments to this work, striving to live up to these commitments more fully and deeply in all areas of our work as a Society.

4. Update: Four-Year Consultation on Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church.

This Consultation, established by the Board ensure that the CTSA continue and deepen its work as a learned society to address, understand, and effectively respond to the scandal of sexual abuse in the church, is holding its first of four annual sessions at our 76th annual convention.

5. Board Action on Report and Recommendations of the Committee Reviewing CTSA Investments and Fossil Fuels.

This committee was chaired by Erin Lothes with members Dan DiLeo, Nancy Rourke, and Matthew Shadle. Following up on a history of discussions and

deliberations about divestment by the CTSA going back to 2013, this dedicated committee did extensive research on this issue over the past year, submitting its report in late April, 2022. In May, their report and recommendations were made available to the membership, accompanied by a letter asking for input and feedback. A special meeting of the CTSA board was also held in May to discuss the report. At its meeting of Thursday, June 10, the Board unanimously accepted **three resolutions for action**, which closely follow the recommendations of the committee report. The accepted action items are the following:

> **Motion to Freeze Investments in Fossil Fuels**
> Approve to freeze any new investments in the Carbon Underground 200, either through direct ownership or commingled funds that include fossil fuel public equities and corporate bonds, including reinvestment of dividends, effective June 30th, 2022.
>
> **Motion on Fossil Fuel Divestment**
> Divest from direct or commingled investments in the Carbon Underground 200 no later than the 2025 Annual Convention.
>
> **Motion to Create Fossil Fuel Divestment Plan Task Force**
> The Board charges the President to form a Task Force during 2022-2023 to develop a plan to be presented at the 2023 Annual Convention for divestment from direct or commingled investments in the Carbon Underground 200 no later than the 2025 Annual Convention.

During 2022-23, the Task Force will work closely with the Board and officers, as it develops this proposed plan, and opportunities for members' input and discussion of the evolving proposal will be provided over the coming months. Thanks to all who, over the years, have contributed to making this historic step. Incoming President Frank Clooney and the board will welcome your comments, questions, and suggestions.

6. Board approves formation of a "Centennial Planning Committee."

At its June 10 meeting, the Board approved the formation of a "Centennial Planning Committee," and charged the president and past-president with determining its membership and refining the implementation of its tasks after the June 2022 Board Meeting. As described in the approved proposal:

> "The Centennial Committee will work with the Board and Officers to help the CTSA to attend to North American Catholic theology's evolving contours and national and international contexts, challenges and opportunities; and in light these, to envisage, articulate and set guiding, strategic goals, to assist the Board in its work of advancing those goals. To that end, the Committee, working under the authority of the elected officers and board, will be responsible, in consultation with membership, for developing, submitting to the Board for approval, monitoring, and regularly updating a mission-driven, multi-year strategic plan for the CTSA, guided by a long range vision shaped in response to questions such as, What may or ought the CTSA look like three, five or ten years down the road? What guiding

vision for 'The CTSA at 100' will best reflect our Society's mission and aspirations, and what priority issues and strategic goals can most fruitfully orient our work in the present, and as we approach our 80th, 85th, 90th, and 95th anniversaries."

Pending some further refinement, during the **first phase of its work** the Centennial Committee's tasks are likely to include:

- Reviewing the mission of the CTSA, and study CTSA's historical records (e.g.,Board minutes and statements, *Proceedings* volumes) for information on the ways the Society has embodied that mission.
- Scanning the Society's current organizational profile to surface strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities WOT).
- Building on a 2022 report on "economic and financial context," scanning the external environment for current and future trends which might impact the Society over the next five, ten, or twenty-five years.
- Drafting a vision statement for "The CTSA at 100" to be presented to the Board and membership for discussion and input.

During his presidency, Frank Clooney and I, as past-president, will be refining the committee's charge, membership composition and terms, etc., and he will be inviting members to join the committee in its inaugural year. We will post more information about this in the newsfeed as it develops. If you have comments, suggestions, or questions about this initiative, or if you or someone you know would like be considered for serving on this committee, please let me and President Clooney know.

7. Encouraging creative inroads for engagement between CTSA members and U.S. and Canadian Bishops.

Much gratitude to our 2021–2022 liaisons Darren Dias, O.P., (Canadian Bishops) and Tom Rausch, S.J., (USCCB Liaison). Both Darren and Tom have expressed the desire to explore with the Board and Officers potential new or renewed initiatives to build and enrich communication and relationships between CTSA theologians and North American bishops.

One ongoing effort is our CTSA program supporting meetings between member-theologians and their local or regional bishops. Participation in this program has not been robust in the past several years.

However, I'd like to point out a proposal we received from Prof. Marc Tumeinski at Anna Maria College in Massachusetts, who proposed a zoom-based reading group with Cardinal Wilton Gregory and CTSA members from nine different universities. As a pandemic-inspired variation on the "meeting with local bishops" theme, this proposal represents an experimental spirit that I hope we might emulate by coming up with other fresh efforts to connect members with Bishops and Bishops Conferences in 2022-23.

8. A final important item to note is the upcoming, five-year review of our convention structure which will include attention to the ways we designate our time across the convention, as well as on the pre-convention day of Thursday.

You will hear more about this from our incoming President; I encourage you to please respond to opportunities for input, and to be engaged in this process of review and, hopefully, improvement over the coming year-plus.

In conclusion, I extend my abundant and heartfelt thanks to each member of the Society for your dedicated labors in the fields of theology, for your service to the academy, society, and church, and for the honor of serving as your CTSA president during the past year.

Report of the President-Elect

The following is the text of the report read by Rev. Francis X. Clooney, S.J.

1. As President-Elect, I heartily endorsed the President's remarks of acknowledgment, adding my own thanks to all who had worked so hard to make this year's convention a success. I am particularly grateful to Mary Jane Ponyik, Executive Director, and Dorie Goehring (Boston College, Ph.D. student), Program Organization Assistant, who were impressively efficient at every stage in the planning of the conference and its actual happening. I add a word of special appreciation for the good work of David Rohrer Budiash, who served as a videographer for the plenary sessions. Recording plenaries was only an experiment this year, but one that I hope leads to the wider dissemination of our presentations on the web in years to come.

2. I was relieved and pleased that so many of our members came to Atlanta, in this first convention "after" COVID, for a convention that was amazingly almost "back to normal." With the assistance of Dorie Goehring, I was able to estimate the robust presence of underrepresented groups on the program in terms of plenary speakers, in leadership positions, and among presenters.

3. This was a wonderfully diverse convention in terms of content too, with so many of us in so many ways rising to the occasion and seriously taking up the convention theme, "Thinking Catholic Interreligiously." I am grateful to all who participated in the topic, selected, and invited sessions, and especially to our plenary speakers and respondents for their superb and stimulating presentations. The richness and diversity of the ways in which we approached the theme confirms for me that the interreligious realities of today's world can and must be a constructive dimension of all Catholic theology in the decades to come.

4. I was particularly pleased with the Friday evening session, "At the Intersection of Race and Our Many Religions," with eloquent and heartfelt presentations by Victoria Raggs, Founder and Director, Atlanta Jews of Color Council, Imam Plemon El-Amin, Imam Emeritus, Atlanta Masjid of Al-Islam, and Balabhadra Bhattacarya Dasa, President of Vedic Friends Association. The panel benefited immensely as well from Susan Abraham's role as moderator, and Simon Mary Aihiokhai as respondent.

5. This year we witnessed the value of fall and spring Zoomed conversations—on anti-racism in the undergraduate classroom (December) and on *Fratelli Tutti* (April). Worthy in themselves, these online discussions also encourage us to plan on more such events as a regular part of the Society's life in the years to come.

The use of Zoom and other online technologies also give us exciting new venues for deeper and sustained communication with the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States (ACTHUS), the International Network of Societies for Catholic Theology (INSeCT), World Forum on Theology and Liberation (WFTL), and potentially other international organizations as well.

6. I confirm too the continuity in planning mentioned by our President in her report, particularly with regard to our Fossil Fuels Divestment commitment, the work of the Sexual Abuse Crisis in the Catholic Church initiative, and Society's Commitments on Racial Injustice.

7. The CTSA convenes and does its work only in the shifting landscape of theology and higher education, affected by and attentive to shifting demographics, urgent economic factors, and the changing needs of a diversifying church in North America and across the globe. Where will we be in ten years as an organization? Or by the 100th anniversary of the Society in 2045? I therefore see as a necessary priority for my year as president (2022-23) that we engage seriously in short term self-assessment, by this year's mandatory five-year convention structure review, and by longer term planning, e.g., by the "Centennial Planning Committee" which will gradually form and take up its tasks this year. I welcome suggestions on both, and anticipate "town hall" sessions on Zoom during the year to further conversations on every aspect of our near-term and longer range future as a Society.

8. Overlapping with President's Report: We need to make certain there is continuity and follow-up regarding the following:
    a. The Fossil Fuel Divestment Committee's work, in light of our conversations at this Board meeting and report to the membership at the Business meeting;
    b. The work of the Sexual Abuse Crisis in the Catholic Church initiative;
    c. Advancing the Board & Society's Commitments on Racial Injustice;
    d. The practice of fall and spring Zoomed conversations, on anti-racism in the undergraduate classroom (December) and on *Fratelli Tutti* (April); these during-the-year discussions seem clearly to be a good practice which we should make a regular part of the Society's life in the future;
    e. Reinvigorating the CTSA's relationship with North American bishops, in Canada and the United States,
        i. possibly by way of more targeted, select conversations with bishops who seem open to conversations;
    f. The establishment, missioning, and forward-movement of the Centennial Planning Committee, to look forward at the large issues facing theological and academic organizations such as ours in the next twenty-five years; and
    g. Monitoring ongoing initiatives to ensure continuity from the presidency of Christine Firer Hinze to that of Francis X. Clooney, S.J.

Report of the Vice-President

The following is the text of the report read by Dr. Kristin Heyer.

I am most grateful to Mary Jane Ponyik and my Presidential Line and Board colleagues for their ongoing collaboration and assistance. Thanks, as well, to the leadership of CUERG for our meetings this year.

I wish to highlight the successful mentorship event held this morning, where senior members of the Society met with new members. As in recent years, the primary purpose of the event was to welcome the new members to the CTSA, with this year's theme as transitioning into careers in theology. I am grateful to all involved for their participation in the event! I add my thanks to everyone who contributed to today's Memorial Service honoring our departed members.

Looking to my work during the year ahead as President-Elect, I am happy to note that initial plans for the 2023 convention in Milwaukee are beginning to come together, with a concise yet generative convention theme: "Freedom." I am pleased to introduce Emma McDonald, the new program organization assistant. Emma is a current doctoral candidate at Boston College and just presented her research last session in the Fieldwork in Theology interest group. I wish to thank Kate Ward (Marquette) and Shawnee Daniels Sykes (Mt. Mary University) and David Stosur (Cardinal Stricht University) for serving on the Local Arrangements Committee. Thanks to our outgoing Liturgical Coordinator, Tony (Antonio) Alonso, who has agreed to help onboard Layla Karst, who will succeed him next year.

I am grateful to the invited plenary speakers and respondents for next year, as well: Andrew Prevot (Boston College) who will address the freedom of God and human freedom; Darlene Weaver (Duquesne University) who will address the relationship of freedom to moral agency, with respondent Melissa Pagán (Mount Saint Mary's University); and finally, Leo Guardado (Fordham University), Stan Chu Ilo (DePaul University) and Mary Mee-Yin Yuen (Holy Spirit Seminary College of Theology and Philosophy, Hong Kong); their panel will address threats to freedom along with modes of resistance and agency in different international contexts. I look forward to working with you all in bringing the convention's theme to life in topic, selected, and invited sessions. If you are an incoming convener of a consultation, interest group, or topic session, please remember to join our breakfast meeting on Sunday.

I hope that the theme narrative you received as you entered will help stimulate your reflection about the many ways our theological subdisciplines can help illuminate the gift and challenge of freedom. We have witnessed tensions between individual liberty and the common good resurge during the pandemic, yet Catholic theology has long articulated a more robust understanding of freedom than mere license. I have sketched potential applications of that understanding, beginning with this year's interreligious theme and expanding out to the various subdisciplines represented at our annual conventions and beyond. I look forward to seeing the creative directions you all take the theme in response to our Call for Proposals. I am also investigating the possibility of a local tour or two related to the theme, as well. I welcome ideas from all of you for the 2023 convention in Milwaukee.

One resolution was submitted to the Resolutions Committee this year, and in my *ex officio* role as chair of the committee, I wish to thank the members of the committee, Marcus Mescher and Mary Kate Holman, Bill Loewe, our parliamentarian, and the resolution's author, P.J. Johnston.

The following is the statement of the resolution that the CTSA members in attendance at the Business Meeting on June 10, 2022 approved as a position of the CTSA:

> The Catholic Theological Society of America stands in solidarity with members of the LGBTQIA+ community. We affirm their dignity and rights as persons made in the image of God and stand committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of our LGBTQIA+ colleagues, both in society at large as well as at our annual meetings. As the CTSA convenes in Atlanta for its 2022 annual meeting, its members deplore the unprecedented wave of attacks on the community across the nation. Legislative restrictions or attacks are frequently combined with dehumanizing and abusive rhetoric, which have predictably led to a surge in hate crimes and murders against the transgender community and others dehumanized by these policies and rhetoric. As Catholics it is our responsibility to denounce this systematic marginalization and disenfranchisement of transgender persons and any other vulnerable communities subjected to a comprehensive assault on their basic dignity and rights of citizenship. We call upon the USCCB along with local and state legislators to reconsider any policy positions that may have contributed to the current explosion of anti-LGBTQIA+ hate. We implore church leaders to consider how these policies alienate LGBTQIA+ persons, their families, and young Catholics from their parishes and from the Church, frequently discrediting Christianity itself. We commit in the words of Galatians 3:28 to that koinonia in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for (we) all are one in Christ Jesus.

A motion to approve was made. The results of the vote were 126 in favor, 6 opposed, and 1 abstention.

Report of the Secretary

CTSA Secretary, Hosffman Ospino, began by thanking the membership for their trust in renewing his service as an officer of the Board. He highlighted a strong number of membership application this previous year: a total of ninety-nine, of which ninety-five were moved forward for consideration of the membership at the Business Meeting. He invited all members to continue to encourage colleagues, doctoral students, and particularly members from underrepresented communities to consider membership in the Society. He expressed his gratitude to the members of the Admissions Committee, Dr. Darren J. Dias, Dr. Rachel Bundang, and Dr. Steven Battin for their generous service.

Dr. Ospino offered a word of gratitude to the CTSA Executive Director, Mrs. Mary Jane Ponyik for her outstanding service to the Society and its members. Dr. Ospino served as a Board of Directors liaison to CUERG along with Vice-President Kristin Heyer. The conversations have been fruitful and we look forward to continued collaboration.

During this time, a couple of members of the CTSA sent materials associated with the Society to the archives at Catholic University of America. If you happen to have

served the CTSA in any capacity and have materials in your possession, please contact me or send them directly to the Archives at CUA appropriately labelled.

Dr. Ospino plans on increasing efforts to connect with doctoral students in between-conventions. More information about these steps will be announced later during the year.

Report of the Treasurer

The Report of the Treasurer, Rev. Patrick Flanagan, C.M., was included in the documents provided to the members attending the Business Meeting. This report is also included in the *Proceedings*. Rev. Flanagan completed his first year of service as Treasurer and he expressed his gratitude to his predecessor, Dr. John Dadosky for his support during the transition. He also thanks Mrs. Mary Jane Ponyik and Rev. Dan Daily, S.J. for assisting him with his responsibilities. He highlighted the work of the Task Force on Economic Context, Business Model and Financial Plan for helping the Society to understand important realities about divestments and re-investments.

Rev. Flanagan expressed that we are in challenging economic times in this country and the world. Many Catholic organizations, including our institutions of higher education, are facing difficulties. Many are bracing for a much-announced decline in enrollment by 2025 (a loss of about 800,000 new incoming students), affecting the Northeast in particular. There are global realities that have made the economy unstable. While the CTSA finances have enjoyed certain stability, currently our investments are down 9 percent. We have some funds that will help the Society on rainy days and to support initiatives at the service of the membership, yet those funds may run out quickly. We need more creativity. Rev. Flanagan will continue to monitor investments, explore ways to reinvest beyond Fossil Fuels, be more precise in the development of the budget, and seek out grants and donations to support the work of the Society. He invited members to continue to be generous with their donations and to encourage their institutions to support the CTSA.

Report of the Executive Director

The following is the text of the report read by Mrs. Mary Jane Ponyik.

Welcome back everyone! This year's convention attendance is 349 with 75 percent attending the John Courtney Murray Banquet. There are nineteen publishing houses represented at this year's convention, and 9 program ads were purchased. This year, sixty-three attendees participated in the NativeEnergy, an expert provider of carbon offsets initiative. The project Madya Pradesh [India] Green Bricks for Urban Construction is to be the recipient of the collected funds.

Callie Tabor and Susan Bigelow Reynolds served as this year's Local Arrangements Committee. They have done a terrific job in assisting Christine, Frank and me with the preparation of the convention. In addition, I would like to thank the student volunteers from Boston College, Emory University, Oblate School of Theology, John Carroll University, and the University of Dayton, who make up this year's registration team.

Future Conventions

The CTSA will travel to Milwaukee next year. The room rate will be $155 and the meeting dates are June 8-11. Your room reservation at the convention hotel impacts the current and future CTSA conventions. For every fifty rooms booked, the CTSA receives a credit. In addition, your room booking assists the CTSA in receiving responses and competitive room rates from our request for proposals from hotels for future conventions. The CTSA uses approximately fifteen meeting rooms at its annual convention, and hotels consider the number of sleep room bookings verses the square footage of required meeting space ratio when determining whether or not to submit a proposal to the CTSA.

The CTSA has taken measurers to sustain the attendance at the annual meetings. The CTSA contracts with hotels in second tier cities as we meet during peak travel time in the summer. Our room rate and registration rate is competitive. In addition, we continue to award twenty convention scholarships each year to offer financial assistance to CTSA members. The submission deadline date to submit a scholarship application is October 1.

CTSA Newsfeed

Have you posted on the CTSA Newsfeed yet? If not, I encourage you to do so. Take a moment to post an event you are hosting at your university, a comment on current events as it relates to theology, or an item that might be of interest to your colleagues. Directions on how to post are posted on the Newsfeed website page. I am always a great resource too if you need assistance in figuring out how to post.

Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram #CTSA2022

The CTSA continues to hold a strong presence on Twitter with 1,600 followers. We continue to have a presence on Instagram at our convention—follow #CTSA2022. New in social media is the CTSA now holds a presence on LinkedIn. Whatever your preferred social medium, be sure to follow us!

Housekeeping Matters

An electronic convention evaluation request will be sent to the email address you provided when you registered for the convention. If you could please complete and submit the evaluation within the next two weeks, it would be very much appreciated. Your comments are valuable to the president-elect in the planning of the next year's convention.

Those who are attending the John Courtney Murray banquet, seats have been pre-assigned in the banquet hall. The purpose for doing this is to help prevent the congestion at the doorways.

Thank you for your continued support for my work as the executive director of your Society. Covid has brought it challenges to the CTSA in terms of gathering, but I am proud to say that the Society continues to engage online and in person. It is my pleasure to serve. And I remind you to never hesitate to reach out to me.

Report of CUERG

Dr. Stephanie Wong presented the Report from CUERG.

Leadership. The Committee for Underrepresented Ethnic and Racial Minority Groups thanks the outgoing convener Melissa Pagán for her leadership. The leadership

team going forward will consist of Joseph Flipper (University of Dayton), Stephanie Wong (Villanova University), and Leo Guardado (Fordham University).

Communication. CUERG appreciates ongoing meetings with the liaisons of the Board. Especially as the Society returns to in-person conventions but continues to utilize Zoom meetings, the CUERG leadership aims to increase communications throughout the year with the wider CUERG membership.

Luncheon. As in past in-person conventions, we will have the pre-registered luncheon tomorrow (Saturday) at 1:00 p.m., an opportunity for members of under-represented backgrounds and for those interested in matters of representation to join to get to know each other.

Report of the INSeCT Delegate

Dr. Ramón Luzárraga, CTSA representative to INSeCT provided the following report.

The process by which INSeCT has revamped its structures to become an international networking center for Catholic theological societies to communicate and collaborate with each other is complete. The website has been revamped, containing news from member organizations. This news consists of meetings, publications, job opportunities, and other resources. The website address is: https://www.insecttheology.org/.

INSeCT hired an executive secretary, Maddison Reddie-Clifford, to manage the website, and the daily activity of the organization.

The transition of INSeCT from being a registered charity in Europe to a 501c registered organization in the United States is still in process. The reason for this is my responsibility. I had to move from Arizona to Washington and settle into a new home and position.

In terms of the fee, *mea culpa*. I will be placing the request for funding for the next coming year. Otherwise, it has been an honor to be you representative. Thank you.

Report of the Delegates to the World Forum on Theologies and Liberation (WFTL)

Dr. Jaisy Joseph and Dr. Rufus Burnett, Jr., CTSA representatives to the WFTL provided the following report.

It is with great excitement that we stand before you in the planetary spirit of solidarity to give this report on World Forum on Theology and Liberation.

The World Forum on Theology and Liberation (WFTL), "has as its objective and mission to be a space of convergence, encounter and exchange, with theologies and theologians around the world who commit themselves to the principle of liberation in their personal, regional and international contexts." It was first organized in January 2003, during the third edition of the World Social Forum (WSF) in Porto Alegre, Brasil. In a meeting between theologians, the idea arose of carrying out an activity on Liberation Theology in the programming of the World Social Forum.

Since our last report submitted on May 27, 2021, several events have taken place. First, on June 1, 2021, the International Committee elected new members to serve on the Methodological and Executive Committees. Members of the Executive Committee include, Kochurani Abraham Karippaparampil (Kerala, India, Asia), Wairimu Beatrice Churu (Nairobi, Kenya, Africa), the Executive Secretary, Denise Couture (Montréal,

Canada, North America), Jesus Alejandro Ortiz Cotte (Puebla, Mexico, Latin America), and the Executive Coordinator, Jean-François Roussel (Montréal, Canada, North America). Members of the Methodological committee include, Geraldina Cespedez (Landívar, Guatemala) Ceaser Kuzma (Rio de Janeiro, Brasil) Pilomena Mwaura (Nairobi, Kenya, Jesus Alejandro Ortiz Cotte (Puebla, Mexico). On September 9, 2021, Rufus Burnett, Jr. (Fordham University), who is one of the CTSA liaisons to the WFTL, joined the Methodological Committee. On November 2021, the WFTL released a new collection of essays entitled, *The World Will Never Be the Same: Liberation Theologies in Times of Pandemic*. These essays emerge from the World Forum on Theology and Liberation (WFTL) 2020/2021. Beginning on December 10, 2021, members of the WFTL met to plan the eleventh gathering of the WFTL, which was held in two parts.

The first part was originally planned to be held in a hybrid format along with the World Social Forum (WSF) in Puebla, Mexico on May 1-6, 2022. Due to local challenges however, the panel format was converted to fully online and the Executive committee nominated Jesus Alejandro Ortiz Cotte to represent the WFTL in person at the WSF in Mexico, City. The general theme of the WSF is "Another World Emerges from the Coronavirus Pandemic." The second part met online, Monday through Thursday of this week. The theme of part two of the eleventh gathering of WFTL is "Action and Promise: Struggling Against Violence, Building Justice and Rethinking Rationality in the Time of Climate Change," which covered major topics such as the futures of the WFTL and the World Social Forum, Eco-justice and Climate Change, Liberating Practices of Resistance, and Depatriarchalizing and Decolonizing Theology. All activities and sessions included simultaneous translation between four languages: Spanish, English, Portuguese, and French. Decolonial and Liberationist approaches to gender violence, patriarchy, and the marginalization of the faith perspectives of women and LGBTQIA+ communities figured most prominently in the forum. Presentations on grassroots projects engaged the embodied realities of migration, disappearances, and indigenous spiritualties. These presentations sparked generative discussions on how the faith experiences of the vulnerable inspire hope alternative imaginings of justice, solidarity, peace, freedom and belonging. Self-critical discussions emerged on the promise of continuing to meet in large format international forums. In light of the multifaceted narratives of struggle, members collectively imagined new possibilities of interaction (via Zoom and other platforms) that take into account local experiences with pandemics, climate change, and polarized political realities.

Collectively the panels organized for this year's WFTL conference offer promise in that they frame the ways in which a relationship with the WFTL can enrich the CTSA's mission to be attentive to "contemporary problems faced by the church and world." Especially during the two-year synodal process inaugurated by Pope Francis from 2021-2023, the necessity of listening to the cries of the poor and the cries of the earth become apparent through venues like WFTL, which widen the horizons of CTSA's capacity to be enriched by voices beyond the US/Western framework. Within the panels, there was a rich attentiveness to indigenous knowledges, and critical assessments of the legacies of Eurocentrism, colonialism, gender oppressions, and hegemonic racialization. While the CTSA regularly dedicates sessions and interest groups to similar topics, there is an increased possibility for closer engagement with

the life-worlds and life-ways of the planet. As Peter Phan has indicated, such an engagement can aid how catholicity is understood interculturally as well as interreligiously. We are confident that the relationship between the CTSA and the WFTL can give greater theological significance to the hope of another possible world.

Presentation of the LaCugna Award

Dr. Neomi DeAnda read the citation for the Catherine Mowry LaCugna Award. She first thanked the other members of the committee, namely Chris Pramuck and Judith Gruber, for their work in reading the submissions and selecting this year's winner. She also thanked all who submitted essays.

The 2022 Catherine Mowry LaCugna Award is presented to Craig A. Ford Jr., Ph.D.

Craig A. Ford, Jr.'s essays, "Our New Galileo Affair," ascertains urgent questions around official Catholic teaching regarding gender and sexuality. Built around a conversation of science and religion, this essay gives a careful and thorough examination of all sides of the questions and their development through the years. The position of a new Galileo moment presents a sound, compelling and creative argument. The essay articulates four parallels around LGBTQ+ issues in the Catholic Church. It also outlines a sophisticated critique of "gender ideology" as a catchall phrase to describe the philosophical background to any/all positions on gender and sexuality which oppose magisterial teaching. Ford's essay powerfully summarizes what the author names as the current "ecclesial deformity" which blocks the movement of the Holy Spirit within the People of God toward truth. This ecclesial deformity arises from two dominating practices: that of subjecting LGBTQ+ persons who inhabit Catholic institutions to unwarranted and heightened monitoring of their lives; and seeking to institute a magisterial authoritarianism in the vein of a narrow interpretation of the moral theology of John Paul II. "Our New Galileo Affair'" finely outlines constructive, practical, and ethical theological ways forward to the urgent removal of this ecclesial deformity as a remedy before our churches become irrelevant around issues of gender and sexuality.

Congratulations, Dr. Ford!

Action to Receive the Reports

All reports were received by acclamation.

New Business

No new business was introduced.

Adjournment

There being no new business, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m. EST.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

HOSFFMAN OSPINO
CTSA Secretary
Boston College
Boston, Massachusetts

Catholic Theological Society of America
COMPARATIVE FINANCIAL REPORT
Fiscal Years Ending December 31, 2020/2021

PATRICK FLANAGAN, C.M.
Saint John's University
Jamaica, New York
CTSA Treasurer

Revenue

Category	**2021**	**2020**
Dues	$ 89,105.00	$ 101,253.00
Proceedings	40.00	40.00
Convention: Registration & Banquet	32,251.11	19,959.00
Sales of Labels & Misc.	600.00	800.00
Contributions	4,829.10	4,660.00
Other	16,147.46	-
Total Revenues	**$ 149,972.67**	**$ 126,712.00**

Expenses

Category	**2021**	**2020**
Convention	$ 15,685.31	$ 6,715.74
Proceedings	5,061.92	2,043.80
Administration	115,806.01	107,752.99
Fall Board Meeting	1,946.03	558.49
Grant: INSECT	-	1,650.00
Total Expenses	**$ 138,499.27**	**$ 118,721.02**

Analysis

Category	**2021**	**2020**
Total Expenditures	$ 138,499.27	$ 118,721.02
Net Operating Revenue (deficit)	4,473.40	7,990.98
Revenues on Investments (loss)	80,724.53	80,865.81
Net Revenue (loss)	**$ 85,197.93**	**$ 88,856.79**

COMPARATIVE BALANCE SHEET
Assets as of December 31, 2021/2020

Category	**2021**	**2020**
Checking	$ 26,124.89	$ 16,729.77
Investment	822,625.79	741,901.26
University Agency Account (Deficit)	(5.883.61)	(961.89)
Total Assets	**$ 842,867.07**	**$ 757,669.14**

Liabilities and Fund Balances

Category	**2021**	**2020**
CTSA Fund Balance	$ 757,669.14	$ 668.812.35
Net Surplus	85,197.93	88,856.79
Total Liabilities & Fund Balances	**$ 842,867.07**	**$ 757,669.14**

APPENDIX I: ADDENDUM TO THE CTSA REGISTRY

NEW ACTIVE MEMBERS

Arel, Stephanie. Affect Theory, Shame and Christian Formation, 2015, Ph.D. – Practical Theology, Boston University.

Avila, Cesar. La educación religiosa Marianista y su influencia en el desarrollo social de Puerto Rico, 2012, Ph.D. – Theology, Universidad Interamericana (Puerto Rico).

Battin, Steven. Intercommunal Ecclesiology: Re-envisioning the Church as God's Response to Intergroup Disunity, 2014, Ph.D. – Systematic Theology, University of Notre Dame.

Belfield, Andrew. Foundations of Scholastic Christology in the Summa Halensis, 2021, Ph.D. – Historical Theology, Boston College.

Beltramini, Enrico. Passage of India. Abhishiktananda and the Retrieval of the Supernatural in Roman Catholicism, 2018, Ph.D. – Theology of Religions, Vidyajyoti College of Theology (India).

Borro Barbosa, Cristiano Guilherme. Speaking Rightly about Christian Hope and the Resurrection of the Body, 2019, S.T.D. – Systematic Theology, Boston College.

Bravo, Milton. Una Comunidad Católica: Assessment of U.S. Hispanic Popular Catholicism among College Students, 2021, Ph.D. – Education, Religion and Religious Education, Fordham University.

Brigham, Erin. Sustaining the Hope for Unity: Ecumenical Dialogue in a Post-Modern World, 2010, Ph.D. – Systematic & Philosophical Theology, Graduate Theological Union.

Budiash, David Rohrer. Order and Wisdom in the Theology of Bernard Lonergan, 2020, Ph.D. – Systematic Theology, Catholic University of America.

Butigan, Ken. Pilgrimage Through a Burning World: Nonviolence in Action at the Nevada Test Site (Published as: "Pilgrimage Through a Burning World: Spiritual Practice and Nonviolent Protest at the Nevada Test Site"), 2000, Ph.D. – Theology and Religious Studies, Graduate Theological Union.

Charry, Ellen. Franz Rosenzweig on the Freedom of God, 1985, Ph.D. – Theology, Temple University.

Chase, Nathan. Rethinking Anaphoral Development in Light of the Barcelona Papyrus (accepted for publication as "The Anaphoral Tradition in the 'Barcelona Papyrus,'" 2020, Ph.D. – Liturgical Studies, University of Notre Dame.

DeBiasio, Rev. Giadio. O felix culpa. La teologia del peccato originale in Anselmo d'Aosta e Tommaso d'Aquino, 2019, S.T.D. – Systematic Theology, Pontifical Gregorian University.

DeSpain, Benjamin. Hope for the Doctrine of the Divine Ideas: A Study on the Habit of Thinking Theologically in the Summa Theologiae of Thomas Aquinas, 2016, Ph.D. – Systematic & Historical Theology, Durham University.

Dy-Liacco, Veronica Chiari A. The Spiritual and Ethical Dimensions of the Eucharistic Devotion in the Roman Catholic Church in the light of Levinas's Phenomenology of Substitution, 2021, Ph.D. – Theology, University of Santo Tomas (Philippines).

Elliott, David. Rethinking Happiness: The Role of Hope in Virtue Ethics, 2014, Ph.D. – Moral Theology, University of Notre Dame.

Garrett, Stephen. God's Beauty in the Act of Christ's Redemptive-Creative Suffering: Resurrecting the Imagination, 2009, Ph.D. – Theological Studies, Trinity International University (Deerfield, IL).

Hanson, Richard. Self Identity in Comparative Theology: The Functional Importance of Charles Taylor's Concept of the Self for a Theology of Religions, 2008, Ph.D. – Comparative Theology, Marquette University.

Heidgerken, Benjamin. The Christ and the Tempter: Christ's Temptation by the Devil in the Thought of St. Maximus the Confessor and St. Thomas Aquinas, 2015, Ph.D. – Historical Theology, University of Dayton.

Hornbeck, II, J. Patrick. The Development of Heresy, 2007, D.Phil. in Theology/Ecclesiastical History, Oxford University.

Jackson-Meyer, Katherine. Tragic Dilemmas and Virtue: A Christian Feminist View, 2018, Ph.D. – Theological Ethics, Boston College.

La Couter, Travis. A Constructive Theology of Prayer, Drawing on the Work of Hans Urs von Balthasar, 2020, Ph.D. – Systematic Theology, University of Oxford.

Land-Closson, Linda. Strings of Relationship and Community: A Dialogue Between the Early Years of Bede Griffiths and the Theories of Jean Baker Miller, 2008, Ph.D. – Religious & Theological Studies. Iliff School of Theology & University of Denver.

Lantigua, David. Idolatry, War, and the Rights of Infidels the Christian Legal Theory of Religious Toleration in the New World, 2012, Ph.D. – Moral Theology, University of Notre Dame.

Lee, Erica Siu-Mui. Exploring the Contributions of Bernard Lonergan and Peter Phan to a Christian Trinitarian Approach to Religious Pluralism, 2021, Ph.D. – Theological Studies, Regis College, Toronto School of Theology, University of Toronto.

Long, David P. John Henry Newman, Doctrinal Development, and the Canonical Status of the Theologian in the Church, 2022, S.T.D. – Canon Law, Catholic University of America.

Martin, Sean. Scott Hahn and the Rise of Catholic Fundamentalism , 2020, Ph.D. – Theology, University of Dayton.

Massena, Andrew. Torah for Its Own Sake: The Decalogue in Rabbinic and Patristic Exegesis, 2020, Ph.D. – Comparative Theology, Boston College.

Maximiano, Jose Mario. The Signs of the Times in the Methodology of the Social Doctrine of the Church: An Epistemological Approach, 1991, S.T.D. – Moral Theology, Universidad of Navarra.

Metz, Jon. Called by Their Gifts: A phenomenological Study on the Parish Directors of the Milwaukee Archdiocese, 2018, Ph.D. – Leadership, Learning & Service, Cardinal Stritch University.

Montecel, Xavier. Communion in Hope: Liturgy and Ethics in the Key of Virtue, 2002, Ph.D. – Theological Ethics, Boston College.

Mueller, Jens. "Where Two or Three Are Gathered": The Use of Symbols in Twentieth-Century Catholic Social Movements, 2021, Ph.D. – Theology, University of Dayton.

O'Halloran, S.J., Nathan. Soteriology in a Future Register: Developing the Doctrine of Purgatory as an Event of Post-Mortem Healing and Transformation, 2020, Ph.D. – Theology, University of Notre Dame.

Petillo, Matthew. The Experience of Grace in the Theologies of Karl Rahner and Bernard Lonergan, 2009, Ph.D. – Systematic Theology, Boston College.

Price, Constance. Pneumatology in the International Roman Catholic–Pentecostal Dialogue, 2008, Ph.D. – Systematic Theology, University of St. Michael's College (Toronto).

Puscas, Victor. Andragogy and the Most Effective Means of Forming Deacons in the Roman Catholic Church in the United States of America, 2019, D.Min. – Ministry, Catholic Theological Union.

Quimba, Roawie. Rediscovering Mercy as Prophetic Witness of Sensus Fidei: A Theological Exposition based on the Model Method of Avery Dulles, 2019, Ph.D. – Systematic Theology, Ateneo de Davao University (Philippines).

Raby, Elyse. Toward An Intercorporeal Body of Christ: A Study in Ecclesial Body Images, 2021, Ph.D. – Systematic Theology, Boston College.

Ream, Todd. United the "I" Stands, Divided the "I" Falls: Exploring Heidegger's Theory of Ontology with Students at Selected Southern Baptist Universities, 2001, Ph.D. – Higher Education, Pennsylvania State University.

Robinson, James. Merton and Ruether: Toward a Contemplative-Prophetic Ecotheological Anthropology, 2020, Ph.D. – Systematic Theology, Fordham University.

Romero, Miguel. St. Thomas Aquinas on Disability & Profound Cognitive Impairment, 2012, Th.D. – Theology, Duke University.

Rugani, Marc. Development as Growth in Virtue: Assessing Recent Development Ethics through Thomistic Virtue Theory, 2021, Ph.D. – Moral Ethics, Catholic University of America.

Schmalz, Mathew. A Space for Redemption: Catholic Tactics in Hindu North India, 1998, Ph.D. – Historical Religions, University of Chicago.

Sheveland, John. Creatures in Correspondence: The Unity of Piety and Responsibility in Karl Rahner, Karl Barth, and Vedanta Desika, 2006, Ph.D. – Systematic & Comparative Theology, Boston College.

Symmonds, Nicole. Trafficking in God: Exploring the Intersection of Race and Religion in Faith-Based Commercial Sex Trade Interventions, 2021, Ph.D. – Ethics & Society Emory University.

Szukalski, Rev. John A. Tormented in Hades: A Socio-Narratological Approach to the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), 2012, Ph.D. – Sacred Scripture, Catholic University of America.

Tabor, Callie. Seeing Beauty: A Lyrical Theology, 2021, Ph.D. Theological Studies, Emory University.

Timoney, Susan. The Feminine Dimension of Discipleship, 1999, S.T.D. – Christian Spirituality, University of St. Thomas Aquinas, Rome.

Titizano, Cecilia. The Divine Feminine in the Andes: A Comparative Triadic Theology from an Indigenous Feminist Perspective, 2020, Ph.D. – Systematic & Philosophical Theology, Graduate Theological Union.

Trice, Michael. Encountering Cruelty: A Fracture in the Human Heart, 2006, Ph.D. – Constructive Theology, Loyola University Chicago.

van Gaal, Dorris. Migrant Spirituality: Correlating the Narratives of African Migrants to the USA and the Dark Night of John of the Cross, 2021 Ph.D. – Theology, Radboud University Nijmegen.

VanZandt Collins, Michael. Comparative Theology, Virtue Ethics, Islamic Political Theology, Climate Ethics, 2022, Ph.D. Comparative Theology, Boston College.

Wadsworth, Msgr. Andrew. The Influence of John Chrysostom in the Writings of John Henry Newman, 2021, Ph.D. – Theology, University of South Africa.

Walker , Malik. Saving Space: A Spatial Recasting of the Divine/Human Encounter and Cooperation for an Urban Theology, 2019, Ph.D. – Systematic Theology, Fordham University.

Wheatley, Michelle. Mission Leadership in Jesuit Higher Education: Practical Strategies for Personal and Institutional Transformation, 2019, D. Min. – Ministry, San Francisco Theological Seminary.

Wood, Alice. Chains of Virtue: Seventeenth-century Saints in Spanish Colonial Lima, 1997, Ph.D. – Religious Studies, Rice University, Houston, TX.

Yu Puen, Stephanie Ann. Design Thinking and Catholic Social Thought: Resources for Addressing Structures of Sin and Grace in Business Ethics, 2021, Ph.D. – Theology / Ethics, Fordham University.

Zas Friz, Rossano. The Symbolic Theology of Saint Bonaventure, 1996, S.T.D. – Spirituality, Gregorian Pontifical University.

HOSFFMAN OSPINO
CTSA Secretary
Boston College
Boston, Massachusetts

APPENDIX II: ADDENDUM TO THE CTSA REGISTRY

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Akhere Ehidiamhen, Mary Lilian. The Relevance of Nonviolent Communication for Peacebuilding: An Assessment of the Catholic Social Teaching on Peace and the Work of Marshall Rosenberg and Its Implications for Peace in Nigeria, Exp. 2023, Ph.D. – Theology / Ethics, KU Leuven.

Baldelomar, Cesar. Fragments Reconsidered: Theological Education in Light of Necropolitics and Ontological Terror, Exp. 2023, Ph.D. – Theology and Education, Boston College.

Cavender-McCoy, Kathleen. Engendering Contemplation: An Existential Metaphysics of Gender, Exp. 2024, Ph.D. – Systematic Theology, Marquette University.

Cinocca, Federico. We Believe in God, the Father Almighty: Liturgy, Ethics, Dominance, Vulnerability, 2021, S.T.D. – Theological Ethics, Boston College.

Curry, Jane. Dorothy Day and the Love of Neighbor: A Practical Theological Exploration of Her 1958 Diaries, Exp. Dec 2021, Ph.D. – Practical Theology, St. Thomas University.

Dechant, James. An Ecological Education: Theological Paths to Liberative Praxis, Exp. May 2023, Ph.D. – Systematic Theology, Fordham University.

Dehm, Zachary R. The Ecclesiology of Catalino G. Arévalo: Inculturation, Mission, and Liberation in the Philippine Context, Exp. May 2023, Ph.D. – Ecclesiology, Duquesne University.

Greening, Molly. Grafting Through Stories: Transforming the Wounds of Religion, Sexuality, and Coloniality, Exp. 2020, Ph.D. – Ethics and Theology, Loyola University Chicago.

Guerrero Estrada, Armando. Immigrant Narratives as Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies in Theological Education, Exp. 2022, Ph.D. – Practical Theology, Boston College.

Heeder, Megan. Balthasar's Aesthetics as a Response to the Contemporary Challenge of Eating Disorders, Exp. May 2024, Ph.D. – Theology, Marquette University.

Herrington, LaRyssa. The Black Madonna: A Womanist Mariology, Exp. 2025, Ph.D. – Systematic Theology, University of Notre Dame.

Hopkins, Megan. Remembering God's Word: Grammar and Logic of Practice in Eucharist and Dhikr, Exp. May 2024, Ph.D. – Comparative Theology, Boston College.

Hoy, Andrew J. Hoarding Grace: Liturgy, Grace, and Corporate Virtue and Vice, Exp. Dec. 2022, Ph.D. – Theological Ethics, Duquesne University.

Ineza, Gustave. Christian–Muslim Relations in Rwanda (1962-1994), Exp. 2023, Ph.D. – Theology, University of St. Michael's College, University of Toronto.

Karanovich, R. Zachary. Conversion in a World of Violence, Exp. May 2023, Ph.D. – Systematic Theology, Boston College.

Litoing m Nougoutna Norbert. Enshrining the Message: A Comparative Study of the (Un)Translatability of Islam and Christianity through Two West African Pilgrimage Traditions, Exp. 2022, Ph.D. – Comparative Theology, Harvard University.

Lujan, Benjamin. Christian Right Relations with Indigenous Peoples: Toward Theological and Philosophical Bases drawing on Indigenous Resurgence Thought and the Thought of Gustavo Gutiérrez and Bernard Lonergan. Exp. 2022, Ph.D. – Theology, University of St. Michael's College.

Matteson, Dannis. Creative Disobedience: Critical Political Character Ethic for White Christians, Exp. August 2022, Ph.D. – Theology / Ethics, Loyola University Chicago.

McDonald, Emma. Moral Decision-Making Regarding Infertility Treatments Among American Catholics, Exp. May 2024, Ph.D. – Theology / Ethics, Boston College.

Mileski, Rev. Greg. Loving One's Neighbor as Oneself: Pacific Mimesis in René Gerard and the Bodhisattva Path, Exp. May 2023, Ph.D. – Comparative Theology, Boston College.

Nnorom, Theodore. Islam and Christianity in Nigeria Public Square: Toward a Theology of Religious Pluralism and Liberation, Exp. Sept. 2022, Ph.D. – Theology, University of St. Michael College, Toronto.

Nwuba, Sr. Mary Kristel. Theological Interpretation of Divine Revelation to Created Realitie, Exp. 2025, Ph.D. – Theology, Duquesne University.

O'Kernick, Patrick. Moved with Compassion: Parables in Luke and the Envisioning Reade, Exp. May 2023, Ph.D. – Theology, Marquette University.

Olatunde Adeoye, Rev. James. Finding the "Holy Spirit" among the "spirits" in West Africa: A Pneumatological Appraisal, Exp. May 2024, Ph.D. – Theology, Duquesne University.

Olokunboro, Fidelis. Liberating Liberation Theology Through Maritainian Personalism and Afro-Cathonomics, Exp. 2022, Ph.D. – Theology, University of Notre Dame.

Omeike, Henry. "Rethinking Economic Solidarity in Africa in Light of Igbo Imu-Ahia Economic Ethics," Exp. May 2023, Ph.D. – Theology / Ethics, Fordham University.

Pappas, Jack Louis. Through Phenomenology to Theology: Karl Rahner, Hans Urs von Balthasar and the French Theological Turn, Exp. 2023, Ph.D. – Systematic Theology, Fordham University.

Poss, Janice. A Feminist Constructive Transreligious Dialogue between Buddha ye shes mtsho rgyal (ཡེ་ཤེས་མཚོ་རྒྱལ) and Saint Hildegard von Bingen, Exp. 2023, Ph.D. – Religion, Claremont Graduate University.

Reese, LaShaunda. A Narrative Ethics of Survival: Critical Explorations of African-American Ethical Meaning-Making in 21st Century United States, Exp. May 2023, Ph.D. – Theology / Ethics, Loyola University Chicago.

Robinson, Chanelle. Poetic Incarnations: Developing a Womanist Theological Anthropology in Canada by Exploring Diasporic Poetry, Exp. May 2024, Ph.D. – Systematic Theology, Boston College.

Stayne, John. Charismatic Gifts and Catholic Ecclesiology, Exp 2024, Ph.D. – Theology, Durham University (Centre for Catholic Studies).

Stout, Huili (Kathy). A Theology of Dialogue and Proclamation in the Life of John C. H. Wu, Exp. 2023, Ph.D. – Theology, University of Dayton.

Theocharis, Mia. The Development and Influence of Gregory Baum's Theological Thought on the Relationship between Judaism and Christianity after Vatican II in Canada, Exp. 2023 Ph.D. – Theology, University of St. Michael's College, University of Toronto.

Troutner, Timothy. The Eclipse of the Word: The Problem of Modern Apophaticism, Exp. 2023, Ph.D. – Systematic Theology, University of Notre Dame.

Vale, Matthew. Luminosity: A Christian Theological Study of Yogācāra, Exp. June 2022, Ph.D. – Systematic Theology / Comparative Theology, University of Notre Dame.

Verghese, Mathew. Liturgy in the World: Laudato Si', Ecological Conversion and the Cosmic Horizon of the Liturgy, Exp. May 2023, Ph.D. – Theology, Villanova University.

Williams, Nathan Bradford. Arvo Pärt: Afn Ecumenism in Sound, Exp. June 2023, Ph.D. – Theology, University of Toronto.

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