

# Lumen

A Catholic Studies Publication  
UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS | SUMMER 2025

A large, diverse crowd of people, identified as pilgrims, is gathered in front of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The crowd is dense, filling the foreground and middle ground, with many individuals smiling at the camera. The basilica's iconic dome and classical facade are visible in the background under a clear sky. The overall atmosphere is one of joy and communal gathering.

PILGRIMS  
OF HOPE

# Lumen

A Catholic Studies Publication  
UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS | SUMMER 2025

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Catholic Studies students

celebrate the election

of Pope Leo XIV in

St. Peter's Square.



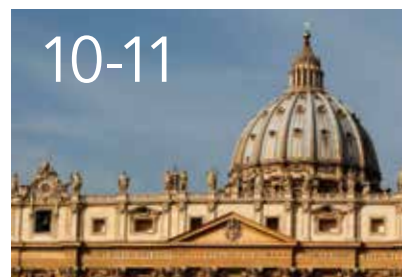
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Pope Francis declared this Jubilee Year to be a Pilgrimage of Hope, and so it has been for Catholic Studies. On our arrival in February, the city was filled with joyful and reverent pilgrims. We too were pilgrims of hope, passing through the Holy Doors of the four papal basilicas with our prayers, hopes, and certainly with joy.

In our first week, we attended the Holy Father's Wednesday audience, not knowing that it would be Pope Francis' last. We accompanied Francis with our prayers in what would be his own final pilgrimage of hope. Our students read at St. Peter's for Palm Sunday, the Easter Vigil, and Easter Sunday. They witnessed up close Francis' heroic service to the very end. He died on Easter Monday.

Our pilgrimage of hope in the Jubilee Year took on its own concrete expression as we prayed for the cardinals gathering in the conclave. We greeted Pope

Leo with prayers and cheers in St. Peter's Square when he blessed us all from the loggia of the basilica. Later that evening, we gathered on the terrace at Bernardi and, looking at the dome of St. Peter's, prayed for Pope Leo and toasted his health and papal ministry.

Our students see the very physical fabric of Rome and the impact of the Incarnation. It is real and it is holy. The vitality of a Jubilee Year, with its call to newness of life, to joy, and to hope, is a gift to all who are able to make the pilgrimage. For those of us who experienced the death of a pope and the election of the successor of St. Peter is fulfillment yet again of the promises of Christ. It is to experience the reality that is the impact of the Incarnation. A pilgrimage of hope, indeed.



*John F. Boyle*

JOHN F. BOYLE, CHAIRMAN  
DEPARTMENT OF CATHOLIC STUDIES

*Dr. John Boyle wrote this letter from Rome during the 2025 spring semester where he and 23 Catholic Studies students experienced the Jubilee Year of Hope.*

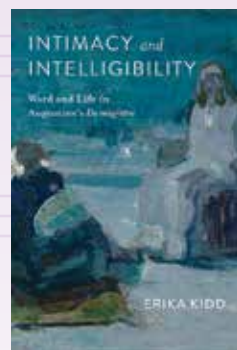


*Michael Naughton*

MICHAEL NAUGHTON, DIRECTOR  
CENTER FOR CATHOLIC STUDIES

# Did you know?

**Dr. Erika Kidd's** most recent book *Intimacy and Intelligibility* (Notre Dame Press) is available for pre-order and will be published in October. The book takes a fresh look at *The Teacher*, Augustine's overlooked and misunderstood dialogue about words, and reveals it to be a rich meditation on living the blessed life as well as a worthy memorial to Augustine's beloved son.



In 2022, Catholic Studies welcomed **Father Austin Litke '04, OP** back to campus as a visiting professor. After three short but significant years, the students,



faculty, and staff said goodbye to their professor and colleague at the end of spring semester. The Order of Preachers called him back to Rome to teach at the Angelicum beginning in the Fall.

During his tenure, Father Austin taught both undergraduate and graduate courses and helped guide our freshman Living and Learning Community and Leadership Interns program. Together with Dr. Boyle, he led the Catholic Studies Rome pilgrimage in February (see pages 8-9). He also delivered the annual Thought & Culture Lecture in April for the Catholic Studies graduate community.

"Fr. Austin is a gifted teacher who exquisitely communicates the reality of Catholic Studies at every level. He has given himself tirelessly to Catholic Studies as that very rare thing indeed, the priest/scholar," said Dr. John Boyle. "Fr. Austin's joy and intellectual vitality has been a gift to all of us in Catholic Studies. We will miss him but look forward to continuing our collaboration with him in Rome."

**Michelle Rash '16, CSMA '25**, received the Scholarly Engagement and Societal Reform award at the School of Law's annual Mission Award ceremony in April. She was recognized for her work that integrates the Catholic intellectual tradition into the study of law, professional ethics, public policy, and social justice. Michelle is the Program Manager for the Murphy Institute, a partnership between the Center for Catholic Studies and the School of Law and in collaboration with the Opus College of Business. Pictured left to right: Emily Keith, '21; Fr. Austin Litke, '04, OP; Michelle Rash; Dr. Michael Naughton; and Karen Laird.



**Monsignor Martin Schlag**, along with Giuseppe Schlitzer, edited *Economics for Ecclesiastics*, published by Libreria Editrice Vaticana, with a preface by Sr. Raffaella Petrini F.S.E. The book is meant as a guide for priests, religious, and lay Christians working in the Church to understand the economy in which we live. Msgr. Schlag, along with Marta Rocchi, edited "Subsidiarity and the Logic of Gift in Business" in *Business and Society Review: Volume 129, Issue S1* (Wiley Online Library). Included in this issue is "Putting first things first: Ordering DEI (diversity, equity, inclusion) in light of subsidiarity," co-authored by **Dr. Michael Naughton** and **Emery Koenig**, former chair of the Catholic Studies Advisory Board.

In January 2025, Msgr. Schlag attended the 129th Plenary Assembly of the Philippine Bishop's Conference in Manila on behalf of the Program of Church Management. From this work, the University of Asia and Pacific will start its own Program of Church Management for the approximately 6,000 priests in the Philippines, in cooperation with the Murphy Institute.

Catholic Studies is delighted to announce that **Dr. Annie Thompson '14** will join the faculty in the Fall as Assistant Professor. Originally from Brainerd, MN, Thompson was a Catholic Studies/English double major at St. Thomas before earning her doctorate in English from the University of Virginia. There she studied modern and contemporary poetry and poetics as well as book history and textual criticism.

Thompson's work on the poet Susan Howe won the William Riley Parker Prize for an outstanding article in *PMLA*, and she is currently working on a book entitled *On Paper: Bookish Poetry in the Digital Age*. She returns to St. Thomas after teaching at Villanova University

and at St. John's College in Santa Fe.

"We could not be happier to welcome Annie Thompson to St. Thomas Catholic Studies," says Dr. Erika Kidd. "She is a talented and creative scholar as well as a lively and engaging teacher. She has a deep love for the Catholic intellectual tradition and a strong commitment to the interdisciplinary, integrative education and formation we offer our students."

"It's truly a dream to work in a community as beautiful (and rare!) as Catholic Studies," Thompson says. "My own intellectual life was sparked in Sitzmann Hall, and I'm filled with gratitude for the providential journey 'there and back again' that I've undergone. I can't wait to continue discovering reality with Catholic Studies students!"



Dr. Thompson will teach "The Search for Happiness" and "The Catholic Vision." She is also developing a graduate course titled "Mystics, Poets, Fools."



## MSGR. JAMES SHEA PROVIDES CAMPUS PRESENTATION

**Msgr. James Shea**, president of the University of Mary (Bismarck), provided a Lenten meditation and presentation "The Church and Her Mission

in These Days" on campus in March. More than 300 people attended the event, which was co-sponsored by the Roccasecca Project, Catholic Studies, and the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. **Fr. Spencer Howe '09**, member of the Catholic Studies Advisory Board, and **President Rob Vischer** warmly welcomed Msgr. Shea. **Archbishop Bernard Hebda** concluded the evening with a blessing. Scan the code to hear the event presentations.



Photo credit: Matthew Montgomery.

**Catholic Studies Alumni!** Have you recently moved, married, or reached a significant milestone? Please send us your updates! [ctrcathstudies@stthomas.edu](mailto:ctrcathstudies@stthomas.edu)

# Pilgrims of Hope

By KATHRYN WEHR

Every person who walks through the door of Sitzmann Hall is an embodiment of the Church's jubilee year theme: Pilgrims of Hope. The Center for Catholic Studies is not an end in itself, nor a place where people come to stay, but rather it is a *way station* along the pilgrimage route. Students and visitors are equipped, nourished, and given rest. Together we consult the map and learn from other pilgrims before starting out afresh, staff in hand, for the next place of God's call.

Many of our undergraduates learn about Catholic Studies through word of mouth. **Brendan Bonin '25** (Psychology and Catholic Studies) heard about the program from his parents who encouraged him to take Dr. Boyle's THEO101 class. After that, he says, "I was hooked. I registered for CATH101 *The Pursuit of Happiness* the next semester." Brendan took this signature course with **Fr. Austin Litke, '04, OP**, and



Brendan Bonin '25

he says it helped him orient himself for his college experience and future plans by pondering "Who I am, what my purpose is, and how to live a meaningful life."

These studies show him ways to continue that formation and integration after graduation. He says, "The concepts covered in Catholic Studies are applicable every day in my work/school life and most importantly, call me to action. Being a Psychology student, I am emersed in human behavior in attempting to optimize human performance. In this way, Catholic Studies compliments my major and lays groundwork for how to optimize human performance morally and scientifically."

**Theresa Williams '25** (Catholic Studies) says she grew up around "Catholic Studies people" and when deciding about colleges, she says, "a big part of that decision was who I wanted to be, what kind of person I wanted to be, and it was clear that Catholic Studies would form me to be the woman I wanted to be." She credits **Dr. Robert Kennedy's Church and Culture: Social Dimensions of Catholicism** class with helping her think through how Christians "ought to interact with the world and society" and, as someone hoping to work and serve in the world, "how to view and engage with social issues and realities." She credits Catholic Studies with helping her view her life as fully integrated with her faith: "There is no time to be a different version of myself in non-religious classes, at work, or on the weekends."

The road ahead is already becoming clear for Theresa, as she has been accepted into a dual-degree program of a master's in theology and PhD in health care ethics through the Aquinas Institute and St. Louis University, with the end-goal of working as a bioethicist.

Master's students arrive at Catholic Studies via even more numerous pilgrim paths. In fact, that is one of the attractions of the program: to walk alongside those who are newly graduated, mid-career, or retired. The flexible options of part-time, full-time, in-person or online help make that diverse learning possible.



Theresa Williams '25

**Mary Ann Dorsher** began taking one CSMA class at a time since retiring from a career in finance that spanned from Wall Street to non-profit management to owning her own company. “Now that I’m retired,” she says, “I have time to pursue academic coursework that I’ve longed to study—philosophy, history, theology, art, and literature—through the CSMA program.” She continues, “I have the joy of learning for the sake of knowledge and personal growth, not for any particular professional goal. Even if it takes me several years to complete, a master’s in Catholic Studies is enabling me to grow wiser as I grow older, and, for that, I am most grateful.”

Mary Ann has long had a devotion to the Virgin Mary and heard about the *Mary, Mother of God* class being offered last spring: “Though I was nervous—I had not been in a classroom as a student for 40 years—I felt immediately at home with **Dr. Erika Kidd**. The readings, class discussions, and her presentations were phenomenal. That led to an equally exceptional two-week class, *Mary in Rome*, in July 2024, again with Dr. Kidd. Together, the classes have reaffirmed my dedication to the Virgin Mary, deepened my understanding of my faith, and inspired me to continue in the CSMA program as a master’s student.”

Another current student, **Sam Camut CSMA ’25**, spent over a decade as an MV-22 Osprey pilot in the Marine Corps before beginning his masters. After hearing about the program from a squadron buddy who was a Catholic Studies undergrad, he now is doing the master’s entirely online from his regenerative farm in Wisconsin. He says, “I am grateful that I can participate in Catholic Studies remotely. It allows me to support my family while also participating in life-giving

intellectual formation. I often think about what we are reading while at work and last semester I even read Augustine’s *Confessions* out in the cow pasture.”

Studying online has given Sam the flexibility to be involved in his rural parish and community too. Alongside raising cattle and sheep, he says, “My hope is to continue finding opportunities to integrate Catholic parish life with farming. I am currently working on starting a farm at a local parish school that will be integrated into its curriculum.”



Sam Camut CSMA '25 & family

**Chris Callan CSMA ’19** says that although he did his undergrad degree in finance at St. Thomas, he never really encountered Catholic Studies at the time. “Amazing,” he says, “how a young person with a lack of formation enters UST, then ignores or simply does not see any of the richness of the university. I had an inkling it was there, but did not enter in.” He feels grateful that when he did hear about the program and felt a need to bring his faith more deeply into his life, the CSMA program was there waiting.

Working as a regional vice president for wealth management consulting at Ameriprise Financial Services, he is particularly grateful for

**Dr. Mike Naughton’s** classes that integrated faith and business. He says, “Dr. Naughton has made a substantial impact on the way I see the world.” At one point he considered leaving the world of business, but Dr. Naughton’s classes and books he required for class, like Josef Pieper’s *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*, have provided a “needed compass to navigate the business world.”

Recently, Chris led a reading group on the vocation of a business leader with members from a variety of fields: financial, real estate, engineering, and political science. Dr. Naughton gave him a document—a draft



Chris Callan CSMA '19 & family

of an upcoming project—called *Good Goods, Good Work, Good Wealth*. He says, “The document has been a *vade mecum*, a handbook to center my vocation. I use it to center myself when all the competing forces of the business world come at me—it provides stability and peace. I often read it prior to giving a presentation or consulting session to get footing on solid ground and stay the course.” He plans to offer that reading group again in the future.

Every Catholic Studies student and graduate carries a variety of treasures in their pilgrim’s knapsack. Their hard work in reading and reflection leads to wide open vistas along their way when they leave Sitzmann Hall behind. Meanwhile, the faculty and staff of Catholic Studies will keep the porch light on to shine for future pilgrims who come our way.

# Pilgrims of Hope in Rome

By KAREN LAIRD

In February, twenty-four people from among the Catholic Studies Advisory Board, university leadership, donors, and friends embarked on an eight-day pilgrimage to Rome. Situated within the Jubilee Year of Hope, this was a remarkable experience of renewal, deeper communion with God, and celebration.

We saw Rome through the eyes of our Catholic Studies students: we prayed, walked, ate, learned, and experienced the impact of the Incarnation together in the heart of the Universal Church.

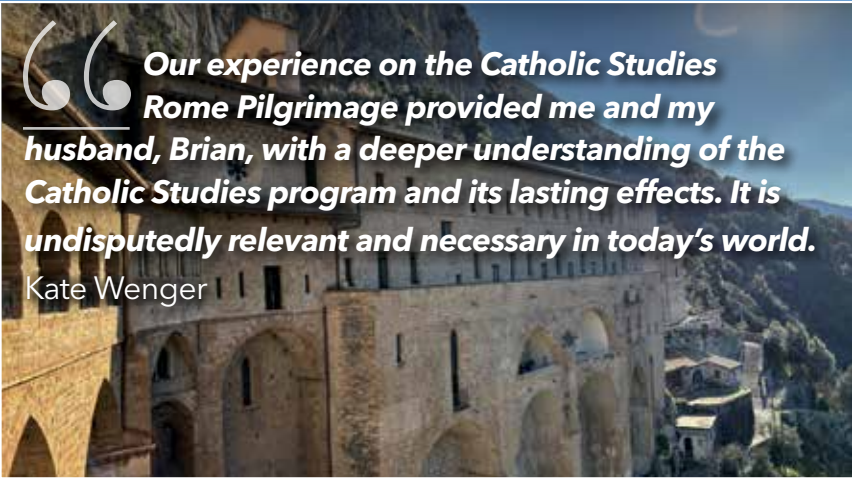
**Dr. John Boyle** provided a broad vision of the history of Rome and our faith in this ancient city. **Fr. Austin Litke, '04, OP**, shared his deep understanding of the spirituality, life, and history of the Church. Taking seriously our role as pilgrims, we trusted in God's promises and prayed throughout the journey.

We walked in our students' shoes: our pilgrimage appropriately began in the chapel of the Bernardi Campus, where our students live while in Rome. We toured the Angelicum where they take classes and visited the historic churches and museums where they experience life outside the classroom. Their teacher and world-renowned art historian Dr. Liz Lev gave us private tours of the Vatican Museum and Sistine Chapel and a walking tour for a closer look at the Catholic faith through art and architecture.

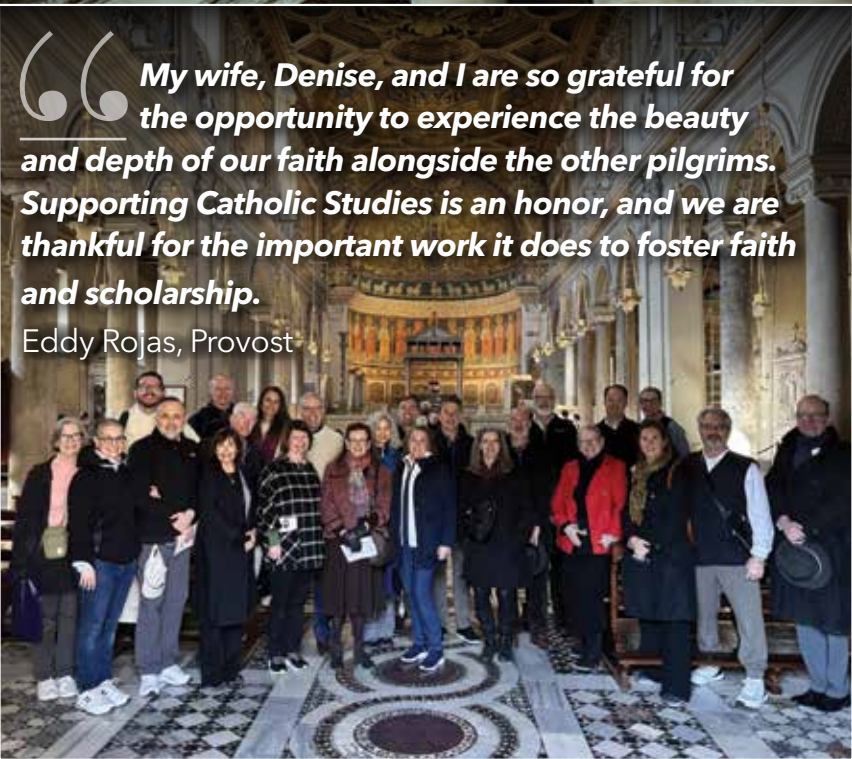
Visits to the four major basilicas—entering their respective *porta santas*—centered our pilgrimage on prayer, mercy, and redemption. We received Lenten ashes during Mass at dawn in the Church of Santa Sabina with other Americans living and studying in Rome. A walking tour of the Roman Forum and a tour of the monasteries of Subiaco

gave us the opportunity to consider this vast timeline of which we are a small part.

We saw our students thrive and grow during their Rome semester and we, fellow pilgrims, experienced some of that transformation for ourselves. We grew in faith, in friendship, and came away with a greater understanding of Catholic Studies as a program and as a way of encountering the world.



“Our experience on the Catholic Studies Rome Pilgrimage provided me and my husband, Brian, with a deeper understanding of the Catholic Studies program and its lasting effects. It is undisputedly relevant and necessary in today's world.”  
Kate Wenger



“My wife, Denise, and I are so grateful for the opportunity to experience the beauty and depth of our faith alongside the other pilgrims. Supporting Catholic Studies is an honor, and we are thankful for the important work it does to foster faith and scholarship.”  
Eddy Rojas, Provost

# What is a Jubilee?

By FR. AUSTIN LITKE '04, OP

On the road to Emmaus, Jesus famously rebuked Cleopas and the other disciple for not realizing that the Messiah had to suffer and die and rise from the dead in order to fulfill his divine mission. So as to prove this, Jesus, *beginning with Moses and all the prophets ... interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures* (Luke 24:27). That is, Jesus, the Word, demonstrated his continual presence throughout salvation history in the events and figures through which God chose to reveal himself, a revelation that culminated in the definitive revelation in the Incarnation. Thus, from the earliest days of the Church, Christians read the Old Testament as Christian Scripture: not just out of respect for God's chosen people, but because it spoke about Christ. They saw in the words of the Old Testament, and the events of salvation history they described, the deeper meanings that referred to Christ and his Church.

This dynamic of reading the Old Testament as describing the life of the Church is the foundation of our celebration of the Jubilee in the Church. In the Book of Leviticus, chapter 25, God commands that every seventh year will be a sabbath for the land, and that it is not to be planted, so that the earth can rest,

just as God rested on the seventh day from his work of Creation (see Leviticus 25:5). Thus, the Sabbath is not just a weekly occurrence for man in his imitation of God, but a cosmic reality for all of Creation, so that everything can bear the Maker's mark. But there was also to be a Sabbath of Sabbaths, the Book of Leviticus commands. That is, every seven-times-seven years—every fiftieth year—there was to be what the Bible calls a *yobel*, which comes over into English as "Jubilee." This was meant to be a sort of "sabbath of sabbaths." The rest and abundance that characterized the weekly Sabbath was extended to a whole year, but it also included more significant observances: each family was to return to its ancestral land, slaves were to be freed, debts forgiven, and exiles were to return home.

Clement of Alexandria, in the late-second and early-third century, recognized that the Jubilee in Leviticus was meant not just to refer to certain economic and political realities for the Israelites of time past, but to the mystery of Christ and his Church. The restoration of property and forgiveness of debt, the liberation of slaves and return of exiles, for St. Clement, point to the forgiveness and remission of the debt of sin that was paid for by the precious Blood of Christ. It refers to the freedom of the children of God whereby we are no longer slaves to sin and death, but free sons and

daughters of the Father. Given that the Jubilee took place every fifty years, the number fifty itself took on the spiritual significance of forgiveness and mercy. Thus, when St. Clement interprets the significance of the feast of Pentecost, which literally means "fifty," for example, he sees that feast as containing the same mysteries of the Jubilee: forgiveness and remission of sin, now brought about by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Church.

The practice of offering indulgences attached to Jubilee pilgrimage and activities, then, is not an invention of Pope Boniface VIII, who called the first Christian Jubilee in 1300. It is the Church seeing in the events and words of Scripture what Christ intended to bring about in his Church from the beginning, and which was brought to light in the glory of the Resurrection.

This article originally appeared in the January 2025 issue of *Magnificat*. Reprinted by permission.  
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# Our Holy Doors



Bernardi Campus Chapel



Faculty Office



Sitzmann Hall Classroom



Sitzmann Hall Front Entry



Albertus Magnus Chapel

During a Jubilee year, pilgrims flock to Rome to pass through the Holy Doors of the four major basilicas. Plenary indulgences can be received, but the action of crossing these thresholds symbolizes an entering into a deeper relationship with Jesus. ("I am the door." John 10:9)

In similar ways, Catholic Studies students pass through our unofficial "holy doors" every day in St. Paul and in Rome. As pilgrims on a journey, they bring the hope of Christ as they cross the thresholds of the classroom, chapel and faculty doors of Sitzmann Hall and the Bernardi Campus.



Bernardi Campus Front Door



Sitzmann Hall Common Room



## Hot Topics: Cool Talk – Religious Accommodations and Other Values

The Murphy Institute for Catholic Thought, Law, and Business hosted a "Hot Topics: Cool Talk" event in March at the St. Thomas School of Law. The program featured two leading legal scholars, Rick Garnett (University of Notre Dame) and Nelson Tebbe (Cornell University), as they discussed the benefits and limitations of religious exemptions. Garnett and Tebbe focused on three pending Supreme

way. Despite some foundational disagreements, Garnett and Tebbe engaged in collegial conversation while highlighting divergent stances. Murphy Institute Co-Director **Greg Sisk** (School of Law) affirmed in his introductory remarks, "We want to move away from the heat of the political realm, and instead, we want to model for our too often divided society a way to engage with difficult issues in a healthy manner."



Scan the QR code to hear this and other Hot Topics Cool Talk discussions.

Court cases regarding religious accommodation and their tension with other values including curriculum development, school funding, and employment benefits.

The "Hot Topics: Cool Talk" series aims to invite those with contrasting viewpoints on a controversial topic to enter dialogue in a spirited yet civil

## Beauty, Law, and the Environment

The Murphy Institute was pleased to co-sponsor the February 27 program "Beauty, Law, and the Environment" with the Claritas Initiative at the University of St. Thomas. With a shared mission of integration across fields, the Murphy Institute and Claritas Initiative hosted a panel discussion to explore beauty as it relates to the law and its practical implications, particularly regarding environmental regulations. Claritas Initiative Director **Dr. Mark McInroy** (Theology), Murphy Institute Co-Director **Msgr. Martin Schlag** (Catholic Studies), **Dr. Amy Levad** (Theology), and **Elizabeth Schiltz** (School of Law) participated in this interdisciplinary dialogue.



## SAVE the DATE



In partnership with the Church of the Assumption, the Murphy Institute looks forward to hosting theologian and author Dr. William Cavanaugh (DePaul University) to discuss themes of his recent book *The Uses of Idolatry* on October 9 in St. Paul. Additional event details are forthcoming.

# Wonder and Awe as Manifestations of Gratitude

By MARK K. SPENSER

An excerpt from “Manifestations of Gratitude: Wonder, Joy, Festivity, Hope” in *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought* 27, no. 4 (Fall 2024)

Gratitude is an experience of awe and humility at being dependent on what is outside myself for what is best in my life. It is, as G. K. Chesterton puts it, “the highest form of thought . . . happiness doubled by wonder.” It is an experience of both the goodness of a gift and the gift’s free givenness, its *not needing to be*, its favor and grace. To experience even the smallest gift is to be open to the gratuity of the whole world, to be open to being aware of how all of created reality does not exist of necessity but is the expression of free persons’ acts, insofar as it expresses the divine persons’ free acts. It is to experience how reality is good or valuable in itself.

Gifts come in a range of forms, from a small gift like a colleague bringing doughnuts for everyone in the department to a life-changing gift like my wife giving me herself and her whole life in marriage. In each case, when I gratefully receive the gift, it appears good and fulfilling for me. But gifts also reveal an attitude of love in the heart of the giver, which appears valuable or important in itself. In each gift, I receive the other person’s heart—that is, the giver gives his or her self to me—which is, in turn, itself a gift that he or she has received.

Each thing and person in this network of gift-giving appears, when seen through grateful eyes, as something that exists, in its entirety, in the relations of being given and received. To be grateful is to be caught up in this world of dynamically flowing gifts. Everything thus appears as a gift; in this sense, this personalist view can be summed up in St. Thérèse of Lisieux’s famous saying, “Everything is grace.”

To see something as a gift is to see it as *beautiful*. The beauty of anything beautiful—Raphael’s *Sistine Madonna*, Yosemite Valley, my wife—always appears as something holistic, in which all of its parts harmonize with one another and with the whole; everything in something beautiful fits with everything else in it, and yet the beautiful thing appears as something free, gratuitous, graceful, unexpected, nonnecessary. Not only is it the case that to see something as a gift is to see it as beautiful, but the opposite is true too: to see something as beautiful is to see it as a gift. We can reason from the giftedness of one gift, however small, to the giftedness of all other real things, but we can also directly experience anything as beautiful and as a gift.

As von Hildebrand observes, gratitude is a *social act*, a kind of act, like forgiving or promising, which in its essential structure aims at *another person*. One is necessarily grateful *to someone*. It is possible, as Jean-Luc Marion notes, to experience the givenness of a gift without knowing or attending to the giver. But something is missing in those cases: the *self-gift*, the gift of a person’s heart, that appears in each gift, and that calls for the return gift of my own heart.

Likewise, to try to be grateful to, say, the sun for shining, or, as people say, to be “grateful to the universe,” is, Guardini suggests, to treat those things as if they were persons—but gratitude only really makes sense when it is addressed to an actual free person, to someone who can make a gift of him- or herself. To be moved to gratitude for all of reality is to find oneself addressing the Giver of all these things. To say to my

colleague “thanks for the doughnuts” is implicitly to say to God, “We give you thanks for your great glory.”

To thank God for his glory is to acknowledge not only that God is important in himself, worthy of praise for who he is, but also that his value is an objective good for me, a good I share in anytime I receive a particular gift. The glory of a thing, as the tradition has understood that term, is its beautiful self-manifestation, which others can know and in which they can share.

I show my gratitude by awestruck wonder at being able to share in the life of other persons, especially the life of the divine persons. For God to include

giftedness in himself, there must be a giver and a receiver and a gift in God—that is, God must be a community of persons, in which there is already receptivity and gratitude. The experience of gratefully receiving any gift is, at least tacitly, an experience of being caught up in trinitarian life; I only fully grasp the significance of the experience of receiving and being grateful for gifts once I can understand that event as a sharing in the life of the trinitarian God. In a Catholic personalist view, any act or experience of gratitude is not only a relation among persons, but is a sharing in—and revelation of—the relations among the highest Persons.

To read the full article by Dr. Spencer, scan the QR code; go to Project Muse, EBSCO, PDC; or visit [www.stthomas.edu/logos](http://www.stthomas.edu/logos) to subscribe.



# Kelly Family Establishes Endowed Chair

By MICHAEL J. NAUGHTON AND KAREN LAIRD



You might say that Catholic Studies is in the Kelly family's DNA. **John Kelly CSMA '10**, senior vice president of tax at UnitedHealth Group, wanted to know more about his faith and how it was connected to his personal and professional life. Prompted by his wife **Paula's** own faith journey and with her blessing, he enrolled in the Catholic Studies graduate program. John's courses awakened in him the powerful relationship of faith and reason and brought clarity to his vocation as a husband, father, professional, and man of faith.

John and Paula's daughter, **Bridget '14, CSMA '17**, followed in dad's footsteps. She graduated from St. Thomas with double majors in Catholic Studies and Psychology and completed her master's degree in Catholic Studies soon afterward. To date, John and Bridget are the only father-daughter CSMA graduates.

John joined the Catholic Studies Advisory Board in 2015, and he and Paula went on their second Catholic Studies pilgrimage to Rome in February. The Kelly's eldest son, **Jack**, often accompanies his family to Catholic Studies events and celebrations too.

Recognizing an immediate need today, combined with a strong desire to make an impact during their lifetimes, the Kellys recently

redirected their generous planned estate gift to establish **the John and Paula Kelly Family Endowed Chair in Catholic Leadership**. The chair holder will be simultaneously a tenure-track faculty member of the Department of Catholic Studies and Director of the Habiger Institute for Catholic Leadership.

"John and Paula have been profoundly generous to Catholic Studies over the years," says Dr. Michael Naughton. "This gift secures the important role the Habiger Institute plays within Catholic Studies as well as contributes to the Catholic mission and culture of the University of St. Thomas."

The Habiger Institute's activities—which include the Living Learning Communities, Guadalupe's Scholars Program, Mission and Culture in Catholic Education

Programs, and Leadership Interns—play a significant role in the lives of Catholic Studies students. These programs have also contributed to the growth of Catholic Studies and the enrollment goals of the university.

By providing the financial support needed to recruit world-class faculty capable of leading and developing the programs sponsored by the Institute, the newly established endowed chair will draw faculty who are aligned to the mission of Catholic Studies.

The inaugural chair holder will be recruited through a national search process throughout the upcoming academic year and will begin in the Fall of 2026.

*Establishing this endowed chair in Catholic leadership is important to our family because we believe that the Catholic Studies program at St. Thomas faithfully answers St. John Paul II's call for the continuous renewal of Catholic universities (Ex Corde Ecclesiae). This is an opportunity to help form young men and women intellectually, spiritually, and morally so that they can make an impact on our society and serve the common good.*

John and Paula Kelly

# LEAVING YOUR LEGACY

Since its founding more than 30 years ago, our students and programs have been sustained by the generosity of annual givers, as well as planned and endowed givers like the Kelly family. Each are essential and provide the necessary resources for Catholic Studies to carry our mission into the future, to enliven a movement, and to lead an ongoing renewal within Catholic higher education. The direct results of these gifts are stronger families, schools, parishes, communities and businesses. In other words, our donors are transforming the culture!

To secure this ongoing renewal, we invite you to become part of the **Catholic Studies Legacy Society** today by establishing a gift for tomorrow. There are easy ways to do this without re-writing your will. For example:

- 1. Add Catholic Studies as a beneficiary of one of your investments or accounts.
- 2. Name Catholic Studies in your remainder designations if you have additional funds in your estate plans.

Contact us to become part of the Catholic Studies Legacy Society. It's transformative.

Thank you,



Nancy Sannerud  
651.962.5705



Karen Laird  
651.962.5716



OF YOUR GIFT  
DIRECTLY IMPACTS  
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2115 Summit Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55105



**Center for Catholic Studies**

55-S

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## **What a semester abroad!**

Dr. John Boyle and his wife, Dia, and the Catholic Studies students were in Rome for the funeral of Pope Francis and the election of Pope Leo XIV, all during the Jubilee Year of Hope.

