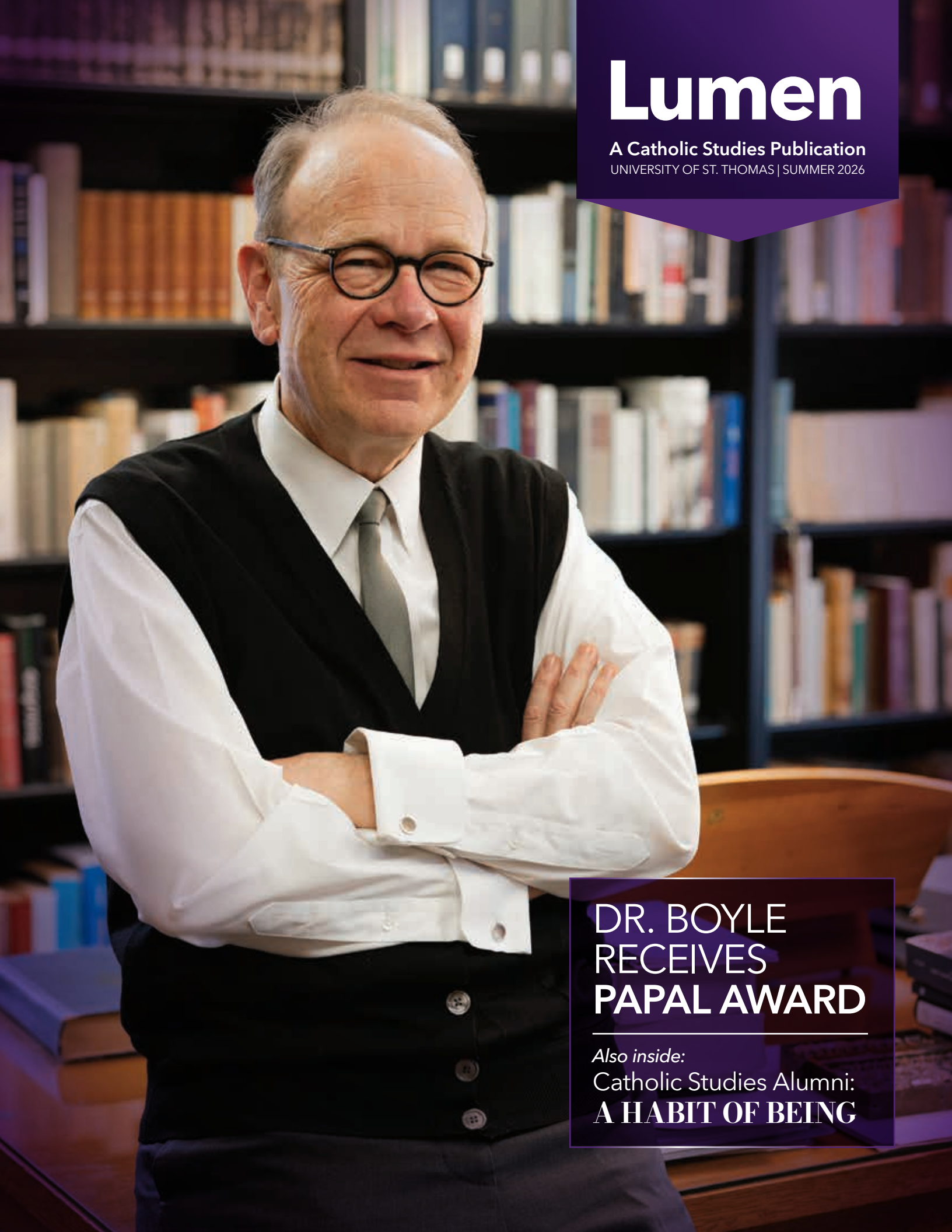




Lumen

A Catholic Studies Publication
UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS | SUMMER 2026

DR. BOYLE RECEIVES PAPAL AWARD

Also inside:
Catholic Studies Alumni:
A HABIT OF BEING

Lumen

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UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS | SUMMER 2026

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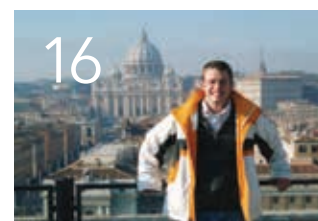
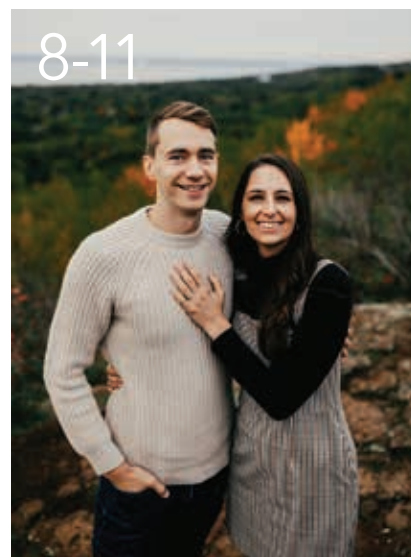
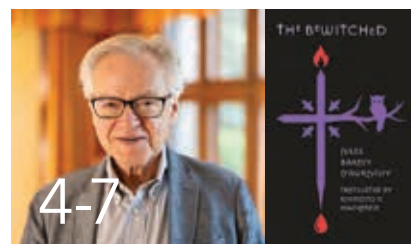
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There is so much to know. Schools, colleges, and universities work very hard to help their students master areas of study. As they advance in their studies, students become increasingly specialized. That is all very good. We are made to know things well.

We are also made to put what we know together in true and meaningful ways. Catholic Studies at St. Thomas helps students learn how to put things together well. Students coming to us know so much and yet they feel like a box of parts. How do those parts go together? Surely there must be some unity to what they are learning. Some unity to their lives. Catholic Studies is about learning how to think in a way that integrates what one has learned and is learning into the whole of one's life, including one's faith. And what better principle of integration than the Truth Incarnate?

Almost all of our Catholic Studies majors also major in something else. That something else is across the breadth of St. Thomas' offerings: business, sciences, health professions, humanities, social sciences. The totality. Students add the additional work of Catholic Studies because here they learn how to integrate all they are learning into a vital whole.

This is a way of thinking, and it grows and deepens over time. This is why our alumni are flourishing in so many different professions. Whatever their profession, they tell us that Catholic Studies makes an ongoing difference. Every day. Because it still shapes how they think about their lives (see pp. 8-11).

That, of course, is essential to our classrooms, but it extends well beyond: into their lives of faith, their friendships, and their family lives. It is part of how they come to understand their lives as vocations, as vocations in response to a call from Truth Incarnate.



JOHN F. BOYLE, CHAIRMAN
DEPARTMENT OF CATHOLIC STUDIES



MICHAEL NAUGHTON, DIRECTOR
CENTER FOR CATHOLIC STUDIES

DR. BOYLE RECEIVES PAPAL AWARD

"For the Church and the Pope"

When the announcement was made on March 9 that Pope Leo XIV had bestowed papal honors upon Dr. John Boyle, phones in Sitzmann Hall started to ring, email inboxes were filled, and social media channels lit up. Reactions from students, colleagues, and friends were overwhelmingly consistent: Dr. Boyle has made a significant impact on their lives.

The *Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* ("For the Church and the Pope") was established in 1888 by Pope Leo XIII. It is awarded to Catholics who have shown long and distinguished service to the Church and to the papal office. Archbishop Bernard Hebda presented the medallion and parchment associated with these honors to Dr. Boyle on April 7 in Minneapolis at the opening Mass of the National Catholic Educational Association's annual convention.

"The honor Pope Leo XIV has bestowed upon Dr. Boyle reflects his 35 years of academic excellence in research and teaching and his deep faithfulness to Christ and His Church," said Dr. Michael Naughton. "Such an honor also captures his humility and generosity to lead and build Catholic Studies and strengthen the Catholic mission and culture at the University of St. Thomas."

Dr. Boyle's long and distinguished career at St. Thomas began in 1990 when he joined the Theology faculty. Three years later, he and an interdisciplinary group of faculty began a new experiment to renew Catholic higher education. Thus, the Catholic Studies movement was born.

In the Fall of 1993, Dr. Boyle taught "The Catholic Vision," the first Catholic Studies course to a class of seven students. This foundational course has been taught every year since. Over the past 35 years, Dr. Boyle has taught more than 4,125 students (including four bishops!) and more than 25 distinct undergraduate and graduate courses at St. Thomas (see list on the opposite page). He taught the first MA course in Catholic Studies in the Fall of 2000 ("Essentials of the Catholic Faith"), and he has, to date, taught more online Catholic Studies graduate courses than any faculty.

Dr. Jason Slattery, director of Catholic education and superintendent of schools, pins the papal medallion on Dr. John Boyle on April 7.

Outside the classroom, Dr. Boyle has published four books, each on St. Thomas Aquinas, including a Latin edition of a lost work of Aquinas. He has also published more than 25 essays and has served as a keynote speaker and panelist at countless conferences, consortiums, and seminars all over the world.

To date, Dr. Boyle and his wife, Dia, have spent four semesters at the Bernardi Campus in Rome. They will be there again in 2027 with more than 30 students in the spring, as well as members of the Catholic Studies Advisory Board during an eight-day pilgrimage to the Eternal City.

"I speak for all when I say we are delighted with this recognition of John's life's work," Dr. Naughton said. "This award begins to recognize his extraordinary achievements in Catholic education. We are blessed by his leadership."

“Over the past 35 years, Dr. Boyle has taught more than 4,125 students (including four bishops!) and more than 25 distinct undergraduate and graduate courses at St. Thomas.



DR. JOHN BOYLE'S COURSES

UNDERGRADUATE

Foundations: Catholicism
 The Christian Theological Tradition
 Church of the Apostles and Martyrs
 Theology from Augustine to Aquinas
 Readings in Thomas Aquinas
 Catholic Vision
 The Spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola
 The Search for Happiness
 Culture, Virtue, Incarnation
 Introduction to Catholic Doctrine and Sacraments
 St. Thomas More
The City of God in the City of Rome
 Rome: Peter, Paul, and the Incarnation
 Church and Culture: The Social Dimension of the Catholic Church
 Readings in Aquinas: the *secunda secundae*
 Gerard Manley Hopkins (Aquinas Scholars Seminar co-taught with English faculty)
 Image and Reality: Medieval Art and Theology (Aquinas Scholars Seminar co-taught with Art History faculty)
 Ambiguous Utopias: Thomas More's *Utopia* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (Aquinas Scholars Seminar co-taught with English faculty)
 Catholic History and Culture (co-taught with Theology faculty)
 Introduction to the Christian Tradition (co-taught with Theology and Philosophy faculty)
 The Development of Medieval Theology

GRADUATE

Catholic Thought and Culture I
 The Essentials of the Catholic Faith
 Augustine's *Confessions*
 Virtue
 Thomas More
 Augustine's *City of God*

Did you know?

In February 2026, **Msgr. Martin Schlag**, pictured third from the left, participated in the first plenary session of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria in Abuja. Organized by the Markets, Culture and Ethics Research Centre of the Pontifical University of Santa Croce and the Murphy Institute for Catholic Thought, Law, and Business at the University of St. Thomas, the "Transparency, Accountability, and Evaluation in the Catholic Church of Nigeria" initiative brought together pastors and administrators to reflect on financial management, leadership, donor relationships, and strategic planning.

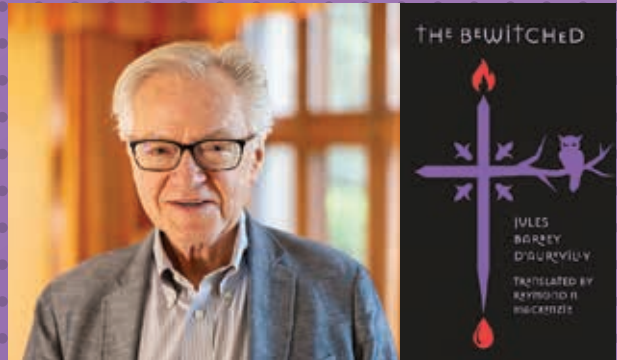


CONGRATULATIONS, DR. MACKENZIE

Dr. Raymond MacKenzie—professor of English, editor of *Logos* since 2022, and professor of many literature-focused Catholic Studies classes—will retire this summer. Perhaps his most enduring connection with Catholic Studies is with the graduate program where he regularly taught "The Catholic Novel," one of the program's most popular courses, for nearly 20 years.

Dr. Billy Junker, director of the graduate program, shares: "Ray's gentle wit and deep erudition have left a lasting impression upon the intellectual culture of our program, which would not be what it is today apart from his many contributions."

MacKenzie's most recent work, a translation of *The Bewitched* by Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly (1808-1889), was published this spring by the University of Minnesota Press, its first English translation since 1928. MacKenzie has translated many classics of



European literature, including books by Balzac, Flaubert, Stendhal, and Lamartine.

Congratulations on your retirement, Dr. MacKenzie!



Dr. Annie Thompson presented at this year's De Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture Conference at the University of Notre Dame, themed "That Which I Also Received: Living Tradition." Dr. Thompson's paper, "The Shape of Time: Theology of History in Vodolazkin's *Laurus*," explored what's at stake in the way we imagine time through the acclaimed contemporary novel *Laurus*, which traces the life of a medieval healer and holy fool whose dramatic story is mystically shot through with the past and the future.

While asked to speak at various parishes, conferences, colleges, and universities around the archdiocese and across the county for the past 30 years,

Dr. Robert Kennedy might have had one of his busiest schedules yet this past academic year. From September 2025 through June 2026, Kennedy presented on a range of topics, including natural law, justice, political protests, the Church in crisis, ownership and property, and prudence in business. He also presented on the legacy of Pope St. John Paul II and historian and scholar Christopher Dawson. Kennedy often spoke about practical applications of the Catholic social tradition which was the focus of his writing during his Fall sabbatical.



WELCOME, NAOMI MAGRUM

Catholic Studies welcomed **Naomi Hasegawa Magrum** to the staff in November as Program Coordinator for the Guadalupe's Scholars program. Born in Venezuela and raised in Miami, Magrum previously worked for the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis as Latino Youth Discipleship Coordinator.

Magrum accompanies 50 scholars through the program where faithful student leaders are invited to engage the Catholic intellectual tradition in the context of the growing Hispanic community in the American Church. Built upon four pillars—rigorous academics, strong community, faith formation, and servant leadership—the goal of the program is to ensure that each participant engages in a transformative educational experience. Magrum also oversees Verso L'Alto, a pathway program for Latino high school students and their families who are preparing for college.



"While Naomi's programming and administrative skills are excellent, it is her heart for young people and her desire to accompany them in their faith formation that stands out," said Program Manager Nancy Sannerud.

Dr. Kidd Delivers Annual **Thought & Culture Lecture**



In April, **Dr. Erika Kidd** presented "Augustine the Teacher" for the annual Thought & Culture Lecture. Based on her recent book, *Intimacy and Intelligibility*:

Word and Life in Augustine's De magistro (University of Notre Dame Press, Oct. 2025), Dr. Kidd shared that Saint Augustine has a lot to say about teaching. He writes memorably in his *Confessions* about the way his early teachers failed him, teaching him to love praise and worldly success. He writes too about the vocation of the teacher, insisting that teaching is not a matter of passing along information but rather an invitation to attend to the voice of Christ.

In addition to the spring lecture at St. Thomas, Dr. Kidd has

presented her newly published work to audiences across the country, including: Villanova University's Patristics, Medieval, Renaissance Conference (Oct. 2025); the Lumen Christi Institute's West Suburban Catholic Culture Series (Nov. 2025); Baylor University's Institute for Faith and Learning (March 2026); and the National Catholic Education Association's National Conference in Minneapolis (April 2026).

PRAISE FOR DR. KIDD'S NEWEST PUBLICATION

"It is almost miraculous that a work as well-known as Augustine's *De magistro* should successfully undergo a fresh and radical reinterpretation, yet Erika Kidd has done precisely that. She has single-handedly changed the conversation about this dialogue: scholars will be coming to terms with her thesis for generations."

- **Michael Foley, Professor of Patristics and Assistant Director of University Scholars in the Honors College at Baylor University**

"Philosopher Erika Kidd's slender but brilliant new book, *Intimacy and Intelligibility*, points us back to Augustine's own attraction

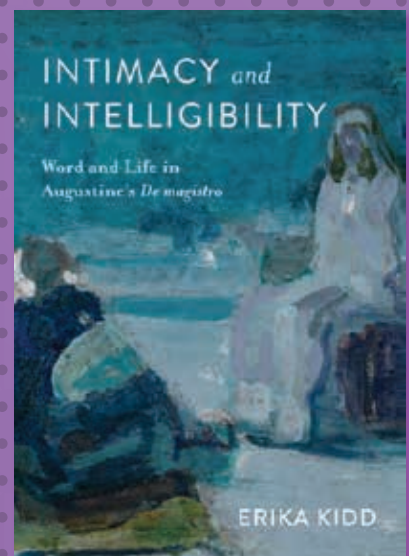
towards abstraction and away from incarnation. What Kidd offers is a better vision of human communication—one that Augustine discovered 1600 years ago, in conversation with his son. She sheds light on the distinctive problems of our own time and shows how to inhabit a better discourse."

- **Terence Sweeney, CSMA '20, Assistant Teaching Professor in the Department of Humanities and the Honors Program, Villanova University**

"*Intimacy and Intelligibility* is a slim, lovely book exploring St. Augustine's *De magistro* (On the Teacher). *De magistro* is a dialogue between St. Augustine and his son, Adeodatus, as they wrestle with the question of whether it is possible to teach anyone anything. Many parents,

perhaps, have wondered this in a moment of frustration. But Augustine and Adeodatus (and Kidd) are deeply interested how an idea can be communicated from person to person, and how conversation knits us together."

- **Leah Libresco Sargeant, Author and Speaker**



FAREWELL, SHAWNA WICKER

After four years of overseeing incredible growth in the Catholic Studies master's degree program, Shawna Wicker is stepping down as Graduate Program Manager.

Shawna managed our MA candidates from prospective student status to application, enrollment, class registration, and degree completion. Owing largely to her work in student recruitment and retention, the graduate program has grown from generating 650 credits in 2021-22 to over 1000 credits in 2025-26.

"Over the past four years, Shawna has gifted Catholic Studies, and the graduate program in particular, with her poise, enthusiasm, and joy," said Dr. Billy Junker, director of the Graduate Program. "The personal attention she has afforded every graduate student in our program means that, despite our impressive growth, we have remained a source of

vibrant intellectual and spiritual community for both our full-time and part-time students."

Shawna will be able to spend more time with her young family and support her husband's growing business. She will be dearly missed by our students, faculty, and staff.



Scan the QR code to learn more about the Catholic Studies Graduate Program Manager position.

Congratulations, MA Class of 2026!

A group of MA students presented their master's theses to the Catholic Studies community in May. They are attorneys, teachers, priests, businesspeople, social workers, and empty nesters. They are an impressive group of people who have deeply explored the impact of the Incarnation on human thought and culture and have integrated this vision into their lives. We are proud of their scholarship, who they are, and their contributions to the world. Congratulations, CSMA Class of 2026!



Catholic Studies Alumni: A HABIT OF BEING

By KATHRYN WEHR

Editor Sally Fitzgerald once wrote that Flannery O'Connor not only developed what Jacques Maritain called a "habit of art" in her writing, but she developed a "habit of being" by "living in accordance with her formative beliefs."

With God's help, Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas seeks to pass on more than a field of knowledge but to help students develop a

life-long habit of being, an interior disposition that increasingly reflects God as the center around which all knowledge revolves.

We recently checked in with a variety of our alumni—lay, religious, and ordained—to see how that habit of being began to sprout here at Catholic Studies and in what ways it has borne fruit.

LISA JASKOWIAK MUICH '19
Actuarial Science and Catholic Studies
(pictured with her husband Matt)

Predictive Modeling Supervisor (actuary) at Intact Insurance Company, Plymouth, MN



Q What was your most memorable Catholic Studies class?

A It's hard to choose just one, but I'll go with Dr. Boyle's class in Rome in which we read St. Augustine's *City of God* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. Both texts are deeply intertwined with the city, so it was a privilege to dive into them in Rome with Dr. Boyle's guidance.

Q What about your experience of the Catholic Studies community?

A I had a lot of friends in Catholic Studies, and it was incredible to hear what they were learning in class. I went to a public school, so the Catholic intellectual tradition was new, and I soaked up as much as I could. I went to an info session about the Rome program just for the pizza. I thought, "I can't go overseas for a few months! Wait, I want to do this!"

Overall, Catholic Studies allowed me to balance the math side of my brain with philosophy, theology, etc. For my summa presentation, I talked about how Catholic social teaching applies to insurance.

Q How has Catholic Studies affected your life today?

A Being in the business world, we don't often think about being a missionary, but it's a place where the Lord is needed. Being a light is a privilege and a gift. On even a basic level, it's in the ethics and professionalism that I can bring to my work, how I interact with my co-workers, and how I manage people. Recognizing the dignity of each human person is important. My principles and how they inform my worldview matters. For instance, improving algorithms so people get a fair price impacts how I look at a problem in front of me. And my husband and I are expecting our first child in June, so my formation takes on a whole new meaning.

JUDGE JOHN SANDY '07**Philosophy and Catholic Studies**

(pictured with Fr. John Kelly, rector of Saint John Vianney College Seminary, and Rob Vischer, president of the University of St. Thomas)

Iowa Court of Appeals



Q What was your most memorable Catholic Studies class?

A "Dante's *Divine Comedy*" with Dr. Mary Reichardt. Dante did not treat right and wrong as "vibes." He built an entire cosmos ordered around justice. Sin has weight and consequences are real. For someone who now lives in the world of law and judgment, that architecture resonated with me. And yet, mercy still breaks in. Virgil guides Dante through Hell. Beatrice leads him to Heaven. Descent before ascent. You walk through disorder to reach order. Purification is possible. That's a profoundly hopeful

vision—especially when I have a front row seat to so much brokenness.

Q What about your experience of the Catholic Studies community?

A I studied in Rome in 2005 and 2006. I served Mass for Pope Benedict XVI and walked part of the Camino de Compostela. I was surrounded by the grandeur of the Church—ancient basilicas, saints in stone, the visible weight of two thousand years of faith. It was overwhelming in the best way.

Q How has Catholic Studies affected your life today?

A I serve as a judge on the Iowa Court of Appeals. In addition, I teach judges from across the country at the National Computer Forensics Institute (NCFI) in Birmingham, AL, on search and seizure law relative to emerging technology. And I try—imperfectly but intentionally—to be a faithful husband and father of four children. Life is full, but Catholic Studies still shapes almost everything I do. I don't approach law, culture, or public life as isolated compartments. Catholic Studies trained me to ask not just what is legal, but what is true, what is just, and what does this say about the human person? That habit of synthesis has stayed with me.

CAMILA MALTA '01 Business and Catholic Studies
(pictured with her family)

Katy, TX



Q What was your most memorable Catholic Studies class?

A I loved Dr. Boyle's "Guardini" class and reading Joseph Pieper with Dr. Naughton, but the Catholic literature class I took with Dr. Mary Reichart really sums up what I learned in Catholic Studies. She instilled a sense of boldness in reading widely, to not be afraid to read challenging literature but to apply a rational perspective, to form a critique of culture that nonetheless focuses on what is good.

Q What about your experience of the Catholic Studies community?

A I was a recent revert to the faith and it was in Catholic Studies where I discovered that I really could ask anything and find that the Church was interested in these questions too and had answers that were often bigger and more universal than I imagined. What did it mean to be Catholic, a member of a living body of Christ? There's room for you and you and you!

Q How has Catholic Studies affected your life today?

A I still love to ponder what is good, true, and beautiful—because the joy of that is contagious. I share that in teaching OCIA and have shared that with my children. In fact, I have talked so much about Catholic Studies that my daughter, Paula '29, is now a freshman and loves her professors.

SR. ANGELICA (KATIE WRATKOWSKI)
'18, CSMA '27

Catholic Studies, English, and Spanish

Handmaid of the Heart of Jesus, serving at Nativity of Our Lord, St. Paul, MN



Q What was your most memorable Catholic Studies class?

A They are all memorable! As a CSMA student, I took Dr. Boyle's "Thomas More" class, the last class I took before I joined the Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus. Through the course, I met a new friend in More. I was moved by his heroic virtue in the face of suffering in *Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*, and it was a source of encouragement for me as I began my vocation.

Q What about your experience of the Catholic Studies community?

A My time in Catholic Studies was very memorable, the Rome semester in particular. It was a time of profound spiritual enrichment in the heart of the Church. I walked the streets of Rome with God as my intimate companion. I also enjoyed how our professors took our classes to the streets, churches, and museums. Such incarnational learning alongside an intentional community was deeply formative, and I understood the impact of Catholicism on culture in a way I may not have otherwise. I was also a devoted participant in the Catholic Studies Talent Show. One year I organized a group of friends to perform "The Bobblehead Saints" with an encore performance our senior year. It was pure delight for us to hear the crowd howling with laughter!

Q How has Catholic Studies affected your life today?

A Looking back, I see how my heart and mind were (and continue to be) gradually transformed. My vision of life grew into a sacramental worldview, with a deeper appreciation of God's providential care guiding human history. My eyes were opened to see truth in places I did not expect it, and my heart was softened to receive others with more mercy.

**CATHOLIC
STUDIES ALUMNI
LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH!**



Scan the QR code to fill out a simple form with your news and updated contact information.

ALUMNI NEWS

Elizabeth Kelly Stanchina CSMA '08 recently published *Anchored by Hope: Meditations to Calm the Anxious Soul* (Word Among Us Press, March 2026). This uplifting book—that includes devotions, meditations, and stories—is a source of hope in challenging times.



FR. TIM WRATKOWSKI '13
Philosophy and Catholic Studies

*Pastor of Holy Name of
 Jesus Catholic Church, Medina, MN*



Q What was your most memorable Catholic Studies class?

A "The Catholic Vision" with Dr. Billy Junker. It is where everything came together: creation and redemption, from the most mundane to the most sacred. We read the *City of God*, *King Lear*, watched

The Tree of Life and the Gospel of John. Dr. Junker was like a method actor of teaching—working out in real time the drama of truth.

Q What about your experience of the Catholic Studies community?

A Rome in the Spring of 2012 with Dr. Boyle was transformative. He modeled letting Rome be our classroom and fostered a sense of community. We read *The Betrothed* and Cicero and went to a series of talks by Pope Benedict XVI. But more than the content, it was the time spent talking on the terrace, the discovery of the truth together, the mutual enrichment, the gift we were to each other.

Q How has Catholic Studies affected your life today?

A I am still in contact with Catholic Studies friends, occasional social events (like a series of wine tastings with Dr. Boyle!) and emails about important life events. We still feel "together." Another lasting gift has been the vision of life as something rich and fulfilling. Nothing is fragmented. I try to share this with my flock—to integrate their life with Christ and live the Lord's invitation to love.

DCN. JOHN ROGERS, CSMA '10

*Serving at Holy Spirit Catholic Church and Vice
 President of Catholic Services, Prenger Solutions,
 St. Paul, MN*



Q What was your most memorable Catholic Studies class?

A "City of God" with Dr. Paul Wojda. We actually finished it! It was around the 2008 elections and

so it was very relevant as we discussed the political and social implications of the book. Also "Literature and Theological Aesthetics" with Michael Jordan and Liz Kelly. It helped me think in new ways.

Q How has Catholic Studies affected your life today?

A I loved the diversity of life experiences in the classroom. It was my first time in class with people that were older, working, retired or clergy. I suddenly had things and thoughts in common with them, similar experiences and similar books that shaped us.

Q What would you say to a high school student thinking of St. Thomas?

A Catholic Studies is the best way to understand the way the Church and world connect. Learning to use enough practical, philosophical, literary, and spiritual wisdom to understand complex situations more deeply—like we are discussing right now at my work.

FROM THE FARM TO CORPORATE LAW

ALUMNUS EMBRACES INTERDISCIPLINARY LIFE

Leah Koch '15, JD/MA '18 and her husband, Matt '15, met as Catholic Studies undergrads and married in 2017.

Self-proclaimed “farm kid,” **Leah (Miller) Koch '15, JD/MA '18** has traveled a career path from law clerk to city attorney to in-house counsel at Land O’ Lakes. Integrating Catholic Studies into her legal education as a JD/MA and Murphy Scholar helped her reach her goals of being more human, more Christ-centered, and a better thinker.

Describe your role at Land O’ Lakes.

Land O’Lakes is a farmer-owned cooperative, owned by dairy member-owners and ag-retail owners. Practically, that means a lot of variety. I can negotiate a contract for a replacement piece of manufacturing equipment one day and next I’ll be discussing innovative technology solutions. Supporting the farm-to-fork food system is a great role for this farm kid!

Why did you choose to participate in the Murphy Scholars program in addition to your JD/MA?

As an undergrad, I embraced all that Catholic Studies had to offer: participating in Leadership Interns, living on the Catholic Women’s Floor, going to Rome, and marrying someone from the Catholic Studies men’s

house. So, when I had the opportunity to go to St. Thomas Law, there was no question that I would also do the Catholic Studies master's degree program. I knew there would be sacrifice, but I had no doubts about two things: 1) The expansion of my mind; and 2) By integrating Catholic Studies into my legal education, Sitzmann Hall provided a portal back to my goals of being more human and more Christ-focused.

The joint degree program also allowed me to make my legal education my own. Some days were intense, such as attending a patent law lecture about infringement in the morning and reading *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* in the evening. This folding of intellectual challenges made me a better thinker and allowed me to embrace the interdisciplinary job I get to do today. The Murphy Institute also has a validating presence at the law school. Their Murphy Scholars fellowship proved to be a natural fit as I walked with other students who were peers and mentors.

How has your interdisciplinary education impacted your work as a corporate attorney?

Throughout my legal career I have benefited from the tangible skills (textual reading, writing, expressing difficult or tangled thoughts) and intangible skills (learning and unfolding large concepts such as dignity, ordered liberty, pluralism, religious liberty, free will). This experience gave me the gift of an intellectual anchor in Truth Himself.

The program impacts and enriches my parish life too. At St. Joseph Catholic Church in West St. Paul, where the Catholic Studies extended universe is felt, I can bring up a gem from Dr. Kidd's "Augustine's *Confessions*" class during a parish women's retreat, lead a book club on *Searching for and Maintaining Peace* by Fr. Jacques Phillipe, and be present and worship well. These are the fruits of my time at St. Thomas.

Was there a specific class that was especially formative for you?

If I had to pick one, it might be the eye-opening "Search for Happiness" course I took with Dr. Billy Junker during my freshman year.

WATCH THE MURPHY INSTITUTE EVENTS SPRING 2026

**The Surge of ICE
in the Twin Cities:**
Law Professors on
the Issues

**Protests and a
Christian Response
to Government
Abuses**

**Greenland: The View
from Denmark**

**250th Anniversary
Celebration of
the Declaration of
Independence**



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see Murphy Institute
event recordings.**

Dante's Tombs in Ravenna and Florence

By DR. RAYMOND N. MACKENZIE

We often think of cemeteries and graves in terms of finality—the grave is our *domus ultima*, our “final resting place.” But the etymology of the word “cemetery” shows it was originally meant to suggest a sleeping place (a “dormitory”), as Jesus says of Lazarus, “Our friend Lazarus is asleep but I am going to awaken him.” (Jn 11:11). The grave then can be understood as, on the one hand, the end of a person, or, on the other, as a site of transition. In the pagan world, the tomb is a monument to an irretrievable past, but for a Christian, the cemetery is a sleeping chamber oriented toward future awakening.

The great poet of Purgatory was of course Dante Alighieri, and it is in Ravenna, at the edge of a quiet courtyard, close by the Basilica of San Francesco, that Dante's remains lie. The surrounding *Zona Dantesca*, a deliberately hushed pocket of trees and paving stones, functions like a miniature cemetery of contemplation, a space set apart for memorializing and mourning Italy's—and Catholicism's—supreme poet. Yet the history of the tomb tells a more unsettled story: Dante's bones, originally housed in an ancient Roman sarcophagus, were repeatedly hidden, relocated, and rediscovered over centuries—acts of guardianship and secrecy that reveal a city determined to protect a poet whose very remains remained a matter of political contest. In this small, protected enclave, visitors encounter not only a grave, but a



narrative of exile extended beyond death, a story written into the very soil that shelters him.

Dante died in Ravenna in 1321 and was buried there next to the Basilica of San Francesco. The neoclassical mausoleum that now houses Dante's tomb was built in 1780, replacing earlier tomb structures on the same site. The remains themselves were—one can't avoid the pun—bones of contention. In 1519, the city that had given him birth but that had

also exiled him, Florence, tried to reclaim his bones. Franciscan friars in Ravenna secretly removed and hid the bones for centuries.

During restorations in 1865, workers accidentally discovered a wooden box buried in the wall of a nearby cloister. It bore the Latin inscription "*Dantis ossa*" ("the bones of Dante"). The bones were later examined and were determined to be consistent with a male of Dante's approximate age and period. They were placed in a

new sarcophagus inside the 1780 mausoleum, where they remain.

Meanwhile in Florence, an elaborate cenotaph rises within the Basilica of Santa Croce, a monumental tomb conspicuously empty. It shows Dante seated in classical garb above an allegorical tableau where Poetry herself drapes sorrowfully across a sarcophagus, mourning a body she does not possess. Outside the basilica, Enrico Pazzi's 1865 statue of Dante towers, standing watch over the piazza, a stone sentinel placed before a church full of the illustrious dead, including Michelangelo and Machiavelli.

Taken together, Florence's memorials form a symbolic necropolis rivaling Ravenna's physical one—a city of monuments built to reclaim, in memory and marble, the poet whose actual bones it could never retrieve. And so the modern literary pilgrim must move between the two cities: from Ravenna's secluded *Zona Dantesca* to Florence's grand, empty tomb, tracing a bifurcated afterlife in which Dante's body and Dante's legacy lie forever apart, and yet forever entwined.



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Why I Give to CATHOLIC STUDIES

Every month ^

Sam Patet '08 then, as a student in Rome in 2006, and now, director of marketing and communications at Lyngblomsten, a senior services nonprofit in St. Paul (below).



Undergraduate Majors/Minor:

Majors: Catholic Studies, Philosophy

Minor: English

Graduate Degree:

Strategic Communications, University of Minnesota

Favorite Catholic Studies Class:

My top three (in no particular order): "The Catholic Literary Tradition" with Dr. Mary Reichardt; "Vocation of the Laity" with Dr. Michael Naughton; and "John Henry Newman" with Dr. Don Briel.

When people ask, how do you explain the Catholic Studies experience?

Catholic Studies is committed to forming the whole person—not just intellectually, but professionally, socially, and spiritually. Through the Catholic Studies experience, students are preparing for faith-filled leadership in the Church and in the world, grounded in a

personal relationship with Jesus Christ and in community with others.

When did you begin giving to Catholic Studies?

I started making one-time gifts in 2011. When I learned how helpful it is for organizations to have a healthy set of recurring gifts, I set up my monthly gift to Catholic Studies in 2019 and have been giving this way ever since.

Why do you give to Catholic Studies every month?

I received so much during my time as a student at St. Thomas—and more specifically, through my involvement with Catholic Studies. Put simply, it helped me encounter the richness of the faith. Now more than ever, I think that encounter is needed for students. If I can help ensure—even through my small monthly gift—that future Tommies will be able to receive what I did, I'm in.

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RMDs and DAFs, and QCDs...Oh My!

Givers age 73 and older are familiar with **Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs)** required by the IRS, and donors of all ages increasingly use **Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs)** when making their charitable gifts.

Also growing in popularity are **Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs)** from your **Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA)**. More acronyms!

What is a QCD?

According to Fidelity Investments, starting at age 70½, a QCD is a direct transfer of money from your IRA provider, payable to a qualified charity. QCDs can be counted toward satisfying your RMDs for the year, as long as certain rules are met. *There are tax advantages when making your charitable contributions through a QCD too!* Talk to your investment advisor to learn more.

QCDs + Catholic Studies

We hear it every day: our students and alumni are part of a movement that is renewing our homes, families, communities, parishes, and dioceses. This is made possible by the generosity of our donors who support Catholic Studies scholarships and programs. QCDs are just one more way to support our students who are exploring the impact of the Incarnation on human thought and culture.

Gifts of any size made in any way help to renew the culture. Thank you for participating in the renewal.



Nancy Sannerud
651.962.5705



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Icons and Iconoclasm

This Spring, Dr. Kathryn Wehr and her students studied Eastern Christian icons, examined icon prototypes at Catholic and Orthodox churches in the Twin Cities metro area, and wrote an icon of the Holy Face. Their finished icons were blessed by Msgr. Martin Schlag during a daily Mass in the Sitzmann Hall chapel.

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