



## From the Director

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Two days ago, we enjoyed the famous rose laden hues and scents of Gaudete Sunday—and lit the most cherished candle of the Advent season (that of "Joy"). The final Advent candle (for "Peace") will be lit next week and heralds the coming of the Prince of Peace who calms the storm and rests our hearts. But this

week, it's joy; and joy is what is on offer as we prepare for the Nativity of our Lord and the adventure of the Christmas season.

Still, it is often difficult to feel joy on demand—especially in an environment so marked these days by fragility and instability in their many forms. I think of Annie Dillard here and the quiet, convulsive *status update* she wrote in her classic, *A Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, some decades ago. "I am a frayed and nibbled survivor in a fallen world," she shares so starkly and so finally; and this feels particularly apt for me this year—and maybe it does for you as well. "I am aging and eaten," Dillard continues, "and have done my share of eating too." Just so, Annie—and here, I've not yet even opened the See's candies.

It is often difficult to feel joy on demand, for joy rarely exists alone. As ever, the mystery of our lives in God calls us to understand how we can feel so many competing things at once. Yes, we do feel great joy today, and there is nothing that can make us feel the lightness of joy more than what the Feast of Christmas entails. But then, we also feel fear and stress and exhaustion at today's challenges, at the historical setting in which the Feast enters-- much like folks did as well, one can speculate, on the First Noel.

The great poet-monk, Thomas Merton, helps us in this regard and his unadorned candor

reminds us again to keep it simple, especially at this busy time of year—or rather, the time of year that we have made so inordinately busy by our various machinations. Far from a time of quiet preparation, Advent, because it coincides with weeks of coerced and unreflective hyperactivity, often tests our faith or decouples us from the reason for the season—for the joy proclaimed in the Latin “Gaudete.” Merton recalls us to ourselves in an entry from his masterly collection, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (1966), and his counsel seems like a good one to heed for the next week or two:

You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope.

A tall order, to be sure, but there's an Advent message in it worth considering, one that responds in simplicity and immediacy to the global tensions of our current moment—and one that counsels a simple surrender to the mystery of God's invitation to encounter and right relationship. I pray that we are all mindful of the gift—and that we are given the gifts of faith, love, and hope (and courage and joy) that help us navigate our many challenges as we continue to make a space for the Christ's Nativity in our hearts and the quiet beauty of Christmas that comes with it.

Dear Reader, this newsletter is a classic semester wrap—a retrospective of the events we hosted and supported since October. Our gatherings, discussions and shared insights have been a source of inspiration and have challenged us to deepen our understanding of faith, justice, and reason. In our shared pursuit of knowledge and dialogue, we have found a deeper connection to the mysteries of faith and a greater appreciation for the intellectual richness within the Catholic tradition. So pleased, too, that our students are being well formed in the living tradition as they experience the gift of enriching conference experiences, two of which are shared below.

On behalf of the [Hank Center Team](#) (for whom I am ever and profoundly grateful), I wish you a Merry Christmas and a New Year filled with hope, prosperity, and endless possibilities. All to the good, friends, and,

Warmest regards,

Dr. Michael P. Murphy

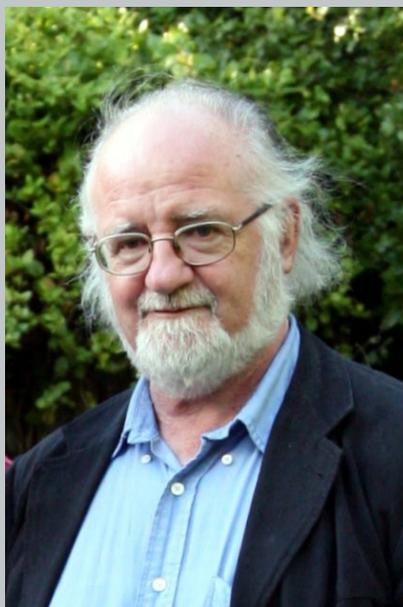
## Hank Center Highlights

### Building Bridges with Pope Francis in South Asia



Building Bridges Across South Asia, the third installment of Loyola's Building Bridges Initiative, brought together students from across South Asia for small group dialogue, reflections, and shared

## John Deane

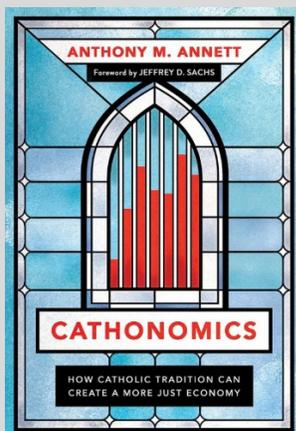


discernment around their shared social concerns. Student representatives from each group dialogued with **Pope Francis via Zoom on September 26, 2023.**

Inspired by the call of Pope Francis to synodality, Loyola University Chicago launched the [Building Bridges Initiative \(BBI\)](#), a student-centered and university-organized series of events. The initial event in February 2022, Building Bridges North-South, emerged organically from a collaboration between the Hank Center, IPS, and the Department of Philosophy at LUC-- and the Pontifical Commission for Latin America. This collaboration continues in support of successive events in the curricular, co-curricular, and ecclesial life of students.

[Read More Here](#)

### **Against Free Market Economics: Lecture and Luncheon with Dr. Tony Annett**



In early October, the Hank Center and

New poetry reading video featuring 2016 Teilhard Fellow, Irish poet, John F. Deane. In this most enjoyable and edifying 30-minute video, Deane introduces and reads new poetry. He reads and reflects from his home in County Leitrim in the middle west of Ireland.

Deane's new memoir, *Song of the Goldfinch* is also out from Veritas Press. John is a gift, a poet of rare insight and talent whose work is of the very best of this age-- or any other.

[Watch the poetry reading!](#)

### **Conference Corner: Hank Supports Undergraduate Academic Enrichment**



*Loyola Catholic Studies students at Notre Dame's de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture Fall Conference.*

### **De Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture Fall Conference 2023: Dust of the Earth**

#### **Conference Reflection by Loyola Catholic Studies Undergraduate Student**

As someone who does not study ethics or philosophy as their major, attending the De Nicola Fall Conference was an incredibly enriching experience. I am passionate about ethics and many of the topics that were discussed, but unfortunately, I do not get to dive deep into them in my studies very often.

The first talk I got the opportunity to attend was on gene editing and its ethics from a Catholic perspective. As a passionate science-minded student, I was enthralled by this conference from the moment this presentation started. Gene editing is something that I have thought in great

LUC's Quinlan School of Business welcomed Anthony Annett, author of *Cathonomics: How Catholic Tradition Can Create a More Just Economy*. for a most robust luncheon dialogue in Beane Hall.

Annett posited that free markets are good at producing wealth but fall quite short in engendering justice or well-being. On the other hand, Annett offered how Catholic social teaching— and the economic theories attached to the Catholic intellectual tradition—offer a more balanced view of market economies and who markets are meant to serve. Resisting free market ideology, Catholic social teaching emphasizes how the common good must take precedence in economic life.

An expansive response was provided by Dayle M. Smith, Ph.D., Dean of the LMU College of Business Administration, and a most lively discussion followed.

Video Available

**An evening with Marco Impagliazzo. "Religions: Leading the Way Towards a Peaceful World"**



The Hank Center and

depth about in my classes from a strictly scientific perspective of how it is possible, but I had never had the opportunity to hear about the ethics of it, especially when taking religion into account.

The second talk I attended was on Artificial Intelligence, something that seems to be very hot in every field right now. This was a refreshing perspective that discussed how AI can be beneficial in many fields, even when the ethics are taken into account. I especially enjoyed the discussion of how AI can be used in education to make it more individualized, but not individualistic. Through this, the presenter claimed that AI can help teachers gauge the gaps between students and provide teachers with information on who needs more help and on what topics specifically they need help. One of the presenters also brought up AI in medicine and how it has many uses, but it is key to keep medicine personal and view medical care as an extension of the family.

The last talk that I found to be very interesting was the keynote presentation on personhood and failed persons. What I got out of that was that we all have the potential to be failures as people when we view others as failures. When we make the moral failure to view others as lesser, we inherently dehumanize ourselves.

Outside of the presentations, I enjoyed the opportunity to attend mass with such a large group of Catholics. Both masses were incredibly beautiful and there was such power in this large community. Lastly, I enjoyed connecting with other religious students from across the country. On the last night of the conference, I got the opportunity to meet many of these great students. We discussed everything from what we enjoyed about the talks to simply life as a college student in today's society and the joys and challenges we face. This community and the connections I was able to make are hopefully connections that will last long into the future. Many of these students and I have stayed in touch and communicate regularly.

Attending the De Nicola Fall Conference was an experience that I feel I gained a lot from personally and academically and I hope to attend again in the future.

**Novitiate Conference on Rene Girard**

**Conference Reflection by Alex de Foy, Loyola Undergraduate Student**

Two weeks ago, I had the privilege of attending the first ever Novitiate Conference at the Catholic University of America. Organized by Luke Burgis, the conference

the Jesuit Community were delighted to welcome Marco Impagliazzo, President of the Community of Sant'Egidio, for an evening of insight and conversation.

Founded just after Vatican II, Sant'Egidio is a Christian community that pays close attention to the periphery and peripheral people—gathering men and women of all ages and conditions, uniting all by a fraternal tie through the listening of the Gospel, and a practicing voluntary commitment with (and for) the poor so as to engender peace.

Sant'Egidio has become a network of communities in more than 70 countries of the world. Pope Francis asked Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, a longtime member of the Community of Sant'Egidio, to lead his mission for peace in Ukraine. Dr. Impagliazzo, a professor of History at University of Roma Tre, has been instrumental in this work.

Video Available

### Poets of Presence Conference



The Hank Center's

aimed to spread the theory of René Girard, a French humanities professor and social theorist. If you've never read his work, I recommend *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning* or *When These Things Begin*. His biography *Evolution of Desire*, written by Cynthia Haven, is also excellent. René Girard was able to see things, patterns in human behavior, literature, history, that had not yet been noticed and synthesized them into what he called mimetic theory. This theory is founded on the idea that our desires are not intrinsic but are rather imitated from those around us. This leads us to admire and envy people, which in turn causes conflict and division between people.



Although there were many professors and it was held at a university, it was not purely an academic event. There were also many young professionals, entrepreneurs, and other businesspeople. I met two other students; we were few and far between. I met people doing social research, philosophers, priests, computer scientists, a law clerk, and more, all with a shared interest in Girard and a curiosity in how his theory could help address the problems our world seems to be powerless against. The panel topics were even more varied than the people in attendance, ranging from Dostoevsky to the Phoenix Suns and crossing through political, racial, religious, and media issues along the way. Peter Thiel also gave an interesting talk titled "Nihilism is not enough," warning of the shift to interiority (atom bombs to bytes) and the threat of a one-world totalitarian state. He finished by stating his personal preference for the Christianity of Constantine over that of Mother Theresa, causing a skandalon and provoking laughter.

What was the result of mixing such diverse topics and people? Might a lack of specificity reduce the potential for valuable progress? No, not at all. It was like a breath of fresh air, an opportunity to embrace and encounter the full picture of what we're up against today. We so often break things down, especially ourselves, in an attempt to make each piece more tangible, forgetting that it's all one. René Girard did not forget this, that's what makes him so hard to explain. The fox knows many things but the hedgehog knows one thing. René Girard knew one thing and boy did he know it. He knew it so well that he saw it everywhere and possibly even saw "things hidden since the foundation of the world." With the advance of technologies powerful enough to control the mob comes a polymath wise enough to reveal the inner workings. With unprecedented challenge comes the weapon needed to face it. This new social threat permeates into every corner of our world and so must such a theory. That's why this conference was so all-encompassing: it was bold enough to take on the full picture with a theory unquestionably up to the task.

Mimetic theory, though simple on the surface, is incredibly complex. Girardians can be zealous and understandably so, except that it can lead to a split between the real world and an application of Girard's theory to it. This conference was a meeting of the issues and the theory, but not yet enough mixing of them. It was a declaration: "here's the issues and here's the

large conference for fall, 2023 was devoted to poetry. "The Poets of Presence: Faith, Form, and Forging Community" gathered over 100 poets and poetry aficionados from October 27-29, 2023 at Loyola University Chicago's Water Tower Campus. The Keynote Address on 10/28 was delivered by the great Christian Wiman and the workshops were led by staff and supporters of *Presence: A Journal of Catholic Poetry*.

*Presence* is a community of writers who recognize Catholicism as fertile ground for the flourishing of contemporary poetry. The October conference consisted of a series of panels and workshops that explored how poetry navigates the intersection of matter and spirit, depicts the struggle between belief and doubt, and engages faith--precisely by being surprised by it, taking joy in it, and even finding humor in it.

Learn More  
About the  
Conference

**Fall 2023 Annual  
Teilhard de Chardin,  
S.J. Lecture Series -  
Paddy Gilger, S.J.**



theory, let's all together start thinking about what we can do with this." That's the next step, a large step that requires familiarity with mimetic theory and contemporary issues, one that I know many people are up to. Mimetic theory is destined for far more than just entrepreneurial success or theology. It's time for it to spread across the disciplines, across our culture, and within individuals. If we're going to stand up to the crisis of individualism, meaning, polarization, and intergroup conflict facing us today, it could be one of our greatest tools.

## Common Home Corps 2024



The Hank Center of Loyola University Chicago is proud to support and host the Common Home Corps (CHC). The CHC is a grant-bearing initiative that addresses the related challenges of climate change, youth climate anxiety, Catholic disaffiliation, and lack of the U.S. Church's fidelity to creation care. This program empowers young adults (18-35) to catalyze climate action in their parishes and dioceses by building on Pope Francis's "culture of encounter."

The project is collaboratively led by Catholic Climate Covenant, the Hank Center and the School of Environmental Sustainability at Loyola University Chicago, and the Center for Justice and Peace at Creighton University.

**Applications for the 2024 program participation will open soon!**

Watch the 2023 Common Home Corps Reflection Video

## Advent Reflection

An energetic and invested crowd gathered at McCormick Lounge to experience this year's Teilhard Lecture, "The Subject of Public Religion," given by Teilhard Fellow, Fr. Paddy Gilger, S.J., Ph.D.

Fr. Gilger tracked how the public sphere, the needed segment of society (and separate from the state and from the private sphere) is under stress. He then outlined many ways that public religion can help in reconstructing a plural public sphere and in doing so, "help stem the tide of de-democratization, anti-politics, demagoguery and autocracy." A most vibrant comment Q&A followed Fr. Gilger's superb talk.

**The Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., Fellowship in Catholic Studies** is an annual, endowed fellowship sponsored by the Hank Center. Scholars from across disciplines and from around the world whose work intersects with the rich intellectual, artistic, and historical tradition of Roman Catholicism are invited to teach, research, and deliver a major lecture. Fr. Gilger's lecture was the ninth in the series.

Video Available

**William Byrd  
Celebration**



**Reflection by:**  
**Dr. Naomi Fisher**  
**Director,**  
**Catholic Studies Program**  
**Assistant Professor,**  
**Department of Philosophy**



Advent is a time for reflection, longing, and hope.

Book X of St. Augustine's *Confessions* is a fitting Advent text, as a meditation on desire.

He describes our desires, how they can be misdirected, and what is their proper object. Attention to our desires teaches us who we really are and what we are made for. The guiding text for St. Augustine's Book X concludes that "the world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever" (1 John 2:17). In my unsatisfied and unsatisfying desires for worldly things lies a lesson: God is the ultimate object of our desire, and nothing less than God can satisfy us.

Advent is a beautiful season because it reminds us of a truth that seems almost at times a secret of Christianity: We discipline our desires not because we are killjoys, but in fact because when misdirected, they distract us from the joy that Christ brings, a joy that is complete: "If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete" (John 15:10-11).

We are not perfectly content, but always experience a lack, an ache, something we seem to remember but that lies out of reach for us in this lifetime. Such dissatisfied longing is a *gift*. Attentive to my own restlessness, I can direct my longings and hopes more properly to the Christ-child, and lay my treasures before him. The things of this world are fleeting, and we know that we long for *something else*. Recall St. Augustine's words: "Late have I loved you, beauty so old and so new: late have I loved you. And see, you were within and I was in the external world and sought you there, and in my unlovely state I plunged into those lovely created things which you made. You were with me,



Loyola University marked the 400th anniversary of William Byrd's death through a series of lectures and performances.

Regarded as one of the most important English composers of the Renaissance, Byrd was also a devout Catholic during a period that condemned Catholicism and its followers.

With programs presented by guest artists and Loyola music students, this series outlines his fascinating life and musical output. This series was led by Professor Kirsten Hedegaard and Department of Fine and Performing Arts with support from the Hank Center.

[Learn More Here](#)

### **Nexus Publication Luncheon**



*Nexus: Conversations on the Catholic Intellectual Tradition* is a digital-age journal that amplifies and publishes scholarly dialogue taking place in the Hank Center. Our second issue, titled *Robots and Rituals: Reflections on Faith in*

and I was not with you. The lovely things kept me far from you, though if they did not have their existence in you, they had no existence at all. You called and cried out loud and shattered my deafness. You were radiant and resplendent, you put to flight my blindness. You were fragrant, and I drew in my breath and now pant after you. I tasted you, and I feel but hunger and thirst for you. You touched me, and I am set on fire to attain the peace which is yours." O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law: come to save us, Lord our God!

### **Highlighting our Hank Center Graduate Student Fellows: Megan Gooley**



Megan Gooley is a PhD candidate in theological and social ethics at Fordham University. She holds a B.A. in physics from the University of St. Thomas and an M.T.S. in moral theology from the University of Notre Dame. Her dissertation, entitled "Integral Human Development: Vocation and Vision of Human Flourishing in the Catholic Social Tradition and International Development Praxis" explores the underlying substantive visions of the human person and human flourishing in international development paradigms, including CST's integral human development.

This project examines the developing theology of integral human development and the praxis of CST through an exploration of the mission and work of Catholic Relief Services since its foundation in 1943. Her research interests also include fundamental moral theology, economic ethics, global bioethics, and peace studies.

### **Hank Center Graduate Student Fellow: Megan Heeder**

the Era of Science and AI, was recently featured in America Magazine. We hosted a publication luncheon to honor those who contributed to the success of Nexus.

**This was a closed meeting by invitation only.**

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Megan Heeder is a Ph.D. candidate in Theology in the area of Systematics/Ethics at Marquette University. Heeder earned her Masters in Theological Studies from Boston College's School of Theology and Ministry after completing a Masters of Arts in Theology through Notre Dame's Echo (Faith Formation Leadership) Program. She graduated cum laude from the University of Notre Dame's Program of Liberal Studies with minors in Theology and Education, Schooling, and Society.

Considering the proliferation of social media and internet use in the lives of young people over the last two decades, Heeder's doctoral research asks what the Catholic Intellectual Tradition can contribute to a moral theological response to eating disorders and body dissatisfaction. Engaging Hans Urs von Balthasar's work on *kenosis* and Christ on the cross as the standard of beauty alongside Shelly Rambo's exploration of his Holy Saturday theology as a lens for understanding experiences of trauma, she offers the Balthasarian vision of Christ's love poured out on the cross and descent into Hell as a way to understand true beauty and accompaniment through the traumatic, isolating experiences of eating disorders.

After establishing a Christological understanding of beauty, Heeder argues that Thomistic virtue ethics offers a moral theological response for those grappling with how to understand their own goodness in light of the body dissatisfaction that surrounds them, or the eating disorder they are experiencing. Her most recent article, "Aquinas's Unity Thesis and Grace: Ingredients for Developing a Good Appetite in a Contemporary Age" was published in the *Journal of Moral Theology* and considers the role that Aquinas's unity thesis can play in aiding those struggling with eating disorders and body dissatisfaction.

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## RECOMMENDED READING



In the spirit of cultivating the Catholic intellectual and artistic tradition, CCIH recommends new and notable books several times a year that integrate, interrogate, and celebrate Catholicism in dialogue with the world.

**[The Jesuits in the United States](#)** (2023)

Author: David J. Collins, S.J. Publisher: Georgetown University Press.

A distinctive and modern telling of the history of the Society of Jesus in America.

The history of America cannot be told without the history of religion, the history of American religion cannot be told without the history of Catholicism, and the history of Catholicism in America cannot be told without the history of Jesuits in America.

*Jesuits in the United States* offers a panoramic overview of the Jesuit order in the United States from the colonial era to the present. David J. Collins, SJ, describes the development of the Jesuit order in the US against the background of American religious, cultural, and social history. He investigates the relationship of Jesuit activities in America to those in Europe and, by the twentieth century, to those around the world as US Jesuits are increasingly assigned to “foreign missions” and the political and religious connections between the US and the world, especially Latin America, grow. He covers the papacy’s suppression of the order and its restoration period. He also reflects on the future of the order in light of its past.

Readers familiar with the Jesuit tradition and those who are new to it will learn from this book’s distinctive and modern perspective—using twenty-first century scholarship and opinions on Jesuit slaveholding, the sexual abuse crisis, and other contemporary issues—on 500 years of Jesuit history in the United States.

**[Making Catholic America](#)** (2023)

Author: William S. Cossen. Publisher: Cornell University Press.

In *Making Catholic America*, William S. Cossen shows how Catholic men and women worked to prove themselves to be model American citizens in the decades between the Civil War and the Great Depression. Far from being outsiders in American history, Catholics took command of public life in the early twentieth century, claiming leadership in the growing American nation. They produced their own version of American history and claimed the power to remake the nation in their own image, arguing that they were the country’s most faithful supporters of freedom and liberty and that their church had birthed American independence.

*Making Catholic America* offers a new interpretation of American life in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, demonstrating the surprising success of an often-embattled religious group in securing for itself a place in the national community and in profoundly altering what it meant to be an American in the modern world.

**[The Catholicity of Reason](#)** (2013)

Author: D. C. Schindler. Publisher: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

An original argument for the recovery of a robust notion of reason and truth in response to modern rationalism and postmodern skepticism

*The Catholicity of Reason* explains the “grandeur of reason,” the recollection of which Benedict XVI has presented as one of the primary tasks in Christian engagement with the

contemporary world.

While postmodern thinkers -- religious and secular alike -- have generally sought to respond to the hubris of Western thought by humbling our presumptuous claims to knowledge, D. C. Schindler shows in this book that only a robust confidence in reason can allow us to remain genuinely open both to God and to the deep mystery of things. Drawing from both contemporary and classical theologians and philosophers, Schindler explores the basic philosophical questions concerning truth, knowledge, and being -- and proposes a new model for thinking about the relationship between faith and reason.

The reflections brought together in this book bring forth a dramatic conception of human knowing that both strengthens our trust in reason and opens our mind in faith.

### **Towards a Politics of Communion** (2021)

Author: Anna Rowlands. Publisher: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Anna Rowlands offers a guide to the main time periods, key figures, documents and themes of thinking developed as Catholic Social Teaching (CST). A wealth of material has been produced by the Catholic Church during its long history which considers the implications of scripture, doctrine and natural law for the way these elements live together in community - most particularly in the tradition of social encyclicals dating from 1891. Rowlands takes a fresh approach in weaving overviews of the central principles with the development of thinking on political community and democracy, migration, and integral ecology, and by considering the increasingly critical questions concerning the role of CST in a pluralist and post-secular context. As such, this book offers both an incisive overview of this distinctive body of Catholic political theology and a new and challenging contribution to the debate about the transformative potential of CST in contemporary society.

### **Divine Rage: Malcolm X's Challenge to Christians** (2023)

Author: Marjorie Corbman. Publisher: Orbis Books.

Malcolm X asked: did Christianity have nothing more to offer Black Americans than spiritual “novocaine,” enabling them to suffer peacefully? He gave voice to the frustration many Black Americans felt over the expectation that, unlike white Americans, Black people were expected to respond to violence with “superhuman” calm and forgiveness.

Malcolm’s apocalyptic vision—in which the world’s oppressed would join together to make God’s righteous judgment on racism, colonialism, and all forms of slavery—galvanized, outraged, and troubled many. *Divine Rage* shows how Christian activists and theologians wrestled with it, including Rev. Albert B. Cleage, Jr., a Congregationalist minister who based his community, the Shrine of the Black Madonna, on Malcolm’s message; a young scholar, James Cone, inspired to develop a Christian theology of Black Power; Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons, a Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) leader who embraced Islam and pushed SNCC to espouse a more radical Black consciousness; Thomas Merton, a Catholic monk and public figure who struggled with his relationship to Catholic peace activists and the Black Power movement; and Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, queer activists of color who moved fluidly between the revolutionary language of Black Power and a religious practice grounded in the saints.

### **Vatican II: A Very Short Introduction** (2023)

Authors: Shaun Blanchard and Stephen Bullivant. Publisher: Oxford University Press.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), or Vatican II, is arguably the most significant event in the life of the Catholic Church since the Reformation. The Council initiated, intentionally or not, profound changes not simply within Catholic theology, but in the religious, social, and moral lives of the world's billion Catholics. It also reconfigured, intellectually and practically, the Church's engagements with those outside of it - most obviously with regard to other religions.

The sixteen documents formally issued by Vatican II constitute some of the most influential writings of the whole twentieth century. Debates over their correct interpretation and authority are constant, but they remain an indispensable point-of-reference for all areas of Catholic life, from liturgy and sacraments, to the Church's vast network of charitable and educational endeavours the world over.

In this *Very Short Introduction*, Shaun Blanchard and Stephen Bullivant present the backstory to this event. Vatican II is explored in light of the wider history of the Catholic Church and placed in the tumultuous context of the 1960s. It distills the research on Vatican II, employing the first-hand accounts of participants and observers, and the official proceedings of the Council to paint a rich picture of one of the most important events of the last century.

### [The Thorny Grace of It](#) (2013)

Author: Brian Doyle. Publisher: Loyola Press.

Best-selling and award-winning essayist Brian Doyle knows that the heartbeat of Catholicism is found not in papal decrees and pageantry, but in the parish halls, potluck dinners, and the believing community. In this spirited collection of more than 40 essays, Doyle employs his trademark wit, candor, and gusto for life and faith to reignite readers' excitement for Catholicism as he plumbs some of the stickier and trickier elements of the Catholic character. From preparing for his first confession with a fake laundry list of sins to his young observations of President Kennedy's assassination, Doyle's passionate writing makes for a heartfelt, genuine, and often laugh-out-loud read. *The Thorny Grace of It* reaffirms that the Catholic faith—imperfect as it is—is wildly aflame in hearts and lives everywhere.

### [Small Things Like These](#) (2022).

Author: Claire Keegan. Publisher: Faber and Faber Ltd.

It is 1985, in an Irish Town. During the weeks leading up to Christmas, Bill Furlong, a coal and timber merchant, faces into his busiest season. As he does the rounds, he feels the past rising up to meet him - and encounters the complicit silences of a people both controlled by the Church's authoritarian Irish past and the ones stamped with the courage and truth of the Gospel.

The long-awaited new work from the author of *Foster*, *Small Things Like These* is an unforgettable story of hope, quiet heroism and tenderness.

### [Zero at the Bone](#) (2023)

Author: Christian Wiman. Publisher: Macmillan Publishers.

Poets of Presence keynoter, Christian Wiman, has a much anticipated new book.

Few contemporary writers ask the questions about faith, morality, and God that Christian Wiman does, and even fewer—perhaps none—do so with his urgency and eloquence. Wiman, an award-winning poet and the author of *My Bright Abyss*, lays the motion of his mind on the page in this genre-defying work, an indivisible blend of poetry, criticism, theology, and searing memoir. As Marilynne Robinson wrote, “[Wiman's] poetry and his scholarship have a purifying urgency that is rare in this world . . . It enables him to say new things in timeless language, so that the reader's surprise and assent are one and the same.”

*Zero at the Bone* begins with Wiman's preoccupation with despair, and through fifty brief pieces, he unravels its seductive appeal. The book is studded with the poetry and prose of writers who inhabit Wiman's thoughts, and the voices of Wallace Stevens, Lucille Clifton, Emily Dickinson, and others join his own. At its heart and Wiman's, however, are his family—his young children (who ask their own invaluable questions, like “Why are you a poet? I mean why?”), his wife, and those he grew up with in West Texas. Wiman is the rare thinker who takes up the mantle of our greatest mystics and does so with an honest, profound, and contemporary sensibility. *Zero at the Bone* is a revelation.

### [Poems for the Weeping Kind](#) (2023)

Author: Althea Davis. Publisher: Self-Published.

This first collection of poetry has a profound power. Davis speaks from raw, hardscrabble experience on topics including love, loss, God, trauma, healing, family, and dreams is unflinchingly self-reflective and poignant, "an examination of the situations in life that define us as individuals and unify us as humans." *Poems for the Weeping Kind* is Althea Davis' unflinching and honest reckoning with the real--through poetry-- and the culmination of a lifelong dream. It will be her last self-published work.

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## About the Center

The Joan and Bill Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage exists to help faculty and students recognize and research Roman Catholic thought and its link to all academic disciplines in the university. It also seeks to convey that thought to other audiences inside and outside Loyola University Chicago.



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