Faith's Reasons

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Faith’s Reasons

The Catholic Intellectual Tradition at the University of Dayton

“St. Peter said that we must give a reason for the faith that is in us, and I am trying to give you those reasons . . .” —Dorothy Day

Remembering Joy and Hope

Forty years ago, the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) conceived and issued the pathbreaking Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, known by its Latin title, Gaudium et Spes. To commemorate the document and explore its evolving legacy, UD’s Forum on the Catholic Intellectual Tradition Today is sponsoring a conference from September 25 to 27, 2003.


Other plenary speakers are Christine Firer Hinze from the Theology Department at Marquette University, who will speak to the theological and historical context of Gaudium et Spes, and Rev. Felix Wilfrid, Professor and Chair of Christian Studies at the University of Madras, India, who will speak on the document’s international import and influence.

Eight workshop sessions will invite attendees to explore various aspects of the challenges Gaudium et Spes posed in key areas of human endeavor. Workshop discussions will delve especially into the role of laity and Catholic universities in reflecting on and animating the Church in the modern world. The wide range of topics explored in Gaudium et Spes offers opportunities for significant interdisciplinary participation.

Ursula King

On January 28, 2003, Dr. Ursula King presented a CIT faculty seminar on “The Phenomenon of Love—Critical Reflections on the Writings of Teilhard de Chardin.” An internationally-known expert on Teilhard’s work, Dr. King was on campus to help inaugurate the new UD Women’s Center. In addition, she gave a public lecture entitled “Christianity and Feminism: Do They Need Each Other?” and on January 30 received an honorary doctorate of humane letters from the University. Dr. King is professor emerita and senior research fellow at the University of Bristol, England.

Brown-Bag CIT

The Forum on the Catholic Intellectual Tradition Today awarded four Research Council Summer grants for the summer of 2002. All four recipients reported on the results of their work in brown-bag lunch discussions over the course of the academic year. Dennis Doyle of the Department of Religious Studies was funded to study the life and work of John Wesley as well as the origins of Methodism in support of his ongoing work with the current round of dialogue between United Methodists and Roman Catholics in the U.S. He is currently a co-drafter of the basic text for the dialogue, as well as at work on a book on Wesley. John Heitmann investigated the scientific career of UD Marianist Bro. William Beck, SM., in a project entitled “Marianist Science: Bro. William Beck, S.M., and his Synthesis of Science and Religion.”

Sheila Hassell Hughes of the English Department shared the results of her research into “Religious and Gender Syncretism in Louise’s Erdrich’s ‘Last Report on Miracles on Little No Horse.’” Danielle Poe of Philosophy asked “What does love have to do with justice?” as part of a project entitled “Suffering Love: Romantic Love and Justice,” in which she works to show that romantic love does not cut a couple off from the world; on the contrary, it can be the groundwork for responding to injustice in the world.

Conference Preparation Faculty Dinners

In preparation for the Fall 2003 conference commemorating Gaudium et Spes, the Forum sponsored a series of dinner discussions of the document and its context for faculty and staff. A total of almost 30 people from every school and college in the university attended two initial dinners. The discussions were successful enough that each group asked to continue
them at an additional dinner.

2003 Marianist Award

On September 3, 2003, at 4:30 p.m. in the Kennedy Union Ballroom, the University will present the Marianist Award to Margaret O'Brien Steinfels and Peter Steinfels. The Marianist Award recognizes the achievement of a Catholic who has made a significant contribution to scholarly and intellectual life. Both past editors of Commonweal, the most prominent lay-edited Catholic journal of opinion, Margaret and Peter Steinfels have for decades initiated and facilitated public discussion of the role of Catholic universities and Catholic intellectuals in American public life. Marianist Award winners receive an honorarium and an original piece of Marian art, and are asked to present a public lecture reflecting on the connection between their faith and their intellectual life.

Death of Alex Cameron

Professor of English Alex J. Cameron died on February 24, 2003. A member of UD's English department since 1964, Dr. Cameron studied at Notre Dame with Frank O'Malley, who taught a well-known and -loved "Modern Catholic Writers" course for over 35 years. Dr. Cameron in his turn taught the Catholic Novel course at UD, and was a witty and collegial member of the general education cluster in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. In addition, he had been for 22 years the official pronouncer for the Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee (and as such has a bit part in the Oscar-nominated documentary "Spellbound"). At a meeting of the College of Arts and Sciences faculty on February 27, English Department chair Brian Conniff offered the following prayer:

God, bless all the keepers of words—
the most exotic of creatures—
because we need their precision to measure,
their colors to dream,
and their rhythms to sing.

Bless all the children learning to spell,
most of all when they are told
they must always go from left to right
and when they discover that every rule,
at the worst possible time,
turns out to have an exception.

Bless most of all the children who stand alone,
moving a hidden finger along an invisible pad,
on a stage where the judges are armed with sentences
prepared in advance, and it is nearly impossible to be cool.

God, bless the words themselves,
as they flow through history
from the Himalayas, the Alps, and the Andes,
into the wide Midwestern river

where once, in a book,
a runaway boy sailed on an abandoned raft
and with a voice borrowed from servants,
spoke to a runaway slave,
and suddenly found the father he had always wanted
and the father he deserved.

God, help us to remember
the saints who sit on the porches of heaven,
practicing words like "euphuistic"
and "pantagruelian,"
because they have lived in our world
and know that, sometimes, life is exactly like that.
Let them know that we are grateful
for every word
when we need to understand each other

and speak to you.

Recent Activities of University Professor of Faith and Culture

Fr. Jim Heft is spending this year as a visiting scholar at the University of Southern California where is he working with the leadership of that university to build the endowment for the Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies (www.ifacs.com). His article, "Theologians, Bishops and the Mandatum," recently published in the Bulletin of the Council of Societies for the Study of Religion (April 2002), will be republished in Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice. He co-authored with James Davidson, sociologist of religion at Purdue, "The Mission of Catholic High Schools and Today's Millennials: Three Suggestions," which will appear in the May issue of Catholic Education. Horizons 29/1 (Spring 2002): 94-113 published his article describing one of the UD inter-disciplinary faculty seminars: "A Study of Catholicism: An Interdisciplinary Faculty Seminar." He has contributed four entries ("Catholic Identity," "John Tracy Ellis," "Ex corde ecclesiae," and "John Henry Newman") to the forthcoming Catholic Schools in the US: An Encyclopedia. He also has written a chapter, "Identity and Mission: Catholic Higher Education," for a forthcoming book, A Handbook of Research on Catholic Higher Education, edited by Thomas Hunt, Ellis Joseph and Ronald Nuzzi. He has contributed the article on "Academic Freedom" to the new edition of the New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 1: 51-57; he also wrote the entry on the "University of Dayton" for volume 4.449-450. His October Valparaiso University address, "The 'Gentleman' and the Christian," will be published this Spring in the Cresset; a version of
that presentation was given at Fordham University on April 23 to finish out their year-long lecture series on Newman and the idea of a university. He spoke at a conference at Yale University at the end of March on "Theological Perspectives on Accountability and Governance in the Church." Other speaking engagements include an address this June to the Association of Catholic Colleges of Canada and in late July, addresses on the multi-campus Catholic University of Australia. In the meantime, he continues to work on his book on Catholic higher education. He is finishing his final year on the board of trustees of St. Mary's University. He looks forward to returning to the University of Dayton in the Fall of 2003.

**Thanks to Fr. McGrath**

Fr. Jack McGrath, S.M., Ph.D., stepped down this spring after eleven years as chair of the University’s Forum on the Catholic Intellectual Tradition Today. The Forum was established in 1991 by then-President Bro. Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., in response to the recommendations of the Committee on the Catholic and Marianist Identity of the University of Dayton. In its eleven years, the Forum has sponsored two conferences, numerous speakers from a wide range of disciplines, two summer seminars for faculty and staff, more than 20 faculty summer research grants, and multiple other opportunities for faculty, staff and students to engage in the Forum’s mission of enlivening the Catholic intellectual tradition on campus. Fr. McGrath’s expertise and fidelity have both been unflagging, and everyone on campus with any concern for the vitality of its Catholic intellectual life knows what a debt of thanks we owe him.

**Short Notes**

The Religious Studies department welcomed to campus two Distinguished Visiting Professors—in the fall 2002 semester, Patrick Carey from the Department of Theology at Marquette University and, in the winter 2003 semester, M. Jamie Phelps, O.P., from the Department of Theology at Loyola University Chicago and the Institute for Black Catholic Studies.

The University’s English Department once again hosted the Mideast Conference on Christianity and Literature on October 18 and 19, 2002.

The Forum sponsored two events in November 2002 with author Jim Cullen. The first was a dinner and discussion of Cullen’s book *Restless in the Promised Land: Catholics and the American Dream*. On the following day, Professor Cullen presented a public lecture entitled "The Resurrectionist: The Catholic Trajectory of Bruce Springsteen’s Music, 1972-2002."

The general education cluster in the Catholic intellectual tradition sponsored a discussion of several articles commenting on the sexual abuse scandals in the Catholic Church on April 2, 2003.

**UD Faculty: Recent Work in Brief**

Therese Lysaught (Religious Studies) has made a number of presentations over the past year. She participated in the 11th Annual World Day of the Sick in Washington, D.C., where she responded to Bishop Nienstadt’s presentation on "Bioethical Challenges and the Church." In November, she presented on "Serving the Underserved: Stories from the Front Lines" at Loyola University of Chicago, Stritch School of Medicine. In October, she presented "Keywords and Concepts in Bioethics: RESPECT" at the annual meeting of the American Society of Bioethics and Humanities. Also in October she presented "Save the Children: Children as Icons of Biotechnology," at UT-Austin, funded by the Pew Christian Scholars Program. In September she presented "If God Were One of Us: Thinking Theologically about Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research" at Loyola College in Baltimore.

In April she was part of a symposium at Wingate College on "Should we Choose our Children's Genes?" At the end of March she gave a keynote address entitled "Gene Therapy: Clinical Realities and Ethical Challenges" at the second annual conference on Ethical, Social, and Moral Implications of Human Genetic Engineering in San Antonio sponsored by CHRISTUS health system, the University of the Incarnate Word, Oblate School of Theology, and the Hispanic Center for Excellence at UT Health Science Center. At the beginning of March, she gave a keynote address on the "Ethical and Policy Issues in Stem Cell Research" at St. Michael's College in Vermont as part of their newly launched "Gospel of Life series."

In addition, she has written an entry on "human gene transfer research" for the Encyclopedia of Bioethics and has prepared other pieces for the Journal of Medicine and Humanities, U.S. Catholic, Commonweal, the Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics, and a chapter entitled “Power Corrupts... Religion and the Disciplinary Matrix of Bioethics" for "Faith at the Frontiers: Religion and Public Bioethics." She has received a grant from the Louisville Institute to help fund a year-long sabbatical during which she will work on a book on the practice of anointing the sick and bioethics.
In January, the manuscript of Jack McGrath, S.M.'s (Religious Studies) short book, *Reading the Signs of the Times, Speaking to a Changing World, A Survey of Catholic Theology 1800 - 2000*, went to the presses in Madrid. We hope to see it soon.

Having completed his thesis on the Lutheran-Catholic accord, *The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, Religious Studies doctoral student Biff Rocha is presenting various chapters of his thesis at the National Communication Association's annual meeting. He is also presenting his work on the spiritual foundations of Miami University at this year's Ohio Academy of Religion. Finally, his archival work on the Italian missionary priest, Januarius De Concilio, will be presented at the conference of the Institute for Liberal Studies.

**Enrique Romaguera (Languages)**

will be working this summer on finishing his next play, in Spanish, which deals with medical/religious/human issues in the context of a Hospital with a terminal patient. The provisional title in English is *Fiesta for Germs or Don Pepin is Fading Fast.* “The intended catch, and difficulty, of this play,” Professor Romaguera says, “is that we never see Don Pepin. The tone of the play is slightly humorous but poignant.”

**Maureen A. Tilley** (Religious Studies) participated in a panel at the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Church History in Chicago in January on teaching the history of Christianity in one semester. Panelists from a variety of institutional settings presented the joys and agonies of covering two thousand years of Christianity in fifteen weeks for students who aren’t entirely sure who came first, Paul or Martin Luther.

**Tom Wendorf, S.M.** (English), published “Greene, Tolkien, and the Mysterious Relations of Realism and Factasy,” in the Fall 2002 issue of *Renascence*.

**For the next issue:**
The next issue of “Faith’s Reasons” will appear in the fall of 2003. If you know of any other activities, events, people, or publications that should be highlighted here, please bring them to the attention of the editors. Contact Una Cadegan by e-mail (Una.Cadegan@notes.udayton.edu) or at the Dept. of History, The University of Dayton, Dayton, OH 45469-1540.

**Faith’s Reasons**
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