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Summer 2023 Fellows

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Summer 2023 Fellows

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By Kayla Harris

The Marian Library fellowships are awarded by the International Marian Research Institute (IMRI) and are currently funded by a gift from the Marianist Province of the United States. These fellowships demonstrate the Marian Library's continued support of IMRI to promote scholarship in Marian theology and related topics with IMRI's recent move to the College of Arts and Sciences.

RESIDENT SCHOLAR FELLOWSHIP

Dr. Hsuan Tsen, a senior lecturer in the Department of Art and Design at the University of Dayton, will receive the 2023 Resident Scholar Fellowship to continue research on visual exchanges between Japan and America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Tsen's research explores the work artist John La Farge produced in the wake of a trip to Japan in 1886.

La Farge was successful in his day, Tsen says, but his works are relatively unknown today.

“Some of those are stained glass, which really requires one to see them in person to appreciate their full effect,” she says. His style also does not cater directly to today’s trends.

“He uses some very sharp color contrasts, and in the case of the works I am interested in, they mix East Asian and Western religion and references in surprising ways,” Tsen says. “I am particularly interested in the ways in which La Farge, who was Catholic, navigated the terrain of religion in the Northeast at the end of the 19th century. He was making work for Protestant clients and spaces and was also part of the trend of integrating a fascination with Buddhism into his work. My research focuses on his representations of the bodhisattva Kannon and the ways in which it was inflected by – or even merged with – Mary.”

In addition to published material on Marian depictions in art, Tsen also plans to consult archival collections and visual art, such as works featured in the 2017 Marian Library exhibit *“Ex Oriente Lux”: Marian Art of Asia*.

“It was largely viewing this exhibition that prompted me to apply for the fellowship,” she says. “I’m really excited to be given the time and space to focus on this work. I’ve only dipped into the library briefly on a few occasions so am looking forward to exploring all that it has to offer.”

The resident scholar fellowship includes a \$3,000 stipend and the expectation that the researcher will present their project to the University of Dayton community in the following academic year.

VISITING SCHOLAR FELLOWSHIP

Dr. Jack Mulder, philosophy professor and philosophy department chair at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, will receive the 2023 Visiting Scholar Fellowship for his project centered on Marian philosophical theology, or as he calls it, philosophical Mariology. Mulder’s existing scholarship has brought about dialogue between Protestant and Catholic thinkers concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary through several particular Marian chapters in books he has authored.

Mulder will spend several weeks at the Marian Library this summer to work on a forthcoming book project.

“I’ve never been to the library before, but I look forward to my visit,” Mulder says. “I’m simply eager to be in a place devoted to reflection on the Blessed Mother. I plan to begin my time at the library working on how the tilma* of Our Lady of Guadalupe relates to icons and the view we should take of them. I also hope to devote some time to Montfortian spirituality and how philosophically we might understand things such as Marian consecration.”

Mulder noted the benefit of having access to a range of materials in one place.

“The ready availability of texts focused on Mariology — in somewhat shorter supply on a Protestant campus — would be a great aid to my work,” he said in his application.

The visiting scholar fellowship includes a \$3,000 stipend and the expectation that the researcher will document their experience working with the collection in some form, such as a blog post or newsletter article.

MORE INFORMATION

The applications for the 2024 summer fellowships will open in October 2023. More information about the fellowships, including reflections from previous recipients, is available on the [Marian Library website](#).

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Kayla Harris is an associate professor and assistant director of the Marian Library.

*A tilma is a cape or a cloak. In this case, it refers to the garment worn by St. Juan Diego at the time the Blessed Mother appeared to him in Mexico in 1531. It bears an image of the Blessed Mother that is said to have appeared after her apparition.