



## From the Director

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The "Commencement Edition" of our newsletter is usually a retrospective of spring events and a celebration of the many kinds of dialogue that the Hank Center has facilitated this year. Beginning with our very successful [Catholic Imagination conference](#) in September and concluding abruptly with the excellent March 11th event on [Stephen Colbert as a public Catholic](#), I am happy to report that, even with the convulsive arrival of the dangerous coronavirus, we have had a most productive year.

This newsletter touches on important Center business, but it is also written with a more personal spirit in mind--one that connects our current moment to moments that, hopefully, transcend and endure. One of our featured pieces is by Frances Rafferty, a Catholic Studies minor and one of our undergraduate assistants at CCIH; the other is by Cathy O'Sullivan, a cherished long-time staff member who "temped" for us this spring. I hope you enjoy their thoughtful, life-giving reflections.

For me--as my vocation as educator is first and foremost--the most important group to think about is our graduating seniors and graduate students, the Class of 2020. My time with students in the classroom is always a treat, both on campus and online; but this spring my experience has been particularly nourishing and revelatory. Loyola students work through many obstacles in any season-- and this was true well before the arrival of Covid-19. But the pandemic has laid bare so much about our lives together, and the Class of 2020 has met the current crisis with grit, compassion, and good humor, whether as Loyolans, Americans, or Global Citizens.

The challenges (and the inequities) we face today are legion--especially for the poor and marginalized--and there are many dragons in our paths. We have students who moonlight as first responders, who work in

grocery stores, who are caring for sick relatives, who are stuck in Chicago because of travel bans, who lack the basic technological tools that they need to thrive, who are grieving the loss of academic ritual, who see now what an precious gift university life and learning is, who are anxious and fearful about an increasingly precarious future. They carry a lot; and we, who are (hopefully) in our maturity-- as parents, educators, and leaders-- can do better to lighten their load. Still, it is moving to see how students lighten *each other's* load-- how they support one another at every turn. They make the beautiful possibility of [\*cura personalis\*](#), an Ignatian hallmark so central to our educational mission, into something more than a slogan and I see it every day.

But it is a rough road and we are all in need of good care. For the first time ever, three of our nine graduating Catholic Studies minors could not finish their capstone. They had too much on their plate, a development that tuned me more acutely into things-as-they-are. I am reminded here of another Loyolan, my grandfather [Cyril F. Meenan](#), who also had to make tough decisions about finishing his degree in the face of crisis. He left Loyola in 1931, in the heyday of his senior year, because he needed to work to support his family as the Great Depression began to assert a more pervasive presence. Cyril had grit, compassion, and good humor as well; but he was also a person of profound faith, which, for him, was central and decisive. It took a little moxie, but Cyril landed on his two feet, just as we all will if we lean into each other in the best spirit of Jesuit/Ignatian education-- a spirit and legacy that marked my grandfather's life even though he was never able to complete his Loyola degree.

This for me makes the completion of degrees this year all the more meaningful; and, as we wrap this too-quiet and eerily unceremonious week of commencement, I turn back to the Class of 2020. While CCIH invites and engages all LUC students in conversation, the Catholic Studies minor, supported by CCIH, Theology, and the College of Arts and Sciences, is its primary student community--and I can't tell you how proud I am of this year's graduating class. We had a memorable Zoom Graduation Banquet and St. Ignatius Medal Ceremony--well attended by the Catholic Studies community, many alumni, and faculty guests. Given the pandemic, the capstone projects were a little less formal this year, but the content and creativity were of as high caliber as ever. They are linked below and we wish our graduating minors a hearty congratulations!

My dad, God rest his soul, wrote to me just after I graduated--a commencement letter of sorts that we in my family refer to fondly as his [Polonius Address](#). He grew up down the street from LUC, never went to college, and spent his career as a "Mad Man" in the advertising world of the 60's, 70's, and 80's. His words are timeless, and I thought I'd share a piece of his wisdom and insight with our graduates and with you. As the letter is addressed is to me, you will noticed the gendered diction--and he was certainly a person of his age. But the practical wisdom is implicit and adaptable. I offer the following to all as a commencement message in the spirit of grit, compassion, and good humor:

Being a gentleman has nothing to do with the age in which you live--either you are or you are not. What is more important is being a doer, a leader, a creator, a finder of the path-- to have the guts to go after it and the courage to make mistakes. And to do these things in a manner which does not compromise your ethics or integrity--or the other guy's either. You don't have to get real wordy in this either; but, Michael, always add the human touch.

If the length of this Director's Greeting is any example, I've clearly run afoul of the "wordy" part. As for the rest, a work in progress!

As we close, I'd like thank [our dedicated staff](#)--Center Manager, Meghan Toomey, Graduate Assistant (and Newsletter editor), Kathleen McNutt; and our Catholic Studies student interns, Justyna Skowronski ('20), Katharine Flores, Frances Rafferty--for all that they have done to contribute to the Center's flourishing this (very busy) year. And thanks to you as well, dear reader, for your time and attention. We hope to dialogue with you next fall at our events-- and hopefully in person. Keep well and in good spirits and,

Warmest Regards,

## VIDEOS



Retrospective on the Third Biennial Catholic Imagination Conference

Did you know that the Hank Center's [YouTube channel](#) has 147 videos of past conferences, events, and conversations with scholars? Explore the archive and subscribe for new videos!

Subscribe to our [Mailing List](#)



## HONORING THE CLASS OF 2020



Each year the graduating class of Catholic Studies minors creates capstone presentations that integrate what they have learned over the last four years. This year's capstone projects are as unique as the time we are in, and which they represent: socially distant, but spiritually and intellectually alive. From painting to song to a cookbook, the Class of 2020 has creatively synthesized the Catholic Studies experience in their final projects.

[View this year's capstone projects on our website!](#)

## UPCOMING EVENT: Zoom Forum

### EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED: REFLECTIONS ON "HOME" ON THE 5TH ANNIVERSARY OF *LAUDATO SI'*

The vision outlined by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* is religiously incarnational, scientifically astute, and morally communitarian. Keeping with the best traditions of the Catholic sacramental imagination, Pope Francis's all encompassing embrace of God's creation begins in a particular biosphere but also stretches out to include the entire community of the cosmos. Join us for a compelling conversation marking the 5th anniversary of the publication of this landmark encyclical.

Featuring



**Paul Elie**  
Senior Fellow, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, & World Affairs at Georgetown University



**Michael Schuck**  
Professor, Department of Theology & Institute of Environmental Sustainability, Loyola University Chicago



**Nancy Tuchman**  
Founding Dean, Institute of  
Environmental  
Sustainability,  
Loyola University Chicago

Co-sponsored by Commonweal, the Institute for Environmental Studies, and the Department of Theology.

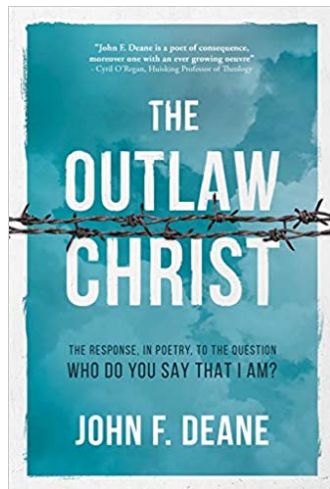
**Thursday, May 21**  
**4-5:30 PM (CST)**  
Join us on Zoom!

[Sign up now for the Zoom link](#)

***This event is free and open to the public. Please register by 5PM on May 20.  
[Registration is Required](#) to receive the link to the Zoom Webinar.***

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

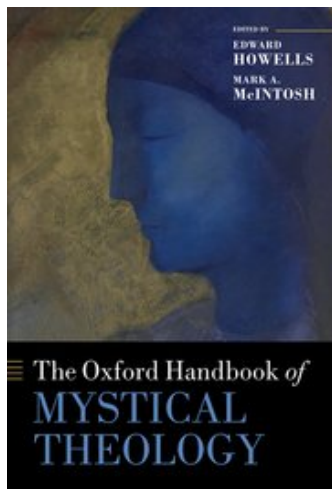
It has been a big year for publications coming out of Hank Center-sponsored symposia, conferences, and events! Keep up to date on new publications on our [website](#).



### **The Outlaw Christ: The Response, in Poetry, to the Question, "Who Do You Say That I Am?"**

By John F. Deane

John F. Deane was the [2016 Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. Fellow](#) at the Hank Center. His new book includes poetry from Loyola students who took part in his course, A Faith in Poetry.

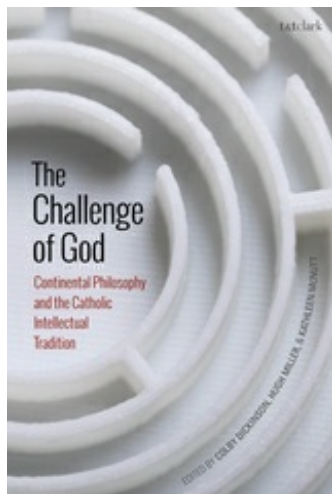


### **The Oxford Handbook of Mystical Theology**

Edited by Edward Howells and Mark A. McIntosh

Many of the collaborators on this volume met at Loyola's Lake Shore Campus in 2015 to begin to shape this major book.

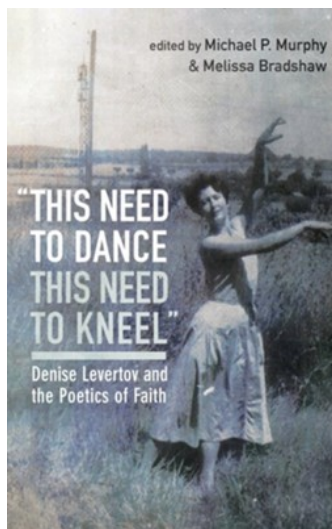
Mark McIntosh was the recipient of the Hank Center's [2019 Living Tradition Award](#).



### **The Challenge of God: Continental Philosophy and the Catholic Intellectual Tradition**

Edited by Colby Dickinson, Hugh Miller, and Kathleen McNutt

This volume grew out of the keynote addresses at the 2016 conference, [The Challenge of God](#).



### **"this need to dance/ this need to kneel": Denise Levertov and the Poetics of Faith**

Edited by Michael P. Murphy and Melissa Bradshaw

This volume grew out of presentations given at the 2015 conference, [The Poetry and Poetic Life of Denise Levertov](#) .

## **LOYOLA, AT A DISTANCE: REFLECTIONS DURING COVID-19**

*Thank you to staff members Frances Rafferty and Cathy O'Sullivan for sharing their perspectives. Frances writes about her experience of this past strange semester, while Cathy shares what Loyola means to her.*

Here we are, approaching Graduation, 2020, 8 weeks from when Loyola moved all of their classes online -- when the



**Frances Rafferty**  
Hank Center  
Undergraduate Research  
Assistant

world turned topsy-turvy for most Loyola students. After talking to several people and scrolling through social media in a cabin-fever daze, there are many things we miss about life before COVID-19 at Loyola.

For one thing, we are missing the physicality of life at Loyola. For myself, I can say that the sedentary lifestyle of social-distancing has put a toll on my motivation and self-esteem. Another aspect of life at Loyola that folks are missing is the comfort of nature and Lake Michigan. Thankfully, I am in an environment where I can go on runs, bike rides, and walks while maintaining social distancing. A blessing that I've received in this change in climate is being able to see the sunset from the shores of West Michigan instead of the sunrise in front of the Madonna Della Strada Chapel. It's not the same, but, in a way, it's poetic that I can see the sustainer of life from a different perspective.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of this unprecedented (forgive me, fellow COVID-19 quarantine participants) transition is the tension that I am experiencing between wanting to step into vulnerability while simultaneously practicing emotional distancing amid social distancing. I would like to talk and be with people, but it takes a significant amount of emotional energy to talk on the phone with someone. Whether it's my own family members or my spiritual director, all I want to is to crawl back into my vulnerability-proof shell. This concept of emotional distancing is prevalent in the countless Zoom meetings that I joined in the last two months. About two weeks into social-distancing, professors requested that we not mute ourselves or mute our video so that it can appear as if we are engaged during their class. While I understand that muting ourselves may come across as a sign of disrespect to our professors, it is easier to put up a technological and abstract barrier so that I cannot be seen. This distancing is because I do not want to be seen. I want to see.

These Zoom meetings and forced phone calls are representative of my spiritual life at the moment. I had something quite traumatic happen to a loved one at the beginning of March, and it has been difficult for me to process these emotions while still being close to them. Since this has happened, I cannot even begin to bring myself to God in prayer. Sure, I can do yoga for an hour every day, go on a walk, listen to music; but connecting with the Divine is another issue. .

As a descendant of Irish immigrants from the 20th century, keeping all of my burdens in my heart is commonplace and, actually, encouraged. If you have seen one of John Mulaney's comedy specials on Netflix, you may be familiar with the following comedic bit:

"Irish people, they don't tell you a thing. Irish people keep it so bottled up. The plan with Irish people is like, "I'll keep all my emotions right here, and then one day, I'll die."  
-John Mulaney, *New in Town*

I can relate; and, after expressing my spiritual state to someone close to me, they were able to see that I am experiencing desolation. Desolation is a spiritual state where you do not have the desire to pray, you are not feeling God's presence, and you do not have the motivation to connect to God in prayer. St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, says that this is part of the spiritual life. While I have experienced profound moments of consolation and connection with God this year, desolation can often happen when this occurs. Although this is normal for the spiritual life, it is difficult for me to remember and reach the moments of consolation that I have experienced.

Something that has kept me moving forward is ecology. While not my primary discipline as an Environmental Policy major, it has cropped up in moments of gratitude in the last month of social distancing. Whether this is through *Missa Gaia* (the Earth Mass) by Paul Winter, Wild Green Memes for Ecological Fiends, or reading about building up soil organic matter content in a magazine; God has shown Godself to me through moments of inspiration, awe, and laughter even when I have not been willing to meet God on our usual terms. God knows that I am struggling to be vulnerable and to be held, and right now; and when I pause and take stock, I can see the joy (even if it is minuscule) in my daily life.

It is in these small moments of joy in my day that I am grateful for my life and for the Sustainer of Life. It is through the real glory and pain of life that I am learning to see God in all things. During this time of desolation because of COVID-19, I encourage all of you to look

back on how you have grown as a part of creation, and how you would like to grow in the future. The next few months provide me with a sense of stability, as I will be moving out to Montana until the end of July to engage in agricultural research. While this experience still holds uncertainty for me, as does the future for most of us, I am already looking forward to reminders from God of consolation through creation and meeting new people. The future is uncertain for those of us leaving Loyola and those who are continuing in the Fall. But, I encourage all of you to conjure moments of consolation from your experience at Loyola, cherish them, and remember that God's comfort is here for you now and will return when we return to Loyola. Until then, peace and good to you all.

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**Cathy O'Sullivan**  
Temporary Administrative  
Assistant

Getting a job at Loyola University was monumental to me. My primary purpose was to have my six children come to Loyola tuition free. I know others come with a higher intellectual purpose, like being an asset to the university, but I didn't have such lofty goals. I just wanted my kids to go to college, and tuition free to boot was beyond my wildest dreams. What a gift the Jesuits give their employees.

I worked in the Institute of Pastoral Studies for twelve years. There I met the most amazing people. At that time most of the graduate students were older and had already made their way in life and found something missing and wanted to give back. The Pastoral Counseling Program had international religious students who came from all over the world. They were rich with experiences and personalities. I remember a woman from England telling me at the end of her two year program that it had been life changing for her; that said a lot about what was happening there.

At that time, it was also a low point in Loyola's history. Enrollment was at its lowest, there were cuts and then more cuts, and morale was very low. Then Fr. Garanzini was announced as the President and the word around IPS was that they knew him and he would be a great leader for Loyola. And he was: enrollment went up, the endowment grew, he had the environment of the university change,. Buildings were being torn down and new ones popping up so much that if you hadn't been here in five years, you wouldn't recognize the place.

The last many years of my time at Loyola I worked with the Sacramental Life group in Campus Ministry. I remember thinking how much I loved working in and around the Catholic culture at Loyola.

I loved all the people I interacted with in the course of my time (26 years) at Loyola. I felt so many lived their faith and complemented the ideals of the Jesuit community and Ignatian spirituality.

Loyola stretched me as a person through all my years. I began with one practical goal in mind; I finish with something more-- more compassion, more understanding, and more knowledge. My children all graduated from Loyola and we all cherish the many opportunities that were afforded to us-- whether with a degree from Loyola University Chicago or, in my case, with the many experiences of my life here that I have found so sustaining and rewarding.

## **THE GRADUATE SUMMER INSTITUTE ON THE CATHOLIC IMAGINATION**

The Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage Presents its Inaugural



## Graduate Summer Institute on the Catholic Imagination



Loyola University Chicago | July 8-18th, 2020

The Hank Center is pleased to announce the inaugural [Graduate Summer Institute on the Catholic Imagination](#). Out of many applicants, 14 students have been accepted for the first cohort. If the GSI is unable to meet this summer, the same cohort will meet next summer.

The Graduate Summer Institute (GSI) provides an opportunity for current graduate students to broaden and deepen their engagement with the Catholic imagination, specifically in the spheres of theology, poetry, literature, and film. This ten day program combines master classes and seminars with scholarly research, relaxed time for community collaboration and reflection, and a series of interesting excursions--all in the setting of one of the country's most bustling campuses and cities.

The seminar is designed for a broad and diverse range of graduate students in the areas of (but not limited to): theology, literary studies, creative writing, fine & performing arts, philosophy, digital humanities, and more.

July 8-18, 2020



### [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.



[\*Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home \(2015\)\*](#)

By Pope Francis

In his second encyclical, Pope Francis draws all Christians into a dialogue with every person on the planet about our common home. We as human beings are united by the concern for our planet, and every living thing that dwells on it, especially the poorest and most vulnerable. Pope Francis' letter joins the body of the Church's social and moral teaching, draws on the best scientific research, providing the foundation for "the ethical and spiritual itinerary that follows."

[\*What You Have Heard is True: A Memoir of Witness and Resistance\*](#) (2019)

By Carolyn Forché

Carolyn Forché is twenty-seven when the mysterious stranger appears on her doorstep. The relative of a friend, he is a charming polymath with a mind as seemingly disordered as it is brilliant. She's heard rumors from her friend about who he might be: a lone wolf, a communist, a CIA operative, a sharpshooter, a revolutionary, a small coffee farmer, but according to her, no one seemed to know for certain. He has driven from El Salvador to invite Forché to visit and learn about his country. Captivated for reasons she doesn't fully understand, she accepts and becomes enmeshed in something beyond her comprehension.

Together they meet with high-ranking military officers, impoverished farm workers, and clergy desperately trying to assist the poor and keep the peace. These encounters are a part of his plan to educate her, but also to learn for himself just how close the country is to war. As priests and farm-workers are murdered and protest marches attacked, he is determined to save his country, and Forché is swept up in his work and in the lives of his friends. Pursued by death squads and sheltering in safe houses, the two forge a rich friendship, as she attempts to make sense of what she's experiencing and establish a moral foothold amidst profound suffering. This is the powerful story of a poet's experience in a country on the verge of war, and a journey toward social conscience in a perilous time.

[\*Chicago Católico: Making Catholic Parishes Mexican\*](#) (2020)

By Deborah E. Kanter

Today, over one hundred Chicago-area Catholic churches offer Spanish-language mass to congregants. How did the city's Mexican population, contained in just two parishes prior to 1960, come to reshape dozens of parishes and neighborhoods?

Deborah E. Kanter tells the story of neighborhood change and rebirth in Chicago's Mexican American communities. She unveils a vibrant history of Mexican American and Mexican immigrant relations as remembered by laity and clergy, schoolchildren and their female religious teachers, parish athletes and coaches, European American neighbors, and the immigrant women who organized as *guadalupanas* and their husbands who took part in the Holy Name Society. Kanter shows how the newly arrived mixed memories of home into learning the ways of Chicago to create new identities. In an ever-evolving city, Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans' fierce devotion to their churches transformed neighborhoods such as Pilsen.

The first-ever study of Mexican-descent Catholicism in the city, *Chicago Católico* illuminates a previously unexplored facet of the urban past and provides present-day lessons for American communities undergoing ethnic integration and succession.

[\*Fragments: The Existential Situation of Our Time: Selected Essays, vol. 1\*](#) (2020)

By David Tracy

David Tracy is widely considered one of the most important religious thinkers in North America, known for his pluralistic vision and disciplinary breadth. His first book in more than twenty years reflects Tracy's range and erudition, collecting essays from the 1980s to 2018 into a two-volume work that will be greeted with joy by his admirers and praise from new readers.

In the first volume, *Fragments*, Tracy gathers his most important essays on broad theological questions, beginning with the problem of suffering across Greek tragedy, Christianity, and Buddhism. The volume goes on to address the Infinite, and the many attempts to categorize and name it by Plato, Aristotle, Rilke, Heidegger, and others. In the remaining essays, he reflects on questions of the invisible, contemplation, hermeneutics, and public theology. Throughout, Tracy evokes the potential of fragments (understood both as concepts and events) to shatter closed systems and open us to difference and Infinity. Covering science, literature, philosophy, psychoanalysis, and non-Western religious traditions, Tracy provides in *Fragments* a guide for any open reader to rethink our fragmenting contemporary culture.

[\*Imagining Judeo-Christian America: Religion, Secularism, and the Redefinition of Democracy\* \(2019\)](#)

By K. Healan Gaston

"Judeo-Christian" is a remarkably easy term to look right through. Judaism and Christianity obviously share tenets, texts, and beliefs that have strongly influenced American democracy. In this ambitious book, however, K. Healan Gaston challenges the myth of a monolithic Judeo-Christian America. She demonstrates that the idea is not only a recent and deliberate construct, but also a potentially dangerous one. From the time of its widespread adoption in the 1930s, the ostensible inclusiveness of Judeo-Christian terminology concealed efforts to promote particular conceptions of religion, secularism, and politics. Gaston also shows that this new language, originally rooted in arguments over the nature of democracy that intensified in the early Cold War years, later became a marker in the culture wars that continue today. She argues that the debate on what constituted Judeo-Christian-and American-identity has shaped the country's religious and political culture much more extensively than previously recognized.

[\*The Varieties of Nonreligious Experience: Atheism in American Culture\* \(2019\)](#)

By Jerome P. Baggett

Self-identified atheists make up roughly 5 percent of the American religious landscape, comprising a larger population than Jehovah's Witnesses, Orthodox Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus combined. In spite of their relatively significant presence in society, atheists are one of the most stigmatized groups in the United States, frequently portrayed as immoral, unhappy, or even outright angry. Yet we know very little about what their lives are actually like as they live among their largely religious, and sometimes hostile, fellow citizens.

In this book, Jerome P. Baggett listens to what atheists have to say about their own lives and viewpoints. Drawing on questionnaires and interviews with more than five hundred American atheists scattered across the country, *The Varieties of Nonreligious Experience* uncovers what they think about morality, what gives meaning to their lives, how they feel about religious people, and what they think and know about religion itself.

Though the wider public routinely understands atheists in negative terms, as people who do not believe in God, Baggett pushes readers to view them in a different light. Rather than simply rejecting God and religion, atheists actually embrace something much more substantive-lives marked by greater integrity, open-mindedness, and progress.

Beyond just talking about or to American atheists, the time is overdue to let them speak for themselves. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in joining the conversation.

***[Avery Dulles: Essential Writings from America Magazine](#)*** (2019)

By Avery Dulles, S.J.; Edited by James T. Keane

Cardinal Avery Dulles, S.J. (1918-2008), was one of the leading American Catholic theologians of the twentieth century. Published in partnership with America Media, this collection of Dulles's essential work from *America* magazine includes more than five decades of writing that showcases his wide-ranging interests in ecclesiology, salvation history, pastoral theology, and contemporary literature and reflects the Jesuit's warm personality and astute insights on the Church in an era of great change.

*Avery Dulles: The Essential Writings from America Magazine* includes occasional and formal writing, book reviews, reflections, and extended essays from *America*. Known as a synthesizer of Catholic thought from disparate traditions and theological positions, Dulles is perhaps best known for his book *Models of the Church*, one of a number of important academic works he wrote. Dulles was the author of twenty-five books and produced hundreds of articles for *America* and other journals.

In these selections from *America*, Dulles reflects on theological questions such as the relationship between faith and reason, as well as events like the Second Vatican Council that affected average Catholics. Avery Dulles also includes the late cardinal's exploration of the teachings of John Paul II and the authority of the episcopacy—solidifying our understanding of Dulles as both a towering figure and a mediating voice in American Catholicism.

## Contact Us

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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.