

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

The Hank Center

March 2026



From the Director

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The call to love one's neighbor—and to live in peace—is the central social message of the Gospel. It is certainly a most difficult charge as we do not get to choose our neighbors; and we quickly realize, especially in our global context, that our concepts of neighbor and neighborhood—so naturally provincial—

require constant review, expansion, and care.

Our recent International Encounter for Peace and Reconciliation, part of our Building Bridges Initiative and co-hosted by several partners, examined the themes and challenges of peace in a day long gathering on March 7. The event, scheduled long before our current crisis, helped us to see again the ways that our rich practices of real-world peacemaking—sourced in the Gospel and derived from the wisdom and insight of the Catholic intellectual and social traditions—can rise again to be serve all people of good will. The works and habits of peacemaking is a top priority for Pope Leo XIV, and in that spirit he wrote a **special letter of**

encouragement for the encounter. We are most grateful to the Holy Father for his greeting and intervention.

Peacemaking not only requires the will to work together, but also requires a well-tuned imagination, a core faculty that God has given to us and one that helps us to see things properly. In his play, *Six Degrees of Separation*, playwright John Guare gives us something practical and realist to ponder about the imagination: "I believe that the imagination is the passport we create to take us into the real world." For his part, G.K. Chesterton, a keen advocate of developing the imagination precisely as a vehicle of intellection—as a way of knowing—lasers in with this insight: "The trumpet of imagination," he muses, "like the trumpet of the Resurrection, calls the dead out of their graves." Just so. I will add a third idea, the **Ignatian option**, one that is profoundly mindful of the power of the imagination in all human making—including the making of just and peaceful societies. St. Ignatius was keenly attuned to the incarnational sense that flows in our blood and, with practice, can discern God in all things so as to dwell in peace, and this is a major fruit of the spiritual practice and style he developed 500 years ago. A major priority for Jesuit colleges and universities today is one shared with the Global Jesuits: the priority of being *agents of Reconciliation* precisely as a method of peacebuilding.

Flannery O'Connor, as an exemplary practitioner of a Catholic imagination, is also helpful here. In a 1962 letter to Alred Corn, an undergraduate from Emory University and future poet of some renown, O'Connor offers an astute observation: "the result of the stimulation of your intellectual life that takes place in college is usually a shrinking of the imaginative life." Far from being anti-intellectual, O'Connor is illuminating the holistic balance needed to make any decision and to chart any course of action—spiritual, political, artistic, or otherwise. An intellect devoid of a fertile imagination is a one-winged bird incapable of flight.

The Hank Center celebrates the 101st birthday of Flannery O'Connor tomorrow in what promises to be a most nourishing, challenging, and constructive day-long event. Please see below for details and our **crackerjack Hank Center team** looks forward to welcoming you. As always, all are welcome.

May we tend to our imaginations—and let them walk free in readiness, friendship, wisdom, and well ordered desire. Please read on, and,

Warmest regards,

Dr. Michael P. Murphy

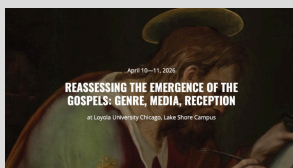
Hank Center Highlights

[Spring 2026 Events
Calendar](#)

Join Us for An Upcoming Event!

**Flannery 101: Capping the Centenary Year of an
American Master**

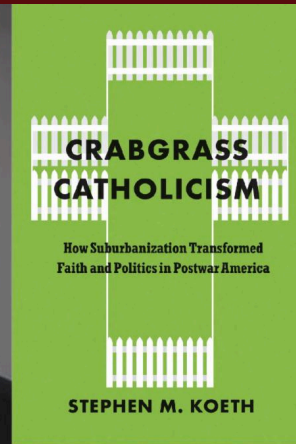
the great balancing act of approaching Scripture as both belonging to the deep past and also speaking to the hopes and sufferings of our present and future, we are delighted to invite you to join us for two free events centered around the study of the Bible with both ancient and modern contexts in view. Both events are cohosted by the Hank Center and the Department of Theology at Loyola.



Reassessing the Emergence of the Gospels: Genre, Media, Reception

**April 10-11, 2026
Information Commons, 4th Floor**

More than at any time in the past 100 years, New Testament scholarship has been returning to serious questions about the nature of the canonical gospels and the processes behind gospel writing. Questions about early gospel reception, gospel genre, the role of the gospels within early Christian book culture, the performative and narratological milieus in which the canonical gospels emerged, and the relationship between our gospels and early Christian memory have all been subjects of serious discussion over the past decade.



**Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 7:00 - 8:30 PM
Information Commons 4th Floor, Lakeshore Campus**

The 1960s in America were a time of revolt against the stifling conformism embodied in the sprawling, uniform suburbs of the 1950s. Typically, the reforms of the Catholic Church's Second Vatican Council, which aimed to make the Church more modern and accessible, are seen as one result of that broader cultural liberalization. Yet in *Crabgrass Catholicism*, Stephen M. Koeth demonstrates that the liberalization of the Church was instead the product of the mass suburbanization that began some fifteen years earlier.

Koeth argues that postwar suburbanization revolutionized the Catholic parish, the relationship between clergy and laity, conceptions of parochial education, and Catholic participation in US politics, and thereby was a significant factor in the religious disaffiliation that only accelerated in subsequent decades.

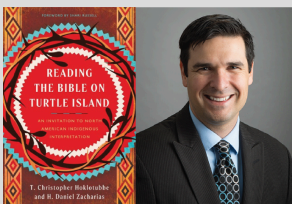
View [Crabgrass Catholicism: How Suburbanization Transformed Faith and Politics in Postwar America](#).

Fr. Stephen M. Koeth, C.S.C. is Assistant Professor in the Department of History at the University of Notre Dame. He is an urban, religious, and political historian of twentieth-century America. His research focuses on U.S. Catholic involvement in postwar metropolitan development, including urban renewal projects, public housing, and suburbanization, and the effects of these interactions on Catholic faith and politics

More Event Information

**2026 Bernardin Dialogues
*Habemus Papam: Three Journalists Weigh-In on Pope Leo XVI's First Year***

More about
Reassessing
the Emergence
of the Gospels



**Book Discussion with
Chris Hoklotubbe
(Cornell College):
Reading the Bible on
Turtle Island**

This groundbreaking book reimagines biblical interpretation in light of the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples in North America and Canada. All are welcome for a panel discussion with one of the authors, Chris Hoklotubbe (Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, ThD, Harvard), joined by Josefrayn Sánchez-Perry (Assistant Professor, Theology Department) and Julian Sieber (PhD Candidate, New Testament/Early Christianity). This event is hosted by the New Testament/Early Christianity Research Colloquium and the Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage.

More about the
Book
Discussion
with Chris
Hoklotubbe



**Wednesday, April 15, 2026, 7:00 - 8:30 PM
McCormick Lounge, Coffey Hall, Lakeshore Campus**

In less than 12 months since his election to the Chair of St. Peter, Pope Leo has continued Vatican reforms, personally reached out to the faithful in need of support, and inspired the Catholic faithful—both committed and lapsed. His influence has been felt outside of the Catholic Church through his ecumenical and interreligious dialogues, as well as his public ministry to the marginalized in Rome.

To mark the one-year anniversary of Pope Leo's election, The Hank Center will host a conversation focused on the first year of the Pope Leo's reign: What has he accomplished? Where do we go from here? What remains to be done?

Featured journalists will include Colleen Dulle (America), Michael Sean Winters (National Catholic Reporter), and Gretchen Crowe (Our Sunday Visitor) will offer their takes on Pope Leo's first year. Dominic Preziosi (Commonweal) will moderate.

[More Event Information](#)

Recap of Recent Events!

EVENT RECAP

**Faith that Builds Worlds: the Catholic Imagination
and Speculative Storytelling Conference**



We were happy to host the Faith that Builds Worlds Conference on Saturday, March 14th at Loyola's Lakeshore Campus. This conference brought together experts from across the speculative fiction genres—horror, fantasy and sci-fi—for a series of presentations and panels about the art of worldbuilding and its place in the spiritual life.

Worldbuilding is inherently spiritual. Worldbuilding in speculative storytelling insists that all things have meaning, that—if we but hold on until the end, gathering up pieces of language and lore, architecture and myth—all will be revealed. Every tiny detail helps a reader understand the new and wondrous world that the storyteller is weaving together.

Worldbuilding, when seen through a spiritual lens, sits squarely atop the oft-noted Ignatian insight that *God is in all things* and that all things glimmer with God's grace. All things—even small—have value, even if we can't immediately see what that value is. Too often, though, we're tempted to ignore or skip past those details in our lives that don't have immediate, understandable value. As adults, we claim to be far too busy for those aspects of life without an immediate ROI.

Fairy tales and fantasy—all the genres of speculative storytelling—have long battled the trope that such nonsensical storytelling is just for children, that wasting time on fictional worlds is a form of foolish escapism. But what if we have it all wrong? Children, after all, are expert worldbuilders. They need to be if they're going to grow. Children, as they develop, collect seemingly random pieces of information, holding this collection in their heads until such information becomes useful. This is worldbuilding! And yet, when it happens in the real world, we simply call it growing up.



[More Event Information](#)

[Article: "A Gathering for Those Whose Faith Builds Worlds" by the Jesuit Media Lab](#)

EVENT RECAP

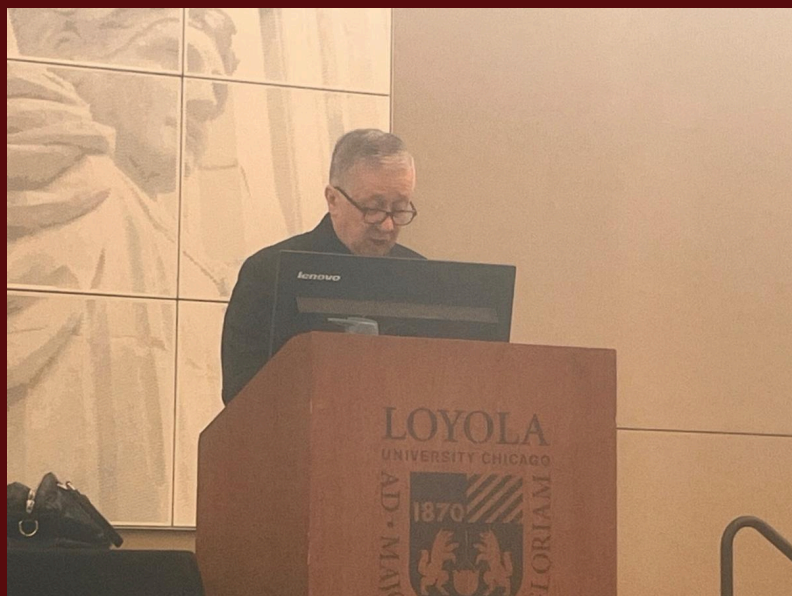
**Building Bridges Initiative: International Encounter
for Peace and Reconciliation**



This event, part of the **Building Bridges Initiative**, invited students, faculty, and practitioners to gather for a day of peacebuilding in the synodal spirit. The main objective was to explore, discuss, and propose interdisciplinary avenues on how to promote peace among peoples of the human family. We shared information for reflection in advance, host a pre-meeting on Zoom, and then gathered for structured dialogues similar to Conversations in the Spirit. These topics were introduced and facilitated by specialists in each of these areas in dialogue with university students from across the Americas. **Review media reports of this needed event here.**

Discussion topics included:

- Peace and the Church
- Peace, Law, and Migration
- Peace and the Economy
- Culture & Art Inspiring Peace
- Peace, Truth, and Justice in an AI era



Cardinal Blase Cupich of the Archdiocese of Chicago offers welcome remarks for the day's proceedings. His remarks are available using the link below and in the margin section of this newsletter.



Dr. Peter Jones, Interim Dean of the Institute of Pastoral Studies Loyola University Chicago, moderates a panel of speakers who provided introductions for the day's small group discussions.

More Event Information

EVENT RECAP
The 2026 Annual St. John Henry Newman Lecture
featuring
David Gibson

"How to be Catholic: A User's Guide to Converting"



Thursday, February 12, 2025, 7 - 8:30 PM
Information Commons 4th Floor, Lakeshore Campus

This year's lecturer was [David Gibson](#), Director of the McGrath Center on Religion and Culture at Fordham University.

David Gibson went to Rome a Protestant, got hired by the Vatican, traveled the world with the pope, and became Catholic. Nice story. But what could such a tale possibly teach most of us about becoming Catholic, and staying Catholic? In the 2026 Newman Lecture, Gibson – a veteran journalist and currently director of the Center on Religion and Culture at Fordham University – talks about what took him from his upbringing as a “Billy Graham Evangelical” to his conversion to Roman Catholicism, and how his unusual experience relates to our church's challenges today.

[More Information](#)

**Video Now Available & Event Recap:
Annual Jesuit Lecture featuring Fr. Mark Massa, SJ**

"Catholic Fundamentalisms"



The Hank Center was pleased to welcome [Fr. Mark Massa, SJ](#) of [Boston College's Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life](#), for its 2025 Jesuit Lecture. He spoke about his new book, *Catholic Fundamentalism in America*. Heidi Schlumpf, Senior Correspondent for Commonweal, provided a response.

The term "fundamentalism" has its roots in specific forms of American Protestantism that arose around the turn of the twentieth century in reaction to liberalizing and modernizing trends within the church. In this book, Mark Massa argues that an analogously reactive, militant, and sectarian

"fundamentalist" movement emerged within American Catholicism in the decades after World War II, for a similarly complex mix of theological and cultural reasons. In *Catholic Fundamentalism in America* Massa gives the first account of the Catholic form of the anti-modernist impulse. Through seven portraits of individuals and movements that embody the Catholic fundamentalist impulse, Massa demonstrates how the Catholic Right, like its evangelical Protestant counterpart, has reacted to--and fought against--modern American culture.

The response was given by [Heidi Schlumpf](#). Heidi Schlumpf is an award-winning, nationally recognized multimedia journalist, editor and podcaster with three decades of experience covering religion, spirituality, political, social and women's issues. She is currently the senior correspondent at [Commonweal Magazine](#).



Fr. Mark Massa, SJ , in conversation with respondent, Heidi Schlumpf, Senior Correspondent at Commonweal.

[Watch the Lecture Video](#)

**The Hank Center Honors Fr. Michael Garanzini, SJ
with Change to Graduate Fellowship Program:**

***The Michael J. Garanzini, S.J.
Fellowships in the Catholic
Intellectual Tradition***



The Michael J. Garanzini, S.J.

Michael Garanzini, SJ

Fellowships in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition

We are pleased to announce our newly-renamed Michael J. Garanzini, S.J., Fellowships in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. These fellowships (formerly Hank Fellowships in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition) encourage and support graduate students in their exploration of the Catholic intellectual tradition in its many disciplinary and creative forms—in theology and philosophy, literature and the arts, natural and social sciences, social movements and culture, pedagogy and pastoral life. Named for Fr. Michael Garanzini, S.J., whose tenure as President of Loyola University Chicago from 2001-2015 was a profoundly transformational, watershed example of leadership and vision, the Garanzini Fellowships support the next generation of Catholic scholars across the United States as they engage life-giving scholarship in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition.

Spotlight:
**The Michael J. Garanzini, S.J., Fellowships in the
Catholic Intellectual Tradition**

Meet our Fellows!

Alexander Luckmann



Alexander Luckmann is a Ph.D. Candidate in the History of Art and Architecture at UC Santa Barbara. He holds a B.A. in Art History from Vassar College, and previously worked as a landscape designer. His dissertation, “Building Catholic Modernity: Religion, Community, and Architecture in Cologne, 1919-1960,” argues that from 1919 to 1960, a cross-disciplinary network of Cologne Catholics – architects, philosophers, politicians, priests, and others – used architecture and urban planning to reimagine Catholicism as a social and communal force for an

industrialized, urban mass society. They thus created a distinct Catholic modernity. They did so largely by building churches and Catholic Siedlungen (settlements), which emphasized the Church as a generator of community, formed a cornerstone of an emerging Catholic social policy, and presented a modern image of Catholicism. These urban and architectural projects, in turn, transformed Cologne into a model modern Catholic city. His dissertation bridges the gap between sociopolitical and architectural histories of German Catholicism, and foregrounds housing as a key topos in 20th-century Catholic and German history. The Hank Fellowship will support archival research toward this dissertation.

Jack Nuelle



Jack Nuelle is a Ph.D. Candidate in Theology in the Integrative Studies in Ethics and Theology (ISET) Program at Loyola University Chicago. He holds an M.T.S. from the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry and a B.A. in English Language and Literature from the University of Chicago. His research areas include fundamental and sacramental theology, the continental philosophy of religion, especially the theological turn in phenomenology, and critical philosophies of race. In addition to his academic work, he has also written for publications such as *America*, *Commonweal*, and the *National Catholic Reporter*, among others. His dissertation project, tentatively titled "An Epicletic Metaphysics of Symbol and Encounter: Eucharistic Metaphysics and White Supremacy" offers a theological

and philosophical critique of onto-theological Eucharistic metaphysics with Louis-Marie Chauvet, Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., Giorgio Agamben and Jean-Yves Lacoste toward a revitalized metaphysics and renewed Eucharistic theology. Then, engaging with philosophers in critical whiteness studies, the project offers a Eucharistic-existential critical encounter with the structural sin of white supremacy, which, the project argues, traffics in the same kind of limited, foundational metaphysics as do deficient theologies of Eucharistic presence.

[Meet All of Our Fellows!](#)

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.



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