From the Desk of Fr. Mark Bosco, S.J.

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

The university's "spring break" is a misnomer this year and should be called "winter break," for it is a frigid 12 degrees Fahrenheit as we go to press. But the cold has not stopped the Hank Center from a month of wide-ranging programs. Two events, in particular, grapple both intellectually and artistically with the dilemma of racism in our country. As this past year has illustrated--in almost epic proportions in places like Ferguson and Staten Island--there is extensive structural and institutional racism that still exists in many modes of American life. Join us for two opportunities to explore this. First, on Wednesday March 11, we welcome Bishop Edward K. Braxton of Bellville, Illinois, to discuss his recent pastoral letter, "The Racial Divide in the United States: A Reflection for the World Day of Peace 2015." The afternoon symposium will offer an in-depth conversation on the Church's role in combating the sin of racism.

If Bishop Braxton suggests theological reflection, then a week later on March 19, the Hank Center's Catholicism and the Arts Series presents an artistic rendering of racism in America by bringing the celebrated New York ensemble, La Compagnia de’ Colombari for a one night performance of "Everything that Rises Must Converge." The play, directed by Karin Coonrod, is a dramatic performance of Flannery O'Connor's famous short story about racial tensions on a post-segregation Atlanta bus trip in the 1960s. The play, which performed off-Broadway and at many university campuses around the country, arrives at Loyola for its Chicago premiere. See more details below.

Finally, the Hank Center is proud to celebrate the conferral of an honorary doctoral degree upon His Eminence, Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, on March 25 in Madonna della Strada Chapel. The President of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Culture and a leading figure at the recent extraordinary synod on the Family, Ravasi will give a lecture entitled "American Culture, Catholic Higher Education, and the Contribution to the Global Church." Please join us for this wonderful celebration.

All good things,
Mark Bosco, S.J.
Bishop Braxton was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Chicago in 1970. He was a founding member of the Black Catholic Theological Symposium in 1978 where he spoke on "Religion, Values, Ethnicity and the Black Experience," utilizing the work of the great Jesuit theologian, Bernard Lonergan. Throughout his priestly and episcopal ministry (in St. Louis; Lake Charles, LA; and Belleville), he has continued to speak and write about the evils of racism from a Catholic perspective.

In his pastoral letter, the bishop urges his readers to enter imaginatively into the experience of Black Catholics in an overwhelmingly White church; to grasp more deeply the anti-racist implications of our faith; to reflect more carefully upon the recent killings of young African-American males; and to discard the language of "minority groups." He also offers concrete proposals for grappling with this sin and heresy that poisons the Church and our national life.

A unique feature of the letter is its accompanying Study Guide to help individuals and groups move from prayer to thought to action. Bishop Braxton's work is thus an important resource for our necessary, ongoing struggle against white supremacy.

Responding to Bishop Braxton's presentation will be Loyola University's own Dr. Timone Davis of the Institute of Pastoral Studies and Dr. Jon Nilson, Professor Emeritus of Theology.

Copy of the letter could be found here

This event is free and open to the public

Catholicism and the Arts Series

Everything That Rises Must Converge

Thursday, March 19
7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Kathleen Mullady Theater
Centennial Forum
Loyola University Chicago
1032 W Sheridan Rd
Chicago, IL 60660

New York City based Compagnia De' Colombari is pleased to announce the four city national tour of Flannery O'Connor's Everything That Rises Must Converge, created for the stage and directed by Karin Coonrod.

Everything That Rises Must Converge by Flannery O'Connor and created for the stage by Karin Coonrod is a tragic-comic inter racial seat shifting dance by whites and blacks on a moving bus in America's deep south. Playing and speaking out the story verbatim, eight Colombari actors with razor sharp precision create all the characters and all the narration. Georgia's red earth is slammed up against the eternal. O'Connor's voice spread out across the company of actors carries the power of the apocalyptic comedy right into the audience.

From Time Out New York
The ensemble is terrific, smoothly slipping in and out of character. It's also gratifying to see so many body types-stout, skinny, short and tall-onstage together, like a tiny village bustling about...dark unsettling magic of O'Connor's art-coming through full force in this exceptionally sensitive translation.

Tickets can be purchase at luc.tix.com. Students with ID-$2, General Public-$7
Catholic Thought and the Professional Life Series

A Contemplative in Action: Is It Really Possible?
A panel discussion with guest speaker Mr. Mark Kennedy Shriver

Wednesday, April 8
3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Regent's Hall, Lewis Towers
Water Tower Campus
Loyola University Chicago
820 N. Michigan Ave
Chicago, IL 6066

The 2015 Chicago Catholic Immigrants Conference (CCIC) will focus on the Polish immigrant community here in Chicago. We would like to invite scholars from the fields of ethnic studies, urban and cultural history, literature and language, theology, and sociology of religion. This conference will also highlight the Polish heritage and traditions with the participation of Chicago artists, students, and Catholic religious leaders.

Please submit your papers to Bozena Nowicka McLees, Director of the Interdisciplinary Polish Studies Program, at bmclees@luc.edu. If you have any questions please call 773-508-2864.

LUC confers the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters upon Cardinal Ravasi and holds colloquium on The Preferential Option for Culture in Latino/a Theology
Wednesday, 25 March 2015
3:00 PM - 4:15 PM

Madonna della Strada Chapel
Loyola University Chicago
1032 W. Sheridan Rd.
Chicago, IL 60660

On March 25th, Loyola University Chicago will confer upon His Eminence Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi an honorary doctoral degree. Cardinal Ravasi is the President of the Pontifical Council for Culture and the Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archeology. An expert in biblical languages, he served as Prefect of the Biblioteca-Pinacoteca Ambrosiana in Milan and taught Old Testament Exegesis at the theological Faculty of Northern Italy.

Thursday, 26 March 2015
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Information Commons, 4th Floor
Loyola University Chicago
1032 W. Sheridan Rd
Chicago, IL 60660

On March 26th, Cardinal Ravasi, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture will participate in an unprecedented conversation with a prominent group of Latino/a theologians. The theologians will address key themes related to the emergence, development, and ongoing contribution of Latino/a theology in the United States. Exploring the central role and distinct interpretation that Sacred Scripture and Popular Catholicism carry within Latino/a theology, they offer Christian challenges to cultures of privilege that all too often feed, in the words of Pope Francis, "the globalization of human indifference." Their valuable ecumenical and inter-religious insights will extend the conversation to popular cultures and the "American" experience of mestizaje. The colloquium offers fresh approaches to Jesus, Mary, and God as Latino/a theologians translate ancient Catholic doctrines into new and culturally relevant words. Join us as we enter into an opportunity to encounter the contribution that this community makes to the Church, to our country, and to a world in much need of justice, peace, and reconciliation.

Learn more at Luc.edu/ccih
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.